City of Richmond, VA
Performance Review Update

September 30, 2024

Prepared by:

James M. Burke, PhD
Linda L. Pierce, MBA
TEOconsulting, LLC
www.teoconsulting.org

teo
CONSULTING

Table of Contents

Introduction

In 2017, soon after Mayor Levar Stoney took office, he commissioned a performance review of 19 departments and offices that are among those under his authority. The review was performed with a team assembled by members of the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. The team conducted employee surveys, held individual interviews with office and departmental leadership, facilitated many employee focus groups and listening sessions, and reviewed agency documents as they prepared their report. The team was led by James M. Burke, PhD, and Linda L. Pierce, MBA, the authors of this 2024 update.

With Mayor Stoney's second term coming to an end on January 1, 2025, he commissioned a review of the 2017 report to gather information regarding the extent to which the recommendations were implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented, and which of the yet-to-be-completed recommendations remain relevant.

The 2017 review contained over 225 recommendations for the departments and offices and several more that were focused Citywide. A number of overarching themes emerged that crossed many areas of City Hall. The 2017 report can be found [here.](#)

In preparing the department and office heads for this update, we made it clear that we did not assume that all of the recommendations should have been implemented. Certainly, during the period of time from 2017 to the present, many unforeseen circumstances occurred. One of the most significant, of course, was the COVID-19 global pandemic that disrupted nearly every area of society. Overnight, workplaces became vacant and remote work became the norm except for first responders, essential services, and other critical service providers whose workloads often increased due to illnesses of their colleagues. In addition, the public response to the murder of George Floyd led to numerous conflicts between civilians and law enforcement and the involvement of many first responders. This was followed by the damage and removal of several controversial statues around Richmond requiring significant legal, financial, and tactical City resources. These and many other global, national, and state events impacted the viability of the recommendations in some cases and required re-evaluation, re-prioritization, and/or alternative solutions. In addition, just because a member of the consulting team made a recommendation did not mean that the City should follow the recommendation. The advantage of consultants is to provide a different perspective, but one should not assume that the consultant is always correct or that the recommendation can absolutely be achieved because of budgetary limitations, City or state code, or other issues.

In addition to obtaining updates on the recommendations, the 2024 consulting team also inquired of the Directors about other initiatives (not among the recommendations) that each agency implemented since 2017, what initiatives are currently being undertaken, and what is on tap for future implementation within their department or office. It is our hope that this report provides an accurate update, not just of the recommendations from the initial review, but also the work that is now being done to take Richmond City government well beyond the 2017

recommendations. Please note, however, that the core scope of our work was only to obtain updates on the 2017 report itself. It was not to explore any issues that have arisen since then.

Methodology

Each Director received a survey that contained the specific 2017 recommendations for their department or office and they were asked to identify where progress had or had not been made for each recommendation. The survey also required the Director to explain their response and provide additional context. The survey responses were followed up by individual interviews with each Director for further clarification.

Of the eighteen agency Directors (two departments from the original 19 had merged), only a few of those surveyed and interviewed were in their positions in 2017. Many of the respondents, therefore, engaged their teams to update the survey responses on the recommendations, providing as much history as possible going back to 2017. In some cases, the better part of the department had turned over since 2017, so they did the best they could historically. In this update, we provide a brief overview to each department or office along with an updated mission and vision statements if we were alerted to those changes. However, we left the responses as we received them except for minor stylistic edits that did not impact the substance of the response.

It is important to be clear that this document relies upon the self-report from the Directors and, in some cases, their teams. The Directors were asked to have the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) of their portfolio review their responses. When it came to inter-departmental performance, we were able to identify where improvements had apparently been made and where more work was needed. We found the Directors to be quite candid in their comments and in the interviews. While acknowledging accomplishments and work that is in progress, none of them suggested that the work was done. The lack of self-satisfaction is a plus from the vantage point of these consultants. As people who have worked extensively in government for over 20 years, we know that there is always more work to be done. Improving performance, processes, and procedures is a constant effort for any organization and all the more so when working with governmental entities that are, by design, bureaucratic.

As with the 2017 report, this report begins by addressing the eight over-arching survey themes. The themes in 2017 were based upon our interviews and a Citywide employee survey. Due to cost-containment, an employee survey was not conducted for this 2024 review. That is something the next administration may wish to do should funds be available. It would provide another updated view from 2017 and allow for ongoing measures of improvement. It should be noted, as we mention in the "Update on Survey Themes" section, that there was a fairly high correlation in the themes from the leadership and the survey results from the rank and file employees. All the same, there is never a true substitute for hearing from everyone.

A Note Regarding Some of the Recommendations

Most of the recommendations were specific to the particular department under review. However, as the reader will see, there are some recommendations that are Citywide but were included in the departmental recommendations. If we had to do it all over again, we would have removed those recommendations from the responsibility of the specific department to either another department or to the Mayor's Office. For example, when the reviewers of a department suggested that the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) should visit the department and meet with the staff, it would have been better to write the recommendation indicating that the Director should invite the Mayor and CAO to visit the department and meet with staff. As the final editors of this team-written report, we take responsibility for that and conveyed that message to the Directors of the departments and offices.

Update of 2017 Recommendations

The recommendations from the 2017 review were distilled into five key areas with subsections. These five areas provide an overarching view of what we felt most pressing in 2017. What follows is just a highlight of some of what we saw in 2017 and what we observed in 2024. More detailed information is contained within the sections related to each department or office.

1. **Processes and Procedures**

   a. Re-engineer processes

In 2017, we found that many processes were inefficient and slow. We identified that Human Resources and Finance were particularly troublesome, but also identified that Procurement and Information Technology were problematic. In other words, the core centralized services were hampering progress.

The Human Resources department was restructured in 2023 and all employees performing HR functions within each department were reassigned to the Department of Human Resources for centralization. In addition, HR Business Partners and Talent Acquisition partners are assigned to various portfolios throughout the enterprise. In the survey and during the interviews, the majority noted that they have seen the turnaround times with Human Resources improve. This is a very positive development as it impacts all of the areas of City Hall. Some noted that there is still room for further improvement. Some stated that they are still losing out on good candidates because the hiring process can take too long. A significant issue in the delays has to do with the many background checks that have to be conducted depending upon the requirements of the position. The Director of Human Resources is looking for ways to adhere to the guidelines while shrinking the time it takes to complete the background checks that are primarily performed by outside entities or the state.

There have been significant advances within Procurement. The P-Card program has been fully implemented, decreasing wait times for anything from some very necessary small items such as

bolts and screws to higher dollar expenses. When controls are in place, the City is able to determine any improper use of spending through this less bureaucratic process and also reap the benefits of rebates from the P-Card system. Ongoing training in the proper use of P-Cards continues to be done by Procurement. In 2024, Procurement Services was awarded the Achievement in Excellence in Procurement award from the National Procurement Institute.

Information Technology implemented a new project management process that includes steps to initiate, analyze, design, build, test, and implement. The process includes change management and training components to help transition from old legacy systems to new systems. Disaster recovery is also integrated into the information system project management process. Users report that this has helped with system changes.

Finance has expanded the use of Oracle for systems improvement and initiated the RVAPay system. A Lockbox change is in process to eliminate credit card convenience fees and a MUNIS upgrade is in process. All of these changes impact the efficiency of processes with the goal of improving customer service.

    b.   Document processes

Given the above, in 2017 we suggested that it would be valuable for the City to document and communicate core processes.

We learned that several departments had obtained various certifications and accreditations which require updated and documented policies and procedures. The department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response, for example, received and was re-awarded full accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Fire received an ISO Class 1 Rating by the Center for Public Safety Excellence Institute. Procurement, as noted above, received an Achievement of Excellence in Procurement by the National Procurement Institute. The Department of Public Works received its fifth renewal of accreditation from the American Public Works Association. Several other departments reported reviewing, updating, and documenting their business processes, and in many cases, developing key performance indicators to monitor progress.

    c.   Educate internal customers

In 2017, we suggested that after documenting core processes, it was essential that all current and future employees receive training on how to execute processes in a consistent and effective manner. Procurement is taking an active stance in this area so that employees properly use everything from the RFP system to P-cards.

    d.   Model customer services inside City Hall

In 2017, the issue of providing effective and efficient customer service came up as a concern across many departments. We suggested that the City reward positive behavior and also, if not done already, evaluate employees on their skill at providing quality customer service.

In response to this, the City has partnered with Reynolds Community College to provide customer service training. We also heard very positive feedback from all interviewed about the current portfolio structure and satisfaction with the DCAOs. Many credited their DCAOs with removing bottlenecks, obtaining more staffing, and helping advance initiatives.

2. Systems and Technology

    a. Develop back-up systems

In 2017, our team was very concerned about the lack of back-up systems that left the City vulnerable. We were also concerned about security issues and recommended that the City elevate security to a higher level.

The Department of Information Technology (DIT) now categorizes systems as mission critical, business critical, business necessary, and supplemental. Major systems comprise the mission and business critical labels and include the Microsoft cloud environment, all infrastructure and security components, financial systems, public safety systems, and utility systems. All cloud hosted systems include disaster recovery processes and recovery time objectives as contractual term components. The department also requires annual disaster recovery testing. The department also now includes business continuity requirements and documentation as part of its standard information technology project planning and management.

Additionally, the Administration has partnered with the City Council and the City Auditor to conduct independent information technology audits every two years.

    b. Invest in technology wisely

In 2017, the team suggested that DIT focus on systems that would improve transparency and workflow communication. We especially recommended working with systems that would support Human Resources, Procurement, and all areas of public safety.

Since that time the City has expanded its use of NeoGov functionality. For example, in Human Resources, NeoGov was used only for job posting. Now with the use of the Applicant Tracking System, workflow improvement and enhanced onboarding are possible. Human Resources is also testing usages into the Application Program Interface to easily transfer new hire data from NeoGov to CORERP, the City's enterprise resource planning system (previously referred to as RAPIDS). NeoGov's LEARN (learning management system) was installed in August 2024 providing opportunities for professional development and NeoGov's PERFORM (performance management system) is slated for a 2025 installation.

Numerous technology improvements were reported to have occurred in the Police department including the Real Time Crime Center, cell phone data extraction devices, full implementation of body worn cameras, upgraded tasers, photo speed enforcement, and several other platforms.

Procurement stated that they purchased and implemented the OpenGov procurement module in 2022, transforming the entire process from bid and request for proposal to contracting, radically shrinking the time to obtain necessary items.

c. Educate users

In 2017, we simply identified the importance of developing a way of educating the employees on the new systems and the retirement of legacy systems.

Since then, the procurement process redesign, for example, has been accompanied by a large-scale initiative to educate and equip users. Policy documents, templates, forms, contracts, solicitation examples, and other documents are on Starnet for users to access. Additionally, Procurement, as noted above, provides one-on-one education and support to users.

3. Culture and Communication

a. Improve culture

What we saw in 2017 was a culture that was in significant need of repair. We saw a level of despondency among many employees that was palpable. We encouraged leadership to foster more positive relationships, promote shared accountability, and create a positive culture that led to both internal and external service improvements. What we were saying is that without a positive internal culture at City Hall, it would be difficult to provide a positive interaction with the residents of the City of Richmond.

In 2024, while engaging with the Directors and their teams, we saw notable improvement in engagement, willingness to cooperate, and general morale. During our research numerous departments (including but not exclusively - Social Services, Public Utilities, Justice Services, Police, Fire, Budget and Strategic Planning) shared their efforts to improve culture, communication, alignment, and morale. We saw renewed energy among the leaders and a genuine care and concern about the staff. The advances made, for example, in the Department of Social Services to support their team were impressive.

We also heard of several departments reorganizing to better align resources and services such as Budget and Strategic Planning, the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response, Planning Review and Development, Human Resources, Procurement, etc.

b. Emphasize proper communication

Consistent with our findings with the culture of City Hall, communication, perhaps the most important sign of a culture, needed to be greatly improved and no longer be so hierarchical or siloed.

Several of those interviewed for this report spoke of the improved inter-department/office communication. In some cases, there were more informal meetings that took place focused on finding solutions rather than on blaming others. We heard of regular inter-departmental meetings that were "robust" and where issues that overlapped departments were discussed and vetted to find solutions with everyone at the table. We heard of numerous staff focus groups held by the CAO and DCAOs to better understand employee concerns, spurring many of the improvements to wages and benefits. Additionally, the Office of Strategic Communication and Civic Engagement was created with a goal of improving communication within and outside of City Hall.

That being said, there are reportedly still areas where more collaboration is needed. We would strongly suggest that the next administration ensure that the heads of departments and offices throughout the City come together frequently to focus on solving problems in a collaborative, non-blaming manner. There is a normal tendency to want to look good in front of those to whom one reports, but this runs counter to collaboration in many cases. We would suggest that the next administration continue the culture shift away from blame and toward even more open and honest dialogue. Much improvement has been made and it is important to build on that success.

4. Change

a. Make it happen

This recommendation emerged from a desire to turn the report into action. What we heard was that a lack of urgency pervaded City Hall in 2017. We suggested the development of a cross-functional team to focus on the recommendations and the implementation of the recommendations that made the most sense for the City and fostering a "get it done" attitude.

In 2024, we were impressed by the number of practical initiatives that were underway in the vast majority of the departments and offices. This seems to be an artifact of getting the right people in the right positions. Admittedly, this was not easy given the turnover in some departments over the years, most notably in Finance, Human Resources, and Police. It is our hope that the energy that people are putting into their work at City Hall will fuel the drive for change and for urgency. From an organizational lens, it is just more exciting to work with colleagues who are energized and mission-focused.

b. Prioritize change

Building on the above, we suggested there be a transformation office that would report to Mayor Stoney to implement the recommendations and advance Citywide culture change. As noted on the City of Richmond website, "The Office of Performance Management was created to instill a long-term culture of accountability and success." One of the functions of the office is to lead the "implementation of additional internal reforms identified by the Performance Review and/or ongoing assessments." The Strategic Action plans from 2020 to 2025 are available on their website. We were pleased to see that this has been implemented and that the plans are posted.

The energy we saw in Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities exemplifies some of the best in the City as does the commitment of several leaders to streamline processes and document improvement as in the Department of Planning and Development. Shrinking response time and being solution-oriented rather than being bureaucratic benefits all who live in or interact with the City. We were also happy to hear of greater cross-agency engagement to make things happen. We recommend that this continue and expand and that the City advertises these collaborative initiatives. We heard much more about collaboration in 2024 than silos, but there is still more work to be done to ensure that the City is operating fully as "One City."

c. Culture survey

We recommended that a culture survey be initiated in 18 months to follow up on the results of our employee survey. Some departments did their own surveys. Fire, for example, reportedly conducted an internal culture survey in 2021 and a focused organizational safety survey in 2023 where Richmond Fire was benchmarked against 90 other fire departments.

The next administration may want to conduct an all-employee survey to establish baseline data and compare that with the 2017 survey data. When reviewing the results of any culture survey it is important to consider that not every employee is going to be a happy employee. Gallup's annual updates on employee engagement are enlightening and can provide a benchmark for any organization.

5. People and Relationships

a. Staffing and workload

In 2017, we expressed a concern about workload balance, especially in the areas of Social Services and Parks and Recreation (now Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.)

Staffing levels in many organizations since Covid-19 have fallen and the dynamics of the workplace have changed significantly in many areas. The City has increased positions in several critical areas. It was good to hear that the movement of staff from the counties to the City is increasing in some areas, upending the movement of employees away from the City. The more the City is experienced as a good place to work, the more likely this trend will be to continue.

b. Workplace improvement

In 2017, we expressed concern about the quality of the workspace for City employees. We were concerned that the workspace for some City employees was not good and, as a result, was damaging morale.

Upon our return in 2024, we saw great improvement in this area with City employees moved to notably better locations. Some examples of this include the consolidation of Justice Services to 730 East Broad Street (with the exception of the Juvenile Detention Center employees), Community Wealth Building office relocation to 701 North 21st Street, Social Services upcoming

move in 2025, and Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities now located at Midtown Green, the former Bon Secours Training Camp.

Other improvements included renovations to the Office of Planning and Development, Human Services, and City Council Chief of Staff office space, and improvements to the Finance and DPU Customer Service Centers on the 1st floor of City Hall.

   c.   Build and nurture relationships

The core focus of this recommendation was to enhance the improvement of inter-departmental and other relationships. In 2017, we found a high degree of tension between and among departments that should have been cooperating with each other on behalf of getting things done for the residents. Instead, they seemed to be impeding progress internally which, in turn, had a negative effect on residents.

In this update, almost all departments reported better relationships with their colleagues in other departments and offices and a much better relationship with the City Attorney's Office. All of these enhanced working relationships have advanced collaborative process improvement initiatives, system updates, and the sharing of knowledge and guidance. These relationships are key to the continued improvements within City Hall.

It is not uncommon to find in any number of organizations that the departments that are meant to serve their colleagues such as human resources, finance,procurement, and information technology lose sight of their primary role as providing internal support functions. It seems that these offices are turning a significant curve and becoming more responsive to both internal and external clients. Some improvements are still needed, but the direction seems to be very positive based on our study. We heard, for example, that several departments initiated bi-weekly meetings on capital projects. This kind of collaboration, as noted above, is very positive. Given the current quality of the Directors, we suggest that a primary focus of the next administration be to continue the trajectory of inter-departmental collaboration and cooperation and, where that is not happening, to require it.

   d.   Develop the workforce

Many employees in 2017 expressed interest in professional development, including managerial and leadership skills.

In response to this, this administration established Citywide professional development initiatives with Reynolds Community College. Also, Social Services instituted a number of professional development initiatives including a complete re-design of their Professional Development and Training Team, a TILT365 assessment for all of its staff members, training certification for its trainers on this assessment to continue offering it to new employee in-house, and executive coaching for the leadership team.

e. Build career pathways

In 2017, we were concerned about the number of employees who did not have a clear career pathway. Keeping experienced people within City government is very important. For those interested in growing in their positions, the lack of a way forward can be demoralizing.

There has been forward motion in response to these wishes. One example is within the Department of Public Utilities. In 2017, there were seven approved department broadband position titles. Now, in 2024, there are 32. Broadbanding is a job classification and compensation approach that can provide more flexibility to pay employees, and encourage employees to take on new projects and assignments to earn more money. It can also lead to lateral moves within the department and City and can also promote lifelong learning and growth.

Update on Survey Themes

In 2017, when we reviewed the survey results of over 1200 City employees, we distilled the results down to key themes (noted below) that overlapped, not surprisingly, with the five themes mentioned in the above section. This suggests that the interviews were a good predictor of what we would find in our more expansive survey research.

1.   Processes and Procedures. In 2017, we noted that the bureaucracy of the City was problematic. Streamlining internal and external processes was absolutely essential. Some of these required technological fixes while others required basic process improvement reviews. Government is inherently bureaucratic, but can become less so if one is focused on solutions rather than leading with policies. As is evident throughout this document, a great deal of effort across numerous departments and offices has been put into streamlining processes and making customer-facing processes easier. Many efforts are still underway, as the reader will see, and many of the Directors are in the process of making changes that will better serve residents and other customers of the City. Internal and external process improvement successes and planned next steps form a significant part of the responses by the Directors.

2.   Responsiveness. The theme of responsiveness came up in 2017. We found that the response time between departments and with, for example, applicants to jobs was not good. We saw, as noted in the previous section, some significant improvements in Human Resources. As noted above, the Department of Planning and Development also reported significantly improved responsiveness critical for both companies and individual homeowners. We would suggest tracking data on turnaround times and putting that up on the website to maximize transparency as much as possible. This is but one example of many in this report.

3.   Communication. This is similar to the above and includes internal and external communication. We saw some notable improvements from 2017 in internal communication and partnership among departments/offices, but there are still areas for improvement. In terms of communication and customer service, there was the training initiative with Reynolds. We do believe that, as in most organizations, that communication can always be improved upon. The City is trending in a positive direction and needs to keep this going internally and externally. The

Directors seemed well-aware of where continued improvement is needed and were not defensive, but rather focused on working to address these issues. A prime example of this was with the Director of Finance and her initiative to improve customer service.

4. Training. There was an emphasis in 2017 on the need for customer service training and also for professional development and promoting higher education opportunities. The arrangement with Reynolds, again, contributes to this. It would be interesting to know how many employees have participated. Human Resources reported that a new training and development unit was created and current offerings include:

- competency training in growth mindset
- conflict resolution skills
- emotional intelligence
- interpersonal conversations
- resilience
- managing difficult conversations
- unconscious bias

Additionally, there are workshops offered for learning how to become a better leader, such as effective performance management, leading a diverse workforce, leading change, and the manager as coach. In August 2024, NeoGov LEARN, a learning management system, was launched providing an opportunity for employees to take courses through a catalog of over 1,500 training modules.

In partnership with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (Reynolds), the City of Richmond has implemented the first ever ongoing workforce development program that provides City employees the opportunity to work with Reynolds to obtain new certifications and training opportunities, such as, but not limited to, customer service certification programs, commercial driver licenses (CDL) training, and business/accounting courses.

From the perspective of a reviewer, these are excellent initiatives. It would be valuable for the City to assess the impact of these initiatives, as much as is realistically possible, on recruitment and retention. Capturing cause-and-effect data in this area is not easy, but it may be valuable for the City to advertise these benefits even more clearly and gather feedback from those who participated in these programs. The Departments of Public Works and Public Utilities reported excellent progress in these areas.

5. Personnel. In response to concerns about the City providing competitive pay and benefits to recruit and retain the best employees, it seems that extensive work has been done. The City established the Attract, Retain, and Motivate (ARM) Initiative and took the following steps: the establishment of a $20.00 minimum wage, significant salary adjustments based on comparisons with similar positions outside of the City, the establishment of employer-sponsored health clinics, transitioning to the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) for new City employees and offering then current employees the option to join VRS, and the enhancement of short and long-term disability insurance through VRS.

In 2024, the City established two health clinics for employees and their families who participate on the City's health plan. The City reported that the clinics offer a range of services, from preventive and acute visits, which are either free or have a nominal charge for employees and their dependents. One of the clinics provides resources for mental health in addition to physical health. A behavioral health specialist is available to employees either in-person or virtually. Physical therapy can be accessed onsite without needing a referral. The clinic conveniently provides occupational health services for sworn police and fire personnel. An onsite pharmacy, laboratory services, certain specialized tests, and referrals are services provided by the clinic at no cost to most employees.

Effective January 1, 2024, new qualifying employees were automatically entered into VRS, and existing employees were given twelve months to decide whether to stay in the Richmond Retirement System (RRS) or transition to VRS. As part of the transition, the issuance of $120 million in Pension Obligation Bonds (POB) and other financial strategies were approved to bring and maintain the Richmond Retirement System's funded status at 80 percent. Employees who enroll in the VRS Hybrid plan will receive short-term disability benefits under the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) as of January 2025. The City is currently securing ST/LT disability insurance for all employees and outsourcing ADA and FMLA management effective January 2025. Finally, in May 2024, Richmond City Council voted to approve three labor agreements for City Police and Fire and the administrative and technical employees. All organized units of employees selected their union representation in 2023 through elections. After several negotiation meetings, three labor agreements have been signed. Two more are in the negotiation phase.

6.   Technology. In 2017, employees expressed a great deal of concern with outdated systems and software. They reported that this impacted their ability to be efficient in the delivery of their services. In 2018, the Interim Director of Information Technology became Director and has held that position since then. In 2024 we heard of expanded usages of core software programs such as CORERP, OpenGov, and NeoGov, among others as well as new software module installations especially in Procurement and Public Safety. There is more room to grow here in making systems work together and meeting the needs of the departments and offices that DIT serves. This is not atypical for any IT entity within an organization. Based upon our interviews with the Directors, DIT is moving in a forward direction while attending to security issues that are essential for all of the City's residents.

7.   Culture. As we reported in 2017, many felt that leadership sets the tone for culture and can be a driving force for improving customer service. As noted earlier in this document, we heard from the Directors that there was much more collaboration in 2024 compared to 2017. They provided specific examples of people getting around the table to solve problems. Some of those who were around in 2017 (Directors and team members) agreed with the survey results of 2017 regarding the siloed approaches that people took to communication. As also noted above, more work is needed in this area to keep the momentum going. Encouraging departments and offices to interact frequently and to consider solutions that span different areas of City Hall acting as one coordinated whole would benefit the employees and residents of Richmond.

During our numerous visits to City Hall to conduct over twenty interviews and meetings throughout this engagement, we were well greeted from the main security desk to the Directors offices. People we passed going in and out of City Hall seemed less stressed and generally happier. First impressions in customer service matter. Improvements in customer service can always be made. Like communication, it is a never-ending and critical process.

8.   Physical environment. In 2017, we suggested that there be greeters at the doors, improved parking for citizens coming to City Hall, improved signage within City Hall, and a more inviting environment. In 2024, we saw improvement in safety and in the quality of the offices of employees at City Hall. We also found the majority of uniformed guards to be welcoming and helpful. We did not notice other significant improvements in the lobby. The signage needs to be updated and, given perhaps the limited space, there are no places for visitors to sit as they wait for someone to escort them. Looking at the structure of the lobby, we did not see viable solutions for this, but it is possible that a redesign of the lobby overall could lead to a solution at some point in the future.

Effecting Organizational Culture Change

At the core of the majority of the themes identified in 2017 was a need for culture change within City Hall. This was no small undertaking. When looking at organizational culture and behavior, many practitioners will tell you it takes three to five years to turn an organization around. This assumes many factors, including clear direction about the vision, clear expectations about the desired behaviors, holding people accountable, providing incentives for positive behaviors, consistency, open communication, having the right people in key leadership and management roles, etc. Dysfunctional cultures tend to have low trust and siloed communication. They are not, in the end, results-oriented, collaborative, or caring places in which to work. As a result, morale, of course, is invariably low. Turning a ship around like that, in our experience, especially in government where bad memories tend to linger, requires at least five years. Add into the mix a pandemic and one is truly facing an uphill battle. It is our estimation that the City has many of the right people in place and is now turning a critical corner. Whoever the incumbent is, in our view, should not seek to undo what it has taken years to create, but conduct a thoughtful analysis to better understand the work that has been accomplished and the work that is in progress.

