

INTRODUCED: November 12, 2024

A RESOLUTION No. 2024-R038

To endorse, for the City of Richmond, legislative proposals set forth within the document entitled “City of Richmond Legislative Proposals for the Virginia General Assembly 2025 Regular Session;” to request the Richmond delegation to the General Assembly of Virginia to take legislative action consistent with and in vigorous support of such recommendations; to support other legislative action recommendations; and to encourage other organizations and individuals to support such recommendations.

Patrons – All Members of Council

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: DEC 9 2024 AT 6 P.M.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That this Council hereby endorses as priorities for the City of Richmond the legislative proposals set forth in the document entitled “City of Richmond Legislative Proposals for the Virginia General Assembly 2025 Regular Session,” a copy of which is attached to this resolution. The Council respectfully requests that the Richmond delegation to the General Assembly of Virginia take legislative action consistent with and in vigorous support of such proposals and encourages other organizations and individuals to support these proposals.

AYES: _____ NOES: _____ ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: _____ REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Ordinance/Resolution Request

TO Laura Drewry, City Attorney

Through Will Perkins, Council Legislative Services Manager

FROM Joyce L. Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Office of the Council Chief of Staff

COPY All Members of Council
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Tori Cotman, Assistant City Attorney
Susan McKenney, Assistant City Attorney

DATE October 21, 2024

PAGE/s 1 of 1

TITLE CITY OF RICHMOND LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE 2025 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

This is a request for the drafting of an **Ordinance** **Resolution**

REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON

All Members of Council

SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE

Waive Committee

ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY

A Resolution is requested to endorse, the City of Richmond's legislative proposals set forth within the document entitled, "Richmond Final Draft Legislative Program for the 2025 General Assembly".

BACKGROUND

A Resolution is requested to endorse, the City of Richmond's legislative proposals set forth within the document entitled, "City of Richmond Legislative Proposals for the Virginia 2025 General Assembly Session," to request the Richmond delegation to the General Assembly of Virginia to take legislative action consistent and in vigorous support of such recommendations; to support other legislative recommendations and to encourage other organizations and individuals to support such recommendations.

The requested introduction date is October 28, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Fiscal Impact	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Budget Amendment Required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact	\$ 0	

Attachment/s **Yes** **No**

**City of Richmond Legislative Proposals
for the
Virginia General Assembly 2025 Regular Session**

Final Draft October 7, 2024



CITY OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Senator Ghazala Hashmi (D)- *Senior Senator*

15th District

senatorhashmi@senate.virginia.gov

Office: 804-698-7515

Committee Assignments

Education & Health (Chair)

Finance and Appropriations

Agriculture, Conservation & Natural Resources

Rules

Transportation

Senator Lamont Bagby (D)

14th District

senatorbagby@senate.virginia.gov

Office: 804-698-7514

Committee Assignments

Commerce and Labor

Courts of Justice

Education & Health

Local Government

Transportation

Delegate Betsy B Carr (D) – *Senior Member of Delegation*

House District 69

delegatebcarr@house.virginia.gov

Office: 804-698-1069

Committee Assignments

Appropriations

General Laws

Transportation

Delegate Rae Cousins (D) House District 79

delegatercousins@house.virginia.gov

Office: 804-698-1079

Committee Assignments

Courts of Justice

Education

Public Safety

Delegate Michael Jones (D) House District 77

delegatemjones@house.virginia.gov

Office: 804-698-1077

Committee Assignments

Communications, Technology, and Innovation (CIT)

Counties, Cities, and Towns (CCT)

