



## CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

*To be a place where everyone thrives*

### Proposed Legislative Priorities

#### TIER 1

- *Planning & Zoning*
  - Delegate Special Exceptions Approval by amending § 15.2-2286 to allow governing bodies to delegate the authority to grant special exceptions to their Planning Commissions, rather than reserving that function exclusively to themselves.
  - Clarify Local Hardship Standards by modifying § 15.2-2286 to permit local jurisdictions to define through ordinance the conditions under which a “hardship” exists for zoning relief applications.
  - Modifying state law by broadening and clarifying the definition of “blighted property” for eminent domain purposes; Removing overly burdensome elements from the definition of “derelict” in the code; Increasing the tax penalties a locality can place on a blighted or derelict property; and expanding the penalties and fines authorized under the finding of a nuisance by a citizen-initiated special grand jury.
- *Transportation*
  - Advocate that the Virginia Department of Rail and Transportation's (DRPT) 'Commonwealth Corridor' plan to create an east-west passenger rail connection between Charlottesville, Richmond, and Hampton Roads is included DPRT's 2026 Statewide Rail Plan. Advocate for state funding to implement DRPT's 'Commonwealth Corridor' plan.
- *Development/ADA*
  - Enable ADA compliance by streamlining pole transfers and establishing a One Touch Make Ready process by amending Title 56 of the Code of Virginia to:
    - Require attaching entities to transfer facilities within 30 days after notice that a replacement pole is ready.
    - Establish expedited procedures when double poles affect ADA access, pedestrian safety, traffic operations, emergency response, or active infrastructure projects.

- Direct the SCC to establish a coordinated One Touch Make Ready process allowing qualified contractors to perform eligible transfers for multiple entities.
- Require pole owners to remove obsolete poles within 15 days after all attachments have been transferred, unless documented safety or engineering conditions prevent removal.
- Require pole owners and attaching entities to maintain current contact information and use electronic notices for replacement-pole activity and outstanding transfers.
- Authorize SCC enforcement for repeated or unreasonable failures to meet required timelines.
- Allow localities to formally identify double poles affecting public safety or accessibility and request expedited resolution.
- Clarify the process for correcting ADA or pedestrian accessibility conflicts by amending Title 56 of the Code of Virginia to:
  - Allow localities, after engineering or accessibility review, to formally designate utility facilities creating a documented ADA or pedestrian obstruction.
  - Require utilities to evaluate the obstruction and develop relocation or mitigation plans within defined timeframes.
  - Establish clear timelines for completing relocation when feasible.
  - Provide expedited procedures for priority locations such as intersections, curb ramps, accessible routes, transit stops, schools, government buildings, and documented pedestrian safety concerns.
- Create an SCC coordination and escalation process when a locality and utility cannot agree on need, feasibility, schedule, or responsibility.
- Establish reasonable standards for assigning financial responsibility, accounting for cases where facilities predate sidewalks and situations where utilities impede ADA compliance.
- Allow relocation work to align with utility upgrades or capital projects when it reduces cost or disruption.
- Require consideration of alternative relocation, consolidation, undergrounding where appropriate, or 2 facility modification before concluding a conflict cannot be resolved.

- *Taxes*

- Amend § 58.1-3703.1(A)(4)(b) to clearly distinguish good-faith jurisdictional errors from fraud or failure to obtain a license. Under this amendment, when a taxpayer shows that

they in good faith obtained a business license and paid the business license tax to the wrong Virginia locality, that mistake will not be treated as fraud or non-licensure. In such cases, the correct locality may assess and collect only:

- The tax due for the current license year, and
- The tax for the three preceding license years.