Mayor Stoney has spoken about building a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. Building a culture that promotes excellence, attracts strong leaders at every level, and is focused on delivering results requires constant vigilance. Along the way, there will be advances and set-backs. However, with a focus on people and processes as well as the effective use of technology, continuous improvement is possible.

Our current study reveals that a great deal has been done since 2017 to create a better environment to attract and retain quality employees, to streamline processes, and to expand the use of technology to better serve City Hall and Richmond's residents. Is everything where it could be ideally? Even the Mayor has said that it is not. However, as with any organization, one has to ask, "Overall, is it moving forward or backward?" There is a natural tendency to notice

what is not going well. It is hoped that this report makes clear that, while acknowledging more work remains to be done, a great deal of forward motion has occurred since 2017 and the next mayor should build upon this forward motion.

Implementation Results on Agency Recommendations

Of the 228 specific agency recommendations in the 2017 Performance Review, 129 (56.6%) were reported as fully implemented, 46 (20.2%) were reportedly partially implemented, 24 (10.5%) were not implemented, and 29 (12.7%) were addressed with alternate solutions to accomplish the recommended or appropriate outcome. There were also a number of initiatives undertaken by several departments in addition to the reports' recommendations, as well as current and planned initiatives for the future.

The graphs below display the recommendations contained in the 2017 Performance Review and the status of their implementation.

Internal Functions, consisting of the departments of Human Resources, Information Technology, Procurement Services, Finance, and Budget and Strategic Planning, had 52 recommendations. Of those, 27 were reported as fully implemented, 6 partially implemented, 3 not implemented, and alternate solutions applied to address 16 recommendations.
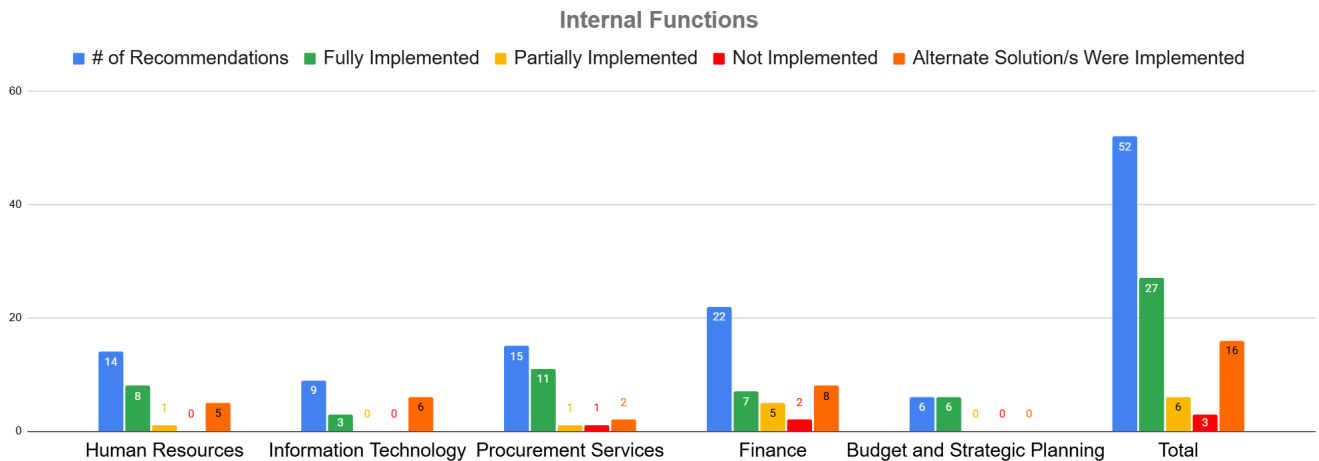
Public Safety, consisting of the departments of Police, Fire and Emergency Services, and the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response, had 42 total recommendations. Of those, 27 were reported as fully implemented, six partially implemented, seven not implemented, and alternate solutions applied to address two recommendations.

Public Safety
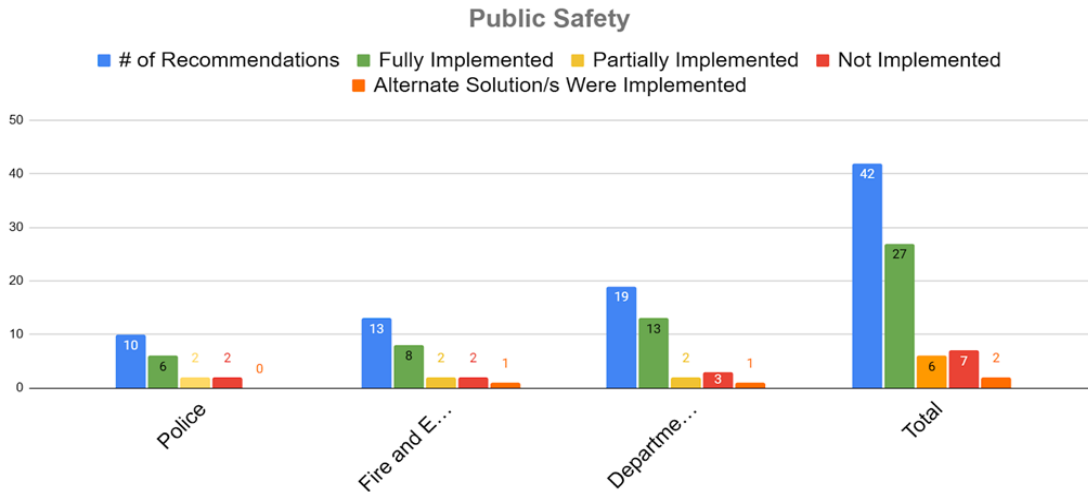
Operations, consisting of the departments of Public Utilities and Public Works, had 26 total recommendations. Of those, 22 were reported as fully implemented, one was partially implemented, zero not implemented, and alternate solutions applied to address three recommendations.

Operations
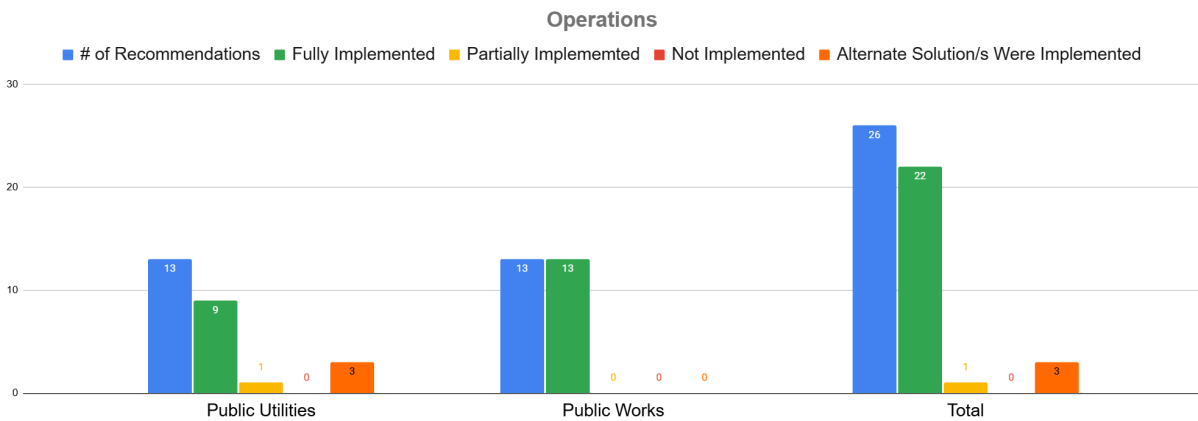
Economic Development and Planning, consisting of the departments of Housing and Community Development, Minority Business Development, and Planning and Development Review, had 45 total recommendations. Of those, 16 were reported as fully implemented, 12 partially implemented, 11 not implemented, and alternate solutions applied to address six recommendations.

Economic Development and Planning

- # of Recommendations
- Fully Implemented
- Partially Implememted
- Not Implemented
- Alternate Solution/s Were Implemented

	Housing and Community Development	Minority Business Development	Planning and Development Review	Total
# of Recommendations	25	7	13	45
Fully Implemented	14	0	2	16
Partially Implememted	3	3	6	12
Not Implemented	3	4	4	11
Alternate Solution/s Were Implemented	5	0	1	6

Human Services, consisting of the departments of Social Services, Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities, Justice Services, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Office of Community Wealth Building, had 63 recommendations. Of those, 37 were reported as fully implemented, 21 partially implemented, 3 not implemented, and alternate solutions applied to address two recommendations.

Human Services

- # of Recommendations
- Fully Implemented
- Partially Implememted
- Not Implemented
- Alternate Solution/s Were Implemented

	Social Services	Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities	Justice Services	Office of Multicultural Affairs	Office of Community Wealth Building	Total
# of Recommendations	11	17	14	4	17	63
Fully Implemented	7	13	12	0	5	37
Partially Implememted	2	3	1	4	11	21
Not Implemented	1	0	1	0	1	3
Alternate Solution/s Were Implemented	1	1	0	0	0	2

Responses by Department/Office
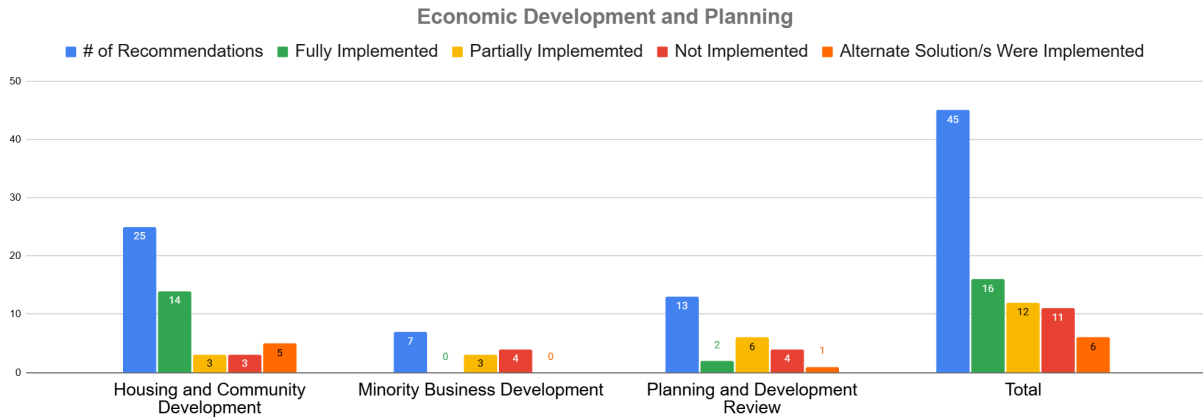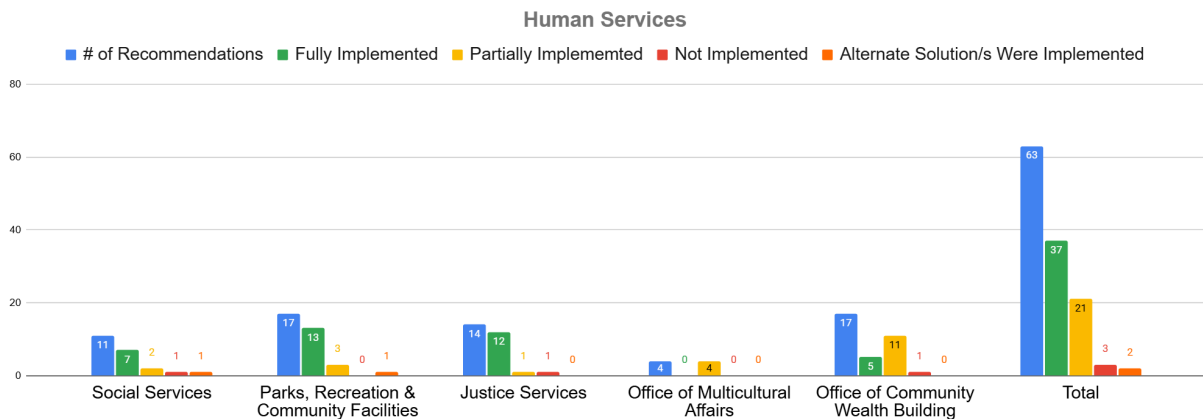
Internal Functions

The Internal Functions portfolio includes the departments of Human Resources, Information Technology, Procurement Services, Finance, and Budget and Strategic Planning.

Human Resources

Updates since 2017

In 2021, all employees who had an HR function and were serving throughout City departments and offices were brought together under Human Resources. In 2024, after a notable degree of turnover, there was a restructuring of the Department of Human Resources. Tyrome Alexander has been Director of Human Resources since February 2023. Mr. Alexander stated that he is bringing a greater emphasis on tracking key indicators such as time to fill a position, with the intent to uncover any bottlenecks in the system and shorten the time period from job posting to hire. He is also interested in using data to track separations and grievances in order to keep an eye for any areas of City Hall that may be having difficulties. He expressed his commitment to continuing to better serve both City departments and applicants.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Human Resources department contained fourteen recommendations. Of those, eight were reported as fully implemented, one was partially implemented, and five alternate solutions were implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary by the Director is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Institute regular staff and department meetings to ensure employees understand the mission and objectives of the portfolios and departments, including priorities and goals.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Following the restructuring of the HR department, Business Partners and Talent Acquisition staff meet with their assigned portfolio groups on a regular basis to discuss HR issues and recruitment needs.

Recommendation 2 - Establish meetings with HR liaisons to understand their needs and expectations while imparting central HR needs and expectations.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Following the restructuring of the HR department, employees performing HR functions have been reassigned to the Department of Human Resources. For example, Police and Fire HR Managers now report to the Department of Human Resources with a dotted line to

their business unit. HR Business and Talent Acquisition partners meet regularly with department Directors and/or their designees to discuss HR issues, needs and expectations.

Recommendation 3 - Working together and understanding the work of central HR can create efficiencies and ensure different departments are not working on the same projects. With more information sharing, groups can tap into subject matter experts to assist with projects, which will lead to a more cohesive central HR department. Listening to employees enhances morale and makes them feel valued.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - Following the restructuring of the HR department, employees performing HR functions have been reassigned to the Department of Human Resources. Centralization of HR services removed the potential for duplication and increased cohesiveness. HR Business Partners are in constant contact with their assigned portfolios and have a pulse on the activities within their business units. The HR Business Partner bring other units into discussion as needed (i.e. Employee Relations, Compensation, Benefits). The HR Business and Talent Acquisition teams meet weekly as a group with the Deputy Director for Talent Acquisition and Shared Services. The HR leadership team meets bi-weekly to ensure interdepartmental cross-collaboration as needed. Additionally, with the reorganization of the HR Department, the Deputy Director for Talent Acquisition and Shared Service has been working on streamlining current internal business processes to ensure consistency throughout the enterprise. We are utilizing our current technology to assist in this endeavor. We are expanding the use of the NeoGov Applicant Tracking System by enhancing the onboarding process and testing the use of an Application Program Interface (API) from the NeoGov system into the COREERP system, which would increase operational efficiency and minimize keying errors. In late 2022, the Chief Administrative Officer and Senior Deputy Chief Administrative Officer performed staff focus groups to understand employee morale issues. This information was used to enhance employee pay and benefit offerings that were implemented in FY 2024.

Recommendation 4 - The HR Liaison reporting structure should be re-examined. Consider centralizing all HR Liaisons into HR with specific agency assignments.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - This has been completed. Following the restructuring of the HR department, employees performing HR functions have been reassigned to the Department of Human Resources. HR services are now centralized. HR Business Partners and Talent Acquisition partners are assigned to various portfolios through the enterprise.

Recommendation 5 - Allocation of work to HR Liaisons should be reassessed to improve efficiency.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Following the restructuring of the HR department workloads have been reassessed and recalibrated. The Deputy Director of Talent Acquisition and Shared Services along with the Senior HR Business and Talent Acquisition Partners monitor the staff's workload and adjust portfolio assignments as needed. The Division Chief for Employee Relations monitors the staff's workloads and adjusts portfolio assignments as needed.

Recommendation 6 - Periodic training of HR Liaisons in the current structure is a temporary solution that does little to reinforce on-going consistency when lines of accountability are fractured.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - Following the restructuring of the HR department, employees performing HR functions have been reassigned to the Department of Human Resources. HR has a new division dedicated to training and development. Robust on-line and in-person training is being offered Citywide as needed. The City has formed a partnership with Reynolds Community College to expand training and development needs. Additionally, procurement has contracted with several HR firms to provide training, development, and coaching services as needed. HR staff provide input in any major process changes and training is provided. HR Business Partners review changes with their assigned portfolios and provide training if requested.

Recommendation 7 - Appoint a cross-department task force led by Human Resources to identify the most critical HR regulations, policies, and procedures that need to be updated or created.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - A major policy review initiative was completed in May 2023. In the fall of 2022, employee focus groups were led by the Chief Administrative Officer and the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer which identified key policies in need of revision. Their feedback along with concerns from department Directors identified policies that needed to be updated and/or created. Several new policies and many others were updated and went into effect as of July 2023 as result of the employee sessions and review initiative.

Recommendation 8 - Clear roadblocks for finalizing and approving such guidance and communicate the updated guidance clearly to all stakeholders. Senior City leaders, in collaboration with the HR department, can then hold department Directors and other key stakeholders accountable for consistently applying the updated HR guidance in their respective organizations.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - All HR policy changes/guidance documents are sent to the Executive Leadership Team and Department Directors by the Director of Human Resources. HR Business Partners also send policy changes to their departmental contact. HR Business Partners may meet with their departments to review guidance as requested.

Recommendation 9 - In the short-term, engage HR employees further on strategies to improve morale. If some incentive compensation is available, design and communicate the pay-for-performance expectations and guidelines. If incentive compensation is not available, explore non-monetary recognition that aligns with vision for department culture (e.g. "shout out board" posted prominently, quarterly recognition celebration led by HR Director, amplify communications from other departments when they are praising support from HR, etc.). Long-term morale improvement depends on progress made against the other identified themes.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Since the reorganization of the HR department, several employee centered programs have been implemented. Examples of these include tuition assistance, first time homebuyer's assistance, employee referral, free employee parking, employee health clinics, and substantial wage increases. HR staff are also recognized for their achievements personally by the Director of Human Resources, their assigned division chief, and at our monthly department meetings. Division Chiefs and Deputy Directors also perform various forms of recognitions to improve unit/department morale throughout the year as needed to award performance for a job well done.

Recommendation 10 - Establish a dedicated training room so training can easily be scheduled five days a week.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - There is a Human Resources training room on the 9th Floor of City Hall. The training room schedule is managed by the Training and Development staff. Additionally, the Training and Development team launched the NeoGov LEARN (Learning Management System) in August 2024, providing an opportunity to take courses/trainings through a catalog of over 1,500 training modules.

Recommendation 11 - Suggest collaboration among departments and portfolios to allow departments/employees to coordinate and attend applicable training for efficient and effective use of trainers.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - The City launched the NeoGov LEARN (Learning Management System) in August 2024 which provides all employees the opportunity to take classes through a catalog of over 1,500 training modules. The City has formed a partnership with Reynolds Community College to expand training and development needs. Additionally, procurement has contracted with several Human Resources firms to provide training, development, and coaching services as needed. The Training and Development team has also begun quarterly meetings with employees with "training" responsibilities to potentially leverage their expertise in Citywide training initiatives.

Recommendation 12 - To maximize resources, rely on community partners to send volunteer trainers to assist with training programs.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - The City has formed a partnership with Reynolds Community College to expand training and development needs. Additionally, procurement has contracted with several Human Resource firms to provide training, development, and coaching services as needed. Following the restructuring of the HR department, employees performing human resources functions have been reassigned to the Department of Human Resources. HR has a new division dedicated to training and development. Robust on-line and in-person training is being offered Citywide and as needed. The Division Chief and four trainers are certified trainers via the Association of Training and Development (ATD). During FY24, the T&D unit performed 146 completed classes with 1,471 learning attendees.

Recommendation 13 - To further stave off staffing and turnover concerns, employees should be empowered to take an active role in making recommendations for improvement. Examples include forming cross-functional teams to evaluate, recommend and implement new HR practices or other projects that give employees a sense of ownership, and the ability to contribute in meaningful ways.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In the fall of 2022, eleven employee focus groups were led by the Chief Administrative officer and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer which identified key policies in need of revision. As a result of the employee sessions, several new programs were implemented. The current HR Leadership Team is extremely collaborative in their management style. Staff has provided essential input as we revamped many of our internal processes, especially in the Talent Acquisition and Employee Relations intake processes. All proposed process changes are led by the respective Division Chief, with input from staff, presented and discussed at the bi-weekly HR Leadership team meetings, monthly HR Department meetings, and reviewed by the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and various department Directors/designees prior to implementation.

Recommendation 14 - A comprehensive process evaluation should be conducted. (This applies to the HRIS system that was in place in 2017.)

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Since the reorganization, the HR leadership team has stabilized the department and performed reviews of our critical, outward facing HR process which our customers demanded fixing in the areas of Talent Acquisition/Recruiting and Employee Relations. The Department is embracing the use of technology for operational effectiveness and efficiency. We have expanded our use of the NeoGov suite of programs by utilizing the onboarding function for new employees to complete most of their new hire paperwork prior to their official start with the City; testing the NeoGov Application Program Interface (API) to easily transfer new hire data from NeoGOV to the COREERP system. HR is also implementing NeoGov's LEARN (Learning Management System) in August which will enhance our ability for training courses for staff and

provide the opportunity to develop customized training plans for employee advancement; and will configure and implement NeoGov PERFORM (Performance Management System) module during FY 25. Human Resources meets with the Department of Information Technology (DIT) on a weekly basis to discuss potential system enhancements and automation of manual tasks.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

The following initiatives have occurred since February 2023:

1. HR Staffing Expertise: Staff hiring has been concentrated on qualified, knowledgeable certified professional staff. Approximately 90% of all current staff have an HR certification issued by ATD, HRCI, IPMA, SHRM, etc. There are regular department staff meetings (third Wednesday of the month) and bi-weekly HR Management Team meetings (every other Tuesday). The purpose of these meetings are to keep staff informed of critical programs and changes.

2. Parking Initiative: Paid parking for staff to reduce carbon footprint and traffic to work iIn process).

3. Attract, Retain, and Motivate (ARM) Total Rewards Initiative Went in effect 7/1/24 and includes the following:

> a. Pay grade increases/restructures for competitiveness.
>
> b. Job study reviews of approximately 1,000 completed job descriptions submitted to determine if job classes remain in line with duties by individuals.
>
> c. City's minimum wage increased to $20 per hour.
>
> d. Non-Sworn employees: Increased in July 2024 at the higher of 4% pay increase or placement at the 15th percentile in the pay range for those hired prior to 7/1/25 to move employees who are earning less than the 15 percentile in the pay range.
>
> e. Sworn employees: Increased in July 2024 to be competitive with neighboring municipalities.

4. Collective Bargaining Agreements:

> a. Admin and Tech: – Completed
>
> b. Fire/EMS: Completed
>
> c. Police: Completed
>
> d. Professional: In process
>
> e. Labor and Trade: In process

5. Language Incentive Special Pay initiative.

6. Major policies created or revised.

7. Transitioned to the Virginia Retirement System (VRS)

8. Implement employee (and dependent) health clinics through Marathon Health Clinics. Clinics provide primary and acute care, pharmacy,nutritional, counseling, behavioral therapy, physical therapy, lab work, occupational therapy, and referral network assistance.

9. Implemented Home Buyers Program.

10. Implemented Hiring Referral Bonus.

11. Implemented Tuition Assistance Program.

12. Outsourcing of employer sponsored Short Term/Long Term Disability Insurance and Managed Leave Programs are in progress.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

1. Continue Attract, Retain and Motivate Initiative (ARM) Initiative.

2. Collective Bargaining.

3. Implementing Home Buyers Program.

4. Implement contracted Short Term/Long Term Disability and Managed Leave Programs.

5. Implement NeoGov LEARN (Learning Management System).

6. Implement NeoGoV PERFORM (Performance Management System).

7. Coordinate Citywide timekeeping functionality.

8. Implement TCP Time clocks for DPU, DPW, and Parks.

9. Begin Citywide Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Analysis.

10. Enhance technology to obtain operational gains/efficiencies.

11. Hiring a Safety Officer and overseeing Citywide safety programming/training.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

1. Develop an HR Dashboard for each department/division which measures items such as time to fill, grievance/disciplinary activity, etc.

2. Clarify roles and responsibilities between HR and Finance around reconciliations.

3. Move towards a paperless HR environment.

4. Execute Career paths and cross walk opportunities for staff seeking promotional opportunities.

5. Develop Citywide workforce development program.

6. Perform an analysis of the HRIS and timekeeping system.

Information Technology

Updates since 2017

Charles Todd was serving as Interim Director in 2017 when the performance review was conducted and officially became the Director in 2018. Since then, the department has been restructured around two deputies: one for operations and the other for strategy and security. The department has received several new positions largely dedicated to security operations.

