



Virginia Clean Cities
East Expansion Pilot -Final Report
2/10/2026

East Expansion Pilot

Virginia Clean Cities East Expansion Pilot -Final Report 2/10/2026

Expansion background:

For a three-year period beginning in 2023, Virginia Clean Cities (VCC) endeavored to expand operations to the eastern portion of the state. This decision came from geographic realities – VCC is headquartered at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. This puts VCC staff about 120 miles from downtown Richmond and about 230 miles from the Virginia Beach oceanfront. This expansion pilot was supported by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (AKA National Lab of the Rockies). Service periods to critical audiences would often be consumed by travel days. To better serve rural regions and two of the main metros in Virginia – Richmond and Hampton Roads – VCC hired full time expansion staff based in Richmond, VA. The territory's major metropolitan areas are Hampton Roads and Richmond. The area includes wide rural representation in counties. The area is highlighted in red below.

This is a diverse area with major metros and also very rural areas. The total population is approximately 3.2 million of Virginia's approximately 8 million representatives.



Expansion Zone

The Expansion Territory has two main poles – Richmond and Hampton Roads. Richmond has a population of approximately 1.3 million and Hampton Roads approximately 1.8. Hampton Roads also hosts one of the largest military installations in the world.

The territory also has major transportation infrastructure which determined a good portion of the expansion work. The Port of Virginia, which has facilities in both Hampton Roads and Richmond, I-95, and I-64 all run through the territory.

Tasks:

4.1 Maintain full time staff in the territory - Full time staff is CCED Graham Sheridan. Based in Richmond, VA successfully teleworking with main team in Harrisonburg. CCED Sheridan also visits Harrisonburg once per month for teambuilding.

4.2 Maintain capacity to host events in territory - CCED Sheridan has hosted many in person events and meetings working with stakeholder facilities and public spaces.

4.3. Ensure branch location is conducting a minimum level of mission-aligned activities informed by the active local branch advisory committee. Branch location is operating Clean Cities transportation energy activities on a full time with activities spread across the region and throughout the Commonwealth.

Mission aligned activities from the expansion:

- Clean Energy Career Day at Virginia State University 3/27/24
- 2 large Electric Vehicle Events at InCharge Energy
 - September 2024 and July 2025
- E Boat Days on Eastern Shore – September 14th and 15th, 2024
 - 65 rides across 2 days in electric boats
 - Working with stakeholders Electrified Marina and A&N Electric Cooperative, VCC hosted a “ride and drive” with all electric boats. This event was advertised on the radio and on flyers around the two marinas. 65 people, almost all first-time e-boat riders, took part.
- Norfolk Green Fleet Expo – March 7th, 2025
 - 60 attendees
 - Fleet managers from across Hampton Roads came for a day of vehicle demonstrations, panel discussions, and learning. Electricity, natural gas, and propane were represented on both panels and in demonstration vehicles.
- Frito-Lay Pepsi Site Tour – April 3rd, 2025
 - Stakeholder Atom Power and Frito-Lay Pepsi took VCC and
- Norfolk EV Ride and Drive with Charge Across Town – 9/20/25
 - 100 check-ins 80 drivers, 83 ride and drives
 - VCC secured a \$25,000.00 grant from Charge Across Town to boost expansion efforts in Hampton Roads. We hosted a large-scale ride and drive at Norfolk Premium Outlets. Attendees included local dealerships such as Rivian, Mercedes Benz, Volkswagen, GM, and Tesla. We also had tabling from community partners Sierra Club, Virginia Department of Energy, Dominion Energy, Go Green Electric Contractors, and others.
- 2 Hampton Roads Events with Atlantic Heavy Duty July 29th and 30th, 2025
 - Smaller but focused on fleet staff

- Public event tabling – Church Hill Spring Festival and Earth Day at the Science Museum of Virginia
 - Tabling at public events has been a goal of CCED Sheridan. Being such a fleet-focused group, it has been enjoyable to discuss the Clean Cities and Communities program with a wider more general audience.

Some event photos are located in Appendix A and posted to Virginia Clean Cities Flickr

4.4 Maintain an active local stakeholder advisory board or committee for the Southeastern VA branch location

The East Expansion Advisory Board meets quarterly. Virginia Clean Cities and CCED Sheridan intends to keep the Advisory Board in place even after the end of this grant. CCED Sheridan's goal when creating the advisory board was to balance the fuels and geography represented by the membership.

Advisory board membership:

- Kirstain McArdle, Propane Education Research Council
- Ed Cronin, Virginia Energy
- Megan Hale, City of Norfolk
- Dawn Olesky, City of Richmond
- Kris Amsel, A&N Electric Co-Op
- Kyle Allwine, Northern Neck Co-Op
 - Member Allwine has moved on to a role at a different firm, VCC has reached out to NN Co Op for when his position is filled.

