

# COUNCIL SUMMARY



City of Richmond  
**RVA**green  
2050

---

# Climate Equity Action Plan 2030

---



*Equitable climate action for a  
healthy and resilient Richmond*

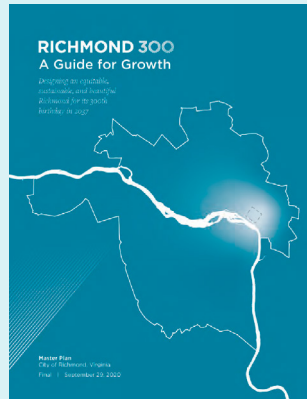


# Vision Alignment

## Council Resolutions

In December 2020, the Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth Master Plan was adopted, outlining a vision for a sustainable and resilient city with healthy air, clean water, and a flourishing ecosystem. The Master Plan update includes implementation of RVAgreen 2050 as a key piece to achieving various goals.

Mayor Stoney patroned and City Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 2020- R024 in June 2020 to “recognize the effects of global warming caused by human activity and establish a climate action goal...”



City Council unanimously patroned and adopted Resolution No. 2021- R049 in September 2021 to “declare the existence of a climate and ecological emergency that threatens the City of Richmond...”

RVAgreen 2050 intentionally aligns with numerous other City of Richmond initiatives including RVAH20, Vision Zero, and others.



## A Note from the Racial Equity & Environmental Justice Roundtable

We started our learning journey with the Office of Sustainability by exploring some basic questions: What is climate change? What is equity? What is race? How do these concepts intersect? We created a vision in which all Richmonders, regardless of their identity or neighborhood, thrive in a climate-resilient and climate-neutral community.

The Richmond Equity Agenda proposed by Mayor Stoney and adopted by City Council in the summer of 2021 provides a foundation for implementing the strategies and actions in this Pathway. It establishes the City’s definition of equity and underscores that racial equity in particular will improve the quality of life for all residents. It also specifically calls out implementation of the RVAgreen 2050 initiative as one of the priorities for achieving equity and justice in access to resources and opportunities.



Mayor Levar M. Stoney

# Community Voices

The Office of Sustainability knew from the outset that equitable and inclusive community engagement would be key to the RVAgreen 2050 process. During the summer 2020 community listening phase, we heard from residents that the voices of Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, and lower income residents are underrepresented in public processes for many reasons: time and capacity conflicts with traditional planning methods; flawed communication and language; and, lack of trust and burnout from people participating in past efforts that have seen limited results.

This Plan represents the culmination of input from hundreds of stakeholders over thousands of hours to ensure that the process and contents of the Plan incorporate diverse and representative voices.

**“I am very thankful for the city’s transparency throughout this process. For me, the Roundtable was an invaluable asset of planning.”**

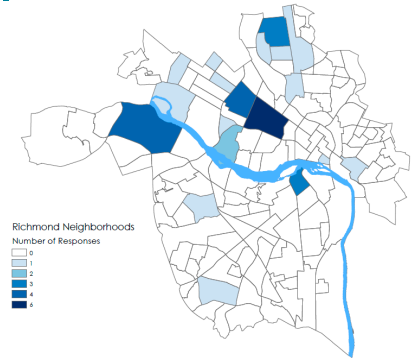
*- Monica,  
Roundtable member*



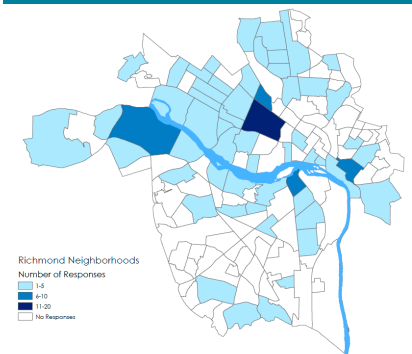
*Roundtable and Working Group members collaborated with the Science Museum of Virginia to host two walks in different neighborhoods across Richmond to collect and compare hyperlocalized air quality data and discuss participants’ experiences in these different spaces.*

Much of the RVAgreen 2050 planning process took place on two parallel tracks: some steps and tools were more typical of traditional city and climate planning processes, while others were specifically aimed at improving the traditional process in order to center equity.

