

Form Name: 2025 Annual Reports for Boards, Commissions and Similar Entities  
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## 2025 Annual Report For Boards and Commissions

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**Name of Board, Commission or Similar Entity** Sustainability and Resilience Commission

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**Current members (indicate chair, vice-chair, etc.)** David Evans - At-large appointee  
Daniel Hart - Chair, Sustainability appointee  
Luis Huertas - Green Buildings appointee  
Rob Jones - Forestry appointee  
Christiane Riederer - Secretary, At-large appointee  
Laura Thomas - City Employee appointee, Director of OOS  
Abigail Thompson - Vice-Chair, Mayoral appointee  
Harrison Wallace - Environmental Protection appointee  
Frank Novitsky  
Vacant Seat

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**Is there any proposed legislation on which the board or commission recommends that the City Council or the General Assembly act?** No

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**Meeting Dates of meetings held in 2025**

Jan. 27th, 2025 - Agenda - Minutes

Mar. 17th, 2025 - Agenda - Minutes

May. 19th, 2025 - Agenda - Minutes

Jul. 21st, 2025 - Agenda - Minutes

Sept. 22nd, 2025 - Agenda - Minutes

Nov. 17th, 2025 - Agenda - Minutes

Link to full report:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e5d14a607547560c855c76a/t/69387a0d238e81193ba03e17/1765308941984/2025+SRC+Annual+Report+.pdf>

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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e5d14a607547560c855c76a/t/69387a0d238e81193ba03e17/1765308941984/2025+SRC+Annual+Report+.pdf>

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**Is the 2025 meeting attendance record included?**

No

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**Is a copy of the body's current by-laws or rules of procedures attached?**

No

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**New Projects**

Link to full report (where it is included):

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e5d14a607547560c855c76a/t/69387a0d238e81193ba03e17/1765308941984/2025+SRC+Annual+Report+.pdf>

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**RICHMOND**  
SUSTAINABILITY &  
**RESILIENCE**  
**COMMISSION**

# **Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission**

2025 Annual Report

## **Contents**

Overview  
Bylaws  
Membership  
Executive Summary  
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Meeting Minutes  
Endorsements

Included in the Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission (“SRC”) 2025 Annual Report is an overview of the SRC’s function and aim as a City Commission, a summary of the work of the SRC for 2025, the Commission's By-Laws, the current membership of the Commission including commissioners terms, minutes from the 6 SRC meetings that took place over the calendar year, and formal letters of endorsement and support passed by the commission.

## **Overview**

The Richmond SRC is a 10-member public Commission tasked with advancing climate action in Richmond. The SRC collaborates with the Richmond Office of Sustainability (“OOS”) to implement the RVA Green 2050 Climate Equity Action Plan 2030 and holds 6 annual meetings that are free and open to the public. Originally the SRC was created as the Green City Commission (GCC) and was established by Richmond City Council in 2009. In early 2024, the GCC was rebranded as the SRC to more accurately reflect the aim and work of the group.

## **2025 Year End Review**

2025 was a year of continued growth and capacity building for the SRC. Six convenings of the SRC took place in 2025: on 1/27, 3/17, 5/19, 7/21, 9/22, and 11/17.

In these times of climate crisis and geopolitical turbulence, many are yearning for connection and one of the SRC’s strengths in 2025 was continuing to serve as a conduit for the public and members of the community to gather at the intersection of issues of social and environmental concern that relate to sustainable development, climate action, and resilience in the City of Richmond.

In an effort to provide a platform for community-based organizations to share their needs and to highlight their work, the SRC provided the space for over a dozen numerous local organizations to share their work in 2025. Another highlight and strength of the SRC in 2025 was serving as a platform for the City of Richmond’s Office for Sustainability to report-out and share their work with the Commission for feedback and consultation in addition to orienting members of the public who’ve been increasingly showing up to learn what the City is doing in terms of creating a more sustainable culture and how they can get involved. Efforts towards passing pieces of formal endorsement and policy support became an emergent function of the SRC in 2025, as numerous groups reached out to the SRC seeking endorsement and support for their work. 2025 also continued to be a year of positive capacity building in the City’s Office for Sustainability, and the SRC is grateful to Council and City leadership for this investment.

Additional highlights of the SRC’s impact in 2025 included:

- Collaboration and dialogue with Councilwoman Katherine Jordan on Code Refresh, with the SRC providing advisory support for encouraging the City to consider nuances related to density that support considerations of equity, local ecology, greenspace, neighborhood context, and urban design.
- Worked with the City Clerk's Office on enhancing process and structure for ensuring City appointment processes are more democratic, transparent, and representative.
- Passed letter of advocacy support for the *Mapping Historical Urban Resilience: The US South, 1815-1920 Project* brought to the SRC from faculty at the University of Northumbria (England). (Project was denied funding)
- Passed letter of advocacy support per the request of the Richmond Community ToolBank for a local grant application, centering resilience and resourcing for local projects.
- Passed letter of support for Disposable Plastic Bag Tax and the City's Waste Diversion Omnibus
- Passed letter of support for community based initiative aimed at Petition to Reopen Richmond's Historic Springs
- Commissioner Dave Evans engaged in dialogue at the Sierra Club's October 2025 program at the Science Museum of Virginia, with representatives from the Public Utilities Commission and Clean City Commission, educating on local civic engagement and the work of the SRC.
- Supporting the continued implementation of RVA Green 2050: the City of Richmond's Climate-Equity Centered Action Plan.

## Looking Ahead

Moving into 2026, the SRC will continue to serve as a space for connection, networking, and relationship building at the intersection of sustainability, climate justice, and resilience in addition to continuing to pursue opportunities to advance and advocate for policy in the City.

Potential opportunities for 2026 include:

- Providing advisory support for encouraging the City to consider nuances related to density that support considerations of equity, local ecology, greenspace, neighborhood context, and urban design.
- Consider and evaluate opportunities related to establishing a "Youth Council" for sustainability, either as an off-shoot of the SRC or as part of the existing commission.
- Seek opportunities for integration with other related City Commissions, such as the Urban Forestry Commission, Clean City Commission, and Public Utility Commission.
- Continue to serve as a space for community building and a platform for community-based organizations to share on their work.
- Continue to serve as a formal body that can provide endorsement and advocacy support for local climate action, resilience, and sustainability projects.

- Explore opportunities around novel policy creation for emerging initiatives.

We look forward to a productive 2026 as we work towards a more sustainable and resilient Richmond. The SRC's meetings for 2026 will continue to take place in person with hybrid options available at the Main Branch of the Richmond Public Library at a bi-monthly basis beginning in January. Cities, local municipalities, community-based organizations, businesses, and individuals all have a critical role to play in the creation of a more just, equitable, sustainable, and livable world as we move into 2026 and the SRC will continue to support efforts towards sustainability, climate justice, and resilience in the City of Richmond.

## **SRC By-Laws**

### **Established**

There is hereby created and established a Sustainability and Resilience Commission for the purpose of providing expertise and information to support the equitable sustainability efforts of the City of Richmond.

### **Composition; Terms of Office**

The Commission shall consist of nine voting members and one non-voting member who shall be a City employee in the Office of Sustainability appointed by the Mayor. The Council shall appoint seven voting members. The Mayor shall appoint two voting members.

Members shall demonstrate expertise in sustainability or equitable climate action through professional or volunteer efforts, or experience, which may include policy expertise, technical skills, community outreach, organizing, advocacy, or other sustainability and climate related skills. The composition of the Commission's membership shall reflect the diversity of the City. The voting members of the Commission shall serve for terms of three years and shall be limited to two consecutive terms. All voting members shall reside in the city.

Upon the expiration of a term of office, the member holding that office may continue to serve until a successor is appointed and qualified. Any vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as provided in this subsection. All other aspects of the Commission and its membership not addressed in this division shall be governed by Article V, Division 1 of the Chapter.

The **responsibilities and duties** of the Commission include:

- Provide expertise and information to the City to support the equitable sustainability efforts of the City.

- Consult with the state government and other local governments with regard to such governments' sustainability efforts and methods.
- Recommend changes to the Code of the City of Richmond (including the City's zoning regulations and building codes), the Code of Virginia and other laws as necessary to implement sustainable methods in the city of Richmond.
- Encourage the adoption of sustainable business and building approaches by the private sector and sustainable, community-led approaches by the residential sector.
- Meet with other City boards and commissions with a similar or related purpose on a regular basis to coordinate the goals, efforts, and recommendations of each such board or commission with the goals, efforts, and recommendations of the Commission.
- Consult with the Office of Sustainability to support the implementation of the RVAgreen 2050: Climate Equity Action Plan 2030, established by Resolution No. 2023-R005, adopted February 13, 2023, any amendments to such plan, and any future sustainability plans adopted by the Council.
- Prepare and submit an annual report to the Council by December 31 of each year.

### **Rules of Procedure**

The Commission may adopt rules of procedure or by-laws not inconsistent with this division to govern the conduct of its meetings and operations. The Commission may elect a chairman and such other officers in accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure or by-laws.

### **Meetings**

The Commission shall hold regular meetings at least quarterly and other meetings as needed.

### **Administrative Support**

The Commission shall have as its staff the Council Chief of Staff and such other staff as the Chief of Staff may identify. The Council Chief of Staff shall coordinate with the Chief Administrative Officer and the City Clerk as needed to furnish the Commission with such other staff and resources as may be necessary to assist the Commission in discharging the duties imposed on the Commission by this division.

### **Members**

The SRC has 10 seats of which 7 are Council-appointed and 3 are Mayor-appointed.

# Commission Member List

**Daniel Hart** ( Chair): Sustainability appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/28)

**Abigail Thompson**(Vice-Chair): Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 6/30/27)

**Christiane Riederer**(Secretary: At-large appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

**Mike Smart**: Sustainability Manager of OOS, City Employee appointee (n/a)

**Luis Huertas**: Green Buildings appointee (1st term ends 10/25/28)

**David Evans**: At-large appointee (2nd term ends 7/22/28)

**Rob Jones**: Forestry appointee (1st term ends 10/26/26)

**Harrison Wallace**: Environmental Protection appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/28)

**Vacant Seat** - *Applications due to City on 12/15/25*

**Vacant Seat** - *In conversation with City Clerk's Office about this seat.*





# **Richmond Sustainability & Resilience Commission**

Monday, January 27th, 2025 – 4:00 - 5:30 pm

Richmond Public Library (101 E Franklin St), Gellman Room

## **Agenda:**

**4:00 pm Call to Order and Introductions**

**Who are you and what are you hoping to get out of this meeting?**

**2024 SRC Report and Highlights**

**Officer Elections**

**Request for SRC Endorsement**

- Mapping Historical Urban Resilience: The US South, 1815-1920

**Potential Priorities for 2025**

- Supporting the development of and integration of sustainability, climate justice, and resilience best practices into Richmond Inspires: the City's upcoming Parks and Recreation Vision Plan.
- Exploring opportunities to expand the impact of the newly established Sustainable Design Standards to non-municipally owned properties through the encouragement and buy-in of related standards for private capital construction, development and renovation projects in the City.
- Consider and evaluate opportunities related to establishing a "Youth Council" for sustainability as part of SRC
- Opportunities around affordable housing at the intersection of social sustainability
- Seek opportunities for integration with other related City Commissions, such as the Urban Forestry Commission, Clean City Commission, and Public Utility Commission.
- Other?

**Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability**

**Upcoming SRC Meetings: 3/17 , 5/19, 7/21, 9/22, 11/17; 4:00-5:30pm**

**Community Updates & Announcements**

**5:30 pm Close**

## **Sustainability and Resilience Commission Members**

David Evans (Secretary): At-large appointee (1st term ends 7/22/25)  
Victor McKenzie (Vice-Chair): Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 8/10/26)  
Daniel Hart (Chair): Sustainability appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
Christiane Riederer: At-large appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
Laura Thomas: Director of OOS, City Employee appointee (n/a)  
Luis Huertas: Green Buildings appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
Rob Jones: Forestry appointee (1st term ends 10/26/26)  
Harrison Wallace: Environmental Protection appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
Bill Nickerson: Energy Efficiency appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/25)  
Abigail Thompson: Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 6/30/27)

## **Meeting Notes**

**Commission Members Present:** David Evans (MS Teams), Daniel Hart, Luis Huertas (MS Teams), Bill Nickerson, Christiane Riederer, and Harrison Wallace (MS Teams). Rob Jones, Victor McKenzie, Laura Thomas, and Abigail Thompson were unable to attend this meeting.

**Members of the Public:** To be added by OOS

**The Meeting was called to order at approximately 4:05pm** by Daniel Hart, who explained that the meeting room layout, with Commission members at the table and public participants around the outside of the room, was a new set-up. With just three Commissioners in the room, Daniel acknowledged it felt awkward and would be reconsidered for future meetings. He then highlighted the planned topics for the meeting, as shown in the agenda above. Daniel noted with appreciation the continued active public participation in the meeting, and noted there would be ample time for public input and announcements during the Community Updates and Announcements.

Daniel led a round robin of participant introductions, beginning with members and public participants in the room, and then for remote participants. He reflected on the excellent public participation in this meeting, building on that at meetings throughout 2024, when live meetings returned following Covid restrictions.

**Annual Report:** Daniel noted that the 2024 SRC Annual Report has been submitted, after a draft was shared with Commission members for their comment. The report is available on the SRC website, which is attached to the RVAGreen2050 website: [Richmond Sustainability & Resilience Commission \(SRC\) — RVAGreen 2050](#).

**Officer Elections:** Daniel then discussed that the SRC elects new officers for the year at its first meeting. He also noted that there potentially are several openings on the Commission later in 2025 and encouraged interested public participants to consider applying for a position on the Commission.

Daniel then noted that while he would be willing to serve another year as Chair, he welcomed nominations for any other Commission member to be nominated by someone else or themselves. With no other nominations, Daniel accepted the Commission's support to serve as Chair throughout 2025. Next, he requested nominations for SRC Secretary. Dave Evans nominated Christiane Reiderer, who accepted the nomination. She was unanimously approved by the members present. Current Vice Chair, Victor McKenzie, was unable to attend this meeting, and Daniel postponed nominations and voting on the Vice Chair until the next meeting.

**Mapping Historical Urban Resilience: The US South, 1815-1920:** Along with New Orleans and Charleston, SC, Richmond will be featured in a new study of historical urban resilience in Southern U.S. cities. Daniel recently met with the study principals and drafted and circulated in advance of the meeting a draft letter of support for this project. After brief discussion, Commission members endorsed the SRC submitting a letter of support, and promised to circulate a revised draft for any final input from the Commission.

**CARE (Community Access to Renewable Energy) Act:** The CARE Act refers to three separate bills that are pending before the Virginia General Assembly. Daniel facilitated a brief discussion of CARE, and asked if members thought that the Commission should write a letter of support for it. Members agreed to, with caveat that we don't know the details, while being very supportive of the presumed intent of the Act. Christiane Reiderer agreed to look into the CARE bills and draft a letter of support, to circulate for SRC comment. This will need to proceed quickly as the legislation is set for approval action on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **2025 SRC Priorities Discussion:**

- The first topic raised for discussion was a proposal for the City of Richmond to prepare a letter of **support for continuing** to work to achieve the goals of the **Paris Climate Accord**, despite announced plans by the Trump Administration to (again) remove the U.S. from the Paris Agreement. *Commission members support such a letter, and Daniel will provide updates on this to Commission members.*
- **Sustainable Design Standards:** one potential priority for the Commission is to work to support voluntary implementation of the SDS (that apply to the City's publicly funded infrastructure) for private construction projects. The Commission could support efforts to encourage such action, and may be able to identify incentives to foster their application. It was noted that the Diamond District buildout offers an excellent opportunity for broadly implementing the new standards.

- **Affordable Housing:** Christiane encouraged the Commission to consider ways to encourage development of deeply affordable housing (affordable to the those living in poverty). Many Richmond area religious institutions and other private organizations own land that could be used to build tiny home and other less expensive housing.
- **Youth Engagement with SRC/Sustainability:** Daniel opened a discussion of opportunities to support greater linkage of the SRC with younger Richmonders who are currently active/interested to support the City’s sustainability efforts. There was strong support among meeting participants to identify ways to encourage and foster synergy with existing groups and interested individuals.

**Office of Sustainability (OOS) Update:** Michael Smart, Tara Worden, and Daniel Klein stood in for Laura Thomas and highlighted several ongoing/upcoming activities by OOS:

- **Sustainability Guide Outreach:** Michael updated participants on efforts to take the OOS Sustainability presentation to community groups throughout the City. He thanked those who have already signed up to serve as “Ambassadors” and welcomed others in attendance to consider such a role.
- **Environmental Justice Event/Tours:** Michael also noted a February 7<sup>th</sup> EJ event (see RVAGreen website) and discussed the plans for EJ tours in several Richmond City Districts.
- **Waste Reduction:** Tara noted that in recent conversations, Mayor Avula has indicated that he supports enactment of a single-use plastic fee within the City. Stay tuned for more information on plans to address this in 2025.
- **RVAGreen Progress/Tracking:** Daniel Klein displayed pages on the website that allow the public to explore the City’s progress in implementing the many (approx.. 150) climate actions contained in RVAGreen2050. Also, the 2024 update of the City’s Greenhouse Gas inventory is posted, and he encouraged participants to look it over and share comments with OOS. Daniel also commended folks to look at “Cool the City” (the \$6 million USDA funded tree planting initiative) under the website’s “Programs” tab.

**Closing:** Daniel Hart closed the meeting at 5:30pm, after thanking Commission members and the public for their participation and many contributions to the meeting discussions.

## SRC Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 17th, 2025 – 4:00 - 5:30 pm

Richmond Public Library (101 E Franklin St), Gellman Room

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### Agenda:

- 4:00 pm**      **Call to Order** *Introduction of Commission Members*  
**Approval of Minutes**  
**Advocacy Items**
- **Mapping Historical Urban Resilience: The US South, 1815-1920** (Daniel)
    - *Letter of Endorsement Sent to Project Leads*
  - **Richmond ToolBank Request for Support** (Toby, Richmond ToolBank)
- Working Items**
- Sustainable Design Standards to non-municipally owned properties (Luis)
  - *Intersections w/ Affordable Housing* (Christiane)
  - *Integration w/ Neighborhood Associations* ( Abigail)
- Community Climate Collaborative: Energy Burden Study** (Maria)  
**Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability** (Tara/Jackson)  
**Community Updates & Announcements**  
**Upcoming SRC Meetings**  
9/22, 11/17; 4:00-5:30pm
- 5:30 pm**      **Closing and Looking Ahead**

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### Sustainability and Resilience Commission Members

**David Evans** (Secretary): At-large appointee (1st term ends 7/22/25)  
**Victor McKenzie** (Vice-Chair): Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 8/10/26)  
**Daniel Hart** ( Chair): Sustainability appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
**Christiane Riederer**: At-large appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
**Laura Thomas**: Director of OOS, City Employee appointee (n/a)  
**Luis Huertas**: Green Buildings appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
**Rob Jones**: Forestry appointee (1st term ends 10/26/26)  
**Harrison Wallace**: Environmental Protection appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
**Bill Nickerson**: Energy Efficiency appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/25)  
**Abigail Thompson**: Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 6/30/27)

#### Members Present:

David Evans, Daniel Hart, Christiane Riederer, Laura Thomas, Luis Huertas, Abigail Thompson, Victor McKenzie (virtually); Tara and Jackson from Office of Sustainability

#### Member Absent:

Laura Thomas, Rob Jones, Harrison Wallace, Bill Nickerson,

#### Public Attendees:

Lee Williams, Glen Bessa, Beth Krudadus, Daryl, Justin ( with the city), Steven McDunnough, McKenna,

Nathan Burren, Steve Marzuck, Denise Payne, Joe Braneoli, Kate Braswell, Carin Schifan, Sandra Obeng, Elian Williams...and others

**The meeting was called to order at [4:06pm].** Commission members introduced themselves.

## **NOTES:**

### **4:00 pm Call to Order by Daniel**

Daniel Introduced of Commission Members and mentioned reworking the room arrangement. Daniel just came back from work in Oregon where locals are inspired by work being done in Richmond. No quorum so no voting today (later NcKenzie joined on line and we were able to vote on letters and new officers)

Introduction of members. Call out to audience attendees to replace members rotating out this year. SRC Vice Chair Mckenzie has to step down. A vote for a new vice chair will happen at the end of the meeting. Daniel spoke of the commission as a space for community input, feedback and interaction with the city, community advocacy

## **ADVOCACY ITEMS**

### **Mapping Historical Urban Resilience: The US South, 1815-1920 (Daniel)**

Letter of Endorsement was sent to project Leads. The project was approved and will be moving forward looking at longitudinal resilience of cities - historical research - merging with the Richmond environmental quality index.

### **Richmond ToolBank Request for Support (Toby, Executive director of Richmond ToolBank)**

#### **Executive Summary**

The Richmond Community ToolBank is a non-profit organization that provides tools, equipment, and expertise to community-based organizations (CBOs) to empower their most ambitious goals. The ToolBank is seeking \$30,000 from the City of Richmond's Non-departmental Grants Program to support the Southside Neighborhood Tool Hub. This project will address the critical need for equitable access to tools and resources in the Southside, empowering residents and CBOs to shape their neighborhoods and improve their quality of life while directly supporting the implementation of RVA Green 2050. The Southside Tool Lending Satellite directly aligns with the Commission's responsibilities to support equitable sustainability efforts, recommend changes to city codes and regulations, and encourage sustainable community-led approaches. We are requesting that the Sustainability and Resilience Commission write a letter of support for our grant application by March 30, 2025.

**ToolBank's mission** is to serve community-based organizations by providing tools, equipment, and expertise to empower their most ambitious goals. The Richmond ToolBank has been serving the community for 10 years and in that time we've equipped 133,000 volunteers with nearly \$10 million in tools and equipment to complete 14,000 projects, directly impacting every neighborhood in the City.

**The ToolBank's flagship program** is Tools for Change, which provides affordable tool access and training to CBOs. The Southside Tool Lending Satellite will expand this program by neighborhood tool hubs in key locations within zip codes 23224, 23225, and 23234.

**About our Non-departmental Grant Proposal for Southside Tool Hub:**

The Southside Tool Lending Satellite will provide equitable access to essential tools and equipment in the Southside. The project will bolster community resilience and sustainability by strategically placing a mobile tool lending unit in key locations within zip codes 23224, 23225, and 23234. The legacy of disinvestment in Southside is still very much present in the physical landscape, health outcomes, and socioeconomic condition of Southside residents. This economic challenge of equitable tool access coupled with geographic barriers hinders CBOs and residents' ability to efficiently and effectively utilize ToolBank's powerful programs. Currently, approximately 50 CBOs in the Southside make numerous trips throughout the year to transport tools, contributing to wasted resources and greenhouse gas emissions.

**Project Benefit and Alignment with City Priorities**

The Southside Tool Lending Satellite will empower residents and CBOs with the physical tools, equipment, and training needed to shape their neighborhoods and improve their quality of life. The project strongly aligns with key recommendations and strategies of the RVAgreen 2025 Climate Equity Action Plan

**1. Community-level Action**

- RVA Green 2050 emphasizes the importance of community-level action in achieving the city's climate goals.
- The Southside Tool Lending Satellite directly supports this by empowering residents and CBOs to implement neighborhood-level adaptation and mitigation projects.

**2. Urban Greening**

- The plan highlights the need to expand the urban tree canopy and create more green spaces to combat urban heat islands and improve air quality.
- ToolBank currently serves nearly all of the CBOs included in a multimillion-dollar Urban and Community Forestry grant focused on Southside climate equity projects, among many others. The Southside Satellite will close the geographic gap and facilitate far greater efficiency in tool access and project execution.

**3. Reducing Transportation Emissions**

- RVA Green 2050 aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.
- The Southside Tool Lending Satellite will contribute to this goal by drastically reducing the number of vehicle trips required for CBOs to access tools, promoting a more sustainable approach to community development.

**4. Equitable Access to Resources**

- The plan emphasizes the importance of equitable access to resources and opportunities for all residents.
- The Southside Tool Lending Satellite directly addresses this by providing a neighborhood tool hub in key locations within Southside, ensuring that historically marginalized communities have the tools they need to shape their neighborhoods and improve their quality of life.

**5. Community Resilience**

- RVA Green 2050 aims to build community resilience to climate change impacts.
- The Southside Tool Lending Satellite will support this by equipping CBOs and

residents with the tools they need to implement projects that enhance climate resilience, such as expanding public parks, improving energy efficiency in homes, managing stormwater runoff, and developing new green infrastructure.

#### **6. Community Engagement**

- The plan highlights the importance of community engagement in developing and implementing climate action strategies.
- The Southside Tool Lending Satellite will foster community engagement by empowering many more residents, CBOs, and volunteers to participate in hands-on projects that improve their neighborhoods and contribute to the city's climate goals.

#### **7. Green Job Creation**

- RVA Green 2050 emphasizes the importance of building a green workforce and promoting green economic development.
- The Southside Tool Lending Satellite will directly contribute to this goal by creating 3-5 new green jobs at ToolBank, including positions related to program management, logistics, and community outreach.
- By providing CBOs with the tools and resources they need to expand their operations, the project will enable the creation of additional green jobs within these organizations.

#### **Request for Action:**

We request that the Sustainability and Resilience Commission submit a letter of support for our grant application. The letter should highlight the project's alignment with the Commission's responsibilities to consult with the Office of Sustainability to support the implementation of RVA Green 2050 and the positive impact it will have on the Southside community. Please send your letter to:

### **WORKING ITEMS**

- **Sustainable Design Standards to non-municipally owned properties (Luis)**

The City has adopted the design standards for city municipal buildings - now trying to get the larger community and contractors to comply with standards Earth Day Proclamation ( Daniel) . Richmond is looking at how other cities are implementing standards, also updating zoning into process. New update to building codes alternative to net zero waste is incorporated into process. Richmond will start training to certify staff, city workers on LEED standards. New LEED version 05. Current training is version 04, next year version 05.

- **Intersections w/ Affordable Housing (Christiane)**

Conversations with different groups on Wraparound sustainable community solutions including with Steven McDunough and his organization Profarms Gateway including a Aquaponics training center coming to center on Oliver Hill Parkway. Need to coordinate with entities in the agriculture based counties eg. Charles City where she met with La'Veesha Rollins on her farming operation under her organization, BLACC Barnetts Learning and Conceptual Complex. there including workforce development and sustainable agriculture and photovoltaic development. Integrating City and county partnerships.

- **Integration w/ Neighborhood Associations Sustainability workshops with the city (Abigail)**

Trying to connect to the city and city community centers and neighborhood associations. There

are some valuable resources with the city. Call out to fellow SRC members to help with outreach. The City's Office of Sustainability workshops through sustainability open access guide can sign up on the website and email Jackson directly through the website.

**Declare a Richmond City Earth day in Earth Month?** - draft shared letter for the city? Attendees were asked if that is a good idea or is this too performative? The city has developed a draft letter on if we as a commission want to sign on? followed by back and forth discussion with the audience.

### **Community Climate Collaborative (CCC): Energy Burden Study (Maria climate policy manager)**

**Link to slides:**

**[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGhnVnHlp0/3xwivt33WrpF1\\_R649akuQ/view?utm\\_content=DAGhnVnHlp0&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=viewer](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGhnVnHlp0/3xwivt33WrpF1_R649akuQ/view?utm_content=DAGhnVnHlp0&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=viewer)**

CCC started in Charlottesville - now also in Richmond. Direct Climate services and advocacy as well as audits. 100% local focusing on cities and counties.

Ongoing energy burden research study in partnership with office of sustainability. The CCC did a similar study in Charlottesville a few years ago. Richmond's study started - 6 months ago - focusing on energy burden - % of household costs spent on energy. if 6% or more of household income spent on energy is considered high burden. Energy burden one of many metrics to measure energy burden. but references energy insecurity effective for policy and advocacy work.

- identifying mapping - neighborhood level analysis, where highest in the city?
- key drivers of energy burden: Income, old house, single vs. multifamily residence, whether rent or own. - how this bounds up with housing costs. If we can reduce energy costs - can lower overall
- what solutions and changes are needed to reduce energy costs?
- need to understand histories
- RVA declared housing crisis in 2023 - energy costs continuing to rise, dominion rates up 20%,
- Cost burden = the amount of income spent on housing costs.
- ¼ of all owners in RVA are burdened, 50% of renters burdened increasing difficulty with rising cost of living.
- aging housing stock - causing significant increase in energy costs.
- ⅓ of all RVA household have an energy burden - one of the highest in the country and one of highest rates and disparities
- low income and renters tend to have most energy burden, public housing, trailer, black and brown communities
- report coming out in June
- concentrations: Southside, East End, parts of Monroe Ward, Jackson Ward, parts of Fan - VCU
- federal database no longer available - but data was downloaded ahead of time
- ways to get involved:
  - email climate collaborative, collaboration with different groups in the city like Sierra Club, cs, southside relief....
- Environmental justice coalition holding meeting in early April
- Survey is for city residents only. **climatecollaborative.org**

if anyone wants to give input please contact CCC and Maria. **policy@theclimatecollaborative, maria@theclimatecollaborative**

### Questions:

*Are impact costs of natural Gas included in study?* Not yet - wants to include into study influence/advocate for how city funding is used

*Is CCC working with the Weatherization assistance program?* no but other groups are

*Is there a commercial building element study?* - not yet, but work being done on by collaborating entities

### Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability (Tara/Jackson)

Earth Month committing up. *Africana Portland* - facilitating land lease for east end landfill. hope to meet July 1 implementation

Mayor Avula is ready to move forward on things that got stalled out in last administration :

- plastic bag tax
- polystyrene ban
- balloon release ban - also state level legislation

Everyone needs to email council members to implement board

language in Richmond 350, RVA GREEN 2050, Richmond Climate Emergency resolution

- plastic bag bans and tax/legislation in over 500 municipalities in 28 states already in place
  - 5 cent tax/bag revenue recommended to go to litter removal, enviro cleanup, education on recycling, and reusable bag fund
  - 3/2 split of tax for City/retailers
  - high end/low end income projections on high end \$2,5mill, low end \$??
  - 2024 report - plastic bans work circular economy hub - clear funding hub - money from tax goes to need council approval first.
  - Polystyrene ban - July 1st - starts with vendors; January bag tax will start
  - next July will be for all food vendors across city
  - exemption for business with financial hardships.
  - Balloon release band with exemptions for science
  - consumer education that they are aware they can not release balloons.. (educational campaign)
  - cities purchasing of products (coffee cups, etc - go away from plastic to compostable)
  - waste reduction ambassadors in house of government
  - special event permits will be required to follow eco waste stations etc.

City now knows this is a big community priority

Big ask for letter of endorsement of SRC .

Daniel - What about people on SNAP - are they exempt? no - not way its written now but hope to offset with reusable bag giveaways - but this is probably the biggest concern of city council that this may be seen as a regressive tax. the four items will be presented as different bills - NOT one omnibus.

how will revenue streams be decided? - environmental cleanup, education, snap, reusable bag giveaways

**Vote** by commission - yes for letter of support **Dave and Abigale** will draft letter in support of resolution.

**LATE QUORUM VOTE** - voted **Abigail Thompson as new Vice Chair of SRC**

Vick Mckenzie, Dave Evans, Luis Huertas, Abigail Thompson, Daniel Hart, Christiane Riederer, (all **aye**)

**COMMUNITY UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Laney Sullivan** - *Richmond Springs Collective* (facebook group) want to restore over 20 natural springs for climate resiliency and how to get conservation urban strategy for tree canopy preservation Fonticello food forest and Richmond springs Collective. been working with the city

Laney Sullivan

703-380-0877

fonticellofoodforest@gmail.com

**Daniel Hart and Christiane Riederer** will draft letter for

**Dave Evans** - RISC Nehemiah Action! Annual meeting Affordable housing, gun violence prevention, Annual gathering March 25th

6:30 - 8:30pm at St Paul's Baptist Church. 4247 Creighton RD

**Meeting Adjourned at 5:40**

**Next Meeting is: May 19, 2025**

# Richmond Sustainability & Resilience Commission

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Monday, May 19th, 2025 – 4:00 - 5:30 pm

Richmond Public Library (101 E Franklin St), Gellman Room

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## Agenda:

4:00 pm

**Call to Order** *Introduction of Commission Members*

**Approval of Minutes**

**Update on Policy and Advocacy Items of Support**

- [The Mapping Historical Urban Resilience Project Letter of Support](#) (Daniel)
- [Toolbank Funding Request Letter of Support to the City](#) (Daniel)
- [Advocacy support for the City's Waste Reduction and Diversion Initiatives](#) (Dave)
- [Support for the Richmond Springs Collective Initiative](#) (Christiane)

### Working Items

- Proposal Submittal Structure for Community Based Projects for SRC Endorsement ( Abigail )
- Sustainable Design Standards to non-municipally owned properties (Luis)
  - o Opportunities w/ Zoning Refresh (Abigail)

### Looking Ahead

- **HB2630Trees**; replacement during development process tree canopy fund.