In 2018 funding for the department was moved out of the general fund into an internal service fund model where eight internal customers pay for services rendered. Decentralized information technology still exists in a number of departments such as DPW, DPU, and Social Services. Technology security has been a major focus since 2017 with the administration partnering with the City Council to include information technology as part of the audit function. In addition to internal security reviews, City auditors have externally reviewed processes in 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024. This provides additional eyes on a key component to protect residents.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Information Technology department contained nine recommendations. Of those, three were reportedly fully implemented and in the case of six recommendations, alternative solutions were implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - The creation of a Citywide Chief Information Officer (CIO) position into which all technology departments should be considered. This position could report to the CAO to make the position a true partner to other department leaders. Funding and filling this position with a qualified candidate could address a number of themes. A qualified CIO would be able to set a strong Citywide vision, strategy, policies and procedures, and be able to affect change that would improve all the themes that were uncovered. The CIO would also communicate the issues clearly to the City council, provide important communication to the employees of the department and other department heads, would be able to set a customer service culture, and would ensure the City's IT security and infrastructure remain up to minimum standards.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - The Administration considered the creation of a net-new CIO position, but ultimately determined that Code and Administrative Regulations already provided a framework by which the Director of the Department of Information Technology is recognized as the central authority for the City's technology. The administration advocates this philosophy in its day-to-day operations.

Recommendation 2 - The City should consider constructing a disaster recovery plan for all major systems with a step-by-step recovery process and required service level agreements (SLAs) for time-to-recover for each major system.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DIT has worked across the period to modernize and streamline its approach to disaster recovery. We have drastically increased our capabilities and in doing so, have decreased our complexity and variance among systems. We now categorize our systems as mission critical, business critical, business necessary, and supplemental. For the purposes of this response, "major system" means mission and business critical. This would include our Microsoft cloud environment, all infrastructure and security components, financial systems, public safety systems, and utility systems. Our cloud-hosted systems include disaster recovery processes and recovery time objectives as part of the contractual terms. We require that these DR plans be tested annually. DIT has recovery time objectives for our on-premises systems. We utilize a multi-tier approach to redundancy, failover, and recovery. Our standard IT project management methodology now requires that DR and business continuity requirements be documented. This significant redesign of DR has been accomplished within our baseline budgets.

Recommendation 3 - An industry best practice would help ensure that all systems have SLAs for availability. Actual production performance should be measured and reported at least monthly against these SLAs to all departments.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - DIT's approach is that systems need to be available at all times. System downtime for functional and security maintenance is scheduled with the owners of each system. Our definition of "uptime" is systems availability outside of these agreed-upon windows. We strive for 99.9% uptime. Uptime is a factor in determining our recovery time objectives in disaster recovery. We have established an incident response protocol to support 24-hour response for issues with mission- and business-critical systems.

Recommendation 4 - It is recommended that remediation plans be developed and executed where systems are consistently failing to meet these availability SLAs.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - We are not aware of any systems that are failing to meet our 99.9% uptime goal. Our remediation plan for all systems is quite simple: identify the root cause of any issue that might cause negative impact to uptime and address. Standard incident and problem management principles apply.

Recommendation 5 - Another industry best practice would be for the City to complete a data management plan in conjunction with the disaster recovery (DR) effort.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - As part of our disaster recovery redesign, we reviewed our classification of our systems (and by extension, the data sources) to determine whether each of them were mission critical, business critical, business necessary, and supplemental. Administrative Regulations require system owners to advise DIT of the necessary criticality and retention needs for their systems. This determination is required during the implementation of each IT project.

Recommendation 6 - The Mayor should consider embarking on a Citywide program to instill a culture of respect and employee appreciation across departments for the duration of the administration. This would include town halls, group meetings, a marketing program, continual reinforcement, and a recognition and reward program that allows employees to easily reward others across departments.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DIT management has participated in all Citywide programs, including employee appreciation events. On our own, we have held town halls, promoted an open-door policy with DIT management, and shared across the department any accolades (such as Stargrams) that our employees receive.

Recommendation 7 - Institute a Citywide communication program that would notify all departments when changes to employment and roles will occur.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - DIT completed a major overhaul of the off-board process. When an agency completes an off-board request, a standard series of activities is generated and monitored. This includes giving offboard information to other departments (example: notifying Procurement for a P-Card cutoff). Success continues to depend upon an agency notifying DIT in a timely fashion. We now leverage Human Resources employment data to identify any status changes that have not been reported to DIT. Onboarding depends on departments notifying DIT of the arrival of new staff. We have a three-day goal for turnaround of security access requests. DIT regularly covers these processes in group meetings with the departments' Automation Coordinators and training materials are posted for their reference.

Recommendation 8 - City employees should work within the current IT Work Request process. If an executive level of service is required, it is recommended that the City provide extra funding for a new executive service tier and identify individuals who may access that new service tier. This will not only improve service for those in the executive service tier but improve the level of service for all employees across the City.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DIT has defined an executive level service. We created a dedicated position to serve as a "concierge" for this class of user. DIT management recognizes that elected officials and agency heads, by nature of the importance of their roles, cannot be constrained by a one-size-fits-all service delivery model. DIT provides immediacy and direct communications to assess the proper and timely means of response.

Recommendation 9 - Other tactics to consider include reducing the number of escalated operational tickets from all departments across the City by including escalation procedures that require department head approval. Goals for each department could be created to reduce the number of escalated tickets. Another incentive to reduce escalated tickets would be to enact monthly funding transfers to the DIT department based on the number of escalated tickets.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - DIT management does not agree with the opinion that our customers are using Director-to-Director communications channels to circumvent standard processes. We have written and distributed protocols that outline escalation to DIT management when customers are not receiving what they consider a timely response to critical items. DIT management encourages our customers to escalate early on, rather than let situations sit without resolution.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

- Creation and implementation of Citywide records management policy.
- Creation of smart cities roadmap.
- Set Citywide policy regarding use of business units and shadow IT, centralizing all appropriate IT services into DIT.
- Identify and implement means to reduce opportunities for individuals and agencies to acquire IT services outside of standard protocols.
- Make organization change management a required component of IT projects.
- Migration from Windows 10 to Windows 11.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- Replacement or overhaul of DIT ticketing/work management system.
- Consolidation of legacy e-discovery data into a single solution.
- RVAPay.
- Replacement of DPU CIS system.
- Replacement of Permitting system.
- Migration from on-premises to cloud SharePoint.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

- Creation and implementation of Citywide records management policy.
- Creation of smart cities roadmap.
- Replacement or overhaul of DIT ticketing/work management system.
- Consolidate legacy e-discovery data into a single solution.
- Migration from Windows 10 to Windows 11.
- Set Citywide policy regarding use of business unit and shadow IT, centralizing all appropriate IT services into DIT.
- Identify and implement means to reduce opportunities for individuals and agencies to acquire IT services outside of standard protocols.
- Make organization change management a required component of IT projects.

Procurement Services

Updates since 2017

The current Director for Department of Procurement Services (DPS) joined the City in January 2021 and became Director in September 2021. DPS is authorized at present to have a staff of 28, but has been approved to add four new positions in FY2025. Under Director Rene Almaraz, the department has reorganized, focused on internal customer support, increased education to the users, and deployed a new procurement system to create ease of use of procurement processes for users. DPS has also set accountability standards and internal controls for those initiating purchases and purchasing processes. In 2024, Procurement Services was awarded the Achievement in Excellence in Procurement award from the National Procurement Institute, a new standard acknowledging best practices in criteria including innovation, professionalism, productivity, e-procurement, and leadership.

The 2017 Performance Review for DPS contained fifteen recommendations. Of those, eleven were reported as fully implemented, one partially implemented, one was not implemented, and two alternate solutions were implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Implementation and management of a P-Card (Purchasing Card) program is estimated to provide an immediate improvement for the City. This could create significant workflow and financial efficiencies across City government, as well as generate revenue for the City. Revenue is generated in the form of a 170-180 basis points "cash rebate" on purchases and is paid back to the City from the financial service provider. It is estimated that the funds received will offset the cost of staffing.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The P-Card program is fully implemented with 300+ cards/cardholders in circulation and $11M+ in annual spend and an annual rebate based on the spend. In FY23, the City received a rebate of $144,000. DPS continues to seek ways to responsibly expand usage and train on appropriate usage. DPS is expanding its core team to ensure efficient processes and transparency.

Recommendation 2 - With purchasing authority established individually, some vendor acquisitions could also be made on a P-Card. This further streamlines multiple processes including eliminating the need for finance to process invoices. This allows vendors real-time payment and improves upon the current vendor payment structure which is considered slow. The purchasing change could also create more competitive pricing due to purchases made from vendors who have previously chosen not to do business with the City due to payment processing time.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The P-Card program is fully implemented with 300+ cards/cardholders in circulation and $11M+ in annual spend and an annual rebate based on the spend. In FY23 the City received a rebate of $144,000. DPS continues to seek ways to responsibly expand usage and train on appropriate usage. DPS is expanding its core team to ensure efficient processes and transparency.

Recommendation 3 - Review and revise contracting authority limits to give contract specialists more autonomy. Take a deeper look at the specifics of current contracting authority and process in order to advise specific limitations/recommendations.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Small purchase single quote threshold has been raised from $10K to $50K and the informal competitive quote (RFQ) process threshold has been raised from $100K to $200K. These increased limits allow more autonomy and flexibility among the City agencies. Feedback on the policy change has been very positive.

Recommendation 4 - Create a process of auto-renewals for continuing contracts with sign-off by Contract Specialists to eliminate redundancies for those contracts without substantial changes. Any contracts requiring such changes could be put through the more rigorous review and approval process.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - DPS considered auto-renewals and determined they are not in the best interest of the City. There are far too many contracts to ensure the appropriateness of each renewal. Agencies must be more engaged with the requirements and periods of performance on their contracts before we allow renewal automation. DPS has implemented agency communication to ensure all contracts needing renewal are reviewed and actioned appropriately.

Recommendation 5 - Vendors could be required to agree to contract terms and conditions of the City rather than supply their own. This would avoid lengthy legal review and approval. An addendum could be attached to note any additional terms required.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation – On formal solicitations such as IFBs and RFPs the City requires prospective bidders and offerors to accept City terms and conditions. In RFPs exceptions are allowed and negotiated. In addition, DPS has implemented process improvements within our interactions with the City Attorney's office –, internal bond reviews before sending for approval, better communications, etc. DPS always seeks to use "our paper" when negotiating contracts with vendors on other procurements. However, we defer to agencies when compromises are required and seek Legal input when necessary. DPS has pushed to increase contract terms for multiple years and reduce the 'one-year' renewal process. The appropriateness of the term is determined jointly with the agency or department.

Recommendation 6 - Review and refine the requirements for procurement. In the past, slight changes in an agreement can force an entire re-procurement. This is seen as unnecessary and highly inefficient when modifications could be made through an addendum.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DPS utilizes modifications on current agreements for changes to contract scope and other areas, term and funding.

Recommendation 7 - Additional performance review dialogue with the HR department should provide greater insight into next steps for addressing the process of recruitment and hiring. Any new process should be developed in a working group with representatives from across City government, preferably from the supervisory level.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Internally, after the reorganization of the HR department, staffing process has vastly improved. The relationship with HR continues to evolve and improve. Transparency to a full candidate pool has greatly improved.

Recommendation 8 - Hiring managers should have access to the broader pool of applicants at an earlier stage. Managers should have the opportunity to share characteristics and qualifications that they believe are best suited to the open position.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - All hiring managers in DPS have access to all qualified candidates on every open requisition. HR owns this improvement.

Recommendation 9 - The candidate approval and hiring process must be streamlined in order to fill vacant positions more quickly. Higher priority should be placed on filling the staffing needs of this agency, as the impact of a fully staffed and highly qualified Procurement office will be felt across City government.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - We agree. Staffing levels are 100%. FY2025 will bring four additional FTEs to DPS. With the right staffing levels, DPS employees have increased workload production with a higher level of engagement with the agencies and departments. The turnaround time from requisition to interview to offer has drastically been reduced.

Recommendation 10 - Software platforms ideally would be consistent across all departments to facilitate effective communication and workflow.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - We agree. CORERP (City of Richmond Enterprise Resource Planning) is still the system used for requisitioning, purchase order processing, and document storage. It does not integrate with OpenGov. DPS acquired and utilizes the OpenGov Procurement system. OpenGov is the most automated, flexible and user-friendly government procurement software available on the market. From Bids and RFPs to contracts, the system has transformed the entire procurement lifecycle:

https://opengov.com/videos/opengov-enables-transparency-for-city-of-richmond-procurement/

DPS has also implemented electronic signatures for all contracts and procurements. OpenGov allows for full electronic (paperless) advertisement of solicitations, receipt, and evaluation of bids and proposals.

Recommendation 11 - Continued movement toward utilization of eVA, Virginia's electronic procurement system, is encouraged. This web-based vendor registration and purchasing system allows the City to conduct purchasing and sourcing activities for goods and services online. While business is still conducted online after receipt of quotes, the online process of receiving and tracking is a significant improvement. Streamlining the post-quote process into RAPIDS or another electronic system is recommended.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - DPS still uses some functionality in eVA and considered using eVA as an electronic procurement tool. DPS also considered using the IFB/RFX notification and management tools in CORERP. Both were poor options and far from best in class. DPS acquired and utilizes the OpenGov Procurement system. OpenGov is the most automated, flexible and user-friendly government procurement software available on the market. From Bids and RFPs to contracts, the system has transformed the entire procurement lifecycle. https://opengov.com/videos/opengov-enables-transparency-for-city-of-richmond-procurement/.

Recommendation 12 - Onboarding training should include procurement basic training, and personnel with substantial responsibilities in this area should be identified and required to attend advanced and ongoing training. Knowledge tests should be utilized regularly to ensure that employees retain their knowledge of policies and processes.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - New DPS employees now have a rigorous on-boarding curriculum and are teamed up with a partner (buddy approach) to help build relationships, stay on task, and have a single point to work out problems and issues. The concept of implementing DPS internal knowledge tests is the wrong approach for this career field. Real world exposure to problems and solutions will gain more benefit for the department than rote testing. Orals or board testing should be considered for advancement in the department. Testing after training for outside departments is being developed.

Recommendation 13 - Create a reference guide as well as list of FAQs, and provide them to employees. Place these on the intranet for easy access and consider them the first step for employees with a procurement question. This should maximize productivity for employees as well as the Contract Specialists. The current departmental newsletter is an excellent vehicle for continuing updates and training dialogue.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - DPS provides policy documents, templates, forms, contract and solicitation examples on Starnet for easy access and agency and department support.

Recommendation 14 - Implementing contract partnerships is an ongoing and longer-term process requiring time for the department to review contract options as expirations arise. There appears to be substantial support throughout the Agency for continuing to find and promote these opportunities.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DPS has used and continues to leverage state contracts where appropriate. DPS uses and continues to use Commonwealth and national agency cooperative contracts.

Recommendation 15 - It was also suggested that HR partnering on improved benefit plans could make the City more competitive as an employer and create a positive boost to current employee satisfaction.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DPS teamed with HR on RFPs for City Health Clinics and the First Home Buyer Program to benefit City employees. The City and RPS have jointly solicited, evaluated, and awarded the health benefits contract. The City also offers competitive salaries and has transitioned to VRS.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

- Higher staffing level
- Implementation of a business outreach manager
- Implementation of Technical writers Policy
- SOP review and revamp/rewrite
- Weekly Legal training
- Employee rewards and recognitions
- Semi-annual retreats
- Strategic cooperative initiative
- Application for the National Procurement Institute
- Award for Excellence in Procurement submission
- Implementation of department quarterly and annual reports

- Refresh of the department offices (construction, carpeting, furniture) - ongoing
- Closing of multiple audit findings from 2022 audit
- Director on GovMvmt Advisory Board Director interviewed for CPO Strategy magazine
- Developed Audit process for small purchase and PCard purchases

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- Internal control assessment
- Source selection re-engineering
- Business outreach to contracting community
- Employee training/conference/certification program
- Growth and development of the PCard program, including increasing the rebate to the City
- Increase sustainable procurement efforts

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

- Technical Writer and agency wide SOW training and development
- Incorporation of performance based SOWs
- NIGP assessment (NIGP is the National Institute of Governmental Procurement: The Institute for Public Procurement)
- Upgrades to CORERP for more procurement and requisition effectiveness
- Incorporation of (Job Order Contracting (JOC) procurements through the Commonwealth

Finance

Updates since 2017

The current Finance Director, Sheila White, joined the City as Deputy Director in June 2020 and became Director in May of 2021. During her tenure, the Director has focused on bringing qualified and credentialed certified public accountants into many positions, building a culture of collaboration, accountability, and trust, upgrading outdated systems, and working with her peers to increase transparency and implement solutions. In 2024, the City of Richmond received a AAA bond rating from Fitch Ratings, the first time in its history.

The Director noted that Finance has been through significant and much-needed organizational change since she became Director. Change efforts are still underway and have expanded to making improvements in customer service. A new Deputy Director for this area started in September and a new Director for customer service will begin in October.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Richmond Department of Finance contained 22 recommendations. Of those, seven were reportedly fully implemented, five partially implemented, two not implemented, and eight alternative solutions implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided in the following pages.

Recommendation 1 - Strong technical accountants are expensive and may be difficult to hire on a full-time basis. Management hired an external CPA firm to assist with the preparation of the financial statement disclosures, in addition to the external CPA firm that performs the audit. This is an excellent short-term way to approach the deficit in this skill set within the organization, but full-time financial reporting staff would provide for a longer-term solution.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - Finance employs a multi-pronged approach to address the resource and skills gap on the Financial Reporting/General Accounting team:

> (1) Partnered with a talent management firm for an immediate pipeline of experienced accountants.
> (2) Targeted the recruitment of Certified Public Accountants (CPA) for temporary and permanent positions.
> (3) Expanded recruitment efforts with Human Resources to include use of LinkedIn and industry portal recruitment platforms to expand the reach and attract a larger qualified candidate pool.
> (4) Outsourced critical/essential work to a CPA firm when competing priority for resources posed risk of late or missed delivery of work product.

Recommendation 2 - As suggested by Finance department staff, the first employee to interact with a customer should "own" the customer. The "owner" should lead the customer physically to

the appropriate place within City Hall to conduct business, staying until another employee acknowledges they are in the correct location. Some employees voiced concern about leaving their station to abide by such a policy.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - For the frontline customer facing service positions, Finance has implemented a high touch customer service approach by:

> (1) Streamlining customer points of entry to ensure managerial oversight of and timely resolution to all customer service requests.
> (2) Establishing service level agreements and standards for response.
> (3) Monitoring key performance indicators for all customer facing processes.
> (4) Retraining basic customer service skills.
> (5) Offering more self-service options that correspond with modern technology and customer expectations.
> (6) Implementing Customer Service Ambassadors for peak volume times to minimize long wait times and reduce lines.

Recommendation 3 - Consider supplemental volunteer-run Information Desks in the lobby of City Hall, in addition to the existing Information Desk at the Marshall Street entrance, to ensure all visitors are directed to the appropriate office. One alternative may be to improve signage at the other entrances to funnel visitors to the current Information Desk.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - The guest services desk was closed during the pandemic and has not reopened due to changes in the security protocols. All visitor traffic to City Hall is now screened through security before entering the building. Security directs visitors to the appropriate City department. Additionally, see response to recommendation #2 for customer service improvements.

Recommendation 4 - Another solution may be volunteer greeters who welcome people to City Hall and direct them accordingly.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Please see responses for customer service improvements in recommendations #2 and #3.

Recommendation 5 - The City should accelerate the monetization of properties in its holdings and reduce the market risk of holding assets tied to the real estate market. The City should consider auctioning the entire portfolio of properties to third-party real estate investors or outsourcing the management of the sales.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - A wide range of options are used to manage delinquent accounts. The COR utilizes two third party collection agencies. Additionally, the number of delinquent accounts has been reduced through tax sale and increasing the accessibility to payment plans.

Recommendation 6 - Policies and procedures should be developed and maintained and available for employees to reference as they perform their duties.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Policies and standard operating procedures have been developed as improvements and changes are made. POWERDMS is the official system of record for policies and procedures for the COR. Finance has migrated policies and procedures to the tool.

Recommendation 7 - Identify appropriate measures to track performance of the Finance department, such as deadlines met, taxes collected, customer satisfaction metrics, surveys, etc.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Key performance indicators have been identified for all major processes in Finance.

Recommendation 8 - Create Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for services provided to other agencies.

Status -Not implemented

Explanation - Finance is primarily a receiver of information from departments and agencies. Routine processes follow workflows and queues are monitored by management to ensure work moves. Additionally, SLAs have been developed and are monitored for 311 tickets received.

Recommendation 9 - Consider aligning performance pay of staff and management with results of compliance with SLAs.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Pay for performance is a larger organizational objective. Finance follows the guidance of Human Resources for merit increases. However exceptional performance bonuses are used to recognize employees that go above and beyond in the performance of their duties. Special Pay is awarded for taking on additional assignments for the period of the assignment. Retention bonuses are also given to retain staff in critical areas at risk of turnover.

Recommendation 10 - Adopt a pay-for-performance program that differentiates between strong and poor performers.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Please see response for recommendation #9 above.

Recommendation 11 - Continue to promote and otherwise reward hard-working and high-performing employees to reinforce that hard work and talent will be rewarded. As with any change to employee compensation, clear communication is extremely important for employees to understand and embrace the change.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In addition to promotional opportunities, high performing employees are encouraged to participate in industry and networking events. Additionally, all employees are provided with job related training and opportunities leading to certifications (GFOA, VaGFOA, TAV, and COR).

Recommendation 12 - Critical work processes surrounding the systems that are not slated for a full-scale upgrade should be identified. These systems should be redesigned with a focus on efficiency and customer service, and the related system features re-implemented to support the functions of the department.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Updated and improved ERP in 2021. In the process of updating the Revenue Administration system, system health is regularly reviewed with DIT. As the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system owner, Finance has established an Oracle Steering Committee consisting of stakeholder departments to guide decisions to optimize the system.

Recommendation 13 - Application Programming Interfaces (API) could be used to automate the flow of data between systems. If feasible, these APIs could reduce effort and frustration while improving accuracy of data transfer.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - APIs are being used in RVAPay and Oracle.

Recommendation 14 - For future implementations, the effort and cost of a system implementation should not be underestimated. These future system implementations should be managed closely and should follow standard practices to ensure all testing is completed before going live. A successful system design and upgrade should be led by a strong group within the user department, rather than an IT department. The team assigned to the project should develop a deep understanding of the specific goals of the new application, ensuring alignment of all the vested parties before implementation work is begun.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Finance works closely with DIT through the vetting process to determine the appropriate solution. Cost estimates, while important, are not the driving factor in the selection process. Evaluation criteria are used to determine which factors will be weighed in the selection of a technological solution. Various stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process before, during, and after for new technology. Additionally, training is provided to all staff on system functionality and job-related functions.

Recommendation 15 - System implementations are demanding on staff and organizations, but when done correctly can dramatically improve an organization. Automating processes can also result in lower operating costs. Poor implementation can result in major cost overruns and result in a subpar system that does not upgrade the organization.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - We work with DIT's project management system to efficiently implement new systems and time implementation around critical work times and schedules. We focus on product quality that leads to better overall system implementation and integration.

Recommendation 16 - To speed the process, a new tracking report could be created for upper management that tracks the approval process for proposals.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - Project tracking is done through the Department of Information Technology (DIT) project management team.

Recommendation 17 - For more routine projects/approvals, the process and timelines for approval should be included in the SLA.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - The COR uses the IT Project Methodology which is managed by the DIT project management team.

Recommendation 18 - Explanations should be included in the report for delays and periodic reviews with management should be scheduled and held to enforce accountability when target delivery dates are missed.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - Project tracking is managed by the DIT project management team.

Recommendation 19 - Performance pay could be based on a department's record for meeting target dates for approvals, such as Procurement, City Attorney, and others frequently involved in approvals.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - See response for #18.

Recommendation 20 - Identify staff to serve as internal Subject Matter Experts (SME) for each of the systems. Train these internal SMEs using external experts. These SMEs should then lead training courses for other employees.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - System training is provided to applicable staff and the agility to perform tasks is a required job skill. Training is documented at the time of system implementation and is part of the delivery from the vendor. Updates to training and documentation are created as changes are made to the system. Employees once trained, serve as an additional resource to new employees.

Recommendation 21 - Provide customer-facing employees with cross-training on the other services provided by the City to improve customer service.

Status -Fully implemented

Explanation - Cross training is offered to finance employees. This training is done to ensure service level agreements are met during peak tax season times.

Recommendation 22 - Despite positive feedback from recent efforts, some employees asked for more interaction with management, particularly informal and casual conversation that seeks to include all members of the staff. These causal interactions can lead to a feeling among staff that they have an outlet to discuss issues.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Weekly staff meetings occur, quarterly meetings are held, and frequent pull ups are held with the Director that include Q&A sessions to discuss any major announcements.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

The finance leadership staff is relatively new. The current Director of Finance was appointed in May 2021. Work concluded to date is the result of the new leadership team since 2021.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

Processes are being optimized in Revenue Administration. MUNIS upgrade is in process (last upgrade was in 2014). The City is transitioning to RVAPay on a module-by-module basis. Lockbox change is in the process of eliminating credit card convenience fees for tax payers. Several legislative adjustments have been made to service/programs provided to the public. Raised the threshold for reserve. Revised the City's investment strategy/policy. Achieved AAA credit rating.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Fully digital Finance Department and Enterprise Risk Management.

Budget and Strategic Planning

Updates since 2017

Budget and Strategic Planning has experienced a complete staff turnover since the performance review was issued in 2017. Currently the department has a staff of 13 and is authorized for 17. The department includes a Director, a budget formulation and management unit, strategic planning, grants management, and policy development.

The mission of the Department of Budget and Strategic Planning has been updated to read:

To provide corporate, performance informed oversight for the development, analysis, and execution of the City's budgeting and strategic performance management processes as well as grant support in order to balance the needs and resources of the community.