Labor and Commerce



PROPOSED Legislative and Budget Priorities

City Requests for Legislation

- 1. Affordable Housing- Long-term Owner Occupancy Program:**
 - a. Richmond requests that the General Assembly pass legislation that would amend the Constitution of Virginia to grant local governments authority over property tax exemptions to combat gentrification, by creating the authority to establish a Long-term Owner Occupancy (LOOP) Program.**
 - b. Recognizing that time may be required to gain support for a relatively new proposal,¹ Richmond proposes, as an intermediary step, a General Assembly study of LOOP Programs and their potential to protect long-term residents from displacement.**
- 2. Richmond requests legislation to expand the authority to use speed cameras to the campuses of higher education institutions.**
- 3. Richmond requests legislation to renew specified localities' ability to collect all sales tax revenue from public facilities, including convention centers and hotels integral to them. That local power, authorized by § 58.1-608.3, sunset on July 1, 2024. The Commonwealth has restored it eight times since first granting the power in 1991.**

¹ This legislation was first introduced to the General Assembly in 2023 (SJR 247 (Hashmi) and HJ498 (Carr)).

City Budget Request

Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO)- The cost of the CSO Final Plan as approved by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on August 8, 2024, is \$565 million. The city will need \$500 million in state funds set-aside for the project by FY29 in order to initiate contracts to meet the requirements mandated by the General Assembly.

Richmond requests additional state funding of \$100 million in FY25 and \$150 million in FY26 to support the implementation of the city's Final Plan.



The City of Richmond’s 2025 Legislative Program: Supporting Virginia’s Historic, Capital City

The City of Richmond is a proud, historic city with a rich cultural heritage. As the Capital of the Commonwealth, Richmond leads the region in high-quality business and residential growth. Richmond’s unique neighborhoods and districts, both historical and new, support a diversity of uses, the equitable accommodation of all phases of life, and the efficient use of land to promote sustainable and healthy lifestyles. Richmond proudly hosts legislators from all corners of Virginia during the General Assembly session. Downtown Richmond is the core of local, state, and federal government in the Commonwealth.

One-third of Richmond’s real estate is located within a historic district. Approximately 25,000 properties in the city are located in either a City Old & Historic District or a National Register Historic District, representing one-third of all City real estate. Richmond is proud to be a leader in historic preservation while still supporting development of new residential neighborhoods and business centers.

The city is growing rapidly as it attracts new residents. Residents of Richmond have a strong sense of community and civic engagement. Each of Richmond’s unique neighborhoods contributes to the rich tapestry that make up the city and make it a place people can call home. However, many of Richmond’s most vibrant neighborhoods were decimated by residential segregation ordinances, discriminatory housing practices, and highway construction. Thoughtful redevelopment in Richmond is an opportunity to redesign the city around the needs, assets, and aspirations of valuable yet historically overlooked communities.

A strong entrepreneurial spirit and a diverse economy exist in Richmond. Richmond was one of the most industrialized cities in the south in the late-1700s and early 1800s. In the 19th century, Richmond’s largest business, by value, was the sale of enslaved people and we must recognize the economic impact that fact continues to have on our city. Today, technology firms, financial institutions, design and creative firms, researchers, restaurants, a variety of public-private partnerships, non-profits, life sciences organizations, artists, and small businesses all choose to locate in Richmond. Richmond strives to increase the number and support the growth of small businesses, start-ups, and women-owned and minority-owned businesses.

The fall line of the James River established Richmond’s prominence as a center of trade, industry, transportation, and economic prosperity. The James River and its park system now provide top-notch outdoor activities and recreation from paddling, hiking, cycling, to just enjoying time at the waterfront. Richmond values protecting the natural splendor of the James River, improving water quality and managing growth to protect natural assets in the city so they are accessible to everyone.

Walking, biking, and transit options are becoming more convenient and more-widely used, thereby improving the natural environment and our health. Richmond's multi-modal transportation system is growing in quality and ease of use for all people regardless of income and physical abilities, connecting Richmond neighborhoods and attractions to each other, the region, and the nation.

Richmond is approaching its 300th anniversary. We are a proud, diverse city whose role in history and as the Capital of the Commonwealth continues to determine many of its limitations and successes. As we build on our success, we know that the city's growth has not benefited everyone equally.

