

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Economic Recovery Special Committee August 18, 2022

WAYNE: Good morning and-- good morning and welcome to today's briefing. My name is Senator Justin Wayne. I represent Legislative District 13, which is north Omaha and northeast Douglas County. I served as the Chair of the Economic Recovery Special Committee of the Legislature, which was created with the LB-- with the passage of LB1024. We will start off by having members of the committee and staff do self-introductions, starting with my right, Senator Wishart.

WISHART: Hi. Good morning. Senator Anna Wishart-- speak loud enough. Senator Anna Wishart, District 27, which is west Lincoln and Lancaster County. It's good to-- good to see you all.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Trevor Fitzgerald, committee legal counsel.

McKINNEY: Terrell McKinney, Senator, District 11, north Omaha.

McDONNELL: Mike McDonnell, LD5, south Omaha.

WAYNE: And our committee clerk, Angenita, is sitting in the front, where she'll be making sure all this flows. I also want to make sure I recognize a couple of other people. We have State Senator John Arch in the front. I did not see any others that-- we have former Senator Burke Harr and-- and a Nebraska State Board rep Jacquelyn Morrison is also here. I do not see any other elected officials I'm looking and, no, there's not. Before I began this process-- before I begin this today, I want to provide some background on the committee process and timeline. LB1024 required that the Legislature contract with a outside company to conduct economic feasibility and impact studies for potential uses of ARPA and general dollar funds in north and south Omaha. The committee selected Olsson to conduct the study and has been working with Olsson for the past few weeks to develop process and procedures for public engagement, review, scoring potential of projects, and more. I want to just note that Olsson has listened to the-- I believe, listened to the legislative history of this bill and highlight and actually done some of the things that we've talked about when they selected and put their group together. They brought in two-- besides just the Olsson team, they brought in two what we would consider mi-- minority-owned businesses, ICONIC Consulting Group from Dallas, Texas-- Keith, will you raise your hand?-- and then B2 Labs. I didn't see him here, but another minority firm. And so the reason I say that is because part of this is recruiting new people to the area and giving people chances, and ICONIC is from Dallas and they are now opening up an office in Nebraska, which is a principle-based African American professional engineering firm. And it's that kind of things that we were looking

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for from the RFP process to bring a diverse, inclusive team together, but also give people opportunities that they normally maybe couldn't bite off by themselves. So I wanted to thank Olsson for that process and for making sure that they not just follow the RFP, but really listen to what we were trying to do and got into the thoughts of how can we make this an overall successful project. And contrary-- contrary to the rumors that have been circulating on social media, most of the \$335 million in funds were appropriated through LB1020-- LB1024, but they have not been allocated. A portion of the funds were allocated for specific things: \$20 million for affordable housing and \$60 million for the airport park-- business park project. But the bulk of the money, \$200-250 million, has not been allocated to the Qualified Census Tract Recovery Grant Program. It is for the use of these dollars that Olsson will be assisting a legislature to identify projects and to have the greatest economic impact for potential of a truly transformed north and south Omaha. If you went to any of the stakeholder meetings, you heard a lot about transformational, lifelong economic impact, and that is our-- our big focus, is something that is just not service based or social based, but truly economic impact that will last generations. On Monday and Tuesday of this week, Olsson conducted a series of stakeholder meetings both in north and south Omaha. This was the first step of gathering input from the community on how to best utilize funds for the Qualified Census Tract Recovery Grant Program. Today's purpose is to brief each other-- to brief the committee on what we've learned those first two stakeholder meetings. While this briefing is open to the public, in order to keep the public and the community informed, we will not be taking public testimony today. This is an opportunity, the opportunity to testify on these funds, including your own ideas and projects from the community, will be around the week of September 19. You may ask, why the week of September 19? It's called going back to school and trying to find locations that can accommodate the entire public. Because of the short timeline, we felt we had to engage community stakeholders, people who have been working on projects for a while and big ideas to engage them, not first to put off the community, but trying to have those today or yesterday or this week were damn near impossible with the start of school and the start of access to buildings. I just dropped off my daughter on her first day of school today, and many people on Facebook obviously were sharing their first days yesterday. So that was the thought process. It wasn't we wanted to put stakeholders first or above the community, but due to the timeline, we knew we had a short window. We are actually-- actually trying to block out the last couple of weeks of October not to engage the community because we realize it's an election year and people will be tired of government and campaigns

