

Virginia General Assembly 2022 Session

Proposed Timeframe for Legislative Agenda and Action Steps

October 20, 2021- Council COS circulates markup of 2021 legislative program to Council and Administration asking for changes or additions for 2022 package with responses due by November 1st at 8 a.m.

October 20th- October 29th – Receive legislative items from Council members through direct meetings or by email.

November 1, 2021 – Circulate draft of legislative items received. Review at the OD Meeting.

November 8, 2021 – Review consolidated draft program with City Council and receive feedback.

November 11, 2021 – Lobbyists will circulate proposed final program to City Council and Administration.

November 15, 2021 – Special Meeting of Council to introduce Resolution (proposed)

November 29, 2021 - All requests for drafts of legislation to be pre-filed to Legislative Services by 5:00 p.m.

December 13, 2021 – **Council Meeting to vote final approval. (Unless Council determines an alternative date for adoption)**

January 7, 2022 - All requests for drafts, redrafts, and corrections of legislation creating or continuing a study to Legislative Services by 5:00 p.m.; All requests for redrafts and corrections for legislation to be pre-filed to Legislative Services by 5:00 p.m.

January 12, 2022 - First Day of Session. Prefiling ends at 10:00 a.m.

*Please note work sessions or special meetings could potentially be needed to accommodate the finalization schedule.

City of Richmond Legislative Proposals
for the
Virginia General Assembly 2022 Regular Session

Requests for Legislation and Funding

Overcoming years of divestment is an immense task. Comprehensively and collectively tackling issues within the City of Richmond that support our marginalized communities is necessary. The City of Richmond, as the seat of state government cannot address these challenges alone – we need support from the Commonwealth of Virginia to be able to effectively fund these priorities. The following represent our requests of the Governor and the 2022 Virginia General Assembly.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) - *With the \$50 million ARPA funds allotted to the City of Richmond during the 2021 General Assembly Special Session, along with the \$50 million local match, plans are underway to initiate Capital Improvement Projects, Interim Plan projects – ten projects over the next six years that will cut combined sewer overflow volume by 182 million gallons per year, and the start of the City’s Final Plan project design. The City of Richmond is incredibly grateful for this investment to-date, but reducing the final ten percent of sewer overflow in the next 14 years will still cost an estimated \$1.3 billion, and the city and its ratepayers cannot do it alone. The General Assembly is requested to consistently help the City of Richmond manage the high cost of controlling the CSO in the city by including in successive state budgets the funding to enable the city to complete the its Final Plan as required by 2035. (CM Jordan)*

Lead Service Line Replacement - *The City of Richmond estimates it has 12,000 lead service lines that need to be replaced. In today’s dollars we estimate this will cost \$35 million. We know that we cannot meet the \$35 million need on our own. We ask that the state include \$1 million for FY 22 – FY 26 in order to help Richmond double its homeowner lead service line reimbursement program and to address once and for all this critical water quality and environmental justice issue.*

HOUSING

Combat Gentrification and Support Familial Wealth *To prevent the displacement of long-term owner occupants due to rising property tax assessments and encourage the creation of intergenerational, familial wealth, the Commonwealth of Virginia should amend the Constitution of Virginia to provide the authority for Virginia local governments that choose to the ability to provide tax relief to low income, long-term residents experiencing dramatic increases in their real estate tax assessments. (See Long-Term Owner Occupant/LOOP Program Issue Brief) (CM Newbille, CM Robertson)*

Redevelopment of Creighton Court *An appropriation of \$27 million to the redevelopment of the Creighton Court community. Creighton, which was built in 1953, and the families that have called this community home for years, deserve a quality and safe place to call home. These dollars will fulfill the FY23 funding needs for the construction and infrastructure costs of Creighton’s Phase A transformation into a mixed-income, flourishing community of choice. Mayor Stoney*

Lead Service Line Replacement Funding *An appropriation of \$1 million for FY22-FY24 for Lead Service Line Replacement to help Richmond double its homeowner lead service line reimbursement program to address this critical water quality and environmental justice issue. The City of Richmond has been working*

with the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water for the past three years to develop and institute a lead service line rebate program for homeowners. This program has awarded the City of Richmond a \$500,000 grant annually towards the replacement of lead service lines on homeowners' property under the VDH-ODW Financial and Construction Assistance Programs. Currently, the City of Richmond estimates it has 12,000 lead service lines that need to be replaced. In today's dollars we estimate this will cost \$35 million. We ask that the state also include \$1 million for each of the next fiscal years.

Mayor Stoney

EQUITY BASED COURTS

Public Defenders Pay Parity - *The Commonwealth of Virginia is requested to supplement the salaries of its public defenders. The cost of this equity-based request should be borne by the state, not local government. (CM Addison, CM Lynch, CM Jordan)*

TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY/VISION ZERO

Use of Radar Enabled Cameras – The City request that the authority to use radar-enabled speeding and red-light cameras be expanded to include business, park, and residential districts. Legislation was enacted in the 2020 General Assembly session permitting their use in posted school crossing zones and work zones. This authority should be expanded to include residential, park, and selected business districts. *See article linked [HERE](#) for Richmond Senator Morrissey comments on attempts to open this bill up beyond school and work zones.*

Bicycle Traffic Requirements –The City requests that Virginia localities be authorized to permit bicyclists to treat a stop sign as a yield sign and a red-light traffic signal as a stop sign on highways maintained by the locality. **(CM Jordan)**

