

Minutes
EPC MONTHLY MEETING
May 2, 2026
2900 Business Center Drive Conference Room
8:00am – 3:00pm

Attendance

EPC Members (12)	Status	Staff/Presenters
Dan Beattie, Vice-Chair	P	Melissa Atwood, TES
Eldon Boes	P	Ryan Freed, Office of Climate Action
Jennifer Debias	P	Blair St. Ledger-Olson, VA League of Conservation Voters
Jordon Eccles	P	Laura Thomas, City of Richmond
Charlie Garlow	E	
David Hole	P	City Council
Perrin Krisko	P	Councilman Canek Aguirre
Philip Mobilia, Secretary	P	Vice Mayor Sarah Bagley
Marta Schantz, Chair	P	Councilman John Chapman
Rick Schneider	P	Councilman Abdel Elnoubi
Julia Slayden	P	Incoming Councilwoman Sandy Marks
Olu Smoak	P	
Yanique Revers	E	Guests
		Ray Juneja, Grassroots Alexandria
		Scott Barstow, Build our Future
		Holly Carr, Resident
		Kathie Hoekstra, Sustain ALX non-profit

P: Present; **PR:** Present Remotely; **A:** Absent - Unexcused; **E:** Absent – Excused; **N:** Not a Member

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Marta Schantz called the meeting to order and provided an overview of topics to be covered. Introductions were completed for all attendees.

2. Office of Climate Action Plans for FY27

Ryan Freed, Climate Action Officer, provided a presentation on the Office of Climate Action (OCA) plans for FY27. Mr. Freed provided updates on the following:

- Recognized the successful passing of the Green Building Plan (the first of its kind) with lower energy use intensity (EUI) and increased renewable energy requirements. Discussed the decreasing trend of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions seen in the most recent GHG inventory generated by Metropolitan Washington Council of Government. Recognized the record number of DASH rides and CaBi use.

- Highlighted the increase in OCA staff's community engagement from 2025 to 2026 and We Are Eco-City Alexandria efforts, including a new video series showcasing the different City departments and the many facets of Alexandria.
- Built on existing programs, such as the EV Charging Blitz and Eco-City Homes & Businesses; and identifying new FY27 programs, including Stay Cool ALX, Green Building Design Forums, and bike promotions.
- Programs focus on efficient buildings, including multifamily buildings and city facilities, such as the City Hall reconstruction that was approved to include a Geothermal Heat Pump.
- Shared examples of OCA program efforts to scale decarbonization for the City, such as solar power purchase agreement, CCA feasibility assessment, and State Corporation Commission testifying
- EPC can help by identifying policy initiatives, celebrating departmental collaboration, and finding community champions.

3. Sustainability Initiatives in the City of Richmond

Laura Thomas, Director of Sustainability, provided information on the City of Richmond's structure and sustainability initiatives. Discussion topics covered:

- The City of Richmond's Sustainability office was established 3 years ago. It has ~12 staff members, some funded by grants, one funded by the plastic bag tax, and one budget grant writer in the Budget office.
- The City of Richmond is known for its work in Environmental Justice. Initiatives focus on climate change impacts to their diverse communities. Including EV Policy, community benefit agreements, pollinator gardens, and resource recovery programs.
- Agency budget and organizational structure of City of Richmond staff and elected officials; energy burden in Richmond is one of the highest in the south; and GHG inventory shows buildings, followed by transportation, are the most challenging sectors for their city.
- Launched a Power BI dashboard data tracker, "TRAC-E" Tracking Realtime Action for Climate Equity (<https://rva.gov/sustainability/trac-e>)
- City of Richmond has a Joint Energy Team (JET) with ~100 staff members to break down departmental silos, fast-track sustainability initiatives, and advance the city's clean energy goals by working across five (5) collaborative committees.
- Sustainability projects: renewable energy projects including onsite solar and an inter-jurisdictional Virtual Power Purchase Agreement (VPPA), municipal energy efficiency with workforce development, a Clean Energy Capital revolving fund, the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) ribbon cutting, and related efforts.
- Grant programs, such as (1) Cool the City initiative, which is a community-based partnership that includes tree planting, workforce development in agroforestry, working with faith-based communities, and an engagement activity to show what individuals/residents would fund in a budget (i.e., what are their priorities); and (2)

Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant that supports equity centered neighborhood-based planning and climate resilience projects within the City of Richmond.

- Shared Responsibility framework. Climate Change is a large problem that needs everyone's effort to overcome. The framework includes regular evaluations, transparency, culture of improvement, institutionalizing sustainability in City Government, and trusting relationships.
- Richmond's EPC equivalent is the Sustainability & Resilience Commission (SRC), which generally has over 30 community members attending the meetings.

EPC questions:

- Grant funding progress with current federal administration. Ms. Thomas noted that there were funds available that may not come to fruition. It's important to expand thinking to include partnerships with private companies and other organizations.
- Goat project. A few teams of goats are brought around the City of Richmond parks to remove invasive species.
- Interest in programs that were initiated but did not continue, struggles with the program and how they are revamping programs to keep moving it forward.

4. VA League of Conservation Voters

Blair St. Ledger-Olson, Director of Advocacy & Campaigns, provided an overview of General Assembly, including chamber breakdowns, key dynamics between stakeholders, the legislative session, veto session, budget and the Governor's final actions.

