

# Preparing A Safe Future for Richmond.

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Public Safety Committee

Thriving City Hall

Thriving Neighborhoods



**CITY OF  
RICHMOND**

# Introduction

- **Acknowledgements**
- **Inquiries**
  - *How are we preparing to address fires in an increasingly dense city?*
  - *What preparations are we making to address fires in a city with an increasing number of tall buildings?*
  - *What preparations are we making to abate fire hazmat incidents at the port and neighboring warehouses as well as boat chemical spills and fires?*
  - *Can you describe Fire Department Overtime Rates and Policies?*
- **The future of the Department**
- **Closing**

# How Richmond Fire is aligning with the Mayor's Pillars

## Thriving City Hall

- Reorganization
- Policy Review and Updates
- Data Based Decision Making/Planning and Management



City Hall

## Thriving Neighborhoods

- Community Engagement
- Fleet Upgrades
- Low Vacancies
- Additional FTE



Neighborhoods

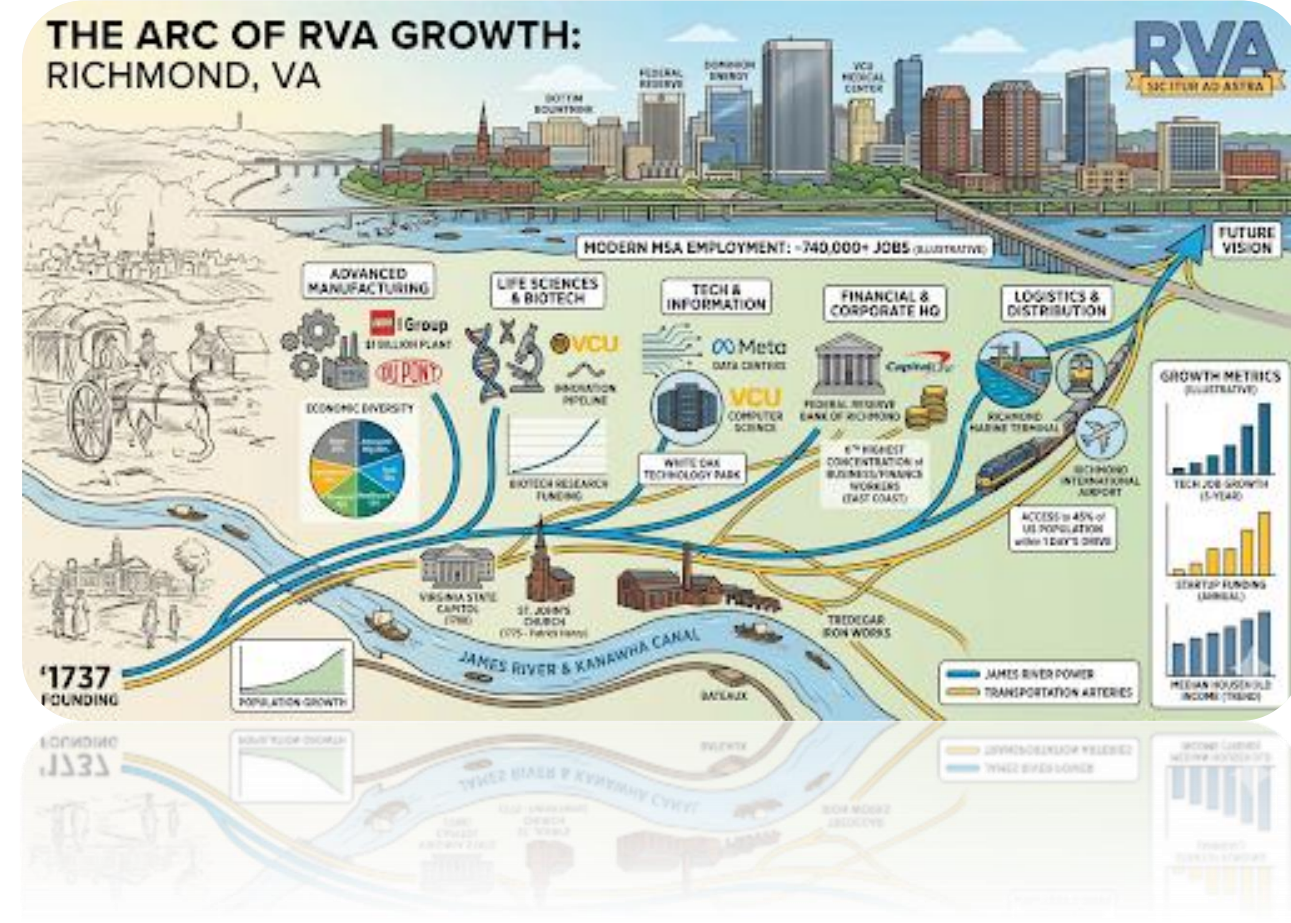
# City and High-Rise Expansion

- Exceeded 2030 projection of 240,000 residents
- 52,000 residents added since 2020
- FY 26 Permits and Projects
  - \* 32 commercial projects= \$308mil
  - \* >7,600 permits = \$620million
  - \* Several 5 stories approved
  - \* One 18 floor project
- Taller buildings = higher complexity



# How RFD Is Addressing City Growth - Positive RFD Growth and Technology

- Added four additional units
