

## **ANNUAL STRATEGY MEETING, DAY 2 – TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026**

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Annual Strategy Session – Day 2 on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 9 a.m. at the Ballantyne Hotel, 10000 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, North Carolina with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, J.D. Mazuera Arias, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell, and Kimberly Owens.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember Renee Johnson

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmembers Danté Anderson, Joi Mayo, and Victoria Watlington

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### **ITEM NO. 1: WELCOME**

**Mayor Lyles** said okay, thank you, everybody. I just wanted to say thank you to everyone. I thought yesterday was absolutely phenomenal for what we've been trying to achieve, and last night, I want to say thank you again for all of the hard work, especially I think those with the staff that made that possible. It was really, really what we needed to have and do. We have a lot more to do today, but hopefully, we'll get the same kind of activity and trust together and making possible for us to continue this journey that we're on. So, I'm going to turn it over to Debra. Thank you, Debra, you're doing a fantastic job.

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### **ITEM NO. 2: RECAP DAY 1 AND DAY 2**

**Debra Campbell, Facilitator** said good morning, everyone. I hope you all had a good night's rest. I know after a long day one, when you exert the kind of energy that you all exerted yesterday, having some really, really tough conversations, and then we had a lot of information that was presented to you all in discussion, it's kind of hard to wind down, because I don't know about you guys, but I kind of replay the day in my head, and then it's the wish I could've, would've, should've done kinds of things.

I like to start off with checking the energy level in the room, so for Council we're going. Yes, I know the Mayor's got a lot of energy, but I'm going to do the thumb-o-meter again. How's your energy? How are you feeling today? Yes, alright, go on record, just about all of them, we're there, so thank you all.

I just want to take just a few minutes, the Mayor did a little bit of this, just to kind of recap what we accomplished yesterday.

#### **Councilmember Anderson arrived at 9:03 a.m.**

You all had a lot of time, the whole morning for the most part, was spent on team building and improving how you work together more effectively. For example, you all made some decisions, and you gave us some assignments, or at least staff some assignments. You established a committee to work on rules of decorum, and these are just examples of some things. I took a lot of notes. You all will get a document that will have all of the kind of the summation of the conversations, as well as action items, and a lot of those action items definitely will be geared toward staff, but some of them will be some things that you collectively or individually will have to address. You identified opportunities to meet where you can have more open and kind of personal and probably tougher conversations than you had yesterday about how you work together, and we decided that staff will provide agenda packets earlier for your committee meetings; instead of Fridays, you may get them on Wednesdays, or as soon as possible. You received a lot of information related to initiatives between the City, County, and nonprofits, to address public safety. You heard a bold goal of providing 1,000 career job

experiences or opportunities. Also, there was a challenge to Council to employers throughout the community to sign up for partnerships to provide and help the City provide some of these employment internships and other opportunities. You're also partnering with the County to provide additional recreation opportunities for youth this summer, and I think that some of these things that you talked about were kind of breaking news, so I have a motto, don't overpromise and underdeliver, because that's how we, in the local government area, lose credibility, so that's my challenge to you all. Also, with the safety thing, you requested some additional data related to a number of items, but one that stuck in my mind was 911 calls and response times, and again as I said, there were several other requests.

Then, you had an update on transition of CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) from your current City department to an independent authority. You have a major deadline of July 1, 2026. That's when the master agreement has to be done, which is an outline of this entire transfer process. It doesn't have to be completed, but you've got to have a game plan by July 1, 2026, and Ms. City Attorney, if I'm wrong? You're right, okay, cool, alright.

Then, last night, you had a meeting, I wasn't there at the Government Center, but I watched it, about I-77 Express Lane. You all were amazing from the perspective of there were lots of different opinions that were expressed, but you did it in a way that I hope residents, citizens of Charlotte, would be proud of you, because again you took that team building exercise that we had and you put it into practice, and thank you so much, you should be proud of yourselves.

**Councilmember Watlington arrived at 9:07 a.m.**

Now, I didn't say that to pat you on the head, pat on the back, to say, attagirl, attaboy. I did it because I think you grew. I mean, I think there was some growth, and I think you all are committed to continuing that journey. Then, the good news out of that, or that discussion, or that meeting, is that you had good news to share with the community about NC-DOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation) agreeing to delay. Now, I'm going to tell you all, you've got some heavy lifting on that item. Well, you've got heavy lifting on a lot of these items, but on this one you've got a lot of work to be done, and I hope that you will carry the theme of relationship building, not only amongst each other, but with the community and with the State. It is very, very important that you all continue to be partners with all of these entities, even though you may disagree on some things, you can work it out. Now, if our panelists are here, Ed, okay, we may start a little bit early.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said good morning, everyone. Ms. Campbell, I thought we had an action item as well, it's coming up with the rules of decorum?

Ms. Campbell said yes, and that was your committee that you all have formed. I said that earlier, and you've got a lot of action items, quite frankly, and we'll be summarizing that, providing you with a document, and Julia, who cracks the whip on me, says I've got to have this by the end of the week, so she will have that and hopefully you all will have that information certainly by Monday of next week.

Alright, so, now for today, again, we've got a lot to get done, and in particular on this day towards the end of the day, you all are going to be taking this bold step of identifying your strategic initiatives going into the year. So, you're going to get a lot of information today, again, and we've had to modify the agenda a little bit, so that we could pick up some things that we didn't do yesterday. So, Julia, do they all have a revised agenda?

**Julia Martin, City Manager's Office** said yes.

Ms. Campbell said okay, so you have a revised agenda of today. You will see that we're going to have a pretty intense morning. There is no break, so I encourage you to take breaks whenever you need to take one. We are going to start this morning's discussion

around mobility and things, and I need to add one additional thing about today. We're going to have a working lunch as well, so we're going break a little early, about 11:45 a.m., pick up our food, and then we're going to have the capital strategy budget discussion from noon until 1:00 p.m. So, there's a lot of moving parts, but hopefully we'll keep you informed.

So, now, this morning's discussion, I'm going to have Ed McKinney come up and introduce the panel around implementing Generational Mobility Investments, and we are deeply appreciative for our out-of-town guests, and for our, who needs no introduction, Mr. Harvey Gantt. So, I'll hand it off to you, Ed, take it away.

**Ed McKinney, Special Assistant to the City Manager** said thank you. Ed McKinney, Special Assistant for Mobility. If the panel can come up, and I'm just going to say a few things to set up the discussion. I want to reintroduce Adam Phipps who's been with us for a little bit. He's going to facilitate this conversation. For those obviously who know, Adam's been with us for the last couple of retreats, helping us think through the mobility efforts. What you haven't seen is he's been working with us behind the scenes as well, so he's been deeply ingrained in our staff and our organization, helping us think through what the implementation and delivery of this program looks like.

#### **Councilmember Mayo arrived at 9:13 a.m.**

A lot of the SIA (Strategic Investment Area) work that you've seen is part of Adam's help in terms of making sure that's been a successful program. Adam, again as a quick introduction, he's currently a CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of Infrastructure Strategies. What they do is advising cities just like us across the Country in how to implement successfully big capital improvement programs. So, we're really lucky to have them. He's working in cities across the Country doing that today. He is former CEO of the Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. You'll see some friends he has from that past history in that role. He led an organization that was over 1,000 people, the successful delivery of a capital program that was over a billion dollars. So, all that to say, Adam knows what he's doing, you'll see that conversation. He's got some great partners that you'll hear a little bit more about that success. What I do want to say as we go into this day of mobility, and particularly the opportunities of the panel to kind of set the tone for that. The purpose of it for me is to have a conversation with this panel about what does this look like to get it right in Charlotte. So, we have a great opportunity and honor to have Mayor Gantt with us. We have some great experts and some experience that you'll see across the Country, but it's about getting it right for Charlotte, and what does that look like for us, get your sort of excitement and discussion as we lead into the day. It's both about, organizationally what we need to do, but also really more importantly in the community. So, you'll hear that, and this conversation will tease that out, but it's about getting it right for Charlotte in our community, in our organization. We're excited. We can be successful, and this will be a great way to start our day. So, with that, I'll throw it over to Adam Phipps.

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#### **ITEM NO. 3: IMPLEMENTING GENERATIONAL MOBILITY INVESTMENT**

**Adam Phipps, CEO Infrastructure Strategies, LLC** said good morning, everybody. Mayor, thank you for having us. City Council, thank you for having us. For those members that I've had the opportunity to engage with before, looking forward to this session today, this is going to be a great session. To City leadership, Manager, thank you, we're excited for this conversation. Alright, so, let me do a little bit of ground rules here for everybody, just so you know what to expect. Similar to what Shawn did with his panel yesterday, I have 100 different questions, I'm going to throw all of them out, and put them in my pocket. I'm going to lead off with some intros of each of the panelists. I'm going to ask one question to each panelist, but then I really just want to turn it over to the room, to Council here, for you guys to engage, ask the questions that you have on your mind. If you run out of questions, which I know you will not, I will go to my

trusted pocket of questions, but I want to give you guys as many opportunities as possible to learn from these.

So, Manager Jones asked me to put together a panel of leaders in mobility, and I knew that that wouldn't be too difficult to do, because I've had the honor of working with some incredible leaders in my past. I didn't realize I'd be able to do this great of a panel, and so I feel privileged to have the opportunity to introduce these folks, and I'm going to start with Mayor Hancock, in fact. Mayor Hancock, it's good to see you. Mayor Hancock is the founder and CEO of Hancock, Global. He has 20 years of experience in elected office, that's two terms of City Council, and in the full maximum of Denver of three terms of Mayor. He's a champion for infrastructure. He's a champion for mobility, and I got to see that firsthand, and really built a reputation of that within the Mayoral community throughout his tenure. He's my favorite strong Mayor, important qualifier, and he also had the pleasure of serving on the Executive Committee for multiple years with the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Again, very well respected of that infrastructure leader across the U.S., so Mayor Hancock, thank you for being with us.

**Mayor Michael Hancock, Hancock Global Services** said thank you, glad to be here.

Mr. Phipps said next, I'll go with Director Cleckley, currently the CEO of the Underline, and a fun fact here, it is a 10-mile, 120-acre urban redevelopment of parks, trails and transit, pretty impressive achievement. In fact, I think a few of you have had the opportunity to go down to Miami-Dade and witness that firsthand. So, Mr. Cleckley is at the helm of that currently. Prior to that, he was the CEO of Transportation and Public Works for Miami-Dade County. Prior to that, Executive Director of Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure under Mayor Hancock. Prior to that, Deputy Director of the MPO, the Metropolitan Planning Organization in Houston-Galveston. Prior to that at the District Department of Transportation in D.C., where he helped with one very high-profile inauguration among many other things, and yes, that experience, he's a lot older than he looks. Quite the resume. Oh, and fun fact, NC State alumni?

**Eulois Cleckley, Friends of The Underline** said A&T, get it straight.

Mr. Phipps said oh, well, everybody can't be perfect, awesome. Then, Debra stole my intro a little bit, but Mayor Gantt, a man that needs no introduction. In fact, I think I might be the only person in this room that hasn't had the honor to meet Mayor Gantt before. Of course, former Charlotte Mayor, very distinguished educational accomplishments, as I looked at his resume, founded his own architecture firm, and has had quite the impact on the City of Charlotte, and so Mayor Gantt, thank you for making the time to join us today.

Alright, with that, I'm going to jump right into the first question I have for everybody, and Mayor Gantt, with your unprecedented perspective on the City of Charlotte, I've got to start with you. So, your perspective is unrivaled. You've been Mayor. You've been involved in the community. You've been a leader for decades. Why is mobility important, and what should this Council be considering as we look at this generational investment, a big investment, an unparalleled investment in mobility as a City?

**Harvey Gantt** said I can take the entire time of the panel, but I won't. A point of personal privilege here, I used to go to these retreats so many times back in the day, that's almost what 40 some odd, 50 some years ago, and I knew everybody in the room, staff, as well as the elected officials. This is the first time I walked into this room, I don't know this wonderful staff that's behind most of you, and I really don't know all the Council members. So, if you don't mind, just as a point of personal privilege, I would like the Council. I mean, I know the Mayor, I know the Manager, but some of these Council members I don't know, so please stand. Ed Driggs, I know you. Anderson. Can you just raise your hands, those who are members of the Council, and give me your names. I know your names, but do it anyway.

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### ITEM NO. 3: IMPLEMENTING GENERATIONAL MOBILITY INVESTMENT

**Mayor Harvey Gantt** said thank you for doing that. Now I forgot what the question was. Let me tell you something, why is mobility important, thank you, Mayor. I think all of you in this room know how excited I am about where we are going with mobility. It is a major and principal opportunity for the City to withstand and overcome the growth that it is going to experience. We're still a relatively young city, that's the way I've always looked at it, even from the days that I served as Mayor, which were decades ago. Being a relatively young city has tremendous advantages, because we get to study cities like Denver, which we are older than you are when you think about it. We get to study the major metropolitan areas of the north, east and the west, and we see some of the issues that they come up with. Here we find ourselves with a tremendous opportunity, one that I've not seen around Charlotte in a long time, and sometimes I don't think we grasp the gravity of what this is all about.

Let me just start with some numbers and play with some numbers a minute. The one cent tax that we just passed will bring about close to \$20 billion in expenditures over the next upcoming decades, and the multiply effect of dropping that into the economy may be as much as 2.5 to 3.5 times that. So, the impact on the economy of Charlotte is going to be substantial. I haven't even said a word about mobility yet, but it is going to be, in my opinion, substantial. Fifty-five thousand people a year, that's what you folks have been bragging on. I mean, I've heard folks say 155, I've heard up as high as 175 people coming here every day, but what that represents is about 55,000 to 60,000 people. When I was Mayor of Charlotte, we had less than 300,000. So, we're talking about in five years matching what the City was when I Mayor, so this grow is substantial. For the first time, we've got money to deal with and build as best we can, as much as we can learn from those older cities, and taking advantage of the technologies. We have the talent in this community, we really do. I've been reading some of those mobility plans and man, I get lost every 10 or 12 pages, but I keep trying to absorb it. We've got the talent, we've got the money, and I said that, and we should have the perspective to understand that there's going to be a lot of unrest.

Well, it's like, I'm obviously not a woman, but I assume giving birth to a new baby might be the best analogy. We're going to go through some things. We're going through some things now, Mr. Manager, because I can't get out of my street with all the construction going on with water and other kinds of lines. Can you imagine over the next 20 years the infrastructure that we're going to put in place to in fact make our City better, and as leaders of the City, you have got to keep reminding the public that all that red dirt, all those trucks, all those machines, all those people out there, are in the process of making the City even better.

Now, there's a lot of work we have to do, and I have a lot of confidence, unlike this current situation that you all are dealing with, the I-77 corridor, and I don't know what you decided to do last night, but this is a situation upcoming for you that in fact you totally control. The governmental structures that you put in place, your ability to project to the community and build trust, trust, trust, transparency, transparency, transparency, and a willingness to listen early on, midway, and getting to the end, are going to make all the difference in the world. There are going to be some people hurt, but we have to find ways to make them whole. Anybody who shares that, we're going to be able to build \$20 billion worth of infrastructure, and not cause some people some discomfort, you're not a realist. You're not being realistic. You can't move that much dirt, put that much rail down, widen that many streets, without some of our citizens feeling some of that, and what is your responsibility, if you go back to this thing called trust, trust, what we're responsible for doing is finding a way to gain the trust of the community by being as open as possible, and by being as honest as possible, and not trying to smooth everything over. You've got to be like this, I'm going to quit, but I am confident at the end of the day that Cindy and I, as we get deeper into senior citizenship, will be able to ring up a metro micro-transit facility, because we're going to see our children in New York, get a ride to the Silver Line, and get on the Silver Line, get to the airport, micro-transit or something else will take me in, they'll get a wheelchair for me by then, and get me over there, but I will get there, and I am confident that that will work. That's a plus.

That's a plus that we have to trumpet to our community. I have confidence that someone who just arrived from Dillon, South Carolina, looking for a job, finding the job, the new job that we brag about, but it's located out on the edge of town. They don't take three hours from where they have to live to get to that job on time, and that's because we will have built a system that works for that new family coming in from South Carolina. I just have confidence that we will beat some of our northern cities in terms of mobility, because we've got the talent, the trust, the will of the community. So, finally, I just want to say, I hope some of ya'll will get as enthusiastic as I am about seeing the good, and then embracing what's not so good, and making sure we can make people whole.

**Adam Phipps, CEO Infrastructure Strategies, LLC** said Mayor Gantt, thank you, and I have that enthusiasm, and I know we're going to see it across the room here as well. You had mentioned we have the money; we have the plans. You all have seen three years of iterations of mobility planning by Mr. McKinney over the last few planning sessions for Council. That's right, you have the congestion. Does everybody agree we have the congestion? Yes, so we have the challenges to solve. Mayor Hancock, let me go to you. In your 12 years as Mayor, I did my research, the City's budget went from \$800 million your first year, increased by \$2 billion to \$2.8 billion your 12<sup>th</sup> year in office; a huge increase. Denver was in a prime growing season, you weren't just spendy, prime growing season in that 12 years. Charlotte is in that same season today. Given that context and the parallel of a growing city, what should this Council be thinking about as they look at transitioning from, we have the money, we have the plans, it's time to implement?

**Mayor Michael Hancock, Hancock Global Services** said thank you, Adam. First of all, it's good to see you all, good morning to you, and it is good to see this legend sitting to my left. As Mayor, as you grow, come along in your careers, and you are hearing about the legends of this nation as Mayors, and Harvey Gantt was one of those great legends that I studied and watched, and he just did a dissertation on mobility, and it is not a myth that this man has earned his legendary status in this nation, so once again, I bow to you man. Thank you to Charlotte for bringing such great leadership to our nation, to my good friend, my dear friend, Mayor Vi, who I've admired over the years and have enjoyed serving with before I left office in 2011, and continue to see around the Mayor's Conferences. I am glad to be here with you this morning. I've got to tell you, I don't know, I thought it'd be a lot warmer down here. When I got here, I came off the plane, I would not know it was Charlotte if I didn't see the buttered grits on the panel out there. I don't know what ya'll got going on, but please turn the heat up just while I'm here, and I leave this afternoon, but it's good to be with my friends as well to see Adam and to see Eulois Cleckley. Your question is one, and I want to congratulate Charlotte on this major infrastructure investment. I think, Mayor Vi, you told me about it during the conference sitting around the Transportation Committee that I was honored to Chair for two years as part of the Conference of Mayors.

In 2011, when I came into office, Denver was like the rest of the nation, beginning to emerge out of the great recession, but you could feel the pulse of the city, it was ready, it was ready to take off, it was brimming with that kind of energy. Kind of like what's happening here in Charlotte. By 2013, Denver was one of the top three fastest growing cities in the Country. To give you scale and scope of what we were dealing with, we were seeing a net new resident population coming into our city, 1,000 per month, net new, and that went on for about almost 10 years, right before COVID hit, or during COVID we started to see the plateauing of the City. Being pretty much a native of Denver, I was not born there, but raised in Denver from infancy, what used to be a situation where it took 20 minutes no matter where you were going in the City to get from point A to point B was now taking anywhere, we saw it begin to steadily increase, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, and if you were going from one end to the other, it would take you well in excess of an hour if you didn't know when to leave to get to somewhere, and that was just unacceptable. Growing population and congestion occurring, and by the way, beginning to see the degradation of our infrastructure, our streets, our bridges, our highways declining significantly. At that point, Denver was a 73 percent single occupied vehicle city. We are talking about a culture shift folks. Does any of this sound familiar

here in Charlotte? Is that where the one percent came from? One of the things that I understood was that we cannot allow this to become our normal. Just as fast as we have grown and became productive and companies were moving in and investments were occurring, congestion will choke this city to death, and I'm talking about Denver now, and I think you pretty much sense that same sense of mortality for Charlotte. You work too hard to advance your city. You work too hard to make it a desirable destination for visitors, tourists, and for people to come work, play and to live, for congestion to kill you. We did not, and with all due respect to some cities around this country, want to be Los Angeles, we didn't want to be the D.C. Metro area, we didn't want to be Houston or Houston Metro area. We wanted to be competitive, but we didn't want the congestion.

So, it occurred to me, and I'm going to not spend time on the economic side of it, except to talk about what we challenged the city to do in 2017, was to make a \$2 billion commitment. I just threw that out there, \$2 billion over the next, I think it was 13 years, to invest in our infrastructure. The City was going to put some skin in the game, but as I look back on some headlines, I didn't realize I was doing this, but some of the headlines read, "Mayor Hancock calls out the State and Federal Government to make investments in our City," and I did that intentionally, saying if we put skin in the game then you ought to join us in this effort, and we're going to make a commitment that by 2030 we're going to invest over \$2 billion on our roads, our bridges, and we're going to improve the City and our mobility. We're going to get more out our streets and stop worrying about moving cars and move people. We're going to move them to jobs and housing. We're going to move them to their medical appointments. We're going to move them to the important places of like education and healthy foods in our lives, and as Mayor Gantt talked about, the economics, I'm going to focus on very briefly the civic side of this. We must not forget we're not talking about just pavement and curbs and bridges and transit and rail, we're talking about people, and as your former great Mayor, Mayor Foxx used to say, as Secretary of Transportation, "We're talking about creating ladders of opportunity for the people in your city." There is no greater determinate of one's wellbeing in life than their access to mobility. As Mayor, I used to say, "You want to know where the greatest challenges exist in our City, where people are struggling every day to make ends meet, where they're economically challenged, then show me where the least amount of mobility options exist." When people are locked in a situation where they can't get to buses, or they have to walk extraordinarily long ways to get to the bus, or there's no transit, or their roads that are not completed or in disrepair, sidewalks don't exist, we don't worry about, we don't address the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility of our sidewalks, which some of us bypass without thinking, but realize that we're shutting people off, when I can't take my wheelchair off of the road and to the safety of a sidewalk. Those are things we're talking about here. Transportation mobility is a foundation of economic opportunity and equity in every metropolitan area, period. If you invest in that, give people access to education, to affordable housing, you build affordable housing around dense transit areas, now we're talking about, and I'll finish on this, and this is the economic side of this. Today most Americans spend in excess of 30 percent for housing. If you add mobility needs to that and cars, the insurance, the fuel, the maintenance, you take that cost to 45 percent or more just for housing and mobility. Now, imagine, take a journey with me where you are building affordable housing near transit options, transit corridors, imagine the economic impact on a mother of three, where she comes out of the back of that unit, jumps on a train and takes her kids to school, gets back on a train and goes to work. In the afternoon, she gets back on a train to go pick her kids up, and then go home. We are now beginning to eliminate a massive economic disparity in our communities. This is the opportunity that we have in our cities around the nation, and this is the opportunity that you as Charlotte have put a stake in the ground and said, this city's going to be for everybody, not just those who can afford a car and housing, but for those who we can help live around transit and other options, biking, walking, transit, and yes cars if necessary, we're going to get more off our streets, and we're going move people to greater ladders of opportunity. I'm looking forward to the conversation.

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Mayor Hancock, Director Cleckley, my apologies. You've been a transformational leader across the U.S., from Houston to Denver to Miami to D.C., you've been the one, to Mayor Hancock's point, that has gotten it done. I've seen

that firsthand and I know that you have a unique skill set to do that. You've also seen the City of Charlotte's journey over the last couple of years. You've opined on it, you've advised on it, and it's near home to you. Help us connect the dots. How does this city go from talking about what needs to get done to actually getting it done?

**Eulois Cleckley, Friends of The Underline** said alright, well, thank you, Adam, and it's a pleasure to be back with you again. I think this is time number three, I believe, so it's good to see you all. Truly am honored to be with legendary Mayors here, Mayor Gantt and Mayor Hancock. I went to North Carolina A&T, so I am originally from the D.C. area, and let me tell you, we studied you, Mayor Gantt. So, very appreciative of being in your presence, and Mayor Hancock hired me from Houston. If you notice all the cities that Mayor Hancock mentioned that were terrible around mobility, I like worked at all of them, so I don't know what that's about, but we'll talk about that later. The way in which this group is working together is admirable, and I've said this before, what you're doing, having retreats, sitting down, bringing in experts to help you identify the issue, gain consensus, and gain, which is the most important word, alignments of how to resolve some of the challenges, it's something that's not commonplace in a lot of metropolitan areas. So, I want to congratulate you for taking time out and working together as elected officials and the administration to figure out ways to make the City of Charlotte better. So, I want to give you a round of applause.

So, what I've seen that is important to continue on, in terms of how you implement large capital programs, is to ensure that the vision that gets set from a strategic standpoint is the one that you always follow. Now, I'm going to speak more technical, because I in my past have been the person that's been brought in to figure out ways to develop the structures to be able to implement, but it always starts with a vision, an aspirational vision that you need to have, and that's been set here in Charlotte. Mayor Hancock made mention of the fact that in Denver when I was there, one of the issues around congestion was the fact that 73 percent of individuals commuting were doing it by a single occupancy vehicle. He had the aspirational vision to say, well we want to reduce that amount down to 50 percent, and then the balance of that is split between transit and walking and biking, and he gave an edict, during one of his State of the City Addresses, which we still talk about today, but he at that address said that he was going to commit in three years to build 125 miles worth of bike lanes, and he pointed at me and said, that's your job to do. Three years later, what ended up happening, Mayor?

Mayor Hancock said we had it.

Mr. Cleckley said we had actually exceeded it. So, my point to you is that when you have alignment from elected officials, the administration that is structured, and a department that's set up to implement, and you have a committed funding source, which you have now, you can do amazing things. What I've seen that has been a challenge in a lot of metropolitan areas is that if you start to deviate from the vision that you have set out, because every single change in a project, or every single change about a certain project decision, especially when it comes to transit, adds time and money. So, when we mention about the ability to ensure that the public has entrusted you all as elected officials, as well as the implementing agencies, and their tax dollars to implement projects that have been identified in a plan that you have, it's the collective responsibility to deliver on that, and so the second that you deviate from that, that's where trust erodes and that's where it makes things much more difficult moving forward. It was mentioned about transparency as well, setting things up in a manner where you're being upfront with how you deliver your projects, but ultimately the responsibility is that you have to develop results. That is key and that's critical, and it takes everybody to step in and to lean in to ensure that you're setting yourselves up for success moving forward.

The last piece, I would say that Mayor Hancock made mention of the fact that mobility and having the ability to be able to move around in a metropolitan area is really about freedom. Having the ability to choose your pathway and your mode of transportation is what we do from a planning perspective as well as implementation perspective, and the ability to provide services. If you're not looking at a variety of different ways for people to be able to get around, you're restricting people's ability to move and their freedom to

move and having the ability to have access to opportunities for them to have a better life. So, transportation is, to your point, more than just concrete. Your ability to have access is generational, and you have an opportunity now over the next two decades to not only change the fabric and how people get around in a county, but to make everybody's life much better that is here currently, and then to attract more people to come in and be able to sustain that growth from an infrastructure standpoint.

So, as you move forward, my suggestion and my recommendation is that you've started off very well. You have a very solid plan. It's time to move into execution and implementation. Stay the course. Things will get difficult. There will be pressures and headwinds, but you have a fantastic strategy to implement. So, it's critical that you figure out the best ways to message that and stick to it, and you have the talent, and you have everything set up, and you have the consensus from the general public, the electeds and administration to make things happen, and you'll be surprised of what you can exceed in terms of the goals that you've set. So, congratulations at this point, but now I think it's time to get to work. Alright, thank you.

Mr. Phipps said great, thank you, Eulois. Alright, I am going to channel my inner Debra, and try to facilitate one half as well as she does, but Council this is your opportunity, this is your planning session. I saw a couple hands go up. Councilwoman, I'll start with you with a question for the panel.

**Councilmember Watlington** said first of all, thank ya'll for being here today and for your perspectives. I've got some questions about transportation as a catalyst for mobility, not physical mobility, but economic mobility, because as we think about some of the things we're dealing with, as Mayor Gantt mentioned before, there are going to be people who are impacted and not always positively. So, when we think about how do we do this differently than some of the other cities that were named, I'm curious as to your thoughts in terms of like, who got it right? Who actually saw declining commute times as they grew? How did they work with the private sector? Because what we tend to see as we think about our Blue Line, is that we've definitely got the economic growth. Looking back, we would've liked to maybe be a little bit more proactive about preserving land along the line for affordable housing. When we think about the types of jobs that are accessible off of transit, we saw at least along the Blue Line, a change from manufacturing or blue-collar jobs to more white-collar jobs, which obviously then creates a bit of a gap as it relates to mobility moving through. So, I'd like to understand how you all thought about how you managed growth and the building of the City with the infrastructure, because we often hear that additional lanes doesn't actually alleviate congestion, because we're not managing the growth on the other side of it. So, I just want to hear your wholistic thoughts about how infrastructure, in particular, plays into those other spaces. Does that make sense?

Mayor Hancock said yes, it does. Well, I'll set the stage for this conversation. Again, back to the thought, don't forget it's about the people, and when you ask who did it right, in the United States, as I survey my mind and all the studies and examples I've seen, I've seen areas that've done well, but we are so far behind in this country. Think about it, right now I have a client in California, The California High-Speed Rail Authority, trying to build the nation's first high-speed rail from L.A. to San Francisco. Today, we go to Tokyo, we go to China. I mean, it's their culture. We are shifting a culture in this nation right now to become more multi-modal, but when you keep it on a human focused level, where you're saying we're going to build transit, but we better have a plan to build housing around that transit, around those corridors. If we're going to improve arterials and collectors, then let's make sure we have an affordable housing plan along those corridors as well. So, the question that you're asking is, who's at the table making these decisions, whose voices are we hearing, and more importantly, who are we missing, who's not at this table that we need to hear to help us plan better?

Mr. Cleckley said so, I'll add to that, transportation and land use are intertwined, and so as you start to identify, especially from a transit perspective, and regardless if you're building rail lines, street car lines, bus only lanes and the like, the nexus between the land use around, especially those major hubs, is extremely important. There's ways,

and cities have done a good job, in providing incentives from a development standpoint to make sure that development is occurring around transit hubs. So, whether it be density, incentives and the like, whether it be height, whether it be more floor area ratio, all of those land use policies, which I'm sure probably exist here, if they need to be amended to encourage a development community to actually build closer towards transit, and then invest in a transit system, that's the way that you can integrate the private sector into helping build out the infrastructure.

So, to Mayor Hancock's point, there's no perfect city in this. America has gone through iterations of change. So, urban areas, 50, 60 years ago, of course, were more condensed and travel patterns were different. Then you had flight, and so everybody had a vehicle, and then they would come into the urban core. Now, you have more of a mix where people are trying to balance and have access and be able to walk around in more mixed-use development. You want to encourage it have a healthy mix as you move throughout the City, and making sure that you have solid land use policies is how you get there. The private sector and industry should understand the importance of making sure that their transportation system that moves their employees is something that they help support, and there's multiple ways that you can do that. There's everything from transportation demand management programs to other incentives and the like, and again, these small things add up to a more comprehensive way to move people around.

Then, the last thing I'll just mention is that you asked about reduction in commute times and accessibility. It's critical that as you move forward and you understand what the results of the projects are that you analyze those projects as you implement them. One thing I will tell you, in Denver we did a really good job. We actually did, at the direction of the Mayor, we took a look at equity analysis in Denver, and what you noticed is that the I-70, the corridor, which had a certain demographic as compared to the western side of the corridor, and you saw the commute times were much different, and then we took it a step further where we did additional analysis where we had about 13 different factors to say, okay, what is the equity index in all these specific neighborhoods that we had, and compared them to each other, and we started to see a pattern. So, then, we made a conscious decision to invest into those areas that needed the most help, and it was like a statement in our department where we said equity was about ensuring that the resources and attention are going to the areas that need it the most, because you're trying to create justice at the end of the day. So, there's ways from an analytical standpoint that you can track that progress and make sure that the projects that you're implementing are actually having the impact that you're trying to seek.

Ms. Watlington said thank you.

Mayor Gantt said I've got a clarification on what you're saying, Victoria. You said you noticed that the people riding the transit were going to jobs on the upper end of the economic spectrum, is that what you're saying?

Ms. Watlington said yes.

Mayor Gantt said and the jobs, by definition then, the lower end are not [inaudible].

Ms. Watlington said well, let me say it a little bit more accurately. What I mean is, if you look along South Boulevard, for example, with the manufacturing that used to be there, I would call a blue-collar job, a means of someone to rise socioeconomically. Now, what I see there is a bent towards corporate headquarters, if you will, or office spaces, and you see white-collar jobs and the folks who live along the line are the employees of those jobs, but we've traded, if you will, the manufacturing jobs. Certainly, we've got no collar jobs showing up there, because there are some restaurants, things like that, but of course, those people can't always afford to live along the line, so they're less likely to actually use the line. So, yes, what I'm saying is I see a change in the stratification of who would be in the corridor from an employment standpoint. So, I'm thinking about how do we ensure that these transit lines don't just become luxury neighborhoods, if you will?

pti:pk

Mayor Gantt said okay, that's good. I'm clear on the question. So, when we're buying the right-the-way to build the Silver Line, are there lessons to be learned there? Do you in fact get involved in land development or land purchasing? Is that appropriate? You think it is?

Ms. Watlington said well, then, not as deliberately as what we're trying to do now, in terms of binding the path of progress.

Mayor Gantt said well, there are two things I wanted to say about that. The Blue Line and the housing going up around it and the cost of that housing attracts on both ends. South End has got corporate offices and other kinds of things, and you might find a different situation a little further away. I'm cautious about whether or not you as a public entity want to get involved in the various kinds of things that go into decisionmaking, start buying land for any purpose. Now, you have some leverage that might say, we help developers when they have housing that includes affordable housing in it, because we do have funds maybe for that kind of thing, or we use some of the penny to address affordable housing issues that might be along those corridors. I would hesitate about getting involved in purchasing land, because that's an area that quite frankly the public doesn't have the expertise in to deal with, but you do have zoning powers, you do have incentives you can offer to developers to get affordable housing in, and I'm seeing some early examples of that happening right now.

The other end of the spectrum is, all the folks who are starting off at the lower end of the economic ladder, my expectation is that we won't have those people at the lower end of the economic ladder with training and other kinds of things that are going on. I think that there are other elements. I don't make the assumption, for example, I'll use this because I see it often, that all black people are at the lower end of the economic ladder. In fact, I know folks who are now living in some of those units along the Blue Line that are striving, hard-working, A&T graduates that are working in Lowes, and so don't make that assumption, but if you're looking for leverage to in fact include more housing, it covers a broader income spectrum, then look at the powers you do have. They come through zoning and they come through dollars that you can offer as incentives to developers to build that housing.

Mayor Hancock said can I add to that? I know there's another question, Councilman, because I think what the Mayor has just said is again textbook, and I'll just say this, housing is infrastructure, and as you are investing your dollars, I have seen where cities have set up with these new tax opportunities, authorities, where they do go and use part of those dollars to buy land. They've engaged the private sector to help them do that through the authorities, and they're not trying to develop those lands as a city, but what they're doing is attracting developers in, and putting that land under them with covenants. It's affordable for 99 years, you can only build affordable housing here, so you're driving it. The other thing they do is to attract. In 1999, Denver did a comprehensive plan, and one of the smartest things they've done, this is before I got on Council, was identify areas of stability and areas of change or opportunity, and those areas of stability, they're thriving, that's where your more middle-class, higher-end people live, jobs are plentiful, people are more educated in those areas, blah, blah, blah, areas of change exist, companies tend to avoid. Those areas of change become those areas where we're going to drive our incentives, where we're going to try to attract companies and employment opportunities and training and housing around these corridors. When we looked back on it, while I was Mayor, I asked the Director of Planning to go back and do an analysis, how well did we do under this plan? We found out that 90 percent of all of our development occurred in areas of change, because we were very intentional about it.

The last thing I'll say is, Eulois alluded to the equity study. That came because we noticed that gentrification had occurred in some areas, and it's almost too late by the time you realize it's been gentrified, it's too late, you can't reverse those trends, and so we're like, well, how do we get ahead of this? Here's what we learned. In our job as permitting in land development authorities in the City, we're the first to know when a development's coming in, when a company's moving in. Permitting tells us what's

happening. That's our opportunity to begin to eclipse and to begin to move in with measures to protect residents and keep them in place, and to help them stay in place, and to inform what's about to happen, or when we're going in with these new dollars, we're building bus stops and we're bringing transit through. We know those things, so where are the tools that come in to protect the people who live in those areas?

Ms. Watlington said thank you.

Mr. Phipps said Council member, I know it was a good question, because I saw staff in the back taking notes.

Mayor Hancock said that was a great question.

Mr. Phipps said I saw Danielle taking notes, I saw Sha talking notes, I saw Adam. That connection between land use and transportation is critically important. I'll keep us moving here.

**Councilmember Anderson** said great comments from all three of you. I just have two questions. One is, you mentioned that throughout your effort with these projects to ensure that the public understands and continues to keep that north star top of mind, with so many of these projects having such a long runway, how did you do that in the City to continue to remind residents this is our north star, this is our joint goal, and we're not going to pivot or have scope creep in or out of that? That's my first question. The second question I have is, we're going to have a conversation later on about safety, our Vision Zero goals. As you stood up your multi-modal plans, did you communicate your Vision Zero goals, your reduction in accidents, etc., did you use that as a part of your marketing and communications plan?

Mayor Hancock said yes, and again, because these two were the answer, the tools that I used to get that information out, I think what I'll say will set the stage for them to respond appropriately, Mr. Mayor, and that is leadership matters. I was amazed at how at times as Mayor I would say something, and people would take that to heart. I wish today's leaders would realize that. By the way, not Charlotte, but nationwide. Your voice, what you say matters to people. So, if you say, this is a priority, this is our vision, your team follows, but also the people in the city begin to get it.

Then two, transparency, I heard it mentioned by Mayor Gantt, Eulois said it a couple of times, you've got to say the same thing. We've all run for office, and you get tired of saying your same stump speech 1,000 times, and your campaign staff says, stay on message, stay there, stay there, stay there, and you're like, I'm tired, I'm bored myself. They're like stay on it. Well, that's what you have to do with this situation. There will always be the attractors, people saying I didn't know, why didn't you communicate this. Well, we said it 1,000 times, but you weren't tuned in, you weren't listening, but say it again, and keep saying it.

