



Background



On January 18, 2024, the City of Virginia Beach hosted a Community Conversation event to discuss the City budget at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. The City engaged Fountainworks to act as an independent third-party to help facilitate the event. This document summarizes the information and feedback gathered at the event.

The City of Virginia Beach is dedicated to gathering resident opinions and using them to inform budgetary and planning decisions. The qualitative methodology employed at this

event promotes engagement and creates the opportunity to understand community preferences and concerns.

Methodology and Report Structure

As guests arrived, they were directed to different tables. Each table had a City staff facilitator who captured participant responses and comments on a flipchart. Facilitators used prompts crafted by facilitators and Virginia Beach staff.

The handout from the evening can be found in [Appendix A](#).

After all the responses from the event were collected, Fountainworks assigned each response at least one theme. For each question and public comment, theme frequency was calculated and used as a measure of public sentiment. As a note, attendees were encouraged to leave feedback in a comment box at the event. The summation of these comments is also included in this summary.



In the subsequent sections, the most common themes (noted as underlined sub-headers in orange font) are listed in order of frequency, beginning with the most frequent theme. Underneath each theme are bulleted subtopics that align with that specific theme. Language in quotations note where verbatim language is used.

Note the themes are representative of the people that attended the community conversation meeting but may not be reflective of a statistically valid sample of the Virginia Beach population as a whole.

All responses to questions from the evening are included in Appendices B-I. Additionally, all the comments left in the comment box are included in Appendix J.

Overall Themes

Based on the frequency of responses, five overall themes were identified to categorize participant responses. These overall themes include the participant responses from the Community Conversations event and responses from the comment box at the event.

Below are the most common themes that appeared throughout the responses:

1. Economic opportunity and affordability
2. Environmental stewardship and preservation
 - a. Particularly related to stormwater and sea-level rise
3. Transportation
 - a. Quality alternatives to cars: pedestrian and bike paths
 - b. Public transportation: affordable, accessible, dependable
4. Adhering to comprehensive plans and the importance of planning and prioritizing
 - a. Avoid overdevelopment
5. Affordable Housing

Question 1- What do you love most about Virginia Beach?

The event kicked off with a welcome and introduction from Mayor Robert “Bobby” Dyer, who highlighted the importance of public input in Virginia Beach City Council decision-making. Next, attendees were asked an opening ice breaker question: *What is one thing you really love about living in Virginia Beach?*



Attendees captured their responses on sticky notes and added them to a Virginia Beach graphic. Responses include but are not limited to references to **the beach, the feeling of community and investment in art.**

Question 2- What kind of city do you want to live in?

To understand attendees' vision for Virginia Beach, facilitators at each table asked participants, **"What kind of city do you want to live in?"** The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following four themes: Community Characteristics; Economy; Nature, Outdoors & Environment; and Planning & Development. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Community Characteristics

- Clean
- Cultured
- Safe
- Family-friendly
- Welcoming, inclusive
- Innovative
- Diverse

Economy

- Affordable housing & living
- Living wage
- Employment opportunities
- Fiscally responsible
- Economic development
- Business friendly

Nature, Outdoors & Environment

- Beautiful natural areas
- Protecting natural areas for storm management
- Accessible green spaces
- Outdoor activities

Planning & Development

- Sustainable
- Well-managed
- Smart growth
- Adheres to established plan

Question 3- What should we be known for? What do we want people to find attractive about our city?

Continuing the visioning questions, facilitators then asked, **“What should we be known for? What do we want people to find attractive about our city?”** The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following four themes: Quality of Life; Nature, Outdoors & Environment; Community Characteristics; and Culture. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Quality of Life

- Safe and clean
- Affordability
- Housing

Nature, Outdoors & Environment

- Beaches and coastline
- Trails
- Stormwater management and sea level rise mitigation
- Ecotourism/sustainability – innovation/green business
- Outdoor recreational activities

Community Characteristics

- Kid-friendly
- Young families
- Civility, friendliness, and hospitality

Culture

- Innovation and creativity
- Arts and history
- Physically active

Question 4- What is your top priority for one thing we should change for the better?

Next, facilitators sought to understand attendees’ most important considerations when thinking about growth and change in Virginia Beach. Facilitators posed the question, **“What is your top priority for one thing we should change for the better?”** The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following four themes: Development & Planning; Economy & Taxes; Transportation; Nature, Outdoors & Environment. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in [Appendix D](#).

Development & Planning

- Sea level rise and flood mitigation
- Committing to comprehensive plan
- Supporting existing (especially older) communities, before new buildings
- Cleanliness: adding more greenery in new development
- Awareness of diverse demographic and geographic features of the city to guide planning

Economy & Taxes (one thing would change for the better)

- Lower real estate tax rate
- Supporting business development
- Diversify revenue sources
- Good paying jobs

Transportation (one thing would change for the better)

- Extending light rail to oceanfront
- Public transportation (into and in the area)
 - Affordability and accessibility
 - Connected city
- Pedestrian and bike paths



Nature, Outdoors, and Environment (one thing would change for the better)

- Stormwater and flooding issues
- Better stewardship of the environment
- Sustainability and environmentally sensitive
- More public maintained parks

Question 5- What is one thing we should avoid?

When envisioning the future growth and change happening in Virginia Beach, facilitators asked attendees, “**What is one thing we should avoid?**” The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following five themes: Development & Planning; Economy & Taxes; Housing & Homelessness; Nature, Outdoors & Environment; and Infrastructure. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Development & Planning (what to avoid)

- Over/unrestrained development
- Ignoring plans that have been adopted with the public’s input
- Not funding the proper things
- Violating the Green Line
- Working as a silo city
- Public-private partnerships with no payback to the City or taxpayer

Economy & Taxes (what to avoid)

- Increasing taxes
- Wasteful taxes
- Excessive government spending (waste)
- Harming small businesses

Housing & Homelessness (what to avoid)

- Ignoring the homeless problem
- More shelters
- Encouraging homeless migration here

Nature, Outdoors, & Environment (what to avoid)

- Consequences of sea level rise
- Destruction of natural areas
- Events that obstruct access to Oceanfront
- Infringing on ability to surf 1st-3rd Street

Infrastructure (what to avoid)

- Neglecting infrastructure
- Toll roads
- Decaying roadways

Question 6- What are the top three things that come to mind when someone says, “core government services”?

Finally, to understand how attendees see value for their money and the City budget, facilitators asked, **“What are the top three things that come to mind when someone says, ‘core government services’?”** The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following three themes: Public & Human Services; Public Safety & Emergency Response; and Education. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in [Appendix F](#).

Public & Human Services

- Trash collection
- Sanitation utilities
- Human services
- Improving quality of life

Public Safety & Emergency Response

- Police
- Fire
- EMT
- Emergency services for natural disasters

Education

- Schools
- Teachers, bus drivers



Question 7A- Let's revisit our Vision section...What has been reaffirmed?

For the next 3 questions, facilitators presented a handout with example tax rates based on budget considerations. Specifically, Virginia Beach staff shared three examples of tax rate reductions and impact on homeowners, as well as the city and school budget to provide scenarios for attendees to react to. The handout can be found in [Appendix A](#).

To start the conversation, facilitators prompted attendees to "...revisit our Vision section...What has been reaffirmed?" based on information provided on this handout and the conversation amongst table participants. The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following three themes: Economy & Taxes; Prioritizing Services and Efficiency; and Amenities & Culture. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in [Appendix G](#).

Economy & Taxes

- Sustainable economy/affordability
- Other revenue sources
- Limit rising costs
- Current tax rate is reasonable
- Not in favor of reducing taxes, does not want less services

Prioritizing Services & Efficiency

- Tax cut and prioritization, realignment of priorities/delaying certain efforts
- City should do more with less
- Evaluate efficiencies and service strategies
- Identify what the City can do without

Amenities & Culture

- Recreation centers
- Libraries
- Culture and art

Question 7B- Let's revisit our Vision section...Are there any gaps?

Continuing to reflect on the earlier vision, facilitators then asked attendees, **“Are there any gaps?”** they noticed based on the conversation amongst table participants and staff. The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following four themes: Economy & Taxes; Infrastructure; Nature, Outdoors & Environment; and Planning & Development. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in [Appendix H](#).

Economy & Taxes

- Wasteful spending
- Taxes
 - *“I wouldn’t mind paying a little more”*
 - *“I want less”*
 - *“Citizens do not want to pay any more, but the vision of the city from questions 2-5 requires additional money”*
- Need to find balance between businesses and individuals

Infrastructure

- Lack of complete roads through city
- Growth in areas without infrastructure to support
- Bike/pedestrian friendly
- Stormwater maintenance – infrastructure replacement
- Equity with older neighborhoods – roads better taken care of in some areas

Nature, Outdoor & Environment

- Preservation of natural areas/historic
- Protecting farmers and fishers
- Stormwater maintenance

Planning & Development

- Desire for fewer studies; more action
- Gap between overdevelopment and maintenance of said infrastructure
- NIMBYism

Question 7C- Does the information on your handout affect what we have been discussing? If yes, how so? If no, please share more.

Referencing the Budget Impact Table and Value Proposition on the handout, facilitators posed the question, **“Does the information on your handout affect what we have been discussing? If yes, how so? If no, please share more.”** The most frequent responses were captured and categorized into the following four themes: Taxes & Revenues; Informed & Intentional Spending; Communication; and Education. A comprehensive list of all responses can be found in the [Appendix I](#).

Taxes & Revenues

- Increased assessment is offset by the decreased tax rate ultimately reduces the impact to the citizens
- Alternative revenue sources – corporations
- Taxes
 - Sales tax vs. real estate tax
 - *“We cannot accomplish our goals if we lower taxes. Scrambling to make up for shortfalls after taxes are reduced.”*
 - *“May not need to cut if we can look through how we spend to see if funding can be better used.”*

Informed & Intentional Spending

- *“What would budget look like as required by state law that is revenue neutral, and then what would it cost to increase services. What is needed to increase/prioritize.”*
- *“Identify the priorities and make tough decisions.”*
- *“Know what is on the other end of the scenarios (cost of living).”*

Communication

- Provide residents information on what is being funded with increased taxes/assessments; connect it to how it advances the vision
- *“Citizen trust/not trusting the city council – citizens need to know what increased tax assessments will fund. Be specific. Tell the “what” and “why.””*

Education

- *“If enrollment is going down, why are we building such large schools?”*
- *“Lower taxes, education budget goes down.”*

Comment Box Response Themes

At the end of the Community Conversations event, attendees were encouraged to leave a response in the comment box located at the back of the room. These responses were reviewed

and categorized into major themes. Note that these categories encompass comments specific to the City and feedback about the Community Conversation event, specifically.

In no particular order, responses were categorized in the following five themes: Infrastructure; Arts; Nature, Outdoors & Environment; City Budget & Taxes; and Community Conversations Event Feedback.

All the comments left in the comment box are included in Appendix J.

Infrastructure

- *“Replace failing infrastructure, specifically the 17th Street CIP project”*

Arts

- Continue to invest in the arts
 - VIBE District
 - VA Symphony

Nature, Outdoors & Environment

- Develop green spaces
- Increase walkability and bike-ability
- Clean up and preservation of wetlands and oceanfront

City Budget & Taxes

- *“Explain how [cuts] will be really split”*
- *“For the amount of services the city provides, I accept the existing tax rate as reasonable”*

Community Conversations Event Feedback

- *“Consider ways to attract diverse and representative populations, so that all opinions are heard”*
- *“Question 7 was difficult to understand”*
- *“Provide more specifics about revenue streams”*

Appendix

Appendix A: Event Handout

Community Conversations Event – Table Handout

January 18, 2024

Your valuable feedback will be used to inform City Council discussions about the budget and community priorities for the City's fiscal year 2025.

Opener/Post-it Note Response:

1. *What is one thing you really love about living in Virginia Beach?*

Facilitated Discussion: Vision, Growth/Change

Section 1: Vision (25 minutes)

2. *What kind of city do you want to live in?*
3. *What should we be known for? What do we want people to find attractive about our city?*

Section 2: Growth/Change (15 minutes)

4. *What is your top priority for one thing we should change for the better?*
5. *What is one thing we should avoid?*

Handout 1

Community Conversations Event – Table Handout

January 18, 2024

Your valuable feedback will be used to inform City Council discussions about the budget and community priorities for the City's fiscal year 2025.

Facilitated Discussion: Value & Budget

Section 3: Value & Budget (35 minutes)

6. *What are the top three things that come to mind when someone says, “core government services?”*
7. *Let's revisit our Vision Section:*
 - a. *What has been reaffirmed?*
 - b. *Are there any gaps?*
 - c. *Let's look at the Budget Impact Table & Value Proposition: Does the information on your handout affect what we have been discussing? If yes, how so? If no, please share more.*

Handout 2, page 1

Question 7C – 3 Sample Scenarios

- 3 examples for tax rate reductions and impact on homeowners, as well as the city and school budget
- Based on FY24 Tax Rate of 99 cents per \$100 of Home Assessed Value
- FY24 Median Home Assessment Value for all home types is currently \$326,800, which would be approx. \$3,235 tax bill.
- The estimated tax bills for each home value are reflected in annual cost and monthly because people often pay these through their monthly mortgage payment, so this reflects the impact on their monthly budget.

Scenario 1: Tax Rate 97 cents (2 cents reduction from current tax rate)

Home Value	Estimated tax avoidance for homeowner ANNUALLY	Estimated tax avoidance for homeowner MONTHLY	Reduction to School Budget	Reduction to City Budget	Total Budget Impact
\$300,000	\$60	\$5	\$7,332,802	\$8,352,336	\$15,685,138
\$500,000	\$100	\$8			
\$700,000	\$140	\$12			

Scenario 2: Tax Rate 95 cents (4 cents reduction from current tax rate)

Home Value	Estimated tax avoidance for homeowner ANNUALLY	Estimated tax avoidance for homeowner MONTHLY	Reduction to School Budget	Reduction to City Budget	Total Budget Impact
\$300,000	\$120	\$10	\$14,665,604	\$16,704,672	\$31,370,276
\$500,000	\$200	\$17			
\$700,000	\$280	\$23			

Scenario 3: Tax Rate 92 cents (7 cents reduction from current tax rate)

Home Value	Estimated tax avoidance for homeowner ANNUALLY	Estimated tax avoidance for homeowner MONTHLY	Reduction to School Budget	Reduction to City Budget	Total Budget Impact
\$300,000	\$210	\$18	\$25,664,807	\$29,233,176	\$54,897,983
\$500,000	\$350	\$29			
\$700,000	\$490	\$41			

Please Note:

- The median assessment for FY25 will not be finalized by the Real Estate Assessor for a few weeks, so we have provided 3 sample assessments for this exercise for rough orders of magnitude.
- If assessments increase, but the tax rate is reduced, homeowners will still pay more, but the reduction in the tax rate will equate to a cost avoidance of the amounts shown in the tables.
- This same reduction will result in the combined loss of revenue for city/schools in the amounts shown.

Handout 2, page 2

Appendix B: All responses to [Question 2: What Kind of City do you want to live in?](#)

- Clean
- Less crowded/congested
- Safe (affirmed by four tick marks)
- Just/fair - no cronyism
- Rec opportunity
- Affordable housing
- Beautiful natural areas/preserved green spaces (one tick mark)
- Beautiful - everywhere not just natural areas
- Preservation of historic houses/buildings
- Diverse from beach to farm/businesspeople
- Protecting existing stormwater systems
- Protecting natural areas for storm management (Wetlands, ponds, etc.)
- Economic sound/affordable
- Wages for employees so they can live here - living wage
- Bring in other business/in the areas zoned for it
- Opportunities/things to do - arts, entertainment, social interaction
- SMART Growth
- Well landscaped public spaces
- Recycling program
- Kind city
- Military friendly
- Safe
- Cultured
- Quiet
- Good schools
- Employment opportunities
- Accessible green spaces
- Well-trained service providers
- Adheres to est. plan
- Responsive to citizens
- Sustainable
- Stewards of social mobility
- Family-oriented
- Well-managed
- Affordable, doesn't raise taxes too much
- Ethical
- Diverse
- Good infrastructure
- Protect wetlands
- Strong arts and creativity
- Outdoor activities
- Welcoming
- Protect suburban neighborhoods
- Supports arts
- Healthy
- Excellent education
- Education to support
- One that is vibrant, culturally rich, diverse
- More support for the arts/venues and cultural engagement (starred)
- Clean, safe, consistent
- Economically developed, such as Asheville or Charlotte
- Welcoming, warm, inclusive
- Affordable, median income
- Decision Making structure that works
- Ready for flooding
- Adapting to AI
- Low crime, less drugs, homelessness
- Safe
- Supportive of health and well-being (Less talk more interaction)
- Vision for the future
- Limited STR (Short term rentals)
- City that embraces the arts
- Good schools
- A well-run city > Transparency
- Living wage
- City that embraces small business (Making it happen, helping businesses access what is needed)
- Proactive police, not reactive
- Transportation of the future (Maintained and quality, Roads, Multimodal)
- Prioritizing revitalization of infill areas
- Inclusive
- Safe
- Affordable
- Values natural resources & access

- Dynamic, growing
- Clean
- Connected
- Opportunities
- Increase/Better Quality of life
- Family friendly
- Culturally vibrant
- Close to family
- Culture and arts
- Excellent education
- Caring community
- Designed & inviting public spaces
- Taxpayer friendly
- Fiscally responsible
- Trees canopy increase
- More walkable, bikeable
- Good jobs for young people
- Government in touch with people
- App. Land use and development
- More open spaces not less!
- Modern infrastructure
- Excellent medical care
- Safe city
- Business development opportunities to retain people in the city and draw young people once they finish school
- Invest in infrastructure and maintain
- Fiscally responsible
- Well maintained
- Functional roadways
- Small city feel, avoid big city feel and density
- Avoid public-private development
- Clean city
- Filled with trees/nature
- Voice matters as citizens
- Things are equitable in all communities
- Natural environment is taken into consideration
- Safe city – sense of city
- Welcoming city
- Continue transparent process
- Keeping environmental dangers out
- Making recreational cannabis available and regulate it
- Expanding recreational opportunities
- More pedestrian trails
- Doing better assisting the homeless
- Lower real estate taxes
- More police presence
- Cultural city
- Less high-density building
- Historic/neighborhood preservation
- Protecting ag. Lines/green line
- Rich arts culture
- More community involvement opportunities (more rec centers)
- Improved infrastructure
- Economic development increased tree canopy
- Preparation for rising seas
- City that's affordable to live in
- Sustainably developed
- Realistic
- Accountable to its constituents
- Full of trees supportive of health and well being
- Creative and artistic
- Job opportunities that pay well
- Walkability/pedestrian friendly
- Innovative
- Supports entrepreneurial/business
- Economically adaptive
- Collaborative
- ADA compliant
- Supportive of aging communities
- Diverse

Appendix C: All responses to [Question 3](#): What should we be known for? What do we want people to find attractive about our city?

-
- Scenic coastline
 - Clean safe beaches
 - Entertaining
 - Beautiful
 - Sports friendly

- “Great place to live” - wages, housing, food, entertainment, but also a great place to visit
- Creativity/innovation
- Community for a lifetime
- Seatack Recreation Center - Equal rec. Centers (Similar size and amenities)
- Vibe district and beyond
- The arts
- Wave park
- Military retirement city
- Good restaurants and gear towards local
- Good place to retire
- Kid friendly
- Young adults
- Young families
- Tourism/a great place to vacation and the off season too
- Trails
- Excellent schools
- Opportunity
- Civility
- Diverse opportunities and activity
- Stability
- Clean beaches
- Tourism
- Global high-speed fiber
- Public art (could be privately funded)
- Military
- Safe to visit
- Respect for public input
- Up-to-date libraries
- Transparency
- Execution of supported plan
- Sticking to comprehensive planning
- Good gov
- Cleanliness
- Affordability
- Outside quiet places/solitude
- Friendliness
- Smart growth
- Economic growth
- Low taxes
- Efficient transportation
- Good governance
- Innovation
- Live events
- Not-port-a-potties (on beach)
- Something in the water
- Good education system/universities
- Good job opportunities (starred)
- Affordable housing
- Fun for all ages
- Highest talented workforce (starred)
- Art that helps elevate the economy and keep people happy
- Fiscally responsible government
- Commerce and innovation
- Interaction with the Navy - affordable housing
- Uniquely welcoming
- Beautiful clean beach
- Lower taxes
- Equal, equitable rec centers
- Reduced one time use plastic bags (disrupts recycling and gets in water)
- A diverse city, welcome to all
- One of the best places to live on the east coast
- Public transportation
- Less homelessness
- Low crime
- Outdoor recreation - beaches, hiking
- The something of the East Coast
- Not overtaxing citizens
- Business friendly
- Recreation/library combinations of manageable size and basic necessities (Places for kids to play, parents & trends, and SAFE!)
- Good healthcare
- Efficient public transportation
- Smart tourism, 1st class tourism
- Art for diverse community
- Clean beach w/diverse options available à surf
- Preserving history
- Our people – people of VB are great – I want to go back there!
- Welcoming!

