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## MAYOR AND COUNCIL Study Session Minutes

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Approved by Mayor and Council  
on February 19, 2025.

Date of Meeting: September 25, 2024

The Mayor and Council of the City of Tucson met in study session in the Mayor and Council Chambers in City Hall, 255 West Alameda Street, Tucson, Arizona at 2:05 p.m., on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, all members having been notified of the time and place thereof.

### OFFICIAL MEMBERS

#### PRESENT:

Mayor Regina Romero  
Council Member Lane Santa Cruz (Ward 1)  
Council Member Paul Cunningham (Ward 2) (arrived at 2:13 p.m.)  
Vice Mayor Kevin Dahl (Ward 3)  
Council Member Nikki Lee (Ward 4)  
Council Member Richard G. Fimbres (electronic attendance)  
Council Member Karin Uhlich (Ward 6)

#### OFFICIAL MEMBERS

None

#### ABSENT:

#### STAFF:

Timothy M. Thomure, City Manager  
Michael Rankin, City Attorney  
Suzanne Mesich, City Clerk

Mayor Romero announced that Council Members Fimbres would be participating electronically through Microsoft TEAMS.

**(NOTE: Minutes for Study Session are transcribed in verbatim format.)**

- 1. Pima Association of Governments (PAG) Management Committee Recommendation to the PAG Regional Council and Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Technical Management Committee Recommendation to the RTA Board (City Wide) SS/SEP25-24-177**

(This item was taken out of order and discussed after item 2.)

2. **Updates on Strategic Initiatives Related to Unsheltered Homelessness and Presentation by Pima County Public Health Director Dr. Theresa Cullen regarding the Regional Opioid Response and Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (City Wide) SS/SEP25-24-178**

(This item was taken out of order.)

Introductory comments were made by Mayor Regina Romero and Timothy Thomure, City Manager.

Information and presentation were provided by Dr. Theresa Cullen, Director, Pima County Health Department, Chad Kasmar, Tucson Police Chief and Amaris Vasquez, Multi Agency Resource Coordinator.

Discussion ensued.

Direction was given, to start preparing a GAP Analysis, to help direct resources strategically.

No formal action was taken.

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**Mayor Romero:** So, we are going to start with Item 2 first and then go to Item 1 after Item 2. So I just wanted to open up the item by saying that Chief Kasmar is with us at the table as well as Doctor Cullen and I just wanted to kind of go back to 2022 when I asked the city manager to begin scheduling these updates for council and for the community to see and hear the efforts that we are making to address unsheltered homelessness in related issues in our community.

We've heard from our own city staff and representatives from Pima County, including Pima County Administrator Jan Leshar, Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator, Dr. Teresa Cullen, Director of Pima County Health Department. Many in our team, my Council colleagues and I remain concerned about the parallel issues of unsheltered homelessness and the rise of opioid fentanyl and meth misuse in our community. These issues are not unique to Tucson or Pima County, or even to Arizona and yet there are particular circumstances that make our situation here in Tucson and in our region unique, including the weather and proximity to the border in terms of the availability of fentanyl in our community over the past five years, we have created many programs to deal with and help unsheltered community members, including the Mayor and Council, creating our Housing First Program, our Community Safety, Health and Wellness Program. We've hired housing navigators and care coordinators, created a homeless protocol tool which is being updated as we speak moved our Place Network Investigation pilot forward to make it a permanent program. It's now called the violence interruption and vitalization action, known as VIVA Program.

We began to make zoning changes to bring additional resources to create shelter, our first pilot program is the Amphitheater First Resource Center. We are currently working to purchase a

facility in South Tucson to create a hundred additional low barrier shelter beds. The city has put millions of dollars into purchasing hotels and house people first. My colleagues on the Council and I passed a resolution in May of this year declaring fentanyl an opioid use a public health crisis, which it is. We've hosted housing Central Command to help us improve the efficiency of our collective regional efforts to move more people experiencing homelessness into housing as quickly as possible. We've been meeting with Pima County myself as the mayor with charity Halva, our city manager, and County Administrator Leshner for the past two years helping ease the processes that we mutually share. And yet we are still in a crisis and we acknowledge that all of these efforts put together are making a dent, but there are issues that, frankly, the City of Tucson and even maybe Pima County. are not completely responsible for.

The City of Tucson has been doing incredible innovative work. To direct resources to these issues but we have seen some turns and I would say the last eight months to a year where there are two parallel crises happening before us, one of unsheltered homelessness, one of unsheltered homelessness that is accompanied with severe mental illness and on top of that, the usage of fentanyl and meth and opioids, which is a substance use disorder. So, I think we need to continue doing what we have been doing, but branch out and reach out to the most appropriate jurisdictions to help us with behavioral health, substance misuse and serious mental illness issues that, frankly, the City of Tucson is not an expert in or prepared to do because that is not within the services that the City of Tucson not according to our charter and not according to what we have traditionally done to...to service our community.

The City of Tucson are not experts on mental, behavioral and serious mental illnesses nor are we experts in knowing how to do or have capacity to do, you know, the work that that substance misuse and the crisis that it brings with it to communities like ours should be doing. So with that, I'd like to call on Dr. Cullen and Chief Kasmar I know also that we have Mari Vazquez, our Multi Agency Resource Coordinator here, Brandy Champion and others to provide us with information as to where we are, what we have been doing and I think most importantly, what we need to do to address these very concerning issues in our Community, so I don't know if you'd like to introduce the team, Mr. Manager.

**Timothy M. Thomure, City Manager:** Thank you, Honorable Mayor, Members of the Council, thanks for the opportunity to give you updates on...on what we're doing regionally. As you mentioned, police Chief Kasmar will give a brief update on activities TPDs involvement Dr. Cullen for Pima County Health Department will...will give a...a presentation as well, and then we'll wrap up with our resource manager for Community Safety, Health and Wellness, Lee Hopkins, who's here at the table with us as well. With that, I'll turn it over to Chief Kasmar.

**Chad Kasmar, Policer Chief:** Thank you, Mr. City Manager, Honorable Mayor, Members of Council, thank you, and my esteemed colleagues that I get to share the table with that cover what we'll hopefully cover. Again, the complexities of this issue that we're trying to tackle. I'll start with. You heard me say this before and then it's actually gone up about two percent, 52% of fentanyl in this country continues to be seized in the state of Arizona. What that means is the cartels are highly effective and nimble, and the way that they get their drugs into our country and when we talk about fentanyl and opiates, we should continue to...to recognize that methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin continue to also be pumped into our country and most of the

folks that were meeting out that have those mental health and substance misuse disorders continue to be Poly drug users.

It's just the fact that fentanyl is so inexpensive for, you know, far less than a dollar a pill if you're buying or purchasing from somebody that you've purchased for before can get down into the 35 to \$0.50 per pill. That's the challenge that's we're facing and that's the reason that we come across so many individuals in our community who are smoking fentanyl out in public or have, you know, a pocket full of fentanyl pills in their in their pockets. So what I want to champion again today is a multifaceted approach of a continuum of care and a continuum of accountability as we try to tackle this really difficult issue that, that, that is a local state and federal opportunity for us all to continue to collaborate, to work together, to not point fingers, but to...to regroup, reacquire and...and recognize what strategies are working and do more of those and...and recognize the strategies that are not working and doing less. This is absolutely a public health crisis.

In my 24 years of public safety service, I've...I've not seen any type of drug impact, our community, like it has recently both with Vice Mayor Dahl and many of other use of Council members, have received a city leadership, have received emails from community members from business owners that are just frustrated with. Where are we headed and what does that look like in the difficulty of the plight that they see related and connected to this devastating drug? I will say that we have over we're nearing 4000 narcotics arrest this year. We are doing more arrests than we did five years ago, but we can see that that doesn't always have an impact. This is absolutely something where arrests and I want to dissect arrest is different than incarceration when we think about arrest. The officers continue to...to embrace the idea behind deflection, we've completed over 400 of those were individuals in crisis have made the decision.

When we catch them with narcotics to go get help and...and instead of going to jail and we continue to work on that, what we're seeing though is the devastating impact and the fact that fentanyl is twice as twice the impact of a traditional opiate. It's very difficult to come off of without medically aided treatment and so the idea that we continue to meet folks where they're at provide services will have increased our probability that folks might actually take alternative pass other than to continue to live in the status that they're living. I wanna I wanna also recognize that's been an ongoing conversation within my organization, in the community and of course with Mayor Council are what do we do and why are we arresting folks who are smoking fentanyl in broad daylight and there are some complexities that go with that. For one, we need to recognize it...it is it is against the law to have fentanyl and...and to smoke fentanyl in our community. When an officer comes across that they have the opportunity, if they're not on a higher-level call for service to...to try to impact.

The person that's...that's committing that offense there has been a conversation around. Is there a 2 hour or...or a hard 2-hour rule at the Pima County Jail in relation to NAF care rules, which is a medical service provided within the jail. That that somebody can't be booked. What I will tell you is at my recent conversations looking at data for this year at jail where we're averaging about 1500, just over 1500 occupancy jail. And what we see is about a ratio of about 50 folks per day. I'm sorry, 50 folks per month who are rejected and about out of out of out of all those about half of those are ours. The number one rejection as we sit here right now is hypertension, so I know you wrap your head around that for a minute. And so, if...if again, it's where they're looking for



high risk folks who could have medical crisis within the jail. But if...if their blood pressure is greater or equal to 200 / 120, that's the number one rejection.

So what will be you know what I what I spoke to the sheriff about was our officers need the ability to effectively make arrests when they need to and to drop somebody off at the Pima County Jail if they're in any kind of immediate kind of health crisis that my team are evaluating. They're certainly calling our Tucson Fire Partners to come out and do that field triage to make sure that they're safe to transport, but at that point what we're looking for is a meaningful health services within the jail for us to safely drop that person off and for them to be reviewed by an expert before they hand that off. So that those conversations are ongoing. I will also say that conversations are ongoing with the Pima County Attorney's Office on thresholds. In what capacity that that Miss Conover's team has to actually process an amount of cases that frankly we're not staffed for and the county's not staff for. So, we're all having to recognize what investments need to be made. So, we can better process this. So, when we look at program development for post arrest but pre conviction and trying to leverage folks into treatment. So, with that, I'm going to pass the mic over to Doctor Collin.

**Dr. Teresa Cullen, Director Pima County Health Department:** Thank you, Chief. Thank you, Mayor, Members of the Council for inviting us. We believe our relationship with the City of Tucson is critical in our ability to react, plan and mitigate the opioid situation. The overdose situation, as well as this recognition that it does not occur in a vacuum, which is what I think. The chief just shared there are multi multiple factors that are contributing to the ongoing crisis with fentanyl, the ongoing overdose crisis, including poverty, unhoused, chronic mental illness, serious mental ill access to care.

So, I'm going to briefly run you through some of the statistics we are seeing because there is some success happening and I think that a match of this is due to the work that we are doing together. There are still lots of challenges and as we move towards the future, what I would recognize, and I stated this on a call this morning on it national is that we are in a unique. Situation here we work together, we share data we can respond together, we plan together, we can track interventions together and hopefully together we will be able to solve some of the problems that we are seeing with some novel solutions that I will say I'm not sure we thought of yet, but let me share with you the news that we are seeing and you may have seen this because it's been published nationally.

We are seeing a significant decrease in overdose deaths in the United States. Pima County in 1984 in 2024 has seen a 17% decrease in overdose deaths. Now at the same time we are seeing an increase in overdose visits in the emergency room. That is probably positive because what that means is people are showing up at the emergency room alive and getting appropriate intervention. As we know, for most of the opioids that intervention. We are also seeing very significant decrease in juveniles 17 and under last year we had seven deaths. At this time we have had one so far this year we had seen a spike in the 50 to 80 year old that we were really worried about, you know, the coupling of that, perhaps with loneliness, perhaps with access to care perhaps. With limited resources, the heat that seems to have mitigate mitigated this year, and those numbers have all dropped significantly. We will make sure you guys copies of all these numbers; we are also launching our website very soon that have numbers. That website is

opioid response PMA. At the same time, the office of the Medical Examiner data is always up to date for opioids and you can sort it by the different kind of medication, the different kind of illegal substances that people are taking.