Thirdly, you've got to help the people believe this is their idea, and you do that from the offset. We used to do little clickers. We would bring community meetings and see we want to fix this road, what are your ideas? Here are some of the options. Don't let them come up with their own, but here are four or five options we have, these are standard, these are federal guidelines, blah, blah, blah, give us a clicker, and they lean in and go, oh, 70 percent said put bike lanes, we got it, and they walk out of there, and this becomes kind of your plan, but now it's their idea. You came in already thinking this is what we've got to do is put bike lanes in there, but you gave them the idea, and so leadership, lay out of the vision, repeat yourself 1,000 times or 100,000 times, thirdly, include your community as much as you can in the reality.

Lastly, I'll say this, leadership matters in that you find people who can get it done. These were some bad ass dudes, and I mean that with all sincerity. We looked for this guy across the nation. Transportation was embedded in public works. It was called the Department of Public Works. Transportation was in there, it was a sub-priority, and as Mayor, I said, if we're going to commit \$2 billion, we're going to make it the Department

of Transportation, and put public works underneath it, or as a subcategory. Trash collection, road sweeping and snow removal, those things would be sub-priority, still important, but transportation will be the north star. Who is the person that comes in and leads that transformation? It's going to be a charter change. It's a whole new attitude, new way of thinking. I'm setting the stage for him to come in and show you his brilliance. We did a national search. This guy rose to the top, and I said this is your job. Denver was run, I'm talking historically, not by the police, not by the sheriffs, but by public works, the longest serving Mayor came out of public works. The Deputy Mayor was always the Director of Public Works. He or she was a heartbeat away from being the Mayor or the Executive of the City, historically. So, we knew we were dealing with a holy grail. We knew we were about to touch something that was going to upset everybody and upset the history, but new attitudes were on our side. He came in and brilliantly laid it out, so I introduce to you, Eulois Cleckley. Tell them how you did it.

Mr. Cleckley said well, leadership does matter, but again, I would say to answer the question real quick. So, the Mayor had a very condensed, straight to the point vision about mobility and expectation of mobility in Denver, which helped. So, we started off with the Mobility Action Plan, I believe that's what it was called. So, we went through a whole process, and the messaging behind it is that it's a new way and a new method to deliver projects that everybody wants, and beating that drum and having the consensus again from all the electeds and the Mayor, helped us to get the charter change, which ended up being on the ballot and passed with 73 percent of the vote. So, messaging and consistency with it is extremely important and it's going to be important in terms of how you deliver projects as well.

With respect to the Vision Zero question, and this is also buttressed by the need to make sure that the public feels like they own what is being built, and the plan that you all have, I think does a good job, because you start off with kind of this City-wide effort, and then you break it down by District. So, when you start breaking it down by District, you end up creating a way to have these smaller efforts where you can involve the community, and the community is important, and transportation is really about connecting communities, so it's always about community and the people within those communities and providing those opportunities. So, making sure that they feel like they own it, which makes it easier when difficult trade-off decisions happen, because that's what infrastructure is about. You're changing something, and so people naturally aren't going to be comfortable with that, but if you're open and you have that conversation and you're transparent, they feel like they have a part in how those decisions are made, at the end of the day they'll be much more comfortable in terms of what you build and implement.

For Vision Zero, this was when I was the director, we did have a couple of flareups when it came to safety. We had some, I would say, pretty significant fatalities on some of our major roadways, and we changed our mindset about what Vision Zero was. There was a Vision Zero program and plan, but it wasn't supported by proactive messaging and intentional design and pushing the envelope, which sometimes you have to do if you're going to make change. I give credit, Adam was our Deputy City Engineer. We had a long-term City Engineer. We had a good planning group, and everybody needed to get on the same page. For about two months straight, we met every day at 8:00 a.m. to talk about our Vision Zero plan, and through that we identified, I would say, maybe about 45 projects. We gave ourselves a certain period of time, and we're going to go get it done, and we had talented people, once you set that standard, and that goal, they go out and execute. We had to have a focus on it, and the leadership had to be involved. From all the planners and all the engineers, they needed to get in line and figure out a way to design quick built projects and get things done, so you show the community that you're serious about safety. You track the progress, and you report out on it. So, what ended up happening is that by having that intentionality behind it, we saw a reduction in fatalities and a reduction in serious bodily injuries, and we were able to report the success of that program. So, that's an example of how to handle it.

Mr. Phipps said Mayor Gantt, would you like to expand on the project kind of vision durability part of the question? How do you ensure?

Mayor Gantt said I really want to go to Councilmember Anderson's point. If you look at the book that's going to bring about all the hundreds of projects you've got, and you put in place a process that engages the engineers and designers and the folks who are going to implement the project, and you're engaging the community like you want them engaged, the north star is getting buy in with the priorities with safety, cutting down on time, etc., etc. Do the projects that you can do in a timely manner, and then say, hooray, we got it done. What I mean by that is, don't make this thing, we've got to wait until we get the whole system done, that's 20-some-odd years. If you do something successful that you've been working with the community on, and you complete it, don't have the cutting of the ribbon or whatever you do, and not invite the whole group of people who were involved. People need to see the success of what you're doing, and there should be 400 or 500 of these all over town, that if they see it then they buy into the process that these guys are speaking about, and they will say, hey, it worked over here, tell your neighbors and the other neighborhoods that it will work here too. We just have to see some things done. I'm really hoping, I keep hearing this thing about it'll take us five to 10 years to get this really going, it shouldn't. There are small enough projects that we can show success now, well, not now, but, and people then come. Don't just invite yourselves to pat on the back, invite all those people that you engaged. Be sure they come and see Tyvola Road and what it did with bike lanes and whatever. I just want to make sure that we're timely in encouraging that, and if it's a Vision Zero thing, to show the numbers of what's going to likely happen [inaudible].

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Mayor. Alright, we've got about 15 minutes. I want to get at least two more questions in.

**Councilmember Mayo** said I know Mayor Gantt spoke briefly about the 77 South Expansion kind of in his opening remarks, and former Mayor Hancock, were you involved this I-70 Central project with a cap and cover? So, just as we're kind of talking and thinking through the 77 South Expansion, just wondering are there any recommendations that you have for us as we are working with NC-DOT to explore how to minimize impact to historically black residents, potentially reconnect communities that have been disconnected as a result of a highway expansion in 1960s? So, just would be interested, and I hope this will be additional conversations that are team and NC-DOT are willing to have with you to think through how do we think through past harm to black and brown communities, and how do we build back trust with them as a result of that, and how could we use this as an opportunity to think outside the box? So, excited to hear a little bit more about what ya'll were able to do with that project, particularly putting public parks overside with a cap and cover. Thank you.

Mayor Hancock said yes, I appreciate the question, because it was one of the very first transportation or mobility challenges I had when I came in in 2011 as Mayor of Denver. The I-70 corridor, for those of you who are not familiar with it, it runs east/west in Denver, it's our east/west highway, and there are two neighborhoods, or actually three, Globeville, Elyria, Swansea is what we call them, GES, that had been forcibly divided by this highway, similar to what you're talking about with I-70. Poverty reigned. Challenges, mobility, restrictions or constrictions were very apparent, and there were environmental, physical, economic injustices that had occurred in this area for decades. So, I come in as Mayor, and one of the first community meetings I held as Mayor, again, you've got to remember I had lived in the City all of my life, was unfamiliar with this conversation, but come in as Mayor, first town hall meeting we held was in the Elyria, Swansea community. I'll never forget a gentleman standing up, and he says, "Mayor," he says, "You're going to be forced to try to pause the efforts around the I-70 corridor. These communities are devastated by what happened for decades, generations have been challenged, but I will challenge you to be courageous enough to move forward. We have been poked, prodded, and studied for over 30 years. Someone's going to call for you to study it again, that will delay this for another 10, maybe 15 years." So, what we did was, went back and we studied the history of this project, and of these communities. Our knowledge of the situation was very important to

understand. Why is it important? Because we wanted to empathize and understand what really happened here. So, empathy matters. So, study the history. Then we understood what the environmental, physical, and economic injustices that occurred, that was important.

Thirdly, what was the outreach? We went all the way to D.C., and met with FHWA (Federal Highway Administration), and we thought they were about to brutalize us, and I'll never forget I walked in the room, there was a round table and we sat there, and there were probably seven FHWA administrators there, Mayor, and there was this one African American woman sitting in the room. Her race doesn't matter, but all I can tell you is that she kind of intimidated me, and she didn't say a word the entire time, except to sit there and just look at me like this. Then the whole questioning was going on around what had been done, I'm giving the history, blah, blah, blah, and then probably about 30, 40 minutes into the meeting she says, "Mayor Hancock, let me tell you something," kind of like my ex-wife used to say to me before I got in trouble, she said, "I have studied the outreach program for this I-70 corridor for 30 years, and I've got to tell you something, it is the best I've ever seen in my 40-year career at FHWA." I didn't do it, it had been done by my predecessors and the other community leaders. She said, "it has been studied enough, the community outreach was what I use today as a model across the nation." She said, "So if you go forward, I will give you the background of this community outreach and you should know that this was done and done well." So, we came back, we looked at the plan. The only overriding value we had was let's reconnect these communities, and that's what the cap and cover was. So, we built a park, yes, we have a public park now that connects them. We fought for improvements of the housing and by the State and the schools around there, and we engaged the community on those plans, and that's where it came from. So, again, being people centric, give you an example, and I'll close on this, for example, the State did not look at what kind of repairs need to be done to the houses as we did this. HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) system, windows, environmental controls, the park connected the communities. How do we invest in the small mom and pop businesses around there? How do we help kids cross railroads, very basic, being scared to death watching kids walk between railroad cars to cross tracks to get to school. Those are things we came in and remedied as a City, but it took studying the history, injustices, and working to find out what the community outreach plan was, and keeping them involved. It was not without pushback, because some advocates stepped up, no can't do this, it's an economic injustice. Today, it's a thriving corridor, the park is beautiful, and people are enjoying it.

Mr. Phipps said great question, fairly timely question as well.

**Councilmember Driggs** said so I am the Chairman of the Transportation, Planning and Development Committee. It puts me in kind of a hot seat, it does. No, look, as far as I'm concerned, mobility is the bloodstream of the City, and no part of the City can thrive or be healthy without a fresh blood supply, so I get that. I think the Council is in substantial agreement on our goals for Charlotte, namely vibrant, safe, and just. The question is then that we have to answer, okay, how do we go about that? Mayor Gantt, I appreciate the wisdom from one old guy to an even older guy of your advice on this. We need to recognize the environment we're in. We need to recognize the limits of the power of the City, and the magnitude of the market, and the market is going to drive a lot of what happens. So, we need to understand the market, and we need to figure out how can we be most impactful in terms of affecting where the market chooses to go, and that's what goes through my mind. I talk a lot to developers, and say, what if we did this? What if we did that? What if we relax the approval requirements for a plan, and we give you a break on some of the things that we demand elsewhere if you give us this affordability, something we can do within the scope of our authority and without spending money?

One thing that does concern me in my engagement outside the community is the emphasis on justice and opportunity of this Council leaves a lot of people in Charlotte thinking, don't they care about me. I have a job, I'm doing fine, what about me? My answer to them is not just shorter commutes, which is easy, and not even just business development, which some people may care about or not, but you cannot enjoy living in

a city that doesn't achieve a degree of social harmony, and they should care about that. They should recognize that. We do not want a situation where there is an undercurrent of anger that erupts the way it did after Keith Lamont Scott. So, how do we move ahead? I think what we're faced with now is the reality, you're going to have to choose this project and not that project, and what does that mean? Are you going to go where the housing is, or are you going to go where you want the housing? How are you going to do it? So, it's not simple. I think not overpromising is very good advice, but we're all essentially striving towards the same goal. I just wonder, and maybe this is a question actually for Denver. When you did your public referendum, because you had to introduce a new tax, and you had to get it approved in order for that very ambitious plan to be realized, what was your messaging to the public, and did you address like everybody? Did you send out a message that everyone in the community could recognize as being important to them?

Mayor Gantt said I'm still trying to figure out, Ed, what question you're asking. I hear the point you're making. First of all, the plan that we looked at that we put a number around is probably not going to be the plan that's going to be in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of the development. We hope it will be adjusted if it needs to, depending on lots of things that will happen that will give it a different kind of focus, including social development and social harmony in our community. I hope we're a long way from some of the kinds of things I see today, 20 years from now, I'll just put it that way, that because we do some things today very well, it might cause citizens to see that, yes, they care about me. They care about me on the West Side. They care about me in South East. They care about me wherever. If we can engender the kind of trust that I expect from the City Council, then all citizens should start to feel a little bit better, and we've got this big old plan that's 20 years down the road, and if adjustments need to be made to build a park where it's prudent to do so to bring people together for example, or to cap a road and allow the kind of thing the Mayor was talking about, we will have the honesty and the guts to make those changes as we need to make them. One final thing I want to say about this, I'm very sensitive, I was involved in the transportation tax, and it passed 52/48. It did not pass 70/30, and even if it had passed 70/30, what I'm about to say is important. Citizens have to be involved in this process, more so at the 52/48. They have to end up trusting you, trusting you.

You need to think about how do you engender trust, but you need to be together too. I've watched your meetings. I'm one of these nerds that will sit down and plug into the government channel just to see how you are reacting to things. Some of you in this room know that I do, because I've called you out, and suggested that I didn't particularly like that, but my point is there is a citizenry out there that needs to learn how to trust you, and I'm not sure that you get that trust if we are, particularly with regard to this, doing the infighting that ultimately gets projected out as the policy for this thing. When you come together, just like those old Charlotte Hornets. I love it because their guys are loving each other in the locker room and then reflecting it out on the floor. I can remember a few years back when they were losing all the time, and everybody was on their own course doing what they wanted to do.

Mr. Phipps said Mayor, would you agree that teamwork makes the dream work?

Mayor Gantt said teamwork does make the dream work, I agree.

Mr. Phipps said Mayor Hancock, in 30 seconds, I want to get to the latter part of Councilman Driggs' question of, you had broad constituent support for your mobility plan. How did you do that?

Mayor Hancock said it doesn't mean it stays broad, but it's important that you meet the residents where they are, the constituency where they are. You must communicate with them in multiple mediums of communication, internet yes, you have survey monkey yes, do town hall meetings, do virtual town hall meetings, just talk about, again you're repeating yourself a thousand times, but transparency engagement, and then continue to check in. The real work doesn't end when you get it passed, and I'm not talking about the construction work, I'm talking about communication with constituency, reminding

them what you voted for, and remind them that part of the message was economic restraints. We're not going to be able to do everything, but we're going to try to do as much as we can to meet the objective that you voted on and get it done.

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Mayor.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said well, I have three questions, and I'm going to ask all three. The panel, thank you so much for your insight, certainly appreciate it. I certainly appreciated how you shared how mobility is not just about moving cars or trains, it's about moving people into opportunity. So, let me ask my first question. Now that the referendum has been approved, what does success look like in 10 years in terms of commute times, air quality, household transportation costs, and also what would failure look like, so that if there are early warning signs that the Council should be paying attention to? Then, I'll ask my last question later.

Mayor Gantt said I'll start with what failure looks like. Failure will be in 10 years we didn't get very much done. In 10 years, we haven't figured out what we want to present to the public. In 10 years, the Council isn't together. You mentioned that high-speed train between San Francisco and L.A., and you compared it to a high-speed train in Asia, one of the Asian countries, Japan, I believe. They've been talking about that high-speed rail between San Francisco and L.A. for how many years?

Unknown said 30.

Unknown almost 40 years.

Mayor Gantt said exactly, that's right, and they've built the high-speed rail in Japan, I believe, something in less than a decade they had it done. People were riding on it. What was the reason that we didn't do it from San Francisco to L.A.?

Unknown said politics.

Mayor Gantt said politics ya'll. You didn't figure out a way to gain the trust of everybody all the way up the political ladder and then engage the people to cause it to happen. So, we're still talking about that high-speed rail. I think the worst thing that could happen is that as I go to my grave and ask my granddaughter, how we doing on the transportation plan that was passed in 2024 or 2025? She said, well, they got a couple roads built, but they still got plenty of money to spend, they haven't done anything. That's what I want you to think of, that's what failure looks like. Success looks like, we're on target, we are getting some things done, people are in fact using those things, economic development might occur, somebody who ran a print shop got the benefit of all the printing that might be done, diversity in employment. You can use diversity, equity and inclusion in Charlotte to make sure that we spread the work around, and there's plenty of work to spread around. So, building on all phases, economically, mobility, that's success, but that starts with you guys. It really does start with the City Council.

Mr. Phipps said I'm going to pause us there. What does success look like is going to be a great transitional question for what Mr. McKinney's going to walk you through here, and I'll add one thing to that, which is there will be metrics. Oh, did you have another question? Apologies, keep going.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. Well, Mayor Gantt, thank you for addressing that. Certainly, our job now is to ensure that every dollar that was approved by the electorate is going towards our safer streets, safer neighborhoods, and stronger commute times, because that's what residents want. They want to see results, not 10 years, three years, five years down the road. So, with that I have a funding question. In this political climate that we are in, how do you best leverage, or how do you get access to federal infrastructure dollars?

Mr. Cleckley said so, this current administration, I would suggest to not rely on them when it comes to certain types of projects. So, they put out guidance. I think there's

been a transition as the infrastructure bill kind of comes to an end. Some of those programs that were available for a lot of communities are not going to exist moving forward, and I think there's a shift in the mindset about how to pay for projects and using taxpayers' dollars from a federal standpoint. So, I would encourage you to just kind of pay attention to those headwinds, but not fully expect that the federal government is going to contribute as much as what's happened before.

Then the last thing, I'll go back to the last question in terms of success and failure, and Mayor Gantt is right. Failure is not showing progress, but success comes in a variety of different ways. One, of all of the lists of projects that you have, there are going to be some projects that might take 10, 12 years, there's some that might get done in 18 months to two years. So, figure out what that timeline is and then celebrate it. One of the good things in Denver we did with our bond program, is that the Mayor was very focused on making sure that we're telling the stories of the projects that were implemented. There are about five or seven different infrastructure categories, and mobility was the largest one, but I think it was every quarter we had an actual document that came out and talked about the progress in those different funding categories for that bond program. That helped to show progress, and that's what people want. They want to make sure that if you're being entrusted with the one cent sales tax that's been passed that you're actually implementing those projects, so you have to tell your own story and celebrate your successes.

Mayor Hancock said Councilwoman, I'm jumping in here, because I know we're tight on schedule on timing.

**Debra Campbell, Facilitator** said excuse me, Mayor, but actually I think Council wants to continue this conversation. It would be sad for us to have invited you all with this esteemed panel and not give you the appropriate time.

Mayor Hancock said I announced the \$2 billion commitment, seeing federal government, state government step up in 2017, who was President? Forty-five, he was President. It wasn't banking on that administration at the time. This is a journey, and I understood that. By the time we got up and going, got our referendum passed, began to implement, we more than likely will be on to a new administration, and so this was the long run, and I think it's important that we remember this. Rome was not built overnight. You're not going to build X number miles of roads overnight. We're going to take the low-hanging fruit that Eulois talked about. We can build 125 miles of bike lanes on our own. Let's get to work and let's celebrate those milestones, and as the next administration came in, President Biden comes in, and what does he do? He passes the largest what? Infrastructure bill in the nation's history, and guess what? We are already mid-air, mid-construction, ready to go. We can show the federal government we put our skin in the game, we need your money. They said more than happy to help you, Mr. Mayor, let's go, and boom, boom, boom, boom, so take the long political game, don't worry about who's in office, keep going. Ultimately, there's going to be a partner there who will help fund what you've got to do, state as well as federal.

Mr. Phipps said perfect. Councilwoman, did that capture everything?

Ms. Ajmera said yes, that was great. Thank you.

Mr. Phipps said great.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said thank you for being here and for sharing, but I just told you, you ain't going nowhere. So, I'm LaWana Mayfield. I serve as Chair of our Housing Committee, as well as I am leading our Faith In Housing initiative where we're working directly with religious institutions thanks to Mayor Lyles' vision two years ago now. I want us to level set, because Mayor, you were strong Mayor with four-year terms. We live under Dillon Law with some people in the General Assembly that did not even pass a budget last year. We have faced certain financial shortfalls with not getting funding that should have come back to Charlotte-Mecklenburg. When we're looking at, and Mayor Gantt, you know I love you, we're going to disagree, and I don't believe in

agreeing to disagreeing, we're going to disagree, because I do think government has a place in that land banking conversation, because what we saw along our Blue Line was that that investment was not made, and you saw major displacement and it's not just in South End, it has bled five, six blocks, beyond where you have \$400,000, \$500,000, \$600,000 townhomes, glorified apartments, where you have people that were long-term renters and/or who owned, and those homes were purchased at \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, that now are worth \$200,000 and some change. When we're talking about our policy language, we have limitations because of our General Assembly. So, when we think long-term, we're not looking like China and planning 100 years out. We're looking at 30 to 50 years, but this body isn't going to be the one that starts and ends that development. So, every other year you have the potential of new Council members, new priorities, staff being directed under the Manager with a new direction versus that 20-plus year commitment.

I grew up in Miami, in Dade County, in Opa-locka. So, we had catwalks, we had jitneys, we had a number of different things. It would be helpful for me to hear, because we had conversations multiple times, for our form of government with the limitations that we have, but also the desire to want to do more, some recommendations now that the community has supported this one cent sales tax. Along with continued communication, how do we have a different conversation around how we protect? Mayor, you've seen it. You've done it. You've talked to other Mayors. You made suggestions. It would be helpful for me to understand, if you were in Charlotte, looking at where we are today at the precipice of good and great, what suggestion would you make as we're looking at growing, the suggestions based on where you have seen success in your development, recommendations for us to consider as this body is majority? Out of 11 members, six-plus of us have to agree to move this forward, that's what would be helpful for me to not only understand as I'm advocating, but when it's time to talk to the community, to help them understand, here's what we actually can do, so we don't have to keep saying well, Raleigh's not going to let us do X, Y and Z. This evening, by 11:30 p.m., we might know something different for Raleigh, but for this conversation, it will be a little more helpful for me to understand just some ideas and/or suggestions on how we can maneuver this, because I wish we were a strong Mayor, but we're not. So, what you did was amazing. I want to do what you did. I want to do what our Mayor in Atlanta did. As far as I'm concerned, 365 [inaudible] even though now we're in March 2026. Yet, help me get to how I can take this to help us?

Mayor Hancock said wow, Councilwoman Mayfield. You know what, listen, I don't think there's a simple answer to it, but before I got into politics, I used to do strategic planning with municipalities all over the Country, and there was one word we used all the time, it's collaboration, and it's still true rather you're a strong Mayor or whether you are Council/Manager form of government. I think the word collaboration matters, and let me tell you what I mean by that, and why it's powerful here. What state legislatures and any politician on the state level knows who recognizes and appreciates and respects, as they are forcing policies down to the municipal government, is that if we stick together, we are greater and more powerful and more threatening to you than you are to us, state. What I mean by that, if it takes six to move, and I'm going to say this, because I want to put it in the right context with what Mayor Gantt said, in terms of you all being together. You are meant to have spirited dissension, but when we agree six or more then we must move, and if you collaborate then let's move. What I don't like about politics today, and now that I'm stepped back and I'm looking at it, and I have no idea how I survived for really 30 years of politics, is disagreeing for the sake of disagreeing. I don't like you and I'm going to just be loud, because I don't agree with you. Well, grownups get in the room, and I'm from a family of 10, I'm the youngest of 10, and if I don't learn how to build alliances, move along with the majority, then I'm left in the room at home alone. So, the reality is that that being a kid growing up like that taught me everything. Okay, from Council, 13, but seven was the number, seven said go. I didn't agree, but we're going. That's the policy of the day. That's what grownups do, and you don't get destructive because it didn't go your way. That's what childish, immature people do. So, I think what we have here is if you're going to collaborate then dammit collaborate. Okay, we didn't agree, but I'm going to accept the decision of the body, and we're going go forward. That's the kind of leadership we need today, and quite frankly,

that's the message that Raleighians will understand. Charlotte's together, we're moving. Just like anyone who pushes down or tries to force their will, they try to separate you. We're looking for that one voice that we know can be destructive. We've got to move beyond that. So, the only thing I'll give you is collaborate. We have accepted a decision of the body, let's move forward and make it the best decision whether you agree with it or not. I didn't ask you to fully agree, I asked you to accept it.

Mr. Phipps said I think I'm going to applaud after that.

Mr. Cleckley said so, I want to make sure I answer your second half of the question right. So, because political consensus is important, and Miami-Dade is a prime example. So, it's supposed to be a strong mayoral form of government on the county level, you have 34 municipalities with their own government structure, and then you have the commission, and so to your point, not full consensus, but collaboration and getting to the votes that you need to get something passed is extremely important and difficult. What I've seen, however, is when there is transition that happens, term limits and the like, and people kind of get off the square a little bit, that the ability to communicate making change to what's been agreed to in the past has a significant impact to the community.

To the Mayor's point, if you have agreed, it's time to go implement and do. So, what I've seen, and this has happened in a lot of different jurisdictions, is that there might be a turnover, Commission seats, Council seats, or an administration that may not have agreed with the decision that's made in a previous body, and the second that you make that change, especially for large capital projects, you're going to add five years, 10 years, 12 years, to that project, and the cost of that project's going to increase significantly, and then at some point you can't catch up. So, I think part of it is the succession that takes place from a political standpoint is extremely important, but when there's agreement and consensus and things get approved, you've got to go, because if you don't go and you just keep delaying, you're providing that window for change to happen and that's where things kind of get off kilter. So, hopefully I answered your question there a little bit.

Ms. Mayfield said I appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. Cleckley said alright, good.

**Councilmember Mazuera Arias** said thank you so much for being here. I'm J.D. I represent District Five, so it's East Charlotte. I like to say we're the most diverse district in the City. So, I really appreciate what you said, because I think one of the things I've kind of been sounding the alarm is that healthy dissent is good. Whether it plays out on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor or on the dais, as long as we're respectful and understanding, I think it's demonstrates to the public that there's a willingness and an appetite for this Council to do what's right, even if it's uncomfortable for some of us to have that disagreement. I think oftentimes we might get stuck in the "Charlotte way," where we want to make sure we're all getting along and agreeing on everything, but sometimes I think that can reflect, yes, it comes at an expense where the community thinks, well, they're all agreeing on everything, what are they not agreeing on that we don't know about. So, I appreciate those comments.

While I have an appreciation that we are a young city, where we learn from different peer cities as well, I want to talk about and pick your brains a little bit about innovation and creativity. Because as a young city, yes, we do have the opportunity to learn from other cities, but we also have the opportunity to do things that we haven't done before, and that other cities haven't done before. So, while it's not unique to other cities, we're working on this big development in East Charlotte called Eastland Yards, where were subleasing retail space to small businesses across the Charlotte region. The City has never done it. There's other cities that've done it as well. Previous Councils have worked on development Historic West End, Five Points, where they're bringing a Co-op grocery store there as well in partnership with the City and private developers. My question is, those things are replications of other models, but I want to know what we

can do very brand new, so we become the model for other cities. So, I would like to pick your brains on what does that look like? I know, Mayor Gantt, you did things that have never been done before that set the model across the Country, and likewise, Mayor Hancock. I would like to know how you cultivated that energy to become the next innovative city?

Mayor Gantt said it's attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt who said, "Some people see things as they are and ask why. I see things that never were and ask why not." That was shared with me when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and I live by it, but as Mayor, one of the things that I challenged the City and all of our collaborative partners, our tourism industry, our business attraction industry, our City Council, my administration, was let's not skate where the puck is, let's go skate where the puck is going, and that means you have to have a big view and a big vision of the world. I traveled extensively as Mayor. I saw the high-speed rail in Tokyo, China. Even some third world countries had innovations that we didn't have. So, the question becomes, what's happening in the world, or where is the world trending that we want to get in front of? For example, that Mobility Action Plan had a lot of EV (Electric Vehicle) stations, building out EV stations and electric vehicles. It was unheard of at the time that we talked about it. People were like, that's for rich people. No, electric vehicles are coming, let's go. Streetlights that can detect snow events or slippery roads or construction zones or hazards of car accidents up ahead, and alert people. We all have our dashboards now in the car where GPS tells you where you're going, and it was Mayor Foxx who invented this transportation challenge, as Secretary Foxx, and we all competed. Well, we all came up with these ideas. What if you're driving down the street and we tell you take this detour now, because up ahead there's a major accident. There's snow that's coming, you may not want to go this direction, because it's pretty heavy over there. Those are things that you have now, we take for granted, but they weren't at the time. We were all competing with it. We were trying to skate where the puck is. So, it really is about not to tell you what's coming, but to unleash your vision, stop thinking myopically or parochially about Charlotte. Where's the world going, and say how do we go there now? Let's move, let's go, and let's start building it now.

Mr. Phipps said I know you're grabbing that mic, Mr. Cleckley.

Mr. Cleckley said yes, yes. So, I think also it's a culture that has to be developed and starts at the leadership level, and there's a sense of competitiveness. So, if there's a decision that Charlotte wants to the best, you start with that and figure out ways to innovate, so you can be the best city possible, and the best city in the Country. This is something that I would encourage you to take a look at, how you can figure out ways to integrate and have the private sector assist in that competitiveness. Because as great as we are as public officials and working for the government, there's restraints. The private industry, though, they're there to innovate, because they have to innovate in order to survive. So, creating that environment where you're encouraging that collaboration, I think is a fantastic opportunity. Then also make sure that you're also focused on the problems that people have, and encourage a solution that includes the private industry and public sector. Sometimes, on the government side, we think we know a lot and what their solution is, and it's not really addressing the problem from the community. So, it always starts with making sure that you're encouraging innovation and you're involving both public and private, and those problem-solving solutions that you can identify.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said can I ask a follow-up question?

Mayor Gantt said let me reinforce that, though. Innovation just to innovate is a fruitless exercise. There's got to be a problem you're trying to solve. I gave you a couple of these today. What do you do about infrastructure that the public is placing, and you've got to buy land to do it? How much land do you buy? That's an area of innovation. I don't want you to leave at least hearing at least from me, that doing something different for the sake of doing something different is the answer, because sometimes what you've been doing for 20, 30, 40 years is working. Don't screw around with it, but if you need to solve a problem, I would hope your colleagues and others around you would be

looking for innovation. We look other places, and if we don't see it there, you come up with the idea. Let me just give you some examples. We ought to figure out a way as to whether or not we're going to get into purchasing just the right-of-way or purchasing some of the additional land around it. We ought to deal with this issue of gentrification. We are looking at what happens with displacement, and are there innovative ways to deal with that? Study what other cities are doing, but you come up with an idea that you can get others to buy into. I don't at least want you to hear me saying that we just need to innovate and do some things different to be doing some things different. That which works, do it over and over and over until it doesn't work. That which does not work, and you can't find examples any other place, all the innovation skills you can bring would be helpful. I come from a design background, and we innovated when we had to innovate to solve problems.

Mr. Phipps said Mayor, I'm going to give an applause to that as well.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said thank you. I had a quick followup, I'm sorry. The partnership between the private and the public sector, I think sometimes I'm sensitive to that, particularly because we are public servants. Our business is serving the public, and oftentimes the business of business is business, and so for me what does that healthy balance look like, and quite honestly and transparently I'm asking how do I become better as a public official who's sensitive to the private sector and private interests? I want to make sure that it's always driven for the purpose of good and advancing public service, rather than sometimes incentivizing and saying, well, if you have just 10 percent AMI (Area Median Income), we're going to give you our Housing Trust Fund dollars, or 20 percent AMI. How can we push the envelope a little bit more to negotiate in good faith with our private sector partners?

Mr. Cleckley said yes, so the benefit of being on the public sector side is that you can set what those goals are. So, this is something that we did in Denver, and in my previous experience in D.C. and Houston, and everything else, where the partnership works well when the public sector or an entity comes out and says, okay, here's a problem statement, but the goal we're trying to achieve is X. You're asking the private sector to solve that problem. Where I've seen it go the opposite way is when you're being solicited by the private industry saying we have this fantastic shiny tool here that can solve your problem, and then you're being pulled into that solution instead of setting the direction of which you want to try to achieve as a result. So, you have control over it, and you'll be surprised that the private industry will step up. They will help support you, especially in the mobility space. So, don't be afraid of doing that, and really pushing the envelope and leveraging the private sector to help you achieve those accomplishments.

Mayor Hancock said I've got two examples on that. One is, Denver was the first city in the nation to implement legal recreational marijuana, and I'll never forget the private sector, or the folks who were investing to set up those retail shops, came to me and said Mayor, we don't want this experiment to go wrong any more than you do. So, let us lean in and help you write rules, regulations to regulate us, and to tax us, and they did. They, to their word, sat down and they were spirited, they were engaged, and they helped us to write probably one of the most restrictive, now today it's seen as one of the most restrictive. At that time, we were new, but the private sector leaned in, so that's important.

Two, just go back to basic economics. People are in the private sector to benefit and profit from consumerism, which means there's a demand for something there, and if they can use your city, and invite them do it, use us as a laboratory. In other words, if you're trying to test and do something innovative, use my city for free. It ain't going to cost us nothing, and we were able to attract the North American Headquarters for Panasonic doing just that. They wanted to test technology throughout the world that didn't exist yet, and we said come to Denver. Use the city as a laboratory, and they are there today doing that. So, whether it's in mobility space of innovation, they're doing it today. So, there is a way that you position your city to be a partner, and to just underscore what Eulois said, have your values in place. You come to build dividends for your investors. We come to build a city. How do we bring the two together and build our

Reese's butter cup, peanut butter and chocolate, it's going to work. Make it work so it's a good product for the consumers that we both serve.

Mr. Cleckley said yes, I was going to tell a story real quick about scooters. Okay, so do we have time?

Mr. Phipps said it's a good story, go for it.

Mr. Cleckley said so, when it comes to a mobility solution that's driven by private sector, several years ago there was a period of time where scooters as an opportunity for people to be able to get around became hot. So, Denver became one of those top five cities with scooters, and I remember getting a call on a Wednesday from an old colleague of mine telling me that on a Friday they were going to drop 500 scooters in Denver, and I said, okay, we had some intense fellowship and some good words. They ended up doing it. Now, okay, that's great. Then the next week, there was another company that came in to just drop scooters. So, we had this new mobility option that basically was unpermitted in the City. It was supported, however, by the community. So, what did we do? We ended up calling all these scooter companies in, and say, listen, first of all, it's not like we don't like the scooter, but you need to follow the rules here in the City. So, we're going to work together and create a pilot program to get you permitted so at least you're legal, so we can test this out. We did that in 30 days, and so the reason why I'm bringing this up is that the speed in which we can pivot from a government to be able to meet with the demand from what the people want and the service that the private sector provides, that was an example of how you can have some friction, but you figure out a way to work together and actually deliver a good program. We ended up having, I think, one of the more innovative scooter programs that was controlled.

Mayor Hancock said wait, he's telling the story so halfheartedly. The true story is, he called me, it was around Christmas. Eulois collected almost 300 scooters.

Mr. Cleckley said so every scooter that was in the City, I said yes, two days to get your blankety blank out of the City, and they didn't do it.

Mayor Hancock said put them in a city warehouse, and I remember we held a press event saying, we've got 300 scooters for kids, c'mon down, we'll give to your kids for Christmas, and that's what got the companies attention saying, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. We were joking, but we weren't joking, but that was the story. He collected their scooters and held them ransom to discuss consumerism.

Mr. Cleckley said and there was somebody who was pictured on one of these scooters that was riding around the parking lot, I'm not going to say who, but yeah, we figured it out, we figured it out at the end of the day.

Mr. Phipps said and just to add to that, if you ask one of the scooter companies today, Denver is one of their most profitable markets, the per capita scooter revenue generation as a result of those rules. So, it's a great opportunity, example of where the public and private sector have partnered.

Ms. Watlington said thank you. Mr. Manager, you know I'm all over this conversation. I appreciate your question. You know my background is in innovation and continuous improvement, so I love that you said we've got to know our consumer, and I think that's an opportunity for us, and I know we started it with mobility, really going down our customer journey maps and understanding who would be using what kinds of transit and why. I think we have an opportunity to do that in all of our spaces. Government exists to correct market failures. I firmly believe that. We also need to understand how to monetize the offering, because to your point, that's what brings the private sector along. So, thank you for putting that in the room, J.D.

To that end, innovation as a whole, I have a broader question. When I think about Miami, I think about Denver, I think about Houston, a lot of the cities you all hail from or

have spent time in, they have an identity. If I think about Houston, I'm immediately thinking brunch. If I think about Denver, of course, I'm thinking about the outside amenities and those kinds of things. We often hear that Charlotte has an opportunity, as our consumers have changed, our residents have changed, to really brand ourselves with an identity external, as we think about tourism and really becoming a Thursday through Sunday city. I think about places like Atlanta. Go with me on this, right, wrong or indifferent, when you think about Atlanta, you often think about entertainment, and there is a natural connection between adult entertainment and music, and it's organic, and because of that, they've been able to attract a lot of A-list stars, film, Tyler Perry Studios, and they've got a lot of investment in that space. When you think about Nashville and their production suppliers and how that drives and connects very organically with their live performing arts. Can you talk a little bit about how in each of your cities that you have thought about, how do we create momentum, because we are large supporters of the arts, but I don't think we've made the pivot yet to where we really see art as an economic engine versus a philanthropic cause. So, I would just like to hear your thoughts on how you innovated to see where the puck is going in the space of tourism? Does that make sense?

Mayor Hancock said yes, yes. I think it's knowing your industries. Obviously, tourism is our number one industry, and what brings people, to your point, outdoor lifestyle, active lifestyle, 300 days of sunshine a year, youthful energy, foodie scene, entertainment, not that I practiced this over 12 years, but you get sense of, but here's a question, have you ever asked people how do you see us? That's a hard question to ask, how do you see me? What do you think of me? That's a hard question to ask, because you're afraid of the answer, but if you ask me today, how do you see Charlotte? I see Charlotte as a youthful community. I see Charlotte as an innovative community, and I mean that because that's the hub you all created, innovation hub, technology hub I think is what you created, but that resonates across the Country, that resonates we came here, one, also because of your history, the fact that you're in the south, your history. I went to the Gantt Center last summer. I brought 12 students from Denver to see the Civil Rights Center. It's those things that people resonate, and so how do you capitalize that and take your strengths to the market? For example, I shouldn't even say this, but it's an interesting story, you said the adult entertainment scene in Atlanta. Well, what adult entertainment scene are you talking about in Atlanta? Think about it for a minute. You think about Tyler Perry Studios. Well, someone else who's been around Atlanta long enough knows that's not what we're talking about, we're talking about Magic City. So, it's kind of like, oh, but that's what they're known for. They may not want to be known for Magic City. They may want to be known as Tyler Perry, R&B, or hip-hop recording studios. So, they've got work to do to shift that image and take it to the market.

Mayor Gantt said I live close by, but what is Magic City?

Mayor Hancock said it's a magic city.

Ms. Watlington said no, but I think you get my point.

Mayor Gantt said I mean, I ain't been there before, but I heard it's a magic city.

Ms. Watlington said I just mean that there is a demand there. There's a performer who wants to get a particular record they go there. I want record played by these DJ's, so that talent exists. The government didn't have to create it, they just had to get out of the way in terms of enabling that business to develop.

Mayor Hancock said exactly, well said.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said this has been really great and fantastic. We really appreciate ya'll's time and sharing your wisdom. So, this question is about messaging, and I want each of you to give us from a different perspective. So, let me give kudos to, I call him Professor Ed McKinney, because he has worked hard to produce the vision. So, Mayor Gantt, messaging Charlotte's Way, what wisdom would you give us in

messaging as it relates to our mobility plan, Charlotte's Way? What would be your wisdom to us?

Mayor Gantt said that's a good question, how would we message it?

Mr. Mitchell said yes.

Mayor Gantt said well, you know it's family, but frankly you can see I've not thought about messaging, but if I were trying to convey why you come here, why would you want to come to a city like Charlotte, we are progressing, but we are family oriented. Now, maybe that doesn't work with, what were we all talking about, Magic City, it doesn't work, it sounds a little bit stodgy, but I can't go beyond that. I'm here, raised my family here, know hundreds of people who've raised their family successfully here, and there's a kind of warm atmosphere. You care about your growth. We care about our school system. We care about health care. We've got a governing body of people that know each other, that's real good. That's as good as I can do. If you don't have the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains and you're not near a great big river, so from a geographic standpoint we don't have a lot to message from there. It's the people that make the difference in this town, the people who stayed here and said, I just like folks that are here, and a lot of them have to do with family.

Mr. Mitchell said thanks, Mayor. So, my HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) alum, from your perspective, messaging is related to mobility. What would be your wisdom to us?

Mr. Cleckley said so, in some of my comments before, talking about mobility when it comes to connecting communities and access to opportunity, I think that sets it at a level that doesn't get tied up into individual projects or services. Especially in the transit space, a lot of times we mention mobility and transit as a great equalizer, as an example. That's because if you provide a good, strong transit service, everybody benefits, commuters, people getting to places of recreation and enjoyment, the employers and their employees, everybody benefits, and it's equal. So, I think in terms of developing the right message, having it at a level that's not overly detailed, but it provides the sense of reverence around why you're working so hard to fix the infrastructure, that you're trying to make everybody's life that lives here and works here much better, and the way to do that is that you have a strong transportation infrastructure to help support it. So, spend some time sitting down and coming up with that proper message at a high level. Then, the last thing I would say is that, for major projects there might be some subtexts that you would have set up for those individual projects of why you're doing such a huge investment in a specific corridor. So, that's kind of my feedback and some of my ways [inaudible].

Mr. Mitchell said Mayor Hancock, you said it best, you said words matter, and so from your perspective, can you share the wisdom as we're talking about mobility, what will be your wisdom to us as we message why mobility is important?

Mayor Hancock said sure, I follow the example of my redeemer, and that is the greatest storyteller, and recognize that people tell stories that meet people where they are, and that's what I tried to do as Mayor when we talked about mobility, otherwise it's a nebulous thing that doesn't matter to me, because all I'm doing is trying to survive every day, and when you come and talk about mobility and bike lanes, most people are like, what are you talking about, I'm just trying to take care of this? I would use stories like, these are ladders of opportunity. I'm going to lease you and create great opportunities for you and your children to access the important parts, things in your life, school, healthcare, healthier options, things of that nature. Then, finally, I always start with recognizing, someone said it to me when I was first elected, and I used it as a theme for 12 years, all great cities are connected cities. Think about Tokyo, Paris, London. Think about the great cities that you know you may have been to, and they have a tremendous, dynamic network of ways to be mobile.

Mr. Mitchell said gotcha. Thank you.

pti:pk

**Mayor Lyles** said I wanted to just raise this book that we had. This is really something that was very important, and I hope all of the Council members have it, and Ed, thank you so much for making it possible. When we were out talking about, will you vote for this? This was the book that we always used, and I think the one thing when we talk about trust, we committed to people that they would get this opportunity. The projects that you're talking about, we would have those projects ready to go. It's kind of like, I guess what I would say, I really worry sometimes, that we're not moving as fast as we have to do as we continue to talk with people to say, well, yes, we said that we were going to get a possibility, you're going to get roadway capacity, you're going to get these things done. So, I really have appreciated this discussion, because I believe that we have no other requirement than this, if we must have this done, and it has to be something where people will trust us, and we talked about trust a lot yesterday. There's an opportunity for us to begin this. It's the messaging that I think I'm more worried about. It's a project delivery outlook book, and that sounds to me like it's too much of a project versus a place that we're going to do something different for you. So, I'm hoping that we will have some kind of messaging, or whether or not we have to hire the right kind of people to look at these things to say, what does this mean for our citizens and our residents? If we can get this done in 2026, I think that we will survive. I guess we will always survive maybe, but I just really believe that the people in this community that voted for this, they understand it, but we've got to deliver it. So, thanks very much for all of the conversation that you've given us, because Eulois, I think you were like, I've got these projects and they're going to happen, and I really appreciate that. Thanks so much for you being here, and of course, Mr. Gantt, thank you always.

Mr. Phipps said alright, I think that largely concludes us for the panel today. Council, join me in saying thank you and expressing our gratitude, and Mayor, Council, thank you for giving us the opportunity to discuss with you today.

Ms. Campbell said alright. So, as they are transitioning, I know you guys probably, as I said earlier, we don't really have a break this morning. If you need a break, please take it, and we're going to transition to the mobility and zero project part of the presentation, since we have some time. I've asked them to really, really go fast, but a couple of housekeeping items as they're coming up. Please silence your cell phones. Parking validation, Amanda, would you explain that very, very quickly?

**Amanda Burch, Office of Constituent Services** said everyone, if you parked across the street, if you pulled a ticket you will not need the ticket when you leave, you'll just use this to scan out. So, please stop by and see me if you don't have a ticket. Thank you, Debra.

Ms. Campbell said alright, just a couple more housekeeping things. The Wi-Fi connection, Ed, could you put that [inaudible]. Lastly, there will be a group photograph at 3:00 p.m. for all Council members, 3:00 p.m., for everyone. Everybody dressed appropriately. For those of you who didn't wear your hat, you still can be in the picture, okay, alright. So, we want to give folks maybe one more minute to transition.

Alright, so we have Ed McKinney and Debbie Smith that are going to provide us with an update on the mobility project and the outlook delivery. He's going to go first, and we will be concluding at 11:45 a.m., now don't leave. We're going to have a presentation; 3:00 p.m. is picture time. No, we're not breaking, we are beginning to do a presentation on mobility. Come on in, let's settle down, right, okay, let's go, Ed, I think you're on.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 4: VISION ZERO AND PROJECT OUTLOOK DELIVERY**

**Ed McKinney, Special Assistant to the City Manager** said so we only have a very short time, that was almost impossible to follow. So, Debbie and I will go through some things really quickly. I think it builds upon everything that was discussed just now with the panel. What I want to do, if all I had was three minutes, I would share this video, and that's what I'm going to do. What you will see here is sort of the year and life of the

Strategic Investment Area work, but think of it this way, and I'm relieved because I didn't know what was going to be said in the panel, but I think so many dots of what you heard you'll see in this video, you might even think that we produced it in the last two hours, but it will I think connect some dots for us. It's about the success of the Strategic Investment Area work, but leave that behind, and view this video as what it looks like in the future for the work that we're about to do. So, think about everything you're going to see here, how it will scale up the engagement, all the things that you're going to see. Think about how that's going to be informed by all the things we're going to do over the next years, 10 years, decades. So, I think I've got someone who will tee up that video and take a look. \*Video is playing.

So, that was the success of the SIA team, the success of Charlotte's team, almost every department was part of that team to get things done, procurement, our field inspectors for construction, police and fire, almost every department you can think of was part of that process, so it all was about getting things done quickly, doing them in the community, connecting all those dots. I don't think I need to say more about that. I think you see everything that was talked about in the panel in that video. Maybe you were getting better in the messaging of this, this was produced by Charlotte Communications, etc. So, it's a first step for how we're going to think about moving this forward, and again, take SIA out of that video, and think about what that video looks like a year or two years from now as we're delivering the big projects. So, that's where we're going. I will run through some things really quickly, short on time. Message this year is delivery. The message last year was, we have a plan, this was the book that we walked around with all last year, the projects. This book that you have now is about delivery. It's taking the 30 years' worth of things that are in that purple book, does everybody have a copy? If you don't, there's a box there that has some extras if you want to pass those around. So, this is taking essentially the next 30 years and breaking it down. So, you'll see our plan for how we're going to do projects in the next five years, the next 10 years, what that looks like. I'll touch upon it really, really quick, just so you get a sense of what's in here, lots of detail.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said Ed, this is too important, take your time.

Mr. McKinney said well, good. So, relax, we're just going to talk about some things. You guys told me to go fast. So, I'll walk you through it again. Lots of detail in here, and I think it's set up that the capital budget workshop will be a good opportunity to go into a lot more detail on some of this. This is just, I want to hit a couple of these things just to give you the themes of what was successful about the Strategic Investment Area work, and what essentially becomes the foundation for how we're going to do this work moving forward. So, we heard it this morning, you've got to get projects out there quickly, you've got to show success, accelerate, and delivery. I've told you already before, we're going to put the \$55 million that you gave us on the ground. It's starting to be on the ground now. We're going to have all of that either under construction or complete by the end of 2026. What do we have, nine more months left. You're going to see a lot. There's going to be a lot of dirt churning. There's going to be some things in front of you as Council in terms of easement and property acquisitions, things like that, so you're going to see some of that. There's going to be some decisions you'll make on some of those projects, but we're really excited, and again that's \$55 million as a drop in the bucket of the big things, that's a big challenge. We'll talk about some resource and kind of organizational things we're going to have to think about differently, so some things we're going to have to do to scale that up, but that's part of our conversation moving forward.

Expanding opportunities. Again, you've heard this this morning that this is more than concrete and asphalt. The scale of investment is too big, too important to not think about it in a broader way. A lot of that will be discussed this afternoon in the work that Shawn, Danielle and others are doing. I just want to highlight, we've had a really great partnership with CBI (Charlotte Business INclusion) over the last year, really engaging the small business and workforce community in these projects. So, you saw some of that in your video, the business connection nights, lunch and learns, social media, newsletters, all the community meetings we had, we had CBI team there. There were

actually some business connections that we're being made at community meetings. So, we're integrating that approach in essentially everything we do. I think we've mentioned it before, we created these cheat sheet commodity codes. So, if you're a small business, you wondering what the projects are, we get down to the details. These are literally the qualifications that we need for the types of projects that we're doing, so we make that through line really easy to understand. We're doing training. Think about innovation, we did the solar lighting training. The company you saw in that video was the successful bidder. They're doing that project. Back to Mayor Gantt, we've got a ribbon cutting coming up on the, I'm going to get the date wrong, but in a couple weeks. You'll all be invited. We're going to have a ribbon cutting for the solar lighting project. So, more training coming. We did the ADA, sidewalk one in December 2025, I think you heard, again, another great example I think from Mayor Hancock. Those little details matter, and we've got thousands of those details to implement, and we did a training session just this past December 2025, to show businesses how to do that. That work is really precise. You've got to get it right, and the value of doing that training is getting businesses to know what we need to do, getting them trained on what we need them to do, and that benefits us. The projects can get done right the first time, they can be done quicker. That's the way we're going to implement this in partnership with the kinds of needs that we have connecting it to the skills that we have out in the community.

You saw this fully in the video, engagement, engagement, engagement, transparency, bringing everybody to table, and again, I didn't tell Mayor Gantt to say what he said, it's all in here. The neighborhood, the communities that are part of these projects, they're invited to the parties. They were there at the groundbreakings, they were there at the ribbon cuttings, and what's happening in between is making sure those projects are right. It's not just doing the projects. It's making sure that we're really engaging and making sure that the priorities, the focus that we have, is embedded in the culture of the relationships that we're making in the community. We've just started that. We're building upon that. I will say it's not new. We're not doing anything different. Corridors of Opportunity, the Community Area Plan process. I mean, we do that very, very well. Housing and Neighborhood Services are out there every single day. So, we had a team that was building upon that experience, and we're just going to continue to do that, amp it up to the scale that we're doing, but I don't want it to look like we're doing something new or different, we're really just strengthening what we've been doing at the City for a long time.

You saw the dashboard. We've talked about the dashboard. It's just one technically complicated, but small example of what we will be doing and what we will be expanding to, again, Mayor Gantt, transparency, transparency, transparency. We want to make sure that everyone knows what we're doing, when it's going to be done, where it is on the schedule, what's the purpose. Back to the mission that Eulois talked about, embedded in there is, why are we doing it? What's the value of it? When is it going to be done? How much it's going to cost? How do you keep up? We've got that for the two pilots. We're thinking about longer term. This is again a resource question as we scale up. We're going to expand that to all the capital, all the road projects we do, all the programmatic projects that we do. So, it's going to take a little bit of time to get the infrastructure of that set up, but we're going to scale that to all the work that we're doing.

**Councilmember Watlington** said this is awesome, and I just like the way that the presentation matches up with the booklet. So, whoever did all of the branding and stuff that's really cute, but anyway, you did a good job, Ed. I just want to get a sense of some of the data that's on the dashboard, and I can see what's here. Because we get a lot of questions from our small businesses in regard to procurement awarding and that kind of thing, is it possible to see who the design teams are? Not just design, but the project teams are on this or filtered by that? Just curious.

Mr. McKinney said it can and will be. What we have here is sort of our external version, so that gives you high level, and if you want to get really in the weeds, we are building the internal version, which is about project management. So, our team needs to know the details. So, all the details you described are there. Certainly, they're all public. So,

as we evolve and transform that, we can shape it based on the information that you want us to put out there, but absolutely, we're tracking all of that.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said Ed, can I follow up to Dr. Watlington's point, under construction, I think we need to lead by example, so be able to show small business participation what are we getting on each project, I think helps us when we're out here selling and we're telling the private sector follow our lead. So, I don't know if it's a drop down under construction, but if we can show the participation, I think that'll go a long way of just us leading by example.

**Councilmember Mazuera Arias** said I'm just going to quickly add, Ed, you know how much I love dashboards, and this is such an excellent dashboard. I mean, like it really is, and I think I referred like all City staff teams to look at this dashboard, Housing Trust Fund, Vision Zero, like this is the model of how transparent, accessible data information to the community looks like, and so I just want to applaud you and all of the team for this dashboard. I'm not always one to always be like, oh, this is great, this is great. So, I really appreciate all the work, because I've been asked so many questions by the community, where are the dollars going to? How are our taxpayer dollars being used? Are we good stewards of our taxpayer dollars? I can point them to this. A few months ago, we, Council, unanimously voted to approve \$50,000 into the Far East Harrisburg SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan), and so I can now direct to constituents, this is where your \$50,000 is going to, this is where our \$55 million investment is going to. So, thank you. Thank you so much.

Mr. McKinney said yes, that's great to hear. This is the beta version. All the input that you're giving is great. I'm the guy that's told folks I just want a dashboard and I want it quick. There's a lot of work that went into that. There's going to be a lot of work to do of some of the things you're describing. So, you'll have to give us some patience, but yes, we will get there, and it's a great tool, and it's obviously an important way that we're going to have to communicate moving forward.

Let me put a bookend on the SIA, because I want to transition to some other things. So, great success on the two. We've got the 22 across the City. With the new funding we're going to scale that up, so I want to make the point that we're ready. From the things that we've learned on the two, we can scale that across the 22, back to some of the points that were made on the panel. We need to be doing things quick, and we could be doing things across the City. So, our plan is, and we need to get ourselves in gear, some resources and things that we'll need to focus on, but we're going to expand that across the 22, small projects, quick projects, with the funding. We're going to be ready when we get the funding. We'll talk a little bit about the bonds moving forward, but I just wanted to give you a sense of the next step for the SIA is not just one by one, two by two. We're going to work on transforming the approach we had to that, so that we can do that across the City.

So, let me transition to what, again, the hope is some of what I'll share now will just inform the conversations you'll be having around the CIP (Capital Investment Plan) budget, and certainly we'll be talking about that in a few minutes at lunch. You'll be talking about that as you move into the budget season in the next few months. This is a framework. Really the value of it is hopefully just to help you think through the investment. So, what you see here, all the programs that you have today are on there. They're aligned with some bigger themes. I'll talk through those themes. There's a few new programs, things that you'll be talking about as you go into the budget cycle. There's a structure for this, and ultimately, it's a question of what resources, really in the short term, what are we putting into, what's the prioritization we have for funding moving in the 2026 bond? So, there's some big decisions and deliberation you'll be having literally in the next couple of months about what that looks like in your CIP budget for the next bond cycle. These themes are important, and again, hopefully it gives you ability to think through and communicate where your priorities are to the community. So, safety is on top, that's informing everything we do, every program, every project, every investment we make starts with safety, and we're looking at the data. Every investment we make is making an improvement to safety. We certainly have a Vision Zero program.

Debbie will talk about that in a minute, but safety is the message, that's the first and primary goal we have around our investment.

**Councilmember Graham** said yes, just a quick question. Could you elaborate on the new state participation?

Mr. McKinney said sure. Yes, let me talk about the new programs, and I'll come back. So, there are several new programs we've put on here. These are just for your consideration. You'll see the obvious ones, I think, are orphan roads. We all know that that's a commitment, so that's a program. Debbie and her team are getting that program in gear, so we're going to put some funding behind it and start investing in that. You mentioned the state participation. That's something we actually had done in the past, and what that is is when there are state projects, separate from some of the bigger ones we've been talking about, there's a lot more than just that, that we have the ability to partner with the state. If we have the money planned for, and we know, we work with them every day. We know when their projects are coming along, so we can align our funding to that. There's opportunities for us to make those projects better, to add things to them, to get them constructed while they are constructing, so really an opportunity to expand and strengthen the investment that the state's making aligned with our goals, but we need sort of thinking about it from a program standpoint.

Mr. Graham said can we work to advance participation if a project, for example, in Mountain Island Lake is due to be done seven years from now, and we're getting ready to work on that intersection between a city road and a state road now? Can we advance some of that work?

Mr. McKinney said we're getting into the weeds, and I'm going to say a few things that either Liz or others will kick me, the answer to that I would say is, and I'm very familiar with Mountain Island Lake, we've been out there several times, the state projects out there are big, very big, very expensive. So, we'll have to think about where does it make sense to leverage our dollars. I'll just be frank, we wouldn't have enough money. I don't think you at all want to allocate the amount of money in one location that would move a state project that big, but I will say, and these are improvements we have already planned. We talked about this in our last town hall up in Mountain Island Lake. We have a SIA, a Strategic Investment Area, up there. There are small things that we can do on those state corridors. Two of them are new intersections on Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, and these are accessed, safe crossings for the community. They are safe ways for people to get out of their neighborhoods. If it's on a state route, we coordinate with the state. We make sure that that investment is anticipating the bigger project. So, that was maybe a long, winding answer to your question, but the opportunities are there, but to move some of the big state projects, we're talking about big, big dollars.

I'll come back to the programs, and again, just to highlight again the themes, mode choice that's again primary in our vision. You heard a lot about that this morning, that's obviously clear. Partnership and leverage, we touched upon that with the state participation. Asset management, maintenance, operations, innovation, those are all core things that Debbie and her team do. We have existing programs around that. We've continued to fund those. Innovation is one of the new ones. We talked about that this morning. We don't fully have the answer, but now that we have funding, we can dedicate dollars to that, dedicate some attention to that, and be ready. Having the funding that we talk about, and if you all allocate and set up a program around innovation, we could probably be one of the few cities in the Country that have that level of focus and actually have put dollars behind it to say, we have a mission around innovation. We put some dollars to it, and we're going to do some of the most advanced things that we can. We don't know what all those things are or what they look like. Five or 10 years from now will be completely different, but the only way to take advantage of it is to have dedicated funding to those things.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said Ed, great presentation as always. For the new orphan roads, did we agree to only ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) areas, or also within the City?

Mr. McKinney said and this is again where I'm going to get kicked if I say the wrong answer, the commitment I believe, correct me Debbie and Liz, is in the City of Charlotte's ETJ, that's the commitment we made and that's the program that we're standing up today.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, because I just want to make sure that we are not overpromising our constituents who reach out. They are not in ETJ area, they are in Charlotte, and they are asking for the maintenance. So, thank you for that clarification. It's only in ETJ areas in the City of Charlotte?

Mr. McKinney said Charlotte's ETJ.

Ms. Ajmera said I meant in Mecklenburg.

**Councilmember Owens** said thank you. This question is actually both for Ed and for our City Attorney, and I just want to be very clear that I'm bringing in some of the conversation from last night, because of the way you started, where you said you're going to be bringing some takings, some eminent domain to us as we look at some of these corridors. Last night, from the dais, and someone called me on it afterwards, and so I just want to clarify. I spoke of some efforts that I saw in a booklet by the South Carolina Department of Transportation. There were some things that they had available to them to mitigate some of the takings that they did as they expanded I-26, and they spoke of the potential for additional mitigation for those who had been impaired by previous public acquisitions. So, it was very much an effort I felt from what I read, appropriate to the situation at hand with I-77, where we're trying to make up for an economic harm generations ago by a second taking right now. So, that's a lot of the fairness, a lot of the passion is there. How do we, and again, this is where it gets into the City Attorney, I don't know that I, and I'm a real estate attorney, and I don't know that I fully appreciate the nature of our remedies. Where do we have limitations? I know your process, for example, that I see on the takings for rights-of-way, and it will say we've made you an offer, and you have an opportunity to go out on your dime and get a second appraisal. I noticed in the mitigation book for I-26, they were paying for those. So, there's all sorts of gradations of things, and I don't know what that looks like as we try to, as the Mayor said, engage the community and feeling like we're solving problems for them. That amount of outreach seems really important, and that we are adequately compensating people in ways that they can trust. So, I know that's a really loaded question, but I think it's so right for this moment, because we've got this confluence of energy around I-77 South, and the improprieties that were done for communities there, and how do we get past that into a good place. Then, we've also got the dynamic projects that you've got everywhere that may be small or mid or even large takings in some places, and we want to get that right from the beginning. So, I just want to understand more what that looks like?

Mr. McKinney said I don't want to speak before our Attorney speaks.

**Andrea Leslie-Fite, City Attorney** said we'll tag team this one. Thanks Ed, and Councilmember Owens, thanks for the question. The I-77 project obviously is being managed by the State of North Carolina with respect to the takings or the eminent domain components. When the City of Charlotte engages in the eminent domain process, it is statutory, and so we are working through those steps, both with the appraisals, the offerings, and all of that, even negotiating up front with the property owners about what that valuation would look like. If we are able to reach an agreement before the court process takes hold, we do that often. After, if we get to a point where we can't negotiate, then what we do is we move forward with the filings and we continue to negotiate. We continue to have those conversations with the property owners. I'll tell you, I was just talking with our Condemnation Attorney a couple of weeks ago, and the vast majority of those resolutions do turn out pretty well in terms of being able to resolve it ahead of litigation. Don't hold me to the statistic quite firmly, but somewhere in the neighborhood of north of 90 percent of those are resolved, and I want to say close to 95 percent of them are resolved before any trial takes place. So, that's very telling about the type of engagement that City staff has with property owners.

With respect to prior harms, and certainly the community can appreciate this, there is the evidentiary burden of showing the nexus between what happened in the past and what happened in the present. Of course, statutes of limitations take hold as well, but what I would encourage communities to do is have robust conversations with staff, because they are available and willing, and I think they do have a really good finger on the pulse of what some of the best practices are in other jurisdictions in terms of communicating about what the process looks like and how they can benefit, and from a public purpose standpoint certainly from these exchanges.

Mr. McKinney said I'll give you one quick anecdotal, a version of that that ties to the engagement that we were doing. So, you saw Vernetta, one of the sidewalk projects was at Turtle Rock neighborhood. I had a picture in one of our past presentations of after the groundbreaking for that project, there was a meeting between their neighborhood association and our real estate attorney's, and they were out there in the field talking about what we need and having that conversation. That conversation is a partnership, and it's so much easier when you're there understanding the purpose and vision of that project, and absolutely, it's a fair negotiation for the value of that property. I wouldn't use the word taking, it's a purchase of the property, or an easement when it's needed, for the ability to build the project. We want to use our engagement to build those relationships, so some of those conversations can be easier and really in partnership, not all for sure, but that's the kind of philosophy we will have around engagement to address what you're saying, is we're not the government coming in to do the project to you. We're doing this in partnership and we need to be sensitive about those conversations.

**Councilmember Driggs** said Council decides.

Mr. McKinney said correct.

Mr. Driggs said Project I-77, which is a State project, any road project that Council feels is unacceptable, we can decide not to do it.

Mr. McKinney said correct, correct.

Mr. Driggs said I mean the key difference, we just say no.

Mr. McKinney said hopefully we're not getting too off topic, but this is a good conversation to have. You heard, I think, Mayor Gantt say this, is that you can't spend billions of dollars and not have some tension about the needs that we're going to have, physical, etc. So, you all have to be prepared. We need to make you prepared. We need to do all the things that we can do to make those decisions align with your goals and your policies, and make sure that you understand why we're doing that, but ultimately it is your decision. I think you're already starting to see a lot of them from the Strategic Investment Areas. So, you're seeing those on Monday nights now, where when we're not fully yet have found and negotiated the value of that property, there's decisions that you make that allow us to continue the conversation for that, but you have full control over that, and it follows the statutes for how we do that, and it's ultimately your decision, even small projects. I mean, you're seeing lots of those I think from the Strategic Investment Areas. The sidewalk project takes more of that than you would imagine, easements and right-of-way. So, you're going to see a lot of it, and when these projects get bigger, you're going to see more and bigger versions of that, and that's again where you'll have a lot of purview about the intent of these projects.

Ms. Watlington said I have a question. I'm not sure if maybe it fits in innovation and aberrations, or you can tell where it lands, but I think about the connection between this plan and the SEAP, especially as we're building roads, what the impact of those cars traveling on those roads will be to our environment and how do we really accelerate some of our SEAP goals by enabling, through our transportation system, some of the electrification and those kinds of things. Can you talk to me, if you're able to, if the answer is, we don't know, we don't know, but can you talk to me a little bit about how we're thinking about how we invest in infrastructure, like electric charging or like battery

stores, that kind of thing, and how that ties to our SEAP goals, as well as if we've thought through how we might generate revenue through distributed energy resources. I've asked this question once before about like virtual power plants, and just given the size of our fleet, and what we may be able to do from a volume standpoint. I just want to know how that's baked into the way we go about delivering the projects.

Mr. McKinney said I'll say I sort of know and don't know. I say a couple things, and certainly Sarah and her team, we've been working in partnership on a lot of those things already as sort of pilots. We absolutely are doing that now and can expand that with the investment that we're talking about, and we need to follow and be true to the policy that you put in place. So, yes, more to come. I think there's a whole discussion that we could have around your direction for us about how we should spend those dollars. Innovation is probably the bucket to put that, but again, just like safety, everything we do follows those things, so sustainability and energy is around everything we do. I'll touch upon it before I end, hopefully, think about the data-driven decisions that we'll make about the prioritization of these big projects. We need to be thinking about, and we do have, the technical tools to understand if we do this kind of project, build this kind of road, what does that do to travel patterns, what does that do to vehicle miles traveled, to the emissions that come from that? So, we can make sure that we can show you the decisions on these big projects, and we can quantify the broader impacts. You're talking about the small things we absolutely can do, but there's also bigger things we need to do, and we're building this system, this process for us, so that we can give you the data to show you how your decisions are impacting those policies.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said I think this is also a perfect opportunity to practice a common motif that we've been talking about, which is communication and our messaging. I think this is where our community engagement and our messaging meet and need to align. To Mr. Driggs' point and to Mayor Pro Tem's point, and to your point Ed, these projects are going to cause some type of discomfort as we continue to grow. It's going to require us to take a more proactive messaging approach about the easements, the condemnations, what is required to make sure that these projects are delivered on time. That's going to require work on behalf of Council, as well, to make sure that we're in front of the press of media, of our constituents, saying listen, this is something you the voters voted on, \$55 million, and we are just making sure that everybody's included, that the process is inclusive, transparent and rigorous, and ensuring that's it's communicated very eloquently to community that this is all part of a process and showing them the proof in the pudding. Like all the work that you all have done already with the FENCO, Far East Neighborhood Coalition, as well as Arrowood constituents, and then making sure we're translating that more in layman's terms to the media and the press.

**Debra Campbell, Facilitator** said so, it is now 11:57 a.m., and I think we're going to continue to have this conversation go on, but if you all don't mind, let's try to get this done by at least 10 after, so that we can allow folks an opportunity to have lunch, and this is supposed to be a working lunch as well.

Mr. McKinney said yes, so I'll run through the last few things quick, and get over to Debbie to talk about Vision Zero. So, that framework I described was sort of systemic programs. There's also things that we're talking about are place based, which are really important because they drive to the needs and specific locations and making sure that the projects that we're doing are changing the needs in different parts of the City of Charlotte. Strategic investment areas is part of that, but the other one I want to just briefly touch on is sort of maybe a new terminology, it was in some of our past work, but something we're calling Big Moves, and so there's big ambitious things that we need to do and should do. It's the dollars that we're talking about, those are big projects. We have a process that I'll share with you a little bit, we'll talk more about what that looks like for identifying, defining, designing, and ultimately delivering those projects.

At the risk of getting into danger of putting too much out there, you've got this in your book, there's dots on this map. There are projects, we know what they are, but they haven't been defined. There's a lot of engagement that needs to happen. So, we've got

a pool of those, but there's a process that we're going to have to go through to refine those engagements, etc. So, don't look too closely, but the point of that graphic is to say, type, you can see the different types. So, we're approaching this as a broad program that's trying to move the needle on everything, safety, congestion, transportation, disadvantaged populations, all the things we talked about this morning, that's driving the prioritization of these projects, and you also can see geographic diversity. We have to invest across our City. What you do in certain parts of Charlotte are going to be completely different, and that's a challenge. You can't prioritize these projects apples to apples. The kinds of projects that you're going to do in different parts of our neighborhoods are just different, and so the way we think about prioritization has to have a geographic diversity approach to that.

Again, more detail. I just want to describe quickly and touch upon the process, how we get to defining those big projects, try to break down to simple things. We need to ultimately define that pool. Everything you see here is a part of engagement, so we're going to do that with the community. We've got to define what those projects are, what the potential is, get their input. There's a really important thing that Mayor Hancock said that I want to reemphasize, which is, there's work that we need to do before we go to that process with the community. We need to be able to say what is possible and what's not possible. What are the things that they have choices about. The worst thing you can do is get out there and ask, what do you want, and we don't have the ability to deliver it, to pay for it, technically make it happen. So, I'm going to ask for you in terms of patience, we're going to be out there in the community, but we need to spend some time internally understanding what are the things that we can go out to the community for. So, there's work to be done. You're going to hold back on your desire for us to be out there in the community too early, because we need to make sure that we have a really clear way to describe, and gives them the choices, but realistic choices.

Design, then that goes into feasibility. We have to continue to flesh out what those projects are. Think about that like advanced planning program that we've been doing over the last several years. Once those projects become clear, we need to get into the details, understand the schedule, the risk, how much they're going to cost, and then ultimately it goes to delivery. Those are the decisions you would make on a CIP budget, identifying those are the projects now that will get funded by a bond program. These are all places where you will have input and direction, choices to be made. These are all places where the community will have input and direction. We will prioritize technically. You see the list of all the technical things, safety being on top, but we also will have qualitative, all the things I described, geographic diversity, the community engagement, technical things like feasibility, etc. So, just gives you a sense of that.

In the meantime, so that's looking at what would be the big projects we're going to do over the next 10 years. We go from that pool. Want to ensure for you that there are things we're going to do quickly. So, we have a set of projects that we're calling the Big Moves 2030. These are the projects that we can do in the next five years. Our team has been taking all the lessons from the Strategic Investment Area work. How do we accelerate and advance projects? These are projects many of them you're familiar with, they've been in the works, but they all aren't fully funded. Some of them have been behind the scenes, because we've been designing them, but didn't have full funding. They all have partnerships, some federal dollars, etc. They're ready to go. They're shovel ready. With these dollars we can advance and accelerate them, that's our commitment now, is we're going to take those seven projects, advance them, get them done in the next five years, because we have the funding available. The decisions you'll make around the capital bonds will give us the ability to accelerate them quickly. There'll be engagement with all of those. Again, message, we need to be out there talking about the purpose of all these things, even though they've been in the works for a while. We need to refresh that and be out in the community and build excitement about those projects moving forward. We've got lots more opportunity to talk to you. We'll back certainly at the CIP workshop, lots of decisions that we'll be making over time, and really the big things you'll be thinking about are the things I described in that delivery book, how do you make decisions now on the capital improvement budget moving forward.

Last thing I will say, though, is we've been out there over the last year with the community talking about the transit plan, talking about the road plan, what we can do long term, short term, connected to some of the things we said. The transit work, think about the things that are going to happen quickly, microtransit, the bus frequency, the improvements of the bus stops, coupling that with everything I've described, all the things that we're going to do across the City. All of those things we're working hand in hand on those things, think about what that will look like in five years. We're going to do those seven projects in five years. We're going to be doing all these strategic investment improvements while microtransit is coming on board, while the frequency of the bus system is being added, while these bus stops are being improved. That is going to be a tremendous amount of investment across all the ways we move in the next five, 10 years. I say that just to ensure for you that we've got big things we're going to do, lots of engagement to happen, but there's going to be a lot we're going to put on the ground in the next five years, completely coordinated with a vision around multi-modal transportation, access and choice. You will have certainly ways to shape and direct us as we do that work, lots of possibilities, great opportunity. We're going to need some resource. We're going to have to think about our organization, more to come on that, but we're ready and it's going to be really exciting times. So, I will stop.

**Councilmember Anderson** said Ed, thank you, of course. You always have great insight and great presentations. I really love the Big Moves 2030, do something quickly, within the five-year, stage-gate to put some moose heads up on the wall effectively. My question is really, though, around slide eight where you have the myriad of projects there.

Mr. McKinney said and if somebody can help me go back.

Ms. Anderson said so, as we're getting there, my question is a two-fold question. The first one is around capacity. So, as you just mentioned, within five years you're going to execute on these seven projects. Do we have the capacity to do that? We'll have the dollars, but do we have the capacity to deliver?

Mr. McKinney said we will with your help. The Manager will be talking about that. We're going to need to think differently about our organization, that's why Adam has been with us for the last two years, helping us think through organizations. There are things we just need to do differently, don't need more money necessarily, resources to do that. We've learned a lot of things from SIA, so that we will do, but there's no way we can implement the scale of investment we're talking about without additional resources. That's probably all I should say.

Mr. Jones said well said, and you mean staff at some level.

Mr. McKinney said yes.

Ms. Anderson said right. The reason that I asked is because we'll get really excited about this Big Moves 2030, and begin to socialize that in community, and if we don't have that priority in the budget process, then that could potentially create some disappointment within our residents. So, we'll talk about the prioritization of adding that capacity in the budget process. The second question, though, is on slide eight where you have, defining the next 10 years of projects. How many projects are listed here? I tried to quickly add them up.

Mr. McKinney said yes, so I was very careful how we numbered those. There's about 80 on there, I will caveat.

Ms. Anderson said 74 is what I'm hearing.

Mr. McKinney said okay, yes, about 80. I will caveat there's more than that. Again, I want to emphasize that's an illustration of the pool. Those are real projects, those in the purple book, but they all need to be defined. A lot of those things aren't even really figured out. There's probably more, so there's engagement that will happen that will

uncover others. So, I want to caveat that looks probably more definitive than it is, because there's so much work/engagement that we need to do.

Ms. Anderson said sure. So, the question really is around, okay, this is 74, let's call it 80 for even numbers. Over the next 10 years, will you and your staff begin to release lists of projects, similar to the Big Moves 2030, that will have a composite of a variety of these different projects that you're bringing forth to Council over the next year plus?

Mr. McKinney said absolutely, and I want to say, clarify something. We're not going to do those 74 projects in the next 10 years. We're going to have to go through a process. We pick it down to seven or eight. We're talking about big projects, just like the 2030 ones. So, it's going to be a challenge, engagement, etc., to get that pool down to the right projects. We'll go through prioritization, data, etc., but yes, what our team is doing now is starting with that pool, starting to do all the technical work. We anticipate coming back to you later this year with more clarity about where that process is with, as soon as we can, identifying those, get your direction on which those should be, and then allows us to communicate to the business community, to the opportunities that are out there, to the neighborhoods and community about what those projects will look like. It's going to be a process, though, because we've got to do technical work. We've got to be out in the community. We've got to do more technical work. We've got to be very careful about the promises we make. So, you are going to have to again give us some space to do that, but we know we've got to do it urgently, because if we're going to do those seven projects in five years, those are all projects that are pretty much designed, so that's primarily why we can do them quickly. These are projects that aren't even defined yet, and we're committed to do them in 10 years, but we've got a lot of work to do to do that, and we're going to be doing it with urgency, but there's prep, analysis, etc., that needs to happen before we can be too public about which ones those are.