- Roughly 17% of residents live in poverty.
- Housing costs in Richmond have outpaced income growth for low- and very low-income households.
- Racial inequities persist in the local and regional labor market.
- Disparities in education exist in the city, particularly in parts of Southside.

As Richmond grows, it seeks to do so equitably, sustainably, and beautifully. As the historic, vibrant, capital of the Commonwealth, Richmond can be a model for what it means to be a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, innovative, and equitable city of thriving neighborhoods, ensuring a high quality of life for all. Richmond believes in courageously acknowledging the continuing impact that racism plays in many of our state policies and state funding decisions.

Richmond's legislative program reflects the needs and tools that we seek from the General Assembly in order to continue to move our good work forward for all.

Come Here, Stay Here: Housing

Richmond envisions being a city that provides inclusive housing with access to quality housing choices for all of the city's residents. Richmond is growing at a rate not seen since the late 1800s. Richmond's main sources of population growth is from people leaving more expensive metropolitan areas in search of less expensive housing and the high-quality of life Richmond provides. Richmond seeks tools that will allow it to adapt to the changing needs of a fast-growing community. Richmond is still grappling with the legacy of discriminatory housing policies and past growth designed to cut through communities of Black and poor residents. Tools that support more housing, inclusionary zoning, and progressive planning practices can co-locate residents to the things they need most, such as transit and transportation, groceries and pharmacies, health care, educational services, recreational options, green space, and jobs.

Richmond seeks to support existing and new residents, regardless of income. More than 50.22% of Richmond households who rent and 39.62% of Richmond households who own their homes are cost burdened. Richmond needs an additional 16,680 affordable units to ensure every household that makes under 80% of the AMI is not cost-burdened. In 2021, the American Community Survey found that the median rent in Richmond was \$1,132. For the average Richmond household, that rent represents an untenable 31.2 % of their income. But that price is simply prohibitive for the 35% of Richmond households who make less than \$25,000. Additionally, while the housing crisis cuts across all demographics, it is hitting our senior citizens extremely hard.

The Mayor and the City Council unanimously declared that a housing crisis exists in the city of Richmond (Resolution 2023-R019) and will support a broad approach to addressing this crisis in the city and in the Commonwealth. Richmond continues to utilize every tool granted to them by the General Assembly to address the city's housing crisis. The city's most recent effort is the effective roll-out of the Affordable Housing Performance Grant Program. That program is attracting considerable attention from both for-profit and nonprofit developers and has put over 2,000 units of affordable housing into the construction pipeline in the last

two years. The city continues to seek the authority from the General Assembly to utilize more strategies and programs to address the housing crisis.

The following proactive steps have been identified as supporting the city as we continue to address the housing crisis in Richmond:

Affordable Housing- Long-term Owner Occupancy Program:

- a. Richmond requests that the General Assembly pass legislation that would amend the Constitution of Virginia to grant local governments authority over property tax exemptions to combat gentrification, by creating the authority to establish a Long-term Owner Occupancy (LOOP) Program.**
- b. Recognizing that time may be required to gain support for a relatively new proposal,² Richmond proposes, as an intermediary step, a General Assembly study of LOOP Programs and their potential to protect long-term residents from displacement.**

Additionally, the city supports:

- Legislative and budgetary tools to increase the availability and funds for Low Income Housing Tax Credits and the Communities of Opportunity Program (intended to decentralize poverty by enhancing low-income Virginians access to affordable housing units in higher-income area). While the real estate market in the Richmond area is robust, the city believes there are reasons for concern and policy areas that need reinforcement.
- Efforts to improve the ability of non-profit entities to support the development of affordable housing options.
- Addressing the issue of blight and out-of-state landlord's failure to properly maintain their investment is a growing concern in the city. The city supports the General Assembly making more tools available to gain the compliance of absentee or uninvolved real estate owners for cleanup and getting blighted investment property back on the tax rolls and available for purchase or rent.
- Policies that reduce discriminatory housing practices and close the gap in racial disparities in the home buying process.
- Efforts to revise the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program to consider proximity to jobs, transit options, and other critical services for residents. Additionally, the city supports revising the area medium income (AMI) requirements to more adequately align to the city's cost of living.
- Legislation that adds housing protections to residents of the city's public housing programs.
- Additional tools from the General Assembly to help increase the number of quality affordable housing units, encourage first-time home buyers, incentivize housing density and a variety of quality housing. The city supports tools that keep authority for housing development as the responsibility of localities and does not have the state override local ordinances.
- Additional local authority and expanded state efforts to decrease the impact of evictions on the city's residents.