So, what are we doing? We have given out 22,000 doses of Narcan this year so far. Just the Pima County Health Department, there are. People that are distributing Narcan, we also give out xylazine testing and opioid testing strips. The hope is that they're 6 to 7,000 in there, but the fact that people take them at all means that people want to live. They may be abusing drugs, but they're not, they're looking specifically to make sure what is in the medication they are using, the other things that are going on is increasing peer support. We've worked really closely with Lee and we plan on continuing to do that work together. We have an anti-stigma communication campaign that is critical not only for the individual, but for the family in the community so that when people see someone who may be suffering from a fentanyl crisis. They may be more likely to call someone to make sure that they seek care.

We're also closely working with our provider community. We know that there are significant number of providers that for multiple reasons do not feel comfortable prescribing medication assisted treatment. We do not have enough providers in the Community to do that. The vast majority of that work has historically fall into psychiatrist and addiction medicine people. We need primary care to get comfortable with prescribing MOUD and treating some of the addiction issues as a chronic disease, which is what happens for those of you who know methadone, methadone, people can stay on methadone for their life. They work jobs. They go to work they...they are very successful individuals in the community and so our goal is to make sure that we can increase access to those kinds of services, which is huge. We are creating a Southern Arizona Chronic pain task.

Of course, but we believe, and the data would show this is that many people end up in the substance misuse substance abuse network because they have had inadequately treated pain. When we look at our overdose data by occupation, we see a disproportionate number of people that are employed in the trades industry in the construction industry makes total sense. Those people may have an accident. They may have an injury and they may eventually end up with an opioid addiction but really started with how do I treat my pain situation there? We have done a significant amount targeting the youth. We have talked previously with you about prevention and how critical that is with the older population. Our prevention is why are you using, is there loneliness, are there other things we should be doing with the youth? The campaigns are a little different.

What are we seeing, what are your risk factors for that, how can we make sure that? Have resilience in your community, in your family, in your individual, as well as giving a lot of education, behavioral health ties in closely here that you are not alone. Campaign is really geared to say to youth you are not alone. There are services available for you and we have put a significant amount of our 207 dollars, our marijuana tax money into that. So, we also have done a needs and asset study. I have talked about this before and now I actually have a copy of it. We approach this from not just what are the needs in the communities, but what is the strength and resilience in the Community, and we will make sure that you guys get a copy of this.



There are many opportunities for us to work together and for the County Health Department to respond to what happened here. This was conducted primarily with interviews we've done multiple surveys, but these were interview groups not only with providers, but also with Unhoused community members. To try to tell us what is working and what isn't working for you. Finally, we have the Substance Misuse Committee or the Opioid committee which we are going to later we have our third meeting today. You will recall that the City of Tucson, the city of South Tucson, Marana, Pima County, are working together to come up with ways to expand not only the fiscal recess but the resources, but the human resources that come along with the opioid settlement dollars. As of this point, the county has received approximately \$18 million, the vast majority of that is unspent. The spending has focused on Narcan provision of care to women who are pregnant and are suffering from opioid use disorder, and a very recent contract that's being let to expand MOUD and treatment into the community through a mobile unit.

There are many people that are unable to get to a facility where they are able to initiate MOUD and then have multiple barriers to stay on it. However, I think as we look forward, our hope is that the opioid committee will look at multiple other opportunities that have arisen for us to work in the Community. I will say that the number one area that is the of most concern is the justice involved population in terms of trying to figure out how do we initiate MIT Behavioral Health Department of Behavioral Health that the county has done that in the jails. But then how do we keep people engaged in that and how do we give people a runway and a transition plan, what they will be OK. At the same time, I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the unhoused population. We know the unhoused population is at risk for overdose. We know that there is a higher use of substances in that Community, not necessarily opioids people are still using methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin. But our ability to be able to touch that community from a public health perspective is critical.

We know that that community, just like we know there's other populations that are more at risk based on our demographic data. We know that the unhealth population is as probably at highest risk for overdose and we are trying to identify what are appropriate interventions for that Community. I would reiterate what I said last year we're not buying ourselves out of this. However, we are seeing a decrease if you ask me why I can give you a litany of reasons and I have no idea which one of those is the causal relationship here. We definitely believe Narcan in the street makes a difference. There is a a new a new measure that looks at how much Narcan has been distributed per thousand people in a community. We are so lucky that we've been working with TFD and TPD to identify high risk areas. Not necessarily of unhoused, but where we're seeing overdoses so that we can do what we call hyper local work.

Obviously, everyone in the community is affected, but our ability to target populations when we know we have limited resources becomes really critical. So I'm going to close with that I just really want to give a shout out to the work we've been able to do with the chief, with EMS, with the responders, with the healthcare providers, with the general community, with the NGOs and finally with Lee. Thank you.

**Mayor Romero:** And Lee if you'd like to add your, yeah, your comments.

**Lee Hopkins, Resource Manager:** Thank you. I'll give just a brief update on how Community Safety, Health and Wellness has been investing in this space as well. So, I wanted to just share some highlights over the summer from June 1st to August 31st to give you a sense of where we're at, what we're seeing. So, in that period, we responded to 555 311 calls a subset of the total 311 calls and the calls that are sent to our team seven days a week are responding to social service needs. And so, among those needs were seeing a large percentage, almost 50% of people are housing insecure at risk of homelessness. And so, although that is, and that is tangential to the conversation we're having, and so a lot of what our team is doing is helping folks navigate how to stay housed to prevent additional families from being on the streets. In addition to that, about 25% of the calls are related to emergency shelter.

So...so we do depend on the shelter system as it is and...and sometimes are able to advocate and help folks kinda get a back door entry, but also sometimes simply depend on you know, the regular intake process and also, about a smaller amount, about 4% of folks are seeking out behavioral health services, detox and substance use. Treatment services and so that aligns also with what we're seeing as far as the voluntary interest and seeking of behavioral health treatment and medication for opioid use disorder. We're seeing it at a much smaller rate than we would hope and so the way that we address that is really just meeting people where they're at and about 14% of those 311 callers become we kind of hold their hand for a longer time and guide them through. Some of the complex systems that they're trying to navigate, so in the summer we also worked with 131 individuals from across Tucson with longer term care coordination. Again, the major need was related to housing instability, either helping folks stay housed or helping folks move from the street into housing.

Sometimes very complex, you know, with folks who have three evictions on their record or, you know, complex family dynamics. Just today we were able to move someone in. Anthony, one of our care coordinators, is doing that this afternoon and...and this individual worked for a month and a half, applying to countless apartments because they the family had three evictions on their record. And finally, we're able to find a landlord that will rent to them and so the team also has leveraged over \$75,000 of both funding that we were able to access through a housing first grant as well as \$30,000 from Community based funds including Ward 3 grants and others to either help folks move in or stay housed. And...and kind of going back to where we're really trying to meet folks where they're at when it comes to, you know, opioid dependence and...and other self-medication using drugs. Is really just trying to use our trauma informed approach meet people where they're at show them that we're...we're ready when they're ready. So even though that's not today, you know they can call us in a month.

And we'll be ready to...to walk them through the next steps with our neighborhood-based work, our community enrichment coordinators have made a lot of inroads in opioid awareness and prevention work in both our the thrive sites as well as the VIVA sites. So, over the summer, 300 residents were served in the VIVA neighborhoods with Narcan and F Test strips. Thanks to our partnership with the Health department. Who attended four of our resource fairs that we had in the sites over the summer? And additionally, we had two Narcan awareness events. So, we have tenants especially from those big apartment complexes coming to those events. And of all ages, we also work closely with partners and this summer we did a summer camp at one of the South



Campbell location apartment complexes for youth and one of the themes of that summer camp was addiction education and prevention.

We also worked with the health department to install Narcan dispensers because the VIVA locations also are areas with the highest rates of overdose in the city. And in our upcoming Community safety Leadership Training Institute, which will begin next week, we have a whole session called Rise to fentanyl that will be delivered by one of our partners. And so really that institute, our community safety leaders, residents of the VIVA sites who will be going through this eight series institute and during the rise to fentanyl session really be equipped with the trauma informed destigmatizing tools to help their neighbors on an individual and community based level. In thrive in the 05 just last week we had a fentanyl focused workshop for the Tucson House Safety Committee so that they can educate their peers within the Tucson House. And we also have been involved in, along with Ward 3 in facilitating neighborhood dialogues about an upcoming addiction treatment center at 11th and Flores. I'm open to any questions you have and thank you.

**Mayor Romero:** Mr. Manager.

**Mr. Thomure:** Thank you, Mayor, and thank you to the team for the presentations today. I also have with us today Mari Vasquez and whether it's now or in a few moments at your pleasure, she can give an update on...on our activities today at Santa Rita Park. So, would you her to like to proceed now? OK, so Mari, please come on up.

**Amaris Vasquez, Multi Agency Resource Coordinator:** Good afternoon, Madam Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor and Council Members. Happy to provide a brief update on the outreach and cleanup effort that we did today at Santa Rita Park. The cleanup began this morning and will continue till 10:00 AM on Friday when the park will be reopened. The cleanup was required to preserve public health, safety and welfare, as noted by many departments, parks, TPD and our outreach teams. Additional outreach to the community members in the park began earlier this month with a significant outreach that was conducted within the last two weeks. Many thanks to the Pima County Health Department's mobile unit that had been out with us several times.

Outreach teams continued to be on site this morning to ensure that any unhoused community members who wish to access available shelter and housing were able to do so. Some of the partners included the City of Tucson Housing First, Community Bridges, Kodak, La Frontera, Hope Inc., Sullivan Jackson, Community Workforce Development, The VA, CMS (Community Medical Services), American Rehab Campus, which we call the ARC, Old Pueblo Community Services, and our multidisciplinary outreach team, which had several nurse practitioners. 78 individuals were contacted by the outreach team on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Prior to that, the previous Friday, we had contacted 40 individuals. More than 50 individuals were at the park this morning. Not all were unhoused. We had about 15 people advising us that they had housing opportunities, but we're hanging out with individuals at that were encamped in the park.

None of the individuals that were contacted last week or today accepted any shelter options. They did take the Narcan and the fentanyl test strips but no shelter options were accepted. We did have 4 initially take decide to...to go, but as it was time to get them in the car, they refused



services. We did have low barrier shelter options as well as other options that may have had some higher restrictions, and again those were not taken. Emergency medical aid was provided by TFD to one individual that was found intoxicated on the premises and was exhibiting symptoms which others felt like needed to be treated by medical teams and he was responsive when they got there. No arrests were made during the outreach.

However, there were some TV stations and social media representatives filming the cleanup and small protest activity along 22nd. There were significant hazards found at the park, which were abated during cleanup, including an unusual number of needles indicating polydrug use, one deceased dog, quite a bit of rotting food and other hazards that we...we encountered. All three areas where we originally were going to see if we could just do a section of the park the entire park did...did need to be closed down. City workers did collect property, including tents, bicycles and walkers, to return to their owners if they come and pick it up. They are all collected and tagged as well as marked for people to go pick up at Thomas Price Center, which is where we're holding items for 30 days. Let's see the park cleanup work as it's closed will include major cleanup of park areas, walkways, restrooms, dugouts and identified needs like removal of graffiti, painting of damaged surfaces and park amenities, as well as repair to damage fencing turf areas into irrigation restrooms et cetera.

