



August 6, 2025

Statement from Virginia Beach Vision on the City's Election System

At Virginia Beach Vision (VBV), our mission is to advance initiatives that strengthen the city's future prosperity and quality of life. As the community evaluates the future of its election system in the 2025 Referendum, VBV supports maintaining the 7-3-1 hybrid model outlined in the City Charter, as it offers a practical and balanced approach to representation and good governance.

The conversation around Virginia Beach's election system reflects the City's ongoing growth and evolution. As a relatively young city still shaping its identity, Virginia Beach has benefited from this important public conversation, which has encouraged reflection and meaningful improvement. It is crucial that this conversation brings us together rather than divide us, uniting residents, business leaders, and policymakers around a shared vision for a government that is inclusive, effective, and responsive to the needs of all.

To that end, VBV's Board and Task Forces have studied this issue at length, carefully weighing the complexities, legal considerations, and potential impacts on the city's governance and future. Our thoughtful process has led us to conclude that the 7-3-1 hybrid model best supports a government structure that can advance the city's long-term growth while ensuring broad representation and engagement. Importantly, the 7-3-1 system can comply with both the Federal and Virginia Voting Rights Acts, which require that minority voters have an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice and that no system dilute their voting strength.

Equally important, the 7-3-1 hybrid model enhances accountability and engagement for citizens. Under this system, each resident is represented by five elected officials: their district council member, three at-large council members, and the mayor. This contrasts with the 10-1 system, where representation is limited to one district member and the mayor, and where voters only participate in certain election years when their district seat is on the ballot. That structure weakens civic engagement and limits a resident's ongoing influence in city governance.

VBV believes that citywide engagement and representation are essential to strong, forward-looking leadership. The 7-3-1 hybrid system promotes a more unified city and greater accountability from City Council and School Board members by ensuring every voter has a voice in every election and not just when their single district representative is up for election.



The City Council has scheduled a referendum in November 2025, allowing all registered voters to choose their preferred local election system. After careful evaluation, VBV supports the 7-3-1 hybrid model over the 10-1 single-member system. The hybrid model enables voters to select five representatives instead of two, promotes broader representation of citywide interests, and ensures every voter can participate in all elections. We respectfully encourage the public to review the options and consider voting "No" in the 2025 referendum.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Miller".

Scott D. Miller,
Chair, VBV

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James K. Spore".

James K. Spore
Chair Visioning Task Force, VBV

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Chalk".

Laura Chalk
Executive Director & CEO, VBV