In order to continue the work of addressing the city's housing crisis while protecting the progress the city has made, Richmond opposes:

- Any state legislative action that would have the effect of preempting recently enacted City legislation that allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by-right and maintain the primary residency requirement for short-term rentals in residential areas. These City Council actions were specific recommendations to

² This legislation was first introduced to the General Assembly in 2023 (SJR 247 (Hashmi) and HJ498 (Carr)).

lessen the effects of the current housing crisis that the city is experiencing, specifically, the lack of housing access and affordability.

- Any state legislative action that would limit the city’s ability to regulate short-term rentals (STRs)

Supporting Our Neighborhoods and Our Public Schools

The City of Richmond is home to 47 public schools, including 27 elementary schools, seven middle schools, eight high schools, and several specialty schools. It believes that schools are best supported when the neighborhoods they are in are thriving and healthy, and that students thrive when they go to school in high-quality schools. Neighborhoods that are well-designed and interconnected with public facilities, open spaces for residents, services and businesses providing jobs, recreational facilities, libraries and equitable accommodations, cultivate sustainable and healthy lifestyles for everyone. The flexibility to co-locate and coordinate city services within communities is a vital strategy as the city looks to provide full access, support, and critical care to our families and communities with the most need and to our historically vulnerable populations. For this reason, the City is excited to have three new community centers—two in Southside and one in the East End—under construction.

It is critical that students can get to school safely whether it be on foot, on a bicycle, on a school bus, or in a car. Richmond’s schools are also the third-largest employer in the city and teachers, staff, and school division employees are valued members of our community. Richmond students graduating from K-12 public schools should have a variety of opportunities available to them including higher education, skill training, mentorship and apprentice program, or gainful employment.

Early Childhood and K-12 Education & Funding Support

The city supports full state funding for public education as recommended by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC). Many of the recommendations in the two most recent JLARC reports, K-12 Funding Formula and Virginia’s Teacher Pipeline, are particularly important to the city. We know that the current funding formulas do not adequately address the diverse needs of Richmond’s school division, which include several, concentrated, high-poverty neighborhoods and many families in need of holistic support. Additionally, Richmond’s school buildings and infrastructure, in many instances, mirror the historic nature of the city, which can often reinforce the inequities between the city and the surrounding counties. The city needs additional state support to provide the types of modern learning environments our students, school staff, and communities deserve. Richmond believes that all of our students should be “at promise” and are only at-risk if they are not provided opportunities to succeed and be supported.

For these reasons, the City of Richmond supports the following near-term goals that will be most impactful to Richmond Public Schools, including:

- Codifying Consolidating the At-Risk Add-On program and the Prevention, Intervention, Remediation program to create a new At-Risk Program under the Standards of Quality;
- Implementing an LCI calculation using a three-year average. Specifically, the JLARC option to weigh population equally with ADM would better reflect overall local budget expenditures, not just school expenditures. For the city of Richmond, it is estimated that this alone would shift approximately \$4.3 million from the city to the state.
- Consistent, annual funding for the school construction grant program from the state’s general fund until such time as the Virginia Gaming Proceeds Fund, or a like-dedicated school construction fund, is up, running, and sufficiently funded.
- Adding Richmond to the list of localities that can hold a referendum to ask voters to increase the sales tax by 1% to raise money for school construction and modernization.

