BACKGROUND

The Mayor's Task Force for a Safer Virginia Beach has been assembled by Mayor Robert M. "Bobby" Dyer to engage the community and stakeholders and develop recommendations to ensure our community remains a safe place for our residents and a desired tourist destination for our visitors. The Task Force is anticipated to complete work in late 2026 and then submit its recommendations to City Council for consideration.

The Task Force will have six meetings that will take place at City Hall, Rm. 1009/1010, except for the September 3rd meeting, which took place at the Voter Registrar Building:

- July 6, 1-5 p.m.
- July 21, 3-7 p.m.
- Aug. 31, 1-5 p.m.
- Sept. 3, 1-5 p.m. Voter Registrar's Office. 500 Studio Drive, Training Room 200
- Sept. 28, 1-5 p.m.
- Oct. 29, 1-5 p.m.

WELCOME & FRAMING

The Task Force convened its fifth meeting on Monday, September 28, 2026, at City Hall. This meeting was attended by City staff, facilitators from Berkley Group, and appointed Task Force members. Mayor Dyer made opening remarks and thanked the Task Force members for their work. The Hon. Christie New Craig provided additional remarks, stating she was excited about the progress so far and that she is looking forward to the final meetings.

Task Force Attendance:

- The Hon. Christie New Craig
- The Hon. Michael Feggans
- The Hon. Colin Stolle
- Alvie Culanding
- Chuck Cayton
- Debbie Lou Hague
- Paul Neudigate
- Gabe Niles
- Jamal Gunn
- John Zirkle
- Kevin Will
- M. Conrad Agresti
- Melissa Lukeson

City Staff Present:

- Monica Croskey (Deputy City Manager; Task Force Support)
- Raven Emanuel (Task Force Admin Support/Notetaker)
- Nancy Helman (Director, Convention & Visitors Bureau)

- Bill Kelly (Resort Administrator)
- Dana Harmeyer (Deputy City Attorney)
- Andrew Damon (Legislative Analyst)

Facilitators Present (Berkley Group):

- Eric Campbell (Executive Manager)
- Laura Hamilton (Executive Manager)
- Tori Haynes (Senior Planner)

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Task Force members discussed the final two pillars, Community Partnerships and Environmental & Place-Based Recommendations. Like the previous two meetings, members reviewed suggestions and potential actions compiled from previous task force meetings and community listening sessions. Each member stated the actions that they support, do not support, or need more information about. The matrices with results and feedback are provided on page five.

RESORT MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Bill Kelly, Resort Administrator, gave a presentation on the Resort Management Office's roles and responsibilities. Resort Management oversees all permitting for outdoor special events, with the exception of events hosted in public parks, which are administered by Parks and Recreation. Mr. Kelly discussed how the department prioritizes events, coordinates with other City departments, and balances public safety with First and Second Amendment rights.

The group also discussed the Beach Ambassador's Program, which is a contracted third-party company that provides hiring, training and support services for the Ambassadors staff. This contractor works with Ambassadors in other cities, including Lousiville, KY. Ambassadors undertake tasks including assisting visitors, answering questions, cleaning, and maintenance. Task Force members conveyed their experiences with Beach Ambassadors. The group generally liked the program and appreciate the ambassadors' assistance, but noted that more effort could be made to help distinguish their roles to the public. For example, members explained that in the past, they haven't been sure if an event worker was a Beach Ambassador, maintenance crew, or other staff. They suggested different colored shirts to help distinguish Beach Ambassadors whose main job is to answer questions versus those who are assigned to cleanup and maintenance.

******BREAK******

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIZATION

Laura Hamilton of Berkley Group discussed the next steps over the final two meetings, noting that Meetings #5 and #6 mark the transition from information gathering to priority-setting and feasibility analysis. Prioritization within each pillar will follow a three-step process:

1. Anonymous priority voting via Mentimeter;
2. Brief full-group review of results; and
3. Feasibility analysis for the top-rated items.

During the anonymous voting exercise, each Task Force member rated the potential actions from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Any potential action scoring an average of 3.5 or higher will move forward for final consideration. Items scoring 3.0 to 3.4 will be further discussed by the group to determine the final outcome. Items scoring below 3.0 will not move forward.

Following the live voting exercise, Task Force members began prioritizing each pillar's top actions, beginning with Legislation & Policy. After a facilitated discussion, the Task Force refined and chose the following recommendations for the Legislation & Policy pillar.

- Gun-Free Zones. Establish gun-free zones near entertainment districts. This is a > six-month recommendation, as this portion of the former HB 778 has been removed for its carriage this session.
- Pop-Up Gatherings. Advocate for HB 778 or successor legislation that increases penalties for instigators of pop-up gatherings and authorizes the City to recover costs from event organizers. This is an expanded and revitalized effort after the failed bill last session.
- Youth Curfew. Maintain the curfew for minors without extending it to adults.
- Mental Health Response. Reduce the approximately 11% of police patrol time spent responding to mental health calls by addressing gaps in crisis services. Lead a Virginia Beach pilot program offering localized services, including Restoration Pods, and implement the initiative of allowing non-law enforcement professionals to perform temporary detention order (TDO) duties.
- Gun Safety. Expand local communication and education about existing gun laws and available assistance.
- Police Drone Use. This recommendation will be discussed at the Task Force's next meeting.

