

VIRGINIA BEACH
VISION

September 6, 2011

The Honorable William D. Sessoms
The Honorable City Council
City of Virginia Beach
2401 Courthouse Drive
Municipal Center
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Dear Mayor Sessoms, Vice Mayor Jones and City Council Members:

As City Council prepares its legislative agenda for the 2012 Session of the Virginia General Assembly and city priorities for the calendar year, I ask that you consider inclusion of several items Virginia Beach Vision believes of significance to the future of the city and the region.

- **Public investment** - City Council should continue to identify public-private ventures where studies show that joint participation will enhance the economic prosperity of the city, broaden its tax base, and serve the interests of the citizens at large.
- **Transportation** - Since the city has many local road building projects that remain unfunded, new or expanded revenue sources must be identified to address key points of congestion. The City Council must also take a leadership role in advocating the development of new sources of state revenue to finance wholly inadequate road, construction and maintenance funding by the Commonwealth.
- **Passenger rail** - The city and state are encouraged to move as quickly as feasible to integrate light rail into the region's transportation network, connecting it to higher speed passenger rail. City Council should expedite the completion of the Alternatives Study for the Virginia Beach extension of the Tide when actual usage date is available and encourage the General Assembly to provide a dedicated source of funding for the newly created rail operating fund.
- **Military affairs** - The complex relationships between federal agencies and facilities and local government has continued to evolve as new strategic military planning and budget pressures challenge the military and host communities to adapt. It is increasingly critical that city continue to offer aggressive and proactive leadership in identifying and negotiating issues that could impede the retention and expansion of military interests or the future growth of new and expanding industries in the city.
- **Public employee benefits** - The City Council should work with other Hampton Roads' localities, VML/VACCO, the General Assembly delegation and the business community to secure enabling legislation that will empower localities to provide defined contribution plans in lieu of defined benefits plans, will allow greater flexibility to modify retirement service and age qualifications, and to require local employee contributions to their benefit packages.

- **Parking strategy** - The success of the city's Strategic Growth Area Plans will depend in part on development of a parking strategy specific to the needs of each area. Private sector transit oriented development that is an integral part of several of the SGAs can only be realized if parking is addressed in a comprehensive way.
- **Intergovernmental relations** - Envision Virginia Beach 2040 was formed to address the realignment of governmental duties, services and responsibilities and to identify the legislative, fiscal and governmental actions needed to adapt to changed circumstances. City Council's close engagement in the process, review and ultimate implementation is encouraged.
- **BPOL Tax** - The BPOL Tax is a poorly structured tax that should be replaced with a more equitable tax on business. It also represents a significant source of revenue to local governments that cannot be forfeited. Virginia Beach Vision encourages the General Assembly to provide enabling legislation for a tax alternative that represents an equitable and sustainable replacement source of local revenue.

We thank you for your consideration of these requests. More detail and background on each position is provided in the attached document. Virginia Beach Vision stands ready to assist you in moving these issues forward during the coming year.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Barrett
President
Virginia Beach Vision, Inc.

Cc: James K. Spore, City Manager
Robert M. Matthias, Assistant to the City Manager