The department's vision is now:

To implement mission-driven, outcome-oriented, and performance based management tools, to include performance informed budgeting, to meet identified outcomes and evaluate success toward achieving City objectives.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Budget and Strategic Planning contained six recommendations. Of those, all six recommendations were reportedly implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below from the Director.

Recommendation 1 - Continue to show appreciation for the work of all employees and promote shared understanding of the importance of their work to the effective operations of City Hall. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Budget Office to other agencies.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation - We acknowledge the recommendation to continue showing appreciation for the work of all employees and to promote a shared understanding of the importance of their work to the effective operations of City Hall, as well as to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Budget Office to other agencies. Our department has made strides in addressing this recommendation. However, we recognize that there are still challenges to overcome, particularly in fostering appreciation and understanding from other agencies and leadership within the City. We have initiated efforts to communicate the roles and responsibilities of the Budget Office more clearly to other agencies. This includes regular inter-departmental meetings, detailed documentation, and communication channels to address queries and provide clarity. Within the Budget Department, we have implemented regular recognition programs to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our staff. This has been positively received and has boosted morale internally.

Recommendation 2 - The Office is investigating the acquisition and development of a new budget model that would resolve current budget tracking, reporting, and other issues. The new model should be designed to incorporate efficient use of technological solutions to import/export data within RAPIDS.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - We have successfully acquired OpenGov, a comprehensive budgeting software that has significantly improved our budgetary practices. OpenGov facilitates enhanced tracking, reporting, and overall management of the budget. To streamline and enhance our grants management processes, we have recently acquired ECivis. This software has automated various aspects of grants management. We are in the process of acquiring a new performance management system. This system will further integrate and automate our budgetary and performance tracking, ensuring better alignment and oversight.

Recommendation 3 - Additional dialogue with the Technology department should provide greater insight into next steps for addressing the myriad technology issues.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation - We acknowledge the recommendation for increased dialogue with the Technology department to address various technology-related issues.

Recommendation 4 - Continuation of ongoing training on budget preparation and forecasting is highly encouraged across all departments. Additionally, clear expectations and accountability for providing forecasts on time to the Budget office should be set by the CAO or DCAO.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation - The Budget Department has been proactive in providing training on budget preparation and forecasting across all departments. We have specific budget analysts assigned to each department, ensuring a continuous training process on systems and projections. However, there are significant challenges in achieving full compliance and accountability, which necessitates stronger support from City leadership.

Recommendation 5 - The Office is pursuing cross-training internally to respond to potential vacancies or absences in the future. This is seen as a process that could and should be modeled in other departments.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - We have made significant strides in implementing cross-training within our department to ensure continuity and preparedness for potential vacancies or absences. This approach has not only strengthened our team's capabilities, we have created comprehensive SOPs for various tasks and processes. These documents provide clear, step-by-step instructions, and serve as valuable resources for cross-training and onboarding new staff. To

enhance the effectiveness of our training programs, we have started recording training sessions. These recordings are archived and made accessible to all staff, providing a valuable reference for future training and ensuring that knowledge is retained and easily disseminated.

Recommendation 6 - Focusing on shifting the overall culture of City Hall will only be done department-by-department. Look for opportunities to build bridges across departments and agencies.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation - Shifting the overall culture of City Hall is a complex task that requires a concerted effort from all departments. We have started taking steps to build bridges and foster collaboration across departments and agencies, recognizing that a unified and cooperative culture is essential for the effective functioning of City Hall. We have initiated regular inter-departmental meetings and workshops to facilitate communication and collaboration. These sessions provide a platform for sharing ideas, discussing challenges, and developing joint solutions. But the overall change in culture in City Hall is still a work in progress.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

The budget department has been the lead in the last few years to coordinate Citywide fiscal impacts on proposed legislation during when the General Assembly is in session. In working in partnership with the Human Resources department, we have standardized how departments request recruitment of vacant positions which we have titled "Position Control Process." Our department was involved with transition to the state retirement system, VRS. We have created a Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) GIS dashboard that is updated regularly and is available to the public on the City's website that provides project status updates of CIP projects. Also, our department plays a significant role in the implementation of the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

Our department is currently engaged in several major initiatives aimed at improving performance management, enhancing efficiency, and supporting data-driven decision-making across City Hall. Below are the key initiatives:

- Complete Overhaul of the City's Performance Management System
- Strengthening the Grants Management Division
- Increasing Automation
- Expanding on the Revenue Resource Guide to incorporate City departmental revenues.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Work to explore the available budget controls in the RAPIDS system as well as other capabilities of the system. Bringing our budget system and having it integrated with the RAPIDS system.

Public Safety

The Public Safety portfolio includes the departments of the Police, Fire, and Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response. Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response was formed in 2022 by combining the previous departments of Emergency Management and Emergency Communications. This was done to provide better coordination between initial 911 calls and coordination of situation efforts. It also combines the resources of the two groups for synergy and efficiency as is held as a best practice for progressive cities.

Police

Updates since 2017

In 2017, when the Performance Review was written, Alfred Durham was Chief and the Richmond Police Department (RPD) had approximately 725 filled positions out of 755 that were authorized. There have been several changes in leadership since then. Chief Durham retired in 2018 and Will Smith became interim and was promoted to Chief in 2019. Chief Smith resigned in the midst of the protests in June of 2020. Major Jody Blackwell was asked to step in as Acting Chief of Police. After 11 days, he stepped down and Chief Gerald Smith from Charlotte, NC was sworn in on July 1, 2020. Chief Rick Edwards became the Acting Chief of Police in October of 2022. At the time, the force had dwindled to just over 600, where it stands today. Rick Edwards was later sworn in as the City of Richmond's 20th Chief of Police in July of 2023.

Over the recent years, three major events shook Richmond and the nation: the Charlottesville protests, Covid-19, and in the spring of 2020, the murder of George Floyd. Uprisings persisted in cities around the country and for over 120 consecutive days in Richmond. Throughout Richmond, there were significant conflicts, (including two officers being shot) and a notable amount of property damage. The relations between protesters and the police were strained and sometimes turned physical.

Despite these challenges, RPD reported that it has made significant progress in addressing the recommendations in the original report and instituted proactive strategies to implement advanced de-escalation tactics, restore morale, expand community policing and relations, emphasize accountability, and build a culture based upon the core values of:

- Employee Health, Wellness and Morale
- Maintaining Trust and Legitimacy
- Public Safety Through Community Engagement
- Innovation through Technology
- Community Policing through Strategic Planning and Evidence-Based Research

Additionally, the department's mission statement has been enhanced by the following additions (in italics):

To make Richmond a safer City through community policing and engagement, *to build open and transparent relationships within our diverse and vibrant communities, to reduce crime through relentless follow-up, to problem-solve utilizing a collaborative spirit, and provide the highest standard of responsiveness, professionalism, and protections guaranteed to all that live, work, and visit our great City.*

The Performance Review for the Police department contained ten recommendations. Of those, six were fully implemented, two were partially implemented, and two were not implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary from Chief Edwards and his team is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Review RPD budget relative to personnel. If pay incentives are not available, other incentives such as a take home car, education support, specialty pay, uniform and clothing allowance, etc. may help facilitate hiring and retention.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The Collective Bargaining Agreement entered into as of July 1, 2024 covers everything in the recommendation with the exception of take home vehicles. RPD is very close to implementation of providing patrol officers with take home cars who live in the City or within 25 miles of the City.

Recommendation 2 - Officers could be asked to sign a minimum contract, possible three years or longer to help defer the negative impact of departures.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Does not align with recruiting practices.

Recommendation 3 - Public/private partnerships may help develop resources to support some initiatives.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - We work with various organizations such as the Richmond Police Foundation, Venture Richmond, Greater Richmond Merchants, etc.

Recommendation 4 - Consider investment in technology which could enhance police effectiveness and provide a path to circumvent long term personnel costs. Each of the technology approaches noted will increase police capacity to deliver services and will help to reduce crime. Other investments, such as traffic cameras, may also create revenue. Issue laptops to all detectives and officers as part of their standard department provided equipment.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - There have been numerous technology investments to enhance police effectiveness such as the Real Time Crime Center, cell phone data extraction devices (Cellebrite, Greykey), full implementation of body worn cameras, upgraded tasers, virtual training, Whelen Cloud, Photo Speed Enforcement, and many other platforms.

Recommendation 5 - The scope of work for police should be limited to police work. Other agencies should fulfill their responsibilities through their personnel and budgets, rather than drawing on police resources. Mental health agencies unduly burden police with tasks which could be conducted by persons that have experience in and are responsible for this function.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Homelessness, mental illness, prisoner custody transfer to Sheriff's Office, crowd control, special event staffing, and school security are all non-police matters that have continued to draw resources in absence of other agencies to fulfill necessary functions.

Recommendation 6 - Consider creating an independent public safety network to connect fire, police, and emergency medical services. This could have greater stability and reliability than the current network. This would produce better service delivery and could preclude the dangerous situation of a failed 911 system.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response has been created to address this recommendation.

Recommendation 7 - Launch a task force to explore agency partnerships that could mutually foster public safety. This could bolster neighborhood development, perceptions of crime reduction, and increase property values and tax revenue. Leveraging City agencies in innovative ways to facilitate public safety is a tenant to successful community policing.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The City Code Enforcement Team and Richmond Community Mediators were created to enhance partnerships and foster public safety and community relations.

Recommendation 8 - RPD may want to host a forum to discuss what specific improvements could be made to enhance communication and collaboration among criminal justice agencies.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Richmond Violent Crime Intelligence meetings take place monthly. Partners include federal partners (FBI, ATF, DEA), Virginia State Police, Probation and Parole, and all surrounding police agencies (Henrico, Chesterfield, VCU, etc.).

Recommendation 9 - Police community relations cannot remain static, especially in high-crime neighborhoods. Initiatives like foot patrols, mini-stations, targeted programs, neighborhood walks by administration, and other efforts can advance police community relations.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - RPD holds monthly command walks, community pop-ups, as well as patrol strategies of Hot Spot Curves, Outdoor Roll Calls, Hotel/Motel meetings, and walking assignments.

Recommendation 10 - While resource support can help, organizational culture shifts are likely to be more impactful. Communication with the public is a substantial element of police community relations. Regular reminders, examples, and rewards of good police/citizen interactions can build a relationship with police viewed as a community friend rather than a community adversary.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - RPD holds quarterly crime briefings (speaking on crime and hot topics, as well as Q&A with media), community briefings on fatal Officer-Involved-Shootings, and attends civic and neighborhood association meetings. These are all ways used to increase communication with the community.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

Yes. RPD applied for and was selected as a 2021 site for the National Public Safety Partnership which resulted in assessments, innovative tactics, training, and collaboration with a multitude of partners. This led to the implementation of Place Network Investigations and Hot Spot Curves as a part of our Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention strategies. Operation Safe Summer was implemented in 2023 contributing to an overall violent crime reduction, and the same initiative has been continued in 2024. RPD officers were sent to a Train the Trainer for ICAT (Integrating Communication and Tactics) training, and all staff were trained on the program.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

RPD partnered with Virginia Commonwealth University in 2023 to conduct a study of patrol staffing and other needs of the agency, resulting in recommendations to modify the precinct boundaries - which had not been addressed since 2005. RPD is also in the process of replacing its Records Management System. We are also in the acquisition process for the BolaWrap, a less-lethal apprehension tool.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Implementation of the new Records Management System to replace the current system from 2002. Implementation of the Precinct Redistricting Project to better distribute personnel to reflect the population demographics of the City and crime trends. Allocation of take-home vehicles to all employees. Outfitting of vehicles with ballistic panels after police vehicles have been targeted by gunfire in recent years.

Fire and Emergency Services

Updates since 2017

Melvin Carter became Chief of Fire and Emergency Services in 2017 shortly after the Review was completed. Since then, the department has been active in continuing to recruit, train, retain, and grow its first responders and supporting staff. The departments mission has been updated to:

The Richmond Fire and Emergency Services Department's mission is to provide high-quality emergency and non-emergency services to the City's residents and visitors.

The Richmond Fire Department's vision is to ensure fire safety in the home and workplace, and to be "there when you need us, every day, every call, every time".

The department is authorized for 506 employees and they currently have approximately 478 uniformed responders. The 24/7 staffing of the department remains a challenge; however, they have implemented several initiatives to assist and are now becoming an employer of choice for firefighters, drawing several certified firefighters from neighboring counties.

The department successfully moved to an ISO Class 1 safety insurance rating, received $24.7 million in grants since 2017, and is currently working towards accreditation by the Center for Public Safety Excellence.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Fire department contained thirteen recommendations. Of those, eight were fully implemented, two were partially implemented, two were not implemented, and one alternative solution was implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary from Chief Carter and his team is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Provide support during the change management process and manage the pace of change. Although indications are that the change is welcome, people handle change differently and some need extra communication and attention.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The department brought in expert consultants and speakers to explain the primary changes being made and the reasoning for the changes. Here are a few examples:

- To assist with organizational dynamics during the change process, the Fire Department invited Ron Keith on multiple occasions to work with organization leadership.
- To assist with the department's increased focus on customer service, the department invited Alan Brunicini, a noted practitioner and advocate for Fire Department customer service delivery, to explain how and why our department must be customer service focused.
- To assist the organization as we placed greater emphasis on compliance with legal requirements and placing an expectation on accountability, the department invited

attorney and chief officer Curt Varone to explain how and why these adjustments are necessary
- To assist the organization to embrace the ideals of equity, diversity and inclusion, the department:
  - Shared as primary host of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusions Conferences in 2018 and then again in 2023.
  - Established an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Recommendation 2 - Educate and encourage all in supervisory positions to learn about managing change and provide support throughout the process.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - A special emphasis was placed on education and encouragement of supervisors by means of increased opportunities to communicate organization objectives and expectations. The primary tools utilized include the following:

- Leadership Expectations Meetings – These meetings provided supervisors the opportunity to have unfiltered access to the fire department's executive leadership team.
- Captain Meetings – A special focus was placed on helping the fire department captains because of their critical role in managing station operations and staff on a day-to-day basis.
- Townhall stations – these visits to the stations proved an opportunity for fire department leadership to learn firsthand about the challenges the members face.
- ESM – Executive Staff Meetings are held each Monday afternoon. The minutes from these meetings are distributed to the entire workforce.
- Officer academies – A developmental tool to assist new officers with their transitions to leadership and supervision.
- Select group of company officers (focus group)
- Routine station visits
- POD cast-now defunct.
- Newsletter-now defunct
- Active social media presence - sparse

Recommendation 3 - Develop liaisons within the fire department with strong knowledge of procurement, human resources, information technology, and other supporting functions.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - They already existed prior to the assessment, however there was a lack of collaboration between procurement, human resources, information technology, and other supporting functions. Ultimately these liaisons were centralized. Additionally, the department suffered from a lack of adequate staffing in these critical roles: PIO, HR.

Recommendation 4 - Work with supporting agencies to develop understanding of other department processes so that prep work can be performed prior to submission and approval.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Not much success here. We find that policies and procedures are still being created with little to no input from our department. Policies are implemented and drafted for 40-hour employees (overall general workforce) and are unfunded regarding minimum staffing needs. We have met with Fleet, prior to ordering emergency response apparatus, and Budget before submission of grant application. By example:

- Mental health days
- Over hire strategies
- Parental bonding
- Federal FMLA 480 hours versus COR 672 hours
- Public safety nuances are usually overlooked, and feedback was and is requested after the fact.

Recommendation 5 - Establish regular meetings with these departments to discuss pending needs and upcoming initiatives.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Current and ongoing bi-weekly meetings on budget and strategic planning (started in April of 2024).

Monthly meetings with the following:

- Special Capital Projects (DPW)
- Procurement Services
- Facility Management (DPW)
- D/HR – Employee Relations
- COT/CA Office – Employee Matters
- Central VA Fire Chiefs Meeting
- Central VA Safety Officers Meeting

Quarterly with the following:

- Fleet Management (DPW)
- VA Port Authority
- VA DFP
- VCU Police

Recommendation 6 - Continue looking for grants and other forms of supplemental funding to leverage budget funding for equipment.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Since 2017, Richmond Fire has been awarded more than $24.7 million dollars in grant funding.

Recommendation 7 - Develop five-year plans for capital including safety equipment and maintenance to help plan for longer term budgetary needs.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Much work was done to identify the needs related to capital fleet and facilities. However, funding these plans has not been adequate. Therefore, even though documents exist, it can only be considered a plan when there is associated funding. The department had robust participation in the drafting of the following documents:

Five-year plans on the following:

- Fleet Unity Plan (led by Operations)
- Facility Management Plan (led by Operations)

Internal to the fire department, the fire department developed an asset renewal/replacement strategy.

- Joint Energy Taskforce (JET)

Recommendation 8 - Continue outreach efforts to educate citizens on fire safety and awareness and increase positive visibility of the Richmond Fire Department and its members.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Developed organization-wide uniform talking points for each calendar month that focused a specific safety message for the community. Our home safety campaign attempts to knock on at least 25% of the City of Richmond residents' doors. In 2022, we knocked on and engaged 54K residents' doors in an effort to drive home residential fire safety. Invitations from the Fire Department were sent to 104 Community/Civic/Neighborhood Association groups requesting to address these groups with a safety message following the uptick in fire fatalities. Subsequently a presentation was made to each group that accepted the invitation. Supported the National Night Out each year.

Recommendation 9 - Host open houses when the renovated and renamed fire stations re-open.

Status - Alternate solution(s) were implemented

Explanation - We conduct annual open house events but not with the consistency as envisioned by the intent of this recommendation. We conduct open houses during our fire recruitment drives and National Fire Prevention Week.

Recommendation 10 - Promote two-way communications among fire staff and the community and examine other methods and ways to increase citizen understanding and involvement with fire safety, prevention, and awareness.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Reclassified a sworn position to onboard a media professional. This position had an immediate positive effect on our internal and external engagement. Since centralization of PIOs, our digital internal and external communication is negligible. However, this position was later taken away from the Fire Department resulting in two losses:

- The loss of a sworn position.
- The loss of the resource that facilitated two-way communication with citizens.

Recommendation 11 - Consider conducting a brief culture survey to obtain a benchmark for important issues such as communication, morale, decision-making, and leadership with a reassessment in 12-18 months.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Two culture surveys were conducted:

- An internal climate survey was conducted in 2021.
- A focus survey of organizational safety culture was conducted in 2023 where Richmond Fire was benchmarked against 90 other departments.

Recommendation 12 - Administer a 360-degree feedback tool for the department leadership in six to nine months to assess how leadership is perceived and identify their current areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - A 360-degree has not been conducted. However, through our previous PIO, we did celebrate successes and paused when safety was an issue to bring attention to areas of needed improvement.

Recommendation 13 - Find reasons to celebrate successes and ways to pause and recognize organizational accomplishments.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The Fire Department celebrated its success in moving to an ISO Class 1 Rating in an event held at Fire Station 17. The Fire Department celebrated its success in obtaining a SAFER grant in an event held at Fire Station 18. The Fire Department celebrated its success in reactivation of 4 previously deactivated fire companies. The Fire Department celebrates the success of having the current Fire Chief of the Year Award.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

- Implemented the Mayor's Equity agenda in facets of the Fire Department (policies, recruitment, fees etc.).
- Improvement in employee health physicals (include mental health)
- Improvements in apparatus safety.
- Received 13.7 million in grant funding to improve response times and employee health from burnout.
- Received a 900K grant to help remove cancer causing diesel exhaust fumes from fire stations living environment.
- Increased promotional opportunities with the implementation of the position of Assistant Chief.
- Implemented the Driver Pump Operator position to improve driver operator safety and reduce at fault accidents.
- Implemented the first of its kind lateral hiring process in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Hired more than 285 sworn firefighters since 2017.
- Promoted more than 81 sworn officers since 2017.
- Reduced the recruitment/onboarding process from 14 months to 8 months.
- Implemented officer fire academy's for newly promoted officers.
- Met with all sworn supervisors and conducted leadership expectation meetings.
- Expanded our warehouse space to 28,000 sq.ft. from our circa 1980, 1800 sq. ft location.
- Requested three audits for agency continuous improvement: Fleet, Fire Marshal's office, and Special event staffing.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- Replacing the outdated and condemned burn building.
- Becoming a center for the public safety excellence accredited entity.
- Updating legacy policies and procedures.
- Updating our promotional standards to reflect the Fire Service standards.
- Addition UAV's drones to our response fleet.
- Implementing a command simulation program for risk free training to improve proficiency.
- Improving our community engagement through digital mediums and other forms of outreach.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

- Replacement of deficient Fire Training Center presently located in Henrico County with a new training facility that is NFPA and VDFP compliant, and relocate into the Richmond City limits. Replacement of aged fire stations that fail to recognize the diversity of employees by providing adequate bathroom and bunk room privacy.
- Work toward a fully funded Fleet replacement plan that is perpetual in nature.
- The Fire Department seeks to become a fully accredited agency.
- Greater collaboration with our public safety partners, especially RPD and the fire academy from its current location in Sandston VA.
- Develop and implement a professional development institute for all fire department employees.
- The Fire Department seeks to reactivate Engine Company 9 as one of two sorely needed Fire Stations to protect the Downtown district.
- The Fire Department seeks to activate fire companies in response to the explosive growth in the Greater Scott's Addition/Diamond District and the Manchester areas of the City.
- Collaborating with Richmond Public Schools, the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, develop a high school to college dual enrollment program for City of Richmond Public Schools students.

Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response

Updates since 2017

In 2022 the departments of Emergency Communications and Emergency Management were combined to create the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response (DECPR). The mission of the newly created department is as follows:

The Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response (DECPR) provides leadership and support to reduce the loss of life and property through coordination of emergency management resources, collaborative public safety partnerships and reliable and efficient E911 emergency services.

The department has authorization for 121 full-time employees and, as of this writing, has approximately 10 vacancies. Since 2017, the department has received accreditation and re-accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement agencies. The accreditation requires updated and documented policies and procedures consistent with the accreditation standards with proven measurements of accountabilities.

Emergency Communications

The Performance Review for the Emergency Communications department of 2017 contained 16 recommendations. Of those, 13 were reportedly fully implemented, one was partially implemented, one was not implemented, and one alternate solution was implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Expedite the implementation of an internet outage back-up plan with operational capacity as soon as possible.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - DECPR has been informed by DIT that internet redundancy has been established. DECPR does not have details of the redundancy plan.

Recommendation 2 - Review all critical and major non-critical systems and develop, implement, document, and train in contingency operations. Cross-train staff and practice Continuity of Operations Plan regularly.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - As part of our accredited program, we update our COOP plan annually. We have also implemented additional redundancy to our critical systems.

Recommendation 3 - Develop regular communications with support services to discuss and consider the development of emergency procedures in crisis situations.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DECPR regularly discusses operations and process improvement through monthly meetings with partner agencies (police incident review committee, fire incident review committee, and dispatch review committee). In addition, regular collaboration amongst partner agencies occurs at the executive level through the Dispatch Steering Committee and Public Safety Chiefs meetings

Recommendation 4 – Continue on the strategic course to identify and adopt relevant best practices, always with the goal of increased safety, efficiency, and customer service.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation – DECPR pursued and received full accreditation through CALEA.

Recommendation 5 – Encourage suggestions for innovative improvement ideas throughout the ranks.

Status – Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation – In line with the City becoming a workplace of choice, a collective bargaining contract has been established.

Recommendation 6 – Develop a method for analyzing the submissions and making decisions toward implementing with follow-up assessment of worthy ideas.

Status – Not implemented

Explanation – This recommendation lacked clarity.

Recommendation 7 – Continue to document processes and cross-train employees.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation – DECPR, through its accreditation, has implemented policies for all 200+ standards. All employees have reviewed and signed these policies. Also, DECPR implemented a broad band program that encourages and incentivizes additional training and skill sets.

Recommendation 8 – Work with Human Resources to understand the challenges in recruiting and retaining employees in Emergency Communications.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation – DECPR reviewed with DHR to implement a rate increase for our emergency communications positions, changing the pay plan structure to ensure competitiveness in the market. DECPR was also authorized to hire an in-house staff recruiter who has streamlined

recruitment and coordinates background investigations and new employee onboarding practices.

Recommendation 9 - Consider a deliberate effort to address high turnover and ways to improve retention.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DECPR reviewed with DHR to implement a rate increase for our emergency communications positions, changing the pay plan structure to ensure competitiveness in the market. DECPR has also implemented employee appreciation initiatives.

Recommendation 10 - Continually develop and share short term and long term financial projections for facility and equipment needs to Finance and others accompanied by clear value statements that explain the return on the financial investment and implications on safety and service delivery.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DECPR completes a yearly five-year forecast to ensure that personnel and operating needs are submitted to City leadership. Through the City's CIP process, DECPR assesses facilities needs and proposed facility enhancements are submitted to the City leadership.

Recommendation 11 - Continue to advocate for high standard equipment and systems while continuing to be proactive about sourcing external funds.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DECPR continues to ensure that our equipment is being updated under a standard replacement plan. And systems are updated as instructed by our vendors.

Recommendation 12 - Continue to message the mission, vision, and big picture while expressing appreciation for the specialization of the units that support the integrated whole.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DECPR continues to message our purpose to staff through numerous channels, like roll calls. DECPR is also currently working on an updated strategic plan that will include new messaging.

Recommendation 13 - Take the time to evaluate your communication plan periodically to ensure the messaging is clear and consistent with your needs of the agency.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DECPR is constantly in communication with the City leadership of the status and needs of the agency.

Recommendation 14 - The agency should continue establishing leadership consistent with the agency's mission, vision, and core values throughout the ranks.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - When a leadership vacancy occurs, DECPR evaluates how the role needs to evolve with the current direction of the organization. As such, DECPR has implemented a number of position reclassification to ensure that we are recruiting and hiring the appropriate individuals based on the department's needs.