Due to time constraints, the Task Force did not finish prioritizing the entire matrix of potential actions. Ms. Hamilton stated that Task Force members will complete the remaining pillars virtually before the next meeting. The matrix with results and feedback for Legislation & Policy recommendations are provided on page 12.

CLOSING

Following the prioritization exercise, the group adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Next meeting is Thursday, October 29, 2026 at City Hall, 2401 Courthouse Drive, Conference Room 1009 and 1010.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PILLAR				
Potential Actions	**Support**	**Learn More**	**Do Not Support**	**Comments and Discussion**
A. Promote workforce training and school-based partnerships	12	0	0	
B. Implement trust-based, friendly neighborhood engagement models co-created with residents and local leaders	7	0	2	• Don't want to depend on private individuals to be arbiters of what's right or not.
C. Expand CCTV and neighborhood watch programs	1	0	3	• Neighborhood watch programs already exist for individual neighborhoods. • Not comfortable with this – hard no.
D. Establish a network of mentoring opportunities for youth through local organizations	10	0	0	
E. Create free access to community mediation services for resolving disputes	4	0	0	
F. Create agreements among agencies to track resource connections	7	0	0	• This should include sharing of information, data, and metrics to track results.
G. READI Chicago model: 18-month subsidized job plus cognitive-behavioral programming for highest-risk individuals in highest-violence neighborhoods; evaluation shows significant reductions in	3	5	0	

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PILLAR				
Potential Actions	**Support**	**Learn More**	**Do Not Support**	**Comments and Discussion**
shootings and homicides (Johns Hopkins CVI)				
H. Focused Deterrence / Group Violence Intervention: law enforcement and community partners deliver a balanced message of swift legal consequences and social service support; average 30% reduction in violent crime (Johns Hopkins CVI)	2	5	1	• How would "swift legal consequences" be defined? People have a right to due process. • Prefer restorative programs over punitive.
I. Violence Reduction Council / Homicide Review Commission: multi-agency, multi-disciplinary review of homicides and shootings to identify system gaps and develop prevention policy; Milwaukee MHRC associated with 52% sustained reduction in homicides (Johns Hopkins CVI)	3	6	1	• We already have multiple multidisciplinary teams that deal with all kinds of reviews of issues in the City. • Is the intention to create a separate group? Instead, refine the responsibilities of an existing team or committee to accomplish specific goals. • Agree that police need to work with other groups to review cases. • Need more community, fewer government agencies.
J. Newport News model: a community gun violence intervention grant program that	2	4	0	• We're already doing this. • Virginia Beach would benefit from establishing a program that is in

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PILLAR				
Potential Actions	**Support**	**Learn More**	**Do Not Support**	**Comments and Discussion**
awarded approx. $1.8M to 19 organizations (pre-reads)				Newport News – VIP Trauma Recover Center.
K. Establish a Violence Reduction Council to convene law enforcement, community members, criminal justice professionals, and service providers to analyze gun violence, identify system gaps, and develop prevention policy; Johns Hopkins has helped multiple cities establish these including Hampton, VA (Johns Hopkins CVI)	3	4	2	• The task force is already doing this – don't want to create another council. • Could be worth trying. What are the results if they do this? • There has been success in Hampton with this program. • Support the work already being done while addressing remaining gaps.
Additional Discussion: • These are good ideas, but how do they correlate to making Virginia Beach safer? • Don't want to duplicate services – some of these resources are available, but need to make the public aware. • G, H, and I – need to invest in the best for this to work; need experience and expertise.				

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION – ENVIRONMENTAL & PLACE-BASED PILLAR				
Potential Actions	**Support**	**Learn More**	**Do Not Support**	**Comments and Discussion**
A. Enhance street lighting	13	0	0	• Need to do this at the oceanfront in particular. • AAA does some of this. • Also consider curb appeal, landscape, sight lines. • CPTED – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. Outdoor lighting helps reduce crime. • CPTED isn't just limited to lighting. Landscaping and other development elements can contribute to decreasing crime rates. • A challenge is that new lighting must following the master lighting formula; must coordinate with Public Works and consider budget. • Some cities have the ability to fluctuate their lighting (e.g., increase lighting/brightness temporarily in specific areas).
B. Develop historically challenged locations	4	3	2	• This is incumbent upon C – can't support outright until questions about C are answered. • If historically challenged means high crime, then we should do whatever

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION – ENVIRONMENTAL & PLACE-BASED PILLAR				
Potential Actions	**Support**	**Learn More**	**Do Not Support**	**Comments and Discussion**
				we can do to change that, including economic development • Not sure what this does for crime – how does this help a safer VB? • Support in the future, but need something that will help right now.
C. Identify historically challenged locations through economic investment	4	4	3	• Are we using economic investment to identify historically challenged locations? • Not well-worded – Combine B and C. • Need to redefine C if it moves forward. • Do not think economic investment is what is needed in historically challenged areas – there are structural needs that go beyond economic needs (like housