



City Manager's Report

*Offices of the City Manager
Elected & Appointed Officials*

10-19-2026

City Manager – Sam Sanders (he/him)

- I participated in a series of employee engagement events coordinated by our Communication & Public Engagement Team. These events, called Sam's Sessions, provided an opportunity for the City Manager's Office to engage with staff to discuss results from our previous employee survey as we prepare to conduct a new one in January.
- I am rolling out an operational framework built on quality and consistency. The leadership team is engaged in the effort to operationalize organizational excellence as how we approach the work and how we embody it daily. At a recent retreat, leaders were engaged in the foundational lesson on how we use organizational excellence to direct us in the execution of our work. The pillars are openly disciplined, strategic advocacy, empowerment, and empathy. More to come on this subject as it relates to the organization's culture.
- On October 6, I attended an employee gathering at Pen Park for the Utilities Department. It was a great opportunity to engage with staff, thank them for their work, and to again congratulate Jason McIlwee on his appointment as Director.
- On October 7, I joined staff in a focused conversation on the Downtown Mall experience. This group, led by Downtown Mall Strategy Manager Brenda Kelley, reviewed maintenance, programming, and investment priorities in what is a quarterly engagement on the City's centerpiece for economic development.
- On October 9, the Finance Department kicked off a quarterly engagement called FINStat. Using the roving reporter structure, Director Chris Cullinan facilitated a discussion of procurement, utility billing, risk management, and accounting with division leaders shared reports on their area of responsibility.
- On October 9, I joined members of the City team for the Minority Business Alliance Gala which was held at The Brick Cellar at Dairy Market. The City has sponsored the event since its inception, and we appreciate the opportunity to celebrate the minority entrepreneurs in our region who are the backbone of community economic development.
- On October 12, I joined Human Resources Director Joe Gilkerson for lunch with Clerk of Circuit Court Llezelle Dugger and her team. We used this as a mini Sam's Session and answered questions, shared stories, and talked about serving the public.
- On October 13, I met with Jeff Richardson for our monthly City-County meeting. We focused on the joint meeting held on October 6 and some upcoming joint executive meetings to continue our collaboration on key topics like transportation and land use planning.

Communications & Public Engagement (CAPE) - Director Afton Schneider (she/her)

- Sam's Sessions - Closing the Loop, Looking Ahead:
 - The City recently concluded Sam's Sessions, an employee engagement initiative designed to close the loop on the 2024 Employee Survey. Three sessions were offered in different formats and locations to provide employees with opportunities to connect directly with City Manager Sam Sanders and City leadership, review survey findings, learn about progress made, and share additional feedback.
 - Led by the Communications and Public Engagement team, the campaign also featured a centralized employee information hub, leadership videos, and interactive feedback tools, including The Loop, which highlighted completed improvements, ongoing efforts, and priorities for the future.
 - The City thanks employees for their participation and valuable input. Feedback gathered will help inform the 2027 Employee Survey and future engagement opportunities, reinforcing the City's commitment to transparency, open communication, and continued connection between employees and leadership.
- Charlottesville Community Media Center:
 - Recently supported the monthly public affairs TV program "[Inside Charlottesville](#)" with coverage of the ReadyKids playground ribbon cutting, Loop de 'Ville at Fontaine Research Park and the Rivanna River Company
 - Provided livestreaming support for the 9/11 25th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony at the Fontaine Fire Station and an edited vignette for social media.
 - Facilitated new episodes of original community programming in our production studio, including "Breaking the Chains" with June Bates and Pastor Lehman Bates, "Open Mic, Open Hearts" with Terry Tyree, and "Rivanna Rider" with Robin Hoffman.

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

- The fall cohort of GO Start-Up recently wrapped up and saw 10 entrepreneurs complete the course to earn their certificates! Offered through the City of Charlottesville Office of Economic Development, GO Start-Up helps individuals take the first steps toward launching a business by providing foundational business knowledge, practical tools, and guidance to turn their ideas into reality. Throughout the program, participants explored key aspects of entrepreneurship, including business planning, marketing, financial management, and strategies for building a successful business. We congratulate this fall's graduates on their accomplishments and look forward to seeing their entrepreneurial journeys continue here in Charlottesville!

City Treasurer – Jason Vandever (he/him)

- The Treasurer's Office is busy preparing and reviewing second-half personal property and real estate tax bills. We expect bills to be sent to taxpayers by the end of October. This year's second half tax due date is Monday, December 7. Please contact the Treasurer's Office at citytreas@charlottesville.gov with any questions or concerns.

Budget & Grants Management – Director Krisy Hammill (she/her)

- Applications are now open for Vibrant Community Fund (VCF), Housing Operations and Program Support (HOPS), and Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) program funding. Application period deadlines can be found at <https://www.charlottesville.gov/1941/Grants>.

Finance – Director Chris Cullinan (he/him)

- The Procurement Division of Finance hosted a Reverse Vendor Fair on September 15 at Carver Recreation Center. This fair is designed for City departments to host tables, allowing vendors to approach departments directly about procurement opportunities, reversing the traditional format. It promotes vendor engagement and strengthens relationships with local suppliers. Over 20 City departments and 75+ vendors participated.
- The City's auditors are on-site the weeks of October 12 and 19 conducting fieldwork and testing as part of the FY26 annual audit.
- The Finance and Information Technology departments partnered to develop and deploy the "City Credit Card Chatbot" job aid. The job aid was designed to help City employees better understand the City's credit card policies, processes, and procedures. The goal is to provide information in a timelier and more intuitive way.