- More balanced police force (More diversity at top)
- Tourist attractions that make \$
- Safe
- Strong neighborhoods
- Informed citizens/transparency
- Support military community & veterans
- Stormwater management and sea level rise mitigation
- History
- Schools and educational opportunities
- Clean beach; bay beaches
- Community that offers culture and arts
- Accountability for clean streets and walkways from government and private citizens
- Family friendly city
- Safe city; low crime
- Robust transportation; public transportation
- Tourism across the city, not just oceanfront
- Ecotourism
- Quality economic opportunities for young adults
- Rich agriculture communities
- Sports complexes
- Safe city
- Most livable city in the country
- Boardwalk
- Land of opportunities
- Forward-thinking city
- Local foods
- Increasing support for mom-and-pop businesses
- Support for start-ups and small businesses
- Communities that help each other
- Hospitality
- Open space
- Unique environment -- Small businesses
- Wonderful multicultural-ness (Food exp./arts/etc.)
- Rich history that started before 1963
- Supporting the arts
- Great natural water resources
- Vibrant and active lifestyle
- Great outdoor rec. opportunities
- Wonderful fishing community
- Arts, culture, action sports
- Great public transportation
- All of the above
- Ecotourism/sustainability *-- Innovation/green business
- Desirable to live/work/visit
- Active community (physically)
- Pedestrian/bike friendly
- Education
- Arts and culture hub
- Opportunities, land of "
- Agriculture
- Robust employment landscape
- Disability and elderly care
- Larger businesses that have educational/skill development/livable wages
- Being uniquely welcoming
- Military

Appendix D: All responses to [Question 4](#): *What is your top priority for one thing we should change for the better?*

-
- Economic growth specifically at oceanfront
 - Aware of population change to be able to achieve items in question 2 and 5 to survive economically
 - Preserve communities
 - Build the Violet Bank Pathway - on Kempsville
 - Fund the 17th St. Project (one tick mark)
 - Affordability - overall
 - Parking at the oceanfront
 - Adding more to replace public parking taken away by new projects
 - Affordable and safe for residents / employees at the oceanfront

- Extending light rail to oceanfront
- Flooding issues (one tick mark)
- Public transportation (into the area/ in the area)
- Replacing old school buildings
- Upgrading facilities the school has
- 911 center (understaffed and underpaid)
- Public safety (understaffed and underpaid)
- Supporting business development
- Retraining residents
- Supporting existing (especially older) communities, Before new buildings
- Storm drain infrastructure
- Attracting young families
- Public transit
- Walkability
- Complete 17th and 18th St. construction
- Landfill open on Sunday
- Expand airport -- Name should encompass region -- Minimize connections and become hub
- More resources for mental health
- Manage growth
- Committing to comprehensive plan
- Taking care of vets
- Geriatric care
- Attracting teachers
- Funding % for the arts
- Business process, speed up, business start up
- Infrastructure investment strategy
- 64 interchange to 264
- Engineering
- Zoning ordinances to match our comprehensive planning
- Stormwater and flooding issues
- Transition from transactional taxes
- Affordable transportation/transit rails/access to better transportation/less car/parking
- Stop ignoring speakers at council meetings
- Affordable housing for less homelessness
- Be aware of population changes, to be able to economically survive and enact priorities
- Working closely with other cities in Hampton Roads to market the region and improve
- Strategic planning in development and real estate -- SMART
- Strategic planning in development and real estate -- Regulations
- Strategic planning in development and real estate -- Airbnb/Banks buying lots
- Implement stormwater res. from 2021 bond referendum to reduce flooding and preserve green space
- Lower real estate tax rate
- Preserve Rudee loop
- Stick to comp. plan
- Address flooding issues
- Understand reality – prioritize
- Create more revenue streams to achieve what we outlined in 2, 3
- More efficient transportation so people can get to jobs in VB, same city they live
- Bring tide to oceanfront
- Increase funding local arts
- Creating unifying vision for city
- Develop comp. plan/partnership to save aquarium
- More fiscally responsible budgeting -- Direct resources to whole city
- No rooftop restaurants/shops at Rudee
- Upgrade Seatack park & rec center
- Recruit tech companies to offer good jobs for young people
- Connected city – transport, paths
- Redevelopment – bringing new spaces & no parking
- Less public/private partnerships
- Affordable housing
- No hotel on DQ property at OF
- Inclusion, diversity, equity
- Follow & execute current plans