Let's see outreach and cleanup effort was collaborated by and coordinated by myself, the Multi Agency Resource Coordinator, but collaborated again between HCD, our Community partners, TPD, TFD, Parks, and Environmental and General Services. Overall, it was an efficient operation since all the resources between City, County and community agencies were present and happy to answer any other questions that you may have.

**Mayor Romero:** Any questions, comments from my Council colleagues? Council Member Fimbres and then Council Member.

**Council Member Fimbres:** OK. Thank you for the service Mari Vasquez. Were there removal services?

**Ms. Vasquez:** So, we had both detox services available and housing shelter services. CMS was actually offering Suboxone treatment in the field and then we had medical services provided by the El Rio Nurse practitioners.

**Council Member Fimbres:** Was that right? Nobody requested services.

**Ms. Vasquez:** Nobody took services today.

**Council Member Fimbres:** Thank you.

**Mayor Romero:** Council, thank you, Council Member Fimbres, Council Member Uhlich.

**Council Member Uhlich:** Thank you and thanks to all colleagues here who've offered us some great updates and information. I appreciate addressing both issues in terms of the unsheltered folks in our community. The...the fentanyl and opioid crisis. I agree with you, Mayor it seems

like in the last eight months. I'm very happy to hear we're seeing fewer overdose deaths. It does seem like The Walking wounded amongst us and the suffering and the use is really intense and in looking through stats from...from different teams and sources that I...I do want to make sure that we don't conflate the two issues. I know that there are a significant number of unsheltered folks using drugs, but even in some of these more recent engagement efforts, it looks like a third to sometimes 1/2 a folks who are very out in public at the bus stops in the parks, etc. using are not unsheltered, and so I'm very...very anxious and excited to see this collaboration come together to intensify our efforts.

Super excited to hear about the mobile unit. I because I...I believe that many of us want to know what to do when we see somebody slumped over in a bus stop clearly inebriated in 110, who do we call and who's gonna go engage with that person? I think our community needs tools to help. I...I also did want to ask whether I worked with Arizona Complete Health for a number of years. There are regional behavioral health authority and as I engage with them, they mentioned the CRC and CBI and other resources that ought to come into play, even assisting our officers, so they're not tied up trying to get somebody into treatment and having to wait for hours. Are they at the table with us and could we invite them to the table to make sure that the Medicaid system and the Reba are...are really brought in as partners?

**Dr. Cullen:** Mayor and Council, these are great points. We, Arizona Complete Health, the Crisis Response Center, they...they are at the table. They're not the appropriate choice for everyone, and so I think what you are highlighting is this need for a really sewn well together patchwork quilt that takes everyone where they are in response to what their need is. It is definitely true that the walking wounded, the individuals that are using, who are not unhoused are a critical component of what we are seeing and I think Brandy's report kinda showed that that there were people that were just at the park that they weren't in house. So that number is a striking number as we move forward, we have had engagement with state Medicaid with access because there are some significant changes coming October 1st about housing availability for those who have certain diagnosis, they have to be on Medicaid at the time for them to be able to access up to six months of housing if they are unhoused and to access different services and Lee, Brandy, and I have talked recently about some other models we are seeing in other cities, specifically San Francisco where when people need help, the help comes to them.

They're not transported to the crisis response Center. There's someone that can go to their home, now all of these are labor intensive fiscally fiscal needs that will have to be addressed. But as we look forward to the decisions to be made around the opioid settlement dollars there, I think that there are opportunities there. But what you are pointing out is so critical because it says we have to meet people where they are and while I like you am very happy that deaths are down I don't think youths is down and so I don't want to conflate those two. Because it's easy to conflate them and we there's no indication to me that utilization is down, so thanks.

**Mayor Romero:** Council Member Lee and then Council Member Cunningham, Vice Mayor, and then Council Member Santa Cruz.

**Council Member Lee:** Thank you, Mayor. I really appreciate all the updates and the collaboration that we've talked about today. One thing that I heard Chief Kasmar as well as Lee

mentioned was the involuntary acceptance of services or treatment and so I know it's...it's a controversial topic on forcing people to seek treatment. But chief, you said 4000 arrests were made and only 10% of those folks opted to get help. You said 400 and you said only 4% of the 311 calls were folks actually wanting services. And so, I guess it's kind of a question on are we other than the fact that it's very difficult to go through a detox program and it's probably not the first thing I would want to sign up to do either. Are there any ideas on what we can do to get more people to opt in, whether that's Mahdi or anyone here? Because it seems like if we could even move the needle on that number that would be really significant.

**Chief Kasmar:** Honorable Mayor, Members of Council, Council Member Lee, I think one space that I continue to have dialogue with my...my professional colleagues in the region in the Pima County Attorney's Office is there's no set hard threshold, but it tends to be around 10 pills, if it's less than 10 pills we typically see those drug charges dismissed in initial appearances. And so, what I've called for is an evaluation of system resources so that we can actually still utilize those arrest. One pill can kill 60% of fentanyl continues to have lethal doses of fentanyl. Although the cartels have gotten better at making it and more consistent. But what we do know is option #1 utopian is that folks are ready to get services without being leveraged into treatment.

But we don't live in a world where we can continue to allow 5000 people impact a major metropolitan million people in our community and so we do, you know, in my opinion, humble opinion need to continue to look at systems investment. And so County Attorney has the resources to staffing resources to process the amount of cases that were put in forward in conjunction with looking at programs like steps that we've discussed many times at this table before. Which is a pre conviction post arrest, pre conviction drug rehab process where again that you know it's a system that has tolerance for setbacks and mistakes, those of us with loved ones that have lost their lives or continue to struggle with...with sobriety recognizer there's going to be setbacks. And so if we build systems that can adapt to that, I think we'd be better off and I think Dr. Cullen did a great job of articulating, and it's certainly the sense that your...your PD staff are seeing out in the field. Is that this problem is scaling and it and it's not, it's getting worse, not better?

**Mayor Romero:** Council Member Cunningham and then Santa Cruz.

**Council Member Cunningham:** Got a few things, 400 deflections are we tracking post deflection success? In other words, how are those clients that are getting deflected doing 20 days later, what's the washout rate on folks going to rehab for deflection and then leaving deflection five, six, ten days later? That's something we really need to track. I'm not saying we need to track it to be punitive to the people who quit deflection, but we just need to know that we're not taking the same six people in deflection every month. I mean not that we are, I'm just. So you...you talked a little bit about the I have stuff for Chad, Dr. Cullen, excuse me, the chief, Dr. Cullen, Ms. Lee, I got all...I got...I got stuff for each of you and...and Mari, I'm not leaving you out when we get through all these. What percentage are we talking to CRC, I mean the CRC have the detox bed capacity for folks who are taking when we take them, if we don't take them to jail or jail doesn't accept them, we take them to see CRC. How many of those are we doing a day?

**Chief Kasmar:** Honorable Mayor, Members of Council, Council Member Cunningham, the Community Response Center, Crisis Centre, is...is particularly the our staff are taking folks from our mental health crisis, not substance misuse crisis so typically, we take folks to Kodak if...if they're dealing with substance misuse disorders.

**Council Member Cunningham:** I had a discussion with a community member yesterday who thought we were taking everybody to the CRC, so I just wanted to try to get that on.

**Chief Kasmar:** It's a fair question because sometimes it's really difficult to separate whether somebody's in mental health or substance misuse disorder crisis.

**Council Member Cunningham:** But it's not something, it's not an alternative if someone isn't going to it. It's not a jail alternative necessarily at all.

**Chief Kasmar:** It is an alternative to jail if somebody's in mental health crisis and the officer we've been doing this for three decades, that feels like that is the best place for them to be and then we long form the arrest.

**Council Member Cunningham:** All right, put it, OK. I'm trying to say that what, well is that 90% of our arrests that we're going to the CRC, because that's what it's made was made to sound like to me.

**Chief Kasmar:** No, Sir, we're, you know, we've...we've approximately, we we've probably processed 200,000 calls for service that have resulted in about 14,000 arrests. So, you can see those numbers are...are low. We...we actually arrest is a fairly low tool that we use.

**Council Member Cunningham:** All right. Congrats...congrats on lowering the odds. This is for you, but how are we able to do we have a mechanism to track 30-day, 90-day daily use? Do we have any pieces to that?

**Dr. Cullen:** Honorable Mayor, Council.

**Council Member Cunningham:** You don't have to do the whole thing.

**Dr. Cullen:** I don't have to do all that. OK, good. 'cause. I always forget how to do it, no? OK. We're trying to put in process in a sense, what we would call a journey map, somebody enters in the system and you can enter, enter into a data system from a zillion different ways, right? An EMS call a loved one, an Ed visit. An overdose, somebody seeing you at Kodak. Then what happens to longitudinally? So, we are in the process of trying to pull something together that will enable us to do that, but right now we don't have great.

**Council Member Cunningham:** And I'll get to that, that's kind of the puzzle.

**Chief Kasmar:** Mayor and Council Member I'll just remind Mayor and Council the \$1,000,000 that you just supported to fund the expansion of the data bank in conjunction with...with my



partner crime and it and our TBD partners and county and...and Dr. Cullen alluded to that earlier that the data bank that we've built will allow that type of congregate data to be shared.

**Council Member Cunningham:** Do we have I...I...I saw that we had some Suboxone. I...I'm assuming you guys are working some Suboxone things and methadone. Are we doing buprenorinorfine as a third alternative?

**Dr. Cullen:** Yes, those are all available. Some of them depend on the insurance of the individual, but they are they are all available and what people choose there's and then I'm long acting medications that are now out there that we believe will be really critical. Medicaid right now does not pay for those. However, we've been in discussion with them because what we believe is that it may decrease craving enough, may make withdrawal a little more tolerable and we'll be able to get people on.

**Council Member Cunningham:** And so, this one's gonna be a little controversial. I'm not taking a stand here either way I just am asking. I understood that there's some cannabis discussion about making that as an alternative for people trying to detox from opiates. Are we using, are we doing any of that research or participating in any of those things?

**Dr. Cullen:** We are not directly, but we work with the Center for Pain and Addiction research at the University of Arizona and they are doing some of that right now.

**Council Member Cunningham:** I was just curious about it cause as I was reading up on the four different alternatives, it's starting to come in, which like 20 years ago would have been sacrilege, and now it's a pretty interesting discussion to have. OK so we had 551 referrals over the summer, that was over about 90 days.

**Mayor Romero:** Can you turn on your mic so that the people at home can hear you?

**Ms. Hopkins:** Pardon me. Yes, 555 311 calls were responded to and then additionally, there was 131 folks who got a...a bit more intensive care coordination.

**Council Member Cunningham:** On those 311 calls are we responding in person with a social worker?

**Ms. Hopkins:** We are responding over the phone, calling them back within 24 hours and it's a member of the Community Safety, Health and Wellness team. So, it's a care coordinator calling them back.

**Council Member Cunningham:** So, but we're all we have so do any of those calls end up with one of our team going to the field? I'm just asking.

**Ms. Hopkins:** It is a on a case by case basis. Yeah, yes, OK, if... if needed, but it's...it's rare.

**Council Member Cunningham:** I'm just. Yeah, I just wanna. And we also have folks with MDOT to the field daily still?



**Ms. Hopkins:** MDOTs in the field daily.

**Council Member Cunningham:** So, there's a couple things that one of the things got talked about that I think we can control at this table. Is someone mentioned about people calling for detox? I don't know enough about the entire system. What I know is that we've listed 15 different agencies. We've got three different entities funding things. My opinion is this without complicating the discussion, we should probably set a goal to have a plan. I know I hate having to say it like that, but I have to say it like that, I'd rather say set a goal and this is it. I want it to be able that if somebody calls for detox they can get picked up and taken to detox within four hours. That should be within our realm. To get there, go ahead.

**Ms. Hopkins:** That can be done by our team as well as the Housing First team, who responded through in one calls and also there are crisis mobile teams that can be dispatched by the mental health crisis line that are access funded for that specific purpose.

**Council Member Cunningham:** And I'm not really. I don't really care who does it. I'm just saying in the city of Tucson, if you want to go to detox, you should be able to get there within 4 hours and we should be able to do that. We should have the bandwidth to do that. Period. There shouldn't be any more discussion about how it's done or who it's done by, or who's responsibility it is. I don't need a finger point circle.

**Mayor Romero:** Council Member Cunningham, do you have any more questions?

**Council Member Cunningham:** Yeah, sorry. I'm going as fast as I can. The second piece was oh, the last piece is, is that OK so the puzzle piece. So we have a data puzzle with each client we're engaging, and then we also have a...a computer puzzle because there's a health, there's a health service computer file on them, there is a court and law enforcement engagement file on them, and then there's also a social services file on them, and it's a digital footprint in different computer systems. And I think one of the biggest pieces is how we get them to. Oh, and finally there's a court file on them. We have to have them talk to each other. One of the things you talked about was we have people with under 10 pills, so the case gets dismissed, but if they have multiple engagements with law enforcement in a six month period can we treat that as a as a clinical piece in how we divert them to mandated care? Can we work with the County Attorney to work with some model like that? And is there a model that exists? That's a question for all of you.

**Dr. Cullen:** Let me respond to the data piece because these guys are amazing. I'm pointing to the chief and the Police Department and we just a call today for an hour and a half trying to figure out this puzzle and figure out that's why this journey map of where the individual goes, the ability to follow the individual, obviously the family too is critical. We are working on that, that is a very difficult area. And but I just want you to know we know we have to do that. We know we have to get people when they enter into the system. And the health system piece is critical. We're actually working with one of the major hospitals to do some predictions about that, so I...I think that will be solved. It will be solved on a small level originally and then it will be solved from a mathematical.

**Council Member Cunningham:** Diversion, like on site. One of the things we talked about was the digital hearings. Are we closer to that? We're able to do video by court on warrants and stuff like that.

**Chief Kasmar:** Bypass formality? Yes, Sir we're getting closer. And you bring up a great point, council member Cunningham, that we are, that Citicorp plays a key role. We often talk about the felony aspect of our County Attorney partners, but through community court and investment in our own court resources is a opportunity to expand impact.

**Council Member Cunningham:** That's all.

**Mayor Romero:** Council Member, I think that what you brought up is in your last question is really important because that's something that I'm sure all of us have been asking for the last couple of years is, what is the map right? We there are huge gaps in the map that we're creating, and even though the City of Tucson has created incredible and innovative and data-driven evidence-based programs. We still have this issue of severe mental illness coupled with substance use disorders, and we're seeing people out in our community and you know there's evidence there throughout the city, and so I feel that we need to create a possibly like a gap analysis. In terms of this is all we're doing and all of the work, both the city and county, we're working together, all these innovative programs that we've created, but there's gaps and so concerning the Santa Rita Park issues that were happening there.

My question has always been, but where do we take these individuals that obviously need help. The first step is for them to accept the help, right? And so, if they are selling, if there's criminality components, are there ways that we can leverage arrests to have either court mandated or any other way, right. So, there are absolute gaps in what we're trying to do and so we need others to come with us. We need the County Attorney to come with us. We need to make sure that the courts are aware of what we're trying to do and then we need places for detox. I think that beds, low barrier shelter beds, but also beds for detox voluntary and involuntary. Unfortunate. So I guess I'll let you think about it in terms of others asking some questions and having concerns, but ideally what I would like to see is a gap analysis where you are all that are doing the work help us put together that map. Help us find those gaps and then also find the jurisdictions that are responsible to help us with those gaps. Because the city of Tucson we are not responsible for mental and behavioral health. We don't know how to do it and we don't have the capacity to do it. So, who is? Council Member Santa Cruz and then Vice Mayor.

**Council Member Santa Cruz:** Thank you, Mayor, City Manager. I know we; you and I spoke yesterday, and I'm frustrated and disappointed on how the sweep that happened at Santa Rita Park went about this morning. You and I have been having conversations over the past couple of weeks about what's been going on there, and I felt like I was blindsided to find out about it yesterday. It's a park that borders Ward 1, and a lot of our neighbors have used the park in the past, have concerns and so to not be somebody that was informed ahead of time about what was happening and could kinda help with that is really, I'm really disappointed. The...the conversations that we've had with you with staff was that it would be a layered approach for how

we would go about closing down the park because we...we all know that we all know in the Community was well aware that there's construction that would be happening.

So, we understood that in October a portion of the park would be closed and that would continue to be the phases till we got to late fall, early winter when the construction would start. And so, I was blindsided to find out yesterday about the sweep that would be happening this morning. And...and I understand because so many of us have had parks, have areas in our districts where there are encampments and there's a lot of frustration from neighbors about all the activity that they see and specifically in parks and I've been on the record about saying I believe parks are recreational open spaces that are for everybody to use once you use them as shelter or housing, they no longer are recreational open spaces. And so, we need to...to maintain that. So I think we have this we've been... we've been allowing for these park spaces to kind of get out of control and then turn a blind eye till it gets out of control and then we come and do enforcement with an iron fist instead of when we we've done these...these sweeps to do ongoing maintenance so that it doesn't get to that point again.

So, I'm not sure what it is that needs to happen so that we have clarity and consistency, how we're going to enforce park rules or criminal behavior that happens at parks. I think that's part of the frustration with both ends of the community that we hear about, that there isn't any clarity and consistency when it comes to that. I am frustrated because I feel like we talked about these hypothetical low barrier shelter options that we have, and I would like to know how many actual low barrier shelter beds we have. Because it's what I understand is what the city's capacity with low barrier is limited and so then we're kind of leaning on other partner, a nonprofit organization that typically run higher barrier shelters to provide low barrier shelters. That's not very clear to me and also not very clear to the Community. So I think we need to do a better, a better job with that at the end of the day, I think a lot of the colleagues have covered a lot of it, will continue to have ongoing conversations but I think also what is missing aside from that gap analysis is that it's not very clear what our goals are in addressing unsheltered homelessness.

What our goals are in addressing the fentanyl use we don't aren't clear of what our tactics are gonna be and addressing those goals and then what our metrics and so I think we can be having data-driven programming, but we're not actually have metrics or goals that we're trying to address. So, I feel like we that needs to we need to have more clarity around that that needs to be documented and then we all need to know how we're going to, how we're going to get there. I feel like our community deserves that and we need to know what kind of path we're...we're forging for us.

**Mayor Romero:** I totally understand the frustration. I think all of us are frustrated. I'm pretty sure the neighbors around Santa Rita Park are equally frustrated with what was happening in front of their home It's I don't know where the communication breakdown happened, but that shouldn't happen. I think we're all on this table interested in terms of how are we dealing with issues that are happening, like Santa Rita Park, right? I know for a fact I take pictures when I see stuff and I send them sometimes to the chief, sometimes to the city manager. I sometimes report him to Mari, but I make staff aware of what I'm seeing and what my concerns are. There are hotspots like there are or there was at Santa Rita Park.

There's 6th and I-10, there's Grant and I-10 on the loop. There are part of the loop that connects from 22nd St. to South Tucson. There are hotspots that we should absolutely report, just like any other resident, we ask any other resident to report. Mr. Manager, or Mari, what type of work was done at Santa Rita Park beforehand to offer resources and are there any nonprofit organization that are partners that have been trying to work in offering resources to the people that were encamped at Santa Rita Park?

**Ms. Vasquez:** Absolutely, Mayor, Council Members, we did have so the list again. So again, Housing First CBI, Kodak, La, Frontera, Home, Inc, Sullivan, Jackson, BACMS, American Rehab Campus, and then the multidisciplinary outreach team El Rio, we really, I mean once you know the...the complaints and the reports coming into the dashboard. So now anybody that reports all the reports go into the dashboard so we have data to show where...where we are in the tiered system with things with parks, we have never tiered those in the past because they've had an opening and a closing time and so what's happening is we could only address those after hours.

And when something gets it to the untenable situation that was happening at Santa Rita, the parks director does have the...the authority to close the park so that we can get a handle on that. We knew that was happening, so we worked diligently to get those services for...for two weeks, different times of the day. So, it wasn't just in the morning, it wasn't in the afternoon and so, but at some point, we have to have a response to it. That was the response that happened today and I, you know, moving forward, I think I will make sure.

**Mayor Romero:** Yeah. Mari, I know for a fact that you and your and the Housing First Team and the Community Safety, Health and Wellness Team and Pima County and TPD and so many of the team within the City of Tucson, some of our nonprofit partners, we've been working fast and furiously and spending millions and millions of dollars. It's not that we don't have goals or metrics. It's that the problems are changing before our very eyes. That's the difference between finding solutions for our own shelter that are open to being helped and those that are The Walking wounded, as you say right, that don't want anything. How many people today accepted any resources?

**Ms. Vasquez:** None.

**Mayor Romero:** How many people accepted resources that were encamped at Santa Rita the previous 2-3 weeks? That the services were being offered.

**Ms. Vasquez:** Like I said, many of them took the Narcan and the fentanyl test strips. You know, we had one person that did connect back to getting on like a Suboxone treatment. But other than that, nobody took services. And...and I will tell you the...the frustration that we are seeing with our outreach workers is that we can't even get to the point with a lot of them to have a housing conversation because of the high use of substances that we're finding. So, I mean it.

**Mayor Romero:** So, I guess my question is maybe Dr. Cullen you can answer my question. Which jurisdiction is responsible for dealing with severe mental health issues, behavioral health issues and substance use disorders?



**Dr. Cullen:** Honorable Mayor, Council Members. I actually don't know the answer to that right now. I know that if you look through the community when we did our needs and assets assessment, we look specifically at behavioral health as well as substance use disorder. The vast majority of behavioral health services in the county, independent of the Crisis Response Center, are within the healthcare system. So that they are within some psychiatric facilities that are inpatient and then with the provider community and we have been in dialogue with the psychiatric community, the psychiatrist to help guide us to figure out what the next steps are. But right now, I...I don't have a great answer to that question.

**Mayor Romero:** Lee.

**Ms. Hopkins:** I'll just add the regional behavioral health authority. Is the overarching regional body that is access funded and is responsible for that sector? Umm and overseeing the crisis response system, the...the court ordered treatment for mental illness system and one thing because we've talked a bit about, you know, voluntary versus involuntary. I'll point out where we are able to put when a family member or an agency or any individual is able to petition that someone be get a psychological evaluation and then be considered for court ordered treatment for mental illness that does not exist for substance dependence. So, you cannot mandate for someone to get substance use treatment, whereas you can based on the you know, decision of a judge for mental illness.

**Mayor Romero:** That's a really important point to make because I believe that's where the state comes in and or the federal government. And so that's why a gap analysis is important because who...who runs the regional Behavioral Health authority and how can we bring up the flag and say, you know, please help us.

**Council Member Uhlich:** And...and that's Arizona complete health and I do have some more information from them on you know these different pieces but I agree, mapping that and figuring out what's not happening, that ought to be because they're on paper, right? Anybody can go to the CRC or to CBI and get in within two to three minutes, right? A court on paper, those are the understandings. How's that looking out in the field, how are officers doing and...and our teams doing with...with making those connections. So, I think Arizona complete health will be very cooperative and ready to...to problem solve with us.

**Mayor Romero:** And I also think that there might be some additional possible state legislation that could help us through these points where we can't court order any...any type of program for a person that's going through substance misuse and addiction issues. This is a super important conversation and we are way over our 25 minutes allotted, but I know that Vice Mayor has questions and I do have more questions but I think we need to continue this discussion I also would like to ask that we start preparing a gap analysis with those that are at the table whoever you feel, Mr. manager needs to be at the table to help direct our resources strategically.

We did not get a chance to talk about the opioid settlement funds that we have money for the opioid settlement funds. We said we have about \$18 million in the bank right now. Could those funds be used for a place? I know that in my conversations with Chair Grijalva and County



Administrator Leshner we've toyed with the idea of the possibility of having a detox facility at the Mission Annex building that is now being used as a cooling center. I would highly recommend to my colleagues on the Council and to the task force that you all put together to really think of the possibility of using some of those millions of dollars into a facility to help detox. I don't know who needs to, I know less than you all right, in terms of who needs to staff it. But I think that could be a possibility of a...an initial contact to start helping individuals that have severe mental illness and or severe substance use disorder, Vice Mayor.

**Vice Mayor Dahl:** Sadly, Ward 3, when we look at Mari's statistics, we're beating all of you, we have more encampments, more problems. We're getting constant concerns from businesses that are being affected, I think mostly by the drug induced crazy vandalism that's going on. So think of Ward 3 as a welcome place to come do your stuff and I want to thank the chief for the involvement of the police with our meetings with the businesses has been very effective and thank you to Cashew we love your work, we love when you come to our office and respond to the people who need help there. Mari doing great work and Dr. Cullen, I am such a fan. Thank you, Mayor.

**Mayor Romero:** And thank you, Council Member. Yes, I want to thank all of you and Mari, Brandi, everyone that is on the ground doing this work. We also want to know what new tools have to be created and you know, like I asked, what other jurisdictions, what other organizations need to be brought to the table so we can start finding the solutions. It is terribly frustrating for everyone, I understand, and I thank you all for your day in day out, commitment to trying to find solutions to this and I really, you know, I think that we need to, as the Council member Uhlich said distinguish what's what, right? What are the unsheltered individuals that have been evicted, need help, what are the unsheltered individuals that maybe are right now not accepting the help? But there's a criminal element there where they're either using fentanyl burning, you know, in public, selling in public, well also that's breaking the law and we need to address that. And how can we leverage an...an arrest to be able to mandate you know, for them to accept detox. So, Mr. Manager, I don't know if you wanted to add additional comments.

**Mr. Thomure:** Thank you, Mayor and members of the Council. Happy to take that as direction to convene that gap analysis and putting together that mapping of both the systems. But that also leads to the mapping of individuals and how we help them across all of those different sectors. Working with the regional jurisdictions and our partners also any gap in communication or information that any of you feel that rests on rests on my shoulders. So I'll do what I can to shore that up and make sure that none of you are ever caught off guard in the future on an action like what we took today and I'll close with saying part of that will also be expressing what those metrics are, what are our goals and making sure there's absolute clarity there. I think that's a fair a fair comment that we need to make sure they're not just in our heads, they're actually in places where we're all working toward those same metrics and goals so thank you, Mayor.

**Mayor Romero:** One last question, so that we can make part of this gap analysis I understand the collaboration to end homelessness received around \$11 million or 7.8 I'm not too sure, but how are we using this \$7.8 million on behalf of the nonprofits that are receiving these funds? How are they, how are they coming to the table right? How are they putting that are putting that federal funds, those federal \$7.8 million funds into work and how do we make them part of the

puzzle with those federal funds that they've received for our region? They have to be part of this conversation as well. Alrighty, thank you so much for everything. Really appreciate the update, Dr. Cullen thank you so much for your visit. Really appreciate you. All righty so we're gonna move back to item one. Item 1.

**1. Pima Association of Governments (PAG) Management Committee Recommendation to the PAG Regional Council and Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Technical Management Committee Recommendation to the RTA Board (City Wide) SS/SEP25-24-177**

(This item was taken out of order and discussed after Item 2.)

Introductory comments were made by Mayor Regina Romero and Timothy Thomure, City Manager.

Information and presentation were provided by Sam Credio, Director, Tucson Department of Transportation and Mobility.

Discussion ensued.

Comments were provided by Vice Mayor Dahl, Council Member Lee.

No formal action taken.

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**Mayor Romero:** Time has been set aside for a discussion of the recommendations from the PAG Management Committee, the upcoming PAG Regional Council agenda and the RTA board agenda. So, Mr. Manager, I know that we're waiting for Sam Credio to come up.

**Timothy M. Thomure, City Manager:** Thank you, Mayor. Members of the Council, my trusty sidekick Sam Credio here to take you through the all things RTA. And what we have a meeting coming up tomorrow that you'll be representing us at. So, we want to make sure we have a clear and fresh discussion about all the issues that are pending. With that, I'll...I'll turn it over to Director Credio.

**Sam Credio, Department of Transportation and Mobility Director:** Thank you so much, Mr. Manager, and good afternoon, Madam Mayor, Members of the Council. So, we haven't had this item in a while. This is our regularly scheduled PAG RTA update and also providing you an update on any action that was taken by the PAG Management Committee. There was not an RTA Technical Management Committee held so that's why there's no update on that specifically. The agenda that was or the meeting that was held two weeks ago with primarily focused around one item and that was the update on the 2055 Regional Mobility and Accessibility Plan, also referred to as the RMAP and what this item is, is the federally required regional long range transportation plan.

The...the Plan is a fiscally constrained 30-year planning document that establishes a long range transportation investment vision for the region. The update that was given to the management committee was really focused around 2 main points. 1st that the fiscal constraint for the 30-year plan has been established at \$16.2 billion. And secondly, the Transportation Planning Committee which I serve on as the Director of Transportation and Mobility, did approve the RMAP project list, which includes some key projects such as the Stone Avenue bus Rapid transit project. It does include all the remaining RTA projects as well as RTA Next projects, but also includes projects such as active mode programs and projects, pavement rehabilitation, as well as all of the transit service for the...the region. The fiscally constrained Plan includes all of the revenue that is reasonably expected to be obtained by the region over the next 30 years and again it is a planning document, not a plan such as the RTA Next Plan, which I'll...I'll talk about in just a moment. Again, this was a discussion item only, and PAG is targeting a spring 2025 completion date for this 2055, RMAP update. T

That brings me to the PAG Regional Council meeting agenda that will actually be held tomorrow. That is one of the main focus items for that agenda is providing that same update to the Regional Council, providing an opportunity for feedback and input on the...the 2055 RMAP. Following the PAG Regional Council meeting, the RTA board meeting will be held, and I think the...the three main topics that will be discussed during that agenda are the RTA Next Plan development, public outreach plan. There will be a continued discussion on the RTA Next Plan development and then lastly, a cost to complete item to discuss completing all the remaining RTA projects. And with that, Mayor, I'd be happy to answer any questions, thank you.

**Mayor Romero:** Any questions, comments, Vice Mayor.

**Vice Mayor Dahl:** Thank you, Mayor, Director Credio. I'm glad there's going to be a discussion item and maybe you're...you're on the board, so I should be directed to you on completion of problems. I have concerns and doubts about the completions in Ward 3 of the RTA One projects, including Grant Rd. finishing First Ave. from Grant Rd. to River and the underpass which I think is the last on the planning. That's been a critical problem for a long time and as the Casino gets completed it's gonna be a major pain point for commuters. And please ask the question why we aren't buying properties along the Grant Road. Does that mean we're not going to do it because we should be buying properties at their lowest price and their...their lowest price now and it's just making the process longer and making everything else more expensive thank you.

**Mayor Romero:** And Vice Mayor, you're talking about...about Grant Road 5-6, which is where we're purchasing, we have to buy properties and then you're asking about Grant, 1st Ave. Grant to River and then the Grant and I-10 underpass. OK, Sam.

**Mr. Credio:** Madam Mayor, Vice Mayor, Dahl on Grant Road 5 and 6, the RTA board has not authorized and...and by extension, the executive director has not authorized the purchase of right of way for Grant 5 and 6. That essentially stalls that project. We are at nearing 90% design plans for that and typically on a on a normal project, we would have already begun the right of way acquisition process. As you know, Grant Road has probably some of the most significant right of way acquisition involved on a project and it is going to take a substantial amount of money and



some time to be able to...to purchase that property and move that project forward so that is currently stalled right now.

On 1st Avenue, we are moving forward with the design concept report and that that is moving forward, and we are working with the task force on...on that project. In fact, I believe there is a survey that's open now that we hope that people will participate, and we are going to be doing public outreach this fall to gain feedback on how they'd like to see 1st Avenue. look, although it's worth noting that First Avenue. is not fully funded in the five-year tip and so that is going to be a point of conversation for the cost of complete exercise. And on Grant Rd. Union Pacific Railroad underpass we are currently at an impasse right now with RTA regarding certain elements of that project, particularly how we include the grade separated pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the...the railroad tracks and Interstate 10.

**Mayor Romero:** Council Woman Lee.

**Council Member Lee:** Thank you, Mayor. I...I share the same concerns, just over the ability to fund the remaining projects. Sam, you've been amazing at keeping us informed on the status of everything on that front, but I'm curious if you could say a little more about the cost to complete process, specifically when we're going to have the information, the results of that that was a really painful process. We had to go through a couple years ago where only the city of Tucson projects had to be kicked off the list. And so, I'm definitely concerned that cost have only gone up in the past couple years and I'm kind of concerned about the findings of that analysis. So, if you could give us more of a sense on when we might know if we're gonna have to arm wrestle again.

**Mr. Credio:** Mayor, Council Member Lee. So that is I wish I could have a really straightforward answer for you there. Back in November 2022, we did have clear information on the cost of the projects and available revenues. And at that time the RTA board made a very difficult but informed decision to defer projects to RTA Next, I think the struggle that we've experienced recently is that the information that has been provided by the RTA has not been as clear on what all of the actual costs are and the available revenue to complete the plan. We have a little bit more clarity with the material that's included in the agenda for tomorrow. It's not quite as clear as it was two years ago, but as I mentioned, we do know that within the five year tip, there are two main projects that are not fully funded and that is Grant Road 5 and 6 and 1st Avenue. Beyond that all of the other projects appear to have all the funding they need for the RTA for the completion of the RTA plan in the tip. However, as we know, projects are coming in higher than expected and so we really do need to dust off that true cost of complete exercise. I'm not certain what's in the material for tomorrow's gonna fully accomplish that.

**Council Member Lee:** Do you know why, and this might be the mayor, since you're at the table, why the information is fuzzier now than it was then in terms of the financial piece. And if there's anything we can do to get clarity.

**Mr. Credio:** Mayor, Council Member Lee, I don't have an answer to that. That material is prepared by the RTA staff. We certainly meet with them on a regular basis and provide updates

to the best of our ability. I think we have a good sense of what the costs are. The revenue side is not something that we have access to.

**Mayor Romero:** Just to be 100% clear in terms or interpret or translate what Sam is saying is that the RTA staff is not providing not just to some, but the entire board how much funds we have and are expected to bring in until 2026 and how much the remaining projects are going to cost that we have been asking for, at least I have as your representative on that board for at least 18 months, and in 18 months we have not received a clear answer by the executive director of the RTA. So, we have additional material for tomorrow, but still there is no clarity on how much we have on one, you know column, and how much the rest of the projects are going to cost to deliver on another column. Council member Cunningham.

**Council Member Cunningham:** You got a timeline for east 22nd?

**Mr. Credio:** Mayor, Council Member Cunningham, that project has started design and we are working through it. I believe we are looking at the design being wrapped up in the spring of 2026 with construction of start soon after.

**Council Member Cunningham:** That is an outstanding answer, Sam, but really let me rephrase, is that project 100% fully funded?

**Mr. Credio:** Mayor, Council Member Cunningham, currently in the five-year tip 22nd St. Camino Seco to Houghton is fully funded.

**Mayor Romero:** Any other of my colleagues want to comment or have questions on. I want to go back to the RMAP, Sam. One of the requests that the City of Tucson had done, to...for PAG, The Pima Association of Governments, was to update the RMAP. The long-range plan to include the bus...bus rapid transit project that the city of Tucson wants to apply for federal funds for. Um is the BRT the bus rapid transit project, is it on the R map now? I know that we wanted to apply for an for a federal grant in August. The executive director at PAG push back against the city. We lost an opportunity to apply for around \$70 million in federal funds for our BRT in August. Now we're trying to raise to a spring timeline to be able to apply for federal funds for the possibility of bringing federal funds for BRT. Does that our map add that and will the R map update be ready for the City of Tucson to apply for federal funds in the spring.

**Mr. Credio:** Yeah. Thank you for that question, Mayor. So, the 2055 RMAP update does include the Stone Avenue bus rapid transit project our...our team, which was part of the working group, was very intent on making sure that that project is included in the update. The...the spring timeline I think puts us in a good position for our project to also move forward, to apply for funding in this next go around. But you are right, we did receive a lot of push back from PAG regarding an amendment to the current 2045 RMAP, which would have included the one project because they were simultaneously working on the full-blown update that I just mentioned.

**Mayor Romero:** Will their completion timeline work with the city of Tucson's timeline? For us to apply for federal funds in the spring.

**Mr. Credio:** Right now, the way things are tracking, it does look like those two should line up in in time for one another.

**Mayor Romero:** Let's not tell them that because they might delay, OK? One thing that I... I did see in terms of the RMAP was that their outreach and engagement public engagement protocol didn't really include a lot of hard to reach and hard to engage communities in them. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

**Mr. Credio:** Yes, Mayor, I'd be happy to. So, the...the outreach for the 2055 RMAP did include a survey and they did receive quite a bit of results from that survey they had 4,481 survey participants. The promotion included paid and nonpaid multimedia campaign partner promotions, they did some drop in events and so they...they did quite a bit of outreach, I think where the concern was and when this was presented to the TPC myself and another jurisdictional members flagged a couple of things in terms of the demographics of the results. So, of those, you know, 4,400 survey results over 2,600 self-identified as white when it came to racial demographics and when it came to age, demographics, roughly 2300 were fifty or older. So as the TPC was receiving this update, we really felt that people of color and people under the age of 50 years old were underrepresented in the survey results. Pack did acknowledge that, and they are doing additional outreach this fall to try to capture those underrepresented members of our community.

**Mayor Romero:** Any anything else from my colleagues I...I share the concerns voiced by Council woman Lee in terms of cost to complete RTA one projects, I know City of Tucson has an additional 8. Do I have that number correct that we're still need to complete from RTA One and those don't count the ones that we move to RTA Next are not part of that right?

**Mr. Credio:** So, Mayor actually did this math right before the meeting. There are two projects under construction, 2 preconstructions, 8 in design, and two deferred for a total of 14 projects. If you don't count the deferred projects, we have 12 projects that are all in various stages of construction, designer planning.

**Mayor Romero:** And so those 12 projects are the ones that we need to know as a City of Tucson if there's enough money to complete.

**Mr. Credio:** Mayor, that's correct. OK.

**Mayor Romero:** Alrighty, thank you so much for your presentation, really appreciate it. I know that we're gonna start working really early tomorrow morning. To make sure that we get ready for...for the PAG RTA meeting, and usually those take about four to five hours, maybe sometimes six, so thank you Sam, really appreciate it.

Do you all, would you all want to take a little 5-minute break and then come back to finish the study session or just keep going? Are you feeling OK? Alrighty let's...let's move on. We move on to Item 3.



3. **Discussion Regarding Drafting a Santa Cruz River Wildlife Refuge Resolution (City Wide) SS/SEP25-24-179**

Introductory comments were made by Mayor Regina Romero and Council Member Santa Cruz

Information and presentation were provided by Luke Cole, Director, Santa Cruz River Program and Rebecca Perez, Urban to Wild Program Manager.

Discussion ensued.

Comments were provided by Vice Mayor Dahl and Council Member Santa Cruz.

It was moved by Council Member Santa Cruz, duly seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 7 to 0, to direct the city attorney to finalize the resolution supporting the establishment of the Santa Cruz River Urban Wildlife Refuge for Mayor and Council consideration and approval at the October 8th meeting Council meeting.

Discussion continued.

Comments were provided by Council Member Cunningham and Mayor Romero.

No further action taken.

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**Mayor Romero:** Vice Mayor Dahl and Council Member Santa Cruz requested a discussion or a draft resolution creating a Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge of Southern Arizona. So, Vice Mayor and Council Members Santa Cruz.

**Council Member Santa Cruz:** Well, first of all, I wanna thank Vice Mayor Dahl for working on this with me and helping me keep it moving. Today we have a brief presentation from Dr. Luke Cole with the Santa Cruz River program director at the San an Institute and Rebecca Perez from urban to Wild program manager at the Wilderness Society and a member of the, sorry, might keep having pop ups here, and a member of the Tucson's Birthplace Open space coalition. So, I'd like to ask them to come up and present.

**Luke Cole, Program Director, Santa Cruz River:** Yeah, come on over here with me. Thank you very much, Mayor, Council and representation here for giving us this audience. We'd like to just briefly bring you up to speed on what an Urban National Wildlife Refuge is, who is working on it and what work has been done to date. Do I say next slide? Next slide please.

We are steeped in ecology in indigenous history, in cultural history here in the Santa Cruz River Watershed. I hope expect that most people are familiar with this, but coming from a standpoint of ecological history, I just want to note a few critical and important points, namely that pushing in today's dollars close to \$2 billion of investment in our wastewater treatment facilities

throughout Santa Cruz and Pima counties has created about 40 miles of clean flowing Santa Cruz River. This is unbelievable and it has in recent years provided more and more quantifiable habitat for threatened and endangered fish species wildlife like Jaguar and Ocelot, Mountain Lion, bobcat. They are using the Santa Cruz River for habitat, for hunting, and for a safe passage to and from locations where they do those activities. And we have seen right here in the City of Tucson that Bobcat are using the...the north-south and east West crossings of the Santa Cruz River in a really tremendous way the work that the city and the county have done to support that intentionally or passively, is really important.

Next slide please. So, in Urban National Wildlife Refuge, this is through the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Sonora Institute, the Wilderness Society and the Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge coalition have been working steadily on this refuge project over the last three years or so. What in Urban National Wildlife Refuge is, most importantly, is the highest standard when it comes to permanent federal protection for wildlife. This is land that would be acquired by the US Fish and Wildlife Service from willing sellers willing donors. This is not a land grab, this is only looking within where are their parcels where the federal government could acquire this land to put it into permanent protection, it does not impose any regulations on land use on water use on floodplain management in any way to whatever entity this Wildlife Refuge occurs within.

It is simply an opportunity for the federal government to provide their resources and their largesse where they can to protect these critical lands, both for wildlife and for the people who use them. God, it didn't work there we go, it had the delay. The work that the Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge coalition has done to date is intended to circumvent Congress by design. This is a grassroots effort, so we are working together at the Community level all the way up to the federal level to establish a justification for establishing this Urban National Wildlife Refuge and the hand out, thank you, Vice Mayor Dahl for bringing this that you brought along is a recently federally approved landscape conservation design. This Is Us doing the homework for the federal government to tell them here's why the Santa Cruz River corridor from Mexico to Marana is worth your investment, especially around establishing a refuge. So, this effort would be administrative action. It would be approved by the Biden administration and future administrations, and it would be the Secretary of Interior who has the ultimate say as to whether this happens.

Just as a brief history of work done to date, the Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge Coalition was established at the end of last year. After about two years of work by Sonoran Institute, the Wilderness Society and other partners. Now this coalition is expanded to around 50 different organizations and individuals represented. We've had site visits from US Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Interior leadership throughout last year and this year in April of this year, Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution supporting the establishment of an Urban National Wildlife Refuge, not just in Santa Cruz County but in Santa Cruz County and Pima County. Following suit, Pima County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a proclamation to do the same, recognizing the importance of both Santa Cruz and Pima County. The document that you're holding right now was submitted back in May shortly thereafter, the San Javier district of the Tohono O'Odham Nation, their council unanimously passed a resolution supporting the establishment of an urban National



Wildlife Refuge. So we come to you today at this study session to provide our input, provide our history and expertise on this to help guide you all as you consider a resolution to also support this refuge and I would be remiss to not include this growing this list that is growing of members of the Santa Cruz River Refuge coalition. This room, folks that have been meeting and working in addition to their jobs and in their spare time to help make this a reality, have really done tremendous, tremendous work and as a representative of them, I humbly thank the coalition team and I thank you all for your willingness to. Take up this topic today and I'll turn it over to Rebecca.

**Rebecca Perez, The Wilderness Society, Urban to Wild Program Manager:** Hello all I'm Rebecca Perez, I am the Urban to Wild Program Manager at the Wilderness Society. But mainly I'm here to represent the community, because first I am a member of the Tucson Community. I grew up here and the reason why I do this conservation work is because I am deeply invested in the future of our community. So, I have been nominated by our coalition to come here today with the consent of Senora Josefina and other coalition members to represent this important perspective. Like Luke mentioned, this is a grassroots effort coalition that is community led with a lot of intention with our different partners, organizations that are part of this coalition. We ensure that the Community is has a huge voice in the decision making that goes into what we do as a coalition. So I think the main thing I want to get across today is this resolution that we are proposing is an opportunity to honor the millennia of stewardship that indigenous people have put into the Santa Cruz River the life ways the diverse life ways that exist along the River.

The research, the recent efforts to conserve the river as well as all the culture and history that is held within the river corridor, along with the ecological significance. That includes our...our barrios and rancherias in you know Tucson going all the way down to Nogales. We also want to acknowledge the decades of environmental justice issues that folks in the river corridor have experienced and the organizing that this coalition stands on Grassroots community led organizing responding to threat after threat towards their communities, but also the river. I think one of the important things that the coalition is doing and the members of the coalition have been doing for a long time, is challenging the narrative that the Santa Cruz River is not a river, it is a river, it is a living river that offers life for not only animals, plants ecologically, but also to our communities and is a significant piece of our culture here in southern Arizona. The other thing we'd like to acknowledge is that we hope this resolution can start a partnership with the city, one that we've already been working on, to continue to support and honor the Santa Cruz River and all the communities that you can find within the court, thank you.

**Vice Mayor Dahl:** I am so very impressed with the cross section of people involved in this effort once they've been working on this, we will. You know, it seems like we're down on the timeline, but we're the first city and this is an urban Wildlife Refuge and we're the urban part. My colleague, Council Member Lane Santa Cruz, and I kind of split the river, but I think we're united that this is a this is a project that will bring. In continuation of coalition efforts with some, maybe some federal money I hope so. We have some assets along the river in my section there's Columbus Park, which we're gonna rename. I think the Danny Lopez Park and the Sweetwater Wetlands and I, I think having Fish and Wildlife service's expertise in enhancing those habitats would be really helpful. So, I'm...I'm all in and I hope you support this effort.



**Council Member Santa Cruz:** Well, I just want to jump in and just express my...my gratitude to the coalition for their continued advocacy on this issue. And they came to us and asked us to review a draft resolution and consider the language developed by the coalition, especially the aspects emphasizing the barrios and indigenous people that have been stewards of this land. We've integrated a lot of much of that language into the draft resolution for the city attorney to review with support from my colleague, Vice Mayor Dahl. So, I think the draft resolution marks an important next step to join Santa Cruz County and the San Javier District Council, who have also adopted a resolution. So, with that I move that we direct the city attorney to finalize the resolution supporting the establishment of the Santa Cruz River Urban Wildlife Refuge for Mayor and Council consideration and approval at the October 8th meeting Council meeting.

