



# **City Manager's Report**

*Offices of the City Manager  
Elected & Appointed Officials*

10-6-2025

## City Manager – Sam Sanders (he/him)

- Recently, I announced to City staff a reorganization of the City Manager's Office (CMO). 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. Here are the changes that became effective October 1:
  - 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 \(link\)](#) (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.

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

- CAPE has launched a weekly On-the-Spot segment with City Manager Sanders featuring highlights from different departments throughout the City and from local leaders. These updates are meant to provide in-time updates for the community and allow opportunities for everyone to be more engaged. Catch it every Tuesday on the City's [Facebook \(link\)](#), [Instagram \(link\)](#), and recently launched [TikTok \(link\)](#). Do you have a TikTok account? Give us a follow!
- On September 26, Starr Hill Pathways students participated in a two-hour multimedia workshop at the Community Media Center, learning skills in interviewing, live switching, audio mixing, and PSA production. Their final PSA will air on CPA-TV and social media. Another workshop is scheduled for October 13.
- Recent filming and editing include Loop De Ville, Cville Sabroso Festival, and Cville Pride Festival. Upcoming coverage includes the NextGen Skilled Trades event on October 4 and the African American Military Experience program on October 11 at Carver Recreation Center, which will air on Educational Access TV14. We also highlight all events on our monthly local public affairs tv program, Inside Charlottesville. Catch new episodes on-air on the first Friday of every month on Charlottesville TV10 and previous episodes every Friday and Sunday at 7:00 PM and Saturday and Monday at 9:00 AM, or stream online on [YouTube \(link\)](#), [Facebook \(link\)](#), [Vimeo \(link\)](#), or CAPE's [webpage \(link\)](#).

- Planning is underway for Charlottesville's Grand Illumination this year on Friday, December 5, from 5:00 - 8:00 PM at Ting Pavilion. The Planning Committee is looking forward to putting on another great event for the community!
- The UVA Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and PEGLLLab invite the community to the Fall 2025 Central Virginia Looking, Listening & Learning Exchange gun violence prevention panel on Friday, October 10, from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM at CitySpace (100 5th Street NE). This event will feature an engaging panel discussion led by representatives from Baltimore's Gun Violence Reduction Strategy alongside community leaders, policymakers, and public health experts. Lunch will be served. Please [RSVP online \(link\)](#) by Wednesday, October 8.

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

- Welcome Lauren Medica – an intern joining the Office of Sustainability (OS) for the fall semester through the UVA Intern Placement Program.
- OS returned as an exhibitor for the Charlottesville Pride Festival for the second year in a row to promote OS programs and the City's recent efforts related to the Biophilic Cities Network.
- OS returned as an exhibitor at the second annual Veg Fest at Ix Park. OS and Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) staff directed attendees towards water- and energy-saving incentives and rebates on the Energy Resource Hub, shared information regarding Resilient Together, heat safety, and encouraged attendees to contribute to a display describing activities that make them feel the most connected to nature or "biophilic".
- To promote the Energy Resource Hub, OS and LEAP jointly tabled at the annual Sabroso Festival, registering attendees for home energy audits, sharing "Imagine A Day Without Water" Art Contest information, and providing materials on water conservation in English and Spanish.
- In partnership with Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, LEAP and OS have expanded the Mobile Resource Hubs to the Northside and Gordon Avenue libraries to increase library visitors' access to OS materials.
- OS and Emergency Management collaborated on the creation of graphics for National Preparedness Month to encourage residents to plan and prepare for a variety of risks and types of emergencies. Using resources from ready.gov, the National Weather Service, and NOAA, the social media posts provide tips and tricks for preparedness that include guidance on how to have conversations in your household, with neighbors, and in the community. The content will be compiled into a hardcopy resource for distribution.
- As part of the United Way's Day of Caring, the Charlottesville Invasive Plant Partnership, the Rivanna Conservation Alliance, and ReLeaf C'ville jointly hosted a service event which OS participated in and focused on the removal of invasive stiltgrass at Riverview Park.