Ms. Anderson said okay, last question. Is there a library of projects that are already designed that could potentially go into the next Big Moves phase?

Mr. McKinney said the simple answer is sort of maybe a bit of an exaggeration, but I will say no, because the seven that you saw that we're going to do are the ones that we've been designing. It wouldn't make sense to design any more than that, because even those we didn't have full funding for. So, we've been doing design and planning, but we did that calibrated to the resources that were available. Again, because we don't want to be out in the community promising more than we could ever do. So, no, that's the big hurdle we have to get over, is we've got to get this machine going from that pool, and so then we have the 2030, what I call Big Moves 2030. That pool will create the Big Moves 2035. Then we're going to create the Big Moves 2040. Like we'll have the system by which we'll have 10 year.

Ms. Anderson said it's like the [inaudible] process.

Mr. McKinney said yes, exactly, but we've got to build that machine. That machine doesn't exist today, not because we were doing something wrong, it's just because it didn't make sense given the resources that were available to us.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said I'll make it very quick. It's more so thoughts and ideating and partnership right now, but I think as we look forward to these projects, and kind of honing down on the Big Moves, it would be crucial for us to look at developments that are happening alongside these corridors, such as rezonings. I'm receiving, and Debbie knows this and Ed knows this, a lot of emails about Plaza Road Extension. All the development that's happening there, whether it's more single-family neighborhoods, whether it's mixed-use developments that are coming down the pipeline for our rezoning petitions, etc. It is a road that needs a lot of attention, but it's also complex, and there's a lot of nuance, like Plaza Extension and Hood Road. Three out of the four quadrants in that intersection are state, and only one is C-DOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation). So, looking at those nuances, those increased developments, the increased congestion, our high-injury network, I saw that's one of the factors in there as well, is I think very crucial to honing down on this, and expanding this model of SIA to

other sectors. The other thing is, more coordination with NC-DOT, and just making sure we're very intentional and getting ahead of the curve, and understanding that when we do get an email from a constituent, we can easily say, this is what's happening, this is what's going on, and we're all working in collaboration, so in sake of not working in silos, working more deliberately together. Thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said my Council member, thank you for bringing up Plaza Road Extension, because you're right, we have received multiple requests about Plaza Road Extension, especially as new development is coming. There has been an influx of townhomes after townhomes along that Plaza Road Extension and it's not stopping. I even saw a few more rezonings there, and that is a rural kind of one lane each way road that certainly can use some help in terms of sidewalks, because I see children walking from the communities, especially around Boulder Creek community, that's absolutely unpaved, and every time I pass by that, I pray that they don't get hit. So, certainly we need to prioritize. Even though it may not be part of the Strategic Investment Area, we need to make sure that our children are safe walking to schools.

So, I know that you have high-injury network as one of the high priority lists, and a couple of years ago, Debbie did a great job with compiling a comprehensive list of all the high-injury networks in the City, and I understand it makes up, what 13 percent of the total network, but that's where the major fatalities or crashes are happening. How do we make sure that we are not only prioritizing major thoroughfares, because that's what was happening under Vision Zero, but we are also prioritizing connector streets, because we want to make sure we are being very intentional, to J.D.'s point, intentional about how we prioritize some of this based on the growth and the development, but also where we can save the most lives. So, even with all these projects, how far are we going to get to in terms of our high-injury network list?

Mr. McKinney said that's a great segway to Debbie.

Ms. Campbell said yes, Debbie will present over lunch.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, so that question will go next, but I'm very much interested in seeing, because oftentimes we'd get a response that we just didn't have enough funding to even make a meaningful difference in our high-injury networks. What I would really like to see, well, can we get through our list now with this influx of funding, and we've got to have clearer timeline. It might be that some of the projects require more funding, but can we have something temporarily that can save more lives now. Because every passing day, every passing year, it is claiming more and more lives when it comes to pedestrians, and we have had at least three recent incidents just in one geographic area. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell said and Debbie, hopefully you can address a little bit of that after we get lunch.

Ms. Owens said so I want to commend you for making more public the amount of diligence that has gone into why you've chosen these areas. I like that for a number of reasons, and I really want to speak to the rest of Council, and I want to make myself do this as well. I think it's incumbent on us from the dais, when we do take our votes, to really articulate the rationale as though you're saying it through us, and arm us with that sort of language, so that we are effective in these spaces, because I think it does a number of things. It makes people feel more confident in the pain points that they may do to experience attendant to all of this growth. It also, though, gives them confidence in their government, and it makes them understand that their tax dollars are working in the ways that we promised them that they are. I think it is that much harder to then convince somebody perhaps on a national level that government is all corrupt. I think we start locally with instilling a sense of trust in us, and the more transparency that we can all communicate around the why this is good for Charlotte, the better we all are in getting that buy in for the future. So, I really want to commend you for this level of transparency, this level of accessibility. I'm not an engineer, but I can follow a lot of this, and when I

am in community people do seem to really understand what is coming, that you're to be commended for that. So, thank you.

Mr. McKinney said appreciate that.

Ms. Campbell said alright, okay ya'll. We'll have Debbie come up after lunch, and she's going to present on Vision Zero, and now go get your meal and come back, because we're going to keep going, we're going to keep going.

The meeting recessed at 12:17 p.m. and reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

Ms. Campbell said I appreciate you all's patience. We've done a lot of adjusting on the agenda. Hopefully after this session, we will be back on schedule for a 1:00 p.m. presentation. So, if we get the presentation pulled up, we will begin.

**Debbie Smith, C-DOT Director** said alright, good afternoon. While the presentation is getting pulled up, I wanted to just say how amazing I thought the morning panel was, and I also wanted to just share it was as if we had our three-course dessert before we had our vegetables. So, I kind of feel like I'm coming up here to talk to you about broccoli, brussel sprouts, and some fried okra. I don't know, because even as I'm thinking about what Ed was doing and performing for everybody, it's fantastic. He was like the meat and potatoes, and once again, I just want to say that this is so important to highlight the sense of urgency that we have as staff around this, but I absolutely know the sense of urgency, Council, that you have around safety. It's really this opportunity, and I just want to say thank you, for the opportunity to talk to you about underscoring this conversation and why it's so important now. I'll really say a lot of the conversation, Council at your level, was around the Vision Zero report that we published. We actually published it last year, but I think it made its way to a couple of you more recently. From that, what I want to say is that Mayor Lyles, you proclaimed Charlotte a Vision Zero City in 2019. City Council affirmed that proclamation through the adoption of the Strategic Mobility Plan, and really what does that mean? What that means is that a Vision Zero City designation reflects a higher commitment to a higher standard, and that's what you all have done with that. That commitment to that higher standard is one where traffic deaths and serious injuries are not accepted as the hazards of a growing city. There are only about 50 Vision Zero Cities nationwide, so when you think about the thousands of cities that there are, we, Charlotte, are a standout, and I just think that's really important for you all to understand and to know that.

So, really around the policy and the framework. So, as I said, Council adopted the Strategic Mobility Plan in 2022, and that plan is really straightforward. That plan has two components to . We can boil it down to these two components. The plan says we're going to be safe and the plan says we're going to be equitable. When you define safety, it means Vision Zero, and we have a lot of qualitative and quantitative tools to be able to describe that, but safety is Vision Zero. I love what the panel said earlier today, when we define the equitable part of that, the equitable mobility, is how do you get around other than using a car? So, just think about the Strategic Mobility Plan says those two very things, safety is Vision Zero and equitable mobility means choice to move around. So, I want to also highlight that Vision Zero builds on this collaboration. I feel like Mayor Hancock had a copy of my notes over here. I was just jotting down everything as he was saying it, that collaboration is so imperative, and its collaboration across the departments, the community, and partner agencies, and let me give this huge shout out, Chief Patterson and her CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department) team are phenomenal. They are the best of the best. Those Deputy Chiefs, every single one of them, speed dial, on the phone. Okay, I'm aging myself a little bit, because yes, exactly. Every single one of them know when they have a situation that they're dealing with they call me, and we deal right away. They're the first people that I call when I need something. Councilwoman Owens, when we needed some work on Providence Road, they were on it. Within three days they were on it. That team is just so impressive, but I also want to share with you all that safety is a shared responsibility, and it's not just that of the Charlotte Department of Transportation. I also want to share that Vision Zero is

an aspirational goal, but it is absolutely grounded in reality, and it is a measurable action.

The other thing I want to share is you're not alone. You heard really some broad challenges that the nation's experiencing, but let me be really specific what that means for you. For more than 50 years, 60 years, roads across the entire Country were built for the automobile, and they were built for that automobile to go really fast and not have any conflict. So, we say that was built for speed and capacity, and so undoing that legacy of 50 or 60 years doesn't happen overnight, but I promise you that we have that as our commitment.

Now, I also want to share that individual decisionmaking continues to be a real challenge to address those safety efforts. So, what do I mean by that when I say individual decisionmaking? Examples include speeding, impaired driving, red light running, distracted driving, and let me tell that that is not that Debbie Smith is passing the buck to anybody else. What that means is that Vision Zero, because we are a Vision Zero City, we acknowledge that reality, and we focus on creating the systems that reduce the severity of those outcomes when those mistakes occur. People are going to make mistakes, and we need to work on how do we create a system to make those not fatal. I want to congratulate you, City Council, Charlotte. We have been a leader in this space, creating complete streets and continuing that design. We've done that since the mid 2000s, and that is such a standout. We were asked in 2006, 2007, to come and talk about the Council Adopted Complete Streets Policies. We were invited to Denver. We were invited to Boston to talk about that, and what I absolutely loved, at what Mayor Hancock said, it is for the people. We are designing streets, we will design streets, and we will build the streets for the people and how they use those streets, that's it, it's not for the cars to go fast.

So, Vision Zero is both an overarching program or a policy that we have, but I also want to talk to you about how it means to be a named program and your commitment. So, Ed shared with you the importance of Vision Zero and the data and strategy. Albeit, he went through it a little quickly, but it's in there, it's foundational. I love that you all talk about the high-injury network and what that means. I have a slide coming up, but I want to highlight that Council commitment to that Vision Zero program that started with the 2018 bond at \$2 million, and I can tell you, I would have never thought within that short period of time you are now at \$20 million; that is impressive and that is thanks to so many of you in this room right now. So, the program itself, if you did not know, focuses on upgraded streetlights, new streetlights, neighborhood traffic calming, school zones, spot safety projects, pedestrian crossings, and technology improvements. I want to tell you that not all of those are solely wholly based on the high-injury network. School zones, for example. We go to where the schools are. We don't need a safety problem on the school before we're putting in the necessary enhancements in those locations. So, we use that data from the high-injury network to inform much of that action plan, but like I said, it's not wholly and solely from that. So, I do not intend for you all to zoom in and read this map, it is merely a snapshot of the active projects that we have on the high-injury network today. So, what this map shows you is if you can see the black lines are the high-injury network, and Councilwoman Ajmera, thank you for your statistic. You are reading it, 13 percent of our streets in Charlotte represent the high-injury network, which is the place where more fatal, more serious injury crashes are happening. What this shows you, or what you can't really see on this screen, but is inherent in that, is the gray lines that represent the over 5,000 land miles of roads that are not the high-injury network. This really is 187 active projects across the high-injury network, and that represents multiple programs, not just the Vision Zero program, and like I said, we used data to prioritize this. Some things that we don't show on the map, because then it would just be covered up completely, is that we are working on about 25 miles of remarking the lane lines and putting in crosswalks along high-injury network streets. We're putting in multi-way stops in locations. So, we are doing projects that are beyond just what we're showing here today.

Last, mobility sales tax really gives that opportunity for commitment and more safety projects. As Ed showed, there is a growing opportunity to advance the safety Citywide.

So, we're going to move from reactive responses to more strategy planned investment. We're going to be wholistic in corridor level solutions, rather than isolated spot treatments. So, Councilwoman Ajmera, I think that really gets at your question about the Plaza, when we can look at corridor-wide treatments, that's where we really are moving the needle on that. I also want to say it really enables us to prove scaled delivery and fast delivery. So, we're not going to wait for the perfect. We are not going to let perfect be the enemy of the good, because we know there are temporary things that we can go out and do today, and I want you to recognize this is a long-term commitment, that we aren't going to get in there and be one and done sustained leadership. My goodness, Mayor Gantt was fantastic. He said trust, transparency, and the listening all along the way, and so with that I'm going to pause, because I want to listen to you all with these questions. So, thank you.

Ms. Owens said thank you so much. I really do appreciate the focus on Vision Zero. It really is something that, when I saw it published, I was quite disappointed that we hadn't seemingly made much progress, and so it is good to hear all of the focus on this and really understanding that the progress is just perhaps not as publicized as we would all appreciate. I will speak selfishly of District Six right now, though. The things I hear from District Six follow a couple of easy thematics that I think will probably be resonate with the other districts as well. Turning cars failing to yield to pedestrians in the right-of-way. I jokingly say that this is probably how I will meet my demise, is going from the government building to my law firm, crossing on Caldwell, someone almost hits me every single time, and I notice around the City that there are some places where there's more signage around the state law being that turning cars yield to pedestrians. I notice in some places there are more signals. The question I guess I'm getting to is, can you help me understand how those determinations are made, so that I can be more articulate when people ask me, hey, why don't we have this? So, I'm going to park that question, and then the other one is the lack of time to cross streets, that those crosswalks don't seemingly allot for a normal human amount of time to cross a street, and there may not be an island where you can seek refuge while you're partway across. So, those two things, understanding the differences between how we treat intersections, how those decisions are made, can you give me a little bit of clarity, so I can be smarter?

Ms. Smith said yes, absolutely, Councilwoman Owens. Those are really great questions, and I think they speak to a lot of the questions that we answer almost every day. So, as it relates to crossing at an intersection, there are some places that we have focused something called a leading pedestrian interval, which just means that you get the walking light sooner than the traffic then allows you to make that right turn, and in some cases, District Six, we actually piloting some innovative improvements where we hold the right turn under a red light while the pedestrian can make its way nearly across the street. So, District Six was a good opportunity for us to pilot that and do that work. We realize that we still have some work to do around the City to expand that in more places. Signage is only as good as the person that's willing to observe it. So, a right turn yield to pedestrians, we recognize that's not a physical barrier, but that is an ask or that is a communication to the driver what they're legally supposed to do. So, we think that there are some tools that we can put out there that help reinforce that, like leading pedestrian interval.

To your point about lack of time to cross the street, I really want to say I want to know exactly what those locations are, because I think we have tools to solve those. So, as we're proactively going out and looking at the intersections, you tell me those locations, and we'll go take a look at them, because we shouldn't be designing it for the fastest person that can sprint across the street. I can tell you, as I have turned 52, I walk a lot slower than I did, and my kids they take off, and I go wait for mom, wait for mom, c'mon, we're coming. So, don't hesitate, let me know those locations, and we will absolutely take a look at them, and then make improvements.

Ms. Ajmera said great presentation as always, Debbie. I will have a few streets for you afterwards.

Ms. Smith said wonderful, you know, you have my number, I welcome them.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, because one is where people are trying to get to the greenway and I see families crossing the street, and there is no barrier stopping either way, but I won't get into the details now, I'll have that after the presentation. What I wanted to get to is, if you can go back to the slide where you had 179 projects.

Ms. Smith said 187.

Ms. Ajmera said 187.

Ms. Smith said and I might phone a friend. Thank you, friend.

Ms. Ajmera said yes. So, I think this goes back to Mayor Gantt's point, as well as other panelists, that we need to celebrate victories. I think we haven't done that when it comes to our high-injury networks. There has been a lot of work done. I can tell you one right off of Albemarle, where people are crossing the shopping strip, this was like six years ago, and I remember I reached out to you, and then three years later we had those beacon lights, and guess what, that saved a lot of lives, because a lot of families would cross to go to the shopping strip there, but certainly no celebration there. I think we need to celebrate those small victories that let's community know we've successfully completed X, Y, Z projects, and when it comes to Vision Zero, in light of this audit report, I think it's more important than ever before. How many current projects are in the high-injury networks that are not funded yet?

Ms. Smith said Councilwoman Ajmera, I think that would be a hard number for me to pinpoint right now. I don't want to get too far out over my skis, would love to follow up, but what I would say is that many of our projects that are currently on the capital improvement program list have prioritized the high-injury network. So, we use that today in the prioritization of the projects that we have.

Ms. Ajmera said right, so Ed did mention high-injury network is one of the priorities. It's a factor. What I would like to see, how many high-injury networks, or we should get to 100 percent. So, it may not be that in two years, three years, but we should have a timeline. So, this is a budget ask, Mr. Manager, where if we can dedicate a set of funding just for the high-injury networks, because some of these projects may not be shovel ready. We've got to make sure that they're in the design phase, so that it is ready for the next cycle and the cycle after. So, if we can get a list, because this is a dynamic list, because you're going to see some projects move up, some projects move down, or maybe some stay the same. So, we need to have that list. I had that list. I think a couple of years ago you did walk us through that list during the budget cycle. We need to have that updated list, and somewhere we can have, speaking of transparency, we need to make sure that list is up somewhere on a dashboard, so people can see, here are the high-injury networks, here are the projects that are in the next bond cycle, here are in the next 2027 bond cycle, 2029 bond cycle, and so on. I think we need to have a clear timeline in getting to 100 percent completion of high-injury networks. We know that 13 percent contributes to the most fatalities. Why can't we just get them done? It may not be tomorrow, but we have to prioritize them, because we know this is the way we can save the most lives with our infrastructure investment, and this should be our number one priority.

Ms. Smith said Councilwoman Ajmera, thank you for recognizing that we don't do enough celebration, and it's not to pat ourselves on the back, it is to highlight that awareness to the community that we are doing those types of projects. So, thank you for that. I think for us it's typically been the sense of urgency to get to the next ones and the next ones, but you are absolutely correct to pause and highlight that. Maybe what I'd ask for is just a little bit of grace. We're probably never going to get to 100 percent, and what I would commit to tell you is that some of these streets are not wholly and solely ours to maintain and decide on. The State has that responsibility on many of these streets that are high-injury networks, and so what I would ask for you, and the Council

too, is that commitment that we are taking action and we're moving in exactly those places where we can control and we can influence and we can decide.

Ms. Ajmera said I think that's great, because to Debra's point, not overpromise. So, I think then we need to be transparent to our constituents who reach out to us for infrastructure requests that's in the high-injury network. Then we need to be very clear about the expectations that this is in our high-injury network. We need to specify what are the streets that are within the City's purview, that it is our responsibility, and here is the list that is under NC-DOT's purview. I think that shows the ownership, and it directs constituents, so that they can reach out to the right folks.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said thank you so much, Debbie, for the presentation, and thanks for all the work that you're doing on it. I do want to recognize some of the stories we've heard in the past months of folks passing away in our high-injury networks, and our roads. I mean, in District One we had Lance Satello, who I went to college with, who was killed by a hit-and-run driver passing a red light. Last August 2025 and September 2025, we had Luz and her son Diego, in District Six. Diego was a bicyclist and he was hit and now he is paralyzed all over. Then we had two young ladies, Lorin and Gloria Manley, on Ardrey Kell Road get killed by a driver that was going 100 on a 45. Then, in my District, 24-year-old Bryan Alexander Guillen Ramirez, who was also killed because of speeding. So, it is a growing epidemic in our City as we continue to grow, as we see more congestion, as we see more traffic, more impatient drivers, more distracted drivers on our streets, the possibility of these crashes to happen. I'm very specific in the terminology I use, crashes versus accidents, because these are crashes and we can prevent them from happening. I really want to learn more about what's in the works in the work that we're doing for Vision Zero in updating our Vision Zero dashboard? Right now, it's not accessible. A lot of the data seems very not reliable. There is some confusion, at least from the public, that we have Mecklenburg County numbers versus City of Charlotte numbers. How do we segregate that data? How do we make it accessible? Sorry to add more work to your plate, Ed, but would love that Vision Zero dashboard to look like the SIA dashboard, and so would love that.

The other thing I had a question on, so that was my first question. My second question is really concentrated coordination and effort with our Vision Zero goals and our Corridors of Opportunity and our Strategy Investment Areas. I think, as we grow as a city, we need to start working more deliberately together within departments. Not that we don't already, but with just a narrow focus of intentionality, second.

Then my third question is, we know where our high-injury network are. What are we doing, to Councilmember Ajmera's point, to improve those high-injury networks? How are we incorporating the work that our Planning department is doing through the rezoning process. If we know there's a high-injury network, why are we going to build a high-density development in the high-injury network. Regardless of how many deaths are in there, one death is too many for a high-density development to happen in that corridor.

Then, my last question is, I know I'm throwing a lot, I'm sorry, I just want to make sure that you have enough time to answer. I know that Vision Zero committed to doing reports every six months on the crashes that happened. I want to have an update. I'm new to Council, so at least an understanding of what that looks like. Can we commit and maybe this is to Manager Jones, that when a crash happens, we have within 30 days an investigation rolling out to see what we can do to improve that road, that intersection, so where we are on that? I think they wrote it down.

Ms. Smith said yes, thank you so much, Council man. If it's okay, I'm actually going to take those questions in the reverse order. I want to let you know that as every fatal crash in the City happens, C-DOT goes and investigates that crash within two weeks of us receiving the report from the police department. So what we're looking at when we go out to do that crash investigation is what were the circumstances that led to that situation happening, and are there some short-, mid-, long-term solutions to be able to address that? So, I do want to reassure you that we perform that today.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said and do we make those public?

Ms. Smith said we haven't historically, but let us take a look at what that could possibly look like, sure, sure.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said yes, maybe a compilation of it every six months that we can report on, just to get that progress report to our constituents of like, this is what we're doing to achieve our Vision Zero goal. Thank you.

Ms. Smith said got it, yes, absolutely. The high-injury network in rezonings, I'll use a more recent example that you experienced, which was at the intersection of Wilora Lake and Sharon Amity. The reason that that intersection was on the high-injury network was because of a fatal crash that happened. The City then came in, we signaled that intersection. We expect that to roll off of the high-injury network. So, we track data for five years on particular things. So, in that specific circumstance, we mitigated for the fatal crash that occurred, and so that's to me, we're doing that thing there, so rezoning wouldn't necessarily have an outcome to it. Love what you're saying about lifting up Corridors of Opportunity and the Strategic Investment Areas. We have great collaboration. We can do more, be better. I think I've heard you say that multiple times, do more, be better, and I really like what that means. We sit on the Corridors of Opportunity team, several Directors and I, talking about this, lifting this up as a priority, which we do, but let's do more of that.

Then, last, I appreciate the comments around the Vision Zero dashboard. Just want to share with everyone the Vision Zero dashboard is really about the data itself. We built it pretty quickly. It's only been out there for a year, and what I can definitely tell you is trust, transparency, and we're listening all the way, so give us some time to make some remedies there and improve that. We know we have a good model to look after for project in the way of SIA's, so thank you.

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

Mr. Driggs said for one, a comment. The situation of crime in Charlotte is such that CMPD is focused on violent crime, and that's where the officers are allocated. So, District Seven is in the fortunate position of not having a single homicide last year, but what that means is that the officers are concentrated away; therefore, the coverage is very thin, the incidental effect is that traffic enforcement suffers. So, a lot of people down in the District get the feeling that they can just do whatever they want, and I can hear the street racing going on from my house. So, I think what that points to is the conversation we've already had about CMPD and the need to kind of expand the force so that they have more capacity to address things below that level of violent crime. I have a question, though, and that is 13 percent of the roads are on the hazardous road network. What percentage of injuries occurs on those, out of all of the injuries?

Ms. Smith said it's about 80 percent, sir.

Mr. Driggs said okay, so there is a high concentration, and I bring that up because a lot of people perceive, you have a zoning or something, it's dangerous, and they always say, people are going to get killed, because of what you're doing. So, I've on occasion, brought back the data and said, there's no evidence of that, but what we have to guard against is the idea that we are focused on the 13 percent, and we're not worried about safety on other roads, because it's on the minds of people, whether or not the numbers bear it out. So, it's just a comment. Thank you.

Ms. Smith said wonderful.

Ms. Campbell said good deal. Alright, unless there's a really burning question, we're going to transition to another subject matter. Debbie, let's give her a hand. Great, as usual.

Ms. Ajmera said a lot of homework.

pti:pk

Ms. Campbell said yeah, a lot of homework. All of my stars are things that staff needs to follow up and provide you all with additional information. So, we're going to move to next item, and by the way just for your information, we did have a presentation and a discussion around the capital budget, and the Manager said that he would want to defer that until March 23, 2026, so it's not gone away, it's just unable to schedule it for this time that we have together.

Okay, so we're going to transition to talk about mobility, approaches to maximize workforce development and small business impact, and we have a panel. Okay, now we know who's going to lead that discussion, and I appreciate the transition, and as I said, if you all need a break, please take it independently. Alright, okay.

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## **ITEM NO. 5: MOBILITY: APPROACHES TO MAXIMIZE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT**

**Monica Allen, Assistant City Manager** said alright, good afternoon. Alright, this one's going to be a little different. So, it's a quasi-panel presentation, Q&A, so we're trying to figure out how to navigate the screen and things like that, but I'll assist as needed. So, today we have with us Sha Rhana, who's Economic Development Director; we have Danielle Frazier, who's the Office of Workforce Development Director; and then one of our newest team members to team Charlotte is Cheryl Wright, and she's our new Contracting and Procurement Director. Just as a reminder for everybody, July 1, 2025, was when we formed the new Contract and Procurement Department, we stood that up. Procurement used to be within General Services, and of course the CBI team was a standalone. We merged the two to help streamline some of the work that we needed to do around business, small business engagement, MWSBEs (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise), specifically engagement, and the contract and procurement processes. Just to add to that a little bit, it is a best practice across the U.S. to actually have those small businesses and minority women businesses in the same place as contract and procurement efforts, and so welcome Cheryl. This is your formal introduction to people here at the strategy session.

So, earlier today, Mayor Hancock mentioned the word collaboration, and so I think that is a great word to kind of round out what we're going to be sharing with you today to talk about how internally as team Charlotte we are really intentionally focused on collaboration. There's a lot of alignment with Economic Development, Workforce Development, as well as contract and procurement. Before I turn it over to Sha to kick us off, the one thing that I just want to say also is, so as you think about what was shared with you earlier around mobility and all of the project work that we have to do, one of the things we've been really intentional and focusing on is, not just collaboration and how we're all going to come together to support that work, but what is really needed to get the work done? So, we know that it's big infrastructure projects. It's going to be over multiple years. Then do we have the right investments that we need to make in preparing small businesses? Do we also have the talent and the skills within our community to be able to take on that work? Then do we have streamlined contracting procurement processes to move the money? One of the things I say around contract and procurement is that most people think it's just a transactional effort to get money out into the community, but it really is a key economic development strategy, because it moves money throughout the City and community, as well as it helps our businesses and our individuals. So, what this slide shows you is just the alignment across all three of those spaces. Of course, we have our friends in General Services and C-DOT, but we are really focusing on creating an integrated strategy, so that we can make sure we have a well-oiled machine, as we support the businesses and the individuals, and the money that's needed to support the work. So, if you start from left to right, you think about the big ecosystem of businesses that's out there, we want to engage those businesses. Sha will talk about in a second, the goal would then be to prepare those businesses to do the work. Danielle will talk about the investments and individual talents and skills. So, we want to make sure when we have the businesses, we also have the individuals to support those businesses to do the work. The thinking there would be

okay, so now what? Well, get registered as a vendor with City of Charlotte. Get certified as a CBI firm. You're made aware of the work. You compete for the work. You get the work. Then we execute the work. So, not just these three entities here, but we also again as I mentioned, have our friends in General Services and C-DOT. So, at this time, I'm going to turn it over to Sha, and he's going to talk about the work that he's doing in business preparedness space.

**Shahid Rhana, ED Director** said well, thank you, Dr. Allen. Good afternoon. One of the things we wanted to emphasize as a group here is that you've heard of a lot of different programs, policies, and projects, but when you really boil down the work that we're doing here as a collective for this particular initiative, it comes down to two common denominators, awareness and preparedness. How are we communicating the information, externally and internally, and how are we preparing our business community, and also how we are preparing internally as well. This really speaks to some of the concerns that Mayor Pro Tem brought up, with all of the complicated information, jargon, and technical aspects of this work, how do we make sure that the work that we're doing is also accessible, not only to our constituents, but also internally as well? So, really, one of the ways that we try to make this information more accessible and to help coordinate our efforts is through a branded strategy called Skill to Build with Economic Development, Workforce Development and Procurement helping to lead the way. Now, we've often heard our Manager talk about the teams of teams approach, but every team has a really good playbook. So, this is our playbook in order to execute a lot of the initiatives and programs as a part of this mobility strategy. Now, you have small business readiness, which is a key component of making sure that our small business community are aware and prepared for the opportunities. You have workforce readiness as well. So, as businesses are scaling up and they're looking to add more employees and essentially grow, because we want to see business growth as the key metrics as progress. How do we make sure that our businesses have the resources to increase the workforce that will also be a part of the growth that's happening in our community, and then last but not least, how do we make sure from the contracting side, that internally we have the right programs, processes, and essentially people. Congratulations with Cheryl being six months in here in this job, but that really speaks to the Manager's vision about this team of team approach, and making sure that we're properly equipped for the amazing opportunity that we have in our community.

So, I'm going to dive a little bit deeper into the small business side, and this is a freebee for Jason here. Every once in a while, I like to throw on my marking hat, but when we talk about small business readiness, we're talking about being all in for small business. So, that's something that as we're operationalizing this initiative, as we're going out into the community, as we're starting various outreach events, how can we let the small business community know that we're all in for you, that we hear you, we see you, we're making the opportunities readily accessible for you, and we're sharing that in ways that typically may not have happened before, especially with a new type of program when it comes to transportation and transit.

Now, on the small business readiness side, we have three phases, and although the graphic communicates this as a very linear approach, what I want to emphasize is that a lot of the work that we're doing in regard to awareness and preparedness is already happening. We're building upon the successes that we've had years before I've even gotten here, and you're seeing some of that new initiative pop up, even with some of the outreach events that have happened recently at Bojangles, when we're talking about with procurement and CBI's doing with business engagement as well. We're not doing anything different, we're not making start pivots, but what we're doing is building upon the success of what already works, especially building upon that trust that we've established in the community with our business owners.

Now, Phase One was a curriculum development. We've mentioned this before, but one of the things that we thought was a unique opportunity for us, as we're training, providing technical support for small businesses, historically we've gone out to bid, to work with third-party organizations, and there's a vulnerability with that sometimes, because if the organization ramps down, or there's a change in their business model,

we lose that training program and intellectual property, and with us owning the curriculum we're trying to think forward thinking, hey, 30 years out, does it make sense to keep going out to bid every year for 30 years? I don't think so. When we talk about the work we have, we have an amazing staff at the City of Charlotte. Some of the best and brightest minds are right here in the City, and we often go out to other cities to look at precedents, which I think is good, because you always want to benchmark yourself, you want to have a sounding board, but what we're realizing, especially in this space, that many cities are looking at Charlotte now. How are we becoming an example? A lot of the policies that this Council put in place, the programs that you've supported are precedent setting. They're the ones that other communities are starting to look at us, at what the Manager is doing, and this transit bill as well.

So, what we want to do is own the curriculum, and in Phase Two we're going to engage with the nonprofit and organizational communities. So, once we own the training curriculum, we'll go back out through a grant, and this is our opportunity for training providers to actually facilitate our intellectual property. One of the things and lessons learned that we've had before is, sometimes with various training programs for small business readiness an organization may receive training and education from one organization and it's totally different from the next organization. What we want to make sure we're doing, especially when it comes to contracting, procurement, and things of this magnitude, that everyone's getting the same information. So, that provides quality control and assurance, that way it eliminates discrepancies on how to bid on projects and what projects may exist, and it's a way for us to share this information with a lens of equity that everyone's getting the same information.

Now, Phase Three is more of a technical support, where if a business, they're already equipped, they're very competent, they've already been bidding on projects, that business may not have to go through a training program. They just may need to know when's the bid happening? How can I just show up to learn the information? What's the next Strategy Investment Area that's going to be a focus and a priority for the City? That's the information I need to know. That will be happening simultaneously throughout the year. So, you'll have a training program that's being facilitated by organizations within our City, and they will help the businesses that really need to make a pivot to scale up, to ramp up, to take on these opportunities, but the technical assistance approach, that's not necessarily linear, it's happening already.

So, I just wanted to emphasize that with the curriculum development, we're at the tail end, and grading a lot of the proposals, and within the next few weeks we should have an actual award for an organization who's going to help craft that curriculum hand-in-hand with us, understand our entire process, to make sure that we're taking best practices, not only from the industry, but as we're scaling up as an organization in the City, as we're implementing best practices, as we're getting feedback from this Council on ways that we can engage with the business community, that's incorporated into the intellectual property that we have.

Now, when you talk about other small business strategies, hey, what's involved? What's included in this technical support? Well, there's several different things that we've been considering, especially with a recent study that we've facilitated through TPMA, the Thomas P. Miller and Associates, a small business ecosystem assessment, so there's a lot of words here. Essentially over the past year, the amazing team here at the City of Charlotte engaged with the consultant to really understanding what does small business support look like after COVID, because the programs, the funding, and even the organization's capacities have changed since then. With the funding administrative changes happening, what are some of the core things that this business community still needs, and what are the areas that we can support them? So, whether it's small business and anti-displacement resources, that could be anywhere from understanding your lease to make sure that you're not subjected to predatory leasing or just unfair business practices, a partnership with Climb which helps provide other legal services as well, which we've had, mentor protégé programs, financial literacy and capital readiness, just name a few. We want to make sure that all of these programs fit within those two buckets of awareness and then also preparedness.

So, as we're going through this and as we're building the Skill to Build program, also want to let you know that many of the programs and projects that we've already had, that work really well, Mayor Gantt said it, hey, if something's working well, continue to use it. We want to emphasize that the decisions that you made in the past to support the programs that we're already implementing, we're going to continue upon that support, because they work really well. Now, I'm going to hand this off to Danielle Frazier to talk about what does workforce readiness look like when we're engaging with our small business community.

**Danielle Frazier, Office of Workforce Development Director** said thank you, Sha. Good afternoon, Mayor and Council, and may I say that ya'll look so good in this green team Charlotte, and Mayor Pro Tem I wear a size medium, thank you so much. So, I'm going to keep the conversation going with the Skill to Build conversation, by sharing a quick review and update on our Workforce Development, mobility readiness efforts. It feels like it was just yesterday when I was with you in January 2026, sharing this update, but we've got some updated information that I want to share with you. You all are aware that we released two Workforce Development grants back in December 2025, to support talent development, as well as business engagement and training, and our talent development grant is to support upskilling and skilling and training programs that focus on construction and skilled trades. That will be a total of \$1.2 million that we will issue to four to six organizations, up to \$250,000 each. We did receive 21 applications for this particular grant, and so we are in the process now of reviewing those. We have two scoring committees that are reevaluating these proposals over the next couple of weeks. For our business engagement and training grant, again that was to support our business community, specifically our small businesses, with talent sourcing internships, and with work training grants, and we will issue up to \$900,000 for one entity to support our business engagement efforts, and we received four applications for that grant. So, again, both of these are in review, and we hope to identify our awardees by April 2026, so we'll keep you posted on that.

The next slide, what I really want to talk about is that, as we think about our approach to Workforce Development and mobility, this is not just about funding programs, this is about how we're establishing an ecosystem around how we're preparing talent for the job and the opportunities, and you'll see on this slide when we think about our ecosystem it's a collaboration. I think that's the theme that we continue to hear throughout yesterday, today and for a long time we've heard, and I think we're going to continue to hear that. It's not just about our internal ecosystem, as Sha and Monica have already mentioned and Cheryl's going to share more about, it's our external ecosystem. So, you'll see on the slide that our Workforce Development ecosystem is about collaboration, and the City of Charlotte is just one entity in this space of how we're preparing talent for the opportunities to come. So, it's partnerships with our industry partners, with our Workforce Development board and our workforce providers. It's with our economic development partners, Mecklenburg County, our community-based organizations, as well as our education and training programs. So, this is really how we're building an effective ecosystem that is really doing some of these things on this slide, and that's engaging individuals early, so that's our K through 12, those are our students. So, partnering with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to make sure that our young people understand, what are these careers? What's available? How do they access the resources and the training programs to be able to get that career? Not to forget our adult population as well, So, those individuals that also need to understand where these opportunities are, and those that may want to change careers. We want to make sure that we're participating and helping to make our community aware of the opportunities. It's one that aligns training and connects people with jobs, and so we continue to say, hey, we no longer want to train and pray. We want to make sure that those that we prepare for employment, there is a job, and so that's the big piece of this business engagement entity that we are going to work with, is that they are going to be the ones that are actually identifying those actual jobs with the projects that are going to be needed for this mobility work.

It also strengthens employer leadership and partnership, and so having strong partners and employers at the table to help lead some of this, to identify the needs that they

have, and commit to the jobs and the positions that they need to hire for, that's what we're also trying to cultivate and create in this, an ecosystem that is a strong one, it reduces barriers, and improves access to education and employment opportunities. So, whether that's challenges with childcare, whether it's challenges with transportation, and other barriers that we need to assist with with helping them in employment as well as in education opportunities. It accelerates job placement and career advancement, and lastly, it demonstrates measurable outcomes in employment retention and career advancement. So, again, the funding is the mechanism. It's the mechanism that we use to help create and cultivate this ecosystem that is needed to help again get our talent from skills, training, to that employment opportunity, and it's about how we're all doing it internally as well as how we're partnering externally. So, excited to share that update, continue to share with you where we are with our grants that is helping to create this whole ecosystem of work, again of how we're preparing our talent for these opportunities, as well as our small businesses to access that talent that they'll need for the projects. So, with that, I think I'm passing it to Cheryl.

