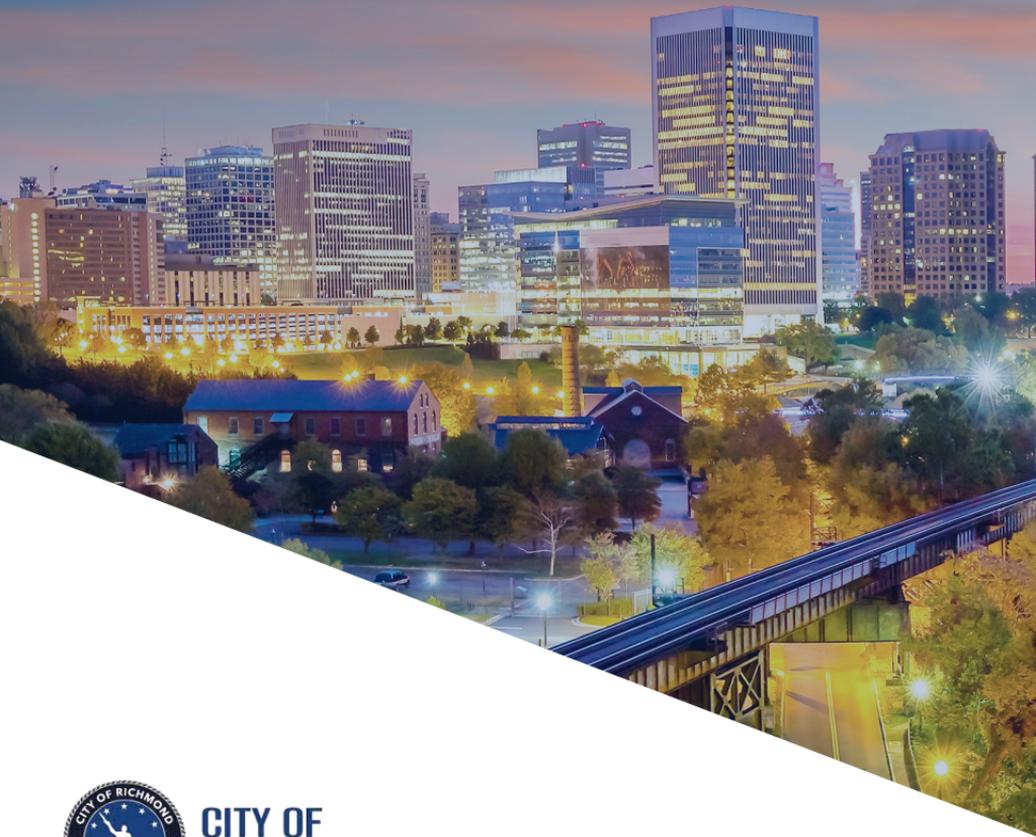


100 DAYS REPORT

of the
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



**CITY OF
RICHMOND**

ODIE DONALD II

CITY OF RICHMOND MAYOR AND COUNCIL



**MAYOR
DANNY AVULA**



**COUNCIL MEMBER
ANDREW S. BRETON
DISTRICT 1**



**COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT
KATHERINE JORDAN
DISTRICT 2**



**COUNCIL MEMBER
KENYA J. GIBSON
DISTRICT 3**



**COUNCIL MEMBER
SARAH ABUBAKER
DISTRICT 4**



**COUNCIL MEMBER
STEPHANIE A. LYNCH
DISTRICT 5**



**COUNCIL MEMBER
ELLEN F. ROBERTSON
DISTRICT 6**



**COUNCIL PRESIDENT
CYNTHIA I. NEWBILLE
DISTRICT 7**



**COUNCIL MEMBER
REVA M. TRAMMELL
DISTRICT 8**



**COUNCIL MEMBER
NICOLE JONES
DISTRICT 9**

CITY OF RICHMOND DEPARTMENTS

Office of the Mayor

**Office of the CAO Chief
Administrative Officer**

**Director - Human
Resources**

Director-Procurement

**Director- Citizen Service
& Response (311)**

**Director- Budget &
Strategic Planning**

**Director- Office of
Strategic Communication**

Chief of Police

**Director- Richmond
Public Library**

**Director- Neighborhood &
Community Service**

**Director- Minority
Business Development**

**Director- Parks, Recreation
& Community Facilities**

Director - Social Services

Director- Justice Services

Director - General Services

**Director - Housing &
Community Development**

Director- Public Utilities

**Director-
Intergovernmental Affairs**

**Director - Animal Care
& Control**

**Director - Economic
Development**

Fire Chief

Director - Finance

**Director- Community
Wealth Building**

**Director- Office of
Sustainability**

**Director - Information
& Technology**

Director- Public Works

**Director - Planning &
Development Review**

**Director -Emergency
Communications,
Preparedness, & Response**





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A LETTER FROM

the

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



ODIE DONALD II



Dear Richmond,

After 100 days as Mayor Avula's appointee as Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Richmond, I remain excited, encouraged, and focused on delivering an even more vibrant Richmond. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Mayor Avula, the Richmond City Council, staff, the business, philanthropic, and faith-based communities, regional partners, and the many Richmonders I have had an opportunity to connect with across the City, for allowing me the opportunity to serve the Commonwealth's capital.

The first months that follow an appointment bring a flood of unexpected demands, and how time gets managed during this window of time will shape our collective effectiveness for years to come. The first 100 days are often thought of as a sprint, but instead, with Mayor Avula's guidance, we have used this time to methodically set long-term patterns, build trust, and strengthen core capacities. The Avula administration has created an aggressive agenda focused on putting the necessary infrastructure in place to govern a rapidly evolving city. With that said, fiscal sustainability, infrastructure, education, and public safety are always at the forefront of government service.

Despite an array of historical challenges, signs of progress are everywhere. In the pages that follow, you will see documented signs of that progress, as well as details on the Avula administration's initial analysis focused on fiscal sustainability, improved operations, continued improvements in public safety, and affordability issues. The first 100 days solidify efforts to build a foundation. In partnership with our Mayor and the Richmond City Council we are taking action to deliver a world-class city where everyone matters, setting a solid foundation benefitting generations to come. At a time when cities across the country are navigating uncertainty ranging from housing pressures to shrinking federal support - Richmond has a choice: fold to challenges or build the future we deserve. My first 100 days as Chief Administrative Officer have crystalized that we have the elected leadership, staff capacity, and the support of Richmonders to choose the latter.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Odie Donald II", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Odie Donald II



100 DAY PLAN

as

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER





ASSESSING THE CITY'S OPERATIONAL HEARTBEAT

Benchmarking Institutional and
Procedural Framework.

Reinforcing Legal Compliance:

Complete a comprehensive review of the City Charter, policy manuals, and state laws, ensuring all strategic actions will be rooted in legal compliance and accuracy.

Integrating Strategic Plans:

Launch a targeted review of the Richmond 300 Master Plan and council-mandated departmental strategic plans to identify critical intersection points for resource alignment and future implementation.

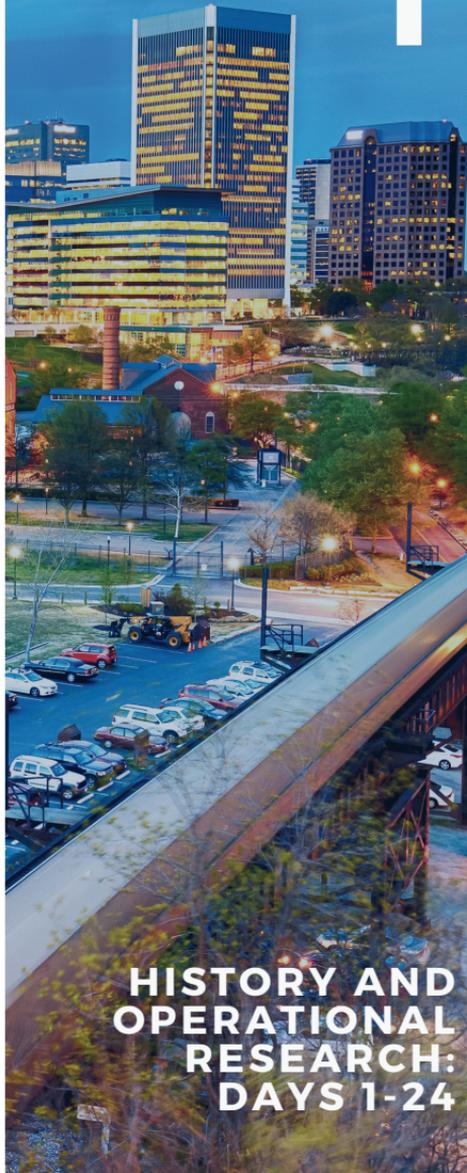
Achieving Political Consensus:

Initiate strategic meetings with Mayor Avula and City Councilmembers to gain comprehensive insight into the political landscape, citywide goals, and operational priorities.