- Maintaining the practice of allocating hold harmless funding if the city is at risk of receiving less state funding for Basic Aid than in the previous biennium.
- Funding and support for out-of-school and after school programs, including ones run by the city, by city partners, and by non-governmental organizations.
- Funding and resources to provide affordable, high-quality full-day, full-year early childhood childcare and education options in all areas of the city.
- Fully restoring the Virginia Pre-school Initiative.
- Fully funding the Child Care Subsidy Program, including maintaining current co-payment rates, to ensure affordability for working families.

Protecting and Promoting Our Residents' Well Being

The city of Richmond prioritizes positive and equitable health outcomes for all residents. In order to meet this goal, the city needs additional support, resources, and tools to achieve positive health outcomes for residents at all stages of life. The City of Richmond recognizes that public health is determined by a wide variety of life circumstances and accessibility of services. Areas that require particular attention this Session and additional support include mental health funding, decriminalizing mental health crises, stemming the opioid crisis, ensuring quality housing options, support for children in foster care systems, and more.

In order to more effectively protect and promote the well-being of our citizens, the city supports:

- Additional state funding our local CSBs and other critical community supports, like the Marcus Alert. The city seeks to continue its resilient comeback from the effects of COVID 19 in students and children, disruptions in routines and relationships, and increased reports of social isolation, anxiety, and learning loss. When our students have supportive communities that prioritize and support health, they can thrive in school.
- Additional state funding to expand programs like the Virginia Food Access Grants that support local food systems by investing in projects that improve retail access to fresh foods in low-income areas with poor access to these foods.
- Additional state programs and resources that continue to support to high-value, evidence-based practices that aim to improve maternal health outcomes.
- Additional state support for holistic state-wide programs that help adults access health providers, pharmacies, addiction treatment programs, and mental health resources without criminalizing health and mental health struggles.
- Additional state funding to address the opioid crisis, especially the disparate impact on communities of color. The city opposes efforts to further criminalize people suffering from addiction.
- Efforts to create a commercial marketplace for adult-use cannabis, to discourage black market sales, protect consumers, prevent children from accessing the drug, and capture tax revenue for needed public services. Richmond urges legislators to dedicate tax revenue from cannabis sales to early childhood care and education, social equity initiatives, public health programs, and directly to the local governments that allow sales in their jurisdictions. The city also supports legislation that allows localities discretion in placement and licensing of cannabis stores and vape stores in proximity to schools, preschools, day care centers, addiction treatment centers, and other similar locations.
- Efforts to ensure that tenants have a right to an attorney if they are facing eviction. The city supports efforts to reduce evictions and tools and programs that help residents overcome financial challenges and keep them in their homes.
- In order to continue to place Richmond's children in need into high-quality foster care settings, Richmond supports maintenance payments to assist in meeting the basic needs of a child in the system. Enhanced maintenance payments are available when a child has a clearly defined need that requires the

parent to provide increased support and supervision due to the child’s behavioral, emotional, or physical/personal care requirements. Under the current system, as soon as a child in foster care reaches the age of thirteen, the stipend disappears.

The city opposes:

- Any action that further criminalizes people suffering from addiction.

Keeping All Citizens Safe: Supporting Public Safety

Richmond has led the way in identifying places where social justice approaches can be applied to reform and reimagine what safe communities look like. Residents need equitable access to public safety services such as EMS and emergency response and peace of mind that emergency responses will help them. Public safety is about protecting citizens and also reconciling the inherent racial biases that can be present in traditional policing. The city believes that the judicial system also must work to eliminate legacy racial biases that can result in inequitable outcomes.

