



HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGES



**City Council Special Session
October 31, 2024**

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1. **CCR Background, Chapter 33 Overview & Other Cities' Survey** (Rick Riley, San Antonio Police Assistant Director)
2. **Results of SA Speak Up Survey** (Alanna Reed, Communications & Engagement Director)
3. **Feedback from Horse Carriage Owners and Operators & Workforce Transition Options** (Alex Lopez, Assistant City Manager)
4. **City Council Discussion**



City Council Consideration Request (CCR) Background

- Submitted by Councilmembers McKee-Rodriguez and Viagran on November 28, 2022
- Development of a plan to phase out the use of horses with horse drawn carriages in San Antonio, to include the abolishment of ordinance(s) or policies as they related to Chapter 33 permitting equine drawn carriages. Plan would include:
 - Determination of the feasibility and establishment of a program to support a workforce transition from horse-drawn carriages to electric carriages and pedicabs;
 - The establishment of a prohibition of the use of horses with carriage rides; and
 - Immediate cessation of the issuance of all new horse-drawn carriage permits, medallions, and/or Special Event Permits so that eventually all valid permits, medallions, and/or Special Event Permits have expired

TIMELINE

2024

April

- Staff presented CCR to Governance Committee Meeting

May

- Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) discussed CCR and heard from Horse Carriage companies

June

- Staff briefed Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
- SAPD met with Horse Carriage companies
- Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) discussed CCR

July

- C&E conducted SA SpeakUp Survey (residents, business and tourists)
- Staff briefed Animal Care Services Board

August

- Staff updated Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

September

- Economic Development Department met with Horse Carriage Operators

October

- Ready-to-Work Department met with Horse Carriage Operators

HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE CURRENT OPERATIONS

- Governed by Chapter 33 of the City Code
- City has issued permits since 1865
- 5 permitted horse-drawn carriage companies each holding 5 permits
 - 25 horse-drawn carriages
 - 81 permitted horse carriage drivers
- SAPD Ground Transportation Unit (GTU) enforces Chapter 33



CHAPTER 33

REQUIREMENTS

Service Regulations

- Operations not permitted when the temperature is above 95 degrees
- Operations suspended between 12:00pm and 8:30pm on Air Quality Health Alert Days

Horse Welfare

- Must be licensed by Animal Care Services and examined by a veterinarian every 6 months
- Required to be offered water and given a 10 min break between trips
- May not work more than 8 hours in a 24-hour period and require at least 16 hours of continuous rest
- Deemed unfit for use if they have lameness; open sores or wounds; signs of emaciation, dehydration or exhaustion; loose or no shoes; or exhibiting uncontrollable behavior
- Must be at least 3 years old and weigh at least 1,200 lbs