Anchoring Future Finances:

Complete an evaluation of the current fiscal year budget and initiate proactive planning for the next cycle.

DAY 1



HISTORY AND OPERATIONAL RESEARCH: DAYS 1-24

Mobilizing Workforce Collaboration:

Write a letter to all employees inviting active collaboration and ask for employee support.

Establishing Service Baseline:

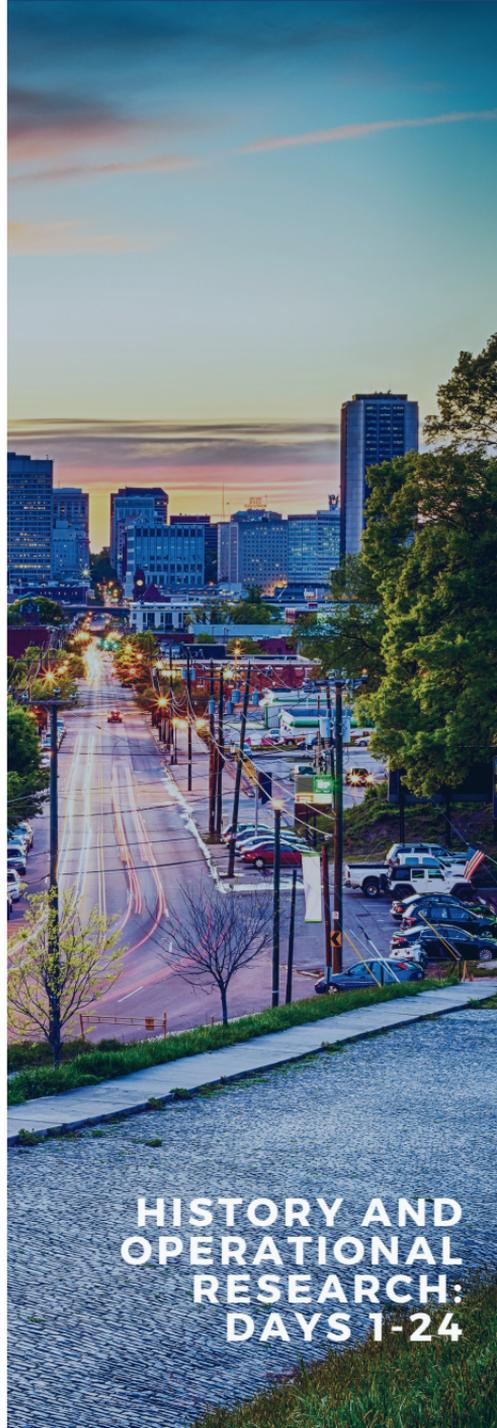
Analyze detailed briefings (including annual reports, organization charts, and union contracts) to establish a comprehensive baseline of the city's current service capacity.

Reviewing Sustainable

Growth Plans: Evaluate key zoning and development plans to inform long-term policy decisions regarding sustainable growth and community stability.

Activating Strategic

Alignment: Initiate contact with external influencers (community organizations and industry leaders) to establish early lines of communication and strategic alignment.



**HISTORY AND
OPERATIONAL
RESEARCH:
DAYS 1-24**

SYNTHESIS & ALIGNMENT

Connecting Leadership and
Aligning Strategic Priorities

Achieving Alignment:

Finalize high-level strategic goals, key city activities, and coordination protocols with Mayor Avula and City Council.

Integrating Legislative

Priorities: Initiate 1:1 meetings with Council members to gather legislative perspectives, concerns, and priority inputs.

Reinforcing Legal Integrity:

Consult with the City Attorney's office to review internal legal coordination, active legal matters, and the administration of local law.

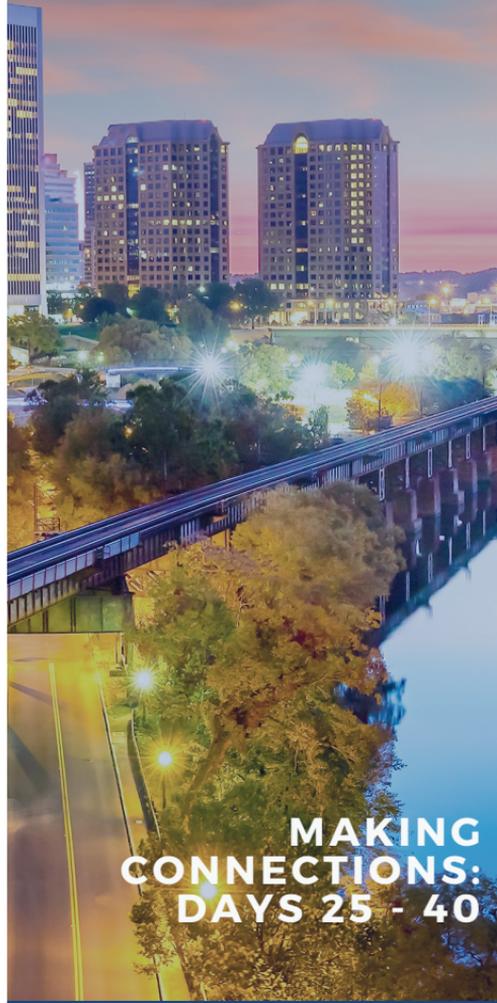
Driving Departmental

Accountability: Advance the development of Council-mandated departmental strategic plans, ensuring they align with established metrics.

Analyzing Fiscal Stability:

Convene with the City finance team to analyze the City's financial position, revenue diversity, and fiscal coordination structures.

DAY 25



**MAKING
CONNECTIONS:
DAYS 25 - 40**

Anchoring Future Resources:

Evaluate the current fiscal year budget and initiated preliminary planning for the FY27 budget cycle.

Reviewing Resilience:

Assess the City's emergency management preparedness, response capacity, and operational plans.

Accessing Capacity:

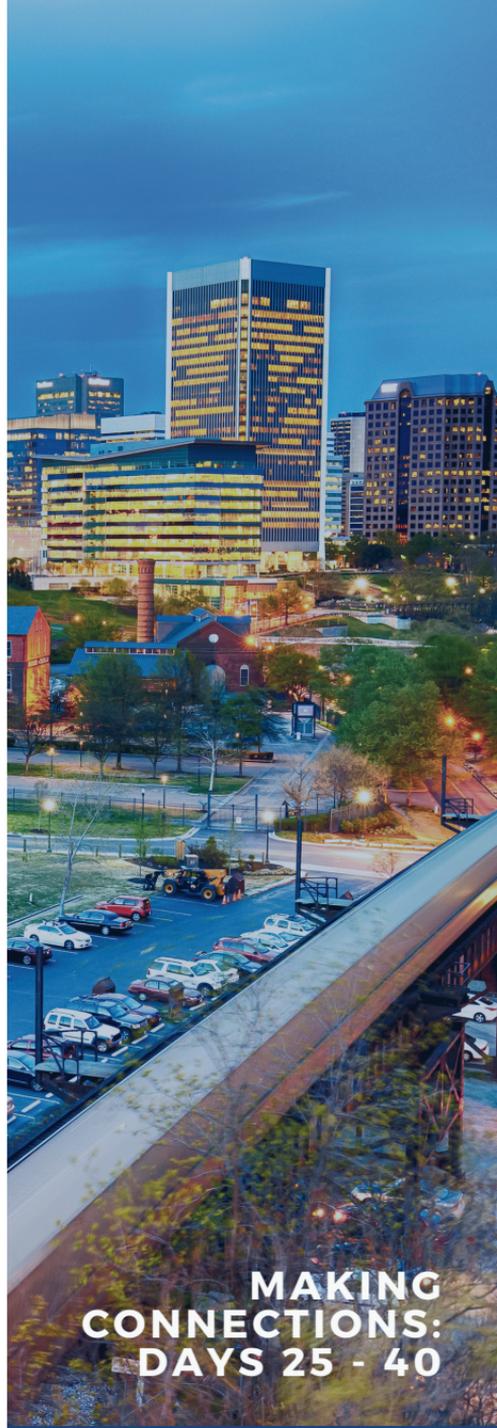
Engage the executive team through individual and group sessions to assess departmental needs and observe organizational culture.