**Cheryl Wright, Contracting and Procurement Director** said alright, well, thank you Danielle. So, this is my first time having an opportunity really to speak and thank everyone, Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, City Manager Jones, leadership, Council, just thank you for the opportunity to be here and work for the City of Charlotte and serve our residents, so I want to say that first. This is a great team. I just want to share this real quick. When I came on board, I think it was my first day in the office, and Kathleen our City Engineer, we're on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, and she showed up to welcome me, and she said, "We're going to be working together," and I said "Uh-huh, we'll be working with a lot of people," but then I soon understood exactly what she meant, and it's been such a great relationship, not just with Kathleen, but the camaraderie throughout the organization, throughout the departments. I've worked a lot of places, but it's strong here in the City of Charlotte, so I just want you all to know we've got a great team.

So, with that, the common theme has been collaboration. It's that structured collaboration and the informal collaboration, and the two working together can help this type of initiative move forward the way we need it to move forward, between Sha, Danielle, myself, our fearless leader Monica, Alyson, all of the Deputies, we're always working together, sitting around the table, talking about mobility, how can we create opportunities for small businesses, all businesses? This is a huge initiative.

So, another example, and I think Ed may have spoken about this earlier, is the SIA initiative. Again, I've seen a lot of initiatives, but the deliberate approach with this SIA, I call it the round table concept, because back in the day it was a round table, and now this concept, they're at a table, is it once a week or twice a week, meaning they, the subject matter experts, representatives from procurement, engineering, legal, CBI, everybody's at the table with a list of projects, going around the table, so if an action needs to happen it happens at that table. If it does not, then somebody needs to speak up as to when it will take place. That's how things move. So, these models, for those two SIA areas, we're taking those models and we plan to apply that across the other mobility initiatives, so that's awesome, so I wanted to share that piece.

In regards to streamlining processes, well, in procurement there are a lot of processes, and the thing is, if we skip a process, somebody's got something to say. So, we're looking always at how to streamline our forms, processes, and let technology be our friend. So, there are tools in the market, and one is called an e-procurement tool, I won't go too deep, but we're all excited about it, because it can take maybe three systems or four that we're using today, and help us merge it into one system so we'll be able to take information when we prepare bids and it moves to a contract, then it needs to be signed. Instead of being two or three different places, it'll be in one place, so we're excited about that opportunity, and wanted to just share with you.

Project unbundling. So, we know that's very important, and so with the project unbundling, of course that happened in SIA and it happens in other areas in the organization as well, but when we're doing project unbundling, we really are relying heavily on our subject matter experts, because they understand the construction and all

of the deals, and can recommend where a deal needs to be unbundled. On the SIA initiative, as you're aware, there were a number of projects that were unbundled to create opportunities for small businesses. Because we need our small businesses, we need our large businesses. When we unbundle these projects, at least the smaller businesses truly have an opportunity to compete and hopefully win, and so just know that we're all consistently strategically looking at opportunities to unbundle solicitations.

Forecasting procurement. So, one of the great things of many here at the City of Charlotte, we've got what we call an early bird tool. The early bird forecasting tool allows departments to post upcoming solicitation information, so that the public can get a feel for what is the City of Charlotte planning to bid out? It could be over the next six months, 12 months, and I think Charlotte Water might even do 18 months. That gives a business an opportunity at a minimum to form some teams, to go identify some subcontractors, hopefully, to meet some of the goals and things like that that we have on our deals. When we're putting projects out for the first time and it's on the street 30, 40 days, a lot of companies have already built their team. So, working this early bird, along with our current strategy, is a great approach. There's always room to enhance that, and we're always looking to see how to do that, but just know this early bird tool is a great tool and Charlotte does it well.

Then I wanted to share with you, as you know, Charlotte, the CBI team, procurement, all of us, we work hard to make sure that we do outreach initiatives, to explain to our small business community businesses how to do business with the City of Charlotte. So, recently, as you're aware, in December 2025, the SIA group and the CBI team did a nice outreach, a great outreach around the holiday. I think we had over 200 companies come out. The SIA team explained the concept and the approach on how to bid on upcoming SIA projects. The CBI team talked a bit about SBE (Small Business Enterprise) programs. It was just a well-attended event and good information shared about how to do business with the City of Charlotte, as well as we recently in February 2026, Mayor Pro Tem with your guidance and suggestions, along with the CBI team, hosted the Policy to Prosperity event, which was another great event. We had more than 250 companies come out, and information was shared about upcoming mobility projects, as well as I think Bank of America was there and talked about some of their upcoming initiatives. We had the Fireside Chat that was there. Mr. Edward Perry was highlighted, awesome. Economic Development, Workforce Development, a great model again of collaboration. This is happening all the time. We are all ready to make sure, as best we can, that our business community is ready, and I'll give you an example in a few minutes of some capacity-building things that've been going on to help fill those gaps when we identify that there are not enough small businesses in certain areas. The team is working strategically trying to figure out how to encourage small businesses to think about, keep your regular business, but also look over here for another opportunity, so that these companies can get ready for all of this work that's about to come down the pipe. We're trying to help our businesses get ready.

Then, when we look at the initiatives in development, our initiatives in development are constant. It's constant collaboration, Workforce Development, Economic Development, all departments, and so when Sha was speaking about the training that's going to start happening with these new groups that'll come out, the procurement and CBI team will be right there partnering with them. We'll be guest presenters and speakers, so we can truly share information about how to do business with Charlotte, like real time, and then blend in with the training that these consultants will provide.

We're also looking at launching a rebranding concept, and this is a collective rebranding concept, similar to what I'm told is the open for business concept when COVID happened, and the City of Charlotte opened for business and it was this big push to let everybody know we're open. Well, now we're talking about let's rebrand with mobility, and let everybody know, yeah, we're open, we're ready, and we need you to support all businesses, but our small businesses as well.

Then, as I move into this last area, all areas are important, but small business is important. So, with the CBI team, they have been doing a great job and collectively all of

us looking at the market, exploring ways on how to enhance our SBE program, and we're doing a great job, and we've got some great ideas, and sharing them with leadership. So, just know the team, we're working behind the scenes all the time getting ready.

So, the next slide is an example of the capacity building concept. So, the first group you see the solar lighting training. That took place in July 2025, and a company by the name of Fonroche, they sponsored a training to try to get companies interested in going into solar lighting business, not just the actual solar lighting, but they were showing them the various disciplines around that, like pouring concrete and other things. Again, encouraging capacity building, because that's an area where there are not a lot of small businesses, and that was heavily attended. That's what I was informed, because I started in August 2025, and so I was told, and I believe them. So, that's an example of capacity building.

Then, another event took place in December 2025, and Kathleen correct me if I'm wrong, the City Inspectors Construction team hosted a training for small businesses about sidewalk repair, with a focus on the ADA component. Again, there's a shortage of small businesses in that arena, so the team was deliberate about trying to encourage companies to come. If I'm not mistaken, at the December 2025 SIA event, it was pushed out about this training, because it was going to happen a few days later. As a result, what did we get over, you got over 40, 45 companies that came out, and when the companies finished the training they received a certificate. So, that's just two examples of the capacity-building concept, but we have to be deliberate in that, and continuous with that, and this team knows that. So, I just wanted to share that with you, and with that said, we do need to celebrate our successes, and Sha's going to give you an example of that.

Mr. Rana said I just wanted to share one business success story, which is Miguel Avila of Daily View Pools. He was a product of one of our small business amp-up programs. He's an alumni. He was also featured in our 31 days of small business campaign twice. He was an ex-CLT participant. He was also part of Scale-Up Charlotte business, and then also learned to take the discipline of actually building pools and understanding that when you're making pools and concretes, you actually have an opportunity to be a concrete finisher. This would not have happened if it wasn't for the coordination with Debbie's team and Kathleen's team, and when we're looking at these bid opportunities and how small businesses can be a part of the change and the bids that are happening in our City. This also engages with [inaudible] as well, because marketing and communication is a critical part of our mobility, although, you wouldn't necessarily think of them as a technical office. It talks to economic development as well. So, this is just one example of how a business owner learned about the opportunities. Various departments within the City of Charlotte thought creatively, thought innovatively how can we have smaller bid opportunities for the small businesses to be part of, and then also all of us wrapping our arms around it. So, the work has been done before. We have precedence for it. We're working together. This is just one of many highlights that we're taking this type of concept and building upon with Skill to Build to do more initiatives in the future.

So, with that in mind, a lot of the work that we're doing is layered. You have economic development with the programs, the small business readiness. You have Workforce Development with its various initiatives, and also procurement as well taking an inward-looking approach to how we do business as a city, and all of these things are layered, so they're happening at the same time. I wanted to highlight a few themes that we have here for moving forward. As Councilmember J.D. brought up, how do we collaborate better? So, a collaborative approach is very key. The photos that you see there is a snapshot of one of the many meetings that we've had with Mecklenburg County's Economic Development, and their Procurement team, in addition to the City's Workforce Development, Economic Development and Procurement team. We've met City and County multiple times to talk about our various initiatives, how we're going to work together, how we're going to support one another, and how do we message that

information. Marketing and communications, as Mayor Pro Tem mentioned, how do we share this information in a meaningful way?

When we talk about celebrating successes, Councilmember Mayo talked about what does failure look like, but what does a success look like? How do we share those successes of Daily View Pools? How do we show those successes of what we're doing in our Strategic Investment Areas and the multiple ribbon cuttings that Mayor Gantt highlighted? How do we celebrate the wins along the way? Then, setting precedents. Some of the work that we're doing is really innovative work, but it may not seem innovative, because it may not have a fancy government acronym behind it. We all love fancy government acronyms and a nice look and feel, but what you see here is also innovative. How are we connecting Procurement, Workforce Development, and also Economic Development along with our other departments of having a team of teams approach? So, when we talk about innovation, and Councilmember J.D. and Dr. Watlington mentioned, how do we think about this differently? These are the major things that we plan to move forward with with Skill to Build, and also understanding we're building upon a success. So, like we're setting the precedents now, we test and verify, and if it doesn't work we pivot, but we're going to have to pivot together. We will do that with data. We'll have data-informed decisions. We'll work with our stakeholders. We'll have transparency within dashboards, but most importantly, you should be able to see and feel the difference in your community when you see the road, when you see the safety happen, when you see the engagement numbers increasing with some of our small business engagement, when you have another Daily View Pools, when we come to you next year at the retreat, and we have seven or eight businesses that we want to highlight, that's how we know we're trending in the right direction. So, metrics tell you what happened, but they don't tell you how it happens. What we're sharing with you is how we do work. So, if there was an ending point of the great Montell Jordan, "This Is How We Do It." Thank you.

Ms. Allen said alright, so I think we'll open it up for some questions at this time.

**Councilmember Driggs** said thank you. I'm very encouraged by what you're saying, because we have addressed this subject in a way that in my mind wasn't comprehensive enough, and if you don't push all those buttons, then there's something missing still, and right now from what you're describing, I think you're pushing all the buttons. I wanted to mention I volunteered at Packard Place for a while, and I talked to people who wanted to start a business, or people who had a small business, and one thing, not to mention having been in finance myself, a person can be really good at a product delivery or a service delivery, and they can build a business through word of mouth and they can hire people. At some point they get to where they really need to have some management skills. Just like a doctor is not the right person to run a hospital, that's a different skill set from what they had before. So, I think that's kind of what you're talking about. I wanted to zero in in particular on the access to capital point, because a lot of the people I talked to said, "I go to the bank and they won't lend me any money," and that's a barrier for them. So, in my mind, one of the focus areas has got to be on budgeting and developing a business plan. People I talked to didn't know how to develop a business plan, and the bank wants to see that. So, I imagine myself sitting in the seat of the bank lender, and talking to the would-be borrower, and I want to tell that would-be borrower, this is what you're going to have to do when you go and see that guy. Think about how you dress, you think about the materials that you show him, and I think there is a potential role for the City in that.

So, we have had some engagement with the capital process in the past through a couple of programs, but what if we had an office that partnered with a bank, and we said, bank, we want to partner with you, it's not going to cost you anything, but we need you to participate with us in an exercise that says you will look at potential borrowers that you probably wouldn't have talked to before, and we will work to make that borrower acceptable to you. It might even involve credit enhancement or mediation or whatever, but just find a bank that is prepared to make a commitment to our priorities, and put some money around it. Then we will see to it that that's not just a lost proposition for them. I think bridging that gap for many companies could be the most

critical thing to allow them to grow. Small business, I'm told, accounts for about 60 percent of the growth of the economy. This is huge, and it's not just social. This is a major important investment in our economic future. Thank you.

**Councilmember Owens** said I couldn't agree more, and I appreciate the opportunity to follow Councilmember Driggs' question. I've got one impossible question for Danielle, and a much easier question for Sha. I'm not sure which direction to take them in. We're going to take the hard one. So, leveraging what Councilmember Driggs just talked about, and really trying to bring access to capital and some management skills, and things. I'm trying to anticipate a number of the small businesses that you raised up are businesses in construction, and are attendant to a lot of the things that we've got going on with our mobility plan, but I look at, and this is where the impossible part comes from, because I don't know if any of us know what to anticipate with disruption of AI, and I look at our white-collar jobs. I look at us being a banking community. I look at how people may need to pivot. I say this, because I'm a mom of three 20 somethings who thought they had it all figured out, and are consistently realizing that they oh, so don't have it figured out, because you can't predict what those opportunities are going to be. So, could you speak a little bit on that, and then I'll have my easy one for Sha.

Ms. Frazier said sure, and it may be all over the place, so bear with me. Monica has me down this AI road, and we have many, many conversations about the impact that it has on talent, and even the impact on our organization and how we'll pivot and move forward with what that looks like. One of the things that I am looking at is, what are those jobs? What are the skill sets? I was watching a podcast not too long ago, and they were talking to the AI Godfather's, and they said, "Hey, what are the jobs that we should really be focused on?" They said, "Plumbers, electricians, those jobs that can't be easily, physically manipulated yet by AI and robotics." So, I feel like that is a good point for us, as we're focused on construction skilled trades, one, but then I think also looking at what AI will bring to the industry around some robotics, some technology, even drones. So, we have to look at this two ways. So, I think it's a plus to where we're looking at, hey, these jobs will be around, absolutely, Councilmember Mayo said it, forever. I think we also need to look at what skill sets are going to be needed that AI is going to offer to enhance these roles and these jobs. I think in the jobs that are high-touch, that you need hands, those are going to be jobs that will be around, but I do think again AI is going to bring opportunity to enhance those jobs, and those skill sets and looking at, and we're talking to businesses now, how are you using AI? Not just from a generative content standpoint, but how are you using it in automation and robotics and other ways, so that it can help inform us, and how we're investing in programs that are developing and training individuals in skilled trades, but then in other areas as well. Again, looking at where AI will impact some of those jobs, but then also what will AI create? So, it's a work in progress. Is it impossible? I don't think so, but it's some work that we're doing right now, and so we'll keep you posted.

Ms. Owens said thank you for taking the hard one. So, the easy one for Sha. So, I believe it was Mayor Hancock who was addressing a comment by Dr. Watlington around how others see us, and how we brand in this new growing age that we have? I'm wondering if you can speak to us a bit from your experience with economic development, when we do get opportunities, what are you hearing most dominant in that decision tree, and then when we are not getting opportunities, what is it that you're hearing we just don't have? Can you give us some clarity on how we're seen by others who think about coming here?

Mr. Rana said oh, absolutely. I can brag on Charlotte all day, and it starts with the leadership in this room. When you talk about a political body who's willing to stand behind principles and actually execute upon those principles, there's an alignment with corporate mission and how cities are also driven as well, and corporations want to align with cities that align with their values as well, so that's number one, when it comes to mission and vision alignment.

Number two is the talent aspect. I tell people all the time, you will not find many cities in this world that have an HBCU, a medical school, an R1 Institution, a regional airport

hub, a community college system within 20 minutes of every person in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the only community out of 100 counties, and the number one state for business, three out of the four years, that has rail, in addition to the amount of diversity that we have in our community at a city basically encroaching upon a million people. You will not find it, and we often talk about communities that have mountains and lakes and rivers. Well, the entire western border of our county is riparian. When you think about Lake Wylie and Mountain Island Lake and Lake Norman, we don't think about that as well. When you talk about the business community and its collaboration with the public sector, that's rare.

So, those are just a few, but more than anything, Charlotte is not a boom or bust city. A lot of our growth is very strategic and methodical. Sometimes we look to the left and the right, because someone's doing something faster than us and better than us, but guess what, a lot of cities have a lot of vulnerability and volatility depending on industry shifts and economic changes when Charlotte's growth has been very steady and methodical. That goes with the vision that you have with the Mayor, the City Manager, this Council, and also being very strategic about the staff. When you talk about a 2040 Comp Plan. When you talk about Strategic Investment Areas. When you talk about laying out a vision and also being very methodical about that approach, and having agreement. I like what was said earlier, you don't necessarily have to agree with everything, but can we have consensus to collaborate and move forward in the right direction? That doesn't happen in every community. I was just in D.C. yesterday for the Annual Economic Development Council Leadership Summit at Capitol Hill, and people are looking at Charlotte because of what we're doing, and it really starts with the public/private partnership of your elected body, working and hearing the priorities of the people, and also engaging with the private community.

**Councilmember Anderson** said so, Sha, you got the job. I love it. I'm convinced that you made the right choice. If anybody should be selling Charlotte, it's you, I love it. A couple things. First of all, I love the Skill to Build brand, and I love the way you guys have brought that together over the last several months, and I love also, Sha, that we are going to keep our IP (Intellectual Property), I think I mentioned that to you around all the training programs, that allows us to manage and pivot as quickly or as slowly as we need to, so that's fantastic. Do you see us ever being in the position where we could source that out to smaller cities and towns who might need that same training for their municipalities?

Mr. Rana said I'm a hustler at heart, but we will have to check with our legal team about the usage of our intellectual property. What I will say is, when we have the opportunity to go to other communities, like I just referenced, to really tout the work that we're doing, that's an amazing opportunity. Previously, before the City would still do it, go on these chamber trips, they were called, intercity visits. What I've noticed over the last two years, that more cities are actually coming to Charlotte, and they're visiting, they're trying to understand. Now, we may not be able to license and share, but what we can do is continue to open up our doors and say, how can we share our common experiences together?

I'm also going to give a big shout out to Jason and the CCM (Charlotte Communication and Marketing) team of Skill to Build and working, hearing what we wanted to do, seeing the vision, and making sure that ties into everything with our brand. We have one of the best teams in the nation. I mean, you give them a hand sketch, and they have a logo and a flyer and a brand behind it in a matter of days, but also with that, how do we take Charlotte to the next level when it comes to being one of the leaders in thought leadership? How do people start flying into Charlotte for a conference about public/private partnerships with our government? We go all over the world, but we have something special at home.

Ms. Anderson said yes, I'm just a huge proponent of beginning with the end in mind, and as soon as I heard you say that about a month ago or so, I thought, huh, this could be a potential opportunity for us. I you are thinking that way in the beginning stages, you

should think about where that IP is being housed, and how that information will flow from the beginning, that's why I throw that out there.

The last question I have is around our contract readiness, and I also love all the work that we're doing around being open for business to ramp up capacity. So, I love that we're ramping up capacity. Do we have any notion of what the size of the actual requirement is, so we can have throughput of lots of individuals going through programs, getting trained, etc.? Will it hit the mark, or will it just be a pebble in the ocean? Do you have any idea of the size of the requirement?

Ms. Wright said so, thank you for that question. Size of requirements, meaning projects and companies having an opportunity to compete?

Ms. Anderson said the actual work that you would need these companies to be doing, the magnitude?

Ms. Wright said we don't have an exact. Kathleen, you have a number?

Ms. Allen said so, we've started those conversations with Kathleen's team to get an idea of what the projects are. So, if you zoom out, it's the work that has to be done, and then we need to right size our structure to be able to support that work. I always say structure follows strategy. So, we have to lead with the projects, what those projects are going to be, the size and scope and scale, and then we need to align. So, I think some of those conversations have started between Kathleen and Cheryl, with Kathleen saying these are the projects we anticipate needing to do, and then Cheryl said, this is probably how many people I'm going to need to support the work, or these are the systems or the processes that we need to modify and change to support the work.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said Monica, I think what she's asking is the gap analysis. So, we have worked on a gap analysis with all of the small business opportunities that are out there over the next 30 years, as well as all of the jobs that will be needed, and what workforce we have and what's the gap in between. I think that's where you'd like to go.

Ms. Anderson said yes.

Ms. Allen said okay, that's clearer. So, it is both and, though. I mean, we have to also make sure we have what we need to support the work, but I think to his point, it's where are we currently and where do we need to be and what is that gap in between? So, we're just wrapping that up and hopefully we'll be able to share that very, very soon.

Ms. Anderson said okay, great, thank you.

**Councilmember Watlington** said following up a little bit on that question, and I'm glad Mr. Manager that you added that context, because I was about to raise an eyebrow, but I'm thinking about Mr. Driggs' earlier question in regard to capital. As a part of needing that capital and some of the barrier to get the capital is this idea that you need to have a book of business. I need this money, because I need to deliver this work. I heard us talk about having RFPs (Request For Proposal) or a forecast, so that people will see what the work is, but the design work is before the RFP, it's an RFQ (Request for Quote), and if you don't have a resume that demonstrates you've done that type of work, you're not going to get picked up for a team. So, I'm curious as to how we're leveraging or how we're thinking about the formal versus informal projects, and how we're using the informal projects in order to help these businesses build capacity, so that they are in a position to be on a team that is competitive?

Ms. Wright said I can try to answer some of that. Kathleen might be able to help me a little bit, and I say that, because under the SIA model when the unbundling was occurring, it was intentional to try to identify projects that were in that informal range, and in doing that, hopefully creating opportunities for those small businesses to be able to compete. So, some elements of that, I think we may have used some existing

architects, engineers or whatever to do the designs early, but to that point, I'm pretty sure some of those formal projects were on the forecast calendar type thing.

Ms. Watlington said yes, so that's one that I will lift up then. The County probably, Sha, as you know, does a great job of leveraging their informal design work, so that smaller businesses can build that resume and be in position to team for the larger work. I did have a question on the back end. So, after you've gotten the project, you've executed some of the work, it's time for your progress payment, I wanted to know how we are thinking about, again on the design side, design payment speed. I know we've got QuickPay, but how does that work outside of construction if you are not the prime? I think about for general contracting, you've got to provide that notice of payment, so that all the subs know that you've been paid, etc., etc. On the design side, I haven't seen that be required yet from a regulatory standpoint. So, how are we thinking about that?

Ms. Wright said good question. I hate to reach to Kathleen, but on the design side to get the payments made, a department needs to check off that they've received the service. So, when the department signs off and says, we've received the designs, everything's complete, you can be paid, or if there's a progress payment scheduled that may have been developed early on with a designer, then that can set the number of payments that they may be available for. At the end of the day, the department will sign off when a design is complete, and then the company is paid.

Ms. Watlington said so, I'd like to suggest that maybe it's a double click down into it. Say the project is with the architect, or it's with a lead engineering firm, and you've got subs under that, there's a way on the construction/contractor side to know, because they're required to notify that they have been paid, that doesn't exist on the design side. So, I'd like us to dig into how we can make sure that those subs on the design side are aware that payments have occurred, and they know what to expect as they're forecasting their payments. Does that make sense?

Ms. Allen said yes, and I think that's something we just need to look into a little further. I know we've had conversations with Mayor Pro Tem about QuickPay, and we hadn't explored necessarily the design element, but that is something we're having discussions intentionally about. We also have to engage legal, because there's certain things with state statute that we can and cannot do. So, that's great feedback, and we can definitely take that back as a team and see what's possible.

Ms. Watlington said awesome, and just a couple more. So, again, back to this idea of sequencing and enabling folks to staff up. Do we have an idea of our current time between the award and the project start? If not, you can bring it back to me, but that's another place where we can look in terms of how do we enable businesses to scale up, because they've got to have time to go get the talent once it's won.

My last thing is, I'm curious because we know that public dollars alone cannot float a business. So, how are we thinking about our connecting some of the larger firms that do public and private work with some of these businesses that are going to want to perform, and have their capability built through public work, but also want to sustain by adding private work to the portfolio?

Mr. Rana said I would say that's the next iteration of what we're doing in public/private partnership. We have precedents of that through our tax increment grants where we partner with a private developer to provide a public benefit, such as roads, parking garages, parks, and other infrastructure, but what we're going to see now within the layering of our Strategic Investment Areas and the Mobility Plan is, how do we engage private capital into our work and partner together. So, that's kind of the next level of maturation of how our P3's (Public-Private Partnerships) work. We're sometimes limited on how we quantify, classify public benefit as a Dillon Rule state, and the opportunities we have as a city municipality, and then some of the projects being in county, but then some of the roads being state. So, that's a little bit of a dance that we're doing, but is 100 percent top of mind, and where we see things going when it comes to infrastructure and P3 work.

**Debra Campbell, Facilitator** said so, we're going to give this session maybe about five more minutes and then move to the next session.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said thank you for everything that you all have been doing. I've definitely seen a difference over the years with a focus on how we support and grow our small businesses. Monica and I have had this conversation for the last year or so. I want to better understand as you all move forward. So, the partnership and relationship was recreated with CLIMB (Charlotte Legal Initiative to Mobilize Businesses) to help with our small businesses with a certain level of legal, but we also learned over the last year or so, one of the challenges is when we have that new business, specifically that small minority business that's a sub, that's a separate contract with that prime. We don't oversee that particular language. So, I want to get an understanding, if you all are already having conversations with the Attorney's Office to make sure that there's clear and clarifying language for that sub who is coming in looking at good faith on the backing of the City, promoting this, but when it gets to the contract with the sub, they might have a line in there stating, you cannot reach out to the City if I don't pay you or if we have challenges, once it's been identified to clarify that to make sure that there's clear communication, so that our subs who we are trying to get to scale know that they have the support that they need.

Mr. Rana said that's a great question. We're limited in our involvement when it comes to contractual obligations between a prime and a subcontractor, to your point. One of the things that we're being very intentional on with small businesses is that when they are engaging, what are some of the things to consider on the front end. So, that way we're not getting calls nine months into the project, hey, I did not get my payment, can you help me out, and providing legal consultation, which is beyond our purview what we do, but how can we take those lessons learned and throughout our training and small business readiness program, highlight some of those potential concerns that a small business may have on the front end and addressing it in that way.

In regards to the contractual language with a prime and a subcontractor, we're very limited in that involvement, but to your point, it does happen, and how do we make sure that we're not branding, marketing a program, a small business engages, and then they have a potential dispute with a prime. That's something that we're aware of and we're considering how we operationalize that throughout our programming to the best of ability within the legal constraints that we have.

Ms. Mayfield said so, Monica, before you tap in, because hopefully you do have a piece on this, I'm going to encourage for our legal team to look at when we are creating opportunities of good business practices with these potential primes, that in our language it is very clear what the expectations are to help to eliminate and/or reduce until we get to the point where we feel comfortable where our legal team would say, yes, I could defend this to protect these businesses that we're putting so much energy in. Because it is small businesses that are the backbone. It is really a lot of these subs working toward scale that are the ones that are doing the additional hiring. When they don't get paid, their people don't get paid. There's a problem with that, but if that prime didn't receive payment, there's a tracking mechanism that's already in place for them. So, if we're going to have a program where we're looking at the focus of Skill to Build, we must also be courageous enough to put the protections in place to ensure that that business also has a clear mechanism of tracking to ensure that their payment isn't being disrupted and/or they have a process to adjust it, and not having to use CLIMB as a bill collector. We should be tracking that relationship with CLIMB. If this is the third time that a particular vendor has had to utilize them in essence, "as a bill collector," there's clearly a disconnect. So, we should be able to step in to direct in a better way, offering more than mediation, to ensure that we don't have bad partners coming into our community taking advantage of whatever incentives we have, knowing that they can get away with not taking care of our local businesses.

Ms. Allen said yes, I was just going to say that that is something we are starting to talk about as what goes into the contracts. Of course, like you said, we would have to engage legal. We're also thinking about some things around Workforce Development. Is

there some responsibility or good will of the prime to help develop that small business through workforce efforts and so on and so forth. So, I would say, yes, the answer is yes, but I also think we need to continue to let the small business know that they should engage in legal counsel when they're entering into contracts as well. So, there is some responsibility on their side in addition to what we can do, but that is some of the conversation that we're starting to have.

**Councilmember Mazuera Arias** said thanks for the discussion. I wanted to talk a little bit about our foreign-born population. As you all know, we have over 330,000 folks that are foreign born, that's roughly 17 percent of our population, as well as a 43 percent increase since 2010. So, my question is more so how can we do better as a city to understand these high-skilled, degree holder, foreign-born individuals into careers, or how can we work to get them into careers that we have gaps in, such as teachers, nurses, engineers, etc., as well as thinking of different partnerships to create pathways to get those degree holders into careers where we are seeing deficits in?

Ms. Frazier said yes, I'll take that. So, that's an area, Councilmember Mazuera Arias, that I'm passionate about, and that we've noticed over time you have a lot of folks that are coming into the U.S., and they've got their doctorate degrees, they're accountants, they're CPAs, but yet they're Uber and Lyft drivers. So, it's how do we help to convert their credentials and help that crosswalk into the jobs that are here. So, that is one that I have been passionate about over time. I think one of the ways that we do it is, one, identifying those roles, seeing what the crosswalk is. Are there jobs and opportunities that directly relate to the work that they've done before, their background experiences? If not, how do we look at those transitional roles where those skill sets equate to other jobs within our community and with industries, working with partners like the Camino Group and others that are serving our refugees, as well as our foreign born, and immigrant populations. So, I think, one, it's collaboration, it's partners, getting with those trust partners that have the relationships with the communities, but then also it's around our awareness and our preparedness. So, it goes back to how do we get that information to our community, to our talent, to our workforce? What are the careers? What are the opportunities? We have been talking about a career awareness campaign, starting with construction skill trades, but that can expand to other industries. So, I think it's collaborating with our education workforce partners on what careers are here, how do we be intentional about the partners that we know are trusted by those communities, so that we can make sure they get that information, they have those resources, and we can crosswalk where those opportunities are for them.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said thank you. Manager and staff, I would love to have a more in-depth conversation, so we can have some guiding principles that can help us achieve exactly the vision that your setting out for. Thank you.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said so, I'm just going to give a praise report to the leadership that's in front of us this evening. I'm going to speak for myself. I make a lot of phone calls, call you all on the weekend and push you all to do things, and then go beg City Manager when we don't have it in the budget. So, to DCM (Deputy City Manager) Allen, thank you for doing a gap analysis very early on the mobility. So, we're talking about \$25 billion over the next 30 years. I remember even last summer, you said Mayor Pro Tem, how do we get ahead of this and start assessing what business we need, or to stand up so we can be successful? Sha, thank you for coming in and bringing a whole different lens to the whole Economic Development. The collaboration has been very important and successful. I remember seeing you on the front cover of the Business Journal, and it was talking, though, about how success was built on collaboration. So, thank you, and I agree with Danté, keep selling Charlotte. You did a good job selling Charlotte. Danielle, I'm always bragging on you, that many, many years at UNC (University of North Carolina) Charlotte, we knew you were the right person to lead our Workforce Development. So, I'm going to ask you one question, because I think you need to update us. Where do we rank on upward mobility? We were 50, then you joined us. You moved us to 38?

Ms. Frazier said well, I'm not going to say that. I can't take credibility for that. We are now at 38 out of 50, but we may have moved up a notch even from the last report, but yes, 38 out of 50 for economic mobility, and the top third fastest growing city for upward and economic mobility.

Mr. Mitchell said so, once again, thank you, yes. Cheryl, let me say thank you for the CBI series, your support. What was interesting, you didn't sit at the round table with your leadership team, you sat way back in the back in almost the middle row, because you said, I want to observe what the small business is seeing. So, thank you for coming in, and being very supportive of CBI, and continuing to move it.

Staff, I will say this, and let me thank my Council members, that CBI series was successful, because you're present. So many small businesses said, we never had eight Council members in one spot out in the community. So, Kimberly, Dimple and the rest of them, okay LaWana, Danté, and Victoria, thank you all, because I think it sent a strong message how the City Council feels about small businesses. So, keep doing a great job, and to the man who hired all of you all, thank you.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said well, first let me just say thank you. I echo everything that's been said by my colleague, Councilman Mitchell. This is the first time we have amplified our support for small businesses to a level that is more visible, because we always talk about how do we recruit large companies here, bring jobs and opportunities, but really, a lot of the property base comes from small businesses who have helped build this City. So, to see more support for small businesses is very satisfying, and I have seen small businesses where they have gotten more opportunities working with the City. So, keep up the great work, and it's great to see more increased investment in our Workforce Development, not just for the jobs that exist today, but also the jobs of tomorrow, especially in sustainability and resiliency. I know Sarah's team did a great job a couple of years ago when they rolled out Workforce Development for renewable energy. I'd like to see more of that, so we are preparing our workforce for the jobs of tomorrow, especially for students that are graduating high schools that may not want to go traditional four-year path. We want to make sure there are opportunities for those that want that alternative path. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell said thank you. Alright, thank you all, great presentations, appreciate you. Now, we're going to transition to this next item, and as I said, we are going to break at 3:00 p.m., and at 3:00 p.m. you've got pictures scheduled. So, come on up ladies, and we're breaking at 3:00 p.m., so modify your presentations accordingly, so that we also have time for Council to ask questions.

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## **ITEM NO. 6: MOBILITY: PRESERVING NEIGHBORHOODS AND SPACES THROUGH POLICY AND INVESTMENT**

**Rebecca Hefner, HNS Director** said alright. Well, those of you who are still in the room, I'm going to just get moving. Okay, so here's the thing. Yesterday I kicked off my remarks with a musical reference, and as Councilmember Anderson kindly stated to me, you fell flat on your face. I looked it up, that song was recorded in 1966, okay. So, Mayor Pro Tem, I'm going back to what works for me, and that's baseball analogies, alright. So, yesterday I struck out with that musical reference, but today I'm following the Detroit Tigers, forget yesterday, win today. Alright, let's do this. So, the esteemed group that you saw up here just before Monica and I came up, plus me and a couple of others, we did a road show last year over and over and over again, sharing with residents and neighborhoods the plans that you have for investment in Mobility Plus. So, this is mobility and affordable housing and anti-displacement, workforce and small minority business. I like to call myself the third leg of that stool, because I always took up the last segment of the presentation. Mayor Lyles said earlier something really important about trust, and that's what was committed to. In the space around housing and anti-displacement, what was committed to were two important things, the transportation and transit plans that were in front of voters at that time and now approved, will connect

affordable places to live with jobs, services, and amenities, and will help residents stay in place as the transit system expands.

Now, I'm going to echo Sha's comments, and talking about the comments earlier about innovation and best practices. When it comes to housing and affordable housing, people across the country look to you. They look at the investments that you have made through your Housing Bond. They look at initiatives like the Faith In Housing work, and they look at the anti-displacement strategies and investments that you have made. Talking about getting people engaged, you had a whole commission that worked for three years to put together a set of policies, tools, and programmatic recommendations. My team and I were looking through the list just this week. I think we have activated all but one of the recommendations from the NEST (Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization) Commission report, and that one, last one, will be done by the end of this fiscal year, because that's the charge I gave folks. I said, let's get every box ticked. We're going to activate on every single one of these recommendations.

One of the things the panel talked about this morning was, how do you set up a structure that lets people know what you're looking for? Well, you've already done that, and you've done that through your Affordable Housing Funding Policy. So, in 2024, you proposed and the voters approved \$100 million bond for affordable housing, and in that bond, you were very clear, we're not going to just do twice as much of what we've always done. It was an opportunity that you took to reset and rethink and transform your investments in a way that would achieve three high-level outcomes that you're looking for, this wholistic focus on resident stability, neighborhood affordability, and economic mobility. Then, within those investment priorities, that's where you flesh out what it is that you're looking for from your partners and from developers and people who are working with you in our City. So, this is really setting the direction that you want to achieve as you were talking about this morning.

Now, in 2024, you were already talking about and preparing for the mobility investment. The funding mechanism wasn't secured yet, but you were very thoughtful in terms of setting up your Affordable Housing Funding Policy. As it exists today, it already prioritizes anti-displacement and integrates with your mobility investments. So, as you look through it, almost half of the bond is dedicated to anti-displacement. You've already identified in your population priorities a focus on households at risk for displacement, and in your location priorities areas vulnerable to displacement and transit development areas. You have an entire category dedicated to current and planned transit areas.

Then, as you think about dedicated funding, where we are today, and as you'll be thinking about in this budget process going forward, your Housing Trust Fund is not your only funding source. Across all of your funding sources, you're currently investing over \$148 million in affordable housing, \$90 million of that is specifically dedicated to anti-displacement initiatives. You're out in front of this, even though it's a really difficult thing to tackle. I want to remind you all, so not just in the Housing Bond, that \$49 million, you also have another funding source, the TOD (Transit Oriented Development) funding fee-in-lieu funds that are specifically dedicated to investment in land acquisition around transit lines.

Okay, so the other thing I want to kind of plant the seed for is that, Councilmember Mayfield says this all the time. When we say who needs affordable housing, Councilmember Mayfield says everybody needs affordable housing. It's just that depending on who you are and the situation you're in, affordable might mean something different to you. This is the same thing when it comes to housing stability and anti-displacement, is that everyone's in a different situation, they need different things. Homeowners need different things than renters. Families need different things than seniors on a fixed income, so it really just depends. Again, this is just an illustration. I did promise Mayfield when we were going through this presentation, I said I promise I'm not going to talk about every single one of these things, and good thing too, because I don't have a lot of time, but I wanted to put them up here. You have a lot of programs. You have a lot of tools. You have a lot of strategies, and the work that we do every day is to apply those tools and strategies, the right tool in the right place at the right time.

When we think about the right place and the right time, first of all the time is now. You talked about that with the Blue Line. You have to get ahead of this when it comes to transit. So, you want to be thoughtful about how you are investing in housing and anti-displacement along the transit lines, that mobility and infrastructure investment, but displacement didn't start when the sales tax passed. This is a product of our incredible growth of that amazing community that Sha sells to other people. So, we also have to make sure that we're balancing those investments and anti-displacement along transit with the anti-displacement work that's just happening in our neighborhoods, that are experiencing growth, that are getting more dense, and are going through change.