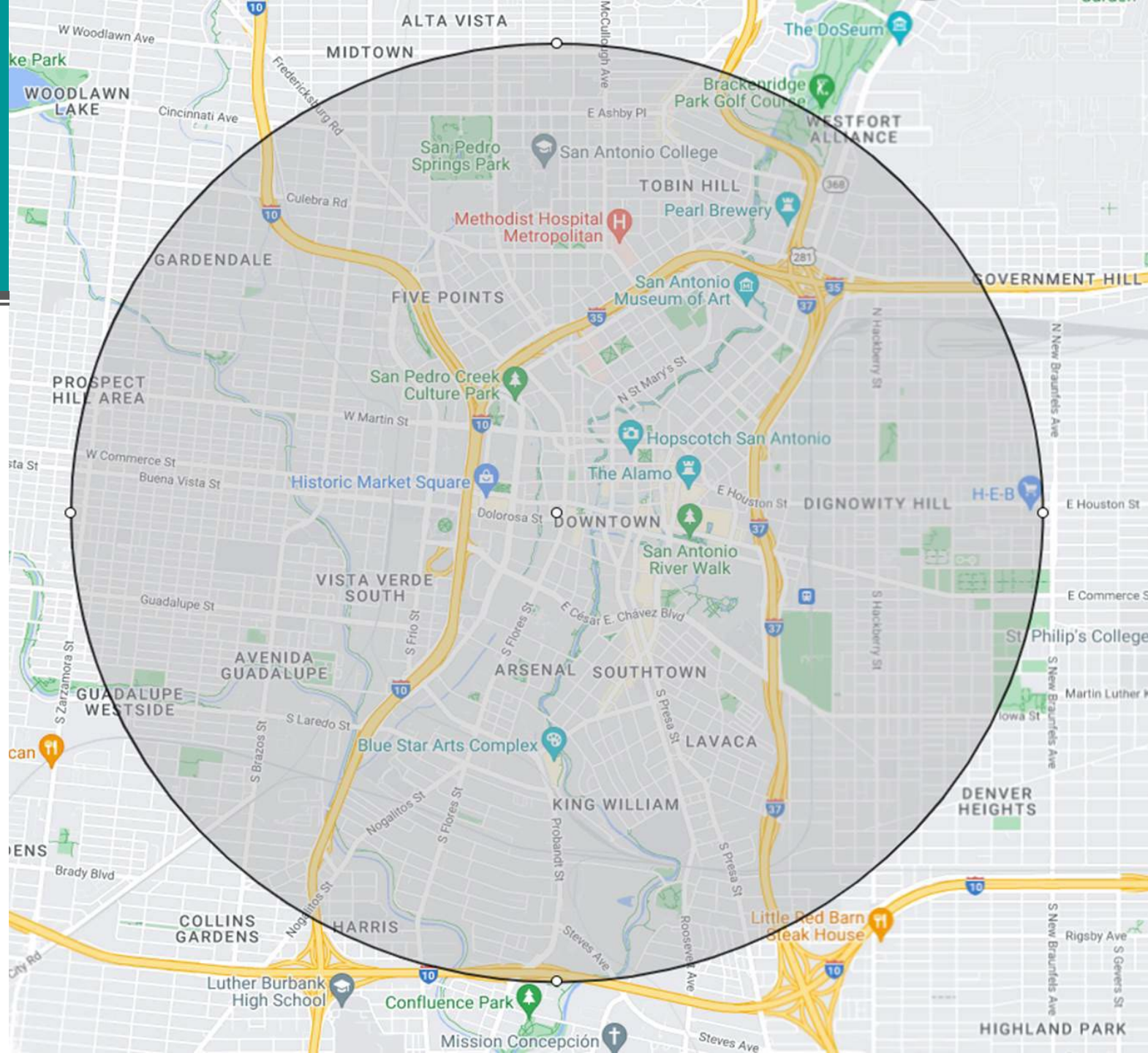
A veterinarian, contracted by the city shall be available on a regular schedule to provide inspections and ascertain compliance



Chapter 33

Area of Operation

- Horse carriages shall not operate outside two (2) mile radius from City Hall



CHAPTER 33

HORSE CARRIAGE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Area of Operation

- 2mile radius from City Hall
- Prohibited on:
 - Houston (between Flores and S. Alamo)
 - Losoya
 - Commerce (except for routes from the barn)
 - Caesar Chavez (between IH-10/35 and St. Mary's)
 - May not be operated in the King William District:
 - After 10:30pm Monday to Sunday; &
 - Before 12:00pm on Sunday

Hours

- Monday to Friday: 9:00am to 4pm & 6pm to 2am
- Saturday, Sundays, Holidays: 10:00am to 2am

Rates

- 10-minute ride: \$40 per couple
- 20-minute ride: \$50/\$75 per couple
- 30-minute ride: \$70/\$100 per couple

Staging Area

- Any unoccupied Commercial Loading Zone (CLZ) in the downtown area
- Primary location: CLZ on Crockett St. (across from the Hard Rock)

RESEARCH OTHER CITIES

Staff researched other cities in US cities

- Cities permitting horse-drawn carriages
- Cities prohibiting horse-drawn carriages
- Cities operating electric carriages



CITIES WHERE HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGES ARE PERMITTED

Horse carriages operate downtown and/or historic districts

- Dallas, TX
- Austin, TX
- Indianapolis, IN
- Oklahoma City, OK
- New York, NY
- Charleston, NC
- Mt. Dora, FL
- Fernandina Beach, FL



CITIES BANNING HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES

	Chicago	Las Vegas	Salt Lake City	Camden	Asheville
Date Banned	2021	1985	2013	1993	2016
Transition time	12 months	Allowed to return in 2014	Immediately	Immediately	2 years
Companies / permits effected	1 company - 10 permits	N/A	0*	Unknown	1 company
Economic Incentives offered	None	None	None	None	None
Profit Loss by HC Companies	100%	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
New entities in HC Vacuum	None	N/A	None	None	None
Demand for Electric Carriages	None	None	None	None	None
What happened to the Horses	Unknown	N/A	Pasture	Unknown	Unknown
* The only carriage company closed after the death of a horse in August 2013					

