



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk

DRAFT Meeting Minutes **Land Use, Housing and Transportation** **Standing Committee**

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

3:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee Members and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Nicole Jones – Chair
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Vice Chair
The Honorable Andrew Breton – Member
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Vice President (late arrival and early departure)
The Honorable Reva Trammell – Councilmember (late arrival and early departure)
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Councilmember (late arrival and early departure via Microsoft Teams)

Staff and Others in Attendance

Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk
Sophie McGinley, Council Policy Analyst
Nahdiah Muhammad, Assistant City Clerk
William Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Danielle Smith, Assistant City Attorney

Call to Order

Chair Nicole Jones called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Nahdiah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the minutes of the March 17, 2026 committee meeting, and the minutes were approved as presented.

[CD.2026.090](#) March 17, 2026 - Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, reviewed board vacancies and applications for consideration by the committee.

[CD.2026.104](#) April 21, 2026 - Land Use, Housing and Transportation Board Vacancy Report

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson moved to forward the following board appointment application to Council with a recommendation to approve, and to continue consideration of appointment applications for the Board of Commissioners of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority to the July 21, 2026, Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee meeting. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved

Commission of Architectural Review:
Daniel Payne

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following resolution was considered:

1. [RES. 2026-R003](#) To commit to working with the City's Administration to [development and implement] develop a [comprehensive] City-wide energy efficiency program that [reduces the] advances equitable reductions in energy burden [and cost of living for vulnerable households, supports small businesses, assists in the preservation of housing and the stabilization of neighborhoods, and makes meaningful], accelerates progress [towards the City's climate goals] toward Richmond's 2050 net-zero goals, and institutionalizes interdepartmental coordination across housing, utilities, and community development. (As Amended)

Patrons: Ms. Lynch, Mr. Breton, Vice President Jordan, Ms. Abubaker, Ms. Gibson and President Newbille

Laura Thomas, Director of the Office of Sustainability, provided an introduction of the proposed legislation, stating that the department supports the proposed amendments to the resolution. Ms. Thomas noted that staff reviewed Council's request and addressed deficit based language, and incorporated specific examples within the resolution that reflect its core objectives. She further noted that a 180-day response period is proposed to allow staff to develop and present a framework for such reports.

Vice President Katherine Jordan arrived at 3:11 p.m., and was seated.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Councilor Reva Trammell arrived at 3:13 p.m., and was seated.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson requested a comprehensive review of the city's housing initiatives as part of the ongoing revision of the housing plan. She emphasized the need to ensure that resources and programming are effectively coordinated and leveraged, and that the plan provides a centralized framework outlining program components and associated funding. She further indicated that a follow-up request would be made to the housing and community development stakeholders to incorporate the review into the broader effort to revise the existing housing plan.

Ms. Thomas stated that she would pass the request along to the appropriate parties. She noted that, as part of the vetting process for the item before the council, staff intentionally coordinated across multiple agencies, including Public Works, Public Utilities, the Office of Sustainability, the Office of Community Wealth Building, and Housing and Community Development. She explained that all parties reviewed and provided input, reflecting a whole government approach to achieving shared goals.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Member Andrew Breton moved to forward RES. 2026-R003 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinance was considered:

2. [ORD. 2026-088](#) To amend City Code § 27-197, concerning parking prohibitions in specified places, for the purpose of clarifying the definition of the term "bicycle lane" and authorizing certain emergency medical services providers to move vehicles from prohibited areas.

Patrons: Vice President Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Jones, Mr. Breton and Ms. Lynch

Vice President Katherine Jordan provided an introduction and brief overview of the proposed ordinance, stating that a 2023 recommendation from the Safe and Healthy Streets Commission, clarified that bicycle lane buffer areas are included in parking prohibitions. She noted that the proposed ordinance addresses safety concerns from vehicles parking in buffer zones, aligns City Code with state and federal guidance, authorizes Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to relocate vehicles when necessary, and has a minimal fiscal impact focused on education and enforcement clarity.

Public Hearing

John Barkley spoke in support of the proposed ordinance, citing safety concerns from vehicles encroaching into bike lanes and buffer areas. He stated that the measure would improve enforcement of these hazards and urged its approval for cyclist safety.

Louise Lockett Gordon, Chair of the Richmond City Safe and Healthy Streets Commission, spoke in support of the proposed ordinance, noting that including buffer zones in bike lane protections helps prevent "dooring" incidents and improves cyclist safety. She also stated that buffer zones support road diet strategies that can reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety for walking, biking, and transit use.

Chair Nicole Jones asked whether the locations for implementing buffer zones across the City have been identified.

Daniel Wagner, Traffic Operations Engineer with the Department of Public Works, stated that implementation will include coordination with parking enforcement contractors and training to ensure they understand that buffer zones are included within prohibited parking areas. He noted potential priority areas for enforcement, including Franklin Street bike lanes, as well as upcoming or expanding bicycle facilities in Southside, such as Hopkins Road, the James River Branch Trail, and Westover Hills Boulevard.

Chair Jones requested that city administration keep the council informed regarding implementation of the proposed ordinance.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson requested that designated pull-off areas in school zones that are adjacent to bike lanes, should be identified when considering transportation safety related infrastructure changes.

Member Andrew Breton stated that enforcement and use of roadway space should be considered, noting that not all bike lanes are necessarily appropriate in every situation. He expressed support for the proposed ordinance and its safety objectives. He also commended the city's enforcement approach, particularly the use of initial warning notices as an educational tool before issuing citations, and encouraged continued use of that practice.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Member Andrew Breton moved to forward ORD. 2026-088 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Vice Chair Robertson, Chair Jones, and Member Breton requested to be added as co-patrons to ORD. 2026-088.

Vice President Katherine Jordan departed the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

The following ordinance was considered:

3. [ORD. 2026-084](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Standard Project Administration Agreement between the City of Richmond and the Central Virginia Transportation Authority for the purpose of administering the Diamond District Transportation Infrastructure Project.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Dironna Moore Clarke, Deputy Director of Equitable Transit and Mobility for the Department of Public Works, stated that the proposed ordinance would help support critical transportation infrastructure improvements of Phase 1A of the Diamond District Transportation Infrastructure Project. She noted that a request of \$12.9 million was submitted to the CVTA. She further stated that the improvements include new multimodal neighborhood streets, transit access enhancements, and signalized intersection improvements, adding that the CVTA approved approximately 80% of those funds.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Member Andrew Breton asked about what specific improvements are expected in Phase 1 of the project funded under the agreement, the likelihood that project costs will exceed \$10.3 million, and a project timeline.

Ms. Clarke stated that Phase 1 improvements include utility demolition, construction of currently unnamed Road B and Road J, vehicle and pedestrian street lighting, site surveying and staking, erosion control, asphalt paving, pavement markings and signage, concrete pavers, curb and gutter, sidewalks, bollards, bicycle racks, benches, transit shelters, and trash and recycling receptacles. She further stated that the agreement cannot exceed the \$10.3 million provided by the CVTA unless additional funding is requested through a separate application process. She noted that the project is expected to be completed and all funds expended by May 2027.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson asked for clarification on the total project budget and funding sources, noting the initial \$12.9 million request and the CVTA award of approximately 80%. She asked if procurement has been completed.

Ms. Clarke stated that the remaining approximately \$2.4 million is provided by the Economic Development Authority (EDA). She noted that City Council previously approved a \$37 million General Obligation (GO) bond, and that funds already committed through the EDA are being used to match the CVTA funding. She explained that these sources are already budgeted within the overall project cost. She added that the project will begin once the agreement is executed, and that the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will be amended to authorize expenditure of the funds. Ms. Clarke noted that the procurement process has been completed.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Vice Chair Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2026-084 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinance was considered:

4. [ORD. 2026-085](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$275,000.00 from the Virginia Transit Association and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Public Works' Shared Mobility Special Fund by \$275,000.00 for the purpose of funding a Free Rides to Work program.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Daniel Wagner, Traffic Operations Engineer with the Department of Public Works, provided an overview of the proposed ordinance. He stated that the program is an annual application through the Virginia Transit Association and is intended to reduce barriers for lower-income families to access transit or other mobility options where fixed route service is not available. He noted that the city is reapplying for the current fiscal year and has also submitted an application for the upcoming fiscal year.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Member Andrew Breton asked whether the program is fully grant-funded and does not require city funding, how success is defined and measured, whether any current year performance data is available, and the long term feasibility of sustaining the program once grant funding ends.