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and coming out to meetings and rallies. So we really have a short timeline and that's why we started with that first, again, not to ignore the community or put stakeholders above, but it was just simply a place to gather and location and timing issue. And so that's why the week of September 19, we will go back out to the public and pretty much have an open forum on how we can better serve you with these dollars. I want to remind everyone that, including the senators, to please turn off your cell phones, put them on vibrate, and today we will be-- begin this briefing. We would like to invite-- invite Mike from Olsson to begin their presentation. Thank you. Please state and spell your name for the record.

MICHAEL PIERNICKY: Good morning. I'm Michael Piernicky, M-i-c-h-a-e-l P-i-e-r-n-i-c-k-y. I'm a principal with Olsson here in Omaha. Certainly we have offices statewide. I do want to recognize-- Senator Wayne already did for me, but the entire time who put together the work that they've done: Lamp Rynearson, APMA Architecture, B2 Lab, ICONIC Consulting, and Canyon Southwest Research. Thank you to you all for all of the hard work you've put in to this point and that we'll be working on as we move forward. Senators, good morning and thank you for allowing us to give you a briefing today of what has been a very full week for us so far. And so I'm going to jump right into it. I've got about 11 slides. We'll give you a quick briefing. And then certainly I'm totally flexible. If a question comes up, feel free to-- to launch it at me. And certainly I think we can get through the presentation piece really quickly and then get to the conversation. So with that, I'm going to jump in. You highlighted briefly the overall process. I do want to-- for the recording and everybody's knowledge, obviously, we got under contract in July and we started doing a lot of research and-- and pulling together information that is going to get formalized here over the next week and a half in a "inventory and opportunities" memo that'll be an appendix to the overall coordination plan. And then obviously, we're in August. The key piece of work here in August is the visioning workshops we've completed this week. And then the-- the work that we're doing to pull all of that information together, pull themes and identify key opportunities, that will give us guidance where we're going next. Senator Wayne highlighted public engagement sessions and project applications process. That's the month of September. The week of September 19, we will hold four public meetings, two in north Omaha, two in south Omaha. We are currently working on identifying specific dates, times, and locations, and that will be actually published through the legislative website as well as other channels, and certainly we will reach out to the folks that have been engaged so far in our processes to make sure that that gets out to folks who

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have been engaged as well as the public in general. That's the week of September 19. There will be a period of time for project submission, and in October is when all of those projects will come into our working group. We'll go ahead and evaluate those with selection criteria and basically we have five weeks to take all the projects in, go through them all, create a report for the senators, which they'll have one-- one look at as a draft report in November, and then we are under contract to wrap all of that up, provide a final coordination report with all the information, the appendices and documenting, everything we've gone through, December 1 of this year. That'll certainly provide the senators time to read, digest, and communicate that report to the rest of the Legislature. And certainly that'll be one of the key tools that moves forward as the Legislature sits next January and then they go through the discussions of actually how to appropriate the dollars to individual projects. Stakeholders engaged over the last week, really the last three days, came from a wide number of different community organizations: institutions and government, business, faith-based organizations, health services, design professionals, real estate, is just a number of them. There were over 200 people that were invited stakeholders to those meetings. We had responses and attendees for 141. Those 141 attendees attended four sessions. First two were at Metro Community College on Monday, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and then-- with the focus being north Omaha. And then obviously on Tuesday we were at South High School and repeated the same sessions, but with a focus on the south Omaha qualified census tracts. We actually asked those folks that joined us to engage and help us work through a bunch of questions. We took them through a number of different exercises. Certainly we presented a lot of information and data that is publicly available and distilled that down to some key findings to give them a basis of-- from a technical perspective, where we're seeing opportunities and key-- key issues in the community. We took them through a SWOT exercise, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses are generally internal to the community as it exists today, and opportunities and threats are external forces or opportunities that are external. And so not only did we do that as a professional group with our perspectives, we actually had the community stakeholders do the same exercise because they're there, they live it every day, and they have a different perspective than we do. And so what we did is then communicated those things together and then took them through a needs exercise. Clearly folks understand their community, their needs that we have in north and south Omaha. And so we took them through an organized exercise to get them to, first of all, identify needs as they see them, and then we actually

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had the large-- larger working groups. We combined them, and then they talked among those needs themselves. We had them go through a process where they identified what are the really key ones, you know, the priorities that, you know, if we do these key and solve these key needs, it allows us to do all the other things that we heard throughout the different sessions throughout the day. And then finally we took them through an idea, brainstorming exercise where they were identifying key things to be done in the community, things for improvement, and actually had them submit a lot of that. We got the last ones. We kept-- we had an online portal open where they could submit ideas. We left it open so that they go home; if they had ideas or they wanted to submit additional ones, we got that back from them, and that actually wrapped up yesterday. We got the last ones in just before close of business yesterday. So we're, as a project team, still gathering all that information and digesting it. We received over 162 different ideas with regards to key things moving forward and/or supporting activities. Some of the key takeaways that we heard as we went through the overall process and the SWOT analysis, I will highlight, folks. You'll notice that there's two different colors up there, white and green. White comments are things that we noticed coming into it as a professional group and that we brought to the table, and then obviously the green ones are specific comments that we heard from the community that were key and/or where we saw that they were repeated; as we started recording information, they were brought up multiple times. And so from a strength standpoint, in north Omaha, one of the things that we think is an opportunity or a strength that you can leverage is the street network and grid. It's, you know, traditional pre-World War II where you had a grid network, provides good access and walkability, and then it's just being able to leverage that as we look at development opportunities and the ability to move those things forward. We heard multiple times that the culture and the character are integrated into the neighborhood. The folks in north Omaha are proud of who they are, their history, and it really is important that that strength is leveraged moving forward. Economic hubs and the-- the proximate location of them to north Omaha, north-- you know, the area for qualified census tracts is just off of downtown. There are some connections to get there. There are other connections that are not good. It is obviously near the airport and the airport business park and these are some key transportation and/or potential economic opportunities that is a strength for north Omaha because of what's right next to it. Weaknesses, some of the things that were identified, physical infrastructure divides the community. Obviously, you know, as a professional group, we looked at, you know, look at the community as a whole. Highway 75, for example, bifurcates that community and

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prevents a barrier for walkability and connectedness. Economic investment does not recycle within the community. This is something we heard multiple times from the stakeholders, you know, folks and dollars that are spent. There's a lot of outside ownership, so the dollars and the economic activity leaves the north Omaha community. Broadband and public infrastructure do not meet current needs. Clearly, there's infrastructure needs that have existed in north Omaha for a long period of time, and North Omaha does lag, both statewide and-- and other pre-- key metrics with regards to broadband connectivity for the residents there. And then one of the other things that we clearly heard is that, from a strength standpoint, is there's people, there's energy, there's folks that are looking to start businesses, but one of the things that was identified is finance and business education resources are needed to support black-owned businesses. Opportunities and threats for north Omaha, you know, opportunities: large areas of north Omaha in the qualified census tracts as identified do exist within the community reinvestment areas, and basically what that means is they're eligible for TIF financing if you have the right type of project and qualifications, so there are avenues for being able to move projects forward and-- and assisting in financing those. There's a number of vacant parcels and there's a bunch of available ground. Now this is a plus and a minus. While there are a number of vacant parcels, one of the things that we find, and this is a hurdle, is it's scattered. And so the ability to pull together large, contiguous portions of available ground so that you could do a development with enough critical mass to be successful, those are some of the things in the balances. While there is a bunch of available ground, trying to find available ground that you can pull together to do sustainable development is key. And then leveraging current residents' entrepreneurial efforts into additional activity, I kind of mentioned before that we heard the people are the strength. They have energy. They have desires to start businesses. How do we leverage that and support them in that process? Some of the threats that we've seen over the near recent past, there's been some redevelopment areas in north Omaha that gentrification is causing low-income households to be displaced, and so as we look at how we transform our communities, making sure that there is a diversity of housing options, so that we're making sure that we are providing those for all of the different socioeconomic levels. Public health concerns: when we look through the data, obesity and cancer were two items that came off the list of overrepresentation, specifically for north Omaha. Pre-diabetic and diabetic was another one that was just below that. And so there are health concerns and at least an understanding of having access to good healthcare is a need and a threat from the

