



## Richmond City Council Retreat

### Day 1

#### SWOT Discussion Notes

(Top 5 – As ranked by Council)

#### Strengths:

1. Coalesce and navigate challenging issues (examples: civil unrest, school system funding)
2. Desire to gather community input, make sure all voices are heard-Responsive to constituents
3. Have great assets: how do you harness them for economic development, quality of life, and revenue generation
4. Committed, talented, and experienced individuals on Council
5. Desire to work with Mayor's administration

#### Weaknesses:

1. Collective Council communication externally. Need to achieve Council-wide presence on social media, news media, and other outlets. Enhance overall public relations.
2. Need to identify pathway for Council staff to better support Council members in their work. This includes reviewing staff responsibilities, consider restructuring opportunities, conducting internal/external salary analysis, streamlining processes, and creating management structure to lead, set expectations, and hold staff accountable. This should encompass all units reporting directly to Council (not just Chief of Staff).
3. Develop structured and timely training, professional development, and support activities for Council members. This includes annual retreats, new member orientation, and action plan when a new Council takes office after an election (organizational meeting and ongoing).
4. Council needs information in a timely fashion to prepare for meetings, etc.
5. Council should embrace public meeting discussions as it is challenging for nine members to communicate effectively otherwise.

#### Opportunities:

1. Set aside time to develop a Council economic vitality strategic plan that proactively identifies economic development opportunities and actions plans throughout the city.
2. Collaborate with the administration to analyze equity issues city-wide and develop an action plan that rectifies the wrongs of ordinances and practices that are systemically oppressive.
3. Partner with, learn from, and share best practices and experiences with other localities (regionally, Virginia, and beyond).

4. Tie:
  - a. Collaborate with anchor institutions, non-profits, private-sector, and other entities to prevent missed opportunities for the city.
  - b. Identify legislative agenda and strategy to improve partnerships with Federal representatives.
  - c. Prioritize and prepare for new potential issues/projects that significantly impact the community (budget, etc.). Examples include ongoing casino and cannabis initiatives at state and local levels.
  - d. Best utilize the Riverfront Plan to focus on opportunities for community/economic development and eco-tourism.

#### Threats:

1. COVID19 pandemic and its impact to the health and welfare of residents, the local economy, housing, employment, schools, etc.
2. Public schools:
  - a. Budget
  - b. School certification
  - c. Local Composite Index
  - d. Student success
3. The structure of Virginia independent cities (Burden of services not shared with counties, annexation moratorium/landlocked, lack of flexibility)
4. Quality of life issues:
  - a. Health and wellbeing of residents
  - b. Age, condition, location of public housing and impacts on residents
  - c. Food insecurity
5. Lack of wealth and wealth building opportunities in areas that have a significant gap.