CCED Sheridan has several goals for the advisory board as it steers the expansion activity. Through quarterly meetings he is hoping to learn of more funding opportunities and learn of more events to attend in different sections of the territory. A goal of the new year is to increase VCC visibility in different areas of the Commonwealth. The advisory board members will keep their eyes and ears open for visibility opportunities.

One main note for Advisory Board meetings, it has been of great use to hear an external perspective on the Clean Cities program and our activities. What the advisory board members enjoy about participating in VCC is not always what is expected. One mentioned, for example, the benefit she receives from interacting with different fuels and technologies in a non-sales setting. She said she, like a lot of fleet managers, is inundated with sales calls but rarely has the opportunity to actually explore new technologies and fuels in a deep way.

Serving on the Advisory Board has also deepened stakeholder relationships for VCC. The City of Richmond and Virginia Energy increased their work with VCC while serving on the advisory board. Richmond also rejoined as a stakeholder after a several year lapse.

4.5 Create a plan to pursue additional, sustainable, funding to support locally-determined priorities and activities

- Additional funds for projects in expansion territory achieved:
 - Event Sponsorships – Secured \$25,000.00 for a ride and drive in the expansion territory from Charge Across Town.
 - Secured \$250.00 for Electric Refuse Vehicle demonstration
 - Secured \$15,000.00 C2C cohort funding
 - Fundraised \$10,000.00 for the Hampton Roads Clean Fleet Expo
 - Raised additional \$20,000.00 for Rally in Richmond 2025 and 2026
 - Secured additional Virginia Energy Contracts to support CMAQ and Charging Smart programs
 - \$40,000.00 for CMAQ
 - \$100,000.00 for Charging Smart
 - Secured funding for multifamily charging outreach from Dominion Energy

Ensure branch stakeholders involved in strategic planning for branch and coalition-wide activities

Many of the high-profile members of VCC's board are based in the expansion territory.

- John Phillips - Phillips Energy – Gloucester
- Erik Pinzon – Electrified Marina - Virginia Beach
- Erin Puryear – Old Dominion Electric Co Op - Richmond
- Chelsea Jenkins Olivari – Virginia Tech - Newport News
- Robin Jones – VA Energy - Richmond
- Courtney Young - Dominion Energy - Richmond

Advice and Guidance

For those considering a clean cities expansion, the VCC east expansion has some learnings. First, *the distance for the expansion is a good range. Being only 2 hours from the headquarters has been a real asset.* It is far enough that the expansion is in a new market, but not so far that the headquarters is inaccessible.

Second, in VCC's case, the expansion territory allows *the expansion staff to cover many meetings and events* for the headquarters staff. Freeing up time and funding for Director Harned by saving him many trips to Richmond has created a multiplier effect on the expansion resources.

Next, *people want to hear from Clean Cities.* We have grown our events and our lists in the expansion territory because leaders across the expansion territory want the services and want the learning that the Clean Cities program provides.

To build on this, *fleets and communities often seek technology novelty. Our e-boat expo and our electric refuse truck expos had strong uptake because we had new technology people had not seen before.* That created a hook that drew people in. Once a relationship was established, then we could continue to deepen and grow the relationship.

VCC's expansion also attempted to engage a large geographic area with diverse needs. In planning events and building the advisory board, we wanted representation from across the area and across industries. The expansion events on the Eastern Shore were the first VCC events on the Eastern Shore in many years. Also, our Hampton Roads fleet expo was advanced by our advisory board who believed that Hampton Roads needed additional clean cities programming.

Lastly, the expansion project needs to be both rigid on outcomes and flexible on outputs. Some of our great successes came when we set strong KPIs and followed through. Also, some of our great successes came when we saw opportunities and pivoted to take advantage of them. For example, when Atlantic Heavy Duty gave us the opportunity to host their events with an electric refuse truck, that sparked 3 successful events. However, being the expansion person far from headquarters requires strong self-motivation every day.

Appendix A Photos



Stakeholder Laura Thomas from the City of Richmond speaks at the Rally in April 2025



The group touring the 60 fleet electric vehicle chargers at the Frito Lay facility in Richmond



Hosting a ribbon cutting for a new fleet-public propane Autogas fueling station at the Richmond airport.



With a Harbinger electric powered step van at the Hampton Roads Green Fleet Expo



InCharge Electric Fleet and Charging Open House in Richmond



Electric powered Boat (E-boat) Expo with Graham Sheridan and family