Policy Statements

EDUCATION

Public Education Funding – *Despite Virginia's status as one of the top 10 states for median household income, it ranks 41st in state per-pupil spending, according to an analysis by The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, a nonpartisan, nonprofit group in Richmond that advocates for racial and economic justice. For this reason, the City believes the 2022 General Assembly session should focus on the equity fund/At-Risk Add-On, English learner ratios, support staff funding, and school construction. The General Assembly should continue to establish and fully fund the equity fund (enhanced at-risk add-on). This program is critical to our public schools' ability to close the achievement gap. Every student should have access to strong, well-supported schools — no matter their zip code. This fund would send additional dollars to public schools like those in Richmond with a high concentration of poverty. As we work to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is vital that our public schools have the resources they need to support our children. Likewise, the City of Richmond supports the statewide authority for local governments to impose a one percent sales tax to help raise funds for school construction and renovation.*

Broadband - Broadband coverage and affordability is a pervasive issue that has far-reaching implications for K-12 education and lifelong learning. The City urges and supports a concentrated governmental effort to ensure broadband coverage is both available and affordable to those that are most in need.

HOUSING (AFFORDABILITY, EVICTION, GENTRIFICATION AND BLIGHT)

Affordability and Gentrification - The City requests and supports General Assembly actions to provide local governments with all possible tools to deal with the impacts of a market that, on the one hand, is

vibrant, and on the other driving home prices upward to the point of being unaffordable for a vast majority of residents. The city needs to increase the supply of affordable housing. The Commonwealth can encourage this by providing local governments additional sources for financing and encouraging all possible resources to leverage federal dollars to the benefit of affordable workforce and senior housing. Any and all tools to encourage private developers and non-profits to develop, construct and/or rehabilitate housing that is affordable should be incentivized by the state. *During the 2021 session, Gov. Ralph Northam signed into law legislation creating a state low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC). S.B. 1197 creates the Virginia housing opportunity tax credit, which will have a \$15 million annual allocation for five years, applying to taxable years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2021. The state credit will match federal 4% and 9% LIHTC allocations. We already know that demand will outstrip supply. Therefore, we encourage the General Assembly to increase the dollars available for the Virginia Housing Opportunity Tax Credit by at least \$10 million.*

Housing Trust Fund - The City supports the restoration of funding and increased funding for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund that was deferred due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City also supports changes that would provide greater flexibility in using a portion of the Fund to match local housing trust funds to support innovative housing projects and low-and moderate-income housing projects that are located in areas experiencing extreme shortages of such housing.

Transformation of Public Housing – The City is supportive of and encourages all possible sources of funding from the state and federal government for the transformation of public housing by providing financial assistance and tools for public housing redevelopment and infrastructure improvements. Being able to build back stronger allows us all to focus on historic inequities that have blighted communities of color for decades. Giving attention to creating healthy, vibrant communities is essential to ensuring Virginians negatively impacted by America’s past racist housing policies are rightfully cared for.

Evictions - As the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare an already exacerbated eviction problem in the Commonwealth, especially in the City of Richmond, further work needs to be done to create a healthier balance between those seeking to obtain or maintain adequate housing and those with housing to offer. The City of Richmond City Council is supportive of requiring that tenants facing eviction for reasons other than nonpayment of rent be entitled to legal counsel.

SOCIAL/HUMAN SERVICES

Wrap Around Child Care– The City supports efforts to provide seamless, affordable access to quality wraparound early childhood services for at-risk families – including home visiting, subsidized childcare, and preschool through increased funding and improved state and local service delivery systems. **(CM Newbille)**

Mental Health – The City supports additional funding in FY 2022-2024 for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to include: community based, recovery-focused mental health, substance abuse and emergency/crisis stabilization services; drug treatment facilities for individuals that have addiction problems but who are currently housed in jails or prisons; and mental health training, communication training for prison and jail staff. **(CM Newbille)**

Virginia Grocery Investment Fund - Food Deserts– The City supports “full” funding for the Virginia Grocery Investment Fund to include financial and technical support for businesses to expand and ensure greater access to healthy food for residents of the Commonwealth. **(CM Newbille)**

TAXATION

Cannabis and Cannabinoid Tax??– The City supports authorizing localities to implement a point-of-sale tax on cannabis and cannabinoid products packaged and sold as a nutritional supplement. The point of sales tax rate should not exceed any existing sales tax rate imposed on tobacco products by the locality.

Games of Skill Machines – The operation of games of skill should be made available as well as a local government funding stream for revenues derived from the games of skill. Local governments should retain local zoning authority over games of skill.

TRANSPORTATION

Street Maintenance Funding and Formula – The City supports increased funding for the State’s urban street maintenance program. Further, the City supports changes in the statutory provisions for the urban street maintenance funding formula by employing a state-of-the-art asset management approach that uses life cycle costs, pavement and bridge conditions, and recognizes on-street parking lanes and turning lanes, to allocate maintenance funding to cities and towns.

Stormwater Local Assistance Funding - The City supports increased state funding for stormwater infrastructure improvements. More funding from the state is needed to help Richmond maintain its existing current infrastructure and build new infrastructure. The Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) should receive more funding beyond \$50 million and cost matching between the state and localities should be reexamined as this model is not equitable for smaller, independent cities with lower tax bases.

Green Building Codes – The City supports authorizing local governments to adopt building code amendments applicable to new construction or renovations of existing buildings which increase energy conservation, water conservation, or environmental protections.

Participation in Federal Pace Program - The City supports enabling legislation that would allow the Commonwealth to participate in the Residential - Property Assessed Clean Energy program (PACE program). Residential PACE is a federal Department of Energy program that allows homeowners to finance energy efficiency, renewable energy and other eligible improvements on their homes using private sources of capital. PACE programs are typically enabled through state legislation and authorized at the local government level. Municipalities may directly administer residential PACE programs, or through public-private partnerships with one or more PACE providers. **(CM Larson)**