



April 28, 2022

The Honorable Robert M. "Bobby" Dyer
And Members of City Council
City of Virginia Beach

Dear Mayor Dyer and members of City Council:

On behalf of Virginia Beach Vision, Inc. and its 120 business and community leaders, we note several budget items within the proposed 2022-2023 Operating Budget that deserve your favorable consideration.

It is our understanding that the budget removes city funding support for the regional economic development initiative under the Hampton Roads Alliance. This comes at a time when the business community believes Virginia Beach ought to be expanding its role as a regional leader. Members of the private sector have stepped up in committing, over a 3-year period, more than \$1 million in financial support, showing their belief that a regional approach is critical to future success. Governor Youngkin has indicated that he will be dealing at the regional level and not with individual local efforts as it relates to state economic development support. We know that businesses seeking to relocate or expand first assess us as the Hampton Roads region. Virginia Beach is and must be a leader in assuring our region is viewed favorably and competitively. We encourage your continued funding of the economic development alliance at the previous \$522,000 level.

As demonstrated during the COVID pandemic, businesses now rely more heavily on remote workers with employees demanding work from home options. This trend makes it possible to live in a desirable community without the necessity of proximity to the workplace. To attract the talent of tomorrow, Virginia Beach must offer a culturally rich, vibrant, unique and desirable community. The region's investment in a broadband network will position Virginia Beach as a premier location. Virginia Beach's growth of a rich arts and cultural community is another important investment toward reaching that goal.

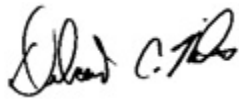
The 2022-23 proposed operating budget falls short of building and sustaining a vibrant arts and cultural community. As drafted, the budget does not provide funding for the ViBe District. With seed money from the city in its first three years, the ViBe has seen the addition of more than 50 new or expanded businesses. It has offered year-round entertainment, attracting thousands to its art and entertainment offerings, and increased the real estate values and related tax revenues by \$500,000 annually. To build on its early

success, the ViBe's request for a \$200,000 appropriation represents a wise investment for the city in the 2022-23 Operating Budget.

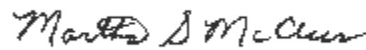
Similarly, the proposed budget does not continue the \$300,000 appropriation for the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) that was granted last fiscal year to promote the world class exhibition now being featured in the museum. Through such offerings, MOCA has gained national and international recognition for the museum and the city. Its ability to market such exhibitions is essential to continued success and to growing this unique asset that attracts both residents and visitors.

Virginia Beach Vision asks that City Council restore annual funding to the economic development alliance in the amount of \$522,000, provide \$300,000 to support the marketing of MOCA's Maya Lin and upcoming Kara Walker exhibitions, and establish a line-item allocation of \$200,000 to further the success of the ViBe District.

Respectfully submitted,



Delceno C. Miles
President



Martha S. McClees
Executive Director

Cc: Patrick Duhaney, City Manager
Taylor Adams, Deputy City Manager
Emily Labows, Director of Cultural Affairs