### Local Advocacy Request

- Multiple community-based organizations are encouraging advocacy related to financial support for the City of Richmond's Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program (NCRG) for the upcoming FY.
- To learn more about this effort, please view [this link](#).

### Community Presentations

**BLACC** (La'Veesha Rollins)

**Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability** (Laura Thomas and Team)

**Community Updates & Announcements**

**Upcoming SRC Meetings**

7/21, 9/22, 11/17; 4:00-5:30pm

5:30 pm

**Closing and Looking Ahead**

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## Sustainability and Resilience Commission Members

**David Evans:** At-large appointee (1st term ends 7/22/25)

**Open :** Mayoral appointee

**Daniel Hart** ( Chair): Sustainability appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

**Abigail Thompson** (Vice Chair) Mayoral appointee

**Christiane Riederer**(Secretary): At-large appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

**Laura Thomas:** Director of OOS, City Employee appointee (n/a)

**Luis Huertas:** Green Buildings appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

**Rob Jones:** Forestry Appointee

**Harrison Wallace:** Environmental Protection appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

**Bill Nickerson:** Energy Efficiency appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/25)

**Members Present:**

David Evans, Christiane Riederer, Laura Thomas, Abigail Thompson, Rob Jones, Harrison Wallace, and Bill Nickerson,

**Member Absent:**

Daniel Hart, Luis Huertas

**Public Attendees:**

Jackson (from OOS) Shannon Macka, McKenna Dunbar, La'Veesha Rollins, Kate Braswell, Brook Betts, Bethany Mizelle, Qui Nguyen, Roy Jones, Susan Miller, Toby Vernon, and others...

**The meeting was called to order at [4:06pm]** by Abigail Thompson serving as Chair in place of Daniel Hart. Commission members introduced themselves.

**Notes:**

minutes approved.

**Advocacy Items**

**The Mapping Historical Urban Resilience Project Letter of Support**

letter submitted, update will be upcoming (Abigail speaking for Daniel)

**Toolbank Funding Request Letter of Support to the City**

letter submitted (Abigail speaking for Daniel)

**Advocacy support for the City's Waste Reduction and Diversion Initiatives** (Dave)

disposable bag tax 5 cents/bag beginning 1/1/26 - going to finance subcommittee on Wednesday - go to full adoption at end of month

**Support for the Richmond Springs Collective Initiative** (Christiane)

draft letter for for strategic way to go forward following feedback from DPU and Parks. Support for non potable usage and for irrigation of community gardens - but concerned about potential liability issues if safety for all uses were inferred by the public.

**Working Items**

- **Proposal Submittal Structure for Community Based Projects for SRC Endorsement** ( Abigail )  
proposal for link on web page for members of the public to send in proposals ahead of time - some form of mechanism for the website - by the city and the office of sustainability - feedback by Dave and Laura T. - help consolidate and centralize public input.

*Caution raised by Rob Jones -between digital and analogue - still having time for people to present at meetings if not digital. Members agreed time should continue to be reserved at the end of each Commission meeting for relevant public input.*

- **Sustainable Design Standards to non-municipally owned properties** (Luis)
- (Luis is not here but Abigail) proposed ways we as a commission and the office of sustainability can be more involved with influencing better environmentally sustainable standard for non municipally owned properties - maybe through 'city code (zoning) refresh'

*Equitable transportation committees are a good start being that they are the largest contributors of green house gasses. proposal for letter by commission.*

- *City's code hasn't been updated in 30 years? (Laura T) encouraged citizens to get involved*
- *A lot of working groups are just starting to meet- (currently a subgroup is meeting in a neighboring room) - community members are encouraged to come to meetings.*
- *Zoning Refresh (Abigail). This will be a very controversial action and public input is important. SRC could consider letter of support for opportunities to foster sustainability.*

## **Looking Ahead**

**HB2630 Trees;** *replacement during development process tree canopy fund. As a result of legislation passed at state level (introduced by delegate Willis) - allows localities to enact a tree canopy fund to help implement a tree bank. - this fund mandates if trees are taken out - trees have to be replaced or money put into the fund.*

- *source of revenue - Private developers : requiring private developments to pay into the fund or replace themselves.*
- *might also work as an incentive to not clear cut as well as 2. inspire the greater region - surrounding counties in tree canopy preservation.*
- *The measure is written with equity as a priority, and discretion to spend funds to improve equity.*
- *Office of Sustainability working with DPU + PDR making a review to get this forward.*
- *there are strict parameters for tree replacement with an updated species list - native or non invasive*

*other sustainability issues that need support are in a waste omnibus, which includes the proposed: plastic bag tax.*

## **Local Advocacy Request (Laura)**

- *Multiple community-based organizations are encouraging advocacy around the city's neighborhood climate resiliency grant program (NCRG) - financial support for the upcoming fiscal year.*
- *amount reduced from \$250 to 150,000 in 2026*
- *the people's budget: approx. trying to get 1% of the annual budget - had hoped for 3 million, but got \$1.7 million in the 2026 budget.*

## **Community Presentations**

### **C5 and Project BLACC (Barnetts Learning and Conceptual Complex) La'Veesha Rollins**

*presentation:*

**Project BLACC is:** *a workforce sector under the non profit Concerned Citizens of Charles City County (C5). Project BLACC specializes in developing workforce to support green sustainable building practices within rural and disadvantaged communities. Its focus is on the following 6 areas, Building Weatherization and Electrification, Environmental Monitoring, Electrical, Mechanical, Agriculture and Plumbing or BEEMAP for short.*

**Project BLACC is a comprehensive initiative focused on minority and rural communities. BLACC is dedicated to advancing sustainability and economic viability through integrated efforts in renewable**

energy, agriculture, waste management and workforce development. This includes the following sectors:

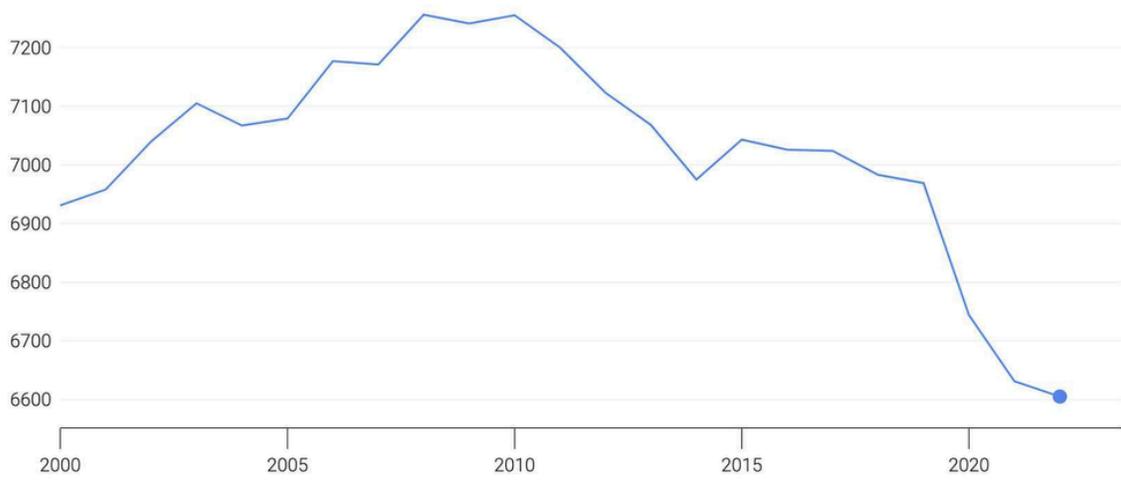
- *Solar Recycling Facility*
- *Sustainable Farming and Agricultural Composting*
- *Waste Reduction Initiatives*
- *Green Workforce Training to support Recycling Facility*
- *Charles City County, VA population ~6,900*
- *Charles City County and neighboring counties*
- *Lower median income than VA average*
- *Limited industrial and skilled trade infrastructure*
- *High potential for green workforce and clean*
- *Tech investment due to lack of infrastructure*
- *U.S. solar panel waste to exceed 10 million tons by 2050*
- *Virginia mandates 100% clean energy by 2045*
- *Recycling capacity lacking in the region*
- *Project BLACC will fill this critical infrastructure gap bringing in three phase power and conceptual R&D for energy.*

After learning of power plants being presented to Charles City County we realized that our lack of skilled labor and infrastructure made us a target for large industries. Learning about Charles City's history, this county was 80% black until a decline starting in 1980. Charles City history is based on a large population of freedmen slaves. After slavery a group called The Cooperative was a black economic system that was built on creating a circular economy for newly freed black residents.

Charles City County's racial demographics are not well known from the early to late 1900s due to limited available data. In 1900, the total population of Charles City County was recorded, but specific racial demographics were not detailed in the available census summaries. Similarly, the 1910 and 1920 census records provide overall population numbers without comprehensive racial breakdowns at the county level. However, some information is available for the 1870 census, which reported a total population of 4,921 in Charles City County. Of this number, 2,104 were described as Black, 1,018 as Mulatto, and 1,818 as White. This data provides a snapshot of the county's racial composition during that period.