  - \* Truck # 6 ( Hawthorne Ave. )
  - \* Truck #7 (Thompson St.)
  - \* Truck #10 (Richmond Hwy)
  - \* Engine #24 (Forest Hill Ave.)
- Two new fire stations - allows for growth
- CIP Current & Future Plans
  - \* Fire training Burn Building and Tower
  - \* Station replacement – Station #18
  - \* Downtown station
- Improved Data and Analysis
  - \* Predictive Response Modeling
  - \* Dynamic Staffing
  - \* Budget requests



# A Modern Fire Department for a Growing City

Category	1972	Today
Total Fire Companies	35	28
Annual Incidents	10,000-15,000	35,000-40,000
City Population	~250,000	240,000+

The comparison demonstrates the department's ability to manage significantly greater demand through innovation, planning, and operational efficiency.

Despite higher incident volumes and increased complexity, the department continues to improve service delivery through strategic resource management and data-driven operations.



# Strategies To Address Growth and Changing Environment

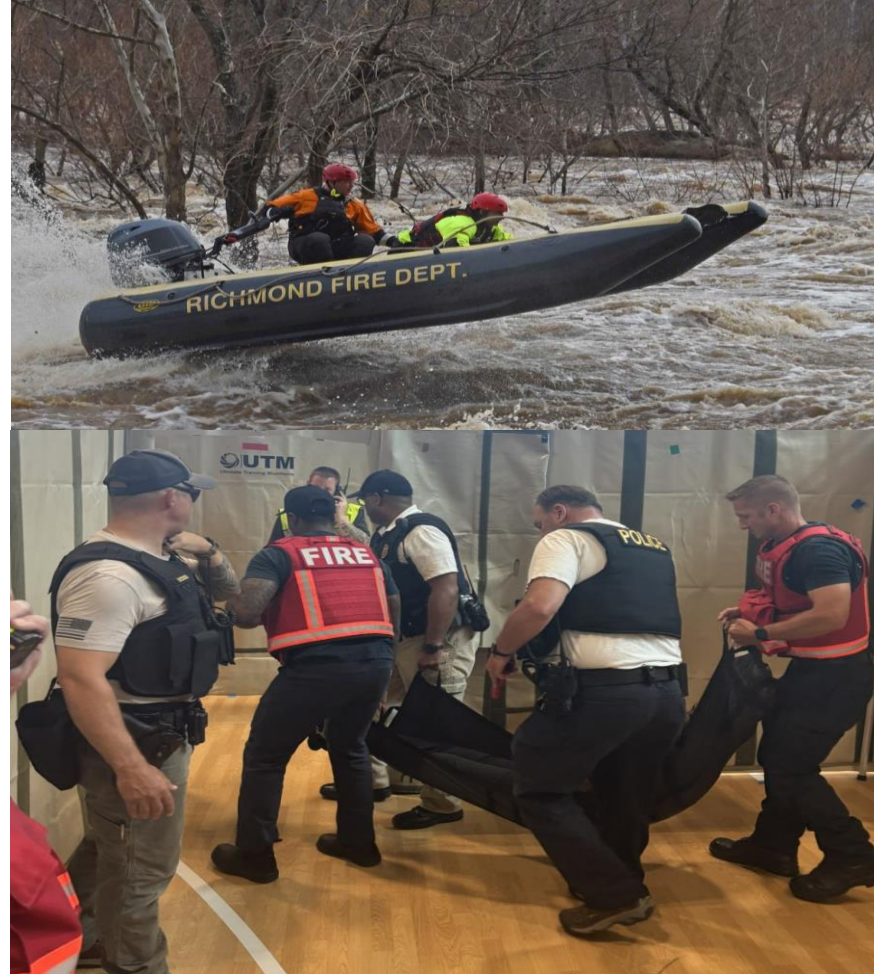
- Community Risk Reduction
  - \* Education
  - \* Engineering – Smoke alarms
  - \* Enforcement
- Collaboration with internal and community partners
- Data driven planning - performance management from January to April:
  - \* Visited over 14,500 homes
  - \* Participated in over 500 Community & Station Events
  - \* Engaged over 27,000 citizens.
  - \* Installed over 450 smoke detectors.



