



# **City Manager's Report**

*Offices of the City Manager  
Elected & Appointed Officials*

1-21-2025

## **Office of Communications and Public Engagement (CAPE) – Director Afton Schneider (she/her)**

- Our biweekly community newsletter, City Scoop, is now LIVE! You may sign up to receive the newsletter via email [here](#), you can find a link on our website and social media platforms, and you can also find copies in City Hall and at a few locations on the Downtown Mall.
- Reminder: The City’s public affairs tv program, Inside Charlottesville, airs every Friday and Sunday at 7:00 PM and every Saturday and Monday at 9:00 AM on Charlottesville TV10 – Comcast Channel 10 in the City of Charlottesville and surrounding counties. We also have a free Roku app for TV10 which folks can find by searching for "Charlottesville TV10" on Roku.
  - January’s episode includes “On the Spot” with City Manager Sanders, updates from the Charlottesville Fire and Police departments, highlights of the Electric Vehicle Climate Café and Imagine a Day Without Water Art Contest, and “Get to Know Your Government” featuring our Risk Manager, Philip Spence.
- The City is working with the County and UVA to relaunch [Project Safe Neighborhoods \(PSN\)](#) with a press conference on Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:30 am at Burley Middle School. Learn about PSN, who the key partners are, and what impact this initiative has on the community.

## **Office of Sustainability – Director Kristel Riddervold (she/her)**

- 2024 Imagine A Day Without Water Art Contest Winners announced! <https://www.charlottesville.gov/500/Imagine-a-Day-without-Water>
- In partnership with the Community Climate Collaborative, the Office of Sustainability hosted the first Climate Cafe on December 13th at the Bradbury. Generation 180 was the featured partner, and the topic was “All things Electric Vehicles”. Over 30 community members attended and engaged in lively conversation about EVs!
- A community electric vehicle charging infrastructure needs study has started. This study will focus on lowering barriers to EV adoption within the community. It also considers opportunities for City fleet electrification.
- OS staff delivered the first batch of electric tools to the Parks and Rec Downtown Mall crew as part of the electric landscaping equipment pilot program. We appreciate the team being enthusiastic partners in this project!
- On December 18, OS staff presented on the LED Streetlights Upgrade Project to the Neighborhood Leaders Association. The presentation included an overview of the plan for upgrading all Dominion Energy-owned streetlights in the City of Charlottesville’s portfolio to LED, and provided details on the project goals, fixture selection, and timeline. Staff shared about the recently completed LED Streetlights Upgrade Pilot on the 250 Bypass between Hydraulic Road and Rt 29.

### **Office of Human Rights – Director Todd Niemeier (he/him)**

- The Office of Human Rights (OHR) continues to work with the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) toward interim certification as a Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP). In November, HUD requested that the OHR make additional changes to the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance prior to interim certification. OHR staff will present the recommended changes to Council during the January 21, 2025, meeting.
- The Human Rights Commission submitted its annual policy and practice recommendations to City Council on January 3, 2025. Commissioner recommendations focused on housing, services for people experiencing homelessness, and eviction prevention.
- At the close of the 2024 calendar year, the Office of Human Rights documented 1,841 incoming contacts, 13 new complaints filed, and a total of 242 unique individuals served. Details regarding the casework of the office can be found in the monthly reports presented to the Human Rights Commission as part of the regular meeting agenda packets. Office staff are currently preparing the 2024 calendar year report for presentation to the Human Rights Commission during the annual planning meeting in March.

### **Office of Finance – Director Chris Cullinan (he/him)**

- At the December 16, 2024 City Council meeting, the City's auditors (Robinson, Farmer, Cox and Associates) delivered a verbal confirmation of an unmodified ("clean") audit opinion for the City's finances for FY24. We have since received written confirmation of their opinion and have published the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for FY24 on the City's website. It can be found on the Finance Department's page under "Financial Reports".