# Charles City County, VA population from 2000 to 2022

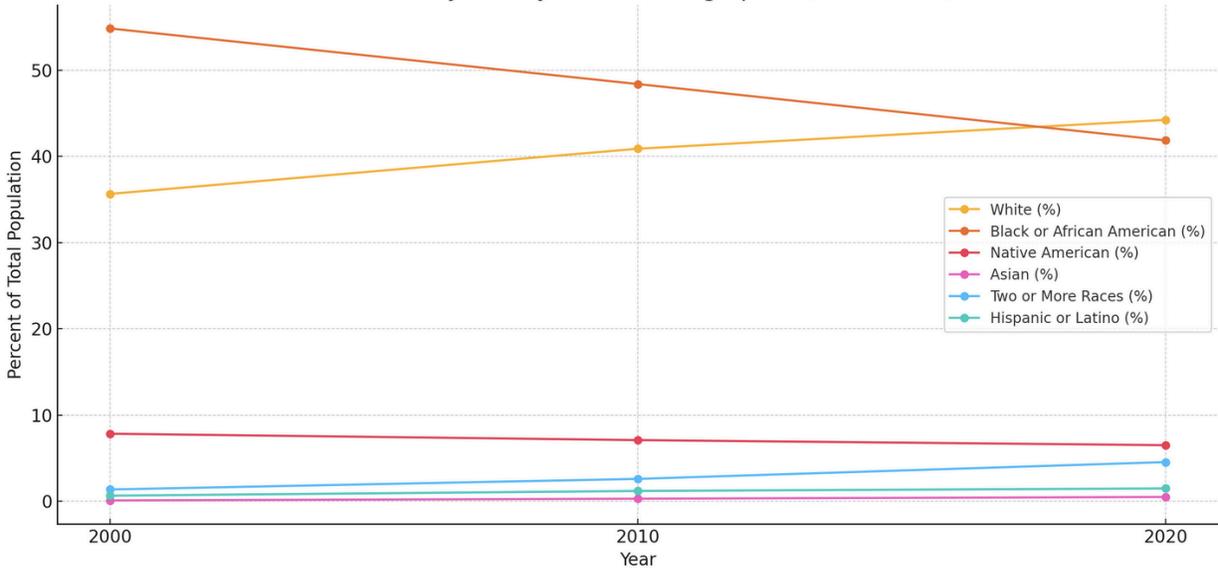
Charles City County had an official estimated population of 6,605 on July 1, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Population Estimates Program)



Charles City County Racial Demographics (2000–2020)



Over the past year we have accomplished:

- Integrated our program in Charles City High School
- Began our recycled solar & technology program recycling
- Increased our compost to 2 acres & vermicompost bin
- Finished our first workforce pre-apprenticeship program with 3 participants
- Installed a fleet of transportation to pickup large sites of solar with 2 semi trucks and 4 flat back transporters
- Farming increased with poultry livestock and increased our garlic production to 2 acres.
- Agri-voltaic Model concept currently under construction

**For 2025-2026 we have the following projections:**

- Expand our program in Charles City Public Schools
- Projected solar panels currently scheduled for pickup will be 15,000 by end of 2026
- Increase compost to 3 acres
- January 2026 2 workforce program 10 members with registered apprenticeship nd
- 30x96 greenhouse installed for year round production
- Increase garlic production to 5 acres
- General contracting partnership
- Agri-voltaics to increase to 1 acres for power distribution
- Increase Water Testing & Farming Volunteer Program

**We also are currently working to restore Barnetts Elementary School to be our headquarters to centralize our recycling and solar training facility to Charles City County, VA**

- We are focused on building on The Cooperatives basis of creating economic viability for Charles City County. The Construction on Barnetts school will include:
- 200+ construction jobs during buildout
- 16 full-time recycling jobs over 5 years
- 20–30 green workforce trainees annually, adults and recent high school graduates.
- 10 admin/logistics positions
- 1.5–2x multiplier in indirect local jobs
- Total: 500+ jobs influenced over 5 years

**How Can SRC and the Office of Sustainability Help?**

- We would love assistance in being included within the communities that the Community Foundation covers.
- Opportunity to recycle the cities decommissioned solar or electronic equipment. (ie. monitors, flat screen tvs,ipad)
- Become a vendor with the city for solar recycling and solar assessments.
- Partnership with the City of Richmond to find ways to assist in recycling electronic components within the city through research.

Charles City County was awarded two years straight the Enviro Justice Award and got additional funding as well as the first Donald McEachin award. Funding also through Emerald City and Dominion. Project BLACC is working with Suntribe solar installer. might be easier ask to get the community foundation to add Project BLACC as opposed to the whole region

## Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability (Laura Thomas and Team)

- on track for the waste facilities reduction Omnibus;
- the climate resiliency grant program moving forward
- (Mike Smart) - Environmental justice - pivoted not meeting people where they are. trying to do more than tours but partnering with organizations like Peter Paul. Need to get out of the echo chamber - build relationships hosting workshops in every area of city.
- Installing solar farm on east end - still working on legal language and training
- continuing on sustainable design standards and training City staff
- (SSDA) conference in Richmond for Sustainability offices around the country - hosted over 200 ppl from the southeast . It was a great opportunity to showcase Richmond and what we are doing.  
Participants were impressed by Richmonds connection with community organizations.  
So many other communities initiatives are being targeted and swarted by their (conservative) state governments
- Development on the Tiny Homes village (northside) - proposal before the city - about 40 units. being presented to council first residents will prioritize people who have been homeless for a year.
- importance of permit Refresh passing to help encourage implementation of design standards, encourage community input.
- Solar meadow - is still in the vetting process for the vendor.

## Community Updates & Announcements

(Mckenna) Va community voices: interested in coordinating work in southside initiatives with city of Richmond

(Qui Nguyen) with city Parks and Recreation

- new commission on Urban Forestry - next meeting at 5pm tomorrow in the same (Gelman) room.
- May 29 Talk/Reforestation event at Fonticello -½ talk QA and tour of sight - high density urban forests
- Richmond tree week in the fall - still looking for partners to host (go to Reforest Richmond Website) next meeting for vendors and last information session is on 6/6 at 11 am - comments from audience:
- on federal level - rescinding the def of harm on the endangered species act - very worrisome - today last day for comments.
- plug into Virginia Master Gardeners/Naturalists

## Upcoming SRC Meetings

7/21, 9/22, 11/17; 4:00-5:30 pm in the Gellman Room Richmond Public Library

**5:20 pm      Closing and Looking Ahead**

# Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission

Monday, July 21st, 2025 – 4:00 - 5:30 pm

Richmond Public Library (101 E Franklin St), Gellman Room

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## Agenda:

**4:00 pm Call to Order** *Introduction of Commission Members*

**Year to Date ReCap:** Policy and Advocacy Items of Support (*brief recap*)

- [The Mapping Historical Urban Resilience Project Letter of Support](#)
- [Toolbank Funding Request Letter of Support to the City](#)
- [Advocacy support for the City's Waste Reduction and Diversion Initiatives](#)
- [Support for the Richmond Springs Collective Initiative](#)

### Working Items

**FY 2027 Budget Support for OOS**

- increase NCRG to \$250,000
- FTE support for additional professional staff

**Charter Change** related to RGW (working w/ other commissions to encourage support for RGW to expand beyond methane)

**Water Resilience**

- Mayor's Office Outreach
- Public Utility Commission working w/ DPU
- SRC support of community-driven springs initiative

### Density and Code Refresh

A presentation from the Office of City Councilwoman Katherine Jordan

### Community Presentations

**FLIPP Inc.** (*Raye Elliot and McKenna Dunbar*)

### Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability (*Laura Thomas and Team*)

Cool the City Initiative , Waste Omnibus, Policy Items

### Community Updates & Announcements

### Upcoming SRC Meetings

9/22, 11/17; 4:00-5:30pm

**5:30 pm Closing and Looking Ahea**

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### Sustainability and Resilience Commission Members

Daniel Hart ( Chair): Sustainability appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

Abigail Thompson(Vice-Chair): Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 6/30/27)

Christiane Riederer(Secretary: At-large appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

Laura Thomas: Director of OOS, City Employee appointee (n/a)

Luis Huertas: Green Buildings appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

David Evans: At-large appointee (1st term ends 7/22/25)

Rob Jones: Forestry appointee (1st term ends 10/26/26)

Harrison Wallace: Environmental Protection appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

Bill Nickerson: Energy Efficiency appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/25)

**Members Present:**

Daniell Hart, David Evans, Christiane Riederer, Rob Jones, Harrison Wallace, Luis Huertas, Laura Thomas, Bill Nickerson

**Members Absent:**

Abigail Thompson

**Notes:**

**4:08 pm Call to Order**

*Grace and the Great Turning - poem by Joanna Macy (Daniel)*

Introduction of Commission Members

**Year to Date ReCap: Policy and Advocacy Items of Support (Daniel)**

***The Mapping Historical Urban Resilience Project Letter of Support*** with partners in England.

*Looking at longevity of spatial trends and demographic transitions between Cities in US South - Richmond Charleston, New Orleans city la holistic approach to resilience. England group will come sometime in Fall to Richmond.*

**Toolbank Funding Request Letter of Support to the City**

mostly in Southside

**Advocacy support for the City's Waste Reduction and Diversion Initiatives** Cities waste omnibus with Office of sustainability - plastic ban tax...

**Broader issue of water resilience** *Support for the Richmond Springs Collective Initiative*

**Need for a better conduit** for Richmond residents to connect with the commission - Office of Sustainability Jackson and Daniel K. are developing platform.

**Working Items (Daniel)**

**1. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Support for OOS**

**a. NCRG (Neighborhood Climate Resiliency Grant) to \$250,000** - has been reduced to 150,000  
Commission Vote in favor of boosting NCRG back to \$250,000 for fiscal year 2027 - unanimous **YES**.  
*Rob Jones* will write letter of support -

**b. FTE support** for additional professional staff at least 2 for Office of Sustainability 2027

Commission Vote for letter in support for additional professional staff - unanimous **YES**.

*Rob Jones* will write letter of support -

Tara clarified what needed to help meet needs for Green 2050 - need additional staff to meet goals of

**2. Charter Change** related to RGW (working w/ other commissions to encourage support for RGW to expand beyond methane) working with commissions change/add language in charter to let us move beyond methane

(Bill Nickerson) - called for more people to get involved in the *Public Utilities and Services Commission* - many positions are open. More audience participation needed as well. Thursday **September 18** next full Public Utilities and Services Commission meeting.

### 3. Water Resilience

- a. Mayor's Office public education outreach through the city's website.  
Also growing inter City/county coordination.
- b. Public Utility Commission working w/ DPU
- c. SRC support of community-driven springs initiative -process for liberating springs in city

### Community Presentations

*FLIPP Inc. (Raye Elliot and McKenna Dunbar) speakers did not show*

### Density and Code Refresh (Councilwoman Katherine Jordan 2nd district)

Jordan started on Green city commission before she ran for council. Jordan is calling out to get involved in committees by showing up to rezoning meetings. Approx 22% of Richmonders are following - too few - worried that average Richmonder not participating YIMBIES VS. NIMBIES

- 1) call out to participants to reaching out and getting neighbors and community groups to participate
  - 2) call to SRC to get involved - well situated to lean in with a point of view
- draft zoning map has been released recently interactive for community participation
  - zoning is so important for everything - way to have leverage over development, density, transportation etc.

### The Code Refresh process further explained by (Mary Anne Pitts department of planning Richmond 300)

- 10 general categories for different parts of city
- big changes to zoning (eg. no more single family zoning districts and lots of mixed use designations)
- zoning gets into details.
- looking less at lot area more at allotment, corridors
- main ask by participants is for walkability
- looking at patterns - trying to lesson need for special use permits.
- Draft: maps, districts, use provisions on line :  
[rva.gov/coderefresh](http://rva.gov/coderefresh)
- public can comment directly on the website until **September 10**. The collected information will be compiled into a proposal by as early as November
- working with zoning advisory council as consultants
- zoning meetings are held monthly - the 2nd Wednesday of the month
- need for participants in working groups in November to take 'deeper dive' into

(Daniel) asked about questions of equity in light of density components of code refresh - will be valued criteria ref, local ecology, culture, equity, contexts etc?

(David Evans) questioned - public communication challenge and public accessibility?

(Qui Nguyen) if you are not a property owner - why should you care and why should you be involved in process?