Defining Requirements:

Conduct specific performance and resource planning discussions with direct reports to identify operational requirements for success.

Gaining Operational Insight:

Attend established departmental staff meetings to observe existing operational practices and team dynamics.



**MAKING
CONNECTIONS:
DAYS 25 - 40**

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK

Optimizing Workflow & Innovation

Building Regional Coalitions:

Initiate dialogue with state, federal, and neighboring local leaders to secure high-level briefings and align on regional priorities.

Assessing Governance Function:

Attend initial board and commission meetings to introduce leadership and gain direct insight into procedural functions and decision-making.

Activating Community Dialogue:

Establish a schedule of introductory listening posts to promote public accessibility and encourage direct, sustained dialogue with residents.

Diagnosing Service Delivery:

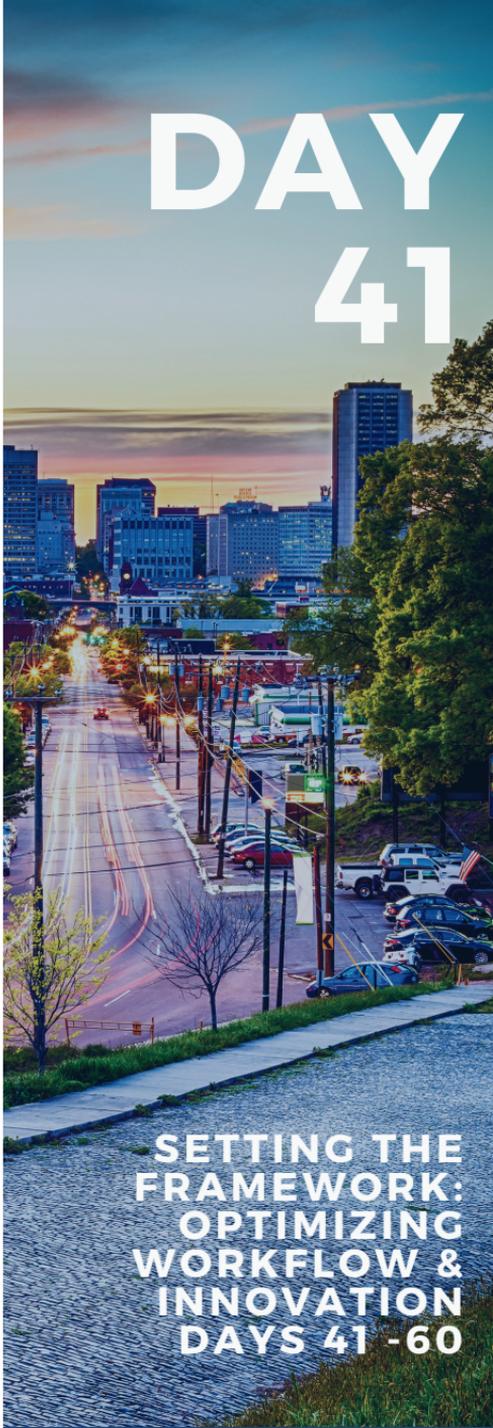
Assess current customer service protocols to establish a baseline and initiated internal discussions focused on future improvement and responsiveness.

Evaluating Technology Capacity:

Complete evaluation of current technology infrastructure and identified strategic investment needs essential for future operational demands.

Formalizing the Mayor's Cabinet:

Partner with the Mayor's office to define roles and formally launch the Mayor's Cabinet.



DAY 41

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK: OPTIMIZING WORKFLOW & INNOVATION DAYS 41 -60

Defining Long-Term

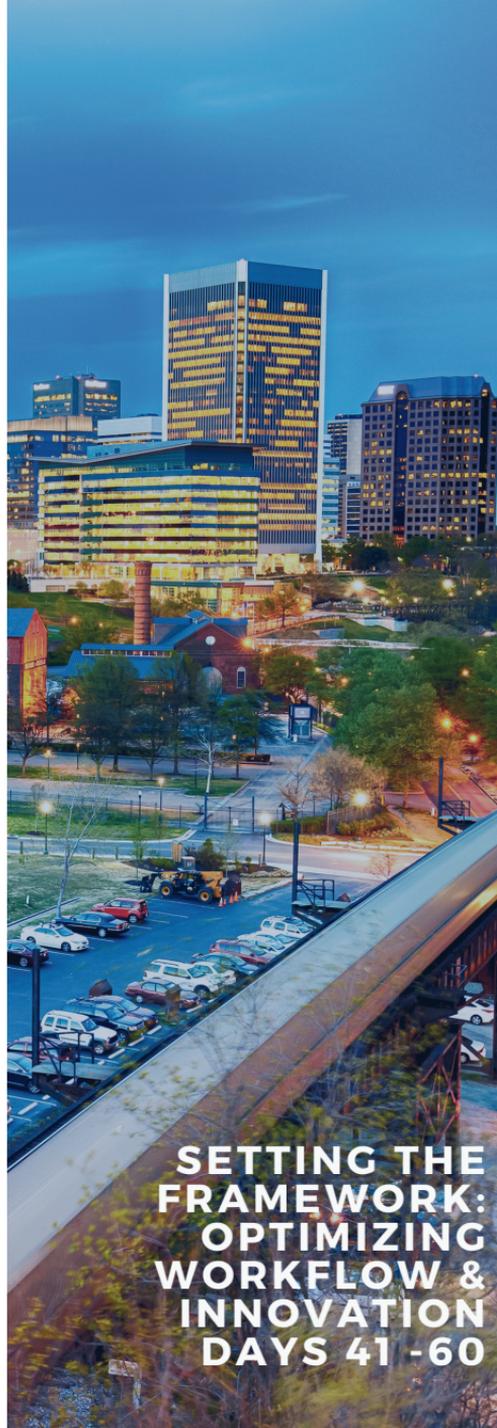
Sustainability: Complete the initial municipal assessment of efforts dedicated to achieving the City's long-term sustainable community goals.

Implementing the Plan:

Present key operational findings and proposed initiatives to elected leadership (Mayor and Council), securing their input and preferred paths to achieve strategic goals.

The plan includes:

1. Establish a clear internal accountability loop for the ongoing evaluation, feedback, and review of strategic goals and metrics.
2. Develop robust pathways for community engagement through strategic public participation activities and targeted status surveys.
3. Enhance Strategic Outcomes by evaluating the current desired results and developing proactive improvements to exceed established metrics.
4. Set clear target dates for initiating and formalizing any necessary adjustments to the strategic plan process.



**SETTING THE
FRAMEWORK:
OPTIMIZING
WORKFLOW &
INNOVATION
DAYS 41 -60**

TURNING INTENT INTO ACTION

Mobilizing Strategy & Outreach

Defining the Action Plan:

Compare findings from comprehensive operational analysis with executive insights (from Mayor and Council meetings) to identify actionable steps and launch key initiatives.

Streamlining Communication:

Complete an evaluation of the executive staff meeting schedule and communications processes, implementing adjustments where applicable.

Codifying Program Delivery:

Finalize key programming components and enhancements of City initiatives to directly support established goals and metrics.

Grounding Strategy in Local

Context: Identify Richmond's unique cultural qualities to inform analysis and recommendations on city issues.