Instances of violent crime in Richmond have been falling and this reduction is thanks to efforts made by the city. Gun violence continues to be a concern, and Richmond seeks additional tools to reduce gun violence. Through the implementation of its “Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention Framework” (GVPI), the City has made strides in implementing a public-health approach to reducing gun violence. The GVPI Framework brings together partners from government, nonprofits, religious institutions, public health organizations, and other community members to enforce existing laws; address the root causes of gun violence; provide wrap around support to victims of violence and their families; deploy credible messengers to communities most affected; and develop best practices to ensure quality services. Through programs ranging from the Police Department’s “Operation Safe Summer,” which uses data to prioritize how to deploy resources, to the Human Services’ Department’s “Positive Youth Development Fund,” which provides out-of-school time opportunities from youth ages 12 to 19, the City is committed to ensuring the public safety of all of its residents.

- The city joins its local government partners, Virginia First Cities and the Virginia Municipal League, in supporting increased HB 599 funding, Aid to Local Police. The state created a program of financial assistance to local police departments (HB 599) when it imposed an annexation moratorium on cities more than 30 years ago. The state must be held to a standard of upholding this contract and funding aid to our city police, especially for our city that is not able to grow in geographic footprint.

Additionally, the city supports:

- Continued funding for the Safer Communities Program to support holistic, community-based strategies that address the root causes and conditions of community violence.
- State funding to increase the salaries and benefits of the city’s public defenders to ensure equitable judicial outcomes for all residents, regardless of income or ability to pay. Increasing salaries and benefits of public defenders also helps ensure the city can retain quality public defenders.
- The granting of authority and tools to help address issues of blight, eradicating dilapidated buildings, and vacant buildings. Blighted buildings can be locations for criminal activities and reduce the quality of life for residents.
- Additional tools and resources to reduce crime around and related to placement of ABC stores.
- Additional resources to reduce the opioid crisis but protections so that we stop criminalizing addiction.
- Funding for out-of-school time programming, that ensures young people have safe and positive opportunities.

Finally, the city **strongly urges** the General Assembly to adopt additional tools to reduce gun violence and encourage safe gun ownership. Richmond has made great strides in reducing instances of gun violence in the city. However, Richmond seeks additional support in the form of legislation that reduces gun violence and funding and incentives to encourage safe gun ownership practices.

Connecting Our City: Transportation

Richmond has been working to ensure that all citizens have access to high-quality jobs, schools, doctors' offices, grocery stores, entertainment options, outdoor recreation, quality childcare, family, and friends regardless of where they live or whether they own a car. The city wishes to build a stronger system of multimodal transportation options for residents. The city has been working to bridge gaps in our transportation systems and ensure safe and reliable transportation and transit options for all residents. The city is committed that as it grows and faces greater transportation challenges, it still works to address and reconcile gaps that currently exist due to systemic inequality in order to ensure safe and reliable transportation options for all.

Richmond requests legislation to expand the authority to use speed cameras to the campuses of higher education institutions. Richmond is the home to three college campuses, as well as to a community college. Virginia Commonwealth University and Virginia Union University, especially, are woven into the urban fabric of Richmond. VCU is among the largest colleges in Virginia and its unique campus results in a large number of pedestrians navigating busy city streets. The city supports expanding authority for tools that will help it achieve its Vision Zero goals to eliminate fatal crashes. Tools such as automatic speed enforcement cameras are already having a positive impact in reducing speeding around the K-12 schools where they have been placed. The city supports expanding authority to place speed cameras in places where vulnerable pedestrian populations can be protected, where speed studies indicate speed cameras would be helpful, and with consideration toward equity and community safety.

The city joins its local government partners, Virginia First Cities and the Virginia Municipal League in additional efforts to fund improvements to local transportation systems, roadway maintenance, safe street improvements, bus and transit support, and evaluate formulas that disadvantage municipalities.