- Even years are long sessions (60 days) or budget sessions. Overview of the process from introduction of bills through reconvene session or veto session.
- Overview of House of Delegates breakdown & Senate breakdown. House had changes in Republican leadership. No other changes in leadership.
- Key dynamics. New Governor, Lt Governor, and Attorney General. Redistricting was a significant part of the session that needed to be addressed at the beginning of session. Dynamics in the middle of session, included appointments of special elections, new administration struggling to engage, and larger democratic caucus. Over 1,200 bills passed.
- VA League of Conservation Voters Tracked ~500 bills. Took positions on over 200 bills (192 supported, 22 opposed). More total bills were tracked than in previous years. About half of the bill positions were energy and climate; three-fourths of the budget positions were energy, climate, and water.
- Governor Spanberger took action on over 1,100 bills, including amendments to 180 bills and 8 vetoes.
- One hundred and twenty environmental bills were passed, all of which VA League of Conservation Voters supported. Seventy-two supported bills and 22 opposed bills were defeated.

- Water, land use & transportation, and energy bills passed. Including PFAS package on industrial & biosolid sources bills, bills that advance EV charging infrastructure, invasive plant bills, and the Affordable Energy Package. Foam ban remains intact and Virginia is on its way back into RGGL.
- Additional bill spotlights included balcony solar, battery storage, rooftop solar permitting, and demand flex utility programs.
- Senator Elizabeth Bennett Parker's building code bill did not move forward, as some stakeholders expressed concerns that building codes are not addressed in legislative action.
- Budget is still to be determined but must be approved no later than June 30th.
- Q&A discussed the power balance of Dominion vs Data Centers and how that is affecting legislation in Richmond.

5. Open Discussion with City Council

Vice Mayor Sarah Bagley, Councilman John Chapman, Councilman Abdel Elnoubi, Councilman Canak Aguirre, and incoming Councilwoman Sandy Marks attended the EPC retreat and shared thoughts on their environmental priorities and how the EPC can support these initiatives. Discussion topics included:

Environmental aspects, topics or priorities, which included:

- (1) Stormwater, the effects of flooding on the City, and the use of the stormwater utility fee for building infrastructure. How infrastructure funds are spread across the City to address the most significant problems in various areas of the City.
- (2) Community Choice Aggregations (CCAs). What it would take to get there, realistic timeline, and benefits of continuing to pursue CCAs if Dominion can/will meet requirements.
- (3) DASH electrification. DASH was looking for direction on whether to slow the transition to 100% electric buses. Federal Low or No Emission Bus grants are no longer available to support the transition. As technology improves, looking for enroute charging of buses. Enhancing bus routes to Chirilagua area.
- (4) Apartment Complexes and ARHA housing. How we can increase equity, help those of low income, and protect the environment. Working with ARHA to achieve environmental goals and enhance community partnerships so they can be the most reliable for their residents.

Other discussion topics include general support for EPC to continue providing monthly public comment at Public Hearings; importance of bike buses and discussion around improving alternate transportation options to ensure safe biking of individuals as well as large groups of bikers; and collaboration or partnerships with schools.

Strong discussion regarding support for change in the West End, including Environmental Justice topics of heat concerns, biking infrastructure, and public transportation.

6. Inward Looking EPC Discussion

Chair Schantz reviewed the EPC purpose, bylaws, and meeting rules, including the Sunshine rule and Roberts Rules of Order, as well as the EPC's 4 Priority areas identified for FY2026, which were decarbonize buildings, decarbonize transportation, environmental justice, and resilience & adaptations. Chair Schantz cross-referenced the list of actions identified during the retreat in 2026, noting where the EPC has addressed actions and a few that were not covered this year.

EPC identified the following actions for FY27:

- Engage directly with Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) school board and continue engagement with ARHA.
- Revitalize efforts to highlight environmental efforts in the press. This ties into Mr. Freed's ask for them to be a champion of environmental efforts and help spread the word.
- Have presentations that are shorter and allow more time for engagement with EPC members.
- EPC was not able to allot time for a Resource Recovery presentation this year and will add that to the calendar for fall FY27.

EPC will continue to provide a legislative priority letter and budget letter in the fall, hit on the EPC's four priorities throughout the year, and provide monthly public comments at City Council's Public Hearings. Secretary Phil Mobilia noted that during elections in June, the EPC will need a new Secretary to take over this role.

FY2026 Attendance

Member	Sept 15, 2025	Oct 20, 2025	Nov 17, 2025	Dec 15, 2025	Jan 26, 2026	Feb 23, 2026	Mar 19, 2026	Apr 20, 2026	May 2, 2026 (Retreat)	May 18, 2026	Jun 15, 2026	TOTALS
Dan Beattie	PR	P	P	P	Cancelled	P	PR	P	P			100%
Eldon Boes	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	PR	PR	P	P			100%
Benjamin Cuddy	E	E	N	N	Cancelled	N	N	N	N			100%
Jennifer Debias	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	PR	PR	E	P			100%
Jordon Eccles	E	E	N	N	Cancelled	P	PR	P	P			100%
Charlie Garlow	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	P	PR	PR	E			100%
Kathie Hoekstra	P	P	P	PR	Cancelled	E	N	N	N			100%
David Hole	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	P	E	P	P			100%
Perrin Krisko	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	P	E	P	P			100%
Philip Mobilia	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	PR	PR	P	P			100%
Marta Schantz	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	P	PR	P	P			100%
Rick Schneider	N	N	P	E	Cancelled	P	E	P	P			100%
Julia Slayden	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	P	E	P	P			100%
Yanique Revers	P	P	P	P	Cancelled	E	PR	P	E			

NOTE: January 26, 2026 meeting cancelled due to snowstorms and City closure.