Alright, what's next. Well, this already started. Ya'll were supposed to do this a month or so ago. So, the Mayor actually already made a referral to the Housing Committee, and Councilmember Mayfield and the Housing Committee members have already gotten started. So, the two things that are happening in Committee right now, one, you are exploring new models to deliver more affordable housing, especially along transit, and those models are things about activating the private market. Councilmember Driggs mentioned that this morning, and he was a strong proponent of including that in the Affordable Housing Funding Policy. They are things about our public development model. How do we, as Councilmember Mayfield says, turn this thing on its head? If we want the outcomes that we're looking for, there are ways that we can have more control in that process. Then, the Committee is also looking at the Affordable Housing Funding Policy to think through things, like how do our partnerships work? Are we aligned or do we need to make adjustments? They'll make some recommendations to ya'll around that to make sure that the policy is aligned with the mobility plan and anti-displacement initiatives, and then also to think through the allocation goals, the categories in which you're investing your funds, and thinking about is there a need for targeting some of those funds to specific geographies as we move forward.

So, you will have a chance for questions, but I'm actually going to have Monica run quickly through her piece, it combines with this, and then we'll go to panel mode.

**Debra Campbell, Facilitator** said and actually before Monica comes up, we're going to take just a few questions, Rebecca, before you come up.

**Councilmember Mayo** said so, I was going to back to slide seven, can we go to that, about the TOD land acquisition. I think Councilmember Mayfield does a great point of always asking like, how much money do we currently have in the budget for that. So, that would be my question for this fee-in-lieu. I know for District Three, we're getting hit by a lot of TOD, because we have the Blue Line, and now we're having the Silver Line potentially come through. So, even as I'm seeing rezonings, it's talking about this. So, I'm wondering like, what currently do we have in there, is that the \$21 million, or what do we anticipate?

Ms. Hefner said so, currently available after the most recent land acquisition, so currently available in cash, is around \$2.5 million. That's a combination of the funds for TOD fee-in-lieu that have already been collected, plus the dollars that were in your Housing Bond, specifically for land acquisition. The balance of that \$21 million, which when you take out the things you've already invested, I think is around \$16 million, has been committed but not yet collected. Those funds are collected when the developments go to pull a building permit, and at that time they become available for investment, and so right now there is still a balance left, that's the balance in your Housing Trust Fund, and then it'll replenish as the TOD dollars are collected.

Ms. Mayo said okay. My other question was, how are we partnering with like CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) for some of their underutilized spaces, like Wilmore School, that's still near transit, South End? We know so many people have been priced out of that location. Mayfield, what does that like school professional development CMS has in Camp Greene? They don't use it for school anymore, but it's like professional development?

**Councilmember Mayfield** said if I'm thinking of the right building, it's the Ophelia Garmon-Brown building that's across from the Movement School right off of Freedom, because that was supposed to be a school, and it's now being reimagined. So, you're thinking in Camp Greene?

Ms. Mayo said in Camp Greene, like further in. It used to be like a high school.

Ms. Mayfield said no, it's right off of Camp Greene Street, because that's a voting location, and I have absolutely no idea, because that's also CMS.

Ms. Mayo said well, I know CMS asks us for money to help with like teacher housing, so how were they contributing? I mean, like Wilmore School, that would be a great opportunity for teachers. They could potentially walk to the light rail. [inaudible] Davis.

Ms. Mayfield said [inaudible].

Ms. Mayo said the original one? They keep moving and changing names.

Ms. Hefner said so, I can answer that question. So, when we think about CMS, we're actually thinking bigger, which is, what does it look like to activate public land. So, on the one hand you do have an open referral around this; it came from the Manager last fall, and actually we just haven't gotten to it yet, because we have a lot of referrals in the Housing Committee right now. You'll be seeing it in the next month or so, and we think about how do we work together, City, County, and the school system, to leverage our assets. So, City-owned land and underutilized properties to advance our objectives as a whole, and one of them collectively is affordable housing. So, we have a number of strategies for City-owned land, where you have put out Requests For Proposals to developers. We also have a strategy where we actually work with the urban design team and planning to bring concepts forward, and then when we think about the partnerships with the County and then with CMS, CMS is really where unlocking the magic is, because of the amount of land across the City. So, they're starting with this teacher village, which the City Council supported with an investment in the FY (Fiscal Year) 2025 budget. They're starting there, but that's not the end point, that's just testing the concept, and so the idea is how do we work together over time to not just build teacher villages, but to build housing that supports all of our workforces, and then how do we support broadly affordable housing with those assets. So, that will be coming forward for a deeper dive into committee in the coming months.

Ms. Mayo said okay.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you. Rebecca, thank you for listening to what this committee and previous committees have asked for. As we move forward, one of our challenges is the fact that, for all the committees, we meet once a month, and we have 2½ hours. Mayor, I would like to ask if we can get a referral to Ad-Hoc Committee similar to what we did in 2024 when it was then myself, Dr. Watlington, and Councilmember Driggs, and we submitted the proposal of the affordable housing funding allocation to full Council. We do need to review that, but I also have been reaching out to our Attorney's Office, because I think everyone saw the article about a week or so ago where it identified housing that was considered affordable workforce housing that was built 2017, we've lost. One of those challenges is because of the escalation clause. So, I would love to work with the Attorney's Office to look at whether or not we have the ability of an escalation cap that's tied directly to fixed incomes. So, how does that play out colleagues? We have elders that are being priced out of multi-family units that we have funded. So, yes, we might have a 15, 30-year, even 99-year affordability level on this development, but for that elder that's only on social security, that say receive \$1,000 a month, if they have received a reduction in their social security, and they've been in a unit for six, seven years, they are now priced out, because it's not based off of their 30 percent, it's based off of the Area Median Income, which is based off of the MSA, so the Municipal Service Areas. That says 30 percent can be up to \$26,000 and some change, but this individual earns about \$12,000.

So, when we think about the earlier conversation, and when I mentioned there are ways for us to flip this whole housing conversation on its head, thanks to the Manager, thanks to Rebecca's leaderships, Warren's, and the team, conversations have been happening with the County for a while, but now we're having some different type of conversations. So, if we look at City, County, as well as school land, by law they cannot give us land, we have to buy it at market rate, but what would it look like if we have land that's adjacent if we build together? What would it look like if we had an escalation cap with a focus being tied to fixed incomes? Not for those that have the ability and will grow their income, we want you to get to self sustainability, but if you're on a fixed income, my greatest concern is that if we don't pivot quickly, we are going to see a large number of elders in our community that will be unhoused, and who are not able to get into the workforce. That is not the City we want to be. Because we have an amazing philanthropic community and a community that recognizes the value of housing affordability and they supported the \$100 million, and when the time comes, I'm pretty sure we're going to ask them for another \$100 million for them to support that bond, because we can actually show them that we were good stewards of those initial dollars. I think once a month, 2½ hours in committee will not be enough time for us to really address it, which is why I'm asking Mayor for us to get a referral for Ad-Hoc Committee, because then we get to dig deep and we get to work directly with the Attorney's Office to find out what language can we put in our contracts to protect our residents long term, because the reality is, we're living longer. God rest her soul, we just lost Representative Dannelly. He was 101, and we just lost him last Friday. So, the idea of people only living to their early 70s, late 60s, that's not a reality today. So, how do we make sure we protect. So, I wanted to, while we had this opportunity, to put that out there, as well as to let committee members know that we do have a number of conversations coming, but more importantly to me, we have experts coming in that are in the development community that's going to help share with us some of the challenges their facing, because it's not \$25,000, \$30,000 a door anymore, it's more like \$185,000, \$200,000 plus a door to build and construct.

So, I also met with Kim Barnes with Greater Charlotte Apartment Association. We only had a 4.5 percent vacancy rate. So, all of this impacts, so when we ride around and we say, oh, why aren't prices going down. First thing I love to say, there's actually only a 4.5 percent vacancy rate out there. So, it's also going to be beneficial for us to have representatives from our Apartment Association to come and give us an update, so that while we're looking at this funding policy and seeing if we need to reallocate, this gives us an opportunity to have a real conversation regarding what's on the market right now, what's proposed to come out, and how we fit into that whole conversation. Thank you.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said well, first, Rebecca, thank you for your leadership in implementing our innovative ideas. On slide number eight you talked about all the innovative ideas that we have implemented in past couple of years, and one of the ideas here is Queen City ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Unit), and I know that you rolled out a pilot last year, and there have been a number of applications for that financing. What I would like to see, and I think I'm going to amplify this again, I think I've said this a couple of times, we need to expedite the preapproved design templates for ADUs, because this is going to save homeowners thousands of dollars who want to build ADUs, might be for young adults in their families, or for seniors in their family. I think this is a very innovative way for us to build affordable housing with the 100 percent private sector. So, if you could provide us an update on where we are, I know this is something we've been talking for almost a year, that we would like to see a preapproved design template sooner rather than later, that would be great.

Also, I know that Monica is going to go next. So, this is something you can keep in your pocket, so you can address it. I hear from small businesses, as well as developers, not just affordable housing developers, but even developers that do not do affordable housing, they have shared that our process to build homes, the permitting process, the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) process has added, not just the cost, but time, and how do we help contribute in terms of cost savings? Because ultimately time is money. So, how can we help with streamlining? Because our goal with the UDO was to have some consistency, but if it is adding more time to that process, how can we make

sure that we can eliminate. What I have heard from developers, as well as businesses talk about, and I shared this with Mr. Rana before he left and he has heard similar feedback from small businesses, where now there is the County permitting process, and the City. It has added layer. It used to be just the County, and that has added a level of complexity and the time too, sometimes four months, six months, and that really adds to the frustration, and it adds to the housing cost at the end of the day. If you're trying to tackle affordability, we've got to make sure that we help reduce the cost of building. So, if you could address those two, that would be great. Thank you.

**Monica Holmes, Interim Planning Director** said just real quick on the permitting while I'm coming up. So, we are actually about two months in to an assessment of our permitting process. We hired a consultant to help us understand like what's breaking down where, especially on the side that we can control, on the process that the City controls, which on a single-family lot is storm water, urban forestry and zoning. So, those three categories, to your point, are something new to our single-family housing developers, and so more to come on that. We actually just are getting preliminary results in the next week or two around what are the points in the system where we can be more efficient? We're hyper-focused on it and understand that it needs improvement, and probably additional collaboration between the City and the County. So, more to come, but we're very aware and working on it.

Ms. Ajmera said so, what's the timeline on that?

Ms. Holmes said so, we're working, it's a very quick turnaround with our consultant. They kicked off in January 2026. We have a Phase One that should be in the next couple of months, and then a Phase Two. So, by the end of this summer, we'll have public results and we'll have some results along the way that we can share. I'll work with the Manager's Office on what's the best way to make sure that that information is shared, but they did interviews with the development community in January 2026. They did interviews with our staff, with County staff, to understand all the different points in the process. So, it should be fairly soon, but we were trying to get ahead of it knowing what we were seeing.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I think that's great, because there is a lot of red tape from what I hear, and UDO was supposed to actually streamline all of it, and trying to provide some consistency to developers, and it hasn't done that. So, it has only added more red tape and bureaucracy. So, I'm glad that the consultant is working on it, and we will have some implementation recommendations in coming months. It's great to hear. If you can also comment on the preapproved ADU design template and where we are with that?

Ms. Hefner said sure. So, we are in the process of working those through the approval. The way I like to think about it is, yes, it's taking a long time, but multiple that by all the people who don't have to take that time, once it gets approved. So, we'll get you an update on exactly when we expect that to happen, but it's moving through the process.

Ms. Holmes said okay, so we are going to pivot. So, I'm the closer. So, closer on mobility, and really what I like to call the top of the stool. So, as Rebecca said, you have the leg of housing, you have the leg of transportation and jobs, and the top of that stool is our communities, and where all of those three come together to build our community, and what is that place. Where do the intersections lie, and what do our community members experience as the space that they live, work and take transportation? So, we have to plan for that. We have all the tools in the toolbox, but we have to figure out what tool are we putting in what place and how are we deploying it. So, that's really how we plan for transit. Very excited we have new transit lines that will be built over the next 10 to 15 years. Where are investments around those transit projects going to occur and how are we going to use all of our tools? So, this slide here is just to say, we've done this before. So, we start with a big vision, so it's really great to have Debra here, because she was a part of that vision last time, of how we integrated our transit and land use planning in the 1990s to create the 2025 integrated vision. Then we moved on to station area principles and station area plans. We did that, we've learned a lot, and we're ready to kind of do it again.

So, we have the 2040 Plan. That's our umbrella. That's our framework. We have the Policy Map. We have our area plans we're working on now. What we need is a refresh and an update on what are the principles and the guiding policy around those transit station areas, and then what are all the tools that we need to deploy? That's the station area plans, how are we deploying those tools in each transit station area? So, when we did this 25, 30, 35 years ago, the conversation was all around transit-oriented development, the private investment. What we have learned is we are in a major pivot from just talking about what does it mean to have new private investment and transit-oriented development, so keyword development, new development, and now what does it mean to have transit-oriented communities, where we are aligning the transit investment to the existing community's priorities and that we're showing equitable growth and reducing displacement? So, we want the transit to benefit the community that is there today. So, pivoting from transit-oriented development, transit-oriented communities. So, what you are going to see is when we talk about this policy, when we talk about the principles, we are going to be intentional to talk about transit-oriented communities. So, let me go through a couple more of the differences. When you're talking about just kind of traditional TOD, you're really focused on the density, the numbers. How many people are riding the train? What is the private market going to do? What are all the specific projects, development project here, development project there? When we're talking about transit-oriented communities, we're talking about what are the outcomes the community wants to see? What are the proactive prevention measures we can put in place? How do we make it about the community with their priorities at the forefront, and how do people have the ability to stay where the transit is located?

So, what are transit-oriented communities? They have some of the same design principles that we talked about 25 years ago with transit-oriented development. You want them to be walkable. You want them to have a mixture of uses. You want them to be accessible where you can get there through a variety of modes, so you can walk there, bike there, take a scooter there. You want them to have public spaces that benefit everyone, and then now what we're adding is that that development is centered on equity. So, it's not just the physical features, it's also how do we put equity at the center of that, so everybody benefits from those principles.

So, we're already getting started on this work. We received a couple years ago \$400,000 through an FTA (Federal Transit Administration) grant, and it was called a TOD grant, but it is to look at Silver Line transit-oriented communities, and with that grant we were very intentional to form a TOC, a Transit-Oriented Communities Coalition first before deciding the full framework of the project. So, they started meeting in 2024. It's a partnership with CATS, the City Planning Department, we have members from Economic Development, Housing, etc., and it's really to set, what are the goals of the development around the Silver Line, and to draft a policy and an implementation strategy around the Silver Line specifically for how we want to execute. How do we want development to occur? What are the types and investment we want to see? The coalition actually worked on a vision statement together, so this was co-created with members of the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition. We had partners such as LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), Knight Foundation, some East Charlotte stakeholders there too. So, it is how do we prepare for a future where every neighborhood benefits from transit investment, and we uplift the community? So, we want to preserve their stories. We want to celebrate the cultural vibrancy and create equitable pathways to opportunity. So, this is the vision statement of the Transit-Oriented Communities Coalition, and something for us to build on for both the Silver Line and our future lines.

So, some of the things, these are just ideas, but what we want to continue talking about in this transit-oriented community work is how we set goals for our future transit projects. So, as we move a policy forward, what are the anti-displacement strategies? How do we include character on identity of communities in the work? Councilmember Mazuera Arias, talking about the public facing transit-oriented community scorecard. How do we have a dashboard that is very deliberate to the community that shows these are the types of investments happening in our transit station area, these are the City

investments, these are also private investments, and these are programs that are helping the community in each transit station area, and then so we can measure the success. Are we being successful, and then how do we again continue that community-driven policy?

So, what's next, and this is just where we're headed. So, lots of great discussion about all the mobility work today, but from a policy standpoint, we really want to use the policy to frame the how and the why and what tool goes where. So, all the work that Sha's doing, Rebecca's doing, the work we're doing around procurement, all those are great tools, projects, programs, ways we can implement. We want this Transit-Oriented Community Policy to help us frame where we use which tool in which location. So, this spring/summer, we want to continue talking about the work that [inaudible]. The next work after that is after we have the principles and the policy in place, is we do a specific plan that really dives into the details for each transit station. So, every single transit station, including the Blue Line ones, is we will go in and do a focus, a deep dive plan, as to what are the infrastructure needs, what are the community needs, what are the housing needs, and how do we want to deploy all those tools? Oh, we have a couple minutes. This is the end of mine. We have this set up so that you could ask Rebecca and I questions too, so you'll see her kind of next steps on the top, and then the transit-oriented community's next step here on the bottom, but I think we got through it quick enough.

Ms. Campbell said you did exceptional, thank you so much. Yes, so we can take just a few questions. We've got about seven minutes.

**Councilmember Owens** said I really do appreciate the work that you've put into making all of this accessible to us. An area where I frequently do get inquiry and just don't feel as though I've got enough knowledge to respond intelligently is around the support of the airline and particularly American around helping us with some of our mobility challenges, particularly, vis a vis, their employees. I often hear about their employees not having the wherewithal to get to work and where the Silver Line would really be helpful to that. I also see, though, the advantages and the ways that we can look at creativity from other countries who really nail that traveler experience. I was talking to a gentleman the other day in my office who came up and was speaking, I believe coming out of Hong Kong, and saying that you know when you get on the rail line you check your bags, and those get checked through. I mean, it is just a seamless experience. So, I appreciate that there are a couple different visions of how that Silver Line can be most useful, both to our workers as well as to people traveling. Can you speak a bit about how we're prioritizing some of those baby steps, and where we may have some milestones that are first and foremost perhaps addressing work needs, and then secondarily perhaps building an experience that's better for all travelers?

Ms. Holmes said yes. I mean, with the Silver Line specifically, it's an interesting inflection point, because you have the new established MPTA (Metropolitan Public Transportation Authority), and kind of the work happening with them, to finalize like where are the specific stations located? What does the final design look like? So, as the City's role, and the work that we'll be doing as part of the policy, is really setting up like, what are the priority needs? So, is it getting to work? Is it making sure we're preserving the existing character of the community? Then, making sure our policies align. So, taking your example, it is to understand like which stations is that a bigger issue, and so then when we go to implement policies and programs, we're doing that in alignment to where the need is, because we have finite resources. So, if we need to improve like first mile, last mile, which is like getting to the station, then we understand that and we can prioritize in the station area plan process transportation investments that close that gap. Does that make sense? So, it's really understanding first like where specifically that is a major issue, and then trickling that down to inform our funding choices. So, we're working in parallel, because the Silver Line's in design right now.

Ms. Mayo said I know we talk a lot about the Silver Line, and kind of how that's going to work. Can you talk a little bit about the Red Line, because I know that's going to happen

before the Silver Line. How are we being thoughtful in how that could impact displacement and things like that?

Ms. Holmes said yes. So, I gave the Silver Line example, but I want to be really explicit that we got the Silver Line grant first. So, we got it about three years ago before knowing the order in which they were going to be developed, and so, now that we know more about the order of the lines, we are using the Silver Line TOC model and project as a way to lay the foundation very much in sync with the rest of the City. So, you'll see on my timeline, is that we are going from the Silver Line TOC strategy, basically almost in parallel into a City-wide principle and policy, because we know that the Silver Line will not be the first line and we want to have principles and policy for every station in the City, and we have an existing Blue Line. So, we also need to be able to have updated principles and policy that guide our existing transit stations, Blue Line, Gold Line, in parallel with the rest. So, we can start putting this framework in place before the new line opens. The Red Line specifically, we will be working to understand more the dynamics of the Red Line and the land use around the Red Line in parallel, because it skipped a line. It's gone from having a little bit of work done on it, to now being what we will build next. So, there's a lot of work to be done on that.

Ms. Mayo said okay.

**Mayor Lyles** said I want to say thank you for this review. I really hope, as a Council, that what we will do is be a policy Council, and that these things that are on this board today, I hope that they will come to the Council for a while, and that we're able to have a policy discussion and to actually put something on the shelf that works. I think that will be a way to make sure that we continuously look at what's necessary, Silver Line, and all of those things. So, I just want to say thank you guys for what you've been doing, but I think really one of the things that I hope that we will do, is that we will have a discussion and we'll decide that this is a policy that we want to have and make it certain for people to come in, especially when we talk about the trust area. I mean, you're going to do great work, but we want to make sure that everybody has an opportunity to participate in it, and so that means that we have to do it as a policy. So, I hope that's what we will be able to do, and I hope, my gosh, policy fall/winter, it's sound pretty cool to me, so thank you, Monica.

**Councilmember Mazuera Arias** said thank you, Rebecca and Monica. You all said all the best words I like. I really appreciate the work that you're doing, and especially as we spoke about like how we unite as a Council. I might have my disagreements with some of the transportation plans, but the voters voted for it and we've got to make it the best we can. One of the questions I had, as the Mayor said policy, is how can we focus on the other modes of transportation, such as buses, and how can we upscale our transit station and buses, and align these developments and these planning where bus stops are? Not just a rail, because as District Five awaits, TBD (to be determined) the Silver Line Extension, we're going to rely a lot on buses and microtransit, and so I would love to see how we incorporate that.

Ms. Holmes said well, I will just put a plug in here, is that other cities around the country are moving to a mode neutral decision around land use. So, for example, Chicago has, you know if you're on a high-frequency bus line, they're considering that equal as if you're on a transit line. So, they're applying a Transit-Oriented Community Policy that is city-wide mode neutral. So, to the Mayor's point, one of the decisions that we could make, the Council could make, in a policy is to take that approach, to have a mode neutral approach, meaning that whether it is bus rapid transit or bus or commuter rail or a light rail, you're making policy that could apply, and it could be based on a frequency. So, does the service come every 20 minutes, and that's your definition? In a policy, that gives us that framework to be able to set that stage, so you're really clear about how the decisions are being made and where they impact.

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

Ms. Hefner said we'll be talking about just that very thing on Thursday in the Housing Committee, so tune in.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said I love this. God, you're so good. So, I mean I guess my call to action to my Council members, my colleagues at Transportation Committee and the committee members is, let's look into mode neutral policy to help frame our guiding framework and policies around transit-oriented communities. Thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said alright, well, I'll make it quick. Monica, thank you for this vision and thank you for planning ahead. I think oftentimes we think about the Blue Line Extension, and some of the lessons that we have learned from Blue Line is that we don't make the same mistakes as we build out Red Line or Silver Line, especially minimizing displacement, and also being intentional about the type of development that we want, especially along the transit corridors and transit lines. So, thank you for planning ahead and thank you for that vision. Actually, Alyson helped me really think about how this would translate into, because at the end of the day, the transit authority will decide where the stations are, but at the end of the day, we will still have to make decisions on our land use, and that's where we can make a lot of difference, is the land use, and how the type of policies that we put in place today will inherit results maybe a decade down the road or maybe two decades. So, thank you for that.

Ms. Campbell said thank you. We did it, alright. Ya'll did a great, great, great job. We're going to take a 20-minute break, but the first thing you've got to do is take your picture. We have to memorialize this. You follow the photographer, and he's going to show you where the pictures will be taken. Follow the tall guy. Now, gear up, because I think ya'll might go outside, so it may be a little chilly.

The meeting recessed at 3:04 p.m. and reconvened at 3:26 p.m.

Ms. Campbell said alright, I think we've got everybody, so we're going to start on the economic development projects update, and Alyson, I think I'm turning it over to you.

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## ITEM NO. 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

**Alyson Craig, Assistant City Manager** said we're going to sit, because we're going to bounce back and forth a little bit throughout the presentation. So, first I want to say thank you. I have some friends in the back over there, so Charlotte Center City Partners, the Knights, Moore & Van Allen, CRVA (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority). So, just wanted to say thanks for joining us today and supporting us.

A lot has happened since the retreat last year. I don't even think he's in here, Sha, is he not in here? Okay, we have a new hire, we talked about him earlier, but this is significant also in that now there is a dedicated resource in the City Manager's Office, and there's a dedicated Director for the Economic Development Department, which is great, but what it's also done, Sha coming over from the County, has really strengthened the collaboration between the City and the County on delivering economic development projects. Staff has always been great, but it really has been quite renewed having Sha in the seat that he's in. So, we spent the last year thinking about what does economic development mean for the City. It's really bigger than just one department, and you heard about that a little bit earlier when we were talking about small business and a thriving workforce. These are two really big areas for the City, and you can see that there are a lot of different departments involved in this from Economic Development to General Services, Procurement, CBI, Workforce Development. So, these are two really important focus areas for the City's economic development. Also, something that we didn't really talk too much about today is really business growth and innovation. I think it's really great that the last year was the strongest in business recruitment that we'd had in decades, which is amazing, and then the last priority is really what we're going to focus on in this presentation today, is about public/private partnerships and how the City works with our partners to deliver great projects.

Okay, so just to go over the agenda, we're going to spend a few minutes celebrating our accomplishments. I think we've talked a little bit about how that's important to not always just talk about the work, but also talk about the great things that've happened. I'm going to turn it over to Matt, and he's going to give an overview of the funds. So, before we start talking about projects, it's good to know about the funding, where it comes from, and how it can be used. Then we're going to start talking about actual projects, and I want to talk about that for a minute. So, we grouped these projects intentionally. First, is we're going to cover City-owned projects, and so I think it's important to recognize when we are the property owner of an asset, we have a certain level of responsibility. Then I'm going to talk about projects in which they are a collaboration with the County, because when we can work with the County on advancing mutual goals, I think this is beneficial to all the residents. Then we're going to talk about some general other projects. What I want to emphasize is the level of detail in the presentations for each of these projects is not necessarily indicative of the level of priority, it's just where it is in the evaluation process. So, there are going to be some projects that have multiple slides, and there are going to be some projects that are just a bullet point. What we think is really important is that you're in your Strategy Session here, and we think it's important to be very transparent about all of the conversations that are going on with all these different projects, so that you see everything as you start to identify priorities that you have and priorities in different projects.

Okay, so a couple of recent wins. Actually, let me start first by saying hospitality and tourism in FY2025 had a \$1.2 billion annual economic impact on our region. We saw 33 million visitors, one in nine residents are employed in hospitality, and over \$9 million in direct visitor spending, which is tremendous. So, we had the Spectrum Center completed some renovations there last fall, and had a grand reopening of the Spectrum Center in October 2025, with 20 events over 30 days, and more than 325,000 people visiting. Bank of America Stadium last year had a \$1.1 billion impact, and the renovations began in 2026, but really the impact of those investments that you've made there will further some of the great advances you've seen, like you see the Savannah Bananas in the upper right hand corner, two sold out games in June 2025, drawing almost 150,000 people. We had three concerts with over 175,000 people attending, and so really excited about that work starting. The Convention Center has an annual economic impact of \$87 million, and has major events like the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Convention, you can see Mayor Lyles there, the Mary Kay Annual Seminar, and the American Football Coaches Association. I want to mention too that we also have some major events. We continue to attract some major sporting events, like the PGA (Professional Golfers' Association of America) Championship, World Military Games, and possible bids to host NBA (National Basketball Association) All-Star weekend.

I want to highlight some recent public/private partnerships. Of course, we have to talk about The Pearl; it opened in June 2025 as our first Innovation District, and really made history last fall being the first four-year medical school that Charlotte has. We've got the River District, a huge masterplan community celebrated the major milestone in September 2025, with a grand opening. It's a huge public/private partnership with the City and the County. Then you have Ballantyne, where we of course are right now; it's a huge destination for business and also residents. The Bowl opened in 2024, which is a really cool place to visit and hang out, and it's really been instrumental, these investments in attracting some major high-profile employers, like SoFi, Citigroup, [inaudible] and others.

Then, I want to talk about some smaller investments that are small in size, but huge in impact. Of course, the Excelsior. In November 2025, you approved a plan to fund a historic and transformative catalytic investment on Beatties Ford Road. Do Greater, a coalition of Charlotte based corporations and foundations joining forces to complete and activate an innovative lab Uptown, and then Eastland Yards. I think we've spent a lot of time talking about how important Eastland Yards is for sports and entertainment for local businesses, public space, and diverse housing, and we will have a grand opening on Friday for the sports side, which is really exciting. Now, before we get into the

projects, as I mentioned, Matt's going to give you an overview of the different funding buckets and considerations, and then we'll start talking about projects.

**Matthew Hastedt, Chief Financial Officer** said thank you, Alyson. So, Matt Hastedt, City CFO. Appreciate Mayor and Council for allowing me to be here today. I've already been warned once by Debra to make sure we keep this as quick as possible. So, this is a lot of information, so happy to sort of follow up as necessary, but really wanted to try to frame some of the discussion today. So, I think this slide was actual a part of the budget presentation last week, and really wanted to frame here that, while we may be talking about a hospitality project or projects, we're talking about the City of Charlotte, and if we issuing capital dollars for anything, for debt or anything, this is City of Charlotte debt that's funding things like the Convention Center, Hall of Fame, Spectrum Center. So, it's really important to make sure we're taking our management AAA practices down to our hospitality investments as well. When we're looking at financing considerations, we have a couple different times where we look at, or we have debt affordability or debt capacity models for all of our funds, including our Hospitality Funds that I'll hit on in just a second, but we have a couple of times a year that we update those. So, every time we have our financial audit, we update for actuals, through the budget process we update for actuals. As marketing conditions occur throughout the year with raising interest rates or lowering interest rates, we're adapting the model to make sure we're reflective of that. Then really when it comes to actually looking at a project itself, we start looking at a couple of these key factors. So, what are the actual project cash flows? What are the fund balance requirements that our funds have to make sure that we're maintaining that today and projecting that out to the future? Are there other policy requirements we have? I'll get to a couple of those in a second. Making sure we're doing this in a way that never jeopardizes our rating criteria. That's always one of our hallmarks that we always want to manage to.

So, one of the other things I wanted to sort of highlight, we're talking about sort of the management AAA. We also have the Capital Hospitality Revenue Investment Policy. So, this is a Council adopted policy back in 2001, and it really sets some of the guardrails for how we evaluate these projects going forward. So, we established some of the financial metrics and policies like fund balance, we always have to maintain at least 100 percent of the next year's fund balance in those funds, because some of these are funded by the hospitality dollars that are more vulnerable to economic shocks than say property tax. So, we always want to make sure we always have that. On top of that, we actually have a recession mitigation reserve. So, for the last five years, we average basically 25 percent of that, and keep that above and beyond our fund balance policy, again, to make sure that we're never in a position where we have to have a momentary callback of what our capability is. Debt structure, we're doing 20-year financings for most of these assets for a level principal and interest so that we make sure that we're amortizing these over the life of the useful asset, so we're never paying for debt service for something past its useful life. When we're looking at the actual projects, we're looking at economic development impact, socioeconomic impact, all of those types of things are a critical part of when we're evaluating these. One of the things we also committed to was things like today, giving you a projection out from some of the horizon projects. So, that's what we're doing in part today, and as Alyson said, some of these are further along in evaluation, but things pop up that we don't always know about, but we're doing the best we can to kind of lay out what we know, dollars that have been asked for the City as best we can.

So, we do have, I'll say depending how we look at things three to four buckets for Hospitality Fund. So, Convention Center Fund, I do have the budget amounts and fund balance amounts, and I'll get to those in a second, but wanted to sort of show the scale of scope of some of these funds, because these are pretty big dollars that are coming in with the prepared food and beverage tax, and the hotel/motel with tax for occupancy. So, the Convention Center Fund can be used on the Convention Center for operations and capital improvements, amateur sports, and stadiums over 60,000 seats, which is essential Bank of America Stadium. Tourism One and Tourism Two, so those are actually combined within the budget book, our financial statements, and actually within the Council's policy for the Hospitality Investment Policy, and that is just based on how

some of those revenues work. Sometimes some of those are transfers, so we have to sort of combine those, and we're looking at those, but the Tourism One is where we've traditionally done things like the Spectrum Center and some of our special events. Tourism Two is where we've done primarily the cultural arts campus, like The Bechtler, The Mint, The Harvey B. Gantt Center, so some of those historical projects, and then the Hall of Fame is a dedicated fund for just the Hall of Fame improvements, the parking deck and the Crown Ballroom. So, I did have the fund balance numbers there just to show a scale of sort of where those funds sit. I do think it's always important to make sure we talk about it. When we talk about fund balance, it does not equal capacity, it does not equal affordability. Most of these funds are sort of built up over a period of time, and then they're programmed to be spent out over a period of time. So, Convention Center is a great example of that. We have \$166 million. We also have a \$650 million commitment to Bank of America Stadium improvements. So, this is making sure that this is where it is today, we anticipate revenues going up over a period of time, and debt service coming on over a period of time, and that's all factored into how we have the plan of finance.

Then, I did want to give a little bit of a historic use, since we have some new Council members, and just an idea of sort of some the projects that were done within these funds. So, obviously, we have the Convention Center. The Eastland Yard Amateur Sports is a part of that. One of the things I think is also interesting here is you can actually see that many projects can sometimes fit in two buckets, so Eastland Yard is a great example of that, as we have amateur sports component and a general CIP component. So, you often have some of those. The BOplex is an example of that. We have made historic investments into the Bojangles Coliseum and Ovens, that's a City-owned facility. We also had some identified funding back when we did the Connector Facility that addressed some of the ADA and other issues that we had there that was a part of the general CIP. You can sort of see that, and one thing I think is also kind of indicative here is that the Tourism One and Tourism Two buckets are probably the most available sources of funding, and it's also the most used source of funding for a lot of these projects. So, that tends to be a recurring pattern, because Convention Center of Hall of Fame have much more narrowly defined uses, that it sort of sometimes isolates those from some of the asks there.

Then, when we're looking at specific projects, we always want to make sure we're staying with statutory compliance and appreciation to our hospitality and tourism partners that help us extend, say the prepared food and beverage statute a couple years ago, that sort of allowed us to go after some of the improvements at Bank of America Stadium. So, always making sure we stay statutory compliant, and we're making sure we're staying within in the City Council adopted investment policies.

Then a couple of the really big things are project eligibility. So, what fund can be used? Whether it's the hospitality fund or the general CIP potentially, but I'd say two of the absolutely most important things when we're looking at capacity or affordability are what's the timing of the cash flow? The how much and when drives really everything. Then how are the funds going to be used in ownership? So, I'll say, for example, when we're looking at some of the bigger projects like Spectrum Center or Bank of America Stadium improvements, us, finance economic development, the Attorney's Office, General Service all worked very closely to identify how much funding can go out the door in any given year and how that fits into our plan of finance. It was also critical on how is our money being used? If we're looking at capital investments, if we're going to finance something over a period of time, we have to own an asset to capitalize over a period of time. If we're using cash for something, that is a completely different thing than if it's going to be an owned asset by the City, and that's maybe leased back through a third party to use, but we still maintain ownership rights and a security interest in it. So, those are some of the biggest things, because it can be anywhere from X dollars in year one to 10-fold if we can wait five years for affordability. So, it really matters on when and how our money's going to be used to really even start looking at affordability or capacity with any of these models. I'll turn it over to Alyson to talk about some of the projects that we know.

Ms. Craig said okay, so we're going into the City-owned bucket first. So, I'm going to start with BOplex. So, this past year, they had a record impact on the \$61 million, hosting 311 events this year. Some of these have been the Checkers, music and comedy performances, the HBCU postseason college basketball tournament, high school graduations, this spring the Crown will debut. Then it was funny, I was reviewing the slides this morning, and sometimes you think your phone's listening to you, and like right as I got to the slide it popped up and was like, Battle of the Bands is coming here in 2026, so that's another one. So, since 2015, we have invested \$34 million in two different phases, these included new seating, improved hospitality space and public art, and so there's just been a lot going on there.

So, bringing this to you today, we've seen some critical needs at BOplex. So, we've got outdated mechanical systems that are as much as 70 years old, and it's raising the risk of disruption in operations, and as I mentioned, all the number of activities that are planned, that can be quite disruptive. So, really what's needed fairly immediately is HVAC upgrades, about \$23 million. I think it's important to do an MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) assessment, about \$2 million for a total estimated of \$25 million, so that includes two chillers, [inaudible] ovens, six air handlers at Bojangles, and others. So, this is moving a little bit on an accelerated timeline. Because these needs are so critical. The installation is critical to manage that around all of the different events that's planned at BOplex. There's also equipment demand. So, data centers are competing for this type of equipment too, and so really wanting to make sure that we're maintaining this July 2026 installation schedule, we would need to order the stuff by the end of March 2026, and if we don't, then we're really running the risk of not being able to do an install until July 2027. So, what staff is proposing to maintain the schedule is to bring this item to ED (Economic Development) Committee on Thursday, so we'll have a detailed discussion and vote about whether or not to move this forward to full Council, and if so, then it would move to the March 23, 2026 meeting for full Council's vote. There would be, at a later date, an approval of debt issuance, but that is not a factor in actually getting things moving and being able to order the equipment.

**Debra Campbell, Facilitator** said excuse me, can I interrupt for just one minute? We have a request from Councilmember Ajmera.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said can you go back to previous slide on BOplex? Yes, so this was in the news recently. I saw that they had to cancel, because of disruption where water was leaking and the roof had to be replaced. So, would any of this capital improvement address that?

Ms. Craig said so, General Services, at the same time they're evaluating this work with CRVA, they're also looking at some of the roof repairs that may be needed, so that is an active investigation ongoing.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. I think we need to address that, it's embarrassing.

Ms. Craig said yes, and we can take a deeper dive in committee as well on Thursday to talk about that.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, and what bucket is this from?

Mr. Hastedt said it would be looking at the tourism bucket for this one.

Ms. Ajmera said Tourism One or Two?

Mr. Hastedt said Tourism One. From a policy perspective, it is one fund, but we'd be primarily looking at the Tourism One bucket.

Ms. Ajmera said but it could be funded from Tourism Two?

Mr. Hastedt said yes.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, Tourism Two is just based on the City policy, where Tourism One is based on the state law? Go back to the slide where it's Tourism One and Two. I was just looking at the capacity to see. I know there are critical needs that will come, not just for this facility, there would be something else, but I just think that when you have a game that is being interrupted where literally people are having to move to watch the game somewhere else, or the team cannot play, I mean that is a critical repair.

