



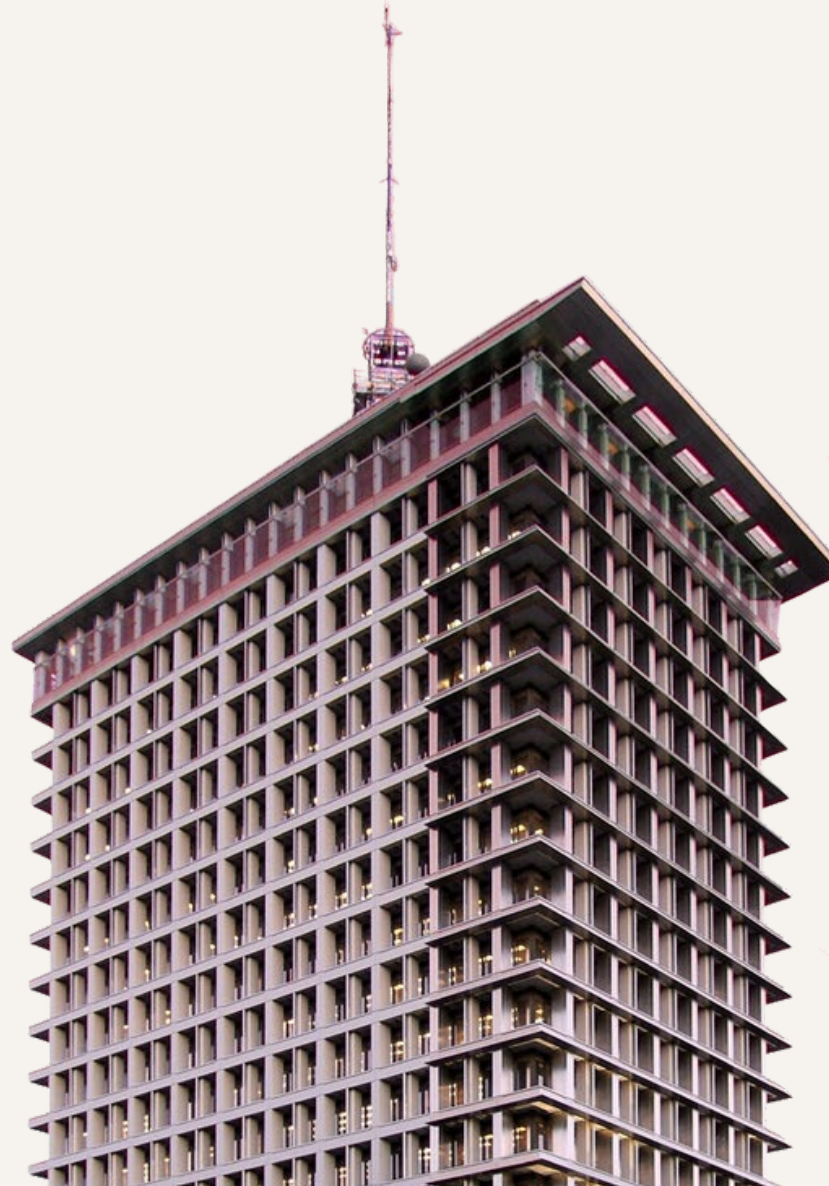
**Richmond City Council**

*The Voice of the People*

*Richmond, Virginia*

# Budget Review Task Force

Collaborative Budgeting for a Stronger Richmond



RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL  
CHIEF OF STAFF'S OFFICE

SEPTEMBER 2, 2025

# Summary and Membership

Following the successful FY 2025-2026 budget adoption, City Council and the Administration identified opportunities to improve the City's budget process.

## City Council

- Vice President Katherine Jordan (Co-Lead)
- Finance Chair Ellen Robertson (Co-Lead)
- Council Chief of Staff RJ Warren
- Supporting Council Staff

## City Administration

- Chief Administrative Officer Odie Donald, II
- Mayor's Chief of Staff Lawson Wijesooriya
- Mayor's Senior Policy Strategist Thad Williamson
- Meghan Brown, Director of Budget & Strategic Planning
- Supporting City Administration Staff

# Opportunities for Enhancement

## Process Timing and Structural

- Enhancing review time:** Extending the timeline could enable more thorough and meaningful Council review
- Strengthening early collaboration:** Increasing opportunities for collaborative dialogue between parties could improve the process
- Expanding the schedule:** A more generous timeline would allow for comprehensive Administration review of Council questions
- Supporting informed decisions:** Providing additional time for Council review of Administration responses could improve decision-making quality

## Operational

- Council Budget Work Sessions:** Opportunities exist to enhance the structure and organization of Council Budget Work Sessions
- Standardizing Procedures:** Implementing consistent amendment processes could reduce confusion and improve clarity
- Expanding public input:** There's potential to create more robust opportunities for community engagement on budget priorities and Council amendments

# Reform Recommendations

Early Collaboration	Conduct September kickoff ceremony, facilitated December priority meeting, joint resolution
Restructured Timeline	<b>16-day advancement</b> - Move Mayor's budget submission to the Wednesday following the first Formal Council meeting
Efficient Work Sessions	Organize around <b>4 DCAO portfolios</b> : Operations, Finance & Admin, Planning & Economic Development, Human Services
Standardized Amendments	Implement priority voting system and sequential approach
Enhanced Public Engagement	Schedule additional public hearing focused on Council amendments during Formal meetings
Annual Review	Reconvene Task Force annually for continuous improvement



# Early Collaboration

Early collaboration through structured meetings and public engagement opportunities to create a more transparent and collaborative process

## **September Public Budget Kickoff -**

Public launch event with early district priority submissions to integrate community concerns into citywide planning

## **December Facilitated Priority Meeting -**

Neutral third-party facilitated session to establish 5-7 shared priorities through joint Council-Mayor resolution with required public hearing

## **January-February Public Engagement**

- Mayor-hosted town halls for additional input, plus comprehensive timeline distribution and earlier legislative priority coordination



# Timeline Restructuring

March 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			11			
	23				27	

## New Budget Submission

Wednesday following first Formal Council meeting – March 11, 2026

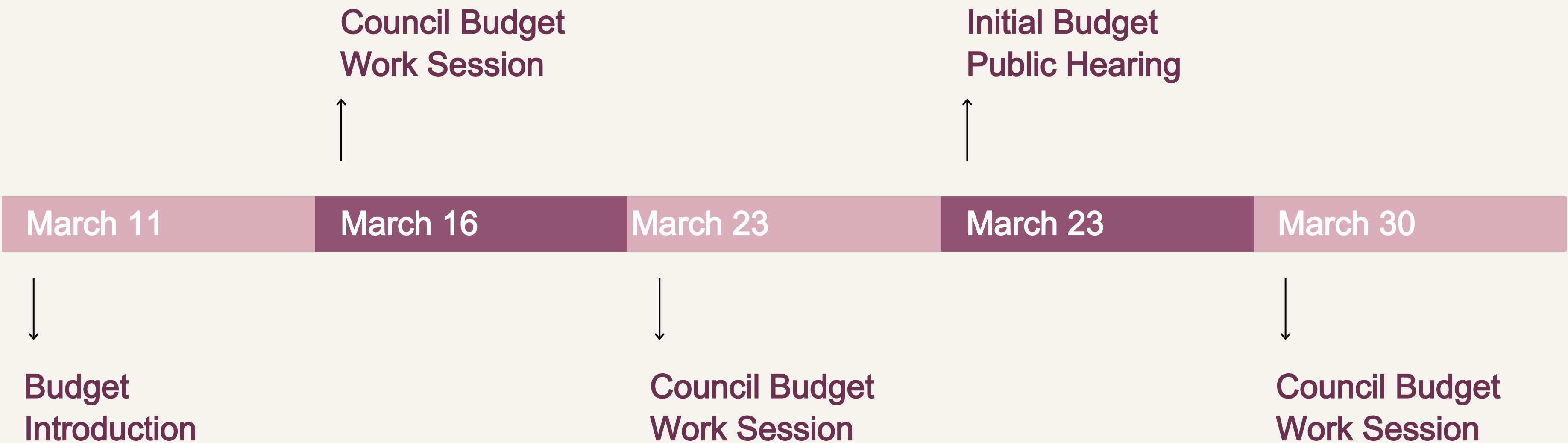
## Special Meeting

Mayor’s Budget Presentation  
CAO remains for detailed Q&A

## Public Hearings

New timeline allows for earlier initial public hearing and public hearing on proposed Council amendments

# Budget Review Timeline



# Budget Review Timeline, Continued

Council Proposed  
Amendments Due

Council Budget  
Work Session



April 6

April 8 (Proposed)

April 13

April 20

April 22



Council Budget  
Work Session



Proposed Council  
Amendment  
Public Hearing



Council Budget  
Work Session





# Budget Review Timeline Finish Line



# Implementation Strategy



Immediate Action	Short -Term	Annual Review
↓	↓	↓
<b>Legislation</b>	<b>Documentation</b>	<b>Post -Budget Action</b>
Upon Council consensus, Council staff will begin drafting the necessary ordinance to establish March 11, 2026, special meeting for budget introduction.	Council staff will develop comprehensive budget procedures and coordinate with the Chief Administrative Officer to schedule the December joint budget priority meeting to improve consistency and inter-governmental cooperation.	The task force will reconvene annually after budget adoption to assess progress and identify improvements, demonstrating the City's commitment to effective governance and fiscal responsibility.

# Outstanding Consideration

## RPS Funding Formula

Res. No. 2025-R023, To request the CAO establish a work group with Richmond Public Schools to develop a funding formula for annual school operating expenses, implemented in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

## Department -Level Budget Requests

Ord. No. 2025-100, To amend City Code to require publication of agency-level budget requests alongside a side-by-side comparison with the Mayor's proposed budget.

## Non - Departmental

City Administration plans to restructure the city’s non-departmental grant process prior to Fiscal Year 2027.

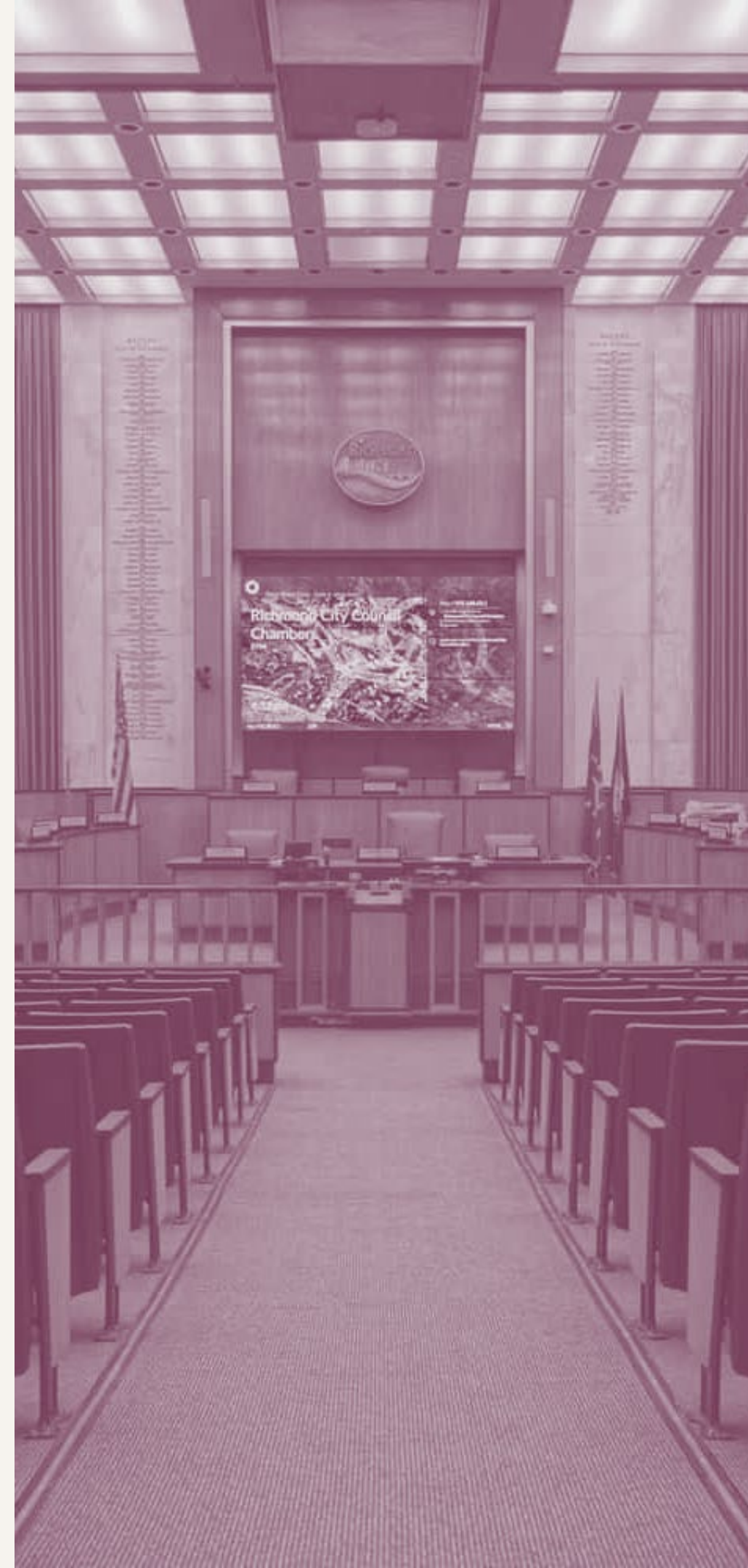
# Conclusion and Future Direction

The task force's recommendations establish a foundation for transparent, efficient, and collaborative budget processes that better serve Richmond residents through enhanced collaboration, structured procedures, and meaningful public engagement.

**Extended Timeline for Better Review** - Mayor's budget submission moves 16 days earlier to allow sufficient time for thorough Council analysis and Administration responses, replacing the previous compressed schedule that compromised decision-making quality.

**Structured Work Sessions and Amendment Process** - Budget work sessions will be reorganized around Deputy CAO portfolios with standardized amendment procedures, eliminating current inefficiencies and confusion while ensuring comprehensive review of all city functions.

**Enhanced Early Collaboration** - New framework includes September public kickoff, December facilitated priority-setting meeting, and January-February town halls, creating meaningful public engagement opportunities and shared priorities between Council and Mayor from the start.



# Thank you