### **Office of Economic Development – Director Chris Engel (he/him)**

- One of the City's signature workforce initiatives is accepting new interest. Ready to Work is a workforce initiative designed to assist both jobseekers and employers. A partnership between the Office of Economic Development and Rappahannock Goodwill Industries, Ready to Work certifies jobseekers in soft skills, provides assistance with resume and cover letter development, interview preparation, and culminates in a guaranteed interview with a participating City employer. The program is free, self-paced and available 24/7. Participating City employers offer a starting wage of at least \$16.70 an hour, have low barriers for entry level positions, and offer career pathways for advancement. Jobseekers receive training on critical thinking, time management, effective communication, conflict resolution, and more. A Career Navigator works with Ready to Work students one on one throughout the program, providing individualized assistance. If you are a jobseeker or City employer and would like to learn more or enroll, email [bichej@charlottesville.gov](mailto:bichej@charlottesville.gov).

## **Office of Community Solutions – Director Alex Ikefuna (he/him)**

- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS/HIV (HOPWA): The Office of Community Solutions in partnership with the Blue Ridge Area Coalition for the Homeless applied for and received funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for the HOPWA program. Our continuum received a \$6,960 increase to last year's award. In FY23 we received \$382,352. For FY24 we received \$389,312.
- National Park Services, Diversity Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility grant: The Office of Community Solutions contracted with Launch Consulting to facilitate three workshops bringing together City Staff and community partners with the purpose of creating a geodatabase that better represents the City of Charlottesville specifically its underserved and underrepresented populations. The final report has been developed, and the grant project has concluded. We are working to create a plan for implementing next steps to develop a more robust geodatabase that can be used to support future funding applications for both City projects and community projects.
- National Park Service - Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP): As the Parks Master Plan process moves towards completion, the Office of Community Solutions is scoping out grant opportunities in 2025 to seek funding to support some of the land acquisitions and other parkland improvements that are recommended in the Master Plan.
- VA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)– Pollocks Branch Trail Bridge: DCR contacted the Office of Community Solutions to inform the city that they had added an additional \$7,125 to their original grant of \$307,639 (total grant award is now \$314,764) to support the construction of the Pollocks Branch Trail bridge at the end of Rockland Avenue. Once this funding is appropriated by City Council, procurement will be releasing the project notice seeking interested parties to bid on the bridge project. If all stays on schedule, the bridge may be installed and ready for public use by early summer of 2025.
- Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (“CAHF”) and Housing Operations and Programs Support (“HOPS”) Grant: OCS staff received six applications for FY25 Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) Grant funding, totaling approximately \$1.6 million. This amount is \$788,000 over the available \$823,000. Additionally, there were 16 applications for FY26 Housing Operations Program Support (HOPS) Grant funding, totaling around \$1.48 million, which exceeds the available \$575,000 by \$897,000. The CAHF committee will begin reviewing the applications in January 2025. OCS staff will present the CAHF Committee's award recommendations to the City Council, alongside the award recommendations for the Vibrant Community Fund, in or by March 2025.
- Housing Equity and Anti-Displacement Toolkit (HEAT) / Strategy, three components of the HEAT Strategy are advancing to support housing equity and anti-displacement goals:

- Land Bank Ordinance/Program (LBP): The Deputy City Manager of Operations (DCM-O) presented a program and policy preference to the Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) on a pilot Land Bank Program as an "Authority," which will be subsequently presented to the City Council for consideration.
- Affordable Housing Development-Oriented Tax Abatement Program (TAP): OCS staff met with a key member of Livable Cville and continued internal discussions across relevant city departments. OCS will collaborate directly with the DCM-O to create a work plan for 2025 regarding the research and development of a Charlottesville TAP program aimed at facilitating affordable housing development in 2025 and beyond.
- Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP): The Office of Community Solution (OCS) staff collaborated with community leaders and managers from relevant city departments to address concerns related to the implementation of the CSRAP beyond fiscal year 2025 (FY25). They are in the process of completing a partner survey and will compile recommendations to present to the City Council in 2025.
- Staff Training and Professional Development: Staff attended the Virginia Governor's Housing Conference in Virginia Beach in November 2024. Over the course of three days, staff learned of best practices being utilized across the Commonwealth to support methods of reducing homelessness and increasing affordable housing units. Additionally, in line with previously scheduled training, the OCS staff completed a session with LISC Virginia's Housing Development Training Institute (HDTI). This training enhanced the staff's knowledge and skills in real estate policy and program development, covering crucial topics such as financial feasibility, site management, and asset management. These topics support long-term goals for affordable housing. The assigned OCS staff will now work to facilitate additional Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) training and development for interested city staff within the OCS and NDS departments.
- Jordan Park Accessible Pathways: As of December 2024, the Office of Community Solutions and Parks & Rec successfully completed the replacement of an older narrow pathway within the park with a new accessible pathway composed of a compacted gravel base and drainage sublayer and topped with an 8' wide asphalt surface connecting the park's entrance on Sixth Street to the new pedestrian bridge over Moore's Creek. This new pathway includes new accessible connections to existing park amenities, including the two playgrounds and the basketball court. Additional work was done to extend the emerging trails network to the east of the new bridge in the form of a compacted gravel base covered with stone dust. (This section of the path lies with fragile wetlands too delicate to be paved). This project was funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) fund.
- Charlottesville CDBG Program: The city's CDBG program continues to make progress supporting subrecipients funded through the city's program year 2024-

25 (PY24) program, including first-of-its-kind support for PACEM's work-enabling transportation program for their clients experiencing homelessness, significant contributions to CRHA's work to renovate the Dogwood Properties and financial supports to ReadyKids, Inc., one of Charlottesville's oldest nonprofits, to support their work providing a wide range of critical supports to area children and families in the city of Charlottesville through counseling programs, family supports and early learning opportunities. The application window for program year 2025-26 (PY25) is set to go live on January 6, 2025, and runs through February 7, 2025. Pre-application technical support workshops will be scheduled for mid-January to provide support to interested applicants. No word has yet been received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as to allocation amounts for PY25, but it is important to note that the PY24 HUD allocations were announced exceedingly late last year (May 7), which left precious little time to secure the needed local approvals to help subrecipients launch their funded activities on July 1.

- Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER PY23): The City's CAPER for program year 2023-24 was submitted to HUD for review, and HUD notified staff recently that the report has been accepted, clearing the way for the upcoming program year 2025-26. (The CAPER is typically the final reporting obligation of a HUD-funded locality in a given program year) and provides a comprehensive evaluation of how the city spent its annual fund allocation and performance in implementing its Five-Year Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan goals.

**Budget Office – Director Krisy Hammill (she/her)**

- FY 2026 Budget Development is well underway. Just a reminder to continue checking the Budget webpage for updates and important information!

## **Commissioner of the Revenue – Director, Todd Divers (he/him)**

- Tangible Business Personal Property Returns and Machinery and Tools Returns (FILING ONLY) are due on January 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Business License Renewals (FILING AND PAYMENT) are due on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Paper returns and renewals were mailed to businesses in December. However, spotty postal delivery service is not a valid excuse for failure to file or pay as these are due every year at the same time.
- Businesses are STRONGLY encouraged to take advantage of the City's Business Tax Portal to complete these transactions. Visit <https://charlottesville.gov/businessportal>.
- Call 434-970-3170 or email [citycorbiz@charlottesville.gov](mailto:citycorbiz@charlottesville.gov) if you need assistance.
- Tax Relief:
  - On February 3<sup>rd</sup> the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office will begin taking applications and re-certifications for Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled. In general, the program is open to homeowners who are at least 65 years of age, or who are permanently disabled – though other conditions apply. If you were in the program last year, be on the lookout for a letter with instructions. If you were not in the program last year and would like more information about whether you might qualify, visit <https://charlottesville.gov/relief>. Or call 434-970-3160 or email [relief@charlottesville.gov](mailto:relief@charlottesville.gov).
  - The deadline to apply will be April 1, 2025.