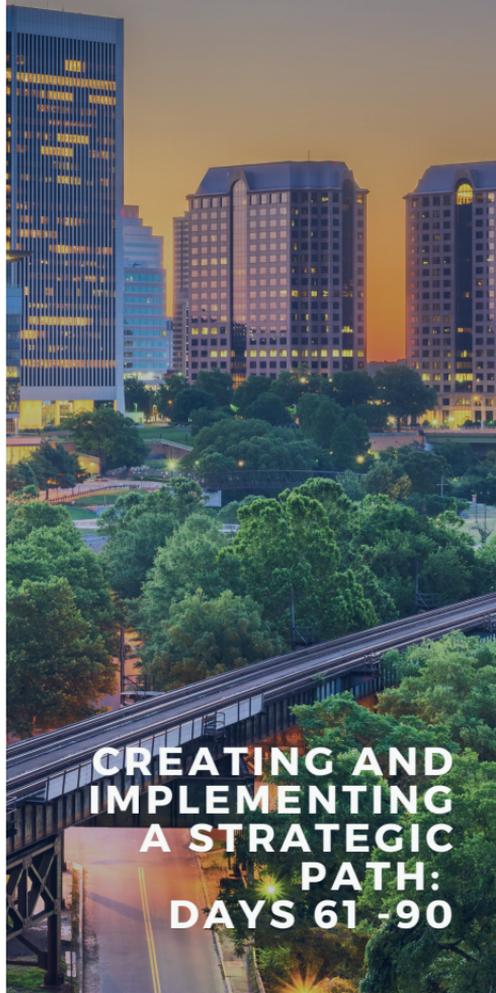
Establishing Broad Alliance:

Initiate written contact with stakeholder groups (e.g., HOA's, universities, unions) to introduce leadership and propose strategic meetings.

Activating Engagement:

Begin scheduling and conducting leadership meetings with key stakeholder groups following the introductory correspondence.

DAY 61



CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGIC PATH: DAYS 61 - 90

IMPLEMENTING KEY ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

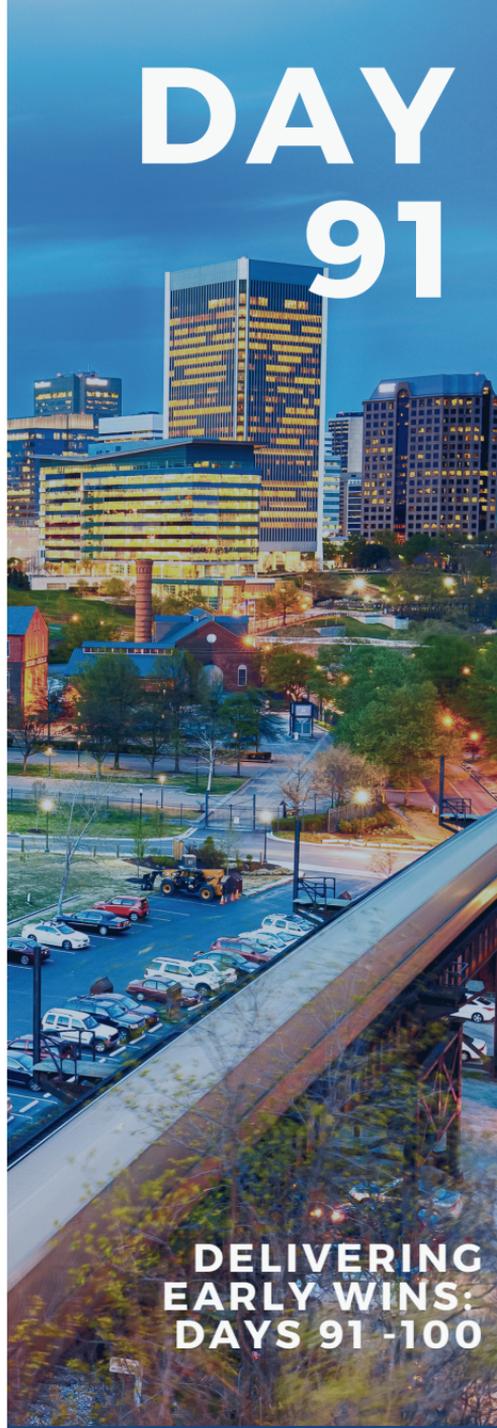
Collaborate with key internal leaders to identify and successfully implement organizational adjustments focused on maximizing operational efficiencies, including initial budget realignment and staffing adjustments.

Leadership Continuity Initiative: Complete the foundational analysis for a succession plan and began development of a framework, anchoring future leadership on the core values of integrity, courtesy, fairness, and honesty.

Accelerating Transparency: Finalize the process for publicly communicating key initiatives, ensuring acceleration toward the Mayor's Action Plan goals and metrics.

Initiative Activation: Activate the execution phase, launching and advancing an array of key initiatives targeted at delivering on the strategic action plan, operational directives, and service area improvements.

DAY 91



DELIVERING EARLY WINS: DAYS 91 -100



WHAT DOES THE CAO DO?

IN RICHMOND, THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

manages the local governments day-to-day operations, acting as the link between Richmond's elected Mayor, the Richmond City Council and staff, implementing policies, overseeing departments, preparing budgets, ensuring service delivery, and managing strategic planning. The CAO ensures efficiency, compliance, and the effective execution of the Mayor's vision. The Mayor sets the vision, and the CAO makes sure the machinery of government runs smoothly enough to achieve that vision by implementing policies and managing resources.



Key Responsibilities

Administration & Operations: Directs daily municipal functions, ensuring the smooth running of departments.

Budget & Finance: Manages budgets, financial analysis, and short and long-term financial planning.

Staff Management: Hires, supervises, and directs municipal employees.

Strategic Planning: Develops and implements strategic plans where appropriate, ensuring alignment with the Mayor's goals.

Policy Implementation: Ensures policies are followed and implemented effectively.

Service Delivery: Oversees the efficient delivery of services to residents, ranging from infrastructure delivery to community programs and services.



100 DAY

MEETING SUMMARY





MEETING SUMMARY

INTERNAL & EXTERNAL

INTERNAL MEETING ENGAGEMENT

JULY - DEC 2025

279+
TOTAL MEETINGS

20+
DEPARTMENTS
Engaged across all city functions

15+
CABINET MEETINGS

INTERNAL MEETING PROGRESSION

70
JULY

80
AUGUST

85
SEPTEMBER

55
OCTOBER

20
NOVEMBER

10
DECEMBER

MEETING TYPES

Director 1-on-1s	25
Weekly Check-ins	20
Touch Points	20
Cabinet	15
Doc Reviews	15
Docket Reviews	12
Pres. Reviews	8
Bi-Weekly DCADs	8
Other	156

TOP DEPARTMENTS

RPD / Police	20+
Finance	10+
Budget	10+
HR	10+
Fire	8+
DPU	8+
Planning / PDR	8+
Economic Dev.	8+

KEY INSIGHTS

- Public Safety Focus**
Weekly touchpoints (20+ meetings)
- Director Coverage**
100% of Departments Engaged
- Operational Rhythm**
Cabinet & Check-ins established
- Admin Excellence**
40+ Document/Docket reviews

FROM ONBOARDING TO OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Building Internal Trust & Connectivity

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS & REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

JULY - DEC 2025

73+
EXTERNAL MEETINGS

8+
REGIONAL CEO/CAO MEETINGS
Henrico, Hanover, Chesterfield

12+
BOARD PARTICIPATIONS
RAA, GRCCA, GRTC, Tourism

MONTHLY MEETING VOLUME

JULY
7

AUG
14

SEPT
16

OCT
20

NOV
10

DEC
6

PARTNER CATEGORIES

Regional Collab.	8
Econ. Development	10
Regional Authorities	12
State/Federal	6
Edu/Workforce	8
Community Orgs	8
Utilities/Infra	5
Courts/Legal	2
Events/Other	14

TOP PARTNERS

Regional Counties	8+
Greater Richmond Partnership	5+
Richmond Public Schools	4+
GRCCA	3+
RAA	3+
GRTC	3+
Venture Richmond	3+
ChamberRVA	2+

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Bloomberg Harvard Leadership**
Innovation Track Sessions (NYC/Virtual)
- State Engagement**
Governor Youngkin Event (Mayo Island)
- Regional CEO/CAO Dinners**
Quarterly collaboration w/ Counties
- School Funding Task Force**
4+ meetings on funding formula

STRATEGIC REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Building Partnerships Beyond City Limits



MEETING SUMMARY

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: CITYWIDE REACH

AUG - DEC 2025

26+
COMMUNITY EVENTS
Festivals, Forums & Public Meetings

5
FIRE STATION CEREMONIES
Public Safety Commitment

Every Month
CITY COUNCIL
Consistent Governance Presence

EVENT PROGRESSION (MONTHLY COUNT)

AUGUST
3

SEPTEMBER
7

OCTOBER
3

NOVEMBER
11

DECEMBER
2

EVENT CATEGORIES

Public Safety	5
Festivals & Culture	7
Ribbon Cuttings	4
Press Conferences	2
Speaking Engagements	4
City Council	5 mos

NOTABLE EVENTS

- 804 Day & National Night Out**
August Community Celebrations
- Music at Main Series (3x)**
September Cultural Events
- Station Grand Openings**
Engine 19, 25 & Station 21
- Unity Tree Lighting**
December Holiday Event

COMMUNITY IMPACT

CITYWIDE PRESENCE

Engagement across all districts

PUBLIC SAFETY FOCUS

3 major station openings & events

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Active participant in festivals & concerts

CRITICAL ISSUES

Addressing food security & housing

• FROM CITY HALL TO EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD

Building Community Trust



100 DAY

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

100 DAY OBSERVATIONS

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND FISCAL CONTROLS

Chart of Accounts (General Ledger)

Fiscal reporting that meets the expectations of the Mayor, City Council, and the public requires a modern and well-structured Chart of Accounts.

The City's current account structure does not fully align with existing reporting, transparency, and performance management requirements. A comprehensive review is needed to modernize the Chart of Accounts and ensure it supports current and future financial reporting needs.

Addressing these issues will require a full investigation, including third-party technical assistance, and may involve a structural overhaul to ensure accuracy, efficiency, and compliance with applicable financial reporting standards.

Given the complexity of the City's financial systems and the need to align with the standardized accounting framework used across Virginia local governments, external expertise is necessary to complete this work.

Establishing a clear and well-structured Chart of Accounts will strengthen financial transparency, improve departmental accountability, and support broader citywide modernization and reporting initiatives.

LEVERAGING THE AUDIT PROCESS FOR CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The City currently has **100+ open internal audit findings** across various internal service departments, underscoring the need for coordinated follow-up and accountability.

Additionally, **ad hoc requests** from individual Council members to Internal Audit staff, outside the established annual audit schedule, have been noted, requiring staff time and resources that adds to planned audit and corrective action work.

To address these challenges, **a CAO-led Audit Working Group will be established** to triage all outstanding findings, categorize them by priority, and determine which items should be resolved, deferred, or retired based on risk level and relevance.



The working group will coordinate across departments to ensure consistent documentation, corrective action planning, and progress reporting to the Mayor, CAO and City Council.

BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX AUDIT

The City could benefit from a review of business personal property tax accounts which will provide a detailed briefing for corrective action planning.

ARPA Closeout

Consultant assistance is needed to confirm that financial and programmatic records are properly maintained and audit-ready.

ARPA Programs - Amongst funded programs, a **revised plan is critical for the \$1.3M first-time homebuyers program** to ensure compliance and impact.

Encumbrance Roll Forward

A cross-departmental working group must be established to ensure the proper transition and responsibilities from the Budget Office to Purchasing, in coordination with Finance, to prevent ledger inaccuracies and system disruptions.

Merchant Card Services

City Council approved and adopted a policy in the FY2026 Budget to waive credit card convenience fees across all City payment platforms, shifting these transaction costs from customers to the City. While approximately \$500,000 was budgeted to cover the anticipated costs, the long-term financial impact of this policy remains uncertain, as total transaction volumes and processing fees increase over time.

Additionally, Council has not yet established how long the waiver should remain in effect or how it will be codified within City ordinances. It also remains unclear whether this policy has been formally implemented within Finance, including how associated fees are being tracked, allocated, or absorbed across departments.

A coordinated review is needed to clarify duration, legal standing, and administrative execution to ensure compliance and fiscal accountability.



HEALTH INSURANCE ACCOUNT

Misalignment between HR, Budget, and Finance requires an annual reconciliation process to ensure accurate transfers, reasonable employee/employer contributions, and proper account funding.

Expenditure Policy

A citywide policy must be established to guide fiscal discipline and standardize spending practices.

Finance Department Restructuring

A redesign is needed to improve efficiency and service delivery.

Reporting, Data Governance, and Systems Integration

The Department of Procurement Services (DPS) does not have the underlying data governance, system integration, or standardized reporting structure necessary to support a procurement reporting dashboard. The department would need to rely heavily on manual processes for collecting and validating data, which diminishes accuracy, consistency, and scalability. There does not appear to be a centralized data model, nor is there automated connectivity between CoreERP and OpenGov for key procurement activities. As a result, the current reporting environment is fragmented and largely informal, making it difficult to produce a reliable, automated, and defensible dashboard without first addressing these foundational gaps.

Reporting Tools

The City continues to face challenges in producing consistent and reliable fiscal reports due to the use of multiple reporting tools—CoreERP, GL Connect, Power BI, and EIS/SplashBI—which do not appear fully integrated and can potentially generate conflicting data outputs. This contributes to discrepancies across reports, inconsistent interpretations of financial information, and significant staff time spent validating accuracy.

These challenges are further compounded by uneven access to reporting tools, limited training, and a lack of internal capacity to create or modify reports within CoreERP or related systems. The current process is slow and heavily dependent on IT or external support, which delays the City's ability to respond to leadership, Council, auditors, and public inquiries in a timely manner.

Given these factors, there is a clear need to establish a single, authoritative source of truth for financial reporting that all departments use consistently.

A cross-functional working group has been identified to advance real-time reporting capabilities, and a consultant will be engaged to lead this effort while staff focuses on defining functional and technical requirements.

P-CARD OVERSIGHT - INTERNAL AUDITOR OBSERVATIONS

Findings from the Office of the City Auditor indicate **significant weaknesses** in the City's P-Card program. The audit identified widespread control deficiencies that resulted in questionable spending, inadequate documentation, inconsistent policy adherence, and delayed or missing transaction approvals.



The Auditor also noted that approvers often lacked independence or sufficient capacity to conduct meaningful reviews, while thousands of transactions were approved late or swept through automatically without required signoffs.

Additional concerns included the City's reliance on third-party payment platforms with limited transparency, inadequate vendor verification, and weak segregation of duties.

According to the audit, these conditions collectively elevate the City's exposure to waste, fraud, and abuse and underscore the need for strengthened oversight and comprehensive program reforms.

Adjustments are currently being evaluated and continued adjustments are necessary.

Potential Risks and Gaps in Contract Management

There appear to be emerging risks in the City's contract management process that could lead to service lapses, financial exposure, and compliance challenges if not addressed. The current approach is highly decentralized and heavily reliant on manual tracking by Contract Administrators, with no automated lifecycle monitoring in CoreERP or OpenGov. This structure creates the potential for late renewals, unnecessary ratifications, and interruptions in service coverage.

Documentation practices vary widely across agencies, and incomplete requisitions or missing forms can introduce delays. The workflow also depends on multiple sequential reviews from DPS Analysts, OMBD, OCA, and the DPS Director, which can create bottlenecks and slow turnaround times. Additionally, the absence of a centralized, consistently maintained contract repository increases the risk of fragmented records and difficulty validating prior modifications. Collectively, these conditions suggest a need to strengthen controls, improve automation, and clarify responsibilities to ensure a more consistent and compliant contract administration process.

Parking Revenue Alignment

Revenue from parking services may not currently cover operating costs, creating a subsidy burden.

Recommendation: Review the parking revenue model and ensure that fee structures adequately support operational expenses.

Result(s): A financially sustainable parking program.

Increasing Tax-Generating Activity

Excessive government occupancy in prime commercial areas limits opportunities for tax-generating private development.

Recommendation: Identify opportunities to attract tax-generating businesses to downtown and rebalance government space usage.

Result(s): Increased revenue potential and a more vibrant commercial environment.

TECHNOLOGY & SYSTEMS

The **RVA Pay System** was designed as a modernization of the City's tax administration infrastructure, replacing legacy manual processes with automated billing, reconciliation, and reporting tools. While Phase 1 achieved partial stabilization of Personal Property, Business Personal Property, and Business License tax operations—helping to reduce backlogs and enable real-time tracking and customer access—incoming staff have identified issues with how the system was originally rolled out and tested. Public dissatisfaction, found in media reports and 311 complaints highlight resident frustration with the customer experience.



Many of these challenges could be traced back to business process decisions made under prior fiscal leadership, which now conflict with established operational workflows and financial management practices.