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outside. Aging infrastructure is a barrier for attracting investments and to maintaining quality of life. There is a negative external media and/or public perception. And external and remote land ownership, you know, this gets that, you know, single-family home ownership, apartments, a lot of the times where it's a rental property, and so any investments that you have, you know, those dollars are then leaving that specific neighborhood and community. Transitioning to south Omaha, which was our meetings on Tuesday, strengths and seaknesses first: culture cultivates local reinvestment. I think if-- if you had been along 24th Street, the commercial district, the community and-- and the energy they have around that is bringing reinvestment from the community itself. There's a strong small business community throughout south Omaha, and it's exhibited up and down 24 Street, as well as spilling off of 24th Street, and then just the success they've had in transforming that over the past two decades. Weaknesses: one of the things we saw as a team is community resources are lacking, availability and proximity of parks and schools and event spaces. Event spaces, you know, we noticed it as a professional group, but we also heard that multiple times from the stakeholders that were there. One of the things that we heard from the stakeholders is older and singular, a single type of housing stock. One of the unique characteristics is a multigenerational household that we see a lot in south Omaha, and so the ability to have houses that have-- well, the ability to do alternate dwelling units or the ability to bring on flats for that multi-generational piece, the limit-- the limited area of parcels there, because they're small parcels and some of the older housing stock doesn't fit well with being able to invest and upgrade those houses to really accommodate or bring to market some of the newer things that we're seeing in other places across the country. Similar, again, broadband and transit and public infrastructure-- public infrastructure do not meet the needs of the community as it exists today. And then one of the things we heard multiple times is access to quality food and produce and the availability of that within the community. Quickly moving on to opportunities and threats, from an opportunity standpoint, once again, a large portion of the qualified census tracts are in the community reinvestment areas, so there is opportunities for TIF financing and other methods to help move projects forward. Building upon the vibrancy and the demand of commercial and office and business opportunities, whether you call this a strength or weakness, there's a ton of energy and folks looking and actually starting businesses, but what we see is, is there's very little office space, there's very little availability of space for additional restaurants and commercial opportunities; well, and/or we have a lot of small businesses and a lot of the businesses