**Mayor Romero:** There's a motion. May I have a second?

**Vice Mayor Dahl:** Second.

**Mayor Romero:** There's a motion and a second. Any further discussion on this item? Council Member Cunningham.

**Council Member Cunningham:** My only thing is...is that I hope you approach the town of Marana. I think it would be really helpful for us to, this is an, this is so incredibly important for our community over the next two centuries, and I want to thank Ward 1 and Ward 3 for leading the way on this. But to really feel out the vision of what we're really trying intending to do, we've got to get Marana on board, and we've got to figure out kind of a a navigation point on how that, how those agricultural. How the...the water resources in that agricultural district are going to be disseminated? I think it's, I think that it's going to require some state, some state discussion, federal discussion, and then then I just can't wait to, I can't wait for the opportunity to help with this when it comes up.

**Mayor Romero:** And any others? I just wanted to add how important is the history of us getting to this point? I want to thank the stewardship of Chairman Austin Nunez from the San Xavier District that has always paid close attention to the health of the River. Including not just the San Xavier, but the entire automation. I also want to give credit to our late and great Richard Elias, who has been paying close attention and doing and did a lot of work on the county side to protect the Santa Cruz River and then of course, I want to thank our own Tucson Water team. I know Tim Thomure came to me when I was a Council member representing Ward 1 to talk about this incredible idea of the Santa Cruz River Heritage Project to be able to put remediated water back into the Santa Cruz to create this desert oasis and...and some semblance of what we used to have thousands of...of years ago, and I was happy.

Very happy as a matter of fact, one of the best days as newly elected mayor of the City of Tucson to return the he led tap mineral to an area of the Santa Cruz River. And so it has taken a lot of work not just on community, which is really important that this project is community led, but also unwilling partners in both Pima County and City government to create the restorative pieces that we are seeing and enjoying today on the Santa Cruz River. Much more to do but happy that this coalition has been taken, taking it upon themselves to be able to bring us this really important project. So, thank you, Council Member Santa Cruz, Council Vice Mayor Dahl

and you all for...for bringing this to our attention. And with that, all those in favor of the motion, please signify by saying aye.

**All:** Aye.

**Mayor Romero:** Any against, motion carries. Thank you so much for waiting. Now, we'll be waiting for some time. Thank you. Alrighty. So, we move on to Item 4.

**4. Discussion Regarding the Regulation and Hours of Operation for Hookah Bars and Hookah Lounges within the City of Tucson (City Wide) SS/SEP25-24-180**

Introductory comments were made by Mayor Regina Romero

(NOTE: Mayor Romero left at 3:55 p.m., and returned at 3:58 p.m.)

Information and presentation were provided by Council Members Uhlich and Fimbres.

Comments were provided by Council Member Uhlich and Mike Rankin, City Attorney.

Discussion ensued.

It was moved by Council Member Uhlich, duly seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 7 to 0, to have staff come back in 30 days or so, with the draft ordinance as described by the city attorney.

Discussion continued.

Comments were made by Council Member Lee and Mayor Romero.

No further action was taken.

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**Mayor Romero:** Council Member Fimbres and Council Member Uhlich requested this time for a discussion regarding the regulation and hours of hookah bars and hookah lounges. Council Member Uhlich if you'd like to start and then we'll pass it on to Council Member Fimbres.

**Council Member Uhlich:** Thank you, and I appreciate the partnership with Council Member Fimbres to bring this forward, and especially the city attorney and...and our police chief and team for providing data to help guide the conversation as I don't need to remind folks of a horrific incident a couple of months ago 180 rounds shot off with automatic weapons near Speedway and Swan, and to the police department's credit, there's an immediate reflection on some of what could be the underlying precipitators of the event and what are is there a thread and something that we can get after together.

I also want to thank area residents and businesses in and around that area because I think they really helped me certainly to focus in on a pattern of concern. So, I will, Council Member Fimbres. I don't know if you'd like to add anything. And then I'd like to just turn it over to our team.

**Council Member Fimbres:** You're probably carrying talking about when you're getting into the team and then come back with the plan.

**Council Member Uhlich:** Thank you.

**Mike Rankin, City Attorney:** Thank you, Council Member Uhlich and Council Member Fimbres, and...and based on the memorandum that you had submitted requesting this item, the Police Department pulled together the crime statistics that were included in your materials that show overall number of TPD event calls for service but also I think significantly focus on the frequency of occurrence of violent crimes and I won't go through all those statistics other than the point out that some of the bigger numbers you see is all they're all so look they also looked at the immediate vicinity around the...the hookah lounges.

But if you look at those numbers in considering the fact that there's relatively small number of these that we're looking at, it's a handful, half a dozen. The...the crime statistics for the frequency and the and levels of criminal acts at the and I'm talking specifically about hookah bars and hookah lounges in this context, is pretty extraordinary. And what you see is you dig down into the detail of those statistics is that while there is a regular need calls to service and impacted at all different times of the day. What you see is that the violent crimes in particular are occurring in a window really from 10:00 PM until 3:00 AM and so when we look at that and we examine the data and we examine the particular use relating to the hookah lounge use which I see really it's...it's more of an entertainment use even than say like a retail use like the smoke shops or the convenience stores etcetera.

And so, the question came forward about what...what can we do right? And I think given the distinct nature of the use, I think that we can lawfully establish a regulatory license requirement for this particular limited use the use as a hookah lounge or hookah bar. And as part of that regulatory landscape, a licensing requirement, I am comfortable and confident that we could lawfully require a limitation on the hours of operation. I've looked at some examples across the country and that tends to be the...the regulation that is included within a licensing type of regulations specific to hookah bars and hookah lounges. And so, if that is an approach the Mayor and Council support direction to come back as Council Member Fimbres was alluding with a proposed licensing requirement that includes hours of operation.

But in the meantime, we'll also look at, well, what other regulatory aspects could be included within that licensing framework. Certainly any licensing framework would include the ability to suspend or revoke licenses based on violations and not just violations, say, of hours of operation, but other criminal violations or illegal sales of tobacco, because there's this really sort of interesting dynamic going on where we have, we have T21, right? It's unlawful to sell tobacco to folks under 21, but these are uses where it's 18 and over and in fact, one of the locations, the one that you were just describing at one point was cited for not having a different type of regulatory



license, which is a dancehall license. And so we were able to address it for a short period of time by enforcing that type of regulatory license, because they do admit patrons 18 years or older, although purportedly don't sell tobacco products to anyone under 21. So we...we've got to kind of navigate that issue about could we, as part of the licensing framework also limit, put an age limit, in terms of being able to enter the establishment, since it is for the purpose of...of smoking tobacco and hashish, and if that's the direction the Mayor and Council want to go, I...I believe we're on sound legal footing.

I noted in the Mayor and Council memorandum that we also have to be sensitive to Arizona's prop. 207 Arizona private property Rights Protection Act, which kicks in whenever a municipality adopts new land use regulations. But there is an exception under Prop 207 for regulations that are necessary to protect public health and safety and that's why this data is so important because it shows yeah, you know, I mean, it doesn't even really leave much room for argument that these uses are causing a significant and ongoing and increasing negative impact on public health and safety. If you just look at the...the rise in the violent crimes alone and then when you're looking at those numbers, factor in that there's only a handful of these locations that are generating those types of numbers it's pretty significant. One other thing I think we can consider going forward is that there...there been some questions about could we require video monitoring, right? Or having them install video systems that could feed to the...the CSRC, etc., to...to help facilitate a response or monitoring of these locations.

As I sit here right now, I...I haven't seen those type of regulations or been able to identify a specific express legal authority that we could comfortably rely on as a licensing requirement. But I am comfortable that if we identify after establishing a license requirement noncompliance by one of the locations that subject to the licensing requirement, then we could add, additional sanctions or requirements in order to bring them into compliance, which could include having on site security having on site video monitoring, etcetera. So, I think there's some...some things we can do in this space.

**Mayor Romero:** Council Member Uhlich.

**Council Member Uhlich:** Thank you and thank you, Mike, and thanks again to...to the Chief and TPD. I do have a couple of brief comments. Our office did reach out to the hookah lounges across the city that we could identify. It's about a dozen we made personal outreach. I was able to speak with Paul Manheim, who owns the Espresso Art Cafe here on university really very engaged and interested in the conversation. Already limits the hours to 2:00 AM, already has security cameras. I think the intent here is not it's really to protect the patrons and the employees and the community and not pretend that this data doesn't exist, that this violence doesn't exist, and there's clearly some kind of Nexus that we need to get after. So, I'd like to make a motion to have staff come back in 30-45 days, 30 days, 30 days is a month with the draft ordinance as described by the city attorney.

**Council Member Fimbres:** Second.

**Mayor Romero:** There is a motion and a second. Any further discussion? Council Woman Lee.

**Council Member Lee:** Just a quick clarification. So, would this apply to future businesses that wanna open, or would this apply to the problematic dozen that we have now?

**Mr. Rankin:** All...all the above. So, in this particular instance given demonstrable threat to public health and safety. Then I'm comfortable that we can act under our police power, which doesn't mean Tucson police. But generally, our police power, that's both flows from our charter and under state law to establish this regulatory requirement that would apply to existing businesses as well as future.

**Mayor Romero:** Are there other cities around Arizona that are experiencing the same data and the same rise in police activity with lounges and smoke shops? And are there any models that we could possibly use in terms of like hours of operation and any other rules that we can establish?

**Mr. Rankin:** Mayor, I've certainly anecdotally heard talking to my peers about issues with some Hookah bars hookah lounges. I have not found any other cities or jurisdictions in Arizona that have established a regulatory license or model like I'm talking about, but there are other examples throughout the country that I have found.

**Mayor Romero:** Alrighty any other questions, comments, hearing none. All those in favor of the motion, please signify by saying aye.

**All:** Aye.

**Mayor Romero:** Any against motion carries. Thank you so much, Council Member Uhlich, Council Member Fimbres for bringing this to us today. Thank you, Mr. Rankin. Alrighty so we move on to item 5.

**5. Overview of Tucson Water's Five-Year Financial Plan and Proposal of FY 2025 through FY 2027 Adjustment of Water Supply Fee and Commercial and Industrial Water Rate Schedule (City Wide and Outside City) SS/SEP25-24-181**

Introductory comments were made by Mayor Regina Romero and Timothy Thomure, City Manager.

(NOTE: Council Member Santa Cruz departed at 4:06 p.m. and returned 4:10 p.m.)

Information and presentation were provided by John Kmiec, Director, Tucson Water Department.

Discussion ensued.

Comments were provided by Mayor Romero and Vice Mayor Dahl.

No formal action taken.

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**Mayor Romero:** Time has been reserved for staff to update Mayor and Council on the proposed 2000 Water Financial Plan and proposed adjustment to the water supply fee and commercial and industrial volumetric rates, Mr. Manager.

**Timothy M. Thomure, City Manager:** Thank you, Mayor, honorable Mayor and Members of the Council, you actually at your last study session endorsed the current Five Year Financial Plan for the Water Utility and tonight you have a notice of intention related to a, a fee and a rate that are being proposed for adjustment. And so, in order to provide the public with sufficient background on those materials, Water Director John Kmiec is here to describe that action, which is not for today, not for this meeting, but it'll be for tonight's meeting.

**John Kmiec, Tucson Water Director:** Thank you, Mr. Manager, Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, Members of the Council. So, like the Manager said, I'm just gonna go give a brief reminder and overview of the Tucson Water's Five Year Financial Plan that was adopted last meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup>. As part of the normal operations we at the utility are continuously looking at the utilities financial position and projecting what are the known costs as well as identifying unknowns that may be present over the next five years plus. This is always a very iterative process because of the changing condition of the water industry. Whether it is the rising cost of supplies, materials, changing threats on the water quality, regulatory front, increased security protocols which include hardening, digital and physical security measures. This plan does outline the dials we sometimes have to tweak to ensure a financially healthy and sound utility that can be prepared to adapt to many changing conditions.