Mr. Hastedt said yes. So, Tourism One has more, let's say, traditional hospitality revenue being the occupancy tax and the rental car tax, and the Tourism Two has a TIG, a Tax Increment Grant, from the cultural arts campus and then a PAYGO (Pay As You Go) transfer. So, from a capacity point of view when we look at affordability or capacity on one of these types of projects, especially a City-owned project, we're going to sort of look at the entire tourism bucket, so we'd be looking at both Tourism One and Tourism Two to make sure we're addressing the City needs from a City facility first, before it'd be going to anything else. So, it is a City Council policy for how the Tourism Two is funded, and that goes back to an interlocal agreement that we had with the County when we originally did the cultural arts campus.

Ms. Ajmera said so, to followup on that, this \$94.8 million, obviously it's going to evolve based on the tax collection and based on how we are doing in terms of our debt projections, but this \$94.8 million is current capacity where we can issue a debt on?

Mr. Hastedt said that is the current fund balance, that is not capacity now. I was going to maybe save this towards the end, but just from maybe setting some expectation as far as what some of our capacity numbers are, these are outside of specific projects, outside of timing, because if we look at say, starting in FY2027, and then sort of if we did nothing over the next couple of years, and today for the tourism combined capacity with Tourism One and Tourism Two, we'd probably be looking at about \$45 million to \$50 million of affordability. If we were to wait out until 2032 before we did anything, it would jump up to \$130-plus million, because some of the old arena debt starts to roll off at that time. So, that's where sort of the timing has a critical function of what our affordability is, and where the cash flows of a specific project would need, but if we're looking at sort of today, probably in that, and this is sort of a capital finance, not cash contribution, so that's where we have to really understand exactly what our money is sort of going into, whether it's the Bojangles Ovens projects or any of the other demands that we may have on the tourism project.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, so obviously we always look at the capacity when we are doing the capital planning, just like we do with our General Fund. So, in this case, you have \$94.8 million currently in fund balance, but the capacity is only \$40 million?

Mr. Hastedt said because we still have, for example, the Spectrum Center debt hasn't fully been brought on, because they're just finishing the sort of ribbon cutting for that, and sort of the timing of that. So, that's a really big part of this, is where we've had commitments that we have already made or factored in, and as those come in over time we want to make sure that those are always prioritized first to maintain our bond rating [inaudible].

Ms. Ajmera said okay, that's helpful. Thank you, Matt.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said yes, and so I want to apologize to Matt. We got a tough go at it last year, because we didn't put that number in. So, Matt, put the number in, but as you said, last year, it's extremely complicated and it's not the number.

Ms. Ajmera said exactly. We need to always look at the capacity, because that's the correct number for us to plan off of, just like we do with our General Funds Capital Plan, because that just looks like a lot of money, but it's not, when you have to pay debt.

Mr. Hastedt said and the challenging part is with capacity. Until we know what a specific timeline of a project is, capacity is almost impossible to project. So, that becomes kind of it's the chicken or the egg type of a thing where we really dive into with Economic

Development and General Services to see exactly how the timing of the funds are needed. Because when we're looking at Spectrum Center, it could've been anything from \$100 million to \$500 million if Hornets and Sports Entertainment may have waited an extra four years, but it's that balance between sort of those things that really drives how much we can do, and also how the money itself is going to be used.

Ms. Ajmera said so, are these teams not providing a project schedule for each one of these projects that's been approved by the Council?

Mr. Hastedt said before it gets approved by Council, we always had that, so that's a lot of what myself and Kathleen, for example, have been doing with Steve Bagwell and the CVRA's, really trying to iron out exactly what the cash flow needs are of this project, and for some of the other projects that we're talking about. That's why they're only to here now, is that until we actually get that specific timeline, we won't bring it to you, because we have to make sure we can afford something before we bring it to you.

Ms. Ajmera said got it, okay, thank you, Matt.

**Councilmember Anderson** said just very quickly, I wanted to say, Ms. Ajmera, it wasn't just one event, it was actually two events that were affected by water leaking through the roof, it was a Checker's game, as well as the U.S. Curling event, that were impacted, and this is compounded for BOplex as well, because the HVAC MEP work is really the most pressing issue that they have, and it is potentially hurting them from attracting other events. Last year there was a new MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) event that has said they want to come back this year, but the HVAC issues were critical in them making that decision. It just so happened that the roof was something that happened due to extreme weather, so this is a compounded issue with the BOplex.

**Councilmember Graham** said yes, and I just want to add to it, and I know we're stuck for time, but I had the opportunity to actually tour the building, the guts of the building, when I was hosting a potential client who wanted to move an event to Charlotte. The building gets used, as you saw the numbers, constantly, and it's a great Class B+ building for the City in joining to Spectrum Center, and so the work that they're requesting is really, really needed, because the building is literally used weekly for a wide variety of events. It hosts our minor league soccer team, and it only has one bay for deliveries, right Steve, it only has one bay. So, it really does deserve the attention of the Council, and again Councilmember Mitchell now is leading the ED Committee, but we've been talking about this behind the scenes, the Economic Development Committee, for the last two years, and so it's now advanced to this point. So, it's just not like it's a new item, it's something that we've been researching and studying and understanding the needs of the building for a while now, and obviously the leakage is just yet another example of why we should pay extra attention to this asset, because it's a valuable asset that the City really, really needs to be online all the time, and certainly we don't want to be on the news for a leaking roof. So, I think this is really something that is a priority for the Council, and I'm glad to see the accelerated timeline for consideration.

**Councilmember Mazuera Arias** said I just want to echo what all my Council members are saying. I think it's great that we're fast pacing this. I think it's very critical, especially in May 2026, we're going to put online The Crown, the new minor WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) team, and so it's going to be home to them, and so we want to make sure that it is up to date and is attracting the visitors that need to be attracted to the City and to The Coliseum. Also, to point out that this lives in East Charlotte in District One, where it is one of the very few venues, community spaces, available to black and brown communities, and the need to have this space open in that side of town and operational and functioning is very crucial. Also, want to take a point of personal privilege to just congratulate and applaud Steve Bagwell and Shawn Heath from the Checker's. They had that leak and then the next day on President's Day, they were able to pack the house again with a quick turn around time and limited resources and supplies. So, thank you, Steve and the whole team for doing what you're doing.

Ms. Campbell said back to presentation.

Ms. Craig said alright, thank you. It looks like we'll have a lively discussion, and a great one on Thursday, so thank you for that little preview there. So, Charlotte Gateway Station. So, this of course is a multi-modal facility with private development. It's pretty exciting, because you're talking about local bus, Amtrak, Greyhound, the Gold Line, the Red Line, and the Silver Line. So, having all of that altogether with private development is a pretty important and transformative project for Charlotte. There's a lot of partners involved, and I think this one is particularly important, and we talked a little bit about the transition yesterday, that we've got a new partner at the table, and so really wanting to work through that new partnership as part of this project. So, we've been looking at this. Staff has been working on it. We've been looking at different site development options with really leaning forward that there's a priority in delivering the Amtrak Station by 2030. We've also been talking about real estate trends, things are really improving in that space, particularly with office, and so what does that look like with a private developer for phasing and what could come online first. So, still not ready for Council to come yet, we're still working through this, but it will come before you soon.

Discovery Place. So, of course this is a City asset. It is showing its age. The Flagship is the facility that's Uptown, but there's four different spaces. The Uptown location opened in 1981, the last major renovations occurred in 2011, and it really just doesn't have the ability to adapt and morph that science museums built today have. It is one of the most visited hands-on science museums in the Country, and also serves as an important extension of our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. So, it's really a facility that's not about looking forward, it's about what's happening today. What can we teach about technologies in the future? It's really because of its space it's not able to sort of flex and be able to be innovative with trends, and so wanting to talk through what that looks like. So, at the retreat last year, we talked about three different options about the future of Discovery Place. You continue at the current location, and maybe potentially put an aquarium out at another location. There was another option to move Discovery Place to a new location and use the Uptown site for something else, or there's an option to redevelop Discovery Place with mixed-use development opportunities. So, since then, we've hired a local consultant, as well as a cultural resource consultant, to work with the City to do some preliminary work on benchmarking, evaluating our options, and starting to look at cost analysis and considerations. Again, we're still in the early phases of this. The next slide, I'll show you a little bit of sort of benchmarking from the assessment, but this is scheduled to go to ED Committee later this spring. So, just the highlight of some of the initial benchmarking results from the consultant is that, of course, the urban location limits traditional growth, and we've done the assessment, and you can't go up, of course, you can't go down, and then going horizontally is not really possible either, so expansion is quite limited.

Maintaining economic accessibility places demands on revenue replacement. One of the great things about Discovery Place is that they offer programs and reduced ticket prices for those that are in need, which is a tremendous thing and attracts a lot of visitors for that reason, but we've also found in looking at some of the other similar museums, that the ticket prices are higher than what Discovery Place charges, and so trying to balance being competitive while also being accessible to everyone is important. So, the multi-site idea is a great opportunity, because you could start to have a greater footprint, have different options for different ideas and different experiences for the visitors; however, it does provide a higher maintenance to revenue ratio than just the efficiency of the single site, so really wanting to recognize that.

The aquatics exhibit are exciting. There's a lot of demand for aquarium facilities, and there's a lot of interest, but it is a big commitment, and it's a 24/7 commitment, because this requires, you can't really adapt this building, because of load requirements. There are some additional needs in terms of the chemistry and creating the sea water for the health of the animals, and so it's a pretty big commitment that is not an insignificant operational cost. Finally, like many cultural facilities and other projects, financial stability requires corporate, philanthropic, and civic support to really be successful. So, again, this is coming to committee in the spring. We will talk through where we are with the

consultant. Really one of the most important things is to start to really test what these different considerations look like of options, and even more importantly how much they're going to cost and what type of partnership would be necessary to make them successful.

Mr. Graham said we just invested last year some maintenance at Discovery Place, correct?

Ms. Craig said we did.

Mr. Graham said okay, and secondly, they still have an outstanding obligation to the County for a project they haven't delivered on as of yet, is that correct?

Ms. Craig said I believe so. I may need to phone a friend for that one.

Mr. Graham said okay, just checking.

Ms. Ajmera said just to follow up on his question, how much was the last investment we made?

Ms. Craig said I don't have those numbers on hand. Do you have them? We can give that information as a follow-up.

Ms. Anderson said so, this was another one that I actually visited Uptown, and you're right that their operations are very, very intricate, and they're running out of space, but they also feel like they're being left behind in that Uptown Tryon corridor, because so many other buildings have been touched with the new library and the Carolina Theatre. It's a highly-utilized building, but the façade and the variety of challenges they have that they need investment. So, this is really one that I'm looking forward to discussing in committee, because they have some specific ask, but at the same time it is something that drives traffic, especially for the youth Uptown, in an equitable manner. So, I look forward to the committee discussion.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said I'm also looking forward to us having this discussion in committee, which you're going to bring it to us a little bit more detail on these considerations. I personally would love to see Discovery Place stay Uptown, that is a major asset when you look at what has been invested in the Carolina Theatre, which is skyrocketing with events and programming, but to have it where it's located is a major asset in Uptown. So, if there's consideration of moving, then also looking at transportation, what would parking look like? How far out we're talking about? Is it feasible to have the two separate pieces? So, you think about, what is it, The Bloom that was created in the old site. I don't know what the update on that is. I don't know if that falls under any of our categories of hospitality and tourism. The last thing that I remember is when we had the space exhibit that we had, and that's been what two years now, but I'm definitely excited to see how we can make the investment. It would also be helpful for me to get an understanding, and I think for all of Council, to get an understanding of when we're looking at these assets that we have, outside of having consultants coming in, what is our tracking plan? Because we know investments are being made, and for some it may feel like other facilities were fast tracked. So, are we looking at year of initial introduction into the City? How are we tracking? If we're looking at dollars that we've already invested, making sure we're keeping a balance, so that it doesn't appear that we're putting other assets before, like it has a higher tier as far as attraction. When Discovery Place was able to host the Marble Exhibit, that was a major revenue driver, but more importantly, that brought a lot of eyes from across the nation into the City. So, when you look at Blumenthal, you look at all the things that's bringing people in, I would just love for us to be able to really have a conversation that provides all the answers to the questions, so that we're looking at not only the financial commitment, but also for lack of a better word, the legacy commitment, to ensure that we maintain the support we need for those pieces of Charlotte that have been here versus energy or desire for all things new and shiny.

**Councilmember Mayo** said when this comes to committee, can we just make sure that we have like some of the numbers? I'd really like to go through that. So, seeing like how many usage, how many of the schools are going there, Title One verse really to see, think through, like how is this impacting people in Charlotte? How many tourism dollars is it bringing? Things like that. I think it would help tell the whole story right now. I've been to the Discovery Place, but it's been awhile, when I was a teacher. So, just thinking through kind of that funding model. With the aquarium, would we vote on that? Yes, because I'm curious about the appetite of Council for something like that.

Ms. Craig said so, this is just a quick overview of everything that's out there on the horizon, and that everything that would ultimately be Council action will go to committee first for a deep dive, it'll go to full Council, and we'll make sure everyone has all the information they need to make really important financial and community decisions, and so, yes, we will have all that information whenever we bring anything forward. This is just, as I was saying earlier, there's a lot of projects on here, and they're all at different levels of evaluation, and so the information is varied, but it's not intended to give you everything to make a decision on it today.

Ms. Campbell said it's not intended to give you everything, but it's also intended to be full disclosure and transparent.

Ms. Craig said exactly, be transparent about everything that's out there.

Ms. Campbell said these are things that potentially may be coming and staff is working on.

**Mayor Lyles** said I just wanted to ask if the Discovery Place at the park, is it completed as well?

Ms. Craig said it's under construction right now, the Nation Museum?

Mayor Lyles said yes, the Nation Museum, I just wondered about that.

**Councilmember Watlington** said I did just want to lift up Discovery Place in terms of its role as being one of the top 10 science museums in the U.S., and I know some of you have mentioned being there and not having been in a while, but certainly there's opportunity to go there, whether it's their IMAX programs or whether it's the exhibitions that come through. We get national exhibitions through Discovery Place, and given where it is and the fact that we've got the two blocks, I think this is an incredible opportunity to invest there, not only from a standpoint of education and like K-12, but as we start to think about how we want to target STEM careers, and what does that throughline look like from the classroom through our university system and partnering with some of our private sector institutions here that are very STEM focused and STEM forward. I think we have an opportunity here, especially as one of our universities is now a Research One, we have incredible opportunity to leverage Discovery Place as a think tank, as a lab, and as a partner, as we continue to be on the leading edge of STEM programming and STEM careers and industries in the region. So, I just wanted to put that in the room, that it's not just, for me, it's not just about Discovery Place as a field trip destination, but it's about how do we leverage Discovery Place as an incubator for talent and for industry?

Ms. Ajmera said I agree with Dr. Watlington. When you look at things to do for young children, this is one of the very few facilities that provide programming for young children. I've taken my children a couple of times, when this especially had dinosaur exhibit, and it was really cool, and kids got to learn about science, because we were there, might as well see everything. So, it really gives opportunities for young children. I have connected a lot of teenagers with their internships there, which helps them with career readiness as well as four-year college. So, when you look at Discovery Place, we have to look at it from a different angle. It's not going to meet the same ROI (Return on Investment) as Bojangles or the Bank of America Stadium. This is truly an asset for children young enough to enjoy these facilities, and we don't have as many in the City

of Charlotte. So, when we're talking about spaces like aquarium, we are one of very few cities where we do not have aquarium. So, certainly, I think we need to look at it from that angle, like Dr. Watlington said, from education, from career readiness, from workforce development perspective, and amenities where we can truly provide programming for young children.

Mr. Graham said programmatically, everybody's correct, everybody's correct. I served on the Board of Discovery Place. I take my grandkids now to Discovery Place. We go to Discovery Place Annexation in Huntersville. What I'm saying is that there's a business case too. I think that when the committee does a deep dive into not only the programmatic aspects of the delivery of the services for sure, then there's the business case, in terms of whether or not they can meet us a third of the way, or half of the way financially. I think that's really important too. That's the numbers. I think for me is really important. Help me help you. I think that's where I'm at, help me help you, because programmatically and all the things Dr. Watlington said is spot on. It's just the business case now, and the relationship with others, and their ability to deliver as partners. I think that's really important too, not saying that they can't, I'm just saying that that's something that hopefully Councilmember Mitchell will do a deep dive on as well.

Ms. Craig said yes, and it's investment, but also it's our property too. So, we own the asset and the land, and so we do need to look at all of those things too, but yes, just as a reminder.

Ms. Ajmera said I just wanted to follow up, I'm sorry. So, this is our facility. We can't expect a private partner to go out and fundraise for our own facility that we are supposed to be responsible for owning and maintaining.

Ms. Watlington said and I agree with Councilmember Ajmera, and your point is taken Councilmember Graham. I think for me, beyond just the programming at Discovery Place, this is a catalytic project in my opinion for what can go on on the north side of our Uptown city. We have more land than we typically have when we're trying to create a place that I think can be critical for tourism, critical for business, critical for housing, and I think it's all of those pieces together, it's not just Discovery Place itself.

Ms. Campbell said and I think it's more about having some performance objectives commensurate with the service that is provided, that should be fair.

Ms. Ajmera said exactly, and the timelines.

Ms. Campbell said right, and timelines, okay.

Ms. Craig said okay, so more to come on Discovery Place. Okay, so, we're moving from projects where the City owns the land to projects in which we are soon to be or are having conversations with the County. I'll start with Truist Field. So, of course, this is the Knights' leased land from Mecklenburg County, and DBH (Diamond Baseball Holdings) purchased the Knights in 2024. I know we've got Dan in the back here. They've already invested \$4 million to upgrade the scorecards and video screens, and now looking to upgrade the stadium to attract new events and offer new amenities. So, this is one in which, as I mentioned, we have different varying levels of information. At this point, what we have in front of us is that the total request is \$40 million. From the City specifically, it's \$2.6 million each year for five years. We are working on this right now. Again, I mentioned that the City and the County meet regularly to talk about evaluating projects, talking about priorities, and how we can work together and help one another, and so I'd say this is in that space of staff is still evaluating, but we know that this is an important asset for the City. There's a lot of things that happen at this field. I take my kids to the Light the Knights Winter Festival frequently, and they're a big fan, of course, ice hockey. So, there's a lot of stuff going on at Truist Field, and again this is one that will come to committee soon after the City and the County have worked a little bit more.

Ms. Mayfield said if staff can go back, and I could be creating it in my own mind, so I'm looking at this funding proposal. They're proposing an amount. They're asking

potentially the City for the same amount they're proposing, and also asking the County, which that will have government giving you double the amount. Correct me if I'm wrong. We were having a conversation about major league, but it will be helpful to know how many requests, to get everybody up to date, how much we have already invested in this minor league, and what is the capacity, and are we still having conversations about the major league coming here, or are we looking at putting the focus on this minor league? These numbers are a little concerning for me, again, when you look at the totality of government dollars in comparison to their investment, but we once had a conversation about the major league. So, where are we, and you don't have to give the answer right now, but before this comes before committee and full Council, it will be helpful to know where we are in those conversations, major/minor? How much have we already invested? What would this look like if we are able in the next two years to have a serious major league conversation, if we have all these commitments out here for the minor?

Ms. Craig said we will get that information to you.

Okay, going on to the ballot. So, they're looking to expand the Charlotte Ballot. This is really in line with the North Tryon Vision Plan, and some of the things that they're wanting to do is a \$60 million expansion. It includes new dance studios, multipurpose spaces, artist housing, affordable housing, wellness space, and that renovated Blackbox Theater is really an important affordable community asset. So, this is one in which we've had just very preliminary conversations, the ask of the City is \$6 million over the course of two years. Really haven't had a detailed conversation with the County. So, City and the County staff haven't really had direct conversations about this just yet, but again, this is a part of our regular ongoing cadence with the County where we talk about things that've come across our plates, what staff is evaluating, and so again, this is one in which not a lot of information just yet to provide to you, but again commit to having way more details before this is brought ultimately to committee, but I think it's really a great opportunity. I've met with the Ballot, toured the space, and I think one of the things that they are aiming to do here is pretty transformative, and we'll have more information later.

Ms. Mayo said my question, when we think about like artist housing, would we be following our traditional like Housing Trust Fund Policy for that with the breakdown that we currently have? So, if we were to give them any type of money for housing, are we going to have to align that with Housing Trust Fund, and would it be open to everyone, not just their artists?

Ms. Craig said I think that's still a TBD. We really haven't gotten that far yet with the evaluation of this. So, again, like I know we don't have a lot of details about all the different projects right now, this is again just trying to be really transparent about the things that have crossed our desks.

Mr. Hastedt said and I just want to maybe sort of add that, one of the things I think we've heard over time is making it clear all the things that are coming to the City that the asks are. These are asks. These aren't recommendations. These are just trying to make sure we're communicating, this is an ask of the City, and part of the Strategy Session here is to get feedback on, is that something that you're interested in, or that's just a hard pass, and then we can focus on all the other asks. So, that's one thing I just wanted to sort of maybe add to the discussion here.

Ms. Craig said yes.

Mr. Graham said okay. So, they are asking for any money for housing, and again a lot of this stuff is carryover work from the other committee, not from the funds that they're asking from the City. I think they've already done that independent of the City, and this is for the building of the facility itself. The housing portion has already been identified sources for it. So, a lot of this is carryover work, that's why I'm so engaged, because these conversations, at least with me and others, for about a year and a half, two years, but this is a great project, and I'll leave it at that, and they're doing the housing

separately, it just needs support for the structure itself. It's a transformative project near the Hal Marshall Center, and there may be an opportunity, if that project goes with the housing, to really go across the street also with future development opportunities. So, it's a good project.

Ms. Campbell said okay, a time check. We're going to be close to 4:30 p.m., and you all know your major thing in terms of a product and a deliverable is your priorities, and I know that's going to take a bit of time to discuss. So, I just want to make you all cognizant of that.

Ms. Ajmera said this funding proposal, is this all dollars that's been committed so far?

Mr. Hastedt said the City has not committed any.

Ms. Ajmera said no, no, no, I know, not our commitment, but I'm talking about the individual donations, corporate foundation, it's already been committed? These are committed dollars?

Ms. Craig said that's their goal. So, they're in an active fundraising place right now.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, got it. Also, for Charlotte Ballot, if you could include how they are engaging underrepresented communities, if you can include that, and what are they doing to do outreach in Corridors of Opportunities, as well as engaging youth?

Ms. Craig said okay, alright, so now we're to the bulleted section. So, this is where all we have is just, I'm going to have a few talking points about each one of these things that are on the list, but again, these are preliminary conversations, or maybe even some things that we've seen in the news and we haven't had active conversations with the entity. Again, wanting to make sure that we are putting on the table anything that you've had conversations about or that we've heard about, just wanting to put everything out there on the table that could come, because as you can see there's a lot of projects. There's not as much money to fund all these projects, as we would like, and so not today, at some point we will be needing to address and identify what your priorities are.

So, The Mint Museum. So, just a brief conversation. There's, of course, the Uptown Campus and the Randolph Road location. The Randolph Road location has been there for 45 years. It has deed restrictions that can limit some future expansion. The Uptown Campus has a library that they really just don't have full access to be able to display, and so what does the future of The Mint Museum, both Uptown and Randolph, look like? We mentioned the BOplex earlier, and just wanted to again flag it here, is that there may be some other critical capital investments that are needed. Then one other potential that is probably coming nearer, that I'm sure Steve will be happy that I'm mentioning, is the parking. So, Park Expo, I know that that's been something that you've heard about that there may be some parking challenges, and so staff is currently evaluating that. That will come sooner than later to Council committee. We've got the Convention Center. The most recent expansion renovation occurred in 2021. So, really thinking about what's needed at the Convention Center and adjacent to the Convention Center to make sure that it remains competitive. Of course, tennis. I know we've got some tennis fans in the room here. There have been some preliminary conversations about reengaging that, what does that look like for Charlotte? How can we have a tennis hub here to lure amateur and collegiate tournaments, but also be an important civic and community use?

There's been some talk about a practice facility for the Checkers, and having a youth ice rink at Eastland, so that's something that we have heard of. We haven't gotten into the details yet, but again, mentioning it. Last year, there were a couple mentions of the football stadium and the aquatic center for UNC Charlotte. We are in constant communication with our partners at Charlotte. This is not a current ask at this time, so not something that we are working on.

There are special events. I think we all are aware that the World Military Games are coming next year, that's a really big deal for Charlotte. What does that ultimately look like? Is there an ask of the City? Then, I have to mention too that there are maintenance of our facilities that come, that may not always be expected, but come at times that then will need funding.

Then, lastly, the second category of other, just recognizing that you all invested in the Five-Points Mixed-Use project in terms of housing, but there may be an ask there going forward from Economic Development. There's office conversions that are being discussed at times, that's also really important to the vitality of Uptown to invest in those as it seems appropriate and bringing those as they see fit. Then, last slide is Matt, taking it home for us.

Mr. Hastedt said alright. So, this is trying to put a little bit of sort of summary of a lot of the projects we looked at, and I'll sort of say that this is high-level, some of the bigger, major capital asks. I think a couple of the takeaways here that I want to maybe just highlight are, I think you kind of see that the Tourism One and Tourism Two bucket is probably outweighed again, and Hall of Fame's not even up there, just for context again.

Then, one of the other things, sort of the how and when our money is used, is a critical part of this. For example, you can see, I'll use the practice facility for hockey, could fit in maybe all three buckets. If it's amateur sports, that unlocks the Convention Center Fund. If it's traditional tourism, maybe it's in tourism. Maybe there's roadway improvements or other capital infrastructure that need to go around something, so maybe it ties into some of our street projects that we're already doing that makes sense. So, the how and when makes such a big difference, because it unlocks other buckets. So, for example, if we could tap into Convention Center Fund, that makes that type of project a lot more available, and then also allows us to use the Tourism One and Tourism Two bucket for some other things. So, the tennis complex, I honestly even ran out of room in the Tourism One and Tourism Two. I could've put it in that bucket very easily too. So, it really ties into sort of what money we're using and what bucket we can get it into, and maybe spread between multiple buckets to sort of maximize our investment. So, this is just a little bit of an attempt to sort of show some of the different ways these could happen, but until we get the details of the project, and we know what our money's going to, because our City Attorney obviously wants to make sure that if we're using money on something, it's within the statute that we're allowed to do it, and we're getting something concrete and defensible that this is what we're getting back in return for our investment, whether that's activity days or performance measures, or all of those types of things.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for this presentation and giving us a snapshot of what will be coming. I think it will definitely be helpful for all of us to know where we are financially. Also, when I look at the other projects and the breakdown, again, my memory could be subjective, because I believe when we first started the conversation regarding whether or not we were looking at funding the water facility at UNC, there were a lot of questions of trying to understand why that will fall into our category. I think it will also be helpful if there's a clear expectation of how much you need to raise. So, when you look at the Charlotte Ballot, they are the perfect example for what we've gone over today of how their capital expansion request, how they've already identified individual, corporate, and foundation dollars. So, the amount that they're asking for our investment is minimal in comparison. It would be helpful for these others to know how much money have you already raised? Because again to the last one that I have concern about, with Truist, two-thirds of that you're looking at coming from local government, that's concerning.

If we have a model out here, I think it will be helpful to know across the board what information is going out to our partners to make sure that there's consistency, because it will be difficult for me to say yes on one proposal when you have another proposal that did the additional steps of identifying solid funding sources before even coming to us. So, I think that information will be very helpful, and may reduce maybe three minutes off of the conversation once it gets to committee to have that ahead of time to

understand financially where are we? What do we think our capacity could be? Because we overcommitted on some things last year and year before, so what does that look like, but also what do they see when they're getting ready to float a possible proposal our way? Do they know that you might have better success when you've identified, for financial partners, you can't come ask for more than 30 percent of your budget. I don't know if that's the conversation that goes out to the partners. It will be helpful to know exactly what that language looks like.

Mr. Hastedt said sure. I think we can definitely do that, and then I think back to the UNC Charlotte one, I think that's also just us making sure that we're being transparent that that was an ask. I think as Alyson said, that's not an active conversation, but it is an ask that has been made of the City, and we've not, I don't think, been formally told that they don't have an ask, it's just we're not actively engaged in it. So, just trying to sort of put everything out there, so that way there's an awareness.

Ms. Watlington said thank you for the presentation, it's very insightful. One thing I did want to ask, though, these are asks, these are things that other people have planned for us. What's not here as we think about, and maybe this is a discussion that we're about to go into, but I want to make sure that what we are choosing to put our money behind is something's that driving something that we are saying is a priority versus just responding to the requests that've come in. So, just wanted to lift that up as we go into this next discussion, because it may be that we want to reserve capacity for something that we'd like to go chase.

Mr. Jones said so, Dr. Watlington, to that point, Steve Bagwell is doing a study right now about what are those attractions that we should be going after, and part of that is amateur sports? So, we should get that early spring.

Mr. Graham said thank you for the presentation, and I think Councilmember Mayfield is spot on, show us your homework. Again, could you go to the first slide, the very first one. I don't want to bury the lead, which is about the revenue that convention and visitors bring to the City. Travel and tourism, amateur sports, arts and entertainment is what's driving our local economy after COVID. It's not a banking town anymore where bankers are coming for bank meetings and conventions and workshops from Monday to Thursday. It's really what's happening from Thursday to Monday that's really driving revenue in the Economic Development space. So, arts and entertainment, amateur sports, the numbers speak for themselves. No diminishing Discovery Place at all. I think we have done really a poor job over the last couple years with the arts. I just don't know where we are with it. I just don't know. I think that's an opportunity for us to really kind of figure out where we are and how we can help moving forward in terms of really establishing an art scene in the community that's a revenue driver itself, and that goes back to a discussion with arts and science, and everyone knows the history, but I just don't know where we're at with it anymore.

So, I just want to leave the Council with this, and having chaired the ED Committee for the last two years, a lot of these are legacy stuff that we've been talking about for years, for the last two or three years, Councilmember Mitchell, so congratulations, in reference to prioritizing what we do and how we do it, but I think the driving factor is sports and entertainment, arts and culture, those numbers represent jobs for frontline workers, you know the spiel, Uber drivers, waiters, waitresses, small business owners, the restaurants in Uptown. They all thrive from this economy, and the more we can invest, I think there's a really, really great return on the investment based on us being very intentional, making sure that partners meet us a third or halfway as well. We can't do it all ourselves, even if some of the buildings are City-owned buildings. I mean, there has to be a true partnership there that represents, Councilmember Mitchell, because the capacity is limited. So, we have to be very intentional about where the investments are placed, and then the impact they will have. You're right, Discovery Place is centrally located on reimagining North Tryon Street, the ballot is centrally located in terms of reimagining North Tryon Street. So, where the investments are and where we place them is extremely important. So, I support Discovery Place, reporters in the room, and the ballot, because the revitalization on North Tryon Street is really important. So, as

Ms. Mayfield and Dr. Watlington have said, the location of the investment matters as well. Thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said so, Mr. Graham is supportive of Discovery Place with a caveat, and that's a big caveat there, but speaking of that, I think we need to have some sort of policy for public/private partnerships. So, if there is an ask, to Councilmember Mayfield's point, there should be a checklist. Here are the things that should be done before it comes up for an approval, or not even for an approval, just for a discussion. Certainly, ROI is important, but how it also adds to the amenity that might be missing, like I talked about Discovery Place fills that void for young children. I also want to give a shout out to Steve Bagwell. His team does a great job of helping us maintain some of our facilities. Lastly, I want to look at the last slide, slide number 26, where you had three buckets. I see non-hospitality CIP, and I see some projects on here that actually should be funded through tourism bucket, like tennis complex or BOplex or Discovery Place.

Mr. Hastedt said I think what I'd say to that is that it could be that there could be capital infrastructure, like roads or other things leading to a facility, where the facility itself may be like hospitality funded, but it could be other infrastructure around it, so it's a partnership. I think Eastland Yards is kind of an example of that, where there is a hospitality investment on the like amateur sports portion, but then the larger project has other components that are non-hospitality funded. So, that's what I was trying to highlight there, that it could be a hospitality funded project with other things around it that maybe there's a site that needs to be developed, a road to a site to even make it functional. So, that could be kind of what I was trying to show there.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. I just want to make sure, because when you look at this slide, it sounds like we are using our CIP dollars, and I would not be in favor of it, because we have so many capital projects that need to be done, especially with our infrastructure, that we need to use our CIP dollars for. So, I'm glad you clarified that. Thank you.

Ms. Craig said I just want to say thank you for your feedback. It's really helpful as we start to bring these things forward to committee and to full Council to know what things you're really looking for, and information from staff, and so wanted to say we'll take good notes and act accordingly when we bring it forward to committee.

Ms. Campbell said okay, let's give them a big round of applause. Yes, I have to take my hat off to you guys. You all are doing tremendous work, and connecting all the dots. Now, I've got a quick question. Yes, I was going to say, why don't we take maybe, how much time do you need? Five-minute break. Let's come back about 4:46 p.m., for five minutes.

The meeting recessed at 4:41 p.m. and reconvened at 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Campbell said I don't want this to sound like I'm diminishing all of the information that you all got, because you got a lot of really, really good information, and that good information actually feeds into why you even come and have a strategy meeting. So, use the context of that information that you've had to help feed into, so what should we be prioritizing? What are the things that we should be working on in the upcoming year? I can tell you, again from experience with my former City Council, it was always hard, because the need is so great, the desire, the want. I want to do this and I want to make a difference, but we have to be realistic. Again, early on, I said resources, both financial and staff, are finite. So, I know you want to do everything. I've wished every Council could do everything, but what you have to keep in context, again, is what is the community saying sometimes are needs. I know everybody wants to do wants, but sometimes we have to prioritize what does our community need. Then, all those other things are kind of like wants, and we can try to do wants. Sometimes when I say that, sometimes it landed on my Council as being, you're not visionary enough, you're not ambitious enough, you don't think broadly enough, you need to stretch your thinking. That's all well and good, but what our community expects of us is to be realistic, and to be extremely diligent with the resources that we have. So, it looks like I'm preaching to

the choir, because all of you all are shaking your heads saying, yes, that's what we want to do, Debra.

So, we're going to transition. We are not going to do the performance metrics discussion, because we think that you all have had two very intensive days, and this discussion is extremely important that we need to get into. I'm going to ask help from the back to change the slide for me. Okay, it looks like that, I believe since 2024, you all have had these as your strategic priorities. They're broad and they should be, they should be broad, so that they can include lots of things under the umbrella. So, well-managed government, great neighborhoods, safe communities, transportation and planning, and workforce and business development. I'll be more than happy to read all the details under each one of these strategic priorities, but you're saying, no, don't do that Debra. Okay, so I won't. So, let's stick with this for a minute. How's the 2024 things landing on you? I believe the City Manager has gotten a little bit of read from you all that we've done a lot, but there's a whole lot more that we could do in these categories. They're broad enough to capture a lot of things. Do you all have any appetite to change these priorities?

**Councilmember Driggs** said first, I want to note the way this works, always has worked, is everybody on Council says what we want, and then it's up to the Manager to do it without a tax increase. Personally, I think anything we might want to do is captured by one of these, and if I look back over the agenda for the last two days, I think we need to elevate our game, but not change our direction, would be my comment.

Ms. Campbell said that was very well said, very well said.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said I think these are great priorities, and I think we should keep them. I think, to Councilmember Driggs' point, yes, we should elevate them by, one, adding more, at least detailed or illustrative language. For example, for well-managed government, the subsection underneath, have something about transparency and rigor, or well-communicated government as well within that subsection of that. For example, I see in that subsection consistency, an approach with emphasis on effective and efficient services that are accountable, customer focused, inclusive, and then transparent and rigorous, something like that. The other thing is, I think for me is as a Council, and I'm just testing the room temperature here, is adding a new priority, perhaps something that is our north star that is all encompassing of all these things, whether it is about what type of culture we're trying to set as a city, because we spoke a lot about that. We are a leading city. How do we become a top destination? Then, the other thing is, we're oftentimes presented as a Council with these ad-hoc pressing moments, whether it's CBP (Customs and Border Protection) being in our communities or I-77 or the airport workers union calling for some type of relief, I think having a priority of how we manage those situations would be key for that, that is also all encompassing of these priorities.

Ms. Campbell said and I would ask, and we probably should've even started from this perspective, before we even went down to strategic priorities level, which is a different level is, does your vision statement for your community not encompass that? This is the community that we want to become. I know that it's somewhere within those slides.

Mr. Jones said so, Debra, it's the first slide.

Ms. Campbell said performance metrics piece.

Mr. Jones said that's the vision from I think 2018.

Ms. Campbell said so, that's pretty new of updating a vision statement, okay. I would ask just one question, so that we can kind of get these action items identified as we go along with the conversation. We had J.D. ask about adding some language about transparency and being rigorous. Could we add that? I think that's where you want it added, but the piece about being rigorous, do want to embellish that a little bit, transparent and rigorous related to what?

Mr. Mazuera Arias said I think related into how we communicate our priorities and policies to the community, as well as how we are good stewards of our taxpayer dollars, managing our budgets, making sure those budgets are communicated to the community. How those taxpayer dollars are being used as well.

Ms. Campbell said and so we're not going to try to have the actual language explicitly developed today, but I did want to make sure that I got the clarity in terms of what the rigorous portion of your statement meant. So, Mr. Jones, staff can come back with those statements revised, okay.

Ms. Anderson said I just wanted to say Councilmember Mazuera Arias, I think what you just talked about was the how and not the what. So, these are the priorities, but the way we communicate, the way we execute, that's how, and so I think that's just another layer underneath our priorities, not necessarily embedded into our actual priorities.

Ms. Campbell said so, I think that this is a statement a little bit in terms of the how and the goals, and I think he's just asking that we just embellish that in terms of being transparent and rigorous in terms of how we communicate to the community about what Council is doing. If I slip up and say we, ya'll know where I'm coming from, okay, alright, sorry about that.