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are in small spaces and there aren't a lot of opportunities for them to move into larger office space or larger restaurants, and so it's kind of a hindrance for growth of existing businesses. And then finally, from an opportunity standpoint, we heard this from the community multiple times, from a diversity of culture and all of the different cultures that exist within south Omaha as it exists today, it quite possibly could be the most diverse area within the entire state of Nebraska. How do we recognize those different cultures, those different people that live there, and then actually point that out as a-- an opportunity and a potential? How do we leverage that to make it, you know, a place that's different than anywhere else in the state? Threats: once again, aging and underinvested infrastructure; requests for transit and additional broadband came up multiple times; limited land for growth and small projects, there's not a lot of available ground for new businesses and the like; and then, once again, there is some negative external media and perceptions that exist within the community. That kind of wrapped up the SWOT analysis. Once we had a good conversation, we were able to record a lot of that information, we then had the folks talk about what the needs are, and the needs ranged all across the board, both in north and south Omaha. What our team did as we worked yesterday was, can we take all of those needs and how do you classify them? So we kind of put them into a couple of big pots, and so land uses was one, transportation, policy, infrastructure and quality of life, so we kind of then went through a process to organize that amongst those. One of the other things that we saw, a lot of times, the needs, you can point to projects that will likely come out of that need or how do you solve that need? One of the other things that we saw are what we're calling supporting actions, and these would be like outcomes in a lot of instances. We saw creating high-paying jobs, how do we support our local businesses that exist today, how do you change that marketing or that external perception of the community and the neighborhood, and then how do you get and create community vision and buy-in? You know, you can have all of these needs, but how do you get everybody behind the two or three or four key ones? And so that communication and marketing and buy-in piece was important for folks. And then, how do we piece all of this together to build destinations where people from all over the community would want to and seek out coming to north and south Omaha? These are the outcomes that, as we look at projects and needs, if you do some of these others and the key ones, hopefully, these are the things that you'll be able to leverage or end up with as outcomes. The overall needs exercises, the information that we got from all the stakeholders, we've got probably about 200 different needs and/or supporting actions identified. This just gives you a little bit of a framework or an understanding of--

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for those different, you know, silos that we kind of classify them into. But we did see from a land use and then a policy standpoint in north Omaha were kind of the two big folks where-- the two big pots where folks had a lot of ideas and needs. And not dissimilar in south Omaha, uses once again led the way, with infrastructure and policy being close-- close seconds or-- or falling behind, so just gives you a framework of, you know, where people's thoughts were and where we're seeing a lot of conversation within those different silos of-- of ideas. And here's the wrap-up. If I had to boil down, 200 folks invited, 141 people there, we received, as we counted up, over 1,200 individual comments from the community, either in strengths, weaknesses, or opportunities, or those needs and idea creations. We got over 1,200 responses from the folks that attended, things that we saw that, if I had to boil it down to the big three: insufficient infrastructure, broadband access, transit availability and service level of-- of transportation services. We heard very clearly from both communities that whatever comes out of this, the development and the transformational change needs to fit within the cultural context of the community. I heard it time and time again in both north and south Omaha. And then the other thing that was interesting was access to tools and leverage for community resources. I commented earlier on there is a ton of folks out there who are looking to start businesses, expand businesses, and there's an education component for how to do this, how to do it better, access to financing as they-- they need to expand their business or start a business, and so there was a lot of community discussion around access to the tools and how do we leverage community resources to continue to benefit north and south Omaha. So with that, that's kind of the end of my prepared remarks, so I'll maybe pause there and look to the senators for any initial questions on what we've heard the last couple of days or where we're going next and-- and everything else that you might come up with. So thank you.

WAYNE: Thank you, Mike, for the initial presentation. Again, just so the public knows, after the 19th, week of the 19th, we'll have a similar public briefing on what the public says, and-- and-- and it's kind of similar to this, and then we'll have more discussion. I guess at this time I'll turn to the committee if they have any initial thoughts, questions, and we kind of can talk in where we're going from here, I guess, and-- let's not all jump in at once. [LAUGHTER] OK, just so the public knows, we're going to try to go into-- or we're going to try at this point, I think, start fleshing out from a committee's perspective over the next two weeks the criteria to evaluate projects. And I think overall, this presentation lines up with the-- the goals of LB1024 as it relates to north and south

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Omaha, as far as trying to figure out how to access tools and leverage community resources, but develop-- we talked heavily about developing within the context of the-- the community itself. Mike, can you give a brief kind of overview where you think the committee should go into and where we should probably maybe take some-- some time out to figure out more discussion? Yeah, I just popped it on you. [LAUGHTER]

MICHAEL PIERNICKY: A follow-up question, Senator, I-- with more discussion in what topic area? There's a lot of different ways I could take that.