# Strategies To Address Growth and Changing Environment

## Complex Incidents Steps to Improve :

- River Response
- Active Threat Response
- High Rise Incidents
- HAZMAT Response



# Overtime Management – Strategies and Successes

- **Control Vacancies - Key driver of overtime.**
  - \* Averaged 24 Vacancies (past 4 years)
  - \* Began FY26 with 30 vacancies
  - \* Proactively filled vacancies- 0 vacancies in February
- **Dynamic Staffing**
- **Improved Climate**
- **54% Overtime Reduction** since March 2026 Implementation

# How is Fire Overtime Different Than Other Agencies?

## Two types of overtime

- **FLSA**

- Legally mandated
- Automatically Earned just by working normal schedule
- Predictable calculation based on sworn strength- approx 67,860 hours

- **Staffing Overtime**

- Used to ensure adequate daily staffing, support training, and large events (planned and unplanned)
- Varies daily based on variety of factors (Sworn FTE, # of Companies, Vacancies, Absentee Rate).

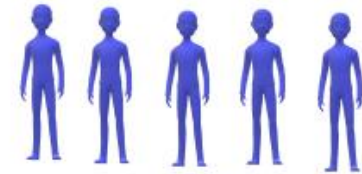


# Analysis-What Drives Staffing Overtime Needs?

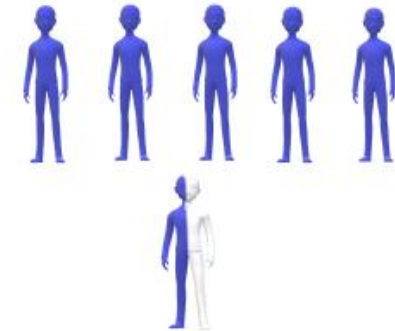
- Number of fire Units
- Number of FTEs
  - \*Staffing Factor
- Leave Usage
  - \*Absenteeism Rate
- Vacancies