IT and Finance staff are actively working to resolve Phase 1 issues while defining requirements for Phase 2. City leadership will need to develop a comprehensive, long-term strategy for the system's future—including how it will be transitioned or replaced in the coming years—as the cost to maintain the current platform is projected to remain high.

Oracle Financial System

The decentralization of key functions—including Purchasing, Human Resources, Budget, and Accounts Payable—has reduced efficiency and limited the City's ability to operate as an integrated financial enterprise.

TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION ROAD MAP

The Journey Forward

RVA PAY SYSTEM

Phase 1 addressing stability and immediate processing needs. Phase 2 will focus on long-term platform strategy.

1

GL & GRANTS CONTROLS

Implementing automated funds-check controls and real-time synchronization to eliminate manual workarounds.

3

RVA311 HOURS

Evaluating call patterns to optimize operating hours and staffing levels for better accessibility.

5

ENTERPRISE SYS.

Pursuing enterprise-wide consolidation to eliminate silos and enable real-time data sharing across departments.

7

ORACLE FINANCIALS

Evaluating upgrade vs. replacement strategy. Optimizing underutilized functionalities for integrated enterprise operations.

2

RVA311 TRENDS

Conducting trend analysis on recurring complaints to identify systemic operational issues.

4

GRAVITY SOFTWARE

CY26 (FY28) implementation underway with Finance-DCAO oversight and process alignment.

6

Oracle Financial System

A strategic decision is needed on whether to upgrade the existing Oracle system or pursue a full system replacement to better support modern financial management and service delivery. Preliminary observations suggest that not all available Oracle functionalities have been fully activated or optimized, meaning the City may be underutilizing critical tools and automation features that could streamline workflows, enhance data accuracy, and improve cross-departmental coordination.

A comprehensive system assessment should be conducted to evaluate current performance, identify functionality gaps, and determine the most cost-effective path forward—whether through system reconfiguration, targeted module activation, or full platform modernization.

General Ledger & Grants Controls

Current integration between the General Ledger (GL) and Grants modules lacks sufficient funds-check controls, resulting in frequent imbalances and manual workarounds to reconcile data. The absence of clearly defined system rules for how grant expenditures, reimbursements, and matching funds post to the GL has created reporting inconsistencies and increased the risk of miscoding or delayed financial closeouts.

To address this, Finance and IT must jointly develop and implement automated funds-check and validation rules that ensure both modules remain synchronized in real time. Establishing these controls will reduce manual journal entries, prevent over- or under-obligation of funds, and improve the reliability of grant reporting to state and federal agencies.

- Mapping of all grant-related account strings and fund hierarchies.
- Identification of transaction points where discrepancies occur.
- Configuration of automated checks and system alerts within Oracle.
- Development of a reconciliation dashboard and monthly validation process.

ANALYZING RVA311 COMPLAINT TRENDS

Recurring or longstanding service complaints submitted through RVA311 are not being systematically analyzed to identify systemic issues or inefficiencies.

The first step in resolving these longstanding issues is to conduct a trend analysis on RVA311 data to identify repeat issues that indicate operational breakdowns. If correctly implemented, the result is more targeted operational improvements and reduced volume of repeat service requests.



Evaluating RVA311 Operating Hours

RVA311's current operating hours may not fully align with when residents are most likely to need assistance.

The City will evaluate call volume and usage patterns to determine whether adjustments to operating hours and/or staffing levels are needed. Improvements ultimately result in increased customer satisfaction and improved accessibility to city services.

Budget Software (Gravity)

CY26 (FY28) Implementation will require strong oversight, alignment with existing processes, and routine check-ins between Finance and the DCAO to ensure success.

Eliminating Siloed Software Systems

Several departments are using multiple, disconnected software systems that do not communicate with one another. This disconnect creates operational silos, duplicate data entry, inconsistent reporting, and prevents leadership from having an enterprise-wide view of city operations.

To resolve this issue, the City will explore implementation of an enterprise-wide software solution that consolidates systems, standardizes workflows, and enables real-time data sharing across all departments. The results include improved transparency, reduced duplication, consistent data quality, stronger collaboration, and better citywide decision-making.

Opportunities for Increased Transparency

Public-Facing Performance Dashboard

Residents do not currently have accessible visibility into how city resources are allocated or how quickly issues are being resolved.

Residents will benefit by the development of a public-facing dashboard that displays key performance indicators, workload data, and progress on long-standing service issues. Greater transparency and stronger accountability ultimately result in improved public trust in the City's ability to deliver services.

Community Alert Systems Review

Community alert systems, such as Richmond Ready are innovative tools that have the potential to expand the City's reach to residents. Further evaluation to ensure that they effectively reach all residents and deliver timely, actionable information is a continuous process.

To ensure optimal usage, the City will continue to evaluate the performance, reach, and reliability of existing alert systems and identify opportunities for improvement.

GOVERNANCE, POLICY & COMPLIANCE GAP GRANT PROGRAM

The 2025 legislation passed by City Council did not provide sufficient time for full implementation of the Gap Grant Program. The short turnaround led to a fragmented launch, as the application process was routed through 311 services, creating administrative inefficiencies and confusion for applicants.

Compounding these challenges, staff turnover and competing priorities within the Revenue Office further delayed processing and stalled program execution. Upon the arrival of the new Finance Director in August, immediate corrective measures were taken, including the hiring of three part-time staff in October to clear the application backlog.

These efforts are now underway, and recent media coverage and Council updates have generated renewed public interest, resulting in a surge of new applications over the past two weeks.

Delinquent Tax Collection

Recent Council inquiries and media coverage have brought renewed attention to the City's Delinquent Tax Collection Program, which was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. Council has requested that the program be relaunched in coordination with the Department of Revenue and the City Attorney's Office.

Staff have convened to evaluate next steps and will present formal recommendations to the CAO.

Additionally, incoming leadership has identified Ordinance 2024-024 (adopted February 12, 2024), which repealed and replaced prior City Code §26-3 regarding the application of tax payments. The new Section 26-3.1 directs the City Collector to apply payments first to the current liability for the specific tax type paid, and only then to the most delinquent account still within the statute of limitations Ord. No. 2024-024. This change diverges from the State Code's default requirement under Va. Code §58.1-3913, which mandates payments be applied to the oldest delinquency unless otherwise authorized by ordinance.

Because of this departure, the ordinance's intent and legal standing must be carefully reviewed to ensure consistency with state law and best practices. Conflicting or unclear provisions within City Code can jeopardize how staff are required to administer tax programs, potentially leading to inconsistent application of payments, inaccurate reporting, and confusion among taxpayers.

To support a compliant and transparent relaunch, the City must develop clear, codified policies and procedures governing payment application, collection timelines, account write-offs, and the treatment of delinquent balances.

These actions will ensure alignment across Revenue, Finance, and the City Attorney's Office while maintaining legal integrity and public confidence.

Real Property Tax Supplemental Billing

Since November 2024, the City has been unable to issue supplemental real property tax bills due to delays in receiving updated assessment data from the Office of the City Assessor of Real Estate. The Assessor's transition to a new CAMA software system has disrupted normal data exchanges, leaving Finance without the necessary files to generate accurate supplemental bills and roll corrections. As a result, an undetermined amount of revenue from both FY2025 and FY2026 remains unbilled and unrecognized, creating fiscal uncertainty and delaying cash flow.

The Real Estate Revenue Division—operating at roughly 50% staffing capacity—continues to rely on manual data transfers and verification while awaiting complete assessment data. If supplemental billing is not completed soon, the City risks pushing recognition of these revenues into FY2027, frustrating taxpayers who may receive newer 2026 bills before their 2025 corrections.

Quarterly & Monthly Council Reports

A formal cadence does not exist. A framework is under development in partnership with the Finance Committee to standardize reporting, identify key financial indicators, and communicate the City's fiscal position consistently.

MANDATORY REPORTING

City Code provisions—established through various ordinances and resolutions—have significantly increased the administrative burden on Finance and Budget staff, reducing capacity for core operational functions. On at least a monthly basis, Finance and/or the Budget department are required to compile and present multiple reports in response to codified mandates as well as ad hoc data requests from City Council. In addition, Council staff routinely request supplemental data and analysis via email or during committee meetings, further straining available resources.

A comprehensive review of City Code reporting requirements is needed to assess which mandates remain relevant, identify redundancies, and recommend potential repeal or consolidation. An initial inventory of current reporting obligations has been compiled and will be shared for review.