- OS's Water Efficiency Program Coordinator presented at three recent conferences (Alliance for Water Efficiency Symposium, Virginia's American Water Works Association Conference, and WaterSmart Innovations) highlighting the City's long-standing toilet rebate program, the updates made to the City's toilet rebate programs, and steps other utilities can take to set up their own or update their toilet rebate programs. [Learn more about the City's \\$150 toilet rebate on the program webpage. \(link\)](#)
- The Water Conservation Program, in partnership with the Rivanna Stormwater Education Partnership, successfully hosted a fall rain barrel workshop in the City of Charlottesville. 15 attendees learned the importance of rain barrels and their role in reducing stormwater runoff. The City continues to offer [\\$30 rain barrel rebates \(links\)](#) for installing rain barrels at their homes. A spring rain barrel workshop is being planned.
- The Water Conservation Program, in collaboration with regional partners, has kicked off the 11th annual Imagine a Day without Water Art Contest, challenging youth to show how "Water Works" through artistic creations. The contest is open to all youth in grades K – 12th living in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Art submissions will be accepted now through October 27. Original two-dimensional creations (including photography) can be submitted via mail, digitally, or at Central, Northside, and Crozet Library branches. More info is available at [Charlottesville.gov/ArtContest](http://Charlottesville.gov/ArtContest).
- Two projects under the City's Energy Performance Contract hit notable milestones over the past month. The solar photovoltaic system at CATEC was completed, producing clean energy for the facility. A project involving LED lighting and efficient plumbing fixtures in City Hall Annex, City Hall, and Key Recreation Center kicked off.
- The Energy Resource Hub partnered with Rewiring America to introduce a [limited-time incentive \(link\)](#) to support heat pump installations. When combined with City incentives, residents can save up to \$5000 on a new heat pump.
- OS joined the Parks and Recreation Department to celebrate the City's recent membership to the Bee City USA initiative.

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

- The Office of Economic Development (OED) recently celebrated seven individuals who completed the GO Start-Up fall cohort. Represented in the group were six different business concepts ranging from counseling services to 24-hour on-call aesthetician services, an independent financial analyst, and more. This cohort continued the GO Start-Up program's tradition of attracting individuals from a variety of backgrounds, all seeking to learn more about how to convert their ideas into a practical business, and some of the essentials required to build and sustain an emerging company.

- Led by the Office of Economic Development's Entrepreneurship Program Specialist, Keith Groomes, and with the support of guest speakers from partner organizations, GO Start-Up serves as an on-ramp to the entrepreneurial highway. It is a critical component of OED's and the City's strategic efforts to provide equitable entrepreneurship opportunities. The next GO Start-Up cohort is planned to take place in Spring 2026.

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

- Following the submission of their legislative agenda recommendations to City Council, Human Rights Commissioners are now shifting their focus to City policy recommendations. As with the legislative agenda recommendations, the Commission will focus its City policy recommendations on housing access and stability across protected classes and economic status. Commissioners will discuss their City policy recommendation ideas during their next two regular meetings on October 16 and November 20, with the goal of presenting their written recommendations to Council on or before November 30.
- On August 16, Lily Gates assumed the role of Human Rights Policy and Impact Analyst. In this role, Lily supports the Human Rights Commission and Office of Human Rights by researching and compiling information regarding policy and systemic human rights issues, conducting community engagement to understand current and emerging human and civil rights needs, and proposing strategies to mitigate individual and community harms. Lily has served in the Office of Human Rights since June 2021, both as an Intern and later as the Human Rights Outreach Specialist. We are grateful for her service and the insights and skills she brings to her new role.
- The Office of Human Rights currently has 19 open discrimination complaint cases. 10 are under investigation, five are in the process of alternative dispute resolution, two are under review for determination after investigation, and two are awaiting responses to offers of alternative dispute resolution.

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

- The City has gone live with its upgraded financial management system. This is the culmination of a multi-year effort by staff from across the organization to ensure that our system continues to be technically robust and secure and provide reliable financial accounting and reporting. The next phase of this project will be understanding and utilizing the built in tools and analytics to better leverage the City's financial data for informed decision making.