ELECTRICAL “HORSELESS” CARRIAGES



- Replaces horse with mechanical propulsion
- Custom made electric carriage
- Operating in Mt. Dora and Fernandina Beach, FL
- Being tested in Philadelphia, PA
- Not authorized in FL or PA to work on City streets according to state regulations
- Cost = approximately \$20,000 per electric carriage

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD (TAB) FEEDBACK

- The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) met on May 22, 2024
 - Public Comment included the owners of all five horse-drawn carriage companies
 - TAB unanimously recommends that City Council consider keeping the horse-drawn carriages in downtown San Antonio and task City Staff to work with the horse carriage industry to set conditions to continue horse carriage service in downtown

At the June 26, 2024 TAB Meeting

- Public Comment included the owners of all five horse-drawn carriage companies

JUNE AND JULY MEETINGS

June: SAPD met with all 5 Horse Carriage Industry companies

- All 5 companies expressed concern for the livelihood of their business, staff and future of horses
- They proposed reducing operating hours
- 4 of the 5 companies are open to:
 - operating electric carriages if the City provides financial assistance to procure them and
 - reducing the number of permits by 20%.
 - requesting an average of 5 years transition time to phase out of the industry

July: SAPD briefed Animal Care Services Board about CCR



SA SPEAKUP SURVEY



Purpose: Understand how residents, tourists and industry stakeholders feel about a proposal to ban horse drawn carriages in the downtown area

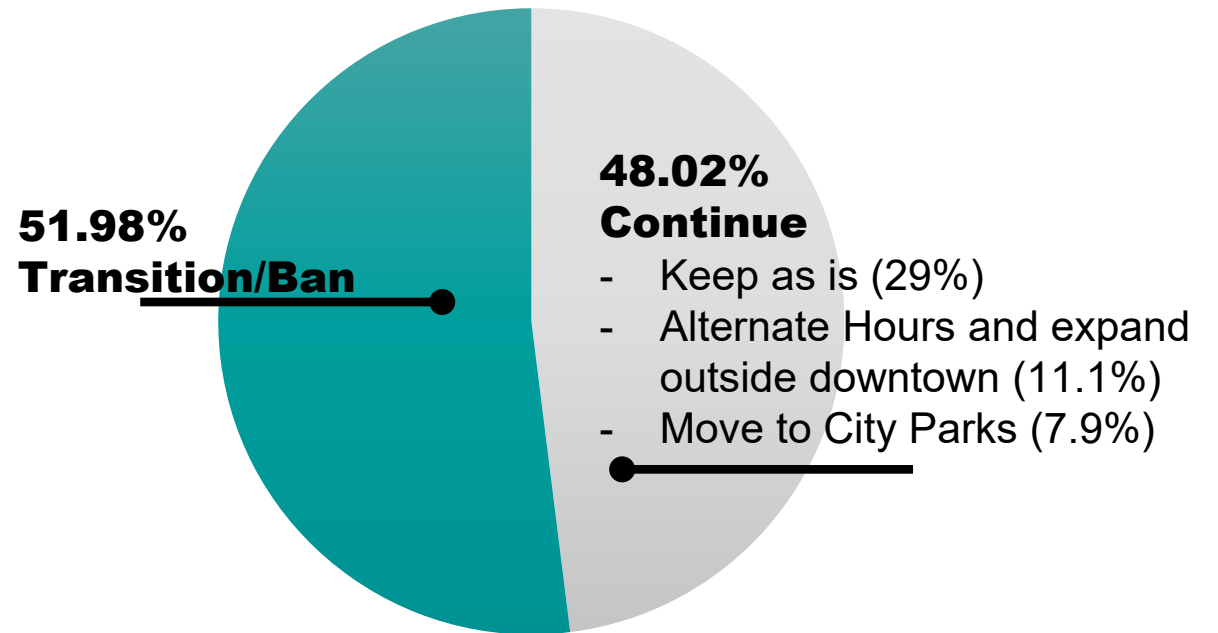
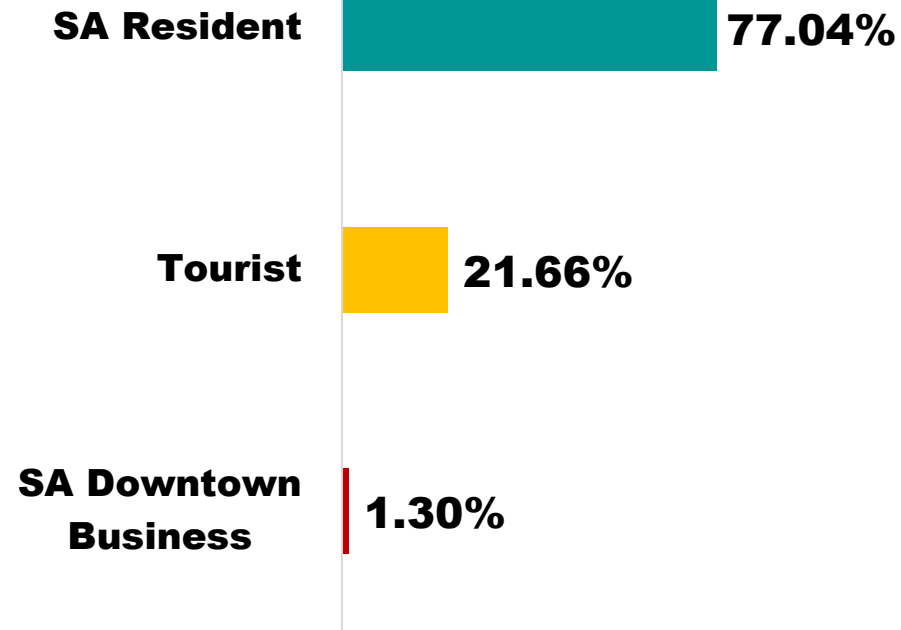
Period: July 25 to August 13