Workforce & Organizational Performance Rising Workforce Commitments

The City of Richmond funds City services, Richmond Public Schools, the Richmond Ambulance Authority, the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC), and contributes to every economic development entity in the greater Richmond area (GRP, RRT, Venture Richmond, and the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce). The City endeavors to be a model employer, as do many other entities in the region, resulting in a competitive employment market across the region. This competitiveness extends to entities that the City funds. Approximately three-fourths of the City's general fund budget is allocated to personnel and component units.

Over the next two years, the City will experience and severe reduction in the growth of residential property taxes (\$42M in FY26 dropping to \$6.5M in FY27). Based on FY25 expenditures (which have increased in FY27), the City expends an average of \$84M a month. The current projected surplus is \$22M, the equivalent of 2% of the total General Fund budget and a little more than one week of operations.

Commitments, including personnel cost and an overall increase in the cost of services across component units, continue with no coordinated plan for necessary local and regional investments.

Before the City commits to fund activities outside of core services, it must consider existing and future commitments while also preparing to increase its rainy-day fund (which currently has the ability to fund less than three months of operational services). In an effort to ensure the City is in the best position to weather the acute reduction in growth during the assessment freeze, the administration will explore a variety of cost management activities, including, but not limited to:

Vacancy Review Board – January 2026

Ensuring that only vacancies that are necessary for the improvement of service delivery are approved. The budget is a living, breathing document, and as we implement the path to deliver services, it is imperative that we continue to evaluate increasing the City's largest cost driver.

Employee Innovation Incentives

Employees are the key to identifying inefficiencies in service delivery, although the City lacks incentives encouraging the workforce to propose solutions. Implementing an employee incentive program that rewards innovative ideas that reduce risks, costs, or inefficiencies will result in greater employee engagement, operational improvements, and a culture of innovation.

Outsourcing Ineffective Cost-Heavy Services

Certain services lag behind or remain incomplete for long periods due to the City's lack of internal capacity. In turn, these services may be more expensive to perform internally than through qualified third-party providers including Richmond's vibrant small business environment. Identify opportunities to outsource select services and reinvest the savings into employee compensation results in reduced operating costs and more competitive pay for City employees.

ESTABLISHING A QA/QC TEAM

The City lacks an independent mechanism to evaluate service quality and performance.

Establish a QA/QC team that supports the newly created Transformation Officer and reports to the CAO, ensuring objective oversight, improved service quality, reduced inefficiencies, and cost-neutral operation.

Procurement, Supply Chain, and Vendor Management

Decentralized Bulk Purchasing

Currently, departments purchase everyday items individually, resulting in higher costs, inconsistent product quality, and inefficient inventory management.

Establishing a centralized warehouse for bulk purchasing of commonly used items such as paper goods, office supplies, and cleaning products will result in lower unit costs, standardized supply management, and economies of scale across the organization.

Further optimization is possible through collaboration with Richmond Public Schools (RPS) and constitutional offices.

Vendor Management Challenges

Vendor performance and pricing competitiveness are inconsistently monitored, resulting in potential cost inefficiencies and service gaps.

The City will explore the development and implementation of a vendor scorecard to regularly evaluate supplier pricing, delivery performance, service responsiveness, and reliability. The scorecard will be used to evaluate vendors and identify ways to spur performance, potentially providing support for incentive-based payment structures that accelerate delivery. Implementation will deliver stronger vendor accountability, improved service delivery, and more competitive pricing.

Persistent Billing and Collections Challenges: Billing and fee collection processes vary across departments, leading to inconsistent customer experiences, errors, and delayed revenue.

The City is currently reviewing and standardizing, where appropriate, billing practices citywide to ensure accuracy and efficiency. Improvements in the process will result in improved revenue assurance, reduced errors, and a more consistent customer experience.

Permit Fee Benchmarking

The methodology for setting building permit fees may be outdated or misaligned with neighboring localities, which can affect competitiveness and cost recovery.

To implement appropriate benchmarking and ensure competitiveness, the City will review the current fee structure and benchmark it against comparable jurisdictions. The effort, along with other supportive actions should help to accelerate a fair, competitive, and cost-effective fee model.



Affordable Housing, Economic Development, and Community Wealth Building/Workforce Development

Disconnected Activities

A lack of Affordable Housing has been identified as an issue that is negatively impacting urban cities nationwide.

The City has been an early adopter and investor in mitigating affordability challenges through its Department of Housing and Community Development, and has begun to refocus on local economic development investments, providing stronger neighborhood amenities, along with wealth building in support of developing Richmond's current and future workforce. Services across housing, economic development, and workforce development are not fully connected, which limits the productivity of these services.

To fully support existing challenges in housing and poverty mitigation, the City must properly connect workforce development, economic development, and housing activities to support the full resident life cycle. The City will soon conduct a full inventory of all funded programs, projects, and financing tools (rebates, incentives, refunds) that exist or are required for a comprehensive view of housing investments, as well as connecting investments in the City's current and future workforce as an attraction tool for economic development.

Ensuring that Richmonders are prepared for the future of work in an environment that continues to provide economic opportunity ensures the City (and region) continues to grow and that existing residents benefit from that growth.

Facilities, Assets & Capital Deployment

Fleet Rightsizing

The City's fleet may contain underutilized, aging, or improperly assigned vehicles, which increases maintenance costs and liability exposure.

To ensure the City appropriately utilizes existing resources, staff will conduct a comprehensive fleet assessment to identify right-sizing opportunities, reduce liabilities, and evaluate leasing options. Lower operating costs and a fleet that better aligns with operational needs.

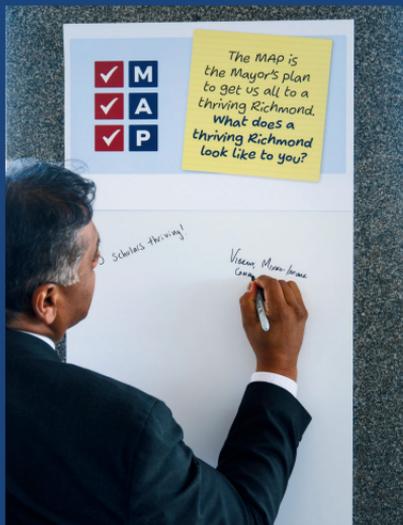
Space Utilization Study

Some city facilities may be overcrowded while others are underutilized, leading to inefficient use of space and unnecessary operational costs.

To ensure the City is appropriately utilizing facilities for optimal use, the City is poised to conduct a space utilization study to determine optimal workspace layouts and identify properties suitable for liquidation or repurposing. The projected outcomes include reduced occupancy expenses, improved operational efficiency, and opportunities for revenue generation.

Facility Location Optimization

Certain City buildings may be inconvenient for residents or inefficient for staff operations. The City is currently evaluating the strategic placement of all City buildings and facilities to improve accessibility and operational effectiveness, aimed at enhancing customer service and improving employee productivity.



Capital Projects Oversight

Capital projects frequently experience scope creep, schedule delays, and cost overruns due to insufficient oversight.

To ensure project management, the City will explore a realignment of resources to stand up a Capital Projects function that reports into the CAO's office to ensure projects remain within scope, schedule, and budget. The targeted result of this investment is more consistent on-time, on-budget projects with reduced change orders.

Reviewing Partner Agreements

Existing agreements with partner agencies, such as the multi-agency radio contract with Motorola, could limit the City's operational independence.

To optimize relationships across partner agencies, the City must review all current agreements to ensure they do not impede City operations or strategic flexibility. This analysis should result in improved operational autonomy and a stronger negotiating position in future agreements.

Emergency and Continuity Planning

Emergency and continuity of operations plans may be outdated or insufficient for current risks.

Conduct a thorough review and modernization of all COOP and emergency preparedness plans to increase resilience and readiness for unexpected disruptions.

Equitable Festival and Event Programming

The City features a diverse set of events and activities delivered by the City and private industry, and community entities. The current model presents opportunities to more fully represent the diversity of the community and generate greater economic impact.

Evaluate and redesign festival and event programming to promote equitable engagement and economic opportunity, resulting in increased resident and visitor engagement.

Business Community Engagement

Businesses lack a structured process to provide feedback on City services and regulatory processes.