Recommendation 15 - Work with City leadership to design and implement a shift of organizational culture that develops, promotes, and holds everyone accountable for values consistent with a healthy and productive workplace.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Through DECPR's accreditation process. Standards for all employees were established and must be met to maintain accreditation.

Recommendation 16 - Encourage employees to take time to pause and celebrate success, remembering that everyone handles rapid change differently. Refocusing and appreciation go far towards sustaining morale.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DECPR has a budget for employee appreciation that is utilized for a number of events and initiatives. National telecommunicator week, monthly staff lunches, etc.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

There have been numerous initiatives that have been implemented. Some of these initiatives include:

- CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.) Accreditation and Re-accreditation
- Text to 911
- Video to 911
- Tow module
- Additional telephony redundancy
- Teleworking
- Updated broadband/career development plan
- Compensation study, to include pay plan update

- Call taking Protocol software
- Emergency Medical Dispatch Consolidated
- Citywide camera management

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- Computer aided dispatch upgrade
- Telephone upgrade, collective bargaining tower lease, management grants, management strategic plan update
- Facility planning
- Amazon web services for non-emergency calls
- CAD to CAD with Chesterfield 911 interface
- Critical building mapping

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

 Better technology interfacing between 911 and 311 services.

Develop a citizen facing application for citizens to enter their own call for service.

Emergency Management

The Performance Review in 2017 for the Emergency Management department contained three recommendations. Of those, one was reportedly partially implemented and two were not implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - The traditional federal funding may not be viable in the short and medium term, so efforts to strengthen the current arrangement and identify funding for a standalone EOC, whether from federal or non-governmental sources, should be undertaken.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - A new EOC is in the long range CIP, however this project has not been funded. DECPR is looking at alternative solutions to implement a standalone EOC in the interim.

Recommendation 2 - Continue work on innovative private sector partnerships to improve private sector resiliency during an emergency.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - OEM merged under DECPR within the last 18 months. DECPR conducted an assessment of OEM which identified this initiative as a recommendation. Efforts are underway to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 3 - The City of Richmond may wish to make contingency plans for sustaining key functions, such as emergency management, that are significantly dependent on federal funding, given the uncertainties that exist regarding federal funding of domestic programs.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - OEM merged with DECPR 18 months ago. Included in this merger is standalone funding within the general fund. Additional resources to include a new FTE were included in the FY25 budget. DECPR has supplemented OEMs budget during the transition to meet critical needs. Additional enhancements will need to be made to ensure proper funding level to deliver services.

Operations

The Operations portfolio consists of the Department of Public Utilities and the Department of Public Works.

Public Utilities

Updates since 2017

The current Director of Public Utilities (DPU) joined the City in February 2020 (amid the pandemic) and was named Senior Director in December 2021. Since then, she has built a new leadership team and led an inclusive strategic planning process resulting in the following updated mission and vision statements:

Mission

To provide safe and reliable utility service while creating exceptional value.

Vision

To our Customers: DPU proactively serves the utility needs of regional customers through environmental stewardship and resource conservation, while providing cost effective, safe service.

To our Employees: To be an employer of choice that nurtures employees through growth and development within a safety-first work environment.

The department is authorized for 680 staff and currently employs approximately 570. Vacancies are viewed as opportunities to build, rebuild and reorganize DPU's workforce as defined by the strategic planning process and the updated vision/mission statements.

DPU is enterprise funded, which means that departmental operations are funded through fees collected as opposed to general fund dollars.

The 2017 Performance Review for DPU contained thirteen recommendations. Of those, nine were reportedly fully implemented, one was partially implemented, and three alternate solutions were implemented. This represents an implementation rate of 92% for DPU. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary by the Director and her team is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Allow managers to have more control over the hiring process, including screening the applicant pool and salary decisions.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - From an HR perspective, more resources were immediately assigned to handle the recruitment process and continuous changes are ongoing. More specifically, between 2018-2023, two HR Generalists were assigned to compliment the daily activities handled by the DPU Organizational Support Team and in 2023-2024, DPU was assigned a Talent Acquisition Partner (TAP) along with an HR Business Partner. Within this same timeframe, , DPU assigned recruitment coordinators for each division to manage the process. Bi-weekly meetings are held with the DPU division coordinators, DPU Organizational Support, and HR TAP to discuss and track the status of active recruitments. Other notable changes include: (a) granting more authority to the division leaders to make salary decisions; and (b) protecting the integrity of the recruitment process by ensuring that the application screening process resides in HR.

Recommendation 2 - Provide clear hiring deadlines to improve the speed in which someone comes onboard.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Over the last several years, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) has created guidelines/deadlines and trained managers and supervisors on the recruitment process. DPU has also hosted and participated in several "hiring events" as an opportunity to recover from the effects of the 2019 pandemic.

Recommendation 3 - Review and restructure the broadband system.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Prior to 2017, DPU had seven approved department broadband position titles. Currently there are 32 approved DPU broadband position titles. More specifically, 59% of DPU employees are currently in a broadband position and periodic reviews are conducted and amended as needed.

Recommendation 4 - Provide supervisory training for all levels of staff and hold supervisors accountable for their actions.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Immediately following the 2017 survey, DPU underwent a cultural initiative with an external cultural change vendor. Specific details include but may not be limited to: All DPU employees were required to go through (two) phases of training. Employees and leaders came up with an employee vision statement. Managers and supervisors were required to attend a series of training and the executive leadership team along with senior managers attended

several sessions with an executive coach. In 2024, DPU introduced and subsequently released a three-year Strategic Plan via a series of communication segments and a copy of the plan to all employees. The following (five) strategic focus areas exist within the Strategic Plan and are designed to support the updated mission/vision statement in a post-pandemic work environment:

1. Community Outreach and Partnerships, which focuses on community confidence within the City and in the larger region.
2. Safe and Reliable Service, which focuses on DPU ensuring quality, responsive gas and water services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.
3. Customer Experience, which focuses on delivering a modern and efficient customer experience through process and technology enhancements.
4. Workforce Development and Engagement, which focuses on creating a culture of learning, growing and adapting for the future.
5. Financial Health Stability, which focuses on balancing infrastructure investments, affordability and financial resiliency to provide essential services. DPU's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan complements the City's efforts and provides a framework for the collective workforce to connect and thrive in the workplace in a post covid environment.

Recommendation 5 - Create a technology improvement plan to address the quality of software, especially RAPIDS, which is in desperate need of an upgrade or elimination.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - DPU is not the owner of RAPIDS and therefore, cannot lead or manage any upgrades to the existing system. However, DPU has other systems that have reached their useful life and are in the replacement phase. One system in particular is the Customer Information System (CIS), where gas and water customers are billed monthly. A new billing system will dramatically improve how DPU customers are served and will further enhance the work environment for current and future staff members. For more information about the success of this program / upgrade, please use the QR code to review the DPU Media Release dated August 12, 2024. Project Team kick-off activities occurred on August 21, 2024 and "go-live" of the new billing system is scheduled for December 2025. Supported by the new strategic plan, this is a huge win for DPU!

Additionally, as a result of the strategic plan process, DPU underwent an organizational design study, which led to the creation of a new division focused on Technology and Innovation, led by a newly appointed Deputy Director Sr.

Recommendation 6 - Find an alternate means of acquiring technology (e.g. leasing).

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - In accordance with DPU's three-year Strategic Plan, there are key initiatives in place to advance the technology track for both the customer and the employee experience. Technology and automation have been introduced into several facets of DPU's operations.

Additionally, DPU continues to benefit from the effects of staff augmentation inside of the Customer Service Division as well as other areas where direct customer interaction is realized. Largely due to the impacts of COVID-19, but equally supported by the need to attract and retain a highly skilled and committed workforce and develop a framework to ensure business continuity.

Recommendation 7 - Expedite the procurement process by giving managers purchasing cards (P-cards) to secure items under a certain monetary limit.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - P-cards are used to support and manage the business within the guidelines established by the Department of Procurement. DPU has several P-card holders, and the Director is not aware of any outstanding issues or concerns.

Recommendation 8 - Contract more services internally that are currently outsourced to reduce expenditures.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - DPU proactively serves the utility needs of regional customers through environmental stewardship and resource conservation, while providing cost effective, safe service. These efforts are not without challenges as the City of Richmond is an old city with aged infrastructure. The Department of Public Utilities is responsible for a territory which includes 5,000 miles of water, sewer, and gas pipes as well as 200,000+ other assets (i.e. fire hydrants, meters, valves). Condition assessments help to inform repair, rehabilitation, and replacement schedules.

Additionally, as a provider of water and gas services to the region, DPU has several must adhere to compliance through these various regulatory bodies. For these reasons, contracted services are used to support operations and ensure business continuity. DPU's 3 year strategic plan defines the priorities by focus area along with the required measurements for success.

Increasingly Stringent Regulations:

- State Corporation Commission (SCC)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Virginia Department of Health – Office of Clean Drinking Water (VDH)
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)

Recommendation 9 - Allocate time for supervisors to write procedures.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The growth and development process for frontline supervisors remains active in both a post covid work environment and a newly developed collective bargaining work environment. DPU partners with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) for leadership courses and development opportunities.

Recommendation 10 - Be consistent with information and communicate changes to all impacted staff.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In 2021, DPU embraced the following three guiding principles (communication, commitment, and courage). The guiding principles are highlighted in and around work zones, employee presentations, the three-year Strategic Plan, all hands meetings, performance evaluations and goal setting opportunities. Even further, employees have helped to develop a list of behavior traits that define success within each of the guiding principles. The behavior traits are included in the Strategic Plan to further highlight the importance of collaboration with staff and across the collective workforce.

Recommendation 11 - Provide clear job definitions.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - As described above, approximately 59% of DPU employees are in broadband positions compared to a previous time frame. Additionally, DPU has promoted and continues to promote and prepare employees for growth opportunities beyond the 2019 pandemic.

Additionally, the updated mission and vision for DPU, speaks directly to the goal of becoming an employer of choice that nurtures employees through growth and development within a safety-first work environment. Even further, the strategic plan defines how the initiatives for workforce development and engagement play a critical role in meeting the needs of regional customers without delay or impact to regulatory requirements.

Recommendation 12 - Communicate updates as they occur.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In addition to the guiding principles and the three-year Strategic Plan, DPU releases a weekly communication to employees each Monday called "TOP 3." Other communication platforms include, but may not be limited to:

A bi-weekly employee newsletter

1. A Spring All Hands Meeting (informational)
2. A Fall Hands Meeting (celebrational)
3. Monthly Director's Luncheon with 15 individual Employees (random selections)
4. Frequent updates to StarNet

5. "From the Desk Of" series - author Sr. Director
6. Department updates via "DPU Communications" listing
7. Several employee resource groups (i.e. Young Professionals, Women's Network, Men's Network)
8. New employee luncheon (bi-annually)
9. New hire orientation (ongoing)
10. Employee service awards (bi-annually)

Recommendation 13 - Ensure that managers are sharing information with all levels of staff.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In addition to the response to recommendation 12 above, the three-year Strategic Plan has been issued to all employees, which provides a framework for information sharing and business continuity. Additionally, the leadership team operates with an "open door" policy, which further promotes communication, commitment and courage (i.e. DPU's guiding principles).

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

I have added current details throughout the answers above.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

In addition to DPU's three-year Strategic Plan, I would like to call out (five) key projects that will serve the utility needs of regional customers for the foreseeable future. Each of these projects are listed in the Strategic Plan summary document.

1. Continue to meet compliance for the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Program by 2035.
2. Replace remaining legacy utility pipe with state-of-the-art material (i.e. gas and water).
3. Implement an updated Customer Information System with robust self-service platforms by December 2025.
4. Implement Advanced Metering Infrastructure and other technologies that promote timely and accurate billing.
5. Comply with recent Lead and Copper Rule Revisions from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for lead line replacements by 2035.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Based on the major initiatives outlined in this response, DPU will continue focusing on workforce development and engagement initiatives that help to foster a culture of safety and continuous growth, outreach and adaptation for employees. Additionally, DPU will continue to invest in the workforce to ensure business continuity and plans to develop a utility career pipeline program along the way.

Public Works

Updates since 2017

After 32 years working in various capacities for the City, Bobby Vincent became Director in 2017. Since then the portfolio has grown to include fleet, streetlights, parking, and special capital projects, however with the recent creation of the Department of General Services, that may revert.

The department consists of about 510 staff with about 410 tenured and the remaining temporary workers. Over the past several years the department has reduced contractors and instead emphasized training, career development and internal promotions. This effort along with significant and frequent pay increases, stabilized staff and improved culture.

A full installation of a GIS system has reported to help workflow by monitoring every job need, performance, and automatically calculating a repeat replacement or re-work date. Additionally, DPW and DPU started a once a month coordination meeting which helps discuss and align services.

The Performance Review for the Public Works department contained 13 recommendations. Of those, all 13 were reportedly fully implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary by the Director and his team is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Provide training for supervisors and hire those with the appropriate skill set for the job.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Supervisory training offered through Human Resources. Executive/Management Team workshop w/Facilitator. From Bud to Boss Supervisor training w/Facilitator. Leaders Who Make a Positive Difference Training session for supervisors. Hiring (appropriate skill set) - promote from within when feasible.

Recommendation 2 - Increase opportunities for discussion and allow staff to share ideas. Fair and honest evaluations are important for employees to feel valued and stay motivated.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The Director holds "All Staff" meetings at least twice per year to update on issues and allow employee feedback. The Director schedules/attends periodic meetings with individual meetings with the staff. The Director holds monthly Executive/Management Team meetings. Operation Managers hold monthly unit meetings with staff. Monthly CIP meetings are held for input and to discuss issues. Monthly coordination meetings are held with DPW/DPU staff.

Recommendation 3 - Employees should be guided in how to work together and communicate outstanding issues between shifts.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Monthly meetings are held with staff. Offered session on Keys to Effective Workplace. Communication Implemented. 13-hour snow shifts to allow for communication for emergency response.

Recommendation 4 - All levels of staff must be more respectful of one another during discussions.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Developed/implemented DPW Core values that are displayed throughout the department and constantly communicated to staff during unit meetings and other employee interactions.

Recommendation 5 - Leadership and management should work to instill greater respect among employees during discussions. They may want to invite some expert help to assist them in this.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Training offered by DPW (with inhouse and outside facilitators). Operations portfolio training for leadership held.
- Creating a High Performance Department Workshop (three days) for Executive/Management Team, facilitator: Derius Swinton from Bud to Boss
- Supervisor Training, facilitator: Walillian Howard
- Leaders Who Make a Positive Difference Training (two days)
- Culture Leadership Training for Managers/Supervisors (three hours)
- DPW Leadership Training (two days)

Recommendation 6 - Find ways to streamline processes and eliminate long paper trails and redundancy. A specific suggestion was to reopen the dump and resell materials considered waste such as natural gas, stones, and mulch.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Streamlined processes through use of technology: DocuSign, Granicus, RAPIDS, OnBase, GIS, Asset Management, CityWorks, Energov, P-Card. Also, developed/implemented standard operating procedures for providing services.

Recommendation 7 - Allow equipment purchases at lower levels and improve accounting procedures so vendors can be paid on time. Supervisors should seek subordinates' advice on equipment needs/requirements prior to equipment purchases. There were also comments requesting that the current rules and regulations be followed and not to allow exceptions to these for customers for nonemergency reasons.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Improved procedures to pay vendors on time. The use of P-Card for small equipment purchases.The use of RAPIDS for processing POs, invoices, and requisitions. Employee input on equipment needs/requirements prior to purchases for sweepers, pavement marking truck, bucket truck, and knuckle boom truck.

Recommendation 8 - Additional funds should be included in the budget so that staff can receive adequate training. Training should be made available for both supervisory and non-supervisory staff.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Budget increased; employees at all levels to attend training, workshops, conferences (based on available funds): APWA, SWANA, NFBPA, IAAP, NACTO, VDOT, Power DMS, DMV, CDL Training, and Tuition Assistance Program.

Recommendation 9 - Staff could be cross trained and should receive training when new software and equipment are introduced.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Employees trained on new equipment with vendors. Employees' training on technology: CityWorks, GIS, RAPIDS, Wavelength Cross training, Pavement Marking/Signs, and Operations services.

Recommendation 10 - When hiring new employees, they should ensure new hires possess the necessary skills to adequately perform assigned tasks. This would reduce mistakes and speed processes.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - New Hire Skills - Practice promoting from within when possible. Hire temporary employees and Interns that have received on-hands training working with the department.

Recommendation 11 - Increase hiring of skilled employees and provide more supervisors for work crews to ensure that supervisors can adequately complete their duties for oversight.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Increased training and promoting from within. No need to hire additional supervisors. Supervisor/employee ratio proportionate and adequate, functioning effectively and efficiently.

Recommendation 12 - Review and shorten the hiring process. Improve the evaluation process so that they are fair and supported by documentation.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The hiring process time reduced as a result of NEOGOV; it's working well. Human Resource processes need to be reviewed, specifically with turn around time of background checks. Alternative initiatives implemented: Job Fairs, Direct Hires.

Recommendation 13 - Provide employee appreciation activities and offer more incentives. Introduce merit increases as recognition for high-performing employees.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Participated in Citywide quarterly/annual RISE Awards Program. Established/implemented DPW Awards/Recognition Program that incorporates various categories year round. Hold DPW Employee Appreciation during National Public Works Week. Participates in activities for Citywide Public Service Appreciation Week. Participates in activities for Citywide Customer Service Week. Department implemented the Mayor's initiative for pay increases and increased minimum wages.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

Bulk/Brush pick up on recycling days to reduce illegal dumping. Re-engineered Leaf Collection Program. Prioritization of sidewalk projects through Richmond Connects. Increased budget from $500,000 to $3 million. Increased maintenance crews from two to six. Symposium increased/adequately budgeted DPW operations through CVTA funds. Traffic Calming Program through Paving. Full-time Graffiti Removal Program. Vision Zero adopted the Paving Program increased PCI rating in the City Improved WISP process.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- Fall Line Trail - regional bike/mixed use trail
- Neighborhood traffic improvement plan
- Bike infrastructure improvements
- Energy efficient facilities
- Securing funding sources through Federal/State grants

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Speed Management Support City initiative through maintenance/transportation infrastructure network.

Economic Development and Planning

Economic Development and Planning consists of Housing and Community Development (previously referred to as Economic and Community Development), Minority Business Development, and Planning and Development Review (previously known as Planning and Development).

Housing and Community Development

Updates since 2017

The current Director joined the City as a consultant in 2022 and became Acting Director in 2024. Since 2017, Richmond's appeal has grown, and remote work has positioned Richmond as a potential place for relocation and home ownership. With increased housing demand and rising interest rates, housing affordability becomes more challenging. The department is implementing numerous strategies and creative ways to finance and facilitate the preservation and production of affordable housing. Additionally, it seeks to remove all internal bureaucratic impediments to these efforts. Collaborative efforts are being employed to work with DPU, PDR, and DPW to remove bureaucratic impediments to the process.

The department has 18 positions.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Economic and Community Development Department contained twenty-five recommendations. Of those, fourteen were reportedly fully implemented, three were partially implemented, three were not implemented, and five alternate solutions were implemented.

A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Evaluate and reduce the number of steps and people required to "sign off" on department decisions, procurements, hiring, and O&R Memoranda.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The Department, to the extent possible and within its control, has simplified the process and has increased its span control.

Recommendation 2 - Give staff more authority and empowerment to make decisions within appropriate limits.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation – Under the current leadership, the staff has been empowered and encouraged to make decisions and to exercise creativity and assertiveness in the performance of their tasks.

Recommendation 3 - Create celebration opportunities for employee recognition, team building, and other morale-boosting events in City Hall.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - HCD celebrates everything and everyone, birthdays, and professional achievements. HCD has made it part of its culture.

Recommendation 4 - City administration (especially affected departments), should have the opportunity to respond to proposed ordinances before they are introduced by council members.

Status- Fully implemented

Explanation - This is a requirement in the preparation and submission of ordinances for council approval.

Recommendation 5 - Reevaluate the procurement process at all levels and seek ways to streamline the process. Consider ordinance or rule changes to speed up the procurement process.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The reevaluation of the procurement process is ongoing. Although HCD desires greater efficiency, it is beyond our scope.

Recommendation 6 - Streamline development review and permitting process. Assign designated coordinators who are responsible for coordinating a single development project from beginning to end of the review process (ombudsman approach). Establish a defined number of days for each department to respond to development review and permit requests.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation – This function is in the Department of Planning and Development Review.

Recommendation 7 - All departments should be required to send an appropriate representative to the Plan Review Committee meetings. Establish accountability measures to create consequences for Directors and others who do not follow guidelines.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - This function is in the Department of Planning and Development Review.

Recommendation 8 - Have the CAO and Mayor issue strong statements of empowerment and policy changes that give deputies and Directors the power and the clear expectation that they use it day to day.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The Mayor and CAO have empowered Directors and Deputies to make decisions and implement strategies within HCD with the expectation that we do so.

Recommendation 9 - Establish clear employee development opportunities, including budgeting for training and development.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The leadership encourages employees to seek advancement for themselves and the benefit of the Agency. Encourages training which is reflected in the budget priorities.

Recommendation 10 - Design clear deal-making procedures and authority for administrative staff.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The leadership provides clear direction and guidance so that the administrative staff is clear as to its authority.

Recommendation 11 - Consider the pros and cons of separating Community Development and Economic Development into two new departments both with Directors that report to the Deputy CAO.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Although fully implemented, I don't think it effectively fosters housing and economic growth. The separation creates silos and a lack of collaboration.

Recommendation 12 - Consider a path to allow the Administration and the Mayor to seek outside legal counsel, at their sole discretion. This may require a change to the City Charter.

Status - Not Implemented

Explanation - This has not been implemented to the detriment of the City. The legal staff is overworked and understaffed, creating challenges.

Recommendation 13 - Establish clear deadlines and guidelines for decision-making, responding to inquiries (internally and externally) with consistent expectations, and consequences for those who do not comply. Establish a culture of urgency throughout City Hall.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - With regards to HCD, there is a sense of urgency necessary to tackle the City's affordable housing crisis, and I would like to see the same urgency throughout the City.

Recommendation 14 - Communication between ECD and Council could be enhanced so that Council Members can receive input from subject matter experts enabling them to make more fully informed decisions.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - It is crucial to maintain ongoing communication with Council members to ensure they are well-informed and able to support the passage of essential legislation.

Recommendation 15 - Streamline City Attorney work review process.

Status - Not Implemented

Explanation – The workload of the City Attorney's Office is significant. HCD wants to ensure that our work is given proper priority. Ideally, HCD would have its own attorney.

Recommendation 16 - Provide communication tools and training for all staff who interact with the public, including messaging and position statements for each priority coordinated with the Mayor's office.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - The Department should get its direction from the Office of Strategic Communication to make sure the message is consistent with that of the Administration.

Recommendation 17 - Create a template for department communications providing guidelines for when and how key information will be provided.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - HCD created a template.

Recommendation 18 - Create opportunities within the law (or make modifications) to allow the City Council to communicate with staff directly rather than have ordinances drafted on a case-by-case basis.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - There is a City protocol as to how the Council interacts with staff. This has been successfully implemented. Council contacts staff regularly, and it has proven to be effective.

Recommendation 19 - The Mayor and CAO should visit every department at least once a year to meet and greet staff. They would appreciate this.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The Mayor, CAO, and DCAO host multiple events during the year to interact with all levels of staff.

Recommendation 20 - Address employee morale concerns.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Under the new leadership, the first order of business was to address morale.

Recommendation 21 - It may be helpful for management and staff to develop a practical plan to foster improved morale within the agency.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation – HCD continues to create a culture of empowering and encouraging our employees to attain excellence. The Department supports this through training and emphasizing the importance of Community Engagement. It wants to create an atmosphere where employees enjoy coming to work, a culture of mutual respect, and a culture of working hard and playing hard which contributes to improved morale and increases productivity.

Recommendation 22 - Review best practices of first-class municipal websites around the country and use results to upgrade website functionality.

Status - Not Implemented

Explanation - In assuming the leadership HCD recognizes that this is critical to adopt best practices for a website and is in the process of doing so.

Recommendation 23 - Survey departments for current use and extent of software applications and additional software needs. Survey departments for software training needs.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - This is ongoing.

Recommendation 24 - Consider hosting some of the inter-departmental meetings in the EDC offices, as they have the capacity and the professional appearance if the business community is involved.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - HCD currently hosts multiple inter and intra-agency meetings and events which include community engagement and public hearings.

Recommendation 25 - Evaluate the visitor experience, routine maintenance, and cleanliness of City Hall.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - City Hall is clean and accessible.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

No.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- Program Expansion
- Considerable investment in the production and preservation of affordable housing
- Managing a portfolio of projects funded by ARPA, AHTF, and EAHP (Bond Funding)
- Housing Related Service
- Eviction diversion
- Support the management of shelter operations through Federal Entitlement funding

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

In the future, HCD aims to become a public development entity, CDFI, and a conduit for property acquisition and disposition to create and preserve affordable housing.

Minority Business Development

Updates since 2017

The Director of the Office of Minority Business Development (OMBD) is one of the few who was in their position when the 2017 review was conducted. Since 2017, the department has updated its mission as follows:

Our mission is to facilitate, produce, and advance opportunities for minority business enterprises (MBEs), emerging small businesses (ESBs), and disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs) to successfully participate in the full array of contracting opportunities available in the City of Richmond. OMBD strives to increase:

- *The number of local MBE/ESB and DBEs*
- *The capacity among local MBE/ESB and DBEs*
- *MBE/ESB and DBE availability in certain under-utilized business categories, e.g. architecture*
- *The number of public and private sector contracts won by MBE/ESB and DBEs*
- *The number of effective strategic alliances, both in the MBE/ESB and DBE community and beyond*
- *MBE/ESB and DBE access to capital*
- *MBE/ESB and DBE integration of information technology*

The department has experienced a decrease in staff from 10 to six over the past seven years. They conducted a disparity and impact study and hope to develop strategies to address some of the recommendations within the report.