- Focus on the broader community, not just oceanfront
- Public transportation; frequent
- Invest in art; performing and visual arts
- Prioritize public education and impact of changing policies
- Sea level rise and flood mitigation
- Earmarked funds for arts
- Better funding for arts
- All rec centers are equitable -- Same size
- Better housing for first responders
- Finding ways to raise academic performance for all schools
- Cleanness—adding more greenery in new development
- Raise revenue
- Increasing funding sources – without increasing taxes
- Universal healthcare
- Height restrictions on new development at the oceanfront
- Flood prevention
- More school
- Recreationalize cannabis
- Utilizing VB convention center to generate more revenue
- Better stewardship of the environment
- Increasing affordable housing
- Reducing real estate taxes
- Playdates with economic development and planning
- Sustainability* / environmentally sensitive
- Affordability/ Affordable housing ***
- Innovative public art structures
- Keep military bases here
- Airport Norfolk and VA beach
- More public maintained parks
- Mental wellness addressing
- Public transport/bike/pedestrian
- Smart growth city plan
- Good paying jobs
- If we build something, how will it be sustained
- Increase education benefits

Appendix E: All responses to [Question 5](#): *What is one thing we should avoid?*

- Increasing taxes (current taxes should cover)
- Making too difficult to open a business
- Trying to be like another city - our city is unique with military and the water
- 70 year old school buildings
- Over urbanization/housing apartments at the oceanfront
- Not funding the proper things (the arts, attractions, entertainment)
- Public private partnerships with no payback to the city or taxpayer
- Silos and the “Single/City/only) -- Need to look at sharing with other cities that border us
- Stop ignoring mental health issues
- UNRESTRAINED DEVELOPMENT
- Violating the Green Line
- Higher taxes
- Restricting access to public beaches and parks -- For expensive ticket events
- Urban blight
- Neglecting infrastructure
- Infringing on 1st - 3rd St Surfability
- Toll roads
- Violation of the transition area (related to green line)
- Overreacting
- Increasing taxes
- Inertia
- Don’t become NOVA - Northern Virginia
- Stagnation
- Larger city government
- Underrated pandemics
- Negative response
- Encroachment on Oceana Air Station
- Knee jerk reactions, be patient when other cities are getting projects done faster
- Avoid benchmark
- Avoid not taking risks

- Rapid growth -- Uncontrolled development and unplanned
- Avoid allowing developers to come in and build whatever they want -- Hazardous community
- Wasteful taxes
- Planning that takes too long and loses original reason/value
- Racism and inequality
- Stop encouraging homeless migration here
- Stop ignoring the homeless problem
- More shelters
- More affordable housing
- Regulation to develop
- Public/private partnerships
- Light rail
- Ignore Plans that have been adopted with public plan
- Collective bargaining
- Decaying roadways
- Spot (development)
- Dropping cables from Sandbridge -- Wind/power
- Anything that creates more traffic
- Oversaturation national chains
- Events that obstruct access to Oceanfront
- Listening to vocal minorities/squeaky wheels
- Failing to address homelessness
- Waivers that allow buildings to exceed city code
- Operating without capital asset plan for buildings
- Lack of cultural identity
- Excessive over-development
- Avoid public-private partnership
- Avoid attracting professional sports; only amateur
- Avoid losing experts; nuclear experts; military retirees
- Avoid working as a silo city
- Avoid not investing in public education
- Do not take the military for granted
- Avoid losing focus on core functions/attractions
- Avoid being close-minded
- Do not give up on the green line, avoid developing below the green line
- Less concrete
- Making promises we can't keep
- Avoid neglecting public infrastructure
- Avoid losing military bases
- Avoid mass shootings
- Avoid getting rid of minority communities
- Prevent weapons from entering schools
- Raising taxes
- Avoid consequences of sea level rise
- Avoid getting in bed with private entities
- Avoid excessive government spending (waste)
- Avoid harm to small businesses
- Avoid funding corporation that don't give back to city
- Avoid destroying our agricultural land
- overdevelopment / paving over all city
- Destruction of natural areas
- Inflating the budget
- Degradation of education
- Elimination of landmarks/historical
- Non-transparency
- Conflicting objectives/vision
- Over taxation
- Stop redefining answers to issues
- Military base closures
- Gentrifying/pricing out communities (i.e., arts)

Appendix F: All responses to [Question 6](#): *What are the top three things that come to mind when someone says, “core government services?”*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Infrastructure / Aging infrastructure replacing/upgrading existing • Something an individual cannot do for themselves • Safety - police/fire/EMT • Transportation • Flood mitigation/prevention (sea level rise) • Economic development • Trash collection • Infrastructure • Public safety • Trash collection • Education • Utilities • Libraries • Cultural arts • Permitting and Zoning • Human services • Tax collection/revenue • Public safety, offer more pay to attract • Schools, public schools • Sanitary services - public works utilities • Public health • Road infrastructure • Public transportation / easy and affordable -- Such as freebie but charge to go outside VA City beach • Health safety and education • Trash pickup • Police, EMT, Fire, and Coast Guard • Teachers, Bus Drivers > Better school busses • City workers • Mental health • Transportation • Emergency services for natural disasters • Subsidized housing • Public safety – police, fire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public works – Trash, Stormwater, Roads, Water, Sewer • Education • Parks and recreation • Transportation – school busses • Waste management/recycling • Public works and public utilities • Public education – real teaching • Public safety/first responders – Police, Fire, ECCS, Sheriff, Emergency management • Infrastructure • Schools/Education • Healthcare • Nature preservation • Affordable Housing • Equitable facilities • Raising revenue • Improving citizen quality of life • Sanitation utilities • Clean community • Roads • Utilities • Public Safety • Trash/recycling • Zoning • Planning • First Responders • Council – FT Mayor • Safety • Fire, police, education • Public health (mental/physical) • Sanitation/ water & sewer • Roads • Parks and Recreation • Libraries/community centers • Environmental sustainability • Public safety • Public health sanitation • Education |
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Appendix G: All responses to [Question 7A](#): *Let's revisit our Vision Section; what has been reaffirmed?*