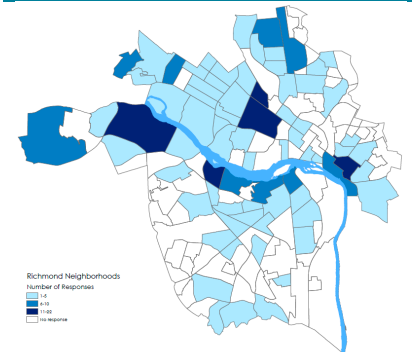
## Week 1 ▾



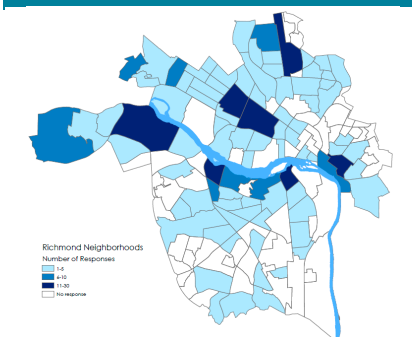
## Week 2 ▾



## Week 3 ▾



## Week 4 ▾



## April 2021 Community Engagement Results

# RVAgreen 2050 By the Numbers

1

## Vision

All Richmonders, regardless of their identity or neighborhood, thrive in a climate-resilient and climate-neutral community

2

## Main goals to achieve

45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, below 2008 levels, and net zero emissions by 2050

Prepare for, adapt, and improve the community's resilience to local climate impacts

5

## Pathways to get us there

-  Buildings and Energy
-  Community
-  Environment
-  Transportation and Mobility
-  Waste Reduction and Recovery

7

## Community priorities to honor

-  Racial Equity and Environmental Justice
-  Government Accountability
-  Community Wealth
-  Affordable Housing
-  Beautiful and Safe Neighborhoods
-  Health and Well-being
-  Equitable Engagement and Communications

49

## Prioritized strategies

Co-created by the Office of Sustainability, five technical Working Groups, and the Racial Equity & Environmental Justice Roundtable across all five Pathways to achieve our 2030 goals

12

## Outcomes the community desires

- Advanced green economy
- Cleaner and more efficient buildings
- Cleaner and more efficient transportation
- Climate-ready community
- Engaged and involved community
- Improved air quality
- Increased flood resilience
- Increased heat resilience
- Increased support for climate action and resilience
- Less landfill waste
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions
- More green space and trees

# Pathways & Objectives

## BUILDINGS AND ENERGY

**Objective 1:** Achieve climate neutrality and increase resilience in government buildings, infrastructure, and operations.

**Objective 2:** Maximize energy efficiency, performance and resilience in all existing buildings.

**Objective 3:** Ensure all Richmonders have equitable access to affordable and renewable clean energy.

**Objective 4:** Achieve climate neutrality and maximize resilience in all new buildings.

## COMMUNITY

**Objective 1:** Ensure that historically disinvested communities that are most affected by local climate impacts are centered and involved in the processes of developing, implementing, and evaluating solutions as a result of equitable communication and engagement strategies.

**Objective 2:** Increase the Richmond community's social resilience to climate change.

## ENVIRONMENT

**Objective 1:** Make sure all residents have the opportunity to engage with healthy natural resources, spaces, and biodiversity.

**Objective 2:** Reduce risks and impacts to the community and natural environment from extreme heat and drought.

**Objective 3:** Reduce risks and impacts to the community and natural environment from extreme precipitation and flooding.

**Objective 4:** Engage the natural environment to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

**Objective 1:** Achieve climate neutrality in municipal fleet operations, encourage alternative travel options, and increase resilience and stewardship of transportation infrastructure.

**Objective 2:** Create vibrant neighborhoods where all residents can easily ride transit, walk, or bike to meet daily needs in alignment with Richmond Connects.

**Objective 3:** Transition the community rapidly and equitably to clean-fuel vehicles and transit.

## WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

**Objective 1:** Lead by example and model zero waste strategies in all municipal operations.

**Objective 2:** Encourage community waste reduction by equitably prioritizing a circular economy.

**Objective 3:** Develop and implement a comprehensive and equitable citywide composting plan.

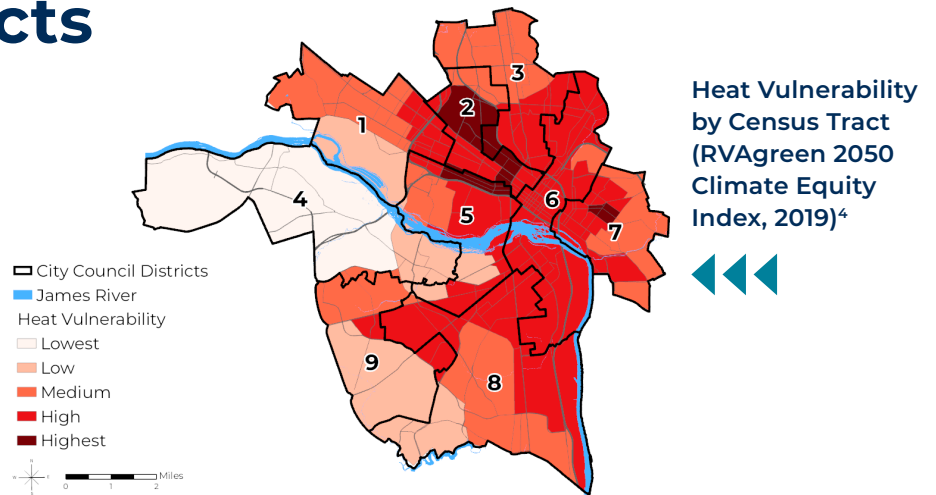
**Objective 4:** Ensure that policies and standards for waste generation and disposal reflect the community's priorities for an equitable, clean, and sustainable Richmond.