The Performance Review for the Office of Minority Business Development from 2017 contained seven recommendations. Of those, three were reportedly partially implemented, and four were not implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary by the Director is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Create protocol for a greater sense of urgency in the Finance Department to respond to departmental needs.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Has not been implemented but continues to be in conversation with procurement.

Recommendation 2 - Consider procurement rule changes that might allow all small purchases to be purchased exclusively from small and minority businesses. This, naturally, could not be applied solely to one agency.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The procurement department has implemented a procurement "umbrella" solicitation that partially addresses the issue.

Recommendation 3 - It would be helpful to MBD if ECD could make community benefit agreements/plans required for all incentive agreements. Compliance requirements, financial covenants, and underwriting should be reviewed to better align with MBD client capabilities.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The City is promoting Community Benefits but only on large development projects.

Recommendation 4 - The department could be more effective if it had a consolidated and broader footprint, including a resource center that offers clients access to computers, conference rooms, workshops, training, and other resources. It is recommended that the City explore options for better location and expanded access to these and other services. A co-location in unused space within one of the Richmond Public Schools could be ideal to provide greater accessibility.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - OMBD is occupying space at the Hickory Hill Community Center allowing us to offer training and one-on-one business consulting.

Recommendation 5 - Expansion of the MBD mission to provide additional support services will require adequate staffing. Effort should be taken to analyze the impact of proposed services and prioritize offerings, as well as outreach to higher education institutions with partnership opportunities.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - We are still in need of additional staffing to adequately serve the community.

Recommendation 6 - Create a template for interdepartmental communications, providing guidelines for when and how key information will be provided.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - We still need a vehicle to communicate more effectively throughout the administration.

Recommendation 7 - Additional protocol should be created to provide guidelines for management to reach out to staff and affected departments for early input into decision-making.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - OMBD is not aware of any progress on this issue.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

The use of the Hickory Hill Community Center to extend the outreach services for technical assistance for businesses.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

Improving the use of community benefit agreements through expansion of its usage with more organizations.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Increase the number of staffers to help better serve the community, increasing the ROI on the investment.

Planning and Development Review

Updates since 2017

The Planning and Development Review department has completely turned over its leadership and staff since 2017. The current Director was appointed deputy Director in fall of 2020 and Director approximately a year later. Soon after, the department was reorganized into the following units: Planning and Policy, Land Use and Zoning, Bureau of Permits and Inspections, and Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement. The agency is authorized for 130 positions.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Planning and Development department contained thirteen recommendations. Of those, two were fully implemented, six were partially implemented, four were not implemented, and one alternative solution was implemented . A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary by the Director and his team is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Evaluate and reduce the number of steps and approvals required for departmental decisions, procurement, hiring, and O&R memoranda. Create celebration opportunities for employee recognition, team building, and other morale boosting events in City Hall.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Departmental decisions are fully implemented. PDR rearranged organizational structure in a more effective and efficient manner. Scope of responsibility for each employee is clear. Better understanding of different divisions. Ability to work together, shared vision, understanding, and responsiveness. Procurement is fully implemented. Procurement raised thresholds for purchasing decisions; adopted a more proactive approach to contract renewals. PDR effectively uses purchasing cards. Hiring is fully implemented. Human Resources posting openings and screening candidates in a more timely manner. PDR set firm internal deadlines for scheduling interviews and making decisions. O&R memoranda are partially implemented. City administration adopted a new SOP for transmittals and approving ordinances to form; using more capabilities of Legistar software. The City Attorney is in the process of adopting the use of Legistar. Creating celebration opportunities for employee recognition, team building, and other morale boosting events in City Hall is partially implemented. City engagement committee offering more activities. Authority for individual department events is still unclear.

Recommendation 2 - Reevaluate procurement process at all levels and seek ways to streamline processes. Consider ordinance or rule changes in order to speed up the procurement process.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Procurement raised thresholds for purchasing decisions and adopted a more proactive approach to contract renewals. PDR is effectively using purchasing cards.

Recommendation 3 - Streamline development review and permitting process. Have designated coordinators responsible for coordinating a single development project from beginning to end of the review process (ombudsman approach). Establish a defined number of days for each department to respond to development review and permit requests.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Commissioner of Buildings is responsible for coordinating building plan reviews. Intake must process and route application within five (5) business days. Plan reviewers must send initial comments back to applicants within ten (10) business days. Meeting these goals about eighty percent (80%) of the time. Deputy Director for Land Use and Zoning is responsible for coordinating plan of development (site plan) reviews. Reviewers must complete reviews within fifteen (15) business days of receipt. Meeting these goals is about eighty percent (80%) of the time. Still work to do with the timeliness of other departments. Individual planners are responsible for working with applicants from beginning to end of the process. PDR placing greater emphasis on pre-development meetings to identify red flags sooner than later. Established internal project review team to resolve internal conflicts. Still needs work establishing zoning entitlement SOPs and updating ordinances.

Recommendation 4 - Establish clear deadlines and guidelines for decision-making, responding to inquiries (internally and externally) with consistent expectations, and consequences for those who do not comply.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - PDR follows VFOIA rules about timely responses to inquiries, consistently delivers ahead of schedule. PDR has issued general guidance for responding to phone calls and emails, but does not track.

Recommendation 5 - Establish a culture with a sense of urgency throughout City Hall.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Progress is being made. We have successfully used time tracking to reduce intake to first review to 10 days or less and from there to permitting to approximately 5 days. Residential backlog has been reduced by 80-90% and commercial to 70-80%.

Recommendation 6 - Train all staff that interact with the public with communication tools.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - City administration has not provided extensive tools or training to departments.

Recommendation 7 - Create messaging for each priority and coordinate with the Mayor's Office. Develop a template for department communications providing guidelines for when and how key information will be provided.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - City administration has not provided extensive tools or training to departments. Unclear about how the department should interact with the Office of Strategic Communications and Engagement and new Office of Neighborhood Services.

Recommendation 8 - The Mayor and CAO should visit every department once a year to meet and greet staff and thank them for their service. Management should reach out to staff for input into decision-making.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - This should be answered by the Mayor and CAO.

Recommendation 9 - Address employee morale with workplace initiatives and an evaluation of compensation/raises.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The City has provided significant increases in base salaries over the past few years to make it more competitive in the marketplace. The addition of VRS in 2024 has also helped. The City has yet to fully implement compensation increases related to job performance. PDR employees have acknowledged a more personable and approachable administration and a better follow through on promises.

Recommendation 10 - Conduct overall efficiency and effectiveness review of the entire hiring process. Analyze impact of current outstanding position vacancies, prioritize, and fill them as soon as possible.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - PDR analyzed workload to better understand resources required to perform departmental functions in a timely manner. Rearranged organizational structure in a more effective and efficient manner. Budget allowed PDR to better use building code fees, which must be spent on building code functions in the department. Human Resources posting openings and screening candidates in a more timely manner. PDR set firm internal deadlines for scheduling interviews and making decisions.

Recommendation 11 - Review best practices of first class municipal websites around the country and use results to upgrade website functionality.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - Website remains clunky, not optimized for mobile devices. City does not provide resources for maintaining departmental pages. Unclear as to proper use of social media.

Recommendation 12 - Survey departments for current use and extent of software applications and additional software needs.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - PDR made all building permit applications electronic using EnerGov community development review software (CDRS) in 2020; we have converted most of our zoning entitlement applications as well to EnerGov. City is currently in RFP process for new CDRS. City has successfully leveraged ArcGIS mapping and analysis software. Could better use Storymaps feature to tell stories. PDR just launched an online permit guide through Camino to allow customers to better self-diagnose what they can do with their property and the process to do it. Software systems generally do not talk well to each other (e.g: RVA311 and EnerGov). RAPIDS is cumbersome, unreliable, and continues to frustrate employees.

Recommendation 13 - Evaluate security measures, loitering, routine maintenance, and cleanliness in City Hall.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Security measures are fully implemented. City Hall is secure. Too cumbersome for City employees? Loitering, unsure what this means. Routine maintenance is not implemented. Took two plus years for PDR offices on the fifth floor to be remediated after flooding. PDR offices on the first floor continue to experience water infiltration and climate control issues. Cleanliness is fully implemented.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

New approaches to community engagement reaching people where they are elevated through the master planning (Richmond 300) process, Community Code Enforcement Team (CCET) and reconstituted the CAPS program with multiple departments and external agencies with two facets: daytime to do proactive corridor and complex inspections; nighttime for nightclub and unauthorized use inspections.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

SOPs for zoning entitlements ordinance to replace the plan of development (POD) with site plan RFP process for new community development review software (CDRS).

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Consolidation of office space, currently on three separate floors, and functions not aligned.

Human Services

The Human Services portfolio contains the departments of Social Services, Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, Justice Services, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Office of Community Wealth Building.

Social Services

Updates since 2017

Just prior to the release of the Performance Review in 2017, the Department of Social Services (DSS) had experienced significant leadership turnover with five Directors leading the agency in a twelve-month period. Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic affected the volume of customer needs stretching the department's ability to keep up. Although staff were limited, the Director reported that services continued to be provided.

The Director had previously been in the City Attorney's Office and has worked since 2017 to stabilize the department by filling vacancies, cascading professional development throughout the layers within the agency, improving morale, establishing strategic goals with performance measures, and creating a culture of delegation, accountability and customer service. It is now reported that the City's Department of Social Services is an employer of choice for qualified professionals.

As part of the new strategic plan, DSS revised their mission of the department to read:

Improve the quality of life for all people of the City of Richmond by strengthening families and individuals through prevention, intervention, and support services that foster self-sufficiency and resilience.

The vision for the department remains the same as it was in 2017::

Build to Last

The 2017 Performance Review for the Richmond Department of Social Services contained 11 recommendations. Of those, seven were reportedly fully implemented, two were partially implemented, one was not implemented, and one alternative solution was implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Continue Trauma-Informed Community (TIC) effort to build on its success in highlighting the challenges faced by the department's clients.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - We have continued our work in TIC/Resilience. Here is a list of how we are engaged in this work:

- TIC/Resilience Manager who is a Licensed Clinical Social Work.
- We have a Trauma Informed Leadership Team (comprised of members of our workforce).
- We are members of the Greater Richmond Trauma-Informed Care Network.
- Two DSS family service workers contributed to the Virginia Trauma-Informed Community Network's e-learning module "Historical & Systemic Traumas."
- We created a Resilience Week (We celebrated our eighth year.) The VTICN implemented "Resilience Week Virginia" from our model.
- During the COVID19 Pandemic, we recognized the heightened need to focus on employee wellness. We created virtual meetups/chats for staff and supervisors (that continue); worked with CIGNA to create opportunities to address mental health/grief, virtually.
- Ongoing Training/Professional Development (Reflective Supervision).
- Created "kid friendly" spaces in our lobbies. During a painting refresh of our facilities, we selected colors that aligned with TIC practices.
- Created resilience rooms for staff in Marshall Plaza and Southside Plaza.
- Presented at conferences for the Trauma Responsive Organizations and Systems Track.
- Case consultation for staff.
- Developed a partnership with RBHA for crisis consultation for displaced youth. We are seeking to expand staffing in this area because of future initiatives/programming.

Recommendation 2 - The City should carefully consider evaluating caseloads and developing a plan to create an environment focused on retaining employees and developing the best financial strategy for utilizing the City matching dollars as they relate to the state matching dollars.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The City completed a market rate assessment for RDSS employees that resulted in an average salary increase of 31% for DSS employees. They have consistently received COL increases that have kept our salaries marketable. Caseloads in our children services/adult services area are within the recommendations of VDSS/VA Code. Caseloads for public assistance programs have increased almost 150% during global pandemic and already inadequate staffing has not yet kept pace with the demand. The City has worked diligently to afford the department the flexibility to increase and shift our staffing strategy to meet the changing needs.

Recommendation 3 - The department should continue to prioritize leadership development and the City should support efforts to strengthen the leadership capability within the department. The department faces a large scope of responsibilities, staffing stresses, and morale issues that could be improved by stronger leadership.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - We have instituted a number of measures to foster an environment/culture of growth within the department:

1. Re-Design of our Professional Development and Training Team (with the consultation of the American Public Human Services Association, APHSA)
2. Creation of a Leadership Development program by the Directors within the Human Services Portfolio (Richmond Leads-a five week leadership development program targeting managers, supervisors and future leaders within our portfolio.).
3. Implementation of TILT365 assessment and training: All staff have completed a TILT365 assessment and corresponding training. It has shifted staff engagement, improved communication and has significantly minimized the number of disciplinary matters that I (the Director) have seen with respect to interpersonal communication challenges.
4. Our trainers have been certified in administering the TILT365, eliminating the need for consultants. We are now able to ensure that it is included for onboarding new staff and develop additional courses to support ongoing learning.
5. Executive Coaching: Executive Leadership Team has gone through executive coaching (leadership, emotional intelligence, executive presence) and ongoing professional development opportunities (Gracie Harris Institute, LEAD Virginia, etc.)
6. Executive Coaching has been offered/provided to all participants who completed the Richmond Leads Program.
7. Trainers are being certified as professional coaches to build this skill set in-house and afford all staff the opportunity to have some level of professional coaching.

Recommendation 4 - Continue work to replicate the strategic planning, culture, and mission success of the Children's Services function within the eligibility function. The effort is complicated by staffing shortfalls, but department leadership is appropriately using this model of success and creating improvement. These efforts should be continued and supported by the City.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - We have implemented the following:

1. Worked with a consultant in developing and implementing a five-year strategic plan ("Build to Last" 2017-2023).
2. The strategic plan oversight is housed with our policy team. We have created a "Gardeners Team" that has oversight for implementation and data tracking. That team is cross functional across all areas of our department. They meet regularly and provide leadership and communicate updates to executive leadership, mid-managers, and staff at all-staff meetings.
3. We worked with APHSA to complete an organizational assessment mid-way through our strategic plan. As a result we created a Roadmap that the Gardners have implemented in our work to complete the goals of our plan.

4. We completed our five-year plan in December 2023. The Gardners, executive leadership in working with consultants updated our strategic plan/goals and launched our new five-year plan--One Vision One Voice 2029 in February 2024.
5. We are continually reviewing our goals, updating our activities that support those goals.
6. We create opportunities for all staff to participate in the strategic planning committees/work groups to ensure all voices/perspectives have the opportunity to engage in the process and shape what we are building.

Recommendation 5 - As the City identifies long-term real estate leasing and capital improvement strategies, prioritize identifying a more functional and hospitable space for the Department of Social Services.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The City signed a lease for a new location for DSS in April 2024. We anticipate completing the relocation/consolidation in the fall of 2025.

Recommendation 6 - As with other agencies with significant dependence on federal funding, the City may wish to conduct a risk assessment/contingency exercise. This could help the City identify the potential harm and mitigation strategies for worst-case outcomes given uncertainty of federal funding for domestic programs.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - This recommendation was not a focus of Social Services. Considering the increased demand as a result of the global pandemic all resources were allocated to ensure our service delivery remained consistent with a shifting delivery style. The City did explore a basic income model that was implemented through the Office of Community Wealth Building.

Recommendation 7 - Consider adopting the use of purchasing cards with appropriate internal controls for routine small purchases of goods and services, particularly those needed to serve the emergency needs of clients.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - We are now able to use purchase cards.

Recommendation 8 - Make improving employee communications a key management priority and performance expectation, perhaps beginning with routine communications such as a daily email to employees from leadership on what is occurring that day in the department (staff changes, new policies, etc.).

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - I responded with partially implemented because this is an area that we are continuing to improve/implement some changes. We found, through our work with the executive

coaches, Richmond Leads and APSHA; that one of the issues with information sharing was around communications styles and having a sense of agency. Our leadership teams have/are developing executive charters that address how information will be shared throughout the organization. As it pertains to our relocation, we have created a variety of workgroups/teams that are focused on various aspects of our move. One is the communication/engagement workgroup. They have taken the lead in developing our communications plan-internally and externally for the move using various styles/platforms. We have also done the following:

- Good News Gazette
- Coffee with the Director
- All-Staff Meetings
- Division/Area Meetings and Newsletters
- Virtual Catch Ups
- Mid-Managers Meetings
- Guidance on emails to be sent to all staff on matters that have agency-wide impact

Recommendation 9 - Keep employees in the communication loop regarding changes and decision-making. Often providing the "why" of a decision is helpful.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - See the prior response.

Recommendation 10 - Partner with the City's Human Resources team and VDSS team to identify and/or develop a career ladder to encourage retention and development of technical and program expertise among front-line staff. Benchmarking best practices with peer agencies would assist in this effort.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Our strategic planning team (Gardeners) did the research on career ladders and drafted out the leveling for each of the titles that we needed to change. The levels (BPS I, III, IV, FSW I, III, IV) were created/implemented in FY24.

Recommendation 11 - As a follow-up to this performance review, seek private sector assistance to advise the department and City leadership on ways of better integrating its computer systems and reducing the security and operational issues created by the current array of systems used by the department.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - The systems used by DSS are primarily Virginia Department of Social Services systems, the locality has no authority to integrate these systems, absent legislative changes. We are procuring a new, local financial/case management system to support our Children Services Act office and some other DSS functions that will have improved integration with City systems.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

We implemented a variety of state-lead initiatives in our child welfare program—Family First Act, Kinship (Kin First Culture), Parental Child Safety Placement Program.

We have re-organized our Professional Development and Training Unit.

We created and maintained a staff self-care/wellness space.

Created new positions within our staffing plan—permanent part-time positions

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

· Kin First Culture

· Parental Child Safety Placement Program

· Medicaid Unwinding

· Relocation Teams and Leadership are working to ensure a smooth consolidation/transition to a new facility.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

· We are preparing to pilot a LCSW supervision program. This creates the opportunity for our staff seeking to meet their licensure observation requirements to do so through Richmond DSS, without obtaining outside employment.

· We are re-configuring our staffing of our Solution Support Center (RVA311 responders) to include those who can take immediate action on some of the call types (e.g. client address change), eliminating the need to transfer such matters to a worker for resolution.

Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities

Updates since 2017

The current Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities (PRCF) started in his position October 30, 2017, after the Performance Review was issued. Since then, the department has built a strong leadership team helping to move the department from a park score of 58 to 22 based on the topmost 100 populated cities in the U.S. The department is authorized for 244 staff and has contracted with temp agencies to recruit temporary staffing to fill seasonal positions. The department has revised its mission and vision statements as follows:

Mission

Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities is "One Richmond" in delivering quality services, programs, and activities that encourages a healthy and sustainable lifestyle

Vision

Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities is committed to "One Richmond" by enriching one's quality of life in providing effective, efficient, and high quality leisure facilities, sites, services, and programs for all generations.

During the pandemic, and since, attendance at Richmond's parks has increased and the department has initiated many programs to support the demand.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities department contained seventeen recommendations. Of those, thirteen were reportedly fully implemented, three were partially implemented, and one alternative solution was implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided by the Director and his team below.

Recommendation 1 - Appropriate funds for summer positions at pool facilities, as well as expedited hiring procedures.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The City implemented a new competitive compensation plan and added additional Human Resources staff to ensure the hiring process is more efficient. In the last three years, the department has been able to fill all seasonal and permanent pool positions due to the competitive pay increases, in addition to the implementation of a lifeguard training program at two of the City's high schools. The pay increase has allowed the department to retain qualified candidates after lifeguard training and certification. The hiring process for lifeguards/pool staff has been more efficient with the additional Human Resources staff assigned to each department

with a focus on specific needs. The City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities has the highest starting salary of $20 per hour for pool staff.

Recommendation 2 - Fill vacant senior leadership posts in the department.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In the last five years, the department has filled all executive leadership positions. The department now has three Deputy Director positions (versus two in 2017) who oversee Recreation and Administration, Capital Projects, and Parks and Cemeteries. We also have Operations Managers that report to each Deputy Director.

Recommendation 3 - Additional consideration could be given to increasing staffing to support after-school at-risk youth programs at community facilities.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Additional staffing, to include Program Specialists and Recreation Program Instructors, have been and are currently being hired to support after-school programming for at-risk youth in DPR Community Center Facilities. This includes extended hours of operation so that youth have safe spaces and increased program offerings and opportunities. Additionally, two Therapeutic Recreation Program Specialists have been hired to enhance and support inclusion within our programs. We have also implemented the We Matter and Gun Violence Prevention Programs for at risk youth, in addition to working with outside agencies. With the increased recreation budget, we will continue to add new staff and programs.

Recommendation 4 - The City could also consider extending the length of the term for provisional hires for DPR summer positions from 90 to 120 days.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Several years ago, Human Resources asked the department to move away from using provisionals and asked us to use the temp agencies to hire staff for the summer season or during the year. Temporary employee's term depends on the agency's needs.

Recommendation 5 - Broader asset investment and funding issues cannot be corrected in the short-term. However, critical maintenance and staffing could be prioritized, particularly with respect to health, safety, and sanitation issues.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The department has implemented several new programs and positions to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens and visitors to the City of Richmond.

- Establishment of the Park Ranger Program
- Successful pilot program to use RVA 311 for the public to report issues on City trails. The plan is to expand to other divisions within the department this fiscal year.
- Finalizing the creation of a river permit system for commercial outfitters and other groups who use the river for paddling trips.
- Monthly safety and security meetings for Park maintenance and divisional staff and temporary personnel.
- The department purchased a mini trash truck and began routine trash and sanitation pickups that allowed staff less contact with soiled, contaminated waste.
- Significant increase in dollars was added to capital funding for deferred maintenance.

Recommendation 6 - Develop a 10-year strategic plan to better capitalize on the strong portfolio of assets managed by the department.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - PRCF is in the process of developing a Citywide Parks Master Plan that will serve as a long-range planning tool to determine service gaps and identify opportunities for improvements across all aspects of parks' operations, recreation and athletic programming, and capital projects management. There is a website for the planning effort, known as Richmond INSPIRE, which can be accessed at www.richmondinspire.com.

Recommendation 7 - The P-Card has been proposed by the Procurement division and should be considered expeditiously.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The department currently has 63 active P-card users. P-cards have streamlined the payment process for small purchases. Administrative staff has reduced the amount of requisitions/purchase orders completed for products/services less than $10,000.

Recommendation 8 - Performance Review dialogue with the Finance Department should provide greater insight into next steps for addressing issues with invoice processing and payment.

Status - Alternate solution(s) implemented

Explanation - The department's use of the P-card has eliminated issues with invoice processing and payment such as late fees and a break in service due to a lack of payment.

Recommendation 9 - Allow the buyer to put in an invoice ahead of service with a cancellation clause in place if service or product is not delivered.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - CORERP allows the buyer to create a requisition/purchase order ahead of service. If a service or product is not delivered, the requisition/purchase order can be canceled, and any funds reserved for this obligation will be returned to the respective funding source.

Recommendation 10 - Performance Review dialogue with the Technology department should provide greater insight into next steps for addressing the myriad of technology issues.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The IT department has been making improvements with the upgrade of software (Microsoft 365), replacement of End of Life (EOL) computers, and other technology. There are still challenges to address.

Recommendation 11 - Build upon the existing platform to develop the catalog into a comprehensive Citywide listing of programs available for all ages, expanding the network of peer agencies and services. Making this available online would be an important next step to accessibility.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The department has a catalog of programs called the "Program Guide" which is printed twice a year (Fall/Winter, Spring/Summer). It is distributed to all recreation centers and libraries. This information is also posted on the City's web site, and the department's social media pages. For the social media pages, a QR code is listed that takes the public to the Program Guide. Additionally, programs being offered can be found listed on the Parks and Recreation program website, WebTrac.

Recommendation 12 - Improved access to a user-friendly online registration process will improve efficiency within the department by minimizing workload from legacy manual processes and procedures.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The department implemented a web-based registration process (WebTrac) where participants/users can register, online, for youth athletic programs, summer camp programs, and after school programs. Users can also go to a community center in person and be registered through our recreation management software. Payments can also be made online. Paper registrations are in the process of being phased out for these programs.

Recommendation 13 - Efforts are underway to more completely and accurately account for utilization of facilities and participation in the department's programs. These efforts should be continued as the data will be vital in developing a long-term strategic plan that will better maintain and leverage the City's parks, recreation, and community assets.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - RVA 311 allows us to track trail-related issues and run location-based reports on problem areas. Trail counters allow us to count the number of users on City trails. Vehicle counters allow us to count the number of users at many of our park facilities. Pilot program is underway using Street Light Data to count users via cell phones in the James River Park System. Our current permitting system allows us to count usage at our facilities that are available to be rented by the public. The department's RecTrac and Web Trac; recreation's registration and data collection program allow us to collect data on program participation, revenue collected, and number of programs created. Master plan is providing AI data that gives a comprehensive look for utilization.

Recommendation 14 - Status as an "Enterprise" operation should be reviewed and appropriate business planning support should be provided.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In 2019, the Budget Office completed a City of Richmond Cemetery Analysis report. The report proposed that the City utilize a blended funding strategy of Enterprise Funds, General Funds, and Capital Funds. The Enterprise Fund can be increased through a revised business plan to fund all maintenance and operation of existing cemeteries. A General Fund contribution approximating the income from a perpetual care fund will ensure proper care for ordinance specified responsibilities. Additionally, the City should invest in one columbarium per cemetery (one per year), additional parcel acquisition, and a community mortuary. The following items were proposed to ensure liquidity: repair roads, development of additional interment property, enhance cemetery staffing level, establish payment plan, implement and fund sales and marketing plan, establish a mausoleum at one cemetery, a cremation garden at each of the remaining cemeteries and consider a crematory, and enhance cemetery historic facilities.