- Increasing taxes (current taxes should cover)
- Making too difficult to open a business
- Trying to be like another city - our city is unique with military and the water
- 70-year-old school buildings
- Over urbanization/housing apartments at the oceanfront
- Not funding the proper things (the arts, attractions, entertainment)
- Public private partnerships with no payback to the city or taxpayer
- Silos and the "Single/City/only) -- Need to look at sharing with other cities that border us
- Stop ignoring mental health issues
- UNRESTRAINED DEVELOPMENT
- Violating the Green Line
- Higher taxes
- Restricting access to public beaches and parks -- For expensive ticket events
- Urban blight
- Neglecting infrastructure
- Infringing on 1st - 3rd St Surfability
- Toll roads
- Violation of the transition area (related to green line)
- Overreacting
- Increasing taxes
- Inertia
- Don't become NOVA - Northern Virginia
- Stagnation
- Larger city government
- Underrated pandemics
- Negative response
- Encroachment on Oceana Air Station
- Knee jerk reactions, be patient when other cities are getting projects done faster
- Avoid benchmark
- Avoid not taking risks
- Rapid growth -- Uncontrolled development and unplanned
- Avoid allowing developers to come in and build whatever they want -- Hazardous community
- Wasteful taxes
- Planning that takes too long and loses original reason/value
- Racism and inequality
- Stop encouraging homeless migration here
- Stop ignoring the homeless problem
- More shelters
- More affordable housing
- Regulation to develop
- Public/private partnerships
- Light rail
- Ignore Plans that have been adopted with public plan
- Collective bargaining
- Decaying roadways
- Spot (development)
- Dropping cables from Sandbridge -- Wind/power
- Anything that creates more traffic
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- Operating without capital asset plan for buildings
- Lack of cultural identity
- Excessive over-development
- Avoid public-private partnership
- Avoid attracting professional sports; only amateur
- Avoid losing experts; nuclear experts; military retirees
- Avoid working as a silo city
- Avoid not investing in public education
- Do not take the military for granted

- Avoid losing focus on core functions/attractions
- Avoid being close-minded
- Do not give up on the green line, avoid developing below the green line
- Less concrete
- Making promises we can keep
- Avoid neglecting public infrastructure
- Avoid losing military bases
- Avoid mass shootings
- Not getting rid of minority communities
- Prevent weapons from entering schools
- Raising taxes
- Avoid consequences of sea level rise
- Avoid getting in bed with private entities
- Avoid excessive government spending (waste)
- Avoid harm to small businesses
- Avoid funding corporation that don't give back to city
- Avoid destroying our agricultural land
- overdevelopment / paving over all city
- Destruction of natural areas
- Inflating the budget
- Degradation of education
- Elimination of landmarks/historical
- Non-transparency
- Conflicting objectives/vision
- Over taxation
- Stop redefining answers to issues
- Military base closures
- Gentrifying/pricing out communities (i.e., arts)

Appendix H: All responses to [Question 7B](#): *Let's revisit our Vision Section; are there any gaps?*

- Infrastructure/connectivity
- Affordability
- Funding community arts
- Equity with older neighborhoods -- Roads better taken care of in some areas
- Lack of complete roads thru city
- CIP funding -- road projects, inflation driving
- Growth in areas without infrastructure to support
- Homelessness
- Don't follow comp. plan
- Employment for creatives
- Less studies/more action
- Increase awareness of volunteer opportunities
- Arts and culture
- Communication of city opportunities
- Funding opportunities missed due to politics
- Wasteful spending
- Gap between officers and judicial process
- Workforce development in education
- Gap between overdevelopment and maintenance of said infrastructure
- Green
- Bike/pedestrian friendly
- Inequality between schools
- Living wage
- Affordable housing
- Assisting the working poor, Gap in living wage
- Extending public transportation
- NIMBYism
- Taxes (low taxes) -- I wouldn't mind paying a little more
- Taxes (low taxes) -- I want less
- Preservation of natural areas/historic
- Driving business out -- Finding balance between business and individuals
- Not embracing change, while supporting policies (example, we are eco-friendly but keeping plastic bags)
- Behind in IT/Technology
- Protecting farmers and fishers
- Stormwater maintenance -- Infrastructure replacement
- Growing our economy

- Money-everything we want requires money
- Housing affordability
- Citizens do not want to pay any more (“Money” taxes fees/charges) - but the