Dr. Watlington said I think this is a really good question, because having not seen whatever the metrics presentation was going to be, I do feel like there is an opportunity to really connect the strategy to the work on a daily basis. Even as I read these, this still feels like vision to me, not priority in the sense of, we understand what the gaps are versus what we're trying to achieve, and so our priorities then become what are the projects or programs required to close those gaps? So, I don't think we're going to solve it here, but I just think our hosha needs to be built out much further down into the departments, so that when we start to talk about priorities, that ties directly back to the individual value streams, whether it's stormwater or sewer or whatever it is. Then, what we see here is vision, but it's also, these are the five things that I know that Angela Charles has got on her board, and when we go to her employees, they're going to tell me those same five things and how their work ties back to this overall delivery. So, I know that a lot of that sits below Council, but I do think that for this to really get the meat out of it and then it would actually look like it's a living document, rather than just broken out vision statement, it has to reflect the gaps and the value stream. Does that make sense?

Ms. Campbell said absolutely, and we had some of those same concerns in Asheville for Council, because this again is what at a Council level? Then, the how, and even the what and the why, because you want to have this kind of an impact. The how comes down to work plans that every department would then develop. Then, they would show Council, this is what we're working on, these are the things that we're prioritizing, and this is where the work is getting done based on these things and making those connections.

Dr. Watlington said exactly, and just one additional piece, because I know we skipped the metrics for time's sake, but when you think about like OGSM (Objective, Goals, Strategies and Measures), the metric then is how you're measuring the goal, and it's still the what. Vision Zero, that's the metric, how are we going to get there, to your point, falls into the work plans. I don't necessarily know what the metric is for great neighborhoods, and I know we did some work a few years ago on trying to build out a balanced scorecard, and maybe it's time to really dust that off, or maybe that's what was in the metrics presentation, but to me that's really where we see the rubber meeting the road, and our work then is to set the goal.

Ms. Campbell said yes. You want to speak to that a little bit in terms of the website and all that it relates to some of these metrics?

**Monica Allen, Assistant City Manager** said yes, I'll just keep it brief, but you're exactly right, Dr. Watlington. So, these are the priorities, and in the document that was handed

out to you, it has the description of those priorities, and then it has the plans that connect to those priorities. So, like the 2040 Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, the Vision Zero Plan, that's how the work gets done is through those plans, and then there's a subset of metrics that are on those pages that help us measure how well we're doing in executing those plans. So, what Debra's trying to take you through is just setting the top line and making sure that these are still the priorities, or you're reaffirming or you're changing the priorities. We're not really digging deep into the how today, but that will come later.

Ms. Anderson said can I just do a follow-up, because what Councilmember Watlington just said, I know we're pressed for time. I know that's why we skipped the metrics, but we skipped the metrics before. I think we've only been through this as a Council in a robust manner like one full time. My point is that it just keeps getting cut due to time. So, maybe during a Manager's report or during some other chunk of time we can actually walk through this where we can have a more robust discussion about our balanced scorecards.

Ms. Campbell said absolutely. Can you put that in an asterisk, so we can make sure that that's a follow-up for staff.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you, Debra. What I wanted to just go over with everyone, because we might need to have this conversation later as well. The current City of Charlotte's Vision Statement. Charlotte is America's Queen City opening her arms to a diverse and inclusive community of residents, businesses and visitors alike. Here you will find a safe, family-oriented city, where people work together to help everyone thrive. When I read this statement, and I think about what Councilmember Arias said what is our north star? So, adding those additional words for it to be the umbrella of all of our priorities, are we looking at development, are we looking at choices in our policymaking in an ethical way, in a way that highlights this vision statement? Is this still our vision statement in 2026 and moving forward? If so, how do our strategic priorities align with this vision, as well as for the Manager, how does your staff interpret our priorities with that umbrella of who is the city that we want to be? We are not Charlotte of the 1980s or the 1990s or even the early 2000s. So, for the Charlotte that we are today and that we're growing into, these strategic priorities, do we need to add more meat to them?

Ms. Campbell said in terms of embellishment of your actual goals.

Ms. Mayfield said right. So, if anyone pulls up, if they're looking at moving to Charlotte, and they go in and they read our vision statement, is this still the statement? If so, when they go to that next slide and see what our strategic priorities are, are our priorities in alignment with this statement, and then is our work in alignment with our priorities and our statement?

Mr. Driggs said two things quickly, and this is a compliment, I think, to the Manager and the staff. In the past, one of the issues always was this concept of silos, and one thing that really struck me during this session, was the extent to which different departments and staff members were talking to each other and informed, and working towards an integrated implementation of these priorities. So, I think that's a really good thing.

My second point, I agree with Mr. Mazuera Arias. In particular in the last year or two, the issue of community outreach and transparency, I think, has risen in prominence. So, I don't think it hurts in well-managed government to say something about transparency, community outreach, and if you look at, for example, our area plans, and not to mention NC-DOT's experience, they found out the hard way. So, I think we could say something about that. A well-managed government to us includes a lot of engagement with the community, taking on board what they say, and communicating clearly with them.

Mayor Lyles said thanks. I wanted to just make this comment. When we talk about great neighborhoods and we talk about what LaWana just read to us as our, I guess, north star, it just reminded me that that's what Harvey Gantt said. He said, "There is a reason for who we are, and it's because we have neighbors, and that we treat people in a

different way,” and so I think that it’s really important to have great neighborhoods to be there. Now, there may be some changes, because I can’t see what it says up there, but I think if you look at what we are, we still are what we know, that people come here, they come for work, but they stay because it is a great place to live. So, I think that we ought to think about the great neighborhoods being a part of that, and then I believe that what we wanted to do was to have some definition of what those might be, and I think that gives us a little bit of grace, because we can have the discussion or have people work towards, well what does great neighborhoods mean, when we go back into the offices and everything, and we decide, and we put it out there to say this is what we expect and this is what we think. I think that’s another part of what we heard from our public, and the many people that have done this work. I mean, I think Mayor Hancock was one that was just saying, you do this, but you define it, and then you tell people about it. So, I would hope that we do take great neighborhoods and that we do something. I know safe communities is an absolute perhaps, and so here go, but I think it’s worth it. I think it’s just worth the time and effort, and a commitment to who we can be and how we can communicate this to our public and our citizens.

Ms. Campbell said yes, I think it’s kind of like, what does great mean? What are those elements of great neighborhoods? So, for example, focusing on comprehensive initiatives to create affordable housing. Well, great neighborhoods are more than affordable housing. They are infrastructure. They are opportunities to communicate, network. There are lots of things that go into this definition. So, there may be, again, some embellishment for staff to kind of elaborate and be more specific, but I believe what we’re trying to get to is, we think that these are the priorities for you all going into the next couple of years.

Ms. Ajmera said so I think our current framework is solid, it’s very broad, but I think it needs to be more outcomes driven. So, I agree with Councilmember Mazuera Arias. We do need to add transparency and rigor under well-managed government. Also, I would like us to add sustainability and resilience. I know this is an area that we have been doing a lot of work on, with SEAP, our tree canopy plan, I think we need to highlight that in our strategic priorities.

Ms. Campbell said where do you think it best fits?

Ms. Ajmera said we just create a new bullet point, it could be under great neighborhoods, or it could be just another bullet point that specifically highlights sustainability, specifically, that means our SEAP goals, our tree canopy goals.

Ms. Watlington said they’re already under great neighborhoods, our SEAP goals are in here on the dashboard, that’s where they sit right now.

Ms. Ajmera said where do they sit?

Ms. Watlington said things like lead certified buildings, solar projects, it links to the SEAP dashboard. They’ve got it linked under great neighborhoods right now. See right here, it says great neighborhoods.

Ms. Campbell said I think she’s wanting it in terms of the narrative.

Ms. Watlington said no, I understand. What I’m saying is the metrics already sit in great neighborhoods.

Ms. Ajmera said we are doing the work, so the metrics are there. I think we need to highlight that in our strategic priority, because it is one of our strategic priorities. It should have its own bullet point where it says sustainability and resiliency, and that’s where we track SEAP goals and tree canopy goals, specifically. I don’t think we have done any tracking or any metrics on our tree canopy, and I know this is something that we were working on a couple of years ago. Yes, we did a study, but I don’t know what’s the implementation plan to get to the goal that we have. So, certainly I think we need to have a bullet point specifically on sustainability and resiliency to highlight SEAP and our

tree canopy, our natural resources, and this also ties with our water management, as we are seeing data centers popping up everywhere and consuming so much electricity and water, our natural resources. So, that will all fall under sustainability and resiliency, that I think we definitely need to highlight as its own bullet point. I know there needs to be more work done. I see Alyson is right here, as we are discussing just the data centers, and more requests are coming in. Residents are concerned, increasingly, because ultimately we are subsidizing their utilities. I mean, we are paying the price, so at some point we will need to have a policy on that. So, I think if we have its own bullet point, we can work on that.

**Councilmember Owens** said yes, thank you. This possibly goes without needing to be mentioned, but it's just something that's sticking with me as I'm looking at this. There's a sentence that precedes on transportation and planning that says, anticipating and planning for the growth of the community. For me, that could precede any one of these, but we seem to only focus on the effects of growth on our transportation needs. I think embracing our growth, embracing the fact that we want to be a destination, and just really adding that overlay of this is how the new south is addressing the desirability of so many elements of our City. We are welcoming and we are all the things that you used to associate with the old south, but we are vibrant, and we are really reaching in around growth and addressing it in multifaceted ways, but that's the only place that we address growth there, is transportation and planning, and I think that that's wrong. I think every one of these is affected by that.

Ms. Campbell said I've had tremendous mentors, and one of my mentors used to say, for Charlotte it's not if we grow, it's how we grow, and I think that this is why you all have these kind of strategic priorities, is that you're going to grow. I mean, you've positioned yourself to grow. It's how you grow with these values. We're going to grow in a way that we have well-managed government, we have great neighborhoods with lessening those kinds of impacts. We want to have safe communities. We want to have the infrastructure, transportation and planning, and workforce development, because we want this to be an equitable community, and it provides opportunities for all people.

Ms. Owens said and just as a follow onto that, what I really want to see us double down on is how we communicate that excitement and that exuberance that we all feel towards growth, that we are not anti-growth, that we are speaking from one hymnal with respect to the benefits that come to all of us when we lift up these communities who want to live here. Councilmember Mazuera Arias and I were speaking about how we embrace the talents of our immigrant neighborhoods, and really looking at arts and culture and all these things that come with the amazing diversity that comes from being a city that's a city of growth. I'd like to see us do more of that and share that story.

Ms. Campbell said absolutely, and I want to emphasize kind of the great neighborhoods, because I think one of the defining things about Charlotte is you literally are a city of neighborhoods. You go to other communities, and I say, well, what community do you live in, West Side. Really, West Side? Not derogatory towards the West Side, but what neighborhood do you live in, though?

Ms. Watlington said yes, but they'll tell you Clanton Park, they'll tell you Revolution Park, they'll tell you Westover Hills.

Ms. Campbell said exactly, here, but not in most communities, they won't. Hey, I know about how neighborhoods claim here, that's what I'm saying.

Ms. Anderson said I was going to have another comment, but based on what Councilmember Owens just said, we could potentially just pull out that sentence, anticipating of the beginning of transportation and planning, anticipating and planning for growth of the community through, and put it up at the top, through well-managed government, through great neighborhoods, through dot, dot, dot. If we do that, and I totally agree that we should, I think there could be an opportunity to embed a couple of words around the existing Charlotte, because there's so much fear and trepidation in

our communities around being pushed out, losing the charm and esthetic. So, if we pull that up at the top, we might want to add a word or two.

My original comment that I raised my hand for is, we have these balanced scorecards for each of these areas, and what we're measuring here should show up in the description, at least some of the most critical ones. I'm looking at safe communities, and there's six metrics that we're tracking, but they should have some language that ties immediately back to these six things that we're tracking.

Then, my last point is, I can't remember if it was the last retreat or the retreat before that, but we spent a lot of time going through a whiteboard exercise, coming up with priorities, we had the buckets, and then we sort of culled them down to these, but there's a whole lot more behind this. These are just like the key areas of focus that we wanted to have on a one-pager dashboard.

Ms. Campbell said absolutely, and again, going back to resources and the ability to, how much can you do, and you want to honestly portray that to the community that for this year, the next two years, whatever, we're going to focus on these things, but this can be your north star, and these categories are your priority of work over the next year or whenever you reconvene.

Mr. Jones said a couple things. So, my fault, I pulled us into a novel starting with Chapter 14, instead of the preamble. So, if we go back, zoom out, there is the vision statement, the vision statement 2018. Maybe that's pretty old, but the point being there's some key words diverse, inclusive, safe, work together, thrive. Then, if we had the metrics discussion, Monica would've gone over the community level indicators, which there is 80 of those, our organizational level indicators, which is about 30, which rolls up to me. In the budget book, there's 120 indicators, and then this performance dashboard, there's 110. What Councilmember Anderson was referring to was, I think three years ago, we put a bunch of things on the wall for two days, and you basically said, these are what I want to measure. We then went to each committee for 90 days. So, what you have in front of you is your work.

If we go a little bit further to where we are today, it's kind of interesting. What typically happens is Council has the discussion about the priorities, and if we go to the next slide, over the course of the last decade, these are some of the strategic initiatives that you've had. Some of them we may say we have fulfilled. Others you may say, well, I want to double down on this. So, when we start to think about great neighborhoods, our Corridors of Opportunity can be in these great neighborhoods. So, at some point, the strategic initiatives are some of the things that we come back to you annually, and we say this is where we are with arts and culture. I'll end with this. So, Councilmember Graham, you mentioned where are we with arts and culture? I would say that it's a great success story, because we went from \$3.4 million to \$21 million City, County together, pumping money into the ecosystem. So, there's a lot of things that you have done over the course of the last five, six years, that there are some outcomes that are consistent with what we're trying to achieve with the strategic priorities. So, that's kind of like the book. We just started on Chapter 13.

Ms. Campbell said yes, and I think what might be also important is a cadence of communication, just updating you and trying to let you all know here's where we are on these kinds of initiatives. What else do you want to hear about?

Mr. Graham said yes, thank you, two points. One, it's not the money, because we are making the investment. It's not being able to shape the outcomes. Arts should be a travel destination for coming to the City of Charlotte, The Mint Museum, The Bechtler, and so we're not shaping outcomes, we're investing and then we have a hands-off approach, which I think if we're really serious about, and this is a topic I was going to ask, don't even know if it fits, but Visit Charlotte, that we should be very intentional about outreaching for conventions and visitors to come to the City of Charlotte, because it fuels our economics. So, I think we should be laser focused on that, because the culture for our City has changed, as I said earlier, going back to COVID. Now, it's a different type of economic driver, based on visitation to the City. So, I don't know if it

could be added somewhere, Visit Charlotte and making Charlotte a travel destination, and highlighting all those reasons why people should come to Charlotte. Arts and culture is one of them, the investment that we're making, but now we need to shape what that looks like, and I don't know what that looks like, and we're distanced from it now.

I don't know where it fits, if it fits at all. I support all the priorities, but just sharing that maybe we think a little differently about if we're going to add anything, how we add that language about Charlotte as a travel destination.

Ms. Campbell said because I think business development, it's broad, and I think you're talking about the type of business development, which is more tourists, arts, culture, that kind of detailed growth in this sector in terms of business development.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said so one thing I would like for us to really think about in this progress tracker, and the Mayor did this before about maybe two years ago, she referred it to each committee, and for the committee to weigh in, because when I look at the workforce business development, I think we need to update or have some new tracker added. So, you said it earlier, Debra, make sure we're doing things after we hear our citizens, and so this needs to be updated. Dr. Watlington, I mean we were looking at spending with MWSBE by 2024. Well, now we're in 2026, and we moved forward. So, Mayor and the City Manager, I think this will be a great exercise, because each one of them we have a committee for, and for the committee members to do their homework, and say let's make sure the tracker is a reflection of our priorities, as well as what the citizens would like for us to work on.

Ms. Campbell said absolutely.

Ms. Watlington said I agree. Thank you for putting that in the room. I absolutely support that, because I think for me, rather than wordsmithing, what I would consider the overall vision, is really about what are the executable priorities for the fiscal. So, I think that's a great idea to put it in the committee.

Ms. Anderson said just wanted to connect what Councilmember Graham said about the arts and tourism. So, the vast majority of our arts institutions, the major ones, they have an economic impact study that they produce on a regular cadence. For example, The Mint Museum has one, and they can tell you how much traffic they've driven to the City, how many dollars, the number of hotel stays that they're visitors have generated, and so it might be an opportunity to just gather all of those economic impact studies from our arts institutions, and then review those in committee, and then think about strategically how do we want to track and stand up driving tourism and visitorship through the arts with those metrics.

Ms. Campbell said great. So, what I'm hearing, these are your priorities going into the next however many years until you change them, which potentially may be next year, but right now we're going with these, with some modifications.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said and I think just reechoing what everybody has said, allowing those metrics through the committees guide us with how we fine tune those priorities, because as Dr. Watlington, Councilmember Ajmera, Councilmember Mayfield said, and Owens, making sure that the metrics are reflected in our priorities, and I also think with our vision statement, really another working group to relook at that, and have us become, at least that the vision statement reflects a responsive, proactive, innovative, city. We are the 14<sup>th</sup> largest, going on 13<sup>th</sup> largest city, and I think we should all move forward to wanting to become number one, and so I think that vision statement will help us guide through the metrics, and the metrics will help guide our priorities, without an outside consultant.

Ms. Campbell said okay, so those priorities were at kind of a higher level. Now we're drilling down to some of Council's strategic initiatives, like things you're working on, and these are still kind of broad, big categories of things. The ones that I believe are

highlighted are getting a lot of attention and focus and a lot of work. Some of these, you've done a lot of work on them. So, do we want to take something off? Like for example, we just heard a lot about arts and culture. Does that become bolder and bigger in terms of the emphasis over the next upcoming year, or do we kind of stay with these things, which essentially some of these things are kind of becoming your steady state. It's just what you do as an organization. You all are just working on these things daily. It's not a special assignment, it's engrained into the culture of the organization, related to some of these bold things.

Ms. Owens said so, just for my clarity, there's a couple of things that I'm not entirely certain that I fully appreciate, so maybe for some context. Is Vision Zero part of SAFE Charlotte is my first question, or is SAFE Charlotte limited to police, fire, that sort of thing? So, that's one. Then, Digital Divide, I appreciate the concept, I'm not certain where it falls within our current prioritization. Then, finally, since we have launched the UDO, do we remain with that one as a prominent focus, because we always acknowledge that it's going to be a work in progress. It's always going to be tweaked and modified and whatever, but the launch of it feels as though it was quite a milestone, and perhaps something that we can pivot a little bit from, but I don't know [inaudible].

Ms. Campbell said I'm going to have to defer to the City Manager in terms of some of these other initiatives that were identified.

Mr. Jones said so, that's a great question, Councilmember Owens. In its purest state, SAFE Charlotte was a report that was worked on for a couple of years, and it would be disingenuous to say that Vision Zero is a part of that. So, I'll say that Digital Divide came up during COVID, and there were some things that the Council sent funds out, and I think those are the two that you said, yes.

Ms. Campbell said and so it may be, for example, Vision Zero. If that's an initiative that you all want laser focus on, we want staff to have laser focus on this, you can have that.

Ms. Owens said I would say so, but that's me, but I put it with mobility. Having the trust and confidence of our voters and the amount of money that will be coming in, that has been my ask since I got on Council was, can we now really beef up our approach to Vision Zero, and make sure that we are prioritizing, safely interacting, in all the multimodal manner of transit, and not just making cars go faster or making more cars go faster.

Ms. Campbell said if we looked at the agenda, there were about five or six things under mobility, and so I think what staff is asking is, because there's so many things under that, in terms of the laser focus, we're not going to not do any of those things, but again finite resources, whatever, at the end of the year you're going to be most proud of your work with staff, because you accomplished these things, and so is Vision Zero a strategic initiative you want laser focused? It's to the broader Council.

Ms. Mayo said I think that's more part of that mobility part with our Strategic Investment Area Plan, so I think that staff has already started to identify those high-network areas that are having high injuries. So, I feel like that's already in there with mobility in Vision Zero, but I do agree, I think sometimes we have to tell that storytelling that we've talked about before about why people should care about the Strategic Investment Area Plans. We have two case studies that we finished with Arrowood and Harrisburg Road. So, doing a better job of not just talking to those neighborhoods, but why should everybody care, because now it's going to be countywide or citywide, because of the investment with the one cent sales tax.

Ms. Campbell said good deal. Alright, what else? Anything related to these initiatives? Stick with these, or do you want to take something off, you want to do a different something? Again, this is the limited resources staff is going to be devoted to. Can we just let her, and then I'll get to you.

Ms. Mayo said is Digital Divide still on there. I heard that their money was kind of running out?

Mayor Lyles said I don't think it was necessarily the money, but I do think that the ability for the whole work after COVID, it was helping seniors, it was helping people that were in living spaces, and I think everybody in the world has a phone right now, so that's the way I would say, take that off.

Ms. Campbell said yes, I think we were saying some of these initiatives, what's the need? Do we need to have staff really laser focused on these things?

Mayor Lyles said not the Digital Divide. I would suggest that that come off, unless someone else has another position on it.

Ms. Campbell said alright, Digital Divide, just for the community, you're not saying you don't care about these things, and that resources and coordination and collaboration with the entities that probably have more of a direct responsibility for delivering those things, you're going to coordinate with them, but you're not going to be laser focused and having a ton of staff resources devoted to that effort. Okay, Digital Divide.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I agree with what the Mayor said on Digital Divide. We did that work during COVID. That was only for that time period, where we were measuring the outcomes, and we successfully delivered on that. So, I think, not that we do not care about Digital Divide, so I'm glad you said that, but what I would like to see is two things, because we are so laser focused on CMPD vacancy, that it needs its own bold strategic initiative that just says CMPD capacity, which includes retaining and recruiting the talent to meet the needs of our growing city.

Ms. Campbell said and it's not under SAFE Charlotte?

Ms. Ajmera said no, SAFE Charlotte is a report that we did, like Manager Jones mentioned earlier. I think that was back in 2018 or 2019, that was a report we did after George Floyd, yes. So, that was responding to the community, and we took a number of actions for accountability. So, that's really what SAFE Charlotte is about, but I think we need a strategic initiative just on CMPD capacity.

Mayor Lyles said Ms. Ajmera, I think that you're right exactly. SAFE Charlotte, I think, is something that we've been working with the communities and we've been working with the business communities. So, I think that the real question, I hope it would be just that the words of SAFE Charlotte can be there, but the identification of what's important is what I think we have to put under that metric. We're talking about making sure that we have enough officers to work in a city the size of ours. We want to make sure that officers have the opportunity to be well. There are a lot of things that we're trying to address with that. So, I think, and Danté help me, if SAFE Charlotte is what most people would probably say or address it as, and if that's just what we can do and keep it, then we ought to keep moving it on, because I think a lot of people are already accepting of it, if that's okay with you, Ms. Ajmera.

Ms. Ajmera said I think that's a good point.

Ms. Campbell said and SAFE Charlotte, it doesn't have to stay being a report. It can evolve into a broader concept on safe community.

Ms. Ajmera said I think we can discuss that as the committee discusses the tracker. We can put performance measures underneath it that includes the vacancy and the recruitment and retention goals, but when Manager Jones mentioned about the report, I was like, okay, let's make sure that it is more than just a report that we did. Also, in the political climate that we are in, I think intergovernmental response and collaboration is crucial, as we are getting requests. So, I would also like us to highlight that. I was talking with the Chair of BGIR (Budget Governance and Intergovernmental Relations

Committee) about intergovernmental collaboration as one of the strategic initiatives as we are getting requests from all levels.

Mr. Driggs said just briefly, we've talked a lot at this session about initiatives for safety that go beyond what we contemplated by SAFE Charlotte, so it needs to be understood, that's generic, so that includes everything that we discussed here, growth of CMPD, safety is critical.

Mr. Jones said so, just a little refresher on SAFE Charlotte, that was one of those initiatives that went to every committee, so it wasn't just policing, it was housing, it was workforce development, it was youth, and a lot of great things. So, I don't want us to act like it's just a report, and nothing's happening with it. Maybe it's time to send the report back to the committees also to see there's some things that we'd like to improve on.

Ms. Campbell said absolutely, we can embellish it.

Ms. Mayfield said so, what Dr. Watlington and I were over here thinking about is, one, the metrics would be helpful, because I think that would've helped to lead this discussion a bit, because for me, under SAFE Charlotte, Vision Zero goes under SAFE Charlotte, along with law enforcement, because it's tied together under SAFE Charlotte. I agree that we can remove Digital Divide for what the question is, but that means workforce development needs to be bold. So, when we think about small minority business, Corridors of Opportunity, mobility, affordable housing, for me also, mobility could go under SAFE Charlotte, because if we put the Vision Zero in, when we break down what is SAFE Charlotte, it is not just the impression and/or impact of crime. It is our mobility. It is the Vision Zero regarding our traffic signals, and how we identify those that choose to look at that red light as a suggestion versus what it is. Also, another part that we never really talk about is how many individuals we have riding around the city on expired tags from out of state when they've moved here, that anywhere from six months to a year, they're riding around on expired tags, but that also contributes to taxes not being paid if you haven't registered, that can be going towards our lights and Vision Zero. So, what does that deeper conversation look like? The UDO could be as small as the Digital Divide for me, because it's an ongoing living document. So, if we had the ability where the links were sent back out to us and we did another bubble vote, then would these all pop up? I think workforce development would be in the big bolder letters, and if we look at what is SAFE Charlotte, what falls under that would be mobility, would be Vision Zero.

Ms. Campbell said so, I think Unified Development Ordinance, I think you're saying maybe because it was a project, and you've adopted it and now maybe the focus is dim, you don't need that major laser focus on it. What I did hear, though, in terms of either workforce development or small and minority business, we heard some issues about permitting, and yada, yada, yada, I think those kinds of things need to kind of be incorporated into some of these other efforts and initiatives. So, SEAP?

Ms. Ajmera said that is a priority.

Ms. Campbell said that's a priority. Do we want it bold?

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I would like us to continue, because at the end of the day we have a very bold goal, when it comes to our Strategic Energy Action Plan. We want to make sure we continue to measure that, and we have a public facing dashboard, and we have an annual report that Sarah and her team, well, now her successor's team, that continues to produce, and that is one of our strategic initiatives. So, I want to make sure it continues to get highlighted, and it is interconnected with mobility goals. Yes, I think we need to have that continue to be included in here.

Ms. Campbell said but as a separate?

Ms. Ajmera said that's how we've always done it.

Ms. Campbell said okay, alright, you all agree, keep it as a separate effort, I mean really highlight it. So, again, laser focus.

Ms. Ajmera said I would like us to add one more item, well-managed government, because we talked a lot about accountability and public dashboards and all of that. So, the way I see this, if we have a well-managed government, we could have progress tracker underneath it that would have dashboards for what Councilmember Owens was requesting, like Vision Zero. Now it's not so much about the plan, it's about the delivery when it comes to mobility. So, pretty much public dashboards will fall under well-managed government.

Ms. Campbell said so, well-managed government is a strategic priority, then we could go and determine what initiative should be linked to this concept.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I would say data dashboards.

Ms. Campbell said okay, so laser focus on data dashboards, and I'm going to be honest with you, throughout this country, everybody is focusing on data. You heard the police, data driven, data, data, data, data. So, I totally understand kind of the pivot to, we've got to update some of the information and the tracking system.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said thank you. I think I'm in agreement, or as Councilmember Graham and I said earlier, we're in the same zip code, but different parts of the zip code when it comes to the UDO. Yes, I think that it has been a landmark ordinance that the City was successful in. I do think there are some aspects to it, though, maybe different initiatives, and I'm just spit balling, I'm not making really any recommendation, other than brainstorming here. I think with the insurgence of data centers in our community, as well as how we're growing really fast as a city, development and rezonings. I'm not sure what initiative might fall under that, but I think either keep the UDO font/color size the same, or we can shrink it and put another initiative that has to do with, how do we do smart development in the City? I think oftentimes we just see all these rezoning petitions come through, and the assumption is we're going to vote yes on it, without providing a lot of context or information or data, as we just were speaking about. So, I don't know if the term is smart development. I'm not sure what initiative that might look like, but again, because it is a living and breathing document, it is something we're going to constantly revisit and talk about, as well as how do we become better planners and conscious about the growth of our City to our existing families, our existing neighborhoods, newcomers, etc., and I think we just need to have a little bit more of a narrow focus on an initiative that encompasses smart development. I said a whole lot of words, and I might just have said nothing at all.

Ms. Mayo said yes, I agree with Councilmember Mazuera Arias. So, just thinking about like affordable housing, even almost calling it like resilient housing, because I know some people in affordable housing aren't calling it affordable housing, it's like attainable housing. I've gotten some slack about that last couple weeks saying that term. So, not sure if there are better lingo for us to use instead of that, but also just thinking about that, I like the idea when you're thinking about like smart growth. So, how are we creating neighborhoods in regions where people can live, work and play, so they're not having to cross town to go to the grocery store or do all these things? So, how are we creating resilient communities, so that people can get around where they need to, and access amenities and jobs? So, I do like that.

Ms. Campbell said absolutely, and again, what we've got to distinguish between, the strategy priorities and then the initiatives. What initiatives, and I want to refocus this, what initiatives, over the next year or two, do you all want to focus on? Again, finite resources, what are your needs?

Mr. Mazuera Arias said everything.

Mr. Jones said so, let me try to do it a different way. Let's call it black box, because everybody has something that's very important to them up there. So, let's just say the

black box over the course of one year, you asked us to focus on black box, and at the end of the year, the black box became a part of the fabric of our organization. Would black box come off the list, because it's embedded in everything that we do, or would black box come off of the list, because we actually accomplished it? I don't think, in all the years I've been here, anything's come off the list. I guess where I'm going is, if something comes off the list, as Debra said earlier, it doesn't mean that it's not important or it's not being done, it's just a year from now there are going to be three, four, five things that you're going to judge us on about how far did we go down that path to get the results that you want. I think that's what we've annually tried to do with the strategic initiatives, which separates them from the priorities.

Mr. Driggs said water is pretty important, it's not up there. I'm just saying, to the Manager's point, there are things that are critical, trash, whatever, that we do, they're not up there. So, this is supposed to be about a new initiative, like a push or a priority.

Ms. Campbell said and again, as a city we have a ton of services that you deliver that are steady state, gotta do it, gotta have it. These may be, what are some things that we really, really have to kind of separate and uplift and give extra, extra attention to?

Ms. Anderson said so, I like what the City Manager said. I'd propose that, I believe SAFE Charlotte has all of the elements that's needed to move forward with public safety, so I'd advocate that it stay there and at its size. I also would advocate that the UDO come off, because it was a major initiative, a herculean effort. We rolled it out, and now it is a part of our way of working, and yes, it's a living document, but it's a part of our way of working. It's not one of our major boulders, as I refer to boulders, rock, sand. So, I'd advocate for removing the UDO off. I'd advocate for removing Digital Divide off, but underneath workforce development, there is a metric for high-speed internet connection from a household percentage. I'd advocate that we keep that there, and we have so many good partners in the community working on the Digital Divide. So, I believe that could come off. The question around what Councilmember Graham said around arts and culture, I believe we have done the work to establish a framework to flow money. So, there's monetary flow to the right organizations to then distribute to both our blue-chip organizations, as well as our grassroots organizations. I think what Councilmember Graham was talking about is, how does that fit into our overall economic development lens? So, perhaps maybe we add a metric within the ED priority that is connected to arts and culture, the ecosystem of that, the economics of that, the economic driver, economic vitality.

I also believe that we have some other really big initiatives that we're working on in collaboration, but I think they would lend itself to individual specific emphasis. So, for me, I think our unhoused challenge should have some space up here, not necessarily focused on affordable housing and the downstream housing, really talking about that major challenge that we have in the community today around the unhoused. We talk about Home For All, we are partnering with the County, but I feel like it needs more inertia behind it. Perhaps if we elevate it to a strategic initiative, I'll just put it in the room to get feedback on that, but I believe that is a specific initiative that needs individual emphasis. The small business, corridors, mobility, affordable housing, SAFE Charlotte, I think all of those things are good as well as workforce and SEAP. The rest of those things, Mr. Driggs mentioned water and some of our other public works, I think those are steady state, that's just our ways of working. Of course, quality of life is critically important, but I think those are steady state items that need to just maintain.

Ms. Campbell said okay, good deal.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said so I think if Council's appetite is to remove UDO, I think we should put in smart growth as an initiative. I think a challenge I see with the City is the follow through. So, we have all these initiatives, and I want to make sure that the follow through is there, such as with SAFE Charlotte or Corridors of Opportunity or workforce development. I want to make sure that if we do remove a certain initiative, that we add it with some type of initiative that allows for us to study the follow through and

implementation, if you will. It doesn't have to be tied to a specific policy, but at least over encompassing.

Ms. Campbell said and I think that if we, staff, has done one thing, they have tried to provide you all with all the things in terms of execution of things that are getting done, and as an outsider to the community, it is amazing the amount of work that is getting done in this community by City employees. It is totally amazing. So, I think where we are, and getting ready to kind of wrap up, your strategic initiatives, a new one that potentially could be, maybe two, could be added, would be smart growth. That's very broad, and we would have to have staff to kind of identify what those specific initiatives are, but it would relate to possibly some of the permitting processes, and it'll be the how you are growing kinds of efforts, so it's a big tent. SAFE Charlotte is a big tent, and it's going to include a number of things. What comes off is Digital Divide and UDO.

Mr. Mitchell said I think we need to have a conversation about UDO.

Ms. Campbell said okay, let's have more conversation about it then.

Mayor Lyles said I think the Unified Development Ordinance is a process for us, more than something that we're creating or whatever, it's a tool, and so I guess what I'm saying is that when we look at the Corridors of Opportunity, we know that we are going to do things in that community. I think the Unified Development Ordinance is really a major planning activity, and I think we have great planning people, all of you, you guys know that. I would just say that if I were to look at that, the Unified Development Ordinance would not be my top one, and I think that it's possible that as we're going to talk about this and take it on as committees, I'd rather the committee really look at unified development, so we are really making a good decision on whether or not we add to it or not, and I think that that might be helpful. If that is, then I would just say, take that and maybe it's up there, but it's going to go through the process for the Council.

Ms. Campbell said okay. Arts and culture is going to get incorporated, it comes off.

Ms. Anderson said that's what I was suggesting. I was suggesting that it becomes a metric under workforce development, economic development, that ED workforce development group.

Ms. Campbell said okay. So, SEAP stays, and workforce development gets amplified, so to speak. There was one other thing that we said we possibly wanted to add. Oh, unhoused. How's that landing on you all when you have these two efforts that you can incorporate?

Ms. Mayfield said so, I'm not sure where it goes under, because keep in mind what our role is. So, even though I would love to expand affordable housing, I'm going to just leave that what it is, but our target really should be workforce, and workforce ties into everything else. Even though the City, many years ago, stepped into a space to help with those that are chronically unemployed, underemployed, unhoused, that is the County, Health and Human Services, wraparound services, all of that. So, to add that as a priority for us, I think would give a different impression to community versus what we have always done, and that is support the County through our financial partners, but to make that a priority for us I think will be doing a disservice to ourselves to add something that really does not fall in our wheelhouse versus how workforce development, SAFE Charlotte, and everything else also ties into housing affordability.

Ms. Campbell said and a lot of these you guys are lead. You are the lead entity delivering that service.

Ms. Anderson said I understand that, and I understand that the County is really the lead, if we think about a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) perspective.

Ms. Campbell said we can do it though.

Ms. Anderson said that's what I mean, through RACI, as were talking about RACI earlier. The reason I put it in the room is that it continues to be a challenge. I wasn't specifically really talking about the mental health aspect or the street psychiatry, and all those elements that are a part of the ragu, if you will, but it continues to be a challenge for the City that we don't have a direct program to address the unhoused issue that we have. It's not just in one pocket, it is a major challenge, and I believe that it should be a strategic initiative. Fine if the majority doesn't want it to be. I wasn't proposing that it be a priority, but I was proposing that it be an area of focus with a higher emphasis than it had been over the last several years.

Ms. Campbell said but I think we heard presentations yesterday that there is a lot of work, particularly related to your CARES (Community Assistance Response and Engagement Support) team, I think is what you all call it, and some of that may be related to mental health. I think you can make it much more wholistic in terms of referrals for assistance, and I think that that can come through with just conversations with CMPD. It doesn't have to be laser focused initiative, but we want you all to step up your referral and your coordination and collaboration with those entities that are principally responsible for providing those services. Then your wheelhouse may be under the affordable housing aspect of that issue. Okay, I think we're close.

Ms. Ajmera said we are done.

Ms. Campbell said alright.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for your leadership, Debra.

Ms. Campbell said thank you for your leadership. I know, three minutes over, and I'm going to just take one opportunity to do one thing, just to remind you all. When we started this meeting, we talked about rules of engagement. We said active participation, respectful communication, confidentiality and trust, accountability, and collaboration. A hundred percent, you all nailed it, so thank you very much. You made the facilitation role very, very, I won't say easy, because I had to go out there and bring ya'll in here a number of times, but thank you, thank you, thank you. I'm going to turn, oops, the Mayor isn't here, or the City Manager, to kind of wrap us up, but thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this, this was amazing you guys. Thank you so much. Mayor Pro Tem.

Mr. Mitchell said so, first of all, Debra, thank you. To the team, thank you so much.

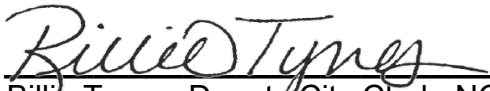
Ms. Campbell said and one last thing, I want to thank staff for your help. Ya'll were amazing, thank you so much, especially Julia. Alrighty, we did it.

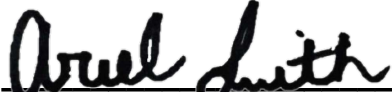
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## ADJOURNMENT

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| Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Graham to adjourn the meeting. |
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The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

  
Billie Tynes, Deputy City Clerk, NCCMC

  
Ariel Smith, Lead Clerk

Length of Meeting: 8 Hours, 26 Minutes  
Minutes completed: April 28, 2026

pti:pk