Recommendation 15 - Dialogue with the appropriate department should provide greater insight into next steps for addressing issues related to the aging fleet and other vehicle maintenance issues.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - More funding should be budgeted for the aging vehicles and equipment when they are surplus. Currently there is not a system in place for replacements. Presently, we have vehicles that stay in service for one to two years or through the next preventive maintenance schedule and then end up surplus by Fleet, due to out-of-date parts or costly repairs because of their age. Because our department is not allocated appropriate funding to purchase vehicles through DPW's Fleet office, we have spent funds out of our budget to purchase vehicles. In addition, when a vehicle is put on the surplus list because it is not operable, Fleet does not replace this vehicle. This leaves the department without a vehicle(s) to use for operations.

Recommendation 16 - Implement an online scheduling system for vehicle maintenance and repairs, with clear accountability for servicing standards and turnaround time.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation -The Public Works Fleet division sends out weekly vehicle and equipment readiness reports to notify staff when to pick up their vehicle. Monthly fleet reports are sent out to notify staff which vehicles and equipment are due for maintenance. Nothing is in place currently to request services electronically or through an online platform. Turnaround time for service has improved for newer equipment and vehicles, but for older vehicles it still takes longer to service.

Recommendation 17 - Evaluate City-owned assets for potential relocation of DPR administrative offices.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - PRCF administration office will move from its current location in leased property to the former Washington Redskin/Bon Secours facility. This facility will house approximately 50 staff and enable us to rent areas of the facility for revenue. These areas include outdoor amenities (football fields) and indoor conference rooms and multipurpose space.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

- James River Park System Master Plan
- RVA 311 pilot program
- Urban Ranger Program
- Green Team - The Green Team was established by Mayor Stoney in 2019 as an initiative to expand Parks so that all City residents are within a 10-minute walk to a park or open green space. To date, the Department has acquired 137 acres of land that has been or is in the process of being converted to park land.
- Acquisition of Mayo Island, acquisition and opening of Dock Street Park
- Acquisition and on-boarding of (five) new Parks in southside
- Implementation of Bee City USA initiative
- Citywide composting program
- Installation of EV chargers at Park facilities
- Establishment of no-mow zones in open areas
- The Gun Violence Prevention program called "We Matter" program which focuses on helping Middle School students deal with the trauma from witnessing gun violence or having lost a loved one to gun violence.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- WorkForce development program.
- Enhanced training programs for staff that includes Tilt Assessment and the Richmond Leads training program that was attended by employees from the Human Services portfolio.
- In the FY 2025 budget, three East End Cemeteries (Historically Black) were transferred to the PRCF portfolio to manage and maintain. Two positions were allocated to manage these assets. • Citywide Parks Master Plan, as referenced in the answer to Question 11.
- Parks is in the process of constructing two new community centers, building an addition onto one community center, and designing renovations for a fourth community center. Annually, we are prioritizing repairs and renovations for at least one community center (as funding allows) that will bring the facility into ADA compliance, as well as modernize and address deferred maintenance.
- These new parks and community centers are allowing us to expand programming into areas of the City that have long been subject to redlining, disproportionate health impacts due to heat island impacts, and an overall lack of community resources that can improve families' health, happiness, and general lifestyle.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

- Park maintenance has started to upgrade the department's older lighting system to LEDs (reduce energy cost), upgrade and remove our outdated HVAC systems to reduce our carbon footprint, when replacing plumbing fixtures, we are installing low flow and lead free fixtures in accordance with federal guidelines. When renovating our facilities, we are unitizing LEED approved construction practices (as a department). We are in the process of transitioning to a web base building automation, asset, and maintenance management system.
- Parks is in the process of constructing two new community centers, building an addition onto one community center, and designing renovations for a fourth community center. Annually, we are prioritizing repairs and renovations for at least one community center (as funding allows) that will bring the facility into ADA compliance, as well as modernize and address deferred maintenance.
- These new parks and community centers are allowing us to expand programming into areas of the City that have long been subject to redlining, disproportionate health impacts due to heat island impacts, and an overall lack of community resources that can improve families' health, happiness, and general lifestyle.
- Trail connectivity: James River Branch Trail, Texas Beach, Fall Line, and Crooked Branch
- 10 Minute Walk Program – developing open space and parks that are a 10-minute walk from most neighborhoods.

Justice Services

Updates since 2017

Since 2017, the Department of Justice Services (DJS) has consolidated operations at 730 East Broad Street except for the Juvenile Detention Center which stayed at its original location. This consolidation helped with the integration and collaboration of communication and services and has reportedly had a positive impact on morale. Since the current Director was appointed in 2019, the department has developed a strategic plan and revised their /mission and vision statements to read as follows:

Mission

Prevent, reduce, and repair harm to the community by holding vulnerable citizens and court-involved individuals accountable through a range of programs and services designed to transform decision-making.

Vision

Safe, productive, and engaged community.

 The department's staff of approximately 80-85 work to help improve decision-making and outcomes for both children and adults through a breadth of services and, in some cases, 24/7 oversight. They have recently added clinical services to their portfolio of services to provide for an expanded clientele.

The 2017 Performance Review for the DJS contained fourteen recommendations. Of those, twelve were reportedly fully implemented, one was partially implemented, and one was not implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - It is not clear how the current system evolved such that these units were combined into a single agency. If the City were to undertake a more comprehensive reorganization, this issue should be considered.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - A new Director was hired in 2019. Based upon her review of the department's organizational structure, she determined that the current structure was not functional in terms of mission or staff span of control; and thus necessitated an immediate change in order to ensure a more effective, efficient and accountable organization. The Director reorganized the organizational chart/operations into three separate divisions: Division of Adult Operations; the Division of Youth Programs and the Division of Finance and Administration. Each Division is headed by a Deputy Department Director who reports directly to the Director. All three divisions are clear on their respective mission's duties and responsibilities and service level expectations. The three deputies comprise the Director's Executive Team and high levels of communication,

coordination, and collaboration take place during the Director's weekly Executive Team meetings.

Recommendation 2 - Those emerging from supervision need quick access to services and support. Persons who receive rehabilitation, counseling, treatment, and guidance while involved with the department of Justice Services need a fast and seamless transition to other support agencies. This will reduce the likelihood of relapse or re-offending. Exit plans, transition strategies, and close communication between and across agencies would assist this transference.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - * Fully implemented but constantly enhancing efforts. The Detention Center's Post Dispositional Program is monitored for compliance by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and the local Court Service Unit (CSU) for compliance to provide counseling, treatment and services, and receive referrals to service providers and support agencies upon release. The Department of Justice Services (DJS) is committed to ensuring seamless transitions for individuals emerging from our supervision. We recognize the importance of quick access to services and support, as highlighted in the recommendation. Here is how we are addressing this need:

- Building Strong Relationships:
  - We actively collaborate with partners within the Human Services' portfolio and our department.
  - Key agencies include the Department of Social Services and the Office of Community Wealth Building.
- Comprehensive Assessments:
  - We conduct thorough assessments for prevention services, criminogenic risk factors, and basic human needs, including clinical needs.
  - These assessments help us identify the specific services required for everyone.
- Onsite Support Services:
  - We provide onsite clinicians and peer support to address immediate needs.
  - Our staff educates participants on how to navigate community resources effectively.
- Resource Navigation:
  - We connect individuals to a wide range of services including: education and employment opportunities, food resources, housing support, medical care, social benefits, treatment programs
- Community Integration:
  - Given the short duration individuals spend with us, we emphasize the importance of knowing who can provide ongoing services within their community.
  - Individualized plans and strategies are tailored to ensure everyone has a clear path to continued support.
- Strategic Plan Alignment:

- ○ This approach is supported by our Strategic Plan, in both the Adult and Youth Programs Division. By focusing on these areas, we aim to reduce the likelihood of relapse or reoffending, ensuring a successful reintegration into the community.

Recommendation 3 - The department can plot a path to success through careful strategic planning. Begin with goal definition and assessing the obstacles to achieving those goals. Some of those goals may require structural or organizational changes.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Fully implemented but constantly enhancing efforts. Over the course of the last several years, the Director has fostered strategic thinking, determined vision, and made an earnest effort toward process improvement in all department areas. Thus, DJS has undertaken a comprehensive organizational assessment and strategic review, beginning with the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Culminating in the development of a five-year Strategic Plan, that identifies goals, objectives, measures, and tasks/action steps to improve service delivery and monitor progress in our three service areas:

- Adult Services
- Juvenile Services
- Administrative Services. This plan aligns our operations with our budgetary decisions. As we continue to work more collaboratively internally and externally, we will uncover more opportunities for improved client oversight and support.

Recommendation 4 - Boards, such as the Community Criminal Justice Board, supersede agency and connect decision makers in a forum where successes can be pursued. Identifying success is often difficult and we tend to rely on numbers (i.e. how many persons under probation were revoked and returned to jail). Introducing more sophisticated, and possibly qualitative measures of success, particularly at the agency Director and senior administration level, could foster greater attempts at creative problem solving.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Fully implemented but constantly enhancing efforts. The Code of Virginia provides the authority for the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to prescribe standards for various community-based and pretrial services, as well as for the Community Criminal Justice Boards (CCJB). The DCJS administers general appropriation funds to support the Comprehensive Community Corrections Act for Local-Responsible Offenders (CCCA) and the Pretrial Services Act (PSA) as discretionary grants to local units of government. These grants dictate the majority of the outcomes shared with decision-makers. To address the recommendation and enhance our efficiency, we are taking the following steps:

- Utilizing Legal Frameworks:
    - ○ The Code of Virginia § 9.1-175, § 19.2-152.3, § 53.1-131.2, and §§ 9.1-178 and 9.1-180 provide the necessary legal frameworks for our operations.
- Sharing Success Stories:

- ○ The Department of Justice Services has been proactive in sharing the success stories of individual participants.
  - ○ Highlighting these successes helps illustrate the qualitative impact of our programs beyond numerical data.
- ● Updating Case Management Systems:
  - ○ Implementing an updated case management system is crucial for efficient data sharing across and within the department.
  - ○ This will streamline the process of tracking and reporting both quantitative and qualitative success measures.
- ● Strategic Plan Alignment:
  - ○ Our efforts are supported by our Strategic Plan: Organization/Support Functions, Goal 3-Objective 6: Procure/develop and maintain secure and reliable IT systems and infrastructure to improve DJS effectiveness and efficiency. By focusing on these areas, we aim to break down silos, foster creative problem-solving, and provide a more comprehensive view of our successes.

Recommendation 5 - A better understanding of City agencies, their roles, and the services they provide could help all City employees.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Fully implemented but constantly enhancing efforts. DJS actively engages and collaborates with other City departments on multiple fronts. As part of the Human Services Portfolio, the department has participated in Richmond Leads which focuses on the Tilt 365 personality assessment framework to assist the Portfolio in developing the strength of managers and other staff throughout each department. In addition, we recognize that the portfolio members (Human Services, Office of Community Wealth Building, Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, Richmond Public Library, and Social Services), serve many of the same clients. There is a strong sharing/collaborative effort within the portfolio at the Director's level regarding service delivery and opportunities for collaboration and those positive efforts have permeated downward within the staff of each department. The department also regularly partners with other agencies and has collaborated in applying for and receiving grant dollars with RPD, Human Services, Parks and Recreation, and YMCA. DJS leadership/staff recognizes the importance of understanding the services each department provides and have participated in the "Department Spotlight" opportunities.

Recommendation 6 - Information distributed to members of proximal agencies could enhance utilization of services or referrals.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Fully implemented but constantly enhancing efforts. DJS is committed to information sharing and collaboration with proximal agencies, as mentioned in the response to Recommendation 5. It is important to note that a shared case management system would greatly enhance access service delivery, client coordination, and a higher level of information

sharing. However, there are vast legal impediments to such a database. Where there are opportunities for such and where allowable by law, these efforts should be pursued without objection.

Recommendation 7 - A regular audit of units, their objectives, and their costs produces a depiction of efficiency. This should not be unique to Justice Services and should be a common practice across all City agencies.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - The components of the Department's three divisions are audited by City and State audit processes. In addition, to ensure compliance and operational efficiency, internal audits are periodically conducted to determine staff compliance with policy, procedure, performance review and statutory compliance with program specific compliance. All supervisors are tasked with ensuring "compliance" with the high level expectations for service delivery in all units.

Recommendation 8 - Examine reintegrating currently contracted functions into the department if doing so will improve service delivery and reduce costs. In particular, this should be considered for contracted functions not achieving established performance metrics.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - As of 2019, the Department no longer relies on contracted agencies for service delivery. This has proven to add the expected level of control, accountability and fidelity to the measures of all programs and a higher level of service delivery of all programs made available to the clients served. Leadership has had to carefully assess its operational budget and personnel requirements. In addition, several grants have been garnered to assist with the expansion of other programs and initiatives needed to support clients served.

Recommendation 9 - Share success stories worth replicating and showcasing. Key components to success with the detention center were new leadership, a strong partnership with Richmond Public Schools, and a strong sense of mission among the employees.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - As of 2024, the Director has replaced all prior leadership of 2017. The new leadership team of Secure Detention comprises a Deputy Director, a Superintendent and two Assistant Superintendents. The duties of the two assistants will cover the operation and administrative duties of the center, respectively. In addition, The Detention Center has experienced great success in the implementation of our post-d program; our Post Disposition Coordinator was recently recognized by Judges at the Oliver-Hill Gavel Award by the Judges. This award highlights his efforts of working with the Post Disposition population that have made significant contributions to the court and the community in preparing youth for re-entry into the community. The Detention Center has developed a strong relationship with our Richmond Public School team which highlights youth successes such as successful completion of learning goals and graduations. Youth can experience a graduation opportunity whether they complete a GED

or High School Diploma followed by a cap/gown graduation and celebration with family. 2019 and 2022 the Detention Center achieved an audit rating of 98.9% allowing the Detention Center to receive the continued three-year certification. The center was also recognized for the awarding of the Teacher of the Year in 2021.

Recommendation 10 - Recognizing that access to the home monitoring program is at the discretion of individual judges; the City may wish to consider a formal evaluation of the success of the program and opportunities, as well as required resources, for expanding the program.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - DJS has continued to provide home electronic monitoring as an option in lieu of confinement. The program numbers increased significantly during the COVID pandemic as a response to relieve the Justice Center from major outbreaks in the facility. Since the pandemic, Home Electronic Monitoring (HEM) is regularly utilized as a bond condition that ultimately affords defendants to maintain employment and housing. Although the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has recommended minimum guidelines for home electronic programs, there is no current standard that is enforced by the DCJS or regulatory board to evaluate DJS's performance. However, DJS has incorporated the recommended minimum guidelines into its standard operating procedures.

Recommendation 11 - The City may wish to consider a formal staffing review of front-line human services positions to address [caseloads] and to develop the needed budget recommendations.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - The Department will need to review and prepare an appropriate RFP for this process. Other than the mandated State/Federal mandated staffing ratio for juveniles housed in the detention center (one staff to eight juveniles), there are no formal staffing studies that recommend a standard client/counselor ratio or span of control/caseload management. Any consultant recommendations would have to support DCJS's guidance and recommendations.

DJS has conducted an internal review of positions during the annual fiscal year budget preparation. Since 2017, DJS has presented statistics showing gradual increases in pretrial placements impacting the trending decline of jail admissions. The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has recommended that local jurisdictions implement evidence-based supervision practices. Unfortunately, the recommendation was not funded as the Virginia Criminal Justice Board has yet to adopt a minimum staff to caseload ratio. DCJS has provided incremental increases to the grant fund distribution based on a funding formula. However, the amounts were not large enough to create new positions. Currently, legislation legalizing marijuana has impacted placements to local probation and the number of referrals has declined, thereby leading to approx. 25% lower caseloads.

Recommendation 12 - As the City assesses its space planning, maintenance, and capital outlay needs, attention should be given to the conditions in the Public Safety Building and the

short-term, medium-term, and long-term opportunities for better maintaining, renovating, or replacing the existing space.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - In 2021, all DJS personnel assigned to the Public Safety Building were moved to the 730 E. Broad St. Building. At the time of the move, the spaces allotted to DJS were adequate. However, the increased rate of program/personnel expansion is outpacing the requirement for office space and file and equipment storage space. Should the City proceed with the inclusion of DJS into the new Justice Center complex, this concern will be eliminated.

Recommendation 13 - Strengthen the career development pathways of middle management, improve employee relations, and push progressive leadership further down within the organization's management structure.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The Department's Executive Team, Management Team, and the majority of the Leadership Team have completed Richmond Leads. Staff at all levels are encouraged to undertake the many career development courses offered by the Department of Human Resources. In addition, all staff are also encouraged to seek out and attend unit specific external training and conferences.

Middle management has participated in critical decision-making activities such as policy amendments, departmental budget planning and implementation.

Recommendation 14 - Continue to work on removing small but notable derailers with the department's relationship with the public. Leadership has been proactive in identifying and addressing these derailers and should continue these efforts.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation - Fully implemented but constantly enhancing efforts.

Adult Division: The Department of Justice Services (DJS) is committed to enhancing our client/customer service orientation and addressing any obstacles in our relationship with the public. Here are the steps we have taken:

- Language and Accessibility Services:
  - Contracted with Language Line Solutions to provide access to services for clients with limited English proficiency and for deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals.
- Community Engagement:
  - The Detention Center and Youth Services organize community events.
  - Adult Programs invite the public to participate in Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education sessions.
- Staff Accountability and Training:

- - - Hold staff accountable for the quality of customer service.
    - Ensure front-line staff complete Interpersonal Communication training.
    - Require trained and professional security officers, including those detaining individuals pending arrest by local law enforcement.
    - Have Adult Services staff, at all levels, complete an Introduction to Dialogue (Effective Communication) training. Collaborate with Human Resources Leadership and Development Trainer to develop customer service training.
  - Communication Standards:
    - Set clear expectations for onsite and offsite communication with both internal and external customers.
  - Strategic Plan Alignment:
    - Supported by our Strategic Plan: Goal 3 – Administrative Services Objective 4: Improve communication with all DJS staff and stakeholders. Use innovative strategies to improve communication and interactions with internal stakeholders. Strengthen relationships and activities with external stakeholders.

Youth Division: The City of Richmond expanded its outreach to English as a Second Language youth over the past two years by seeing the need for and hiring ESL staff. Often language is a barrier for families in our community and they are hesitant to seek services if communication is a challenge. Justice Services have expanded the program reach to offer leadership and educational opportunities to the ESL community. By doing this, our staff can influence the lives of more teens by providing them with knowledge, skills, and support. Also, our Youth Justice Program initiative expanded its referrals not only to justice involved youth, but also community youth referred by partnering agencies in the City. The Youth Justice Program involves recruiting teens who are upstanding in their community and in their school who would like to volunteer in a peer justice setting. This involves providing attendance and insight at community pop-up events to encourage public members to reach out and ask questions. Pop-up events are notable for getting into the community where families and youth are raising awareness. Youth Justice participates in approximately 12-15 pop-up events per year including participating in "Trunk or Treat" during the month of October. Community Programs/Justice Services is always utilizing critical thinking skills and research skills to see what trends are happening in the juvenile justice realm. Social media is an area where we need to be more in the forefront and continue the efforts of involving the public and having the community know what services are provided by Justice Services. Our next steps are to find out all that is involved through the City of Richmond to have a known presence on social media.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

Prior to 2019, there was not a defined financial unit in the department. There were individual members of the department who had financial tasks. Many of the financial decisions made were at the employee level and were often absent from management review until late in the decision-making process. In 2020, a Financial and Administration management structure was established and a Deputy Director was hired to oversee and coordinate all aspects of support

services for the department. This has led to heightened accountability and rigorous established financial controls were up in place.

1. Effective Practices for Community Supervision (EPICS)
● Description: EPICS II, developed by Dr. Christopher Lowencamp, is based on research showing that officers using core correctional practices can positively influence supervisees' behavior, promoting lasting public safety.
● Implementation: In 2017-2018, through a VCCJA pilot program, our Division of Adult Programs trained local pretrial probation officers in EPICS II. Training included multiple days of instruction and assignment of an EPICS coach to ensure skill proficiency. Officers recorded themselves performing the skills, which were reviewed by the coach.
● Skills Trained:
   ○ Role Clarification: Establishes a supervision alliance while developing rapport.
   ○ Effective Use of Reinforcement: Emphasizes the benefits of prosocial behavior to increase motivation.
   ○ Effective Use of Disapproval: Highlights the consequences of negative behavior to promote change.
   ○ Effective Use of Authority: Applies appropriate authority to guide behavior. Principles of Effective Intervention:
      ■ Risk: Focus on higher-risk clients.
      ■ Need: Target criminogenic needs.
      ■ Responsivity: Use cognitive-behavioral approaches.
      ■ Fidelity: Deliver services as designed.

2. Learning Teams

● Description: Probation staff met monthly to use dialogue practices for resolving concerns, enhancing teamwork, improving operations, and refining intervention skills with probationers.

3. Administrative Response Matrix (ARM) Implementation Pilot Program:

● Collaboration: This pilot project involved six local agencies and the Department of Criminal Justice Services.
● Purpose: To promote behavioral changes by empowering probation officers to implement consistent, swift, and responsive practices when addressing behavior.

4. Court Reminders

● Description: Implemented a system of court reminders to reduce missed court appearances and improve compliance.

5. Dialogue Skills Training

● Purpose: Equip staff at all levels with dialogue skills to enhance respectful, appropriate, and effective communication.

- Management/Staff Dialogue: Focuses on improving the relationship between management and frontline staff, recognizing that culture change is driven by collective behavior. Dialogue practices create a blame-free forum for exploring effective alternatives and fostering communication from top to bottom and vice versa.

6. DJS is one of 3 pilot sites across the Commonwealth of Virginia for the implementation of the PSA assessment. The Public Safety Assessment (PSA) is an actuarial assessment that estimates failure to appear in court pretrial, new criminal arrest while on pretrial release, and new violent criminal arrest while on pretrial release. Use of the PSA, in combination with other pretrial improvements, is associated with improved outcomes such as higher rates of pretrial release and reduced use of financial conditions of release. The advantage of using PSA eliminates the need to have face-to-face interviews with defendants held at the jail. Data have revealed in Richmond and among several Virginia jurisdictions, access to defendants for the interview process was contingent upon jail personnel and operations. Short staffing and modified jail operations since COVID resulted in several incomplete investigations.

Youth Division: The City of Richmond expanded its outreach to English as a Second Language youth over the past two years by seeing the need for and hiring ESL staff. Often language is a barrier for families in our community and they are hesitant to seek services if communication is a challenge. Justice Services have expanded the program reach to offer leadership and educational opportunities to the ESL community. By doing this, our staff can influence the lives of more teens by providing them with knowledge, skills, and support. Also, our Youth Justice Program initiative expanded its referrals not only to justice involved youth, but also community youth referred by partnering agencies in the City. The Youth Justice Program involves recruiting teens who are upstanding in their community and in their school who would like to volunteer in a peer justice setting. This involves providing attendance and insight at community pop-up events to encourage public members to reach out and ask questions. Pop-up events are notable for getting into the community where families and youth are raising awareness. Youth Justice participates in approximately 12-15 pop-up events per year including participating in "Trunk or Treat" during the month of October. Community Programs/Justice Services is always utilizing critical thinking skills and research skills to see what trends are happening in the juvenile justice realm. Social media is an area where we need to be more in the forefront and continue the efforts of involving the public and having the community know what services are provided by Justice Services. Our next steps are to find out all that is involved through the City of Richmond to have a known presence on social media.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

The Finance and Administration Unit seeks ways to continuously improve its operations and service delivery. A strategic planning and process improvement expert was brought onto the team in late 2021. That team member has led the development and implementation of the DJS's five year Strategic Plan, with guidance from the Executive Team. The unit has also begun a process improvement evaluation of its critical operational functions, the first of which is the Payroll process. Secure Detention will implement an electronic case management system that will transition the Center from paper to electronic case management. This will enhance

operations and mandated audit functions. In addition, efforts are underway to collaborate with the Children's Cabinet to establish a "baby room" for residents with children to provide life skills for their parents and positive activities for the babies. Implementation of the Department's Five Year Strategic Plan. Department wide review and development of Policy and Procedure. Enhanced collaboration with the Court Services Unit to increase the number of programs funded by VJCCCA. A concerted effort proffered by the Executive staff to attract and retain quality candidates for vacant positions, push toward pay equity based upon pay scales of cross jurisdictions, and internal mechanisms to demonstrate appreciation to staff.

DJS has established a new Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (NSE), commonly known as the office of violence prevention. The NSE is an entity under DJS within Richmond's Human Services Portfolio. NSE serves as a necessary community response to addressing the root causes of crime that have historically and negatively impacted Richmonders. It is crucial to acknowledge that violence is not an unsolvable problem, but rather a public health crisis that is treatable and preventable through an intentional, coordinated, and sustained effort. NSE actively demonstrates Richmond's commitment to addressing both short- and long-term needs of our community using a human services lens while seeking to accomplish the following goals: In partnership with other City agencies and the community, prevent incidents of gun violence. Reduce the annual number of violent crime victims, as reported. Address the root causes of crime that contribute to violence. NSE is a collaborative effort to organize a "both/and" approach to addressing community-specific needs and circumstances using evidence-based practices. With the understanding there is not a one-size-fits-all answer to addressing crime and violence. NSE builds off community engagement with residents, public health experts, public safety experts, and other stakeholders that were convened through the Task Force for Reimagining Public Safety and our Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention (GVPI) Working Group. These groups provided recommendations specifically catered to the needs of Richmonders that have and will continue to inform the trajectory of the NSE.

