

Harrison Roday responses:

1. How would you work to implement the proposals outlined in RVAGreen2050 and the Climate Equity Action Plan 2030? Would you take a different approach to climate planning, or continue the RVAGreen2050 program?

The actions that we take today to reduce our carbon emissions and improve climate resiliency will have a powerful impact on the City and the wellbeing of Richmonders for years to come. That is why it is so important that we take meaningful steps to advance Richmond's sustainability efforts and achieve the goals of RVAgreen 2050 and the Climate Equity Action Plan. Right now, the City is actively taking positive steps to execute this plan, such as investing in electrifying its vehicle fleet, investing in multimodal transportation infrastructure and public transportation, and delivering grants through the Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program. That said, there is much more to be done to address the challenges of climate change and resiliency.

As mayor, I will be keenly focused on investing in energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy sources, and electrification efforts, including upgrading facilities and end-of-life equipment that are powered by fossil fuels to cleaner, renewable and energy-efficient alternatives. We must also further improve and expand access to public transit and multimodal transportation infrastructure, including continuing to electrify the City's vehicle fleet, increasing the number of routes and frequency of public transportation, and improving our pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to decrease reliance on gas-powered vehicles.

Additionally, we must prioritize sustainability and green space in urban planning efforts as well as work with community partners to strengthen climate resiliency in all neighborhoods across the City.

At the end of the day, implementing these proposals and tackling the pressing climate challenges facing our city will require serious investments. As mayor, I will work with City Council as well as community organizations and nonprofits to ensure that we are investing in projects that provide communities with what they need to improve their climate resiliency and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across Richmond.

2. What proposals would you make to support the Office of Sustainability, and how would you encourage other city departments to adopt sustainable, carbon-neutral and environmentally beneficial practices?

I am committed to investing in the Office of Sustainability to ensure that they have the staff and the resources necessary to implement sustainability and climate resilience projects within our community. In particular, I am a strong proponent for ensuring that equity-centered funding initiatives, such as the Neighborhood Climate Resilience Grant Program, receive continued funding and become a permanent, reliable source of support for organizations working on the ground to improve resiliency. We need to increase our investments in these types of initiatives that we know have meaningful impacts throughout the city and ensure that the Office of Sustainability has the resources needed to be successful in implementing RVAgreen 2050.

Additionally, in order to work towards being a climate-neutral community, city departments will have to change and adapt to new practices and infrastructure. Across city government, we have to invest in energy efficiency and electrification upgrades in our facilities, replace end-of-life equipment powered by fossil fuels with cleaner alternatives, and continue to electrify our vehicle fleet. These are concrete actions that we can take to enhance sustainability across city departments and ones which, as mayor, I will be committed to investing in.

3. How would you manage the competing needs of DPU gas system customers and city carbon emissions reductions? Would you support a study on the future of the system and ways to move away from natural gas?

In order to address the health and environmental risks that methane poses, we must find a way to transition away from Richmond Gas Works and towards greater electrification. However, the future of Richmond Gas Works and how the city should approach this utility is a complex one with a series of challenges that we will need to approach thoughtfully. We can't effectively transition away from methane usage without making sure there is a long-term plan in place to responsibly phase it out while also addressing the costs and debt obligation that Richmond Gas Works needs to cover.

Given the nature of the utility and who it services, these are not decisions we can make alone. As an aspect of developing a strategic plan to responsibly wind down the utility

over time, we need to come to an agreement with neighboring jurisdictions to establish a partnership focused on developing a plan for electrification. We must also ensure we are honoring collective bargaining agreements and protecting the jobs of DPU employees.

Within all of these discussions is the impact on people themselves, particularly low and median income households. In developing this long term strategy, we must address the financial impact the energy transition would have on these Richmonders and implement policies to support households. Specifically, the City should help subsidize the costs of low- and median-income households transitioning to clean and renewable energy sources or installing energy efficiency upgrades to their homes.

A study on the future of the system and how to best move away from natural gas is a necessary first step and one that I fully support to answer these complex questions.

4. The city recently restarted its Urban Forestry Commission and formed a Public Utilities and Service Commission. How would you approach working with these oversight commissions?

The climate-related issues that we must tackle cannot be addressed in a vacuum. It will take commitment, collaboration, and accountability to ensure that the City makes meaningful progress to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address heat islands, and shift to clean and renewable energy sources. These oversight commissions play an important role in this process, whether it be developing recommendations and bringing new ideas to the table or asking the tough questions that others aren't. I look forward to collaborating and keeping open communication with these oversight commissions to ensure that my administration and City Council are fulfilling our obligations to address climate change and improve climate resiliency in every neighborhood.

5. How would you manage Richmond's heat islands and the growing threat of extreme heat in the city?

We have to increase the amount of green space throughout Richmond, prioritizing the neighborhoods and areas with disproportionately low tree cover. Greater tree cover and green spaces improve public health by improving air quality and moderating temperatures. We must also dedicate resources to maintaining existing and newly

expanded green spaces so that they can flourish and benefit Richmonders across the city. As Mayor, I will prioritize sustainability as well as the creation and protection of green spaces in our urban planning efforts, including through the use of tax incentives to encourage developers to preserve green space.

Additionally, we must continue to support and facilitate direct assistance to Richmonders facing the threat of extreme heat. That includes assisting Richmonders with accessing resources such as cooling assistance services and cooling stations.

6. How would you prioritize addressing the causes and mitigating the effects of climate change in the context of all the other things city government has to do?

So much of the work that needs to be done to address the causes and mitigating the effects of climate change intersects or is intertwined with a range of other public policy priorities that the City must focus on to deliver for all Richmonders. This is true for the basic functions of city government, such as the delivery of core city services, as well as for the larger issues that we have to tackle as a city, including ensuring all Richmonders live in neighborhoods that are safe, healthy and thriving. Tackling the challenges posed by climate change and working to strengthen climate resiliency across Richmond will be an important lens through which my administration approaches the mission of delivering for Richmonders.

I am committed to taking meaningful steps to advance Richmond's sustainability efforts and reach the RVAgreen 2050 and the Climate Equity Action Plan 2030's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030. My administration will dedicate resources to further electrification efforts, work to phase out fossil fuel use in city government facilities and services, patch leaking Richmond Gas Works infrastructure, and increase the City and Richmonders' ability to access clean energy resources, such as expanding solar energy development.