(Rob Jones) but if do not have money or accessibility for people to centers?

priorities affordability, accessibility of housing and walkability, accessibility to work but they are limited on requiring affordability

trying to get around this with incentives, and smaller affordable housing units

looking at zoning to be 2 single families and an adu - basically 3 units

Have calculations been done to address storm water management challenges that will come from increased density? and issues of permeable surfaces in larger developments.

(Daniel Klein) - updating zoning makes it cheaper to build by making process simpler - addresses supply issue

(Tara)DEQ is currently addressing stormwater management - with buy in program to address on a neighborhood scale instead of site by site basis

Request by ( Anne Pitts) for connections to more groups that they can present/ explain Code Fresh to to get more community involvement especially looking to get more people to the south of the river involved. asked for supplying presentation to commission

interactive map tool: atlas [rva.gov/coderefresh](http://rva.gov/coderefresh) access to interactive map.

or can email: [richmond300@rva.gov](mailto:richmond300@rva.gov)

### **Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability** (Tara Warden)

- In June Council passed the 5% Disposable plastic bag tax - \$400,000 revenue should come from in 1st year office is working on figuring out how the revenue should be used
- interested in Circular Economy momentum - ie. some biotech companies circular plastics reuse
- **Local Murf** - how we can capture \$ from waste management  
looking at other southern cities in particular Charlotte NC and Austin TX - who are leading the way with managing and monetising their waste streams
- received great press on Richmond **COOL KIT** (by Daniel Klein)  
25 strategies on cooling that can be pursued by business and residents alike
- Mike Smart - environmental justice tours - trying to build momentum in fall because summer too hot.
- **Tree canopy focus** following up on GA legislation that went into implementation in July - allowing all localities to be able to set tree canopy minimums between 20-10% - with minimum tree canopy - trying to include into new developments including fund that can be used by developers to offset carbon burden.
- City wide need for curbside charging in particular in highly dense areas
- **Cool to city updates:**  
in 1st year - partners planted 530 trees, graduated 27 people from ( urban green workers program?)  
Project funding still for 4 more years. (managed to avoid DODGE cuts so far.

how will sustainable design standards interact with Code Refresh? (Daniel)

- sustainable design standards (SDS) ,as they are currently worded, only apply to city funded projects at a certain threshold.
- working on trying to incorporate on incentive based programs for private developers because of Dillon Rule

(Bill Nickerson) - put in new plug for solid waste subcommittee of **public utilities commission** to bring question of how best to use funds from the plastic bag tax.

(lee williams) question?

- Is fully funded and adopted just not utilized much yet - just 1 request so far
- department of economic development sends out packages when new business project developments with all the incentives programs the city is involved with

### **Richmond Cool Kit** - cooling strategies for city of Richmond (Daniel Klein - Office of Sustainability)

just released the richmond Cool kit

#### 1.) **Urban heat Islands**

- impacts of: health, violent crime, infrastructure, business and industry - especially those working outside, environment, students and learning outcomes suffer

2.) **Extreme Heat** (number of consecutive days over 95) projected from 5 days over 100 in early century to over 36

days over 100 by late century

3.) this book is heat mitigation strategies, not heat management

**mitigation:** is cooling down the neighborhoods; **management** is responding to the heat to protect people  
mitigation: is planting trees, creating shade, making roofs white, depaving oversized parking lots,  
**management:** water bottle distribution, cooling centers, supplying fans etc.

scope of project - one of 136 actual items of RVA Green urban heat island reduction plan  
strategies that city and residents can apply.

- where do you cool down? Site Typologies:
- where people congregate - where they are going, where they are waiting hot spots, waiting spaces, corridors, intersections - how do we cool these spaces down

### Cooling Strategies

- urban greening
- smart surfaces
- shade - temporary and permanent  
taller buildings - shade street
- smart surfaces - lighter colors, cool roofs, cool infrastructure, cool pavements  
coated or permeable solar on green roofs....
- depaving impermeable pavements replace with green infrastructure, reimagining spaces

[rvagreen2050.com](http://rvagreen2050.com) - to find document

there are resources for people who want permeable surfaces payment programs and assistance for  
links in guides to different programs and grants on the rvagreen website.

(Daniel Hart) **Green infrastructure Resource Center** in Scottsville is a helpful resource.

## Community Updates & Announcements

updates from parks and req (Qui Nguyen)

- **Richmond Inspired** - master plan for parks in process of being created - community engagement looked for
- capital improvement projects -
- Bell Isle development
- call for volunteers for tree plantings
- social media or Parks and Rec page on [rva.gov](http://rva.gov) capital improvement projects
- forestry program **Richmond Tree week** [reforestrichmond.org](http://reforestrichmond.org)
- Walks  
all green spaces need help, caring for trees..

Environmental entrepreneur (Leslie Jarvos) **Go Green Auto Care** - Newport News

Rainwater harvesting Secure and sustainable water future - interested in rain to be a free and sustainable resource

HB192 - makes rainwater harvesting legal for everyone was passed out of the General Assembly last session.

[gogreenautocare.com](http://gogreenautocare.com)

re emphasized request for SRC to take up the Code Fresh push some more

### Upcoming SRC Meetings

9/22, 11/17; 4:00-5:30pm

# Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission

Monday, September 22nd, 2025 – 4:00 - 5:30 pm  
Richmond Public Library (101 E Franklin St), Gellman Room

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## Agenda:

### 4:00 pm Call to Order *Introduction of Commission Members*

#### Year to Date ReCap: Policy and Advocacy Items of Support *(Daniel)*

- [The Mapping Historical Urban Resilience Project Letter of Support](#)
- [Toolbank Funding Request Letter of Support to the City](#)
- [Advocacy support for the City's Waste Reduction and Diversion Initiatives](#)
- [Support for the Richmond Springs Collective Initiative](#)

#### Working Items

##### Commission Appointment Process and Structure: Challenges and Opportunities *(Daniel)*

##### Zoning Refresh / Urban Forestry *(Dave Evans)*

##### FY 2027 Budget Support for OOS *(Rob Jones)*

- Increase NCRG to \$250,000
- FTE support for additional professional staff

[Inter-Commission Collaboration](#), 10/14 at 7pm - SRC, Public Utilities Commission and Clean City Commission in dialogue through public forum at the Science Museum of Virginia, in Partnership *(Daniel)*

##### Year End Report *(Christiane)*

#### Community Presentations

[RPS Environmental Literacy Plan](#) *(Josh, Meredith, and Penelope)*

**SYNC project with VCC and GRTC** *(Graham Sheridan)*

**Richmond Tree Week** *(Qui)*

#### Updates from City of Richmond Office of Sustainability *(Mike Smart and Team)*

#### Community Updates & Announcements

#### Upcoming SRC Meetings

11/17;4:00-5:30pm

### 5:30 pm Closing and Looking Ahead

#### Sustainability and Resilience Commission Members

Daniel Hart ( Chair): Sustainability appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

Abigail Thompson(Vice-Chair): Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 6/30/27)

Christiane Riederer(Secretary: At-large appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

Laura Thomas: Director of OOS, City Employee appointee (n/a)

Luis Huertas: Green Buildings appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

David Evans: At-large appointee (1st term renewed 7/22/25)

Rob Jones: Forestry appointee (1st term ends 10/26/26)

Harrison Wallace: Environmental Protection appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)

Bill Nickerson: Energy Efficiency appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/25)

Vacant Seat -

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## Notes:

### 4:06 pm Call to Order

**Introduction to flow of meeting (Daniel):** intro of presenters Graham Sheredin of Va Clean Cities, working commission items and presenters of the RPS Environmental literacy plan, updates from office of sustainability, open discussion and questions

### Introduction of Commission Members:

#### Members Present:

Daniell Hart, David Evans, Christiane Riederer, Rob Jones, Harrison Wallace, Luis Huertas, Bill Nickerson

#### Members Absent:

Abigail Thompson, Lalura Thomas

(Daniel) acknowledged need to have better process for succession and appointments to the commission. Have met with City Clerck's office for more transparency and actual coordination and input from council members in the process for a better, broader representation of the city residents.

**October 14**, at the Science Museum - Dialogue with the public utilities commission, clean city commission in a convening by the Sierra Club to talk about What are the roles of the commission, how can community engage, how to build capacity around community social change and how might we work more cooperatively between commissions and better process and structure and longevity.

### Joint Project between Virginia Clean Cities and Dominion Energy

Graham Sheriden (Virginia clean cities) with Julie Manzari (Dominion Energy) - electric vehicle team and net meter solar and battery energy storage and education

- **Project SYNC** - electric transit route bringing electric charging to rural users sharing transit charging with private and public
- Trying to win over range anxiety especially in rural areas
- Also way to transition transit fleets
- Fed grant from DOE to service these projects
- Residential charging program



## What We Do

- Clean Cities and Communities is a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) partnership to advance clean transportation nationwide.
- More than 75 DOE-designated Clean Cities and Communities coalitions work locally in urban, suburban, and rural communities to strengthen the nation's environment, energy security, and economic prosperity.
- Virginia Clean Cities Coalition statewide technology integration – plan, connect, inform, deploy



2 Clean Cities and Communities

**Ease of adoption:** We want to make it easy for our customers to make the transition to electric as a fuel (ex. offering educational resources and outreach, partnership engagements like this project with VCC, policy support, and turn-key customer EV programs)

**Universal access to charging:** Making sure all customers and communities get the benefits of electric transportation, such as cleaner air quality (ex. focusing on things like ride share electrification, transit electrification, and electric school buses, which benefit all communities; EV Charging Access program provides no-cost installation for underserved communities)

**Supporting demand growth:** With EV adoption rising, that means more load and more electricity sales, and we want to make sure we're integrating that into our grid as responsibly as possible (ex. battery storage program, vehicle-to-grid with electric school bus batteries, demand response programs and time of use rate)

## What We Do

- Dominion Energy operates generation, transmission, and distribution systems to serve approximately 2.7 million electric customers located in approximately 30,000 square miles of Virginia and North Carolina.
- Our mission is to provide the **reliable, affordable, and increasingly clean** energy that powers our customers' every day.
- Dominion Energy's Electrification Team focuses on 3 key priorities that guide our plan to support a clean transportation future:

1. **Ease of Adoption**
2. **Universal Access to Charging**
3. **Supporting Demand Growth**



## Customer EV Programs



### Residential Charging Program

- We will install level 2 charging stations for customers in single-family homes with attached garages.
- Customers pay a \$40 fee per month on their bill

### Level 2 Charging Program

- We will install, own, and maintain level 2 charging stations for customers including businesses, workplaces, and MUDs.
- Customers receive a 50% upfront incentive on the EVSE make-ready and monthly on-bill payments for the remaining costs.

### Fleet Charging Program

- We will install, own, and maintain charging infrastructure for fleets.
- Customers receive a 50% upfront incentive on the EVSE make-ready and monthly on-bill payments for the remaining costs.

### Fleet Advisory Service

- Interactive tools to calculate the benefits of transitioning your fleet to electric
- Comprehensive fleet assessment options for larger fleet electrification



#### Smart

Guides, interactive tools, calculators, and incentives to support electrification.



#### Convenient

Monthly on-bill payments reduce upfront costs for EV charging infrastructure.