For the full list of prioritized strategies, visit [RVAgreen2050.com](https://www.rva.gov/green2050)

# Climate Impacts

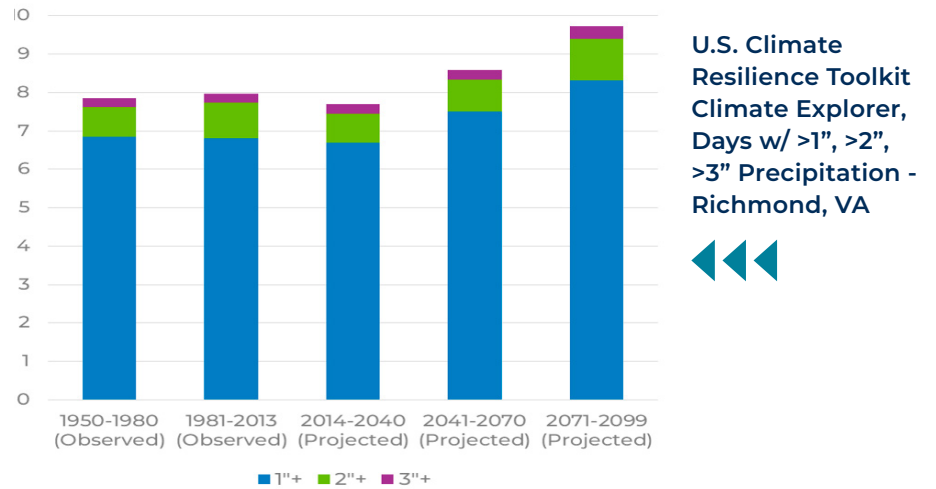
## Hotter

Richmond is already seeing the impacts of climate change when it comes to temperature. Richmond has experienced, and will continue to have, higher average temperatures, more dangerously hot days (above 95 degrees), and longer heat waves.



## Wetter

Annual precipitation and the number and intensity of heavy precipitation events are projected to continue increasing. During dry periods, naturally-occurring droughts will be more intense due to higher temperatures.



## Low-income populations and communities of color are more likely to...



live in areas with less greenspace and are more vulnerable to respiratory and heat related illnesses



lack access to energy efficient housing and often are disproportionately impacted by high energy bills



be impacted by extreme weather events as a result of climate change



live in neighborhoods that lack convenient access to transit, or safe walking and biking options



live in housing without air conditioning and are more vulnerable to heat related and respiratory illnesses and death



exposed to pollution and airborne allergens and are more vulnerable to asthma and other respiratory illnesses

## Disproportionate Impacts Faced by Communities at the Frontlines of Climate Change

# Equitable Climate Outcomes

The overarching goals of the RVAgreen 2050 process were created to equitably reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The Office of Sustainability used community feedback to develop a set of 12 Outcomes for the Plan. Each Outcome represents an aspect of a future Richmond that the community wants to see.

✓ <b>Advanced green economy</b>	✓ <b>More green space and trees</b>
✓ <b>Climate-ready community</b>	✓ <b>Increased support for climate action and resilience</b>
✓ <b>Increased flood resilience</b>	✓ <b>Improved air quality</b>
✓ <b>Less landfill waste</b>	✓ <b>Cleaner and more efficient transportation</b>
✓ <b>Cleaner and more efficient buildings</b>	✓ <b>Lower greenhouse gas emissions</b>
✓ <b>Engaged and involved community</b>	✓ <b>Increased heat resilience</b>

