



November 18, 2008

**TO: Virginia Beach Planning Commission** via  
Tom Pauls, Virginia Beach Dept. of Planning

Dear Commission members:

As you move through the review and revisions to the Virginia Beach Comprehensive Plan, we ask that you consider a number of concepts and elements that we believe will enhance and strengthen the planning process. Those recommendations are enumerated below for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen R. Davis  
President

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### **Recommendations for Comprehensive Plan Update November 18, 2008**

#### **Overarching considerations:**

- **Connect areas** - The Virginia Beach Comprehensive plan should create a City in which we have places that promote art, creativity, learning, interaction, and fun. This can be achieved by paying attention to connections to working landscapes, connections to open space, and connections between neighborhoods and places of work.
- **Capitalize on City's natural assets** - Green space, parks, tree cover and visual access to our other natural resources, namely our rivers, bays and the ocean, are important in order to take advantage of the natural beauty inherent in Virginia Beach. The Comprehensive Plan should encourage restoration of tree cover, preservation or creation of additional green spaces, connections between green spaces and visual access to areas of scenic beauty such as our marshlands and ocean.
- **Regional overlay** - The Comprehensive Plan should focus on providing for facilities and opportunities not otherwise available elsewhere in the region. Thought should be given to future sports venues for major athletic teams, transportation to serve those, and regional economic

development. The Plan should also include a comprehensive regional plan addressing the visual and performing arts.

**Specific areas of consideration:**

- **Water quality** - The entire Comprehensive Plan should be overlaid with the recognition of the importance of water quality including standards for retrofitting all the existing storm drainage and requirements for effective storm drainage going forward in all new projects.
- **Recognition of waterways** - The waterways throughout our city are environmental assets that are also very beneficial for recreation, sports, and other quality of life experiences. They are beneficial as 'open spaces' that separate, in some cases, by hundreds of feet the neighborhoods and developments throughout the city. There is a concern in calling them 'open space' as it is currently defined in the zoning ordinances, but these unique areas need to be identified along with the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean as real quality of life assets to our communities.
- **Green Space requirements** - Housing, subdivisions and individual lots, when approved for zoning, special uses or variances or the like, should include requirements for green space.
- **Academic Research Centers** - The future of the region will be tremendously dependent upon new business creation, which is often the outgrowth of successful academic research centers. Attention should be given to ways to encourage and promote such regional centers.
- **Video Art Walk** - Within the 19<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, the Plan should encourage a video art walk.
- **Transportation considerations:**
  - **I-264 corridor** - The I-264 Corridor must be transitioned from a suburban to urban corridor within the next 5 years. Advances at Town Center serve as the anchor for the Witchduck, Town Center and Rosemont areas. Moving north and south of I-264, the City should first address the Cleveland, Constitution Drive and Virginia Beach Boulevard segments. The next roadways to address would be Greenwich Road, Bonney Road, and Southern Blvd. to the Independence/Holland Road connections.
  - **I-264 connections and beyond** – I-264 is the transportation spine, particularly as it will relate to Light Rail transit along the NS Railroad line, however, other east/west corridors will continue to gain importance in the urban model. In the future, they will not just provide avenues to get from points north and south for access to I-264 but they will grow to be multimodal transportation and mixed use corridors in themselves with people living, working, shopping and recreating around them. The perpendicular roads to I-264 will continue to grow around intersections with I-264 and parallel roads. They will serve to enhance the quality of existing and new neighborhoods. As the city becomes more urban these roads will continue to provide the infrastructure of the local neighborhoods to access the urbanizing parts of the city while also remaining critical corridors to schools, recreational areas, medical facilities, waterways, the bay, the ocean, police, library, and other public quality of life facilities.
  - **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** - The intensity of development will grow in Strategic Growth Areas (SGA) and TOD (Transportation Oriented Development) Nodes throughout the city and especially where there are existing commercial developments such as: Kempsville, Redmill, Hilltop, Lesner Bridge, Dam Neck, Centerville, Haygood, Oceanfront, PA Commons, Lynnhaven, Pembroke/Town Center, etc. These locations must be encouraged to grow to meet the TOD Node concept of reduced transportation needs for the day to day activities with the tie in to 264 and 64 for sub-regional and regional/beyond trips. The term density needs to change to quality and effectiveness to

meet the Node objectives and to provide a variety of living choices including senior, work force, multi-family, etc.

- **Bicycle and Multiuse paths** - Bicycle or multiuse paths should be developed for casual, recreational and business purposes throughout the city. These paths should, for the most part, be outside of the road surface like sidewalks to ascertain safety. A separate system, specifically for professional riders, should be established along the major corridors for use during specific times on weekends, holidays, and for unique events. The corridor should provide at least 4 lanes, for example along Virginia Beach Boulevard, Independence Boulevard, Shore Drive, and the like, where there is adequate parking at commercial/business nodes for starting and ending rides. Other opportunities may exist in the rural areas, but the activity must be weighed against public safety considerations.
- **Underutilized land and buildings** - Throughout the city, in the Strategic Growth Areas and in the TOD Nodes, underutilized land and buildings must be leveraged through public investment in the form of financial support, development rights, or other mechanisms to lead to redevelop and their maturing to become parts of the future city build out.
- **Resort area** - The tourist industry is a critical economic engine for the city and the region. Redevelopment of the "strip" and the adjacent areas must remain a top priority. The continued development around the Pavilion, the Dome site, Rudee Inlet, 31st Street, 19th Street, 17th Street and the Aquarium must bring new excitement and variety to the Oceanfront. Year round living in the form of mixed use and high density development as in the other SGA's and TOD Nodes will grow this area to even more desirable and populous. With the growth in these locations, transportation alternatives will become more important. Laskin Road, Virginia Beach Boulevard (17th Street), Birdneck and Shore Drive must have increased capacities. Multimodal systems like Light Rail, bus service, bicycle, etc. must also be grown to play a significant role, especially in the Oceanfront.