#### Equitable

No-cost charging solutions available to eligible customers in underserved areas.



#### Flexible

EV charging hardware and software options to meet specific customer needs.

Dominion Energy offers turn-key EV charger installation programs for residential and non-residential customers in Virginia

### Residential Charging Program:

- Provides a one-stop shop for your level 2 home charger installation where Dominion will handle each step of the process for you, and it offers convenient on-bill payments, and a 5-year warranty and support for maintenance

### Level 2 Charging Program:

- Make-ready program that provides installation and maintenance for Level 2 EV supply infrastructure (EVSI) and EV supply equipment (EVSE)
- Available to businesses, workplaces, parking areas, and multi-family communities
- 50% upfront incentive on EVSI with on-bill payments for remaining costs

### Fleet Charging Program and Advisory Services:

- Similar to L2 program - Provides Installation and maintenance for Level 2 or DCFC EV supply infrastructure (EVSI) and EV supply equipment (EVSE)
- Available to fleet customers
- 50% upfront incentive on EVSI with on-bill payments for remaining costs
- No-cost Fleet Advisory Services, Award-winning Fleet Electrification Guide, and other resources available



LED BY DOMINION ENERGY VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA CLEAN CITIES, BAY TRANSIT, JAUNT AND VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

Reservation and Restriction Capabilities	Affordable Access Pricing	Optimal Charging Locations	Additional Benefits and Barriers	Cost-Effectiveness

**Question:** how do you determine the charge rate for kilowatt hour for multi-family units as well as workplace environments?

Answer: (Level 2 charging program) works for both multi family as well as Business models

No recommended rate - recommend to look at what rate is or work out a monthly price - depends on site.

**Question:** Why for developing Richmond EV use - do you concentrate on rural areas?

Answer: Need anchor user as in Transit systems that go into rural areas - bring the chargers into rural areas by anchoring with the transit systems. Private cars can charge when transit vehicles are not charging.

**Question:** is grant for public or private property?

Answer: Mostly in retail type spaces (Grocery stores, shopping areas, doctors offices) but also government and public spaces.

(Graham )Vehicle exhaust is one of the biggest polluters of the bay. We need to *decarbonize grid*.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Expand **clean mobility** options for residents in areas served by Bay Aging housing and Jaunt ridership
2. Enhance residents' **access to essential services** such as healthcare, childcare, employment. And other services
3. Ensure **reliable and affordable access to EV charging** for both transit agency fleets and the public



**Concern about mature trees being taken down by private owners** (Dave) - hoping for better control over. Dave is seeing his area having trees taken down. With the rezoning work (code refresh) - need to refine proposal to allow increased density without taking down too many of the mature trees.

- (Harrison) How does balance with suburban sprawl into rural areas and the forest being taken down with that vs. the loss of mature trees in the city.
- (Daniel) We are in a unique situation in the commonwealth where cities are not meshed with counties as in most of rest of country
- (Dave) Maybe require a tree arborist for large tree take downs vs. tree preservation ordinance

**Office of Sustainability needs support from the council to counter the funding cuts to the grants program** (Jones) which was cut from 200,000 to 100,000

**Intercommission Collaboration October 14**, at the Science Museum (Daniel) reiterated from earlier

**Year End Report** (Christiane) in process

**Environmental Literacy Plan** - RPS school district wide plan

Presenters: Penelope Davenport - James River Association State of Virginia (?)  
Meredith Dash - Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Josh Bearman - Blue Sky Fund



## Guiding Questions for Today

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How can I use the ELP to advance students' understanding of climate action and climate equity, specific to the Richmond region?

How does the ELP support RVA2050's goals, and how can we use the ELP to drive toward those goals?

## Quick Summary & Key Partners

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### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Community driven
- Streamline efforts of partners
- Equitably distribute resources across the division
- Hyperlocal place based learning - promoting knowledge of ones watershed and ecosystem.

## What is an ELP and why does this matter?

An environmentally literate person “both individually and together with others, makes informed decisions concerning the environment; is willing to act on these decisions to improve the wellbeing of other individuals, societies, and the global environment, and participates in civic life.”

In RPS, we build environmental literacy through

- Science knowledge
- Environmental Justice knowledge
- Use of outdoor space as an all-the-time tool for all classroom teachers
- Local environmental knowledge, including close scrutiny of natural and built environments.

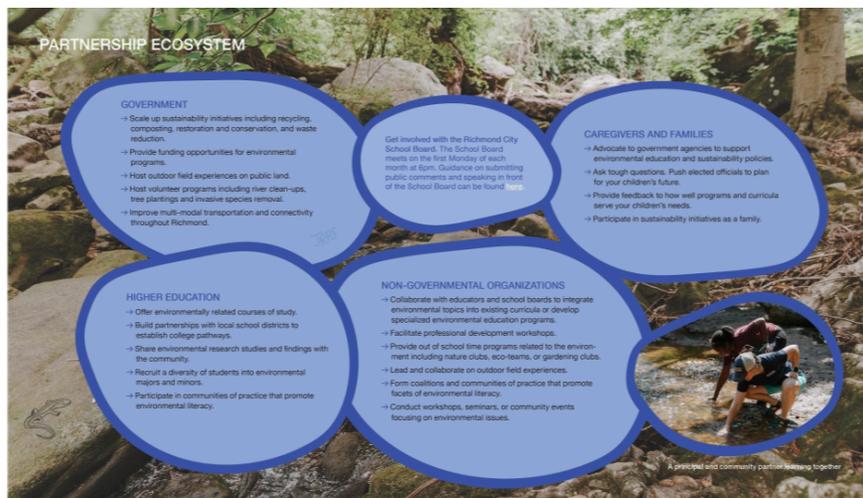


## ELP Goal 3: Partners

Goal 3: Collaborate with community partners to build upon existing learning opportunities for staff and students.

Objectives:

- a. Use a Community Partner Map to match schools with non formal educators in order to link out of classroom learning to in classroom learning. (Priority 2, Action 2.6, DREAMS4RPS)
- b. Align schools and partners equitably across the school district.
- c. Recognize and honor milestones resulting from collaboration with partners to foster a sense of pride and motivation within the school community.



## Status of ELP activities for 2025-26

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### JRPS

- Expanding and systematizing secondary field experiences
- Focus on Earth Science and 6th grade water quality monitoring



### Alliance

- Amelia St School accessible nature trail and learning nodes as a field venue



### Blue Sky Fund

- Supporting grades 3-12 with scientific skills of observation, questioning, and data gathering
- Partnership with Dr. Lanouette (W&M) to measure program effectiveness and connect data gathering to classroom learning



## Status of ELP activities for 2025-26

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### Chesapeake Bay Foundation

- Expanding and systematizing secondary field experiences
- Focus on Life Science and Earth Science watershed explorations (Middle School)



### James River Association

- Grants partner in K-12 science
- Focus on Environmental Science and Biology watershed explorations (High School)



### Shalom Farms

- Expanding and systematizing secondary field experiences
- Focus on Climate Resiliency & Ecological Sustainability with Environmental Science & Biology students (High School)



### Broad Water Innovations

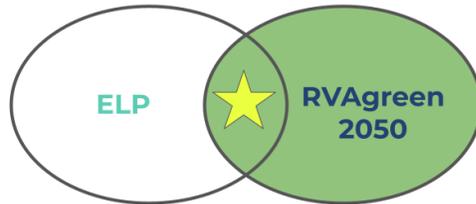
- Expanding the Careers in Conservation program with RPS AP Environmental Science students (High School)

## Think and Share

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From your point of view as an SRC member,

In what ways do you see the ELP goals overlapping with the goals for RVAgreen 2050: Climate Equity Action Plan 2030?



## How do I get involved?

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<p><b>Wendy Just</b> Instructional Specialist, Elementary Science K-5 wjjust@rvaschools.net</p>	<p>The collage features three distinct scenes. On the left, a man wearing sunglasses and a light blue shirt is smiling from a green metal bridge overlooking a river. On the right, a woman in a green dress stands on a dirt path in a lush, wooded area. In the foreground, the backs of several people are visible as they sit on wooden benches along the path.</p>
<p><b>Linda Tarry</b> Manager, Mathematics and Science ltarry@rvaschools.net</p>	
<p><b>Aimee Sobon</b> Instructional Specialist, Secondary Science asobon@rvaschools.net</p>	

*Contact:*

*Wendy Just, Linda Tarry, Aimee Sobon through Richmond Public Schools*

### Office of Sustainability updates

Michael Smart ( I was unable to hear very well and unfortunately recording is not audible)

- Sandra Jonson - new team member - new positions available
- Va Energy Resilience study
- 9/30 - community engagement session in Eastend (Hosted by Michael smart)
  - Potential solar farm on landfill
  - Other cost saving opportunities
  - C3- community
  - Grant program

Terry Winn(Sustainability manager - Code refresh)

- Need Development standards ( not in current code)- what it looks like  
Public comment is until 9/28
- Call for everyone to look at and engage with zoning map
  - Module 1 : how dense and where
  - Module 2: what it looks like? What are the requirements?

- State allows for If developers are physically unable to supply required tree canopy - can offset
- One goal is to have Most of city be residential with certain amount of mixed use as opposed to concentrations of standalone commercial areas.
- So far only around 380 users have provided comments online - need to have more voices to be more representative

#### Closing up - questions from group

- All comments will be collated into general feedback logs and how cities priorities can align with development, Green 2050 etc.
- The project is slated to be presented before the city council in spring.
- Critical to have broad feedback from public
- How can Council ( issues - Equity, justice, neighborhood historical context, green space) effectively weigh in and public as well? - This is currently the time for public comment weigh in

#### Daniel Cline speaking for (Qui Winn of DPU) about Richmond tree week - Reforest Richmond

- Richmond tree week 11/1- 11/8 - event series with multiple events including: Tree plantings, Tree giveaways, Book talks, Opening social
- Schedule still being finalized [reforestrichmond.org](http://reforestrichmond.org) - will be live early October

#### Community Updates & Announcements

- Second DEQ meeting coming up 10/08 at 5pm at springhill suites in Chester on proposed Chesterfield Gas Plant
- SCC meeting tomorrow 9/23 10am 1300 E Main Street  
To discuss community need for Chesterfield Gas plant and whether a certificate for community need should be granted. Wear Red T-shirts to show opposition to the Gas plant.
- Tax credits for EV's end in 18 days.
- Home energy improvements for solar run out end of year
- *Grow RVA and Cool City Coalition working with VCU students on city resiliency hubs looking at bus hubs and transportation corridors for tree plantings.*

#### Upcoming SRC Meetings

11/17;4:00-5:30pm

- Speaker - Richard Walker with Bridging the Gap
- Structural Issues work through

#### 5:30 pm Closing

#### Sustainability and Resilience Commission Members

Daniel Hart ( Chair): Sustainability appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/28)  
 Abigail Thompson(Vice-Chair): Mayoral appointee (1st term ends 6/30/27)  
 Christiane Riederer(Secretary: At-large appointee (1st term ends 10/25/25)  
 Mike Smart: Sustainability Manager of OOS, City Employee appointee (n/a)  
 Luis Huertas: Green Buildings appointee (1st term ends 10/25/28)  
 David Evans: At-large appointee (2nd term ends 7/22/28)  
 Rob Jones: Forestry appointee (1st term ends 10/26/26)  
 Harrison Wallace: Environmental Protection appointee (2nd term ends 10/25/28)



**Letter of Support for Research Grant Application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK (AHRC): Mapping Historical Urban Resilience: The US South, 1815-1920 (MHUR).**

This letter is to confirm the support of the City of Richmond, Virginia, Sustainability and Resilience Commission (RSRC) for this grant application led by Project Lead, Professor David Gleeson, of Northumbria University. We are pleased to become a partner to MHUR. The RSRC is a public commission tasked with advancing climate action in the city as part of its RVAgreen2050 initiative and it collaborates with the Richmond Office Sustainability to implement its Climate Equity Action Plan. We have a particular focus on actual and potential climate changes on marginalized and under-represented communities throughout the metro Richmond area.

