



Climate Action and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Efforts

COMMUNITY REPORT



February 2025



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Dear Supporters and Friends,

The level of public involvement in the region's Climate Action Plan has been amazing. We are so grateful for the participation of more than a thousand residents throughout the region.

Over the past year, the PlanRVA team has worked with community members and organizations, as well as local government officials and business leaders, to prioritize specific steps that our region can take to reduce emissions and improve the quality of life for those most impacted by pollutants.

The focus of the Climate Action Plan is the significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across six sectors: **transportation, waste, energy, industry, building, and agriculture/land use**. By providing local governments with current data for each of these six sectors, the plan positions our localities to take action at a community level to reach a “net-zero” regional economy by 2050 where the amount of greenhouse gases released is equal to the amount removed.

Informed by the perspective of more than 1,750 survey respondents and the ideas of several hundred focus group participants, this community feedback report reflects the priorities and concerns of residents eager to work together toward meaningful climate action in the Richmond region.



Sincerely,

Nicole Keller

Nicole Keller
Resilience Planner, PlanRVA

Community Engagement

Two goals drove the engagement efforts behind the plan: Ensure the community's voice and priorities were at the center of the plan and hear from those who are most impacted by climate change and air pollution, particularly residents in the region's underserved communities.

Several rounds of in-person and virtual focus groups were conducted, along with two community surveys. PlanRVA and its partners collaborated with local stakeholders and community organizations to target a broad and diverse group of residents.



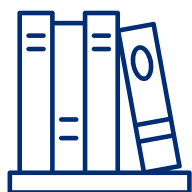
238
Community Organizations Engaged



1,760
Total Survey Responses



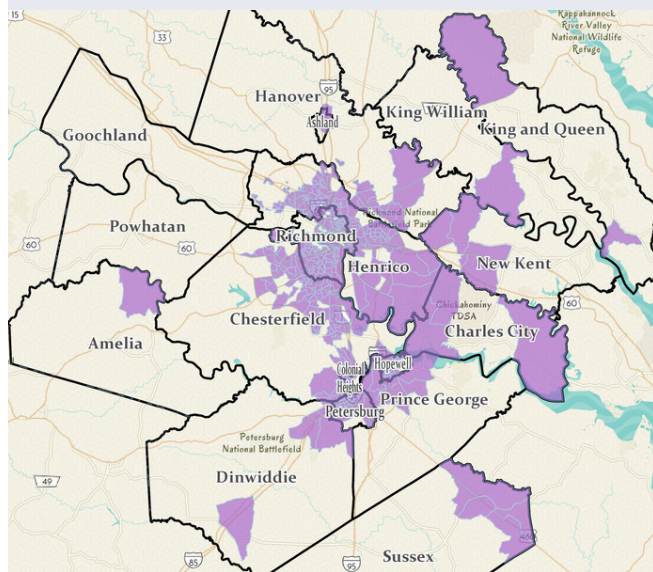
21
Community Focus Groups



39
Interviews at Public Libraries

Engagement focus areas in the Richmond region

The Climate Action Plan covers the Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area (shown with a black outline). The purple areas highlight census block groups identified by the EPA's EJSCREEN tool for focus due to high pollution exposure or a disproportionate number of low-income homes. We focused our engagement efforts in many of these areas.



Your Priorities and Concerns



We asked the public to review ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in each sector. Based on the survey feedback and the input of focus groups, we clarified key priorities and areas of opportunity.



A COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Residents discussed how pollution is worse in some neighborhoods and how those areas also have the fewest resources. They want to see investments in cleaner air, accessible transportation, and environmental improvements in areas with the worst pollution.



INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

Problems should be tackled cohesively, not in isolation. People believe that coordinated solutions across sectors and between localities will have a bigger impact on reducing emissions and improving communities.



ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

People want genuine commitments from local government and industry. They want consistent updates on climate actions, and they want to stay engaged. They are looking for measurable solutions that keep our communities moving toward emissions reduction targets.



INCENTIVES

It should be easier for individuals and businesses to do the right thing. There were suggestions to create incentives to encourage a faster and broader transition to renewable energy and to build more sustainably. Identifying and implementing solutions that help more people and organizations take concrete steps to reduce emissions would be useful.



INFORMATION AND ACCESS

Many residents want better access to information on environmental programs, services, and benefits going forward. They desired to know more about programs that can benefit them, such as home energy-efficiency improvements, increased transportation options, and access to composting and recycling.



GREEN JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Residents believe that climate action can strengthen the local economy by creating blue-collar jobs, particularly in renewable energy and energy efficiency (often referred to as “green jobs”). There is a desire to see climate initiatives that support sustainable economic growth and that provide training and employment opportunities for residents.

Community Ideas

Explore the public's top priorities in each sector below, highlighted with quotes from community members.

BUILDINGS

Improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions in residential and commercial buildings.

"Older buildings are in desperate need of retrofitting if we're serious about emissions reductions."

"Energy-efficient buildings are a no-brainer. It reduces costs and helps the environment."



TRANSPORTATION

Expand and electrify public transportation, reduce vehicle emissions, and improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

"We need a public transportation system that people can actually rely on, and it needs to be green."

"Electrifying buses would cut emissions and provide cleaner air in our communities."



WASTE

Expand recycling, composting, and waste diversion programs to reduce landfill emissions.

"Everyone can contribute to waste reduction. It should be a major part of our climate action plan."

"More access to recycling and composting could make a huge difference in reducing emissions."



Community Ideas



ENERGY

Transition to renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and geothermal to reduce the region's reliance on fossil fuels.

"Renewable energy isn't just the future—it's something we need to implement now."

"The Richmond region has so much potential for solar energy; we should be leading this effort."



INDUSTRY

Implement cleaner technologies and incentivize industries to reduce emissions through carbon capture and other methods.

"If we don't tackle industrial emissions, any progress we make elsewhere won't be enough."

"It's time for local industries to take responsibility for their emissions."



AGRICULTURE & LAND USE

Promote sustainable agriculture practices and protect green spaces to reduce emissions from land use.

"Sustainable farming needs more support if we're going to reduce emissions from agriculture."

"Preserving green spaces is critical, not just for emissions reductions, but for the well-being of the community."



What's Next and Thank You



PlanRVA and its partners are committed to listening to the voices of our community, and we are incorporating the feedback we received into every step of the Climate Action Plan. The themes explored in this Community Feedback Report are already informing what projects we tackle first, and what types of grants we seek for project implementation.

Visit www.ClimateResilientRVA.org to follow the development of the Climate Action Plan, which will be published in December 2025. For more community data, see the full report at www.ClimateResilientRVA.org/documents.



Thank you for engaging with us! We're proud that PlanRVA and the Richmond region were recognized nationally as examples of participatory climate planning excellence. Scan the QR code to learn more.



SOUTHERN
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PROJECT



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