Mr. Wagner stated that the program is grant-funded and currently supported through annual Virginia Transit Association funding, with no immediate need to discontinue it. He noted strong demand, reflected by a wait list, and explained that success is measured by meeting immediate mobility needs while connecting participants to longer term employment and transportation options. He added that staff use the program to identify transit gaps and would coordinate with regional partners if funding becomes no longer available.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson asked about the level of demand compared to program availability, any eligibility restrictions for participants, and the modes of transportation used under the program.

Mr. Wagner stated that the program uses a vanpool-style service, similar to micro transit, provided through a private Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) vendor, Palms and Pines, which is required to maintain insurance. He noted that eligibility is limited to TANF qualified families and estimated that approximately 60 participants are currently enrolled. He stated that staff would provide follow-up information.

Chair Nicole Jones sought clarification on program eligibility and enrollment, asking whether participation is on a first come, first served basis, and how individuals are informed about the service to avoid confusion with GRTC micro transit or paratransit services.

Mr. Wagner stated that enrollment is effectively first come, first served and confirmed that once program capacity is reached, additional applicants are placed on a wait list. Mr. Wagner noted that initial engagement occurred during the Richmond Connects planning process, with outreach conducted in Southside and parts of Northside identified as transit deserts. He added that additional outreach has been conducted within public housing communities. He explained that the program originated with a focus on supporting Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) residents in accessing employment, and that outreach efforts have expanded from that initial focus over time.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Member Andrew Breton moved to forward ORD. 2026-085 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinances were considered:

5. [ORD. 2026-086](#) To designate the 1000 block of East Clay Street in honor of Bill Martin.

Patrons: Mayor Avula, Vice President Jordan, President Newbille, Ms. Robertson and Ms. Abubaker

6. [ORD. 2026-087](#) To designate the 2300 block of Rosewood Avenue in honor of James “Jimmy Lee” Bracey.

Patrons: Ms. Lynch and Ms. Robertson

Councilor Stephanie Lynch provided an introduction and overview of Ordinance 2026-086, thanking the Bracey Committee and community members for their efforts. She highlighted Mr. Bracey's mentorship and contributions through the Western Striders, noting his lasting positive impact on local youth and the community.

Public Hearing

Michael Gray spoke in support of Ordinance 2026-087, honoring James Bracey as a community leader and founder of the Western Striders youth track and field organization. He shared personal reflections on Mr. Bracey's mentorship and lasting impact on youth development and noted the organization's continued activity.

Al Hutchinson spoke in support of Ordinance 2026-087. He described Mr. Bracey as a long-time community mentor who volunteered for over 40 years with the Western Striders, shaping the lives and futures of many young people. He credited Mr. Bracey's mentorship with having a lasting impact on his own life.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson thanked those who spoke about the honoree and acknowledged the importance of recognizing individuals in Richmond who have contributed to community transformation and family support. She requested to be added as co-patron to the proposed ordinances and expressed support for honoring Bill Martin, noting his significant contributions to the city and the tragedy of his passing.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Vice Chair Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2026-086 and ORD. 2026-087 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Presentation(s)

Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) Long Range Financial Outlook and North/South Pulse Expansion

Adrienne Torres, Chief Development Officer for GRTC, presented an overview of the FY 2027 draft budget, five year financial outlook, and the North/South Pulse BRT project. She stated the FY 2027 operating budget is approximately \$96 million and reflects current service levels with assumed 3% inflation, excluding future expansion. She noted the North/South BRT is a 12-mile corridor with 30 planned stations, currently in early environmental and design phases, with operations projected for FY 2032 or later, and construction not expected before 2028. She estimated total project costs at under \$400 million and described ongoing coordination with City and regional projects supported by CVTA, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and other funding sources.

Lora Toothman, Director of Capital Construction and Facility Improvement for GRTC, provided an update on the North/South BRT conceptual design. She noted station adjustments, proposed dedicated transit lanes with median modifications, and ongoing National Environmental Policy Act review through the third quarter, along with continued public engagement and technical surveys. She also described planned corridor treatments including dedicated or peak hour transit lanes, intersection and pedestrian improvements, coordination with City Code updates and transit oriented development planning, and progress on a downtown transfer hub. She added that a Request for Proposals is expected in the second quarter of the year.

[CD.2026.118](#) April 21, 2026 - GRTC Long Range Financial Outlook and North - South Pulse Expansion

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Member Andrew Breton asked how GRTC's fare free model can be sustained given increasing ridership and national trends, whether the proposed BRT project supports or competes with maintaining a fare free system, and how design decisions are made regarding dedicated bus lanes.