In kind support for this project, involving time of the Commissioners, consultation and support over the life of the project, including providing the opportunity to have the project presented at an SRC meeting is approximated at \$1,500.

We believe that MHUR's production of a free-to-use Visual Urban Archive (VUA) featuring Richmond, along with an accompanying GeoAI mapping toolkit aimed at public officials, will support our plans for climate-change mitigation by indicating, in an easy-to-understand way, how this historically important city has dealt with resilience issues in the past. For example, we are planning for the future reality of many people having to leave Virginia's coast due to climate change and moving to Richmond. After the US Civil War, for example, the city saw a similar rapid and substantial rise in population as many emancipated African Americans came to seek their fortunes and express their independence in the state's largest city. Visualising easily how the city authorities and its citizens, both old and new, dealt with this population growth could create interesting lessons for current and future resiliency plans.

We agree to work with MHUR to host a launch event for its VUA in Richmond at a RSRC Meeting (which are open to the public) and provide space and time to support it. We will also commit time to working with the MHUR team as the project progresses and have them speak to the Commission, and other relevant city staff, with updates when any MHUR member is in the city conducting research.

We look forward to working with MHUR on this important project.

Sincerely,

*The Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission*



**April 15, 2025**

**Le'Charn Benton**

Office of the DCAO for Human Services 900 East Broad Street, Room 501 Richmond, Virginia  
23219 HSNondepartmentals@rva.gov

**Subject: Letter of Support for Richmond Community ToolBank Grant Applications**

Dear Ms. Benton,

On behalf of the Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission ("Commission"), we are writing to express our support for the Richmond Community ToolBank's grant applications to the City of Richmond's Non-departmental Grants Program. We specifically endorse their requests for the Southside Tool Lending Satellite and the RVA ToolBOX program.

Richmond ToolBank has proven itself a vital community asset since its founding in 2015. Over the last decade, it has equipped numerous volunteers and organizations, lending nearly \$10 million worth of tools for thousands of projects. Over the past three years alone (2022-2024), ToolBank lent approximately 90,000 tools, supported over 5,000 community projects led by more than 400 unique community-based organizations ("CBO"), and generated over \$3 million in direct cost savings for the local nonprofit sector.

The ToolBank's proposed initiatives build on this impactful history and align directly with the Commission's work supporting the implementation of RVA Green 2050 and promoting equitable, community-driven sustainability.

**Alignment with RVA Green 2050 & Sustainability Goals:**

Both the Southside Satellite and RVA ToolBOX proposals directly support key strategies within the RVAgreen 2050 Climate Equity Action Plan, including:

- **Community-Level Action & Resilience:** These programs empower residents and CBOs to undertake neighborhood adaptation and mitigation projects. The ToolBank anticipates enabling approximately 1,900 community improvement projects in 2026 by lending around 35,000 tools. The Southside Satellite equips CBOs for resilience projects like park expansions and green infrastructure, while ToolBOX empowers residents to implement solutions at home.

- **Urban Greening & Green Infrastructure:** The ToolBank already supports CBOs involved in major Southside urban forestry and climate equity projects. The Southside Satellite will enhance these efforts by improving tool access. RVA ToolBOX provides residents with training and resources to implement residential green infrastructure like rain gardens and permeable pavers, managing stormwater runoff.
- **Reducing Transportation Emissions:** The Southside Satellite, located strategically at Broad Rock Park, will significantly reduce vehicle trips and associated emissions for Southside CBOs currently traveling long distances for tools.
- **Energy Efficiency:** RVA ToolBOX will offer workshops and tools focused on residential energy-saving DIY projects, such as weatherization and insulation, helping residents reduce energy consumption and costs.
- **Community Engagement:** Both programs foster community engagement by enabling more residents and volunteers (an estimated 30,000+ tool users equipped in 2026) to participate in hands-on neighborhood improvement projects.

### **Economic Impact**

Beyond its environmental contributions, the Richmond ToolBank functions as a powerful economic engine, amplifying the value of community investments and driving significant financial benefits throughout the City. Its model provides crucial leverage for nonprofits and volunteers, creating ripple effects that strengthen Richmond's overall economic health in the following ways:

**Nonprofit Cost Savings—** By lending tools for a fraction of their retail value (6%), ToolBank saves CBOs substantial funds. Since 2015, this has amounted to over \$10 million in savings, allowing nonprofits to reinvest in vital community services. In 2026, ToolBank anticipates generating over \$1.1 million in direct cost savings for CBOs.

**Volunteer Leverage—** ToolBank maximizes the impact of volunteer efforts. In 2024 alone, volunteers using ToolBank tools contributed labor valued at an estimated \$1.24 million. Projections for 2026 estimate this leveraged value will reach \$1.5 million.

**Green Job Creation—** The Southside Satellite project is expected to directly create 3-5 new green jobs at the ToolBank in the first two years and support further job creation within partner CBOs.

**Housing Stability—** The RVA ToolBOX program promotes housing stability and economic mobility by empowering residents with affordable home maintenance skills and tools, preventing costly deferred maintenance and possible unwanted displacement.

### **Southside Investment & Equity**

These ToolBank initiatives are precisely the type of strategic investments needed to fulfill the City's commitment to empowering residents and strengthening community organizations in Southside. They move beyond planning to provide tangible resources and skills development,

ensuring residents and CBOs have the necessary tools to build the resilient, thriving communities they envision. Advancing equity is fundamental.

The Southside Neighborhood Tool Hub directly confronts the legacy of disinvestment by establishing a neighborhood tool hub in zip codes 23224, 23225, and 23234. This strategically reduces geographic and economic barriers, providing equitable access to essential resources for Southside CBOs and residents.

RVA ToolBOX prioritizes inclusivity, offering workshops on a "pay-what-you-can" basis and partnering to bring training directly into low-resource neighborhoods. This program aims to empower at least 840 residents in 2026 with practical skills.

The Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission firmly believes that the Southside Neighborhood Tool Hub and RVA ToolBOX program represent strategic investments towards a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable Richmond. They provide tangible tools and training that empower community-led implementation of RVA Green 2050 goals.

We strongly endorse the Richmond Community ToolBank's grant applications and urge their approval. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission*



April 7, 2025

Matt Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff  
City of Richmond  
900 E. Broad St.  
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: *Letter of Support for Disposable Plastic Bag Tax for the City of Richmond*

Dear Mr. Slaats,

This letter conveys the support of the City of Richmond's Sustainability and Resilience Commission ("SRC") for the Disposable Plastic Bag Tax that will be introduced during the April 28, 2025, City Council meeting.

The SRC is a public commission tasked with advancing climate action in the City as part of its RVAgreen2050 initiative and collaborates with the Richmond Office of Sustainability ("Office") on its Climate Equity Action Plan. The Office has worked diligently with City officials, waste reduction experts, residents, businesses, and the SRC to implement these initiatives in a thoughtful and equitable manner. To that end, SRC fully supports the proposed ordinance to implement a Disposable Plastic Bag Tax. This policy initiative was identified as an action item in Richmond 300, RVAgreen2050, and the Climate Emergency Resolution passed by Council in 2021.

The **Disposable Plastic Bag Tax** is a 5 cent/bag tax that will apply to all plastic bags provided by grocery, convenience and pharmacy stores beginning January 1, 2026. Revenue generated will support environmental education, cleanup projects, and provide reusable bags to City residents receiving SNAP or WIC benefits. The policy proposes a revenue split with retailers. The estimated cost to residents is \$2.12/year.

City staff propose conducting rigorous outreach to community members and businesses in advance of the tax taking effect. We believe that the six-month outreach schedule will allow ample time for businesses and community members to prepare for the introduction of the new tax. During this time, staff will also conduct an education campaign to businesses and consumers on the statewide **polystyrene ban** and the statewide **balloon ban**. Unlike the plastic bag tax, these two measures are already established by state law and do not require local adoption, though local education and enforcement efforts will be important for their success. Together, these waste reduction initiatives aim to measurably reduce plastic and polystyrene waste that either ends up in our landfills or detracts from the City's beauty as unsightly and long-lasting roadside and waterbody litter. The substitution of reusable, recyclable or

compostable alternatives directly supports RVAGreen2050's goal of fostering a sustainable RVA community by reducing waste

-2-

streams. In addition, reinvesting the bag tax revenues in environmental improvements in disadvantaged communities within Richmond and providing reusable bags for low-income residents will further the environmental justice goals of RVAGreen2050.

We strongly support the Disposable Plastic Bag Tax and are hopeful that it will be enacted by City Council.

Sincerely,

*The Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission*



April 18, 2025

**To: Richmond Springs Collective**

Re: *Letter of Support for Petition to Reopen Richmond's Historic Springs*

This letter conveys the support of the City of Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission ("SRC") for the [Richmond Springs Collective's Petition to Reopen Richmond's Historic Springs](#).

The SRC is a public commission tasked with advancing climate action in the City as part of its RVAgreen2050 initiative and collaborates with the Richmond Office of Sustainability ("Office") on its Climate Equity Action Plan.

Considering the SRC's focus on supporting sustainability and resilience in the City of Richmond and in light of some of the disturbance to regional water availability at the beginning of 2025, the SRC endorses the Springs Collective's community-driven work in supporting the re-opening of Richmond's historical springs and would request that the City evaluate opportunities around reopening the springs outlined in the petitioner's request in alignment with Park and Recreation planning should the water quality meet standards for drinking water in alignment with the City of Richmond's best practices.

From the Petition: *"The Historic Springs are more than just a relic of the past; they are a valuable natural resource with the potential to serve residents once again. Historically, these springs provided essential water to our community, and with proper restoration, they could do so today—offering accessible water for non-potable uses such as flushing toilets, cleaning, and other daily needs, particularly in times of crisis."*

Through supporting this petition, the SRC supports *"this initiative and calls upon city leaders to prioritize the reopening and revitalization of Richmond's Historic Springs for the benefit of current and future generations."*

Sincerely,

*The Richmond Sustainability and Resilience Commission*



**Richmond Sustainability  
and Resilience Commission**  
2025 Annual Report