Additionally, the city supports:

- Legislation that expands the authority to use speed cameras in designated children's day care programs and to expand the hours speed cameras may be used in school zones.
- Legislation and budget amendments that allocate additional resource to multimodal transportation options. With Richmond's growth, there must be an increase in pedestrians, bikes, public transit riders, and other alternative forms of transportation in order to keep the city growing sustainably and to prevent regional traffic congestion. Richmond supports efforts to make all alternative forms of transportation more accessible, user-friendly, adaptive, energy-conscious, and reliable. Support for multimodal transportation will help all Richmonders be more connected to the services they rely on.
- Fully funding the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission's findings in the 2021 Transportation Infrastructure and Funding study and increasing the availability of street maintenance funding.
- Additional street maintenance funds to support the increased use of the city's road and infrastructure because it serves as the seat of government for the Commonwealth of Virginia and the regional hub of jobs, entertainment, and cultural institutions.

Economic Development and Community Wealth Building

Richmond is home to a variety of businesses and industries that offer opportunities for quality employment and capital investment. Richmond is a first-choice location for businesses and investment because the city's

transportation, housing, cultural, outdoor, commercial, and institutional amenities create a vibrant city. Richmonders of all income levels should have opportunities for life-long learning and skill-building. Richmond seeks to foster an environment that supports the growth of existing and new small, medium, and large businesses. Richmond also seeks to mitigate the racial disparities that exist in the current job market, where white workers in the Richmond region are about three times as likely as Black workers to be employed in management occupations and Black workers are predominately in low-wage jobs. Poor job access leads to modern-day segregation. While the legacy of unequal job access is not unique to Richmond, the city seeks to cultivate a diverse and thriving economy with opportunities to help all residents.

To support Richmond’s economic and commercial growth the city will request legislation to renew specified localities’ ability to collect all sales tax revenue from public facilities, including convention centers and hotels integral to them. That local power, authorized by § 58.1-608.3, sunset on July 1, 2024. The Commonwealth has restored it eight times since first granting the power in 1991.

Additionally, the city supports:

- Authority and tools to upzone and increase zoning density, particularly around transportation, housing, and critical care services.
- Maintaining and expanding local authority to plan and regulate land use and opposes any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities.
- Support for start-ups, small businesses, and women- and minority-owned businesses.
- Programs and tools that support Richmond’s vibrant and growing tourism industry.
- Increased state funding to further support the work of the city’s Office of Community Wealth Building.
- Efforts that expand access to and reduce the cost of quality childcare. Childcare is critical to maintaining a vibrant and diverse workforce.
- Efforts to sufficiently fund the Governor’s Motion Picture Opportunity Fund and the Governor’s Motion Picture Tax Credit Fund. The City of Richmond has benefited significantly from the location shooting of many different projects. Richmond has become a backdrop for Hollywood and continues to drive resources, jobs, and unique creative opportunities to Richmond. It also highlights Richmond’s historic place as the capital of the Commonwealth, its unique culture and architecture, and beautiful James River system.
- Efforts to allow a deeper partnership between the city and the Commonwealth as it relates to off-hours use of state-owned parking decks, particularly for weekends and large events.

Building a Cleaner Future

The City of Richmond values having clean water, clean air, and a flourishing ecosystem. Richmond is positively adapting to a changing climate where all residents have equitable access to nature and a healthy community. Richmond has a wide system of parks, including the excellent James River Park System. Clean water not only improves the natural environment that supports plant and animal life, but also improves human health, as the James River is the source of drinking water for residents in the region.

Richmond’s Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Project

In the late 1800s, Richmond was one of the first cities in Virginia to create a system to carry sewage away from the urban center. While the first, Richmond is not alone as many cities in the United States have a combined sewer system. Roughly one-third of Richmond is in the combined sewer system area. In these areas, wastewater from homes and businesses, and stormwater from streets, are combined into a single pipe and flow to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. During dry weather, all of this water is treated. But if stormwater overwhelms the system’s capacity, as it can after heavy rainfall, stormwater and wastewater create an overflow that directly