DJS has also implemented onsite clinical services. Licensed professionals and peer support specialists will work with program participants who are requiring behavioral health intervention, grief counseling, aggression therapy and other problem-focused solutions to well-being that leads to successful outcomes.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

Based upon a 2021 report from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) in conjunction with the Council on Youth (COY), the Center is being proactive in addressing areas of recommendation that included more enhanced programming to include evidence-based services, and job skills programming. Although these requirements have yet to be mandated, the Detention Center is currently using Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) which is evidence-based programming for our Post Disposition Population. Furthermore, the Detention Center is preparing to execute a Character and Leadership Curriculum which is also evidence-based. The Detention Center is also researching the ability to utilize Virtual Programming which will allow our youth to conduct virtual job experiences in several

occupational fields which will equip them with the ability to make career choices for their futures. The Detention Center also partners with the Richmond Police Department (RPD) on teaching skills to youth through a culinary program. The Detention Center also partners with the Mayor's Youth Academy to provide job skill experiences to youth in preparation for re-entry into the community. Due to changes at the State level of the regulations that govern secure residential facilities, the Center will undertake the process of re-writing the entire policy manual. The Department/Center is preparing for the outcome of the same committee regarding the possibility of regional detention centers and the building of new juvenile focused detention centers (City initiative as well).

- Comprehensive case management system for adult programs

    o HIPPA compliant

    o Report outcomes

    o Engage participants

- Engage with community via social media platforms
- Use QR Codes for clients to complete Intake, satisfaction surveys, etc.
- Drug Testing Lab
- Focus on harm reduction models

    o REVIVE! Training for First Responders (probation officers)

    o No-Cost Naloxone and Accessory Case for First Responders (probation officers)

    o Distribute Naloxone to participants and high-risk community members

Office of Multicultural Affairs

Updates since 2017

In 2022, the Office of Multicultural Affairs was renamed the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement to better reflect their mission and engagement with these two communities. The office is composed of six including a Director, Spanish language interpreters, a language access specialist, and an outreach coordinator. The office contracts with language vendors for interpretation of languages other than Spanish.

With a re-invigorated emphasis on immigrants and refugees, the office has hosted numerous outreach events, provided language interpretation services to City council meetings, included language access and civil law education to the City's onboarding program, and reviewed many of the City's policies for language accessibility and inclusive practices.

In 2016, the City of Richmond established the City's Language Access Plan that details the internal standards and procedures to provide services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) residents. In response, the office designed the iSpeak Richmond campaign with a series of training courses and handouts as a tool for City employees and residents.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Office of Multicultural Affairs department contained four recommendations. Of those, all four were reportedly partially implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary from the Director is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Focus on inclusivity of City Hall in future branding efforts. Clarity is needed for communication within the City, as opposed to the current bureaucracy that impedes communication [and] creates complications and unclear accountability.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - In 2022, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, changed its name to Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement to better align with our mission of serving these two communities. After the inauguration of the City's Office of Strategic Communications and Engagement, significant strides have been made in translating public information into Spanish as well as providing simultaneous interpretation at major City events. Additionally, we initiated biweekly meetings over the past year to ensure robust multilingual support for campaigns and events.

Recommendation 2 - Host monthly sessions for departments to meet and discuss how they can partner to support each other.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - We have implemented recurring monthly meetings with several departments to address Language Access needs to include how to access language services, training, and

provide other outreach and educational materials. Several departments routinely reach out in response to engagement opportunities to request assistance when doing outreach with multilingual communities. These include the Police Department, Planning and Development Review, Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Office of Children and Families, Public Libraries, and Office of Voter Registrar.

Recommendation 3 - Seek an increased budget to advance outreach and communication to educate the public on access to City services.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Some departments have allocated budgets to engage multilingual communities. Some of the efforts include paying for interpretation services, multilingual graphic design, and paid advertisement. At this time, our office has not received increased budget to allow for a communications campaign nor implement the Language Access Plan. We receive in-kind support from the Office of Strategic Communications and other departments to support specific events and programs.

Recommendation 4 - Review the positions and salaries of OMA staff to compensate them fairly for the multitude of services they provide.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The City established a Citywide Language Pay Differential policy in July 2023, thus recognizing the added value of multilingual employees. Beginning in July 2024, the City will carry out a Citywide compensation evaluation and we expect OIRE's staff to be included.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

- Rental Assistance program for immigrants during Covid-19
- Communications and Engagement support to City Health Department during COVID -19 response
- Latino Entrepreneurship Academies – Partnership with several private and non-profit organizations
- Latino Youth Identity and Leadership Program
- Cultural Celebrations Events – Hispanic Heritage Month
- Annual Multicultural Festival, AfroFest
- Free legal clinics for immigration and tax issues
- Language Access Plan Training - Cultural Awareness Training, Working with Interpreters
- Spanish Classes for City Employees – Beginners and Intermediate
- Monthly Networking Meeting with partner organizations
- Participation on weekly Human Services Expert Cabinet - a regional collaborative group with government and non-profit agencies initiated in response to COVID-19

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

- Latino Youth Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention Program
- Latino Entrepreneurship Academy
- Development of Civic Academy for Newcomers
- Professional and Career Advising
- Navigation of Services for Newcomers

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

- Establish a Multicultural Advisory Committee
- Complete the Welcoming America Certification
- Economic Integration Program
- Adult Education Program in partnership with RPS Adult Ed

Office of Community Wealth Building

Updates since 2017

The Office of Community Wealth Building was created under Mayor Dwight C. Jones' administration in 2014 and is now 10 years old. According to the Office of the Mayor, the number of individuals living under the poverty level in Richmond is down 22% from 2017. The Office of Community Wealth Building is engaged to help reduce the number of people living in poverty through various methodologies, i.e., workforce development and training, youth engagement, entrepreneurship, personal budgeting, debt management, credit repair and restoration, investing, long-term planning, homeownership and more. They are also engaged in "boots-on-the-ground" work with Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Richmond Public Schools, HumanKind, and other organizations in a wide variety of outreach efforts to meet the basic needs of residents for food security, rental assistance, restorative justice, and educational support for youth.

The Office of Community Wealth Building has been very active in the community in order to fulfill its mission. The vision and mission of the office have been updated since 2017. They are as follows:

Vision

The Office of Community Wealth Building envisions a thriving community where all residents have equitable access to opportunities that build wealth and well-being throughout their lives.

Mission

The mission of the Office of Community Wealth Building is to facilitate equitable solutions that improve the quality of life and enhance wealth development opportunities for the City of Richmond's most impacted communities.

The 2017 Performance Review for the Office of Community Wealth Building contained seventeen recommendations. Of those, five were reportedly fully implemented, eleven partially implemented, and one not implemented. A summary of the recommendations, their status, and further commentary by the Director and her team is provided below.

Recommendation 1 - Create an outcome-based performance review.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - As a new department, the Office of Community Wealth Building followed the administrative regulations that guided performance evaluations, incentives, and promotions. Performance became driven by grant metrics and remained the primary measurement for success until the Virginia Department of Social Services Temporary Assistance for Needy Families grant expired on June 30, 2024. Revised outcomes and performance priorities for staff

are being developed that are independent of the grant deliverables and aligned to maximize performance outcomes.

Recommendation 2 - Consider changing the approach to recruit and retain high performing staff or talent by offering competitive wages and compensation packages. Also, include professional development and additional support services to strengthen staff capacity, incentivize high performance, and support employees who take initiative.

Status – Fully Implemented

Explanation - Over the past several years, the Office of Community Wealth Building has worked diligently, in partnership, with the Department of Human Resources, to recruit and retain high performing staff. Several strategies were implemented including:

· Offering competitive salaries.

· Prioritizing the hiring of staff from diverse backgrounds and creating an inclusive and welcoming culture.

· Incentivizing high performance and empowering employees by supporting their career growth both within and outside of the organization.

· Increasing the allocation of funding and resources to expand access to professional development opportunities.

· Implementing innovative approaches to service delivery to increase capacity. This was done through partnerships with academic institutions and nonprofit organizations like Befriend, ReWork Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University, and the University of Richmond.

Recommendation 3 - Redefine the caseworker's position where they can be trained to transition from case managers to coaches and mentors. Redefine the relationship and change the language to enhance the customer experience. Customers must be seen as more than numbers. Explore how they engage their humanity and provide first class customer services.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation - Increasing accessibility and inclusivity have been our top priorities. As funding priorities have shifted, we have leveraged innovation to maintain and, in some cases, enhance service delivery. To this end, increased professional development efforts have resulted in helping engagement specialists (caseworkers) provide more comprehensive assistance to residents who need more employment coaching and mentoring than case management. We have built upon constructive partnerships with organizations like the Community College Workforce Alliance and across city government through collaborations with offices such as the

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement to also eliminate barriers like language and citizenship status that oftentimes affect access to training, credentialing, employment, and wealth building services.

This commitment to inclusivity is reflected in our internal changes, as well. We are hiring a Bilingual Engagement Specialist whose primary function will be to expand access for our growing, Latino community. We will also continue assisting grassroots organizations with employment services so that they can expand their capacity by hiring community members with barriers to traditional employment. In this effort, the employer benefits from investing in the communities they serve, and community members gain work experience in a nurturing environment that will help them overcome barriers.

In response to the growing request for services, the Office of Community Wealth Building is expanding its Career Services footprint to implement new training programs through a cohort model. This provides more structured and impactful workforce development opportunities. Virtual assistance, language interpretation, small business bookkeeping, and tax preparation are just a few of the new offerings slated for FY25.

Recommendation 4 - Create a standard and universal data operating system. The system would produce data that informs the Office of Community Wealth Building's decision-making. Decide who would write a standard operating procedure document. Define how the department heads or the employees can be involved in the process. The system should be user friendly, customer friendly, and based on how staff interfaces with people.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation – The Office of Community Wealth Building has implemented the use of the MyOneFlow system. The office is still in the early implementation stages, although, key staff have been assigned to manage system oversight. Additionally, program staff have been trained for daily use and are involved in the process to provide updates and suggestions for improvement.

Recommendation 5 - Coordinate and integrate systems to more effectively and efficiently track the pathway from poverty to self-sufficiency, analyze progress, and develop a pathway/action plan to assess where a resident is along the continuum, what services they need, and connect them to those services. Make that data available to other providers within the system who are working with the same residents to avoid duplication. Be strategic about transparency in data sharing.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation – The Office of Community Wealth Building's Crisis-to-Thriving model has been the methodology we have implemented to track our progress on this recommendation. Once the initial space on the continuum is identified, residents are provided with supports that help them continue to progress toward self-sufficiency and thriving. Data collection and analysis are

priorities for this fiscal year, as they have been significant barriers for the team in the past. Intentional partnerships, targeted recruitment, effective collaborations with the academic community, and investments in professional development for existing staff in these areas have been the most successful approaches practiced, to date.

Recommendation 6 - Restructure and reevaluate how resources are shared and deployed.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - The Office of Community Wealth Building works with public, private, and nonprofit partners to address the root causes of poverty and economic mobility for Richmond's residents.

Systems transformation includes:
· Developing collective impact models with partners.
· Modifying how we serve residents in our networks.
· Promoting inclusive narratives for those most impacted by poverty and experiencing racial inequities.

In addition to our workforce development services, we create stronger connections with organizations that support economic development, housing, health, financial literacy, transportation, childcare, education, and other sectors to ensure we have a broader approach to empower our residents to thrive.

Recommendation 7 - Utilize other City resources that are already paid for by another department (e.g., Use established technologies for Town Hall events.).

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation – The Office of Community Wealth Building has forged partnerships with City departments across all four City portfolios—effectively building collaborative programs and initiatives. One example is seen in the partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development when the Office of Community Wealth Building received multiple Community Development Block Grants. This partnership expanded opportunities and access to programming and services for Richmond residents. This has resulted in an ongoing partnership with the Planning and Economic Development portfolio that will now afford the Office of Community Wealth Building the opportunity to support the engagement of residents and businesses in the Diamond District project and many other economic development projects across the region.

Recommendation 8 - Streamline individual employees' daily systems.

Status – Fully implemented

Explanation - Over the past several years, technology has been implemented to enhance the efficiency of staff and their ability to achieve the mission of the Office of Community Wealth Building. The MyOneFlow system has helped create a more streamlined approach to data management by helping engagement specialists (caseworkers) capture information that can be linked to comprehensive services offered by other partners, such as the Capital Region Workforce Partnership and the Community College Workforce Alliance. Having a system that can interact with the data systems of key partners in the network prevents duplication of services, expands service offerings, and increases available options for residents.

Recommendation 9 - Prioritize the creation of a marketing and communications plan that includes strategies for outreach and generating public awareness about the Office of Community Wealth Building, purpose, and function inside City Hall, and beyond. Currently, the Office of Community Wealth Building benefits from being perceived as a favorable project of the mayor's office (past and present) and having received national recognition.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Though our overall strategy is still in development, our efforts to date have yielded positive results thus far. Our focused social media campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram have led to a 10% increase in online community engagement. Posts featuring success stories from participants in our programs have been particularly effective, sparking conversations and encouraging sign-ups.

Strengthened Community Partnerships: We have strengthened and deepened our collaboration with various community organizations, schools, and training providers, resulting in a progressive increase in workshop attendance and the expansion of the Office of Community Wealth Building's reach and presence in historically impacted neighborhoods. Examples of organizations include RVA Rapid Transit for transportation equity, ReWork for a continuum of care in workforce development, and the United Way to provide affordable childcare for moms enrolled in schools.

Media Coverage: The Office of Community Wealth Building has received local and national recognition for both its programs as well as its divisions. Of note, the AmeriCorps program, RVA Health Corps; the Building Lives to Independence and Self-Sufficiency program's *Heard* documentary; and the Youth Engagement Services division's work-based learning program, Mayor's Youth Academy, have each been recognized. The Office of Community Wealth Building also won the following awards: Virginia Municipal League's Stairway to Success Award (2016), Social Vision Award (2019), Outstanding Achievement through a Collaboration or Consortia of Partner with the Community College Workforce Alliance award (2022), and the United Way Steps to Success award (2023).

Employer Engagement: Through targeted outreach, the Office of Community Wealth Building has grown its network of pre-employment training partners, securing approximately ten new partnerships that support the department's workforce development initiatives. The Mayor's

Youth Academy work-based learning program expanded its employer network from 107 to 250 partners while logging over 13,000 work hours for more than 500 youth in FY24.

Recommendation 10 - Launch a high quality and professional marketing campaign that will bring attention to issues, educate the community about increasing wealth, and speak to multiple audiences and constituencies. The campaign will serve as a platform to build the Office of Community Wealth Building brand - This brand can be leveraged to serve as the seal of approval, fidelity, and vet partners or communicate who is in partnership with Office of Community Wealth Building. Increase listening sessions to allow people to have more input. Simplify messaging and tell a clear and concise story.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Though our overall strategy is still in development, our efforts to date have yielded positive results. The Office of Community Wealth Building partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Foundation to produce a national, high-quality, video case study. This video used individual stories of Community Health Workers to highlight their significant contributions to improving public health outcomes in Richmond's most impacted communities. By showcasing personal journeys and the skills gained, the video demonstrated how these workers address health disparities and promote self-sufficiency in high-poverty neighborhoods, ultimately advancing health equity nationwide.

Recommendation 11 - Adapt the vision based on the new information available and frame day-to-day operations to support achieving desired outcomes.

Status - Fully implemented

Explanation -Though Office of Community Wealth Building programs continue to be adjusted to reflect input from community members, this recommendation has been fully implemented. This was done by:

- Collaborating with the regional Workforce Investment Board to maximize the efficient use of available resources to expand the numbers served.

- Working with Richmond Public Schools and other local workforce providers to improve alignment and user-friendliness of workforce services operating in the City of Richmond.

- Expanding access to job networks, workforce development services and wealth building initiatives directly to those living in high-poverty neighborhoods in the city.

- Strengthening the wrap-around support services available to program participants.

- Continuing to align the City's workforce efforts with closely related poverty reduction initiatives, such as Social Enterprise Development and the East End Transformation Process.

Recommendation 12 - Create a business development plan to make a case for support. The Office of Community Wealth Building must make a fiscal case for why its model is economically and socially viable to attract support beyond the city budget. Get clarity around how much an investment it requires at each stage of the pathways continuum to support moving people forward. Identify strategies to reduce costs of doing business or the time it takes to deliver services.

Status – Partially implemented

Explanation – The Office of Community Wealth Building has supported over 50,000 Richmond residents through workforce development, financial literacy, and other vital initiatives to break cycles of generational poverty. The office has demonstrated a $4.25 return on investment for the community and a $4.64 return on investment for the state (Annual Impact Report FY24). The plan being developed in FY25 is designed to outline the financial needs at different stages of the Office of Community Wealth Building's continuum, the benefits of reducing poverty, and strategies to reduce operational costs while maintaining quality service delivery. The Office of Community Wealth Building's approach involves a pathway continuum that helps residents transition from crisis to stability and economic mobility. The continuum includes several stages, each requiring targeted investment:

Crisis Intervention (Barrier Mitigation)

Investment Required: Funds for immediate housing support, food security, and childcare subsidies.

Cost Breakdown: Initial funding for eviction prevention ($5.9M in 2024), food assistance programs, and emergency financial aid totaling $600K annually.

Economic Impact: Investing in crisis intervention reduces long-term dependency on public benefits. The Office of Community Wealth Building prevented evictions for 2,443 households in FY24.

Workforce Development

Investment Required: Workforce training, certifications, and wraparound services.

Cost Breakdown: The Office of Community Wealth Building has created high-demand career pathways in construction, logistics, healthcare, and cybersecurity. The estimated annual cost per participant, including training and case management is $1,200.

Economic Impact: In FY23, 484 participants successfully completed training and obtained employment at an average starting wage of $19/hour. Expanding this program can boost Richmond's local economy by improving employment rates and reducing unemployment-related public costs.

Wealth Building and Financial Empowerment

Investment Required: Programs that promote financial literacy, entrepreneurship, homeownership, food security and asset-building.

Cost Breakdown: Wealth-building initiatives like the RVA Doulas-in-Training and Growers Academy cost an estimated $300,000, annually.

Economic Impact: The Office of Community Wealth Building's participants report increased credit scores, enhanced debt reduction, and improved availability of homeownership opportunities, and expanded access to healthy food options - - - all of which contribute to long-term, community health, wellness, and economic stability.

Youth Development and Empowerment

Investment Required: Career exploration, mentoring, post-secondary planning, and soft skill development programs for youth.

Cost Breakdown: The Office of Community Wealth Building invests approximately $2 million annually in the programs offered through its Youth Engagement Services division, with over 500 youth logging 13,000 work hours in the summer work-based learning program in FY24, alone.

Economic Impact: By reducing youth unemployment and enhancing job readiness, these investments help reduce future public costs associated with underemployment and juvenile crime.

Strategies to Reduce Costs and Improve Efficiency

Shared Service Models

Strategy: Implement shared service models across local departments and non-profits, reducing operational redundancy. For example, centralized case management systems that serve multiple agencies can streamline service delivery.

Expected Savings: Estimated 15% reduction in administrative costs through shared technology platforms for workforce and social service programs.

Leveraging Technology

Strategy: Expand virtual service offerings, which proved effective during the pandemic, to include digital case management, remote training, and virtual resource navigation for residents.

Expected Savings: A shift to virtual training models can reduce facility-related costs by up to 20% while increasing participant reach.

Expanded Public-Private Partnerships

Strategy: Increase collaboration with local businesses through workforce pipeline programs. Businesses like CoStar and Owens & Minor have already created over 1,000 jobs through the Office of Community Wealth Building's -supported initiatives.

Expected Savings: Reducing business recruitment and onboarding costs by providing ready-to-work employees with Office of Community Wealth Building training. That can also attract investment in workforce development from corporate partners.

Demonstrating Economic and Social Viability

The Office of Community Wealth Building has consistently shown that investing in human capital yields economic benefits. The community experiences a $4.25 return for every dollar invested, translating into economic growth. Moreover, reducing poverty improves social outcomes such as reduced crime rates, improved health outcomes, and enhanced educational attainment.

Key Metrics:

· $9.1 million in wages and benefits were generated for Office of Community Wealth Building participants in FY21 alone.

·   76 families enrolled in wealth-building programs in FY24, many of whom are on a pathway toward homeownership and financial independence.

Conclusion

To attract support beyond the city budget, the Office of Community Wealth Building must present a clear fiscal case highlighting the economic returns of its model. The combination of targeted investments at each stage of the pathway's continuum, cost-saving strategies, and demonstrated return on investment makes the Office of Community Wealth Building's approach both economically and socially viable. Expanding partnerships, completing updates in research and data collection

methodologies, and leveraging technology will improve efficiencies and make an even more compelling case for sustained and expanded investment in the Office of Community Wealth Building.

Recommendation 13 - Consider securing a non-profit foundation similar to the Richmond Education Foundation, which can be an entity to expand the ability to raise funding from the philanthropic community to support the Office of Community Wealth Building efforts to transition 1,000 people to self-sufficiency. Another option is to partner with a non-city entity to serve as a development partner and fiscal sponsor to work with the Office of Community Wealth Building in securing philanthropic investments to support the initiative and amplify city funding. Nonprofit status would allow more money inflow, create Office of Community Wealth Building partners, and possibly spark financial commitment from the community.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - This is in development; negotiations with local nonprofits are underway.

Recommendation 14 - Identify how to best collaborate with existing agencies, such as the offices of Grants, Budget, Procurement, RRHA, Economic Development, Minority, and others.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Staff have been tasked with this priority and negotiations with local entities are currently underway. Though this is in development, memoranda of understanding and partnership agreements have been implemented with key partners like Minority Business Development and RRHA; working relationships with other inter-city agencies are being strengthened as we explore service delivery efficiencies across the city and metropolitan region, alike.

Recommendation 15 - Consider developing an anchor institution to engage institutions and the business community. They are an important partner in providing social enterprise and living wage employment opportunities.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Staff have been tasked with this priority and negotiations with local entities are currently underway. This is in development.

Recommendation 16 - Create a work environment and space that is more conducive to a healthy city.

Status - Partially implemented

Explanation - Activities have been created to help individuals focus on holistic health. Renovations to workspaces have been completed and mental health care is consistently emphasized, encouraged, and supported. Investments in overall wellness have been

demonstrated during team development activities. The Director has also provided administrative leave for staff before and after the busiest times of the program year to remove barriers to prioritizing self-care.

Recommendation 17 - Examine the residents' customer experience with social services, utilities, and gain clarity on how people experience City Hall and how it affects their view of the City of Richmond. Change customer/resident interaction with City, DNS, and RRHA into an authentic, actionable, and applicable experience that is more customer friendly.

Status - Not implemented

Explanation - While this is not a recommendation that is specific to the Office of Community Wealth Building, the department works diligently to ensure staff are well educated on services and resources available to residents across city departments, quasi-governmental agencies, and through nonprofits. This allows staff to support residents in having a positive experience as they seek services.

Were there initiatives implemented in your department since January 2017 that were not included as recommendations in the Performance Review? Please specify.

The Office of Community Wealth Building recognizes that poverty is a function of inadequate income, and that sustained, full-time employment at a decent wage is the best antidote to poverty. Developing more effective mechanisms to connect under-employed residents to existing job opportunities, as well as creating more job opportunities accessible to high-poverty neighborhoods, must be at the core of an effective poverty-fighting strategy. However, success in employment is closely linked to preparation through education, as well as the removal of common barriers under-employed residents face such as inadequate transportation and inadequate access to childcare. Both access to quality employment and educational success, in turn, are deeply impacted by the dense concentration of poverty present in Richmond, particularly in and around the City's major public housing communities. The Office of Community Wealth Building's programs are designed to empower residents to meet both short-term and long-term goals.

In the shorter term, the City can most immediately impact poverty by connecting residents to quality employment opportunities and preparing them to succeed in such. In the longer term, the City needs to dramatically improve educational outcomes and the neighborhood and housing environment of our most concentrated areas of poverty. Success is in the short-term work of expanding employment that will facilitate the achievement of substantial, long-term improvements in education and housing.

Please describe some of the major initiatives currently underway in your department.

The FY24 summer work-based learning program achieved its most significant milestone yet, with over 500 youth logging more than 13,000 work hours across diverse sectors. This initiative emphasizes essential soft skills such as time management and financial responsibility, preparing participants for future success in the workforce. Building upon this success, we will expand our

youth leadership offerings beyond our traditional Youth Empowerment Council by adding a Youth LEADS initiative, and effort tied to helping youth enhance their outcomes through *learning, engagement, aspiration, development, and service*.

Wealth Building initiatives are also expanding. In FY24, the Office of Community Wealth Building launched the RVA Doulas-in-Training program, funded by an innovation grant from the US Conference of Mayors. This pilot helps families start businesses while staying home. It especially addresses black maternal health and high unemployment rates among black and brown women. Likewise, the Southside Growers Academy, focused on sustainable urban farming. This initiative not only creates an economic opportunity, but also improves the well-being of the community by addressing critical food production needs, particularly in impacted communities where affordable, nutritional food options are not as accessible.

Are there future initiatives that you hope to implement in the coming years? If so, please briefly describe.

The Richmond Resilience Initiative pilot program provides critical financial support to 76 individuals (46 in the second cohort and 30 in the third cohort), helping them improve their management of factors impacting their economic health, reduce debt, and enhance their credit standing. The program's success lies in empowering participants to achieve financial stability and invest in their families' futures. In FY24, the program distributed approximately $311,000 to RRI families. A fourth cohort is anticipated this fiscal year. We hope to continue to fund and expand our guaranteed income opportunities to even more cohorts in the years to come.