Questions:

- Resident/Tourist/Downtown Business Owner
- Ridden horse drawn carriage (yes/no)
- Alternative options to horse drawn carriages
- Optional Demographic Questions

SURVEY RESULTS

50,476 RESPONSES



Horse Carriage Operators

On September 30 and October 2, Workforce Development staff met with drivers from the five horse-drawn carriage companies.

Gender	Age	Educational Level	
44 responded <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Female – 28• Male – 16	50 responded <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18-24 – 12• 25-34 – 13• 35-54 – 19• 55-64 – 5• 65 plus - 1	46 responded <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than high school diploma or GED – 2• High School Diploma/GED – 13• Some college/Post-Secondary Credential - 14• 2-year Degree – 6;• 4-year Degree – 7• Master's/Doctorate Degree – 4	
Years working in horse carriage industry	Average hours worked per week	Annual income from horse carriage operations*	
45 responded <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0-4 years – 20• 5-10 years – 12• 11-20 years – 12• More than 20 years – 1	45 responded <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-20 hours – 2• 21-35 hours – 7• Above 35 hours – 36	44 responded <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Below \$30,000 – 6• \$30,001-\$50,000 – 7• \$50,001-\$70,000 – 12• \$70,001-\$90,000 – 8• Above \$90,000 – 11	

**Horse carriage operators work as independent contractors*

HORSE CARRIAGE OPERATORS

Interest in driving electric carriages

- 74.5% not interested
- 21.3% unsure
- 4.3% interested

Should horse-drawn carriage operations be banned

- 56.5% would seek other employment
- 39.1% unsure
- 8.8% would finish a college degree

Concerns with ability to operate e-carriages

- 75.6% no concerns
- 22.2% unsure
- 2.2% concerned

Interest in COSA job training services

- 44.7% not interested
- 43.5% they might be interested
- 12.8% interested



HORSE CARRIAGE OPERATORS ANECDOTAL FEEDBACK - HIGHLIGHTS

Motivations and Job Commitment

- Passionate about horses
- Invested significant time in career

Concerns

- Potential loss of income and schedule flexibility
- Ripple effect on related businesses and staff
- Entertainment rather than transportation and contributes uniquely to the city's tourism
- Employment barriers

HORSE CARRIAGE BUSINESSES

Staff conducted at least one meeting with each business owner, with some owners receiving multiple follow-up meetings.