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) – Emergency Coordinator John Oprandy (he/him)

- OEM's Emergency Coordinator served on the planning team for the Virginia Unified Readiness Summit, held in Richmond on October 7, drawing roughly 750 preparedness leaders from across the Commonwealth. Rather than a conference of presentations, the summit put participants to work by brainstorming, refining, presenting, and prioritizing practical solutions to shared challenges in communications, planning, operational capacity, and workforce. The day produced six to eight viable solutions to pursue further, ranging from legislative changes and state budget requests to more easily achievable improvements in regional coordination and communication. The real measure of the summit's success will be what gets implemented or advanced from that list in the months ahead.
- OEM joined colleagues from CAPE and the Charlottesville Police Department (CPD) for a two-and-a-half-day Julie Parker Crisis Communications simulation,

recommended by CPD Chief Kochis. The training brought staff from several departments together to sharpen their communications and media skills under crisis conditions, and the group agreed to carry the momentum forward by facilitating its own crisis-communication tabletop exercises.

- OEM kicked off the City's year-long active threat preparedness exercise series, a joint effort with CPD, the Charlottesville Fire Department (CFD), and Charlottesville City Schools, supported by The Olson Group. The series opened with a kickoff meeting and work has begun on the policy review workshop, the first major milestone in the program.

ADA – Coordinator Paul Rudacille (he/him)

- We are identifying areas across the City for upcoming sidewalk repairs to address vertical height displacements, where uneven surfaces can create barriers and tripping hazards. We are also working with Parks and Recreation to replace the playground at Meade Park with an accessible playground that meets Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

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

- The [landscaping electrification rebate program](#) has launched, providing incentives for City residents and lawn care firms to transition to electric mowers, leaf blowers, and string trimmers.
- The City initiated an LED lighting upgrade project in September that will save energy and improve lighting and occupant experience at five schools. The project will include lighting replacements and occupancy sensor/dimmer control upgrades at CATEC, Sunrise Elementary, Summit Elementary, Tall Oaks Elementary, and Trailblazer Elementary. Tall Oaks is nearing completion and CATEC is set to start in mid-October. The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.
- OS tabled at Charlottesville Pride on September 26.
- OS staff attended the Rivanna River Basin Commission's annual conference on September 30.
- The OS Director attended the 2026 Virginia Clean Energy Summit on October 7 and 8.
- The OS Director participated in the UVA Solar Ecologies Roundtable on October 13.
- OS staff presented the [draft Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan](#) to the Planning Commission on October 13 and the Land Use and Environmental Planning Committee on October 16. Visit [Connect Charlottesville](#) to learn more about the Plan.
- Supported presentations of the Urban Forest Management Plan to the Tree Commission on September 1, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee on October 12, and a staff/community partners open house on October 15.

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

- During their regular meeting on September 17, Human Rights Commissioners heard research reports from Human Rights Interns Kattalin Bennett and Shounak Reza. Kattalin's research centered on the impact of luxury student housing development on housing affordability and accessibility in Charlottesville. Shounak researched the availability and access to mental health services in Charlottesville. Both interns are excited to continue their research beyond the internship and will likely return to future Commission meetings with updates.
- The Office of Human Rights had two staffing changes this month. Haadiya Ahmed began serving as the Human Rights Policy & Impact Analyst on September 28 and Chyelle Chatman stepped down from her role as Human Rights Investigator. While we engage in the hiring process for a new Investigator, the Office of Human Rights will temporarily halt the intake of new complaints.
- The Office of Human Rights currently has 26 open discrimination complaint cases: seven are in the process of alternative dispute resolution, nine are under investigation, nine are under review for determination after investigation, and one was reopened for further investigation following a public hearing by the Commission on August 27.

Public Works – Director Steven Hicks (he/him)

- Angus Road/Route 29 Crosswalk Improvements:
 - Public Works continues pedestrian safety improvements at the Angus Road/Route 29 intersection. Installation of the new crosswalk and pedestrian signals is expected to be completed by the end of October. These improvements will enhance pedestrian visibility, accessibility, and safety.
- Snow Mobility Operations:
 - Public Works, in coordination with other City departments, will conduct a Snow Mobility Operations dry run on October 21-22. The exercise will allow operators, supervisors, and street monitors to become familiar with assigned routes, responsibilities, and operational expectations. A citywide meeting is scheduled for October 28 to review this year's winter operations plan, staffing, equipment readiness, and interdepartmental coordination.
- Leaf Collection Program:
 - The City's annual leaf collection program begins October 26, with each neighborhood scheduled for three collection cycles throughout the season. Residents may place loose, unbagged leaves along the curb without obstructing streets or sidewalks. Saturday drop-off service will also be available at 1505 Avon Street Extended. Residents can receive collection

reminders by texting their address to 434-771-0251. Collected leaves will be composted locally, supporting the City's sustainability efforts.