It is imperative that the City strengthen relationships with the business community and formalize mechanisms for ongoing engagement to enhance economic competitiveness and optimize the resident/visitor experience.







ADMINISTRATION'S EARLY SUCCESSES

EARLY SUCCESSES



Resolved complex legislation (including Grimm, FOIA/Transparency, Budget, RPS Funding Taskforce, Procurement, and Diversity Study legislation)



Onboarded Key Leaders in operations, finance, workforce development, public safety, human services, policy, and public safety, totaling more than 275 years of experience



Revamped the City Budget Process to include a joint public budget launch and joint prioritization process for the first time ever under the current form of government



Execution of the Mayo Island easement ushering in a State and City partnership to permanently protect 14.5 acres



On time billing for more than 70,000 2026 tax bills, representing 76,592 parcels, with a value of \$56B generating a projected \$530M in revenue



Weathered the Federal Government Shutdown with little to no residual impact, mitigating negative citizen impact, while providing transparent public updates. No disruption of service or RIF



Helped set the operational strategic path for the City via the Mayoral Action Plan (MAP)



Jumpstarted the resolution for the most audit findings in recent history (5 years or more)



Revamped the Emergency Communications Process, successfully navigating the City's first weather emergency of Winter 2025



Continued DPW's six-year national accreditation streak, 1 of 225 recognized cities



Revamped the City Budget Process to include a joint public budget launch and joint prioritization process for the first time ever under the current form of government



Finalized Major terms for Sports Backers Stadium, opening the door for mixed use development



Received November legislative approval to use the Tourism Development Financing Program (TDFP) for 2 Scott's Addition hotels —\$149M in investment, 348 new rooms, and \$85M in net City revenue over 20 years.



Improved Fire operations and accountability through the creation and implementation of four new policies and the creation of the department's first Senior Business Officer



Execution of more than \$38M in FY2026 non departmental funding for Arts + Culture (\$766,400), Children, Youth, and Families (\$3,403,168), and Housing, Health, and Human Services (\$2,785,856)



Complied with City related budget legislation on time by providing a \$22M surplus estimate in advance of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)



Extended Park's agreement with the Maymont Foundation, maintaining continuity of services and operations



Harry J Banker Award for Reforest Richmond 2025



Successful opening of the \$20M Luck's Field Community Center



Lowest citywide vacancy rate in close to a decade



Partnered regionally to expand available shelter resources via Regional Caritas Agreement



Issued innovative RFP to transform surplus city owned vacant parking lot in Shockoe Bottom to create a mixed income residential multi-family project.



OPPORTUNITIES & PROPOSED INITIATIVES

Development of a Procurement Blue Book

The Blue Book would serve as a roadmap to Richmond government spending opportunities with MBEs, providing valuable insights into procurement goals, upcoming opportunities, and ways for small and local businesses to navigate the contracting process successfully.

Comprehensive Review of Fiscal Health of the City, Assessment and development of Internal Controls

There is a need to fully evaluate the fiscal health of the City in the midst of severe cuts at the federal level, rising costs that challenge affordability for residents, and increased burden on our residential tax base. The City has also shown continuous challenges in meeting reporting deadlines, the ability to provide data and analysis, all while faces severe structural changes including but not limited to a two-year assessment freeze. Improving on and developing stronger internal controls will resolve audit closeout process and ensure closeout is done timely and properly in advance of Fy2026 year end. The ability to analyze monthly close outs more firmly will make year-end closeout less cumbersome.

Commit to Transparency by Expanding Access to Records, Increasing Compliance, & Ensuring Ethical Activity by Appointing a Chief Transparency Officer

Create a senior role responsible for managing data disclosure, privacy, and public access to information, balancing openness with security/privacy need.

The role would oversee policies for public trust, manage Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) compliance moving it from Communications oversight, and integrate transparency into operations, ensuring legal and ethical data handling. Beyond basic privacy management, the role would encompass broader data governance and ensuring public trust. Implementing into the existing framework allows the City to create, track, and report data to ensure visibility and accessibility balancing innovation with ethical standards.

RVA University (Public Facing)

Why RVA University? The City of Richmond is one of the country's most unique cities and our operations are focused on meeting the needs of citizens. In our attempts to provide the greatest access to services, RVA University will provide key insights into service delivery, governance, and policy-making that are important for residents to be aware of. We believe that when government works, it is because citizens are engaged. RVA University gets us one step closer to delivering world-class services on behalf of our Mayor and Council.



Encourage Civic Participation by Reducing Costs of Services to Residents

Create stronger connectivity between the Office of Neighborhood Services, the Office of Aging, and the Richmond Community. Communicating governmental activities, ensuring multiple opportunities and access to receive services, and resolving constituent issues are key expectations of residents. Refocusing and connecting the work of the offices that deliver constituent services and transitioning from a reactive to a proactive approach benefits departments across service areas as well as residents across the City.

The reduction of administrative costs and connecting services in a meaningful way would create a rare but meaningful opportunity to increase the quality of service, while reducing the cost to residents. Free Parking on Adjoining Streets Around City Hall During Full Council Meetings, making street parking in the immediate vicinity (2 block radius) of City Council meetings encourages civic participation as vital decisions are made with marginal impact to projected revenues.

Support Local Restaurant, Retail, and Culture Through Planned Activations

The City of Richmond is known for both its vibrant local restaurant scene and its local fashion culture. While there are a variety of locally facilitated activations, including Black Restaurant Week, 804 Day and Richmond Fashion Week, the City plays little to no role. Actively connecting these efforts to the City's brand and resources is mutually beneficial.

Creation of the Richmond Department of Transportation

Department of Transportation is intended to provide quality infrastructure improvements to better the safety, equity, and mobility of our community. To remain competitive and support anticipated growth, the city requires a transportation network that reduces automobile reliance and offers convenient, affordable, and safe travel alternatives. The Richmond Department of Transportation will serve as the coordinating agency for all transportation matters within the city government. This department will be designed to be a one-stop shop for citizens and external agencies and will be fully equipped to plan, design, construct and maintain the mobility network.

Expansion of Youth Centered Services

Expand the Youth Summer Program and establish a year-round work experience/internship program for introducing young Richmonders to the world of work.

Ramp Up and Incorporation of Ethical and Innovative Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The United States is experiencing an affordability crisis that touches every aspect of human life. Ranging from housing affordability to increased food and grocery prices. Municipal government is not exempt from the challenges faced by rising costs of both goods and services. The use of AI tools presents challenges and opportunities that serve as one of the primary disruptors in the way government currently does business.

AI tools and associated technology provide a key opportunity to optimize productivity while reducing cost. While the use of these tools require clear guidelines and monitoring, the opportunities to improve service delivery are tantalizing. AI tools have the potential to assist in services ranging from legal support, document management, speech writing, and program design. Generally, the lines of demarcation will be not if you use AI, but how you use it. Richmond has the capacity, technological expertise, and need to serve as an early adopter of ethical AI use in government.

Expand Efforts to Make Richmond a Model Employer

The City of Richmond endeavors to be a model employer. A model employer demonstrates best practices in employment, maintains transparent policies and procedures, promotes work-life balance (which Richmond does), actively recruits and retains a diverse workforce (including people with disabilities), and invests in employees by providing extensive training, upskilling, and career pathway programs (including apprenticeships). Currently, the City provides an extensive holiday schedule, competitive wages, and low vacancy rates. Developing a dedicated program that provides extensive training across service areas and upskilling, along with career pathways that allow employees to attain a city-specific credential and open up opportunities for upward mobility, will solidify the City as a model employer.

NOTES

CONTRIBUTORS

Director - Human Resources	Director - Procurement
Director - Citizen Service & Response (311)	Director - Budget & Strategic Planning
Director - Office of Strategic Communications	Director - Minority Business Development
Director - Richmond Public Library	Chief of Police
Director - Neighborhood & Community Services	Director - Parks, Recreation & Community Services
Director - Social Services	Director - Justice Services
Director - General Services	Director - Public Utilities
Director - Emergency Communications, Preparedness & Response	Director - Housing & Community Development
Director - Animal Care & Control	Director - Intergovernmental Affairs
Director - Economic Development	Fire Chief
Director - Community Wealth Building	Director - Finance
Director - Information & Technology	Director - Office of Sustainability
Director - Planning & Development Review	Director - Public Works

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