WAYNE: Well, just open-ended.

MICHAEL PIERNICKY: OK. I expected some good questions and-- and I get to basically almost create my own. So I--maybe I'll talk for just a second about the work that we're going to do from this point, between now and the public meetings on September 19, and kind of the key things that are in front of us. One, up to end of business yesterday, we were still receiving, you know, ideas and needs from the invited stakeholders, the community leaders that we engaged with over the last two days, so we're still working through all of those different ideas. Some of them are communitywide and/or general statements; other ones are, you know, attached to specific locations and specific ideas about things that need to be changed in the location. So what we're doing is kind of overlaying all of those on a map right now to see where-- are there opportunities to put those different pieces together, because one of the things that we talked about is a group on-- on creating places that are sustainable, things that are vibrant, is having multiple uses in an area that are close to one another, and so this is, you know, commercial and-- you know, commercial business, jobs, housing, and how does that all work together? So one of the things we want to do is, because a lot of the input we get from-- from community members that they have a specific need or they know something needs to be done in a location, but how do we try and pull these all together so that you have a compre-- a comprehensive approach to a solution that then draws the community and creates place? And so that's the number one thing we're doing right now is trying to locate all of the ideas on a map, seeing how they could work together, so that, as we come up with ideas and feedback for the community and as-- as we get project submissions in September, how do we provide guidance back and then how do we put those together so that we put together transformational things that touch all of the different boxes that we need to do to have sustainable and community growth. So that's probably our number-one

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task. Number two is clearly, and I-- I'm pretty sure we're going to get into some of this conversation momentarily, is, you know, yesterday afternoon, after getting the community input on hearing what, between the senators and the stakeholders' input, is in their goals and what their key items are, we did have our at least initial conversations, the project team, on how to put together selection criteria, and there is a wide range of different things we could look at. And so that's task number two. And then task number three is, once we get a summary of all this together, honestly, we're going-- we're already right into the preparation for the four public meetings on September 19. We'll have locations, I'm guessing, by early next week, and then obviously we want to communicate those out over the next two weeks so that folks have a couple weeks' notice of the location, when and where, and preparing for all those meetings. In conjunction with that, we will be standing up a website that will explain the overall process that we're going to go through with the development of this coordination plan. We will have guidance up there from obviously the Recovery Funds Act on eligible-- things that are eligible for funding. Admittedly, I-- I was reviewing the document on that. It's 437 pages long. One of the-- one of the things that I think our responsibility, as a-- a program or project team, is trying to pull that down into something that the community can engage with and have an understanding in a one- or maybe two-pager. I love one-pagers, but my guess is, it's 437 pages and the number of rules there are, it might leak over one page. But how do we facilitate communicating to the public and community members how to engage, what kind of projects are going to meet the eligibility requirements, and-- and make that as digestible as possible for our community. so websites. I will-- we'll also be, as part of that, standing up a web portal for the submission of all the ideas, and that'll probably be open for a couple of weeks, the week of the public meetings and at least one week after. So that's kind of a roadmap of-- of where we're going and kind of the three big tasks that are in front of our project team. I don't know if that asks [SIC] the question you didn't ask, but I'll start with that.

WAYNE: Senator McDonnell.

McDONNELL: Mike, thanks for-- for all the work you've put in so far, you and your team, and-- and you talked about high-paying jobs and how were you defining that in this process so far?

MICHAEL PIERNICKY: Admittedly, high-paying jobs, you know, we'll look at some of these statewide. You know, we've had conversations with several senators on, you know, where are the poverty level, what are

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the goals. If-- if we're going to make a federal/state investment, we want to create high-paying jobs. A certain percentage over the average income hasn't been set yet. That'll be part of the discussion and the setting of the criteria. But admittedly, it was clear that high-paying, high-wage jobs is a goal of this overall process.

McDONNELL: How about the food and-- and produce with the-- the idea of the lack of access? Was there also-- did you guys get into more details on how to solve that, that problem?