**Current Staffing Factor**  
**5.0**

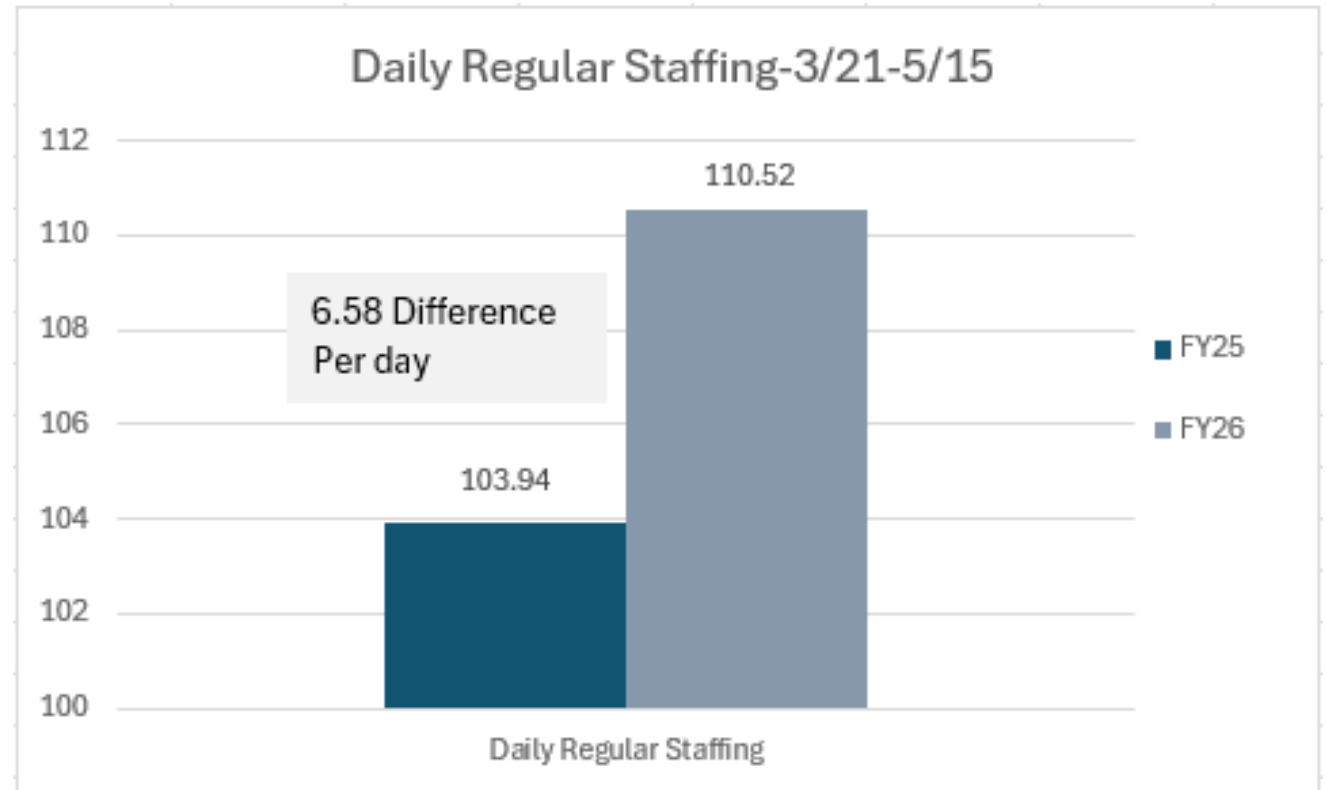


**Ideal Staffing Factor**  
**5.5**



# Management – Proactive Steps Taken to Address Overtime

- Improved staffing by 4 FTE per day since recruit graduation
- Stay ahead of vacancy/attrition rate
- Recruit class - June 2026



# Management-Improved Budgeting

## Improved Overtime budgeting for FY27

- FLSA Budget for FY27- \$3,931,008
- Staffing OT Budget- \$1,322,999
- Overall OT budget increase of \$2,965,057

