



City of Richmond Office of the Inspector General: Investigative Report

OIG CASE #: 26-0023-I
INSPECTOR GENERAL FOSTER CURTISS

Executive Summary

The City of Richmond (COR) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated an investigation on April 24, 2026, after receiving information from an anonymous complainant that Department of Public Utilities (DPU), Parks and Recreation Department (PRD), and Department of Public Works (DPW) (“SUBJECT/S”) employees were using marked City vehicles to purchase illegal narcotics during work hours at 510 S. 14th Street, Richmond, VA 23219. The complainant stated that a “hemp food truck” parked at the location was selling “huge zip-lock freezer baggies full of fresh weed” to SUBJECT employees in marked COR vehicles throughout the day. Subsequently, the OIG investigated the allegations that the SUBJECTS abused their authority and wasted government funds in violation of COR policies and state law. The OIG reached several findings.

- **The SUBJECTS allegedly used a marked COR vehicle during work hours to purchase narcotics from 510 S. 14th Street, Richmond, VA 23219.** The OIG conducted surveillance, reviewed GPS and video data, and consulted with COR Fleet Management regarding vehicles assigned to the SUBJECT Departments. No information or observations indicated that COR employees or COR-owned vehicles were entering, exiting, stopping, or idling in that lot during work hours. The alleged loss to the COR is undetermined. Based on the investigative findings, the OIG determined that the allegation that COR employees were purchasing narcotics from the previously stated address in marked COR vehicles during work hours is *unsubstantiated*.

Background

On April 24, 2026, the OIG received an anonymous complaint alleging that COR employees (“SUBJECT/S”) were using marked City vehicles to purchase illegal narcotics from a “hemp food truck” at 510 S. 14th Street. The complainant stated that there was a white trailer operating as a business with images of marijuana leaves and “hemp-products” advertised on the side, and a red food truck, owned by the same individual, was openly selling large quantities of marijuana and other alleged narcotics to City personnel during work hours.

After gathering initial information, OIG investigators conducted on-foot surveillance of the location from May 19, 2026, through May 22, 2026. OIG Investigators observed a blue box truck, described as the “hemp food truck,” displaying green-and-white lettering that read “Holistic Remedies, Cannabis Education, Smoke Accessories, and More...” and three Instagram handles on the passenger side. During this time, no COR employees or COR-owned vehicles were observed entering, exiting, stopping, or idling in that lot during work hours.

The OIG coordinated with COR Fleet Management to review vehicles assigned to the SUBJECT Departments, including vehicle registration, operator assignments, and usage records. This review found no evidence that any SUBJECT employees misused COR vehicles or expended City resources for personal purposes.

The OIG obtained and reviewed video surveillance footage and GPS tracking data from Fleet Management to determine whether a COR vehicle was within a 200-ft radius of the previously referenced address between April 15, 2026, and May 19, 2026. GPS data indicated that several COR vehicles traveled through the general area but did not stop, idle, or enter the parking lot located at 510 S. 14th Street. Video surveillance further confirmed that these vehicles neither pulled into nor remained at the location.

The OIG collaborated with the Richmond Police Department (RPD), which provided additional surveillance of the area. No suspicious activity was observed, nor was any conduct witnessed that indicated COR-owned vehicles or COR employees were purchasing any items from that location

Observations

The COR has implemented enhanced tracking systems in its city-owned vehicles to monitor vehicle activity and usage. These measures are intended to reduce the risk of fuel waste and prevent potential misuse of City vehicles and were effective in supporting the OIG's investigative efforts.

Allegations and Findings

Allegation (COR/OIG): A report or claim of potential fraud, waste, or abuse involving the COR. Allegations may be **received** by OIG from the public, the COR employees, contractors, or other sources, or **initiated** by OIG through proactive reviews.

Classification after OIG inquiry/investigation:

- **Substantiated:** Evidence meets the applicable standard of proof (e.g., **preponderance of the evidence**) and indicates the alleged conduct likely occurred.
- **Unsubstantiated:** Evidence does **not** meet that standard. This classification does **not** state the claim is false; it reflects insufficient evidence to prove it.

Note: "Preponderance of the evidence" means **more likely than not**. If OIG policy uses additional outcomes (e.g., **partially substantiated, inconclusive**), those may be applied as appropriate.

Based on the information reviewed and the surveillance conducted, the OIG did not identify evidence to support the allegation that COR employees were using City-owned vehicles to purchase or possess illegal narcotics at 510 S. 14th Street. GPS tracking data, video surveillance,

and on-foot observations all showed that City vehicles passed through the area but did not stop, idle, or enter the parking lot where the “hemp food truck” was located. Additionally, coordinated surveillance with the RPD did not identify any City employees or marked COR vehicles engaging in suspicious or prohibited activity at the site. The OIG will continue to monitor relevant complaints and will coordinate with partner agencies as necessary should new information arise.

As a result, the allegation of misuse of City vehicles was determined to be ***unsubstantiated***. There is no actual financial loss to COR.

Foster Curtiss

Foster Curtiss, Inspector General