Ms. Torres stated that the fare free policy remains in place and is supported within the current budget, with additional revenue efforts including advertising and a regional funding study with PlanRVA. She noted that fare free service has contributed to increased ridership, typically by about 30%, along with expanded routes. She further stated that dedicated bus lanes would typically be placed in existing parking lanes to avoid widening the roadway and maintain the existing roadbed by repurposing current space rather than undertaking major roadway expansion.

Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) Redevelopment Plans

Steven Nesmith, Chief Executive Officer of RRHA, presented an overview of RRHA's redevelopment plans. He stated that his full written presentation outlines how RRHA's work aligns with the Mayor's Action Plan and the Richmond 300 Master Plan. He explained that RRHA serves both as a public housing authority and a redevelopment authority, and emphasized the importance of collaboration with City Council, the Mayor, stakeholders, developers, and community advocates to preserve and expand affordable housing while supporting resident stability and pathways to self-sufficiency and homeownership. He noted that these efforts are challenged by longstanding federal disinvestment and declining funding.

Sherrill Hampton, Senior Vice President of Real Estate and Community Development for RRHA, stated that approximately 16% of Creighton Court Phase A residents who opted to return have moved back, with a goal of reaching 20% to 25% as redevelopment continues. She outlined RRHA's affordable housing efforts, including 259 units supported by project based vouchers, 115 of which are for Creighton Court, with an additional 339 units expected by the end of 2026 supported by approximately 700 vouchers. She also highlighted the conduit bond program and noted that, over the past three years, these combined efforts have produced more than 1,100 units leveraging various city funding sources.

Councilor Reva Trammell departed the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

[CD.2026.116](#) April 21, 2026 - RRHA Redevelopment Plans

[CD.2026.124](#) April 21, 2026 - Handout

Copies of the materials provided have been filed.

Chair Nicole Jones asked for clarification regarding the South Gate development and tenant protection vouchers, requesting further explanation of how they relate to project based vouchers.

Ms. Hampton stated that the South Gate project, developed by Genesis Properties, includes 112 units and involved the preservation and substantial renovation of existing affordable housing. She explained that tenant protection vouchers, required under Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved redevelopment plans, help prevent displacement by allowing eligible residents to receive rental assistance and relocate while redevelopment occurs, with RRHA providing relocation support. She also noted ongoing coordination with the city on a broader resident relocation “people plan” to support affected households.

Member Andrew Breton asked for clarification regarding the tenant protection voucher program and the previously cited 97% utilization rate, requesting an explanation of what that figure represents, how it is calculated, and whether a similar utilization or success rate is available for tenant protection vouchers.

Ms. Hampton clarified that the 97% refers to the utilization rate of RRHA’s standard Housing Choice Voucher program, not tenant protection vouchers. She explained that tenant protection vouchers are issued to eligible residents displaced by redevelopment and that all voucher types share the same eligibility requirements. She added that residents may choose between using a tenant protection voucher to relocate, applying for limited project based units, or transferring to another public housing site.

Fatimah Smothers-Hargrove, Vice President of the Housing Choice Voucher Program and Tenant Selection Office for RRHA, stated that the 97% utilization rate applies to the agency’s baseline Housing Choice Voucher program, based on 4,060 allocated vouchers with approximately 3,967 currently in use. She reiterated that tenant protection vouchers are tracked separately and are not included in that utilization rate until one year after issuance. She further stated that there is currently insufficient data to establish a reliable success rate for tenant protection vouchers, as the program is relatively new to RRHA. She noted that only a limited number of prior redevelopments have used such vouchers, and that Creighton Court will provide the most substantial data set moving forward to assess outcomes and housing placement success.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Staff Report

William Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager, asked the committee to clarify the recommendation for RES. 2026-R003, stating that the motion could be amended to reflect the committees intent to amend the proposed resolution.

Member Andrew Breton moved to amend the original motion to forward RES. 2026-R003 to council with the recommendation to approve, to forward RES. 2026-R003 to council with a recommendation to approve with an amendment, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Council staff provided the committee with the April Land Use, Housing and Transportation staff report.

[CD.2026.117](#) April 21, 2026 - Land Use, Housing and Transportation Staff Report

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.