Regulatory Changes and Alternatives

- No interest in collaborating with equine rescue groups
- Hesitant interest in electric carriages
 - Less public interest in electric carriage rides
 - Lower fare = less revenue
 - Lack of maintenance cost
 - lack of domestic manufacturers

Business Model and Market Position

- Form of entertainment rather than transportation
 - No interest in expanding operational perimeter
- Pedi-Cabs not viable business model
 - Significant investment into horses and their care
 - Physical demands on drivers

HORSE CARRIAGE BUSINESSES

Financial Impact and Business Operations

- Investment includes significant debt
 - Ranged from \$67,000 to \$700,000
 - Maturity ranged from 2028 to 2050
 - SBA loans, private loans, obligations to former business partners and family
 - Monthly debt service varied up to \$17,000
- Ongoing expenses associated with horse care and stable operations
- Concern retaining drivers due to industry uncertainty

Business owners expressed a need for consideration of the financial implications of changes to City code and adequate time for any transition to mitigate risks to their livelihoods and business sustainability.

TRANSITION PLAN OPTIONS

Three Options Developed: 12-month, 24-month and 36-month Transitions

Each option provides:

- Changes to City Code (Ordinance)
 - Changes needed to operationalize option
- Carriage Business Owner Strategies
 - Not required of business owners, but may support the effective transition
- Carriage Operator Strategies
 - Short, mid, and long-term strategies available to support workforce transition

12-Month Transition Option

Changes to City Code	Carriage Business Owner Strategies	Carriage Operator Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse carriage permits renewed through March 2026 • Issue 25 electric carriage permits by September 2025 • Limit e-carriage permits to existing carriage business owners for the first two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to mitigate revenue losses such as alternate business operation models, asset disposition, and debt restructuring • Explore e-carriage acquisition and financing options, including the City's Zero Percent Loan Program with LiftFund 	<p>Short-term: (Jan to April 2025) Intake & Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly fairs to provide resources • Monthly career exploration workshops • Individual education and career plan • Connected to LaunchSA and LiftFund to explore Zero Percent Interest Loan eligibility <p>Mid-term (May-August 2025) - Support service/agency enrollment and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to Work enrollment • Encouraged to visit American Job Center for additional resources/support <p>Long-term (Sept 2025-April 2026) – Employment transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported to transition into their new careers • Resume preparation and interview practice

24-Month Transition Option

Changes to City Code	Carriage Business Owner Strategies	Carriage Operator Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse carriage permits renewed through March 2027 • 25% decrease in operating hours starting April 2026 • Issue 25 electric carriage permits by September 2025 • Limit e-carriage permits to existing carriage business owners for the first two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to mitigate revenue losses such as alternate business operation models, asset disposition, and debt restructuring • Explore e-carriage acquisition and financing options, including the City's Zero Percent Loan Program with LiftFund 	<p>Ongoing Intake & Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly fairs to provide resources • Monthly career exploration workshops • Individual education and career plan • Connected to LaunchSA and LiftFund to explore Zero Percent Interest Loan eligibility <p>Ongoing Support Service/Agency Enrollment and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to Work enrollment and training • Encouraged to visit American Job Center for additional resources/support <p>Ongoing employment transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported to transition into their new careers • Resume preparation and interview practice

36-Month Transition Option

Changes to City Code	Carriage Business Owner Strategies	Carriage Operator Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse carriage permits renewed through March 2028 • 25% decrease in operating hours starting April 2026 • Additional 25% decrease in April 2027 • Issue 25 electric carriage permits by September 2025 • Limit e-carriage permits to existing carriage business owners for the first two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to mitigate revenue losses such as alternate business operation models, asset disposition, and debt restructuring • Explore e-carriage acquisition and financing options, including the City's Zero Percent Loan Program with LiftFund 	<p>Ongoing Intake & Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly fairs to provide resources • Monthly career exploration workshops • Individual education and career plan • Connected to LaunchSA and LiftFund to explore Zero Percent Interest Loan eligibility <p>Ongoing Support Service/Agency Enrollment and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to Work enrollment and training • Encouraged to visit American Job Center for additional resources/support <p>Ongoing employment transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported to transition into their new careers • Resume preparation and interview practice

CONCLUSION

- Staff seeks City Council feedback on various transition plan options



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