So, in the Plan, the Plan is adopted to ultimately look at three primary pillars that must be ensured to be supported fiscally over the next several years. Those pillars are one to required debt servicing on previously acquired and future loans. The necessary funding to maintain salaries in the operations of the utility and the capital improvement goals for the future years on our massive Community wide infrastructure debt service has been updated to reflect the recent WIFA loan loans and a plan \$75 million revenue bond issuance later this fall, the ordinance passed last meeting gave authorization for the proposed debt issuance of note, the city has committed in the past to flattening the debt service curve for the utility to ease the pressure on future rate increases and that's the intent with the structuring of any acquiring debt in the near future.

On the water supply fee adjustment also included in last meeting was a financial recommendation in the fiscal plan to adjust the water supply fee. This is the value metric fee assessed to all customers that supports the overall purchase of CAP water and potentially other available water supplies year to year. Staff has studied the trends of the changing cost of Colorado River water over the years and we've come up with a suggestion to adjust this current fee from \$1.00 per CCF to \$1.25 per CCF in the upcoming months. This adjustment should allow for this fee to remain stable over the next few years for the customer base. Having the fee change from \$1.00 to \$1.25 also allows the city to avoid what is often termed as rate chasing. Rate chasing can be best defined as always, returning back to Council to do small tweaks or adjustments driven solely by the upcoming forecasted rate, in this case our supplier, the Central Arizona project. By adopting this rate put forth and starting the process with a notice of intent on



consent agenda this evening, the need to return every nine or ten months to council for changes becomes unnecessary.

So as the City and Utility who was known for an excellent long-term forecasting in water resource management, water quality protection and fiscal responsibilities, the avoidance of rate chasing with the water supply fee is a good and sound strategy. Another adjustment that is on this evening's consent agenda is to include a volumetric rate plan for the commercial and industrial customers. Last year the decision was made to do a restructuring of the rates related to those customer classes. You may recall we changed the structure from a six-month winter average rate to a six-month summer surcharge rate into a three-month winter average and a nine-month summer surcharge rate structure. This was to provide a stronger conservation signal in those business classes to avoid discretionary water use during the hotter months of the year if possible.

Now that that structure is entering its first full year, a rate plan to change the volumetric rates for those classes is necessary. To keep equitable parity with our other rate classes, in particular the residential rate class. If the notice of intent for these two water rate adjustments are accepted and adopted tonight at the regular session, the utility will then start the formal process for public review, which also includes a public hearing and a timeline for implementation. Right now, the proposed public hearing date is for December 10th regular agenda prior to the public hearing, the utility will reach out to the full customer base to provide the information regarding the water supply fees proposed changes as well as reaching out to our Community business stakeholders on the commercial and industrial proposed value metric rate changes. And in summary, I'd like to remind the Community that Tucson Water has wanted a better or one of the best assistance programs in the utility space to help custom who may be having current financial troubles or just looking for ways to save money so they can save or save water so they can save money.

We are launching this fall our new initiative called the Tucson Water CARES Program. CARES stand for Community Assistance and Resources for Economic Stability. This will be a new look for our outreach materials that customers can use to quickly check to see if they may qualify for ongoing assistance programs, as well as quickly getting to links associated with detailed conservation programs and information. We are very excited about this approach and have received great feedback already on the direction of the campaign, and I know most of your offices have received these in advance, these great Flyers in this trail guide format that we've done to help our customers and it comes with this cool sticker and I'm just going to say this might be edition one. There might be others plan in the future to come out on that so, honorable Mayor, that concludes my presentation. Thank you.

**Mayor Romero:** Thank you, Director Kmiec. Any questions, Vice Mayor.

**Vice Mayor Dahl:** Brilliant having a sticker on that. Thank you.

**Mayor Romero:** Any other comments questions? I have two. One is how much more water was conserved this summer in the extension of the summer months. Cost. And then my second one is about the Financial assistance program and how we will make sure that eligible customers are well informed that we have a financial assistance program.

**Mr. Kmiec:** Honorable Mayor, Members of the Council, on the...on the commercial and industrial rate change where we started, the new structure just being the first year, we don't have the full amount of data yet. So actually, when we go into next summer, we'll have a better idea if we do see a tick down in those business classes to be able to see those adjustments. On the and the financial assistance yeah over the course of the last several years we've really become really approachable to our customers and...and honoring other assistance programs that they're on at the federal level and having that as automatic qualifiers to come into the Tucson Water now, the Tucson Water Cares program so there should, there should be very little impediments to our customers who may need additional support financially.

**Mayor Romero:** Wonderful. Anything else? Any questions, comments. Thank you so much, Director Kmiec, really appreciate your presentation. Alrighty. So, we move on to item 6.

**6. Updates on States and National Legislation and Regional Committees (City Wide)  
SS/SEP25-24-174**

Information and presentation were provided by Andres Cano, Intergovernmental Relations Manager, who fielded and answered questions.

Additional information was provided by Mayor Regina Romero and Council Members Uhlich and Fimbres.

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**Mayor Romero:** Time has been set aside for Mayor and Council to receive an update on state and national legislation, and regional committee reports. And while Mr. Cano comes up, I just wanted to inform you all that last week, Board of Supervisors Chair Adelita Grijalva, members of our local labor unions and our own Heat Advisory Task Force gave a big welcome to U.S. Department of Labor acting Secretary Julie Su to Tucson. Acting Secretary Su visited southern Arizona to discuss heat safety for workers to highlight the excellent work that the city of Tucson is doing to implement both our Tucson resilient together and our Heat Action road map, and to provide additional information on the department's proposed rule change to reducing heat exposure for US workers in indoor and outdoor settings.

In fact, I encourage all of us individually to provide comments to the US Department of Labor on the heat rule they have before them currently. I also had an opportunity to speak with Acting Secretary Su about the need to consider work permits for undocumented individuals who are living in the United States and to highlight the work we are doing to uplift the care economy here in Tucson. Just some information, a few items to note in relation to our celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Latinas are the most likely to be care workers in the United States. Multi-generational Latinx households are the most likely to be providing care to both children and seniors informally within their own homes. Latina equal payday is on October 3rd. This day recognizes the widest the wage gap that exists for Latinas marking the number of months it takes for Latinas to earn as much as white non-Hispanic men in a year.

So, it takes them ten months to catch up to what a white male makes in one year. Also, in Tucson, the last day to register to vote is October 7th, and ballots are mailed out October 9th. I encourage all Tucsonans to educate themselves about the items on our ballot, it's gonna be a two pager, and cast their vote as quickly as possible. So, with that, Mr. Cano, it's all yours.

**Andres Cano, Intergovernmental Relations Manager:** Thank you so much, Honorable Mayor and Members of the Council. It's so good to see you. Let's start with federal updates. During the time that you've been in the study session today, the US House and Senate have both passed a continuing resolution to keep the government operating until December 20<sup>th</sup> the House vote was 341 to 82, the Senate vote was 78 to 18. This bill, the legislation, now heads to President Biden's desk. We expect Congress will adjourn for a six-week recess and return after the November election and depending on the results of the election, Congressional leaders are expected to convene a lame duck session to take up a series of legislative priorities. As mentioned in our last meeting the fiscal year 2025 appropriations funding, the National Defense Authorization Act, the Water Resources Development Act and potentially the farm bill. It's good to keep our federal government going.

As we switch to the state, I want to let you know that I've reached out to your offices to begin preparing our state legislative agenda for the next session. The month of October will be crucial for your input to this document, and I look forward to meeting with each one of you, as we prepare to support legislation that benefits Tucsonan's in consultation with the city manager, we anticipate the legislative agenda will be before you for your consideration at the November 19th meeting. Once the agenda is adopted, we will meet with our Southern Arizona legislative delegation as well as the governor's office to brief them on our priorities for next year. The next session with new legislators and many returning begins on January 13th, the second Monday of every January is the custom and practice for the legislature to convene its legislative session. Lastly, I wanted to let you know that there is continued speculation about whether the current legislature will return after the election for a lame duck special session on water conservation and rural groundwater management. We are keeping our eyes and ears open on this update. And with that I'm available for any questions.

**Mayor Romero:** Council Member Uhlich.

**Council Member Uhlich:** Thank you so much for the updates. I...I just don't wanna lose the thoughts some of the thoughts that came up this afternoon as we were talking about opioids and their one issue that came up was that Medicaid doesn't cover the longer acting medication assisted treatment options. I don't know if that's a state or federal rule, but that is just something that I think there's got to be coalitions pushing really hard for that and then maybe I...I...I know you're so familiar with what's been moving and what has not moved. If there are other opportunities to partner at that Medicaid health level that is a real priority at this table, so thank you.

**Mr. Cano:** Thank you, Honorable Mayor and Council Member Uhlich. I was listening to the conversation I will find out more about the Medicaid funding. There...there has been in prior sessions a an effort to have volunteer and involuntary substance abuse treatment. The most important thing that we've already received in terms of feedback is the legislature can pass all it



wants, but without dollars to support the local municipalities those efforts may not be as impactful, and so we will continue to look for this and I absolutely appreciate the opportunity to learn from the conversations you had earlier today and I look forward to our conversations to ensure that those priorities are included in your legislative agenda.

**Mayor Romero:** Thank you so much for bringing that up, Council Member Uhlich, because I think we should have you know, substance misuse, opioid agenda to to request from our own delegation, but also from the Arizona State Legislature and, of course, absolutely I agree with you that it should be funded. Because as I said and I've been seeing for at least a year and a half or two, such a big societal issue should not be laid on the shoulders of local governments. It has to be a full-on jurisdictional partnership to...to deal with this. So, I do look forward to additional discussions with you about putting together that agenda to present to our...to our delegation and as our legislative agenda for the next year, great point. Thank you, Council Member.

Any others? Any other questions, comments. Alrighty thank you so much. Really appreciate the presentation. So, we move on to Item 7.

**7. Mayor and Council Discussion of Regular Agenda (City Wide) SS/SEP25-24-175**

No items were identified.

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**Mayor Romero:** Does anyone have any items to remove from the consent agenda? Alrighty hearing none, Item 8.

**8. Mayor and Council Discussion of Future Agendas (City Wide) SS/SEP25-24-176**

Council Member Fimbres requested an update on the homeless work program.

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**Mayor Romero:** Does anyone have anything for future agendas?

**Council Member Fimbres:** Mayor, I do.

**Mayor Romero:** OK, Councilman.

**Council Member Fimbres:** Mayor we want an update from City Management on the homeless work program to be funded for like 8 years now, 10 years, 10.

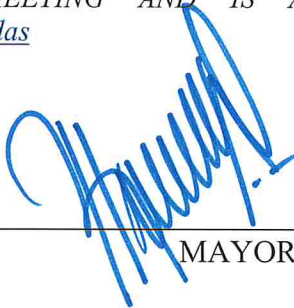
**Mayor Romero:** An update on the homeless work program alrighty, we will try and agendize it Council Member Fimbres. Thank you. Any others?

**Council Member Fimbres:** Thank you very much.


**Mayor Romero:** Thank you. Study session is adjourned and let me look at the time. Alrighty. We will meet here at 5:30 PM. The next study session will be Tuesday, October 8th, 2024. Thank you all. Really appreciate you.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 5:29 p.m.

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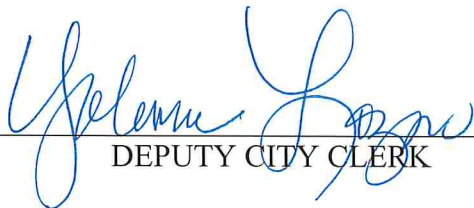
  
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MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
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CITY CLERK

**CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY**

I, the undersigned, have read the foregoing transcript of the study session meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Tucson, Arizona, held on the 25th day of September 2024, and do hereby certify that it is an accurate transcription.

  
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DEPUTY CITY CLERK

SM:RJ:yl