## **TIER 2**

- **Planning & Zoning**
  - Enable “Housing Near Jobs” Zoning Reform by adding § 15.2-2286.2 to permit by-right multi-unit development in commercial zones statewide (as proposed in HB 816/SB 454).
  - Direct DHCD to study potential regulatory modifications to allow cost-effective elevators in residential midrise buildings that meet safety standards but are less costly than full commercial elevators, improving affordability in multi-unit construction.
  - Commission a General Assembly study on how state-level daycare licensure standards affect the viability of urban childcare centers, with the aim of identifying scalable, cost-effective licensing for facilities under 12 children in dense neighborhoods.
- *Transportation*
  - Extend the delegation of building-code enforcement for state-funded bus shelters by local officials until 2032.
- *Emergency Management*
  - Any legislation establishing a state grant fund for local emergency management planning, preparedness, and mitigation, consistent with VEMA’s 2027 platform.
  - Any measure that shifts VDEM core programmatic functions to the general fund or otherwise increases the agency’s pass-through of federal grant funding to cities and counties.
  - The funding mechanism recommended by the Emergency Management Needs Evaluation once it reaches the General Assembly.
- *Human Rights/Economic Security*
  - Increase and sustain funding for the State Rental Assistance Program, providing adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the financial means to lease private market rental housing and the opportunity to choose where and with whom they live.
  - Renew legislation protecting access to courthouses, schools, health care facilities, polling places, and other essential public institutions from civil immigration enforcement absent a valid judicial warrant.

- Increase and sustain state funding for deeply affordable housing, with particular attention to households with incomes below 30% of Area Median Income and those at greatest risk of housing instability and homelessness.
- Increase and sustain investment in the Virginia Housing Trust Fund, providing predictable and sustained resources for the creation, preservation, rehabilitation, and support of affordable housing.
- *Tax*
  - Preserving local administration of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and oppose any legislation that would transfer authority over TOT collection, enforcement, or revenue distribution from local governments to the Virginia Department of Taxation.
- *Health*
  - Request that the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) pursue an 1115 waiver amendment under the federal Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) authority to add medical respite care as a reimbursable Medicaid service
  - Request that the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) explicitly include “medical respite” as an eligible use under both the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) and the Housing Trust Fund’s Homeless Reduction Grant (HTF-HRG).
- *Sustainability*
  - Allocate \$600,000 to support the Energy Resource Hub (ERH) operations for 3 years to enable continued support and partnership for local sustainability and climate-related initiatives.

### **TIER 3**

- *Planning & Zoning*
  - Authorize a one-time appropriation for planning and initial construction of the World Heritage Trail connecting UVA and Monticello. This cultural infrastructure project would enhance pedestrian and heritage tourism, aligning with regional goals.
  - Clarify that if a demolition permit for a historic property is not granted and the owner elects to offer the property for sale for 12 months, after which they can proceed with the demolition, they must publicly advertise that the property is for sale.

- Adjust Notice Requirements in Areas Without Daily Newspapers by amending § 15.2-2204 to allow alternate notice methods (e.g., digital publication or public posting) for jurisdictions where no daily-print newspaper exists.
- *Emergency Management*
  - Support for VEMA’s 2027 legislative platform, and for any legislation establishing a state grant fund for local emergency management planning, preparedness, and mitigation.
  - Support for the funding mechanism recommended by the Emergency Management Needs Evaluation once that report is delivered to the General Assembly.
- *Human Rights/Economic Security*
  - Strengthen state support for preservation of existing affordable housing. State housing policy should prioritize preservation and rehabilitation of existing affordable properties, including subsidized properties at risk of conversion to market-rate housing, alongside the production of new affordable housing.
  - Amend and reenact Code of Virginia §§ 55.1-1258 and 55.1-1314 to prohibit retaliatory nonrenewal against all tenants who engage in legally protected activity.
  - Improve language accessibility to state agencies and public-facing state information. Establish and adequately fund consistent statewide standards for interpretation, translation of vital documents, and meaningful language access in state agencies, courts, schools, and other public programs and services.
- *Health*
  - Fund a full-time Tick Surveillance Coordinator position within the Virginia Department of Health, ensuring dedicated leadership and oversight of vector surveillance efforts statewide.
    - Allocate resources to modernize tick surveillance data systems
    - Provide recurring research funding
- *Sustainability*
  - Support data center reform legislation to minimize environmental impacts and reduce financial burden on ratepayers (e.g., building data disclosure, cost-share reform, transmission cost allocation).

- Maintain the intent of the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA), in particular in light of the Dominion/Next Era acquisition negotiations.
- Support review of the methodology for allocating funding from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to expand access beyond current eligible recipients.