- vision of the city from #2,3,4,5 requires additional money
- More transportation options that include biking trails

Appendix I: All responses to [Question 7C](#): Let’s look at the Budget Impact Table & Value Proposition: Does the information on your handout affect what we have been discussing? If yes, how so? If no, please share more.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would budget look like as required by state law that is revenue neutral, and then what would it cost to increase services. What is needed to increase/prioritize. • Identify the priorities and make tough decisions • If enrollment is going down, why are we building such large schools • Why do we have 3 VBT channels • Education • Public Works/Public Utilities • Public Safety • Wasteful Spending • Alternative revenue sources – corporations • Economic development with transparency • Increasing year-round tourist opportunities – both inside and outside • Sales tax vs. real estate tax • Increasing population/bringing in more people/retention • Prioritizing what we have to have • Lower taxes education budget goes down | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not need to cut if we can look through how we spend to see if funding can be better used • Know what is on the other end of the scenarios/cost of living • Pungo! Sandbridge diverse area • Can’t cut taxes! • Keep taxes the same! • Increase real estate tax! > \$1.05 • We cannot accomplish our goals if we lower taxes -- Scrambling to make up for shortfalls after taxes are reduced (i.e., when gas tax was repealed and schools missed out) • Explain to public what increase in assessments/revenue go to • Explain what a tax increase would look like or fund in the vision • The increased assessment is offset by the decreased tax rate ultimately reduces the impact to the citizens • Citizen trust/not trusting the city council - citizens need to know what increased tax assessments will go fund - be specific - tell the what and why? |
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Appendix J: All Comment Box Responses

Arts

- 1% for the Arts/Culture; rich and diverse community
- Increase funding for the Arts and Humanities Commission: grants will pay community quality of life dividends well beyond the fiscal expense (potentially increase funds \$1.2-1.5M and allow funds to be used for operations)
- Continue to support the arts; ongoing growth on budget for the arts
- Devote public dollars to the arts (visual, performing and public arts)
 - VIBE district
 - VA Symphony
 - MOCA
- Invest in the arts, give money to the VA symphony and the VIBE
- Invest in oceanfront entrance and the VIBE
- Please fund “Perfect for the ARTS” that was adopted in the 1980s but was never funded. It will help grow our arts and culture, attract fortune 500 companies and incubate our young up and coming artists and entrepreneurs.
- Please consistently support the arts and the 17th street improvements—vital to the vibrance of the VA beach community

Green Space/Oceanfront/Parks and Recreation

- Close street to cars for safer walking areas in Town Center and Atlantic Ave that will create community. Green space at town center for park and special events
- Rather than cutting trees and building everywhere, lets redevelop distressed areas
- Walkable, bike riding areas to enhance community and avoid traffic
- VB could be a shining star of health-conscious tourists and locals if we develop green space, oceanfront, parks, paths and outdoor events
- Less new development-redevelop distressed properties
- When sites come available at the oceanfront, turn them into parks or open space so the ocean is visible and accessible instead of blocked by hotels
- Create a new sense of arrival at the oceanfront (21st street and visitors center)
- Preserve green space in VA Beach
- Preserve VA wetlands and historical relevance
- Upgrade Seatack park and Rec Center
- Stop building on the boardwalk and leave open space
- I would like to see accountability for clean streets, sidewalks, public and private property. Hold property owners accountable for maintaining their property whether they live here or rent it.
- Remove the trash boats from bay, beach and cape –stay by sea
- Prevent dumping of boats and private property on public beaches
- Beach is trash—I would not purchase a home here now nor bring my business here

Bond Referendum

- Put the bond ref. info full affect citywide so that all stormwater drainage ponds, marshes, wetlands and lakes are not developed on

MISC

- Good paying jobs for young people by recruiting tech companies
- No upfront costs with pre-construction? \$15.4M pre-construction VBCPS Schools agreement with Ballard construction – unaffordable PPEA
- Avoid missing out on opportunities to invest in the future
- Clean up the homeless at the beach
- All public school kids should receive free meals
- Why are we asking for more groups to come get grants, nonprofits should ask for donations from supporters
- Sandler, convention center, sports center, MOCA—losing \$ by being free; they should be self-funded by ticket sales

Community Conversation Event

- Demographics at event were not reflective of city and creates bias in answers
- Do another event with a group of residents under 40 years old
- The sample scenarios don't provide realistic choices. They seem to push one option—if you want to save \$140 it will cost the city \$15M
- It would be better to leave all things constant, provide us with a total amount we can spend and provide the line item costs so we have to prioritize—just as we ask Council to do
- Show overall revenue streams
- It was very difficult to hear the facilitator, too many side bar conversations going on
- Nobody understood Q7—reaffirmed and gaps (so you won't get what you wanted out of this exercise)

Taxes

- For the amount of services the city provides, I accept the existing tax rate as reasonable
- I don't mind paying taxes in VB—I appreciate the value for the services we receive
- I don't need a tax cut this year, I'm ok paying what I currently pay (home value <\$250k)
- Be honest w/ the public:
 - Cuts won't be even across the board. Explain how they will be really split.
 - Showing residential real estate relocation, when much of the \$ is from commercial real estate is disingenuous