MICHAEL PIERNICKY: I-- admittedly, I-- I mean, I've had discussions around this for a lot of years, and-- and my engagement, I'm an engineer by training. We do development work. I-- there's food deserts. You know, obviously, the-- the last improvement in north Omaha was Walmart at 50th and Ames. I mean, before that, there's nothing throughout all of downtown, and a lot of folks in that community were heading out to the Walmart at Irvington and 680. And certainly we've been trying to, as a city and city planning, have been trying to attract a grocery store to downtown because of all of the new housing there, and we have similar issues as you move into south Omaha. I think that goes to, as we look at the big ideas and trying to pull things together, if you put the right mix of uses, be it commercial, business, housing in a-- well, I'll call it a district or-- or a specific area, those are things that I-- I would hope would incent or attract a grocery store user and some of those types of things that would want to be there because of the critical mass of different uses and the people that would be every day-- that would be there every day. Those are the kinds of conversations on, like, how do we pull all these ideas and projects and get them to work together in one spot so that then there's a business case for the Krogers, the Hy-Vees and those types of uses, to want to locate a business with everything else.

McDONNELL: Knowing that-- that, you know, that we have a large population in north and south Omaha, and so far with, after Monday, Tuesday, just kind of evaluating the participation so far, the-- the-- the feedback, the-- do you think we're at that level where we're-- we're getting enough participation from the community?

MICHAEL PIERNICKY: I-- I'm going to say, no, I-- not because there hasn't been great participation. I mean, in the last three-and-a-half weeks, we went from, OK, let's get started on this project, we're going to invite 200 people, hold four public meetings, but admittedly, while we did get good engagement from community leaders, that's a beginning. You know, one of the things that I think is going to be not a major issue, but a concern of mine is we've got literally

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about four-and-a-half months to discuss, engage the community on keeping them informed and getting input from them on how to allocate \$300-plus million. And so we could do a year or two process and I'm not sure that we would, you know, meet every need and-- and every piece of community engagement, but are we there yet? Absolutely not. That's the next piece of this, public meetings on the 19th. I encourage everybody to communicate all of that out to everybody you know. We're going to go fast because of the timeline we're on; however, the more engagement we have, the better.

WAYNE: Thank you, Senator McDonnell. Any other questions from the committee? OK. From a public perspective, those who don't go down to Lincoln quite a bit and see how the Legislatures work, typically after an interim-- an interim study or in a bill that's introduced, there's a presentation and there's conversation, and then we move into Exec and have further conversations. Exec is open to the media, but it is not open to the public. And that-- we are probably-- we are going to move to Exec to have further conversations and help go through the-- the guidelines and the-- and the criteria and have some initial conversations. That's how our rules are in the Legislature and that's how we're going to operate today. But I do want you to know, I haven't seen this presentation ahead of time. You guys are going-- the public is going through this process with us, partly because of the time, but partly because we want to be as transparent as we can. And that's why our legislative rules allow for the media to be in our Exec Session, and they do report out on things that happen in Exec Session. But that's how our Legislature works; it's operated that way for the last 50, 60 years. So we are going to move into Exec here in a minute, but I just wanted to make sure that the public knows it isn't-- we're not doing anything that we don't do normally every day in Lincoln. That's how we operate, but not everybody is in Lincoln to see how the-- the sausage is made, but this is kind of the criteria that we go through. Bills and interim studies are all handled the same way and we are going to be consistent here. So, again, I appreciate you guys coming out. I'm sure there'll be reports of things that happen in the Exec Session as far as our conversations and where we're going. But we're having initial conversations to try to move this along and give some context around the public-- public meetings that are coming up. And so, again, appreciate everybody from coming out, and with that, that'll close the hearing on the Economic Recovery Committee on LB1020. Thank you for-- LB1024. Thank you for coming out. And we'll let the room clear and then we'll make a motion to go into Exec. Thank you all for [RECORDER MALFUNCTION]