

# Council work sessions slated to resume, with some changes

by Mina Shekarchi | AUSTIN MONITOR



Photo by ATXN

(AUSTIN, TX) - It looks like City Council work sessions may be resuming soon. After three consecutive cancellations, there was some speculation that work sessions might be eliminated, or only utilized for necessary Council briefings. However, today, Council will vote on a proposal from City Manager T.C. Broadnax to restructure work sessions beginning in October.

Work sessions are typically the Tuesday before a regular Thursday Council meeting and provide an opportunity for members of the dais to hear departmental briefings or publicly discuss items on the Thursday agenda without voting. The recent cancellations seemed to be in response to a court ruling last month, when Judge Daniella Deseta Lyttle provided further clarification on an April ruling against

the city in a lawsuit over violations of the Texas Open Meetings Act. The August clarification determined that public comment may not be necessary during briefings alone but should be required at work sessions if Council is discussing items slated for future votes or action.

In a memo on Sept. 20, Broadnax outlined an ordinance that was added to the addendum for today's Council meeting agenda. The ordinance would repeal and replace the prior procedures for future Council meetings and work sessions, likely reinstating regular work sessions. The memo explained that, for work sessions beginning in October, "The public will be allowed to register to speak on briefings, preselected Council meeting agenda items, and Council Items of interest posted on the work session agenda."

Under the new ordi-

nance, speakers at work sessions, like at Council meetings, would be given a minimum time allotment of two minutes per item and they could donate their time to other speakers. Unlike Council meetings, which include a "General Public Communication" period, where up to 10 people can speak on items not listed on the agenda, public participation at work sessions would be limited to items on the work session agenda.

The proposed ordinance does not include significant changes to the rules for Council meetings, although it does expand expectations for conduct and decorum. If Council approves the city manager's proposed changes today, the new rules would apply to the work session and Council meeting scheduled for Oct. 8 and 10, respectively.

# Travis County Commissioners Unanimously Approve Central Health FY 2025 Budget

(Austin, TX) – The Travis County Commissioners Court voted unanimously Tuesday, Sept. 24 to approve the Central Health fiscal year 2025 budget and tax rate. Citing unwavering support of the taxpayer-funded Travis County Hospital District's mission, all five members voted yes.

"I represent a community that lives 10 to 20 years less because of the lack of access to adequate health care," Travis County Precinct One Commissioner Jeff Travillion said. "The point of all this is to serve our indigent populations, improve the health of our whole community, improve equity and justice, and improve the overall economic vitality of our community, which is linked to health."

The \$888.7 million budget supports a \$58.2 million increase in healthcare delivery with approximately 88% of the total budget dedicated to funding healthcare delivery. Key increases in the budget include:

Expanding specialty care: Increasing the district's budget by \$30.8 million to provide 30,000 annual specialty care visits.

Supporting mental health: Increasing the



Jeff Travillion

budget by \$8 million for specialty behavioral health care.

Enhancing post-hospital care: Expanding teams in skilled nursing facilities and setting up new contracts with a goal of providing 1,440 bed days directly operated by Central Health and 3,000 contracted.

Strengthening care coordination and enrollment: Expanding patient navigation efforts with a \$3.6 million increase and 21 new employees; and bolstering eligibility and enrollment services with a \$2.6 million increase for more on-site and virtual services.

By the end of FY 2025, Central Health aims to achieve several key milestones founded in its Healthcare Equity Plan, the document that

is guiding the district's work over the next several years. These objectives include a six-fold increase in specialty care visits, establishing a dedicated respite facility where people experiencing homelessness can rest and recover safely after leaving the hospital, and improving how the district coordinates care for patients, reducing hospital readmissions.

"Thank you for entrusting us with the vital mission of providing access to health care for those who need it most," said Dr. Pat Lee, Central Health President & CEO. "Your confidence in Central Health empowers us to continue this important work."

Central Health's new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

**OUR FUTURE 35**  
Austin's Cap and Stitch Project

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

The City of Austin invites you to an Open House to see updated concepts of green spaces and facilities on caps over I-35 in central Austin.

**Saturday, September 28**  
10:00am - 2:00pm

**Canopy Austin**  
916 Springdale Rd.

The community-driven concepts will be presented to the City Council with funding options **this fall**.  
For more details visit [www.OurFuture35.com](http://www.OurFuture35.com)