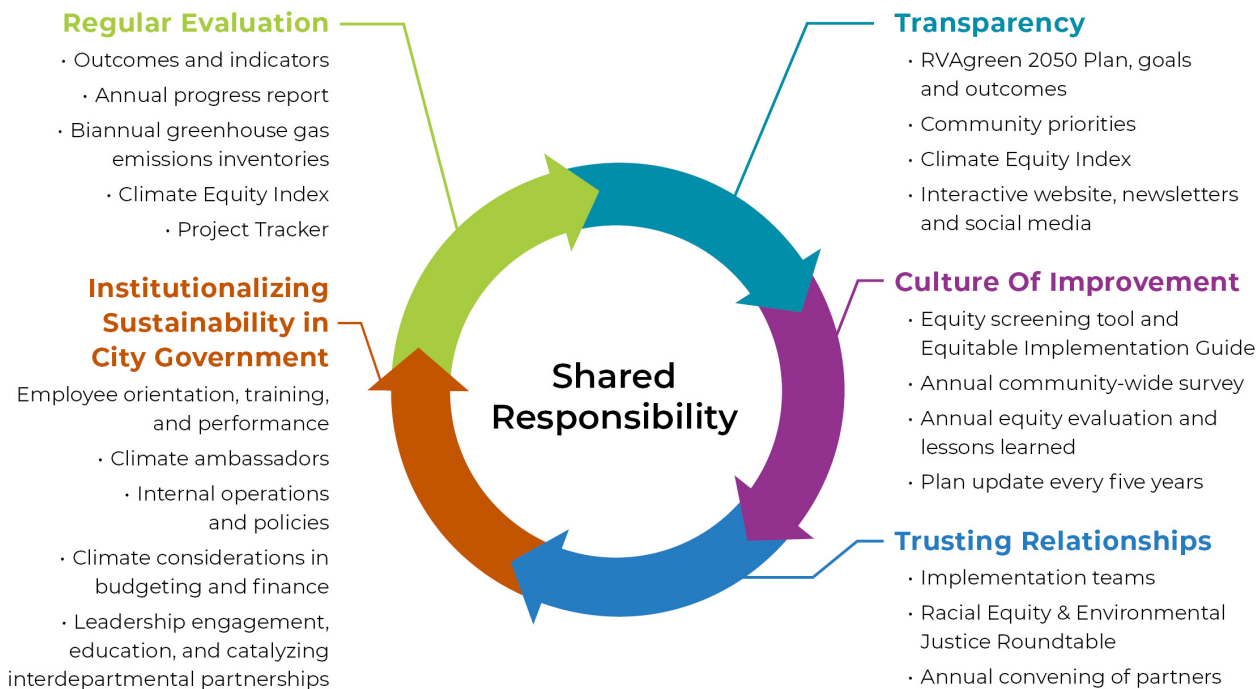
RVAgreen 2050 Cross-Cutting Outcomes

## Acting on climate has many co-benefits...

<p><b>22% Reduction in energy burden growth through 2050</b></p> <p>This will improve quality of life for frontline communities in Richmond and reduce inequitable energy costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 2018 median energy burden level: 8.4%</li> <li>» A household is considered "high burden" if their energy burden exceeds 6% of their annual income.</li> </ul>
<p><b>\$231M Public health savings through 2050</b></p> <p>Lower emissions also means fewer diseases and conditions caused by exposure to pollution like asthma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» CO<sub>2</sub> reductions exceed 6 million metric tons through 2050</li> </ul>
<p><b>10,900 New jobs created through 2050 (net)</b></p> <p>The transition to a carbon-free economy will open up twice as many job opportunities as are lost.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Median annual household incomes will increase by \$226 through 2050</li> <li>» Job gains are strongest in Construction and Environmental Management</li> </ul>
<p><b>\$3.6B Total net benefits (benefits minus costs)</b></p> <p>Aggressive pursuit of decarbonization efforts are cost-effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Benefit/Cost Ratio: 2.2</li> <li>» Cumulative benefits: \$6.6B</li> <li>» Cumulative costs: \$3B</li> </ul>

Max Case Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Co-Benefits, Greenlink Analytics

A critical concern for RVAgreen 2050 stakeholders throughout the planning process was ensuring the Action Plan does not end up sitting on a shelf. Equitable implementation of the Plan is just as important as the Plan itself.



**Shared Accountability Graphic**

### Stay Engaged!

Visit the [RVAgreen 2050 website](https://www.rva.gov/rv-green-2050), sign up for the email newsletter, follow us on social media, and stay tuned to updates on RVAgreen 2050 such as progress reports, meetings, and opportunities to provide input and ideas. Share your thoughts directly with the Office of Sustainability at [rvagreen@rva.gov](mailto:rvagreen@rva.gov).

### Acknowledgement

The development of this plan is a collaborative community effort that would not be possible without the significant contributions of our project team members to whom the City of Richmond and Office of Sustainability staff are profoundly grateful.

**[RVAgreen2050.com](https://www.rva.gov/rv-green-2050)**