feeds into the James River and Gillies Creek. The release of stormwater combined with untreated wastewater can contribute to poor water quality and impairs recreational use of the river. While Richmond has made significant progress in reducing the frequency of combined sewer overflow events and amount of pollution entering the James River, these overflows still persist and need to be addressed for the health of the river and the community. Richmond has made large investments since the 1970s to reduce overflow events, investing over \$780 million (in 2023 dollars). The City is currently beginning a new \$575-\$625 million effort to address overflow events. The General Assembly mandated that the city complete this work by 2035. In order to meet this requirement without placing the full burden of the cost on Richmond's ratepayers, the city seeks state grant funding to support the CSO project. Without state support, the city has limited options to fund the overall cost of the project. Rate payers in Richmond are already paying the some of the highest rates in Virginia. The city cannot burden them with the costs. The city's other options would require abandoning some of the important work the city is undertaking on other key public services including other water-quality mandates, schools, roads, affordable housing, tax incentives to support low-income homeowners, and public safety programs.

The cost of the CSO Final Plan as approved by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on August 8, 2024, is \$565 million. The city will need \$500 million in state funds set-aside for the project by FY29 in order to initiate contracts to meet the requirements mandated by the General Assembly. Richmond requests additional state funding of \$100 million in FY25 and \$150 million in FY26 to support the implementation of the city's Final Plan.

Richmond also supports:

- Development of patterns and policies which encourage density and discourage a dependency on single-occupancy vehicles.
- Policies which reduce the level of greenhouse gasses and increase healthy air quality
- Funding support for the parks and trails system, including the Fall Line Trail, in the city which improve the quality of life for our citizens and those who visit our capital city.
- Infrastructure investments in parks and public spaces such as accessibility to public transportation, installation of bathrooms, and access to drinkable water.
- Additional tools and resources to support the Richmond Soil and Water Conservation District efforts to provide financial and educational resources and administer programs designed to encourage individual responsibility to conserve, improve and sustain our soil and water resources for future generations.
- Additional resources to support the city's Office of Sustainability.
- Additional efforts to allow the city to tap into federal dollars for the critical Lead Service Line Replacement program.
- Funding for installation and maintenance of public electric vehicle charging stations.
- Recognition that Richmond is an urbanized heat island that experiences higher temperatures than outlying areas. The city supports efforts to reduce urban heat vulnerability. These efforts include helping increase tree canopy coverage in the city, shade from which helps reduce urban temperatures and encourages a more walkable environment. Trees also help reduce air pollution.

Courageously Opposing Discriminatory Policies and Practices

As a city we know that we must acknowledge the continuing impact racism plays in many of our state policies and state funding decisions. The city supports all efforts to amend the Code of Virginia and any state regulation that is inherently racist or biased.

Additionally, the city supports all efforts to amend any state funding formula used to allocate funds to local governments that create and sustain inequities between communities.

The City of Richmond will continue to oppose any state policies or regulations that attempt to roll back civil rights or to discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, or race. Likewise, any state attempts to regulate the placement or banning of books or otherwise whitewash the nation and Commonwealth's history will be opposed.

Local Authority of Our City

Local authority is a key component to ensure Richmond can continue to meet the strategic initiatives it has adopted. In order to further the strategies and programs outlined in the Richmond 300 plan, Richmond seeks to preserve local authority and autonomy in matters including land use, revenue measures, procurement, and other issues of local concern. Richmond also has a unique relationship with the Commonwealth of Virginia as it serves as the seat of state Government.

The City Charter:

The city believes that authorities established in their City Charter should allow Richmond government to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible and the city should be supported when they propose updates to the Charter.

Richmond supports:

- Fair market evaluation and continuation of payments in lieu of taxes to offset losses in property taxes due to the existence of a high number of nontaxable properties within its boundaries.
- Authority to determine placement and licensing of cannabis stores, vape stores, and skill games in proximity to schools, preschools, day care centers, addiction treatment centers, and other similar locations.
- Preservation of our local authority and autonomy in matters of local concern.

Richmond opposes any unfunded mandate from the Commonwealth of Virginia. When funding for a mandated program is altered, the mandate should be suspended until full funding is restored.