



CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

To be a place where everyone thrives

MEMO

September 25, 2025

To: All Staff

From: Samuel Sanders, City Manager

RE: City Manager's Office Reorganization

Over the past two years, the focus as I have communicated to the City Manager's Office (CMO) has been on creating **strength and stability**—rebuilding trust, establishing clarity, and restoring a foundation our staff and community can rely on. That work has been essential. And now, with stability in place, it is time to move forward from a goal of stability to a goal of organizational excellence, which is one of Council's strategic outcome areas in the City's Strategic Plan (also attached to this email).

As the leader of this organization, it is important that I model the discipline and strategy that I often call on each of you to display in your work each day. And while I know the CMO staff have worked hard to make a great number of things happen, I can admit that we have not always been able to do so with everything we have on the long list of things to do. We have also been unable to give our full attention to important things to move them as far as we would have liked; therefore, change is needed.

Last week, I announced to the Extended LEADTeam a reorganization of the City Manager's Office. The purpose being to ensure all items we are responsible for are in the capable hands of a specific member of the team, so progress occurs, and delivery is possible. This simply represents the next step in the ongoing work: aligning our leadership structure so that the **organization** can serve with **quality and consistency**—not just in moments of crisis or high visibility, but every day, across every department, for everyone we serve.

This reorganization illustrates a division of the City Manager's function to one that focuses on the organizational management core priorities and the critical initiatives work which influences and complements the churn of the whole organization. The new organizational chart for the City Manager's Office is attached, but I want to walk you through the changes:

An **Assistant to the City Manager** is a new role for the City, but not new in the world of local government management; this critical leadership role supports the City Manager directly in advancing strategic priorities, overseeing cross-departmental initiatives, and ensuring effective communication and coordination across the organization and with community stakeholders; think of it as a project manager for me and one who works with me and independent of me on specific things; I have extended an offer for this role and an announcement will be coming shortly.

A **Chief Prosperity Officer** is a new title, but the same core values-driven work as equity by another name; Ashley Marshall has been tapped to serve in this role of supporting the needs of the whole community through aligning programs, services, and practices to remove systemic barriers so access and opportunity result; this role focuses on the priorities set by the City Manager in what is referred to as “The Laboratory” – a place where we dream, imagine, try, test, assess, evaluate, discard, change, and pivot; Ashley will continue to collaborate with PCOB, Human Rights, ADA, and Home to Hope, and she will directly engage a body of initiatives focused on health and wellness, access and opportunity, and culture and history.

The **Chief Strategy Officer** is also a new role; this position will lead a performance management effort within the organization; this role will support the facilitation, tracking, and reporting of the citywide strategic plan; the production of a dashboard to collect, synthesize, analyze, and report on performance across the City; the ideal person will be one who can help visualize the effectiveness of the entire City team in its service to the community and ensure this is priority number one.

One Deputy City Manager. James Freas will work to consolidate strategy-setting and decision-making authority for clarity and consistency with the City Manager; the Deputy will act in the absence of the City Manager.

The return of the **Assistant City Manager** role, but this time **two** will serve as collaborative strategists with senior leadership to support the delivery of results outlined in work plans and envisioned by Council’s Strategic Plan; each portfolio will be determined once we have recruited and selected from the best available candidates looking to join the City of Charlottesville team.

And lastly, a grant-funded temporary position: **Economic Mobility Officer** as part of a national project with [ICMA](#) (International City/County Management Association) – the leading organization of local government professionals – will provide the base salary for a person to coordinate citywide efforts that advance upward economic mobility, promote opportunity, and reduce poverty through community-engaged strategies.

This higher capacity team will be realized using already budgeted, but unfilled positions; this reorganization is budget-neutral and ensures the CMO can work on everything entrusted to it. In short, this reorganization is about moving from **stability** to **excellence**—serving not only with strength, but with the quality and consistency that our community deserves.

These changes are effective October 1st. All departments and offices have been notified of who they will report to until all vacancies are filled, and portfolios set. In the interim, I am happy to work with James and Ashley in answering any additional questions needed for your daily operations. Thank you for supporting this effort to strengthen this office to best support you.

I look forward to making this impact with you.

Sam