# Employee Engagement and Retention

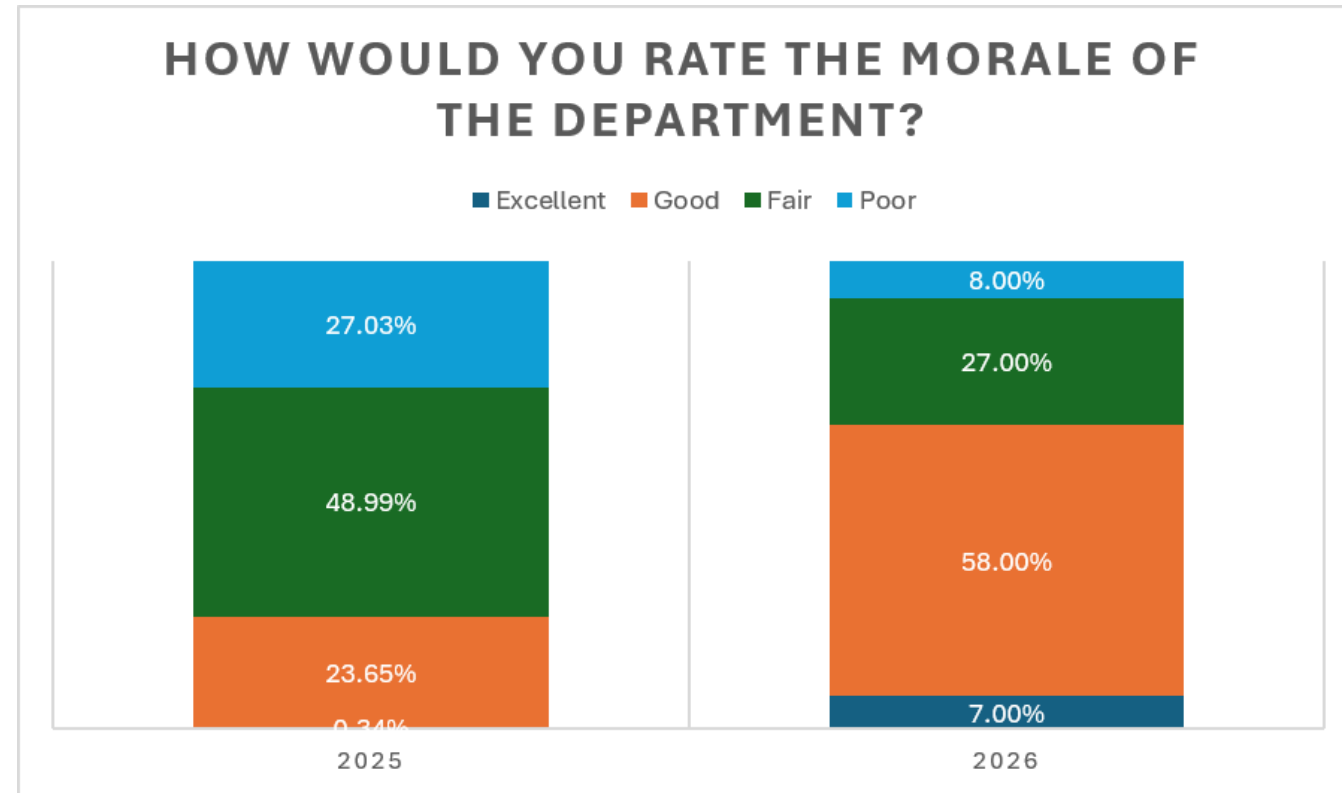
- Improved communication
- Awards Ceremony
- Relationship with Union
- Climate Survey



# CLIMATE SURVEY 2025 vs. CLIMATE SURVEY 2026

## Improved Climate Survey = Thriving Workplace

- **Survey Overwhelmingly Positive**
  - \* Negative morale rating dropped from 27% to 8%
  - \* Majority rated morale as excellent or good
- **Improved Employee Satisfaction**
  - \* Retention Minimizes Vacancies



## **We are not the same department we were a year ago.**

- Employee and community focused
  - \* THRIVING workplace
- Resources are better organized to:
  - \* Handle current and future demands
  - \* Adapt to the changing needs of our city
- More processes and data driven
  - \* Ensures top performance
  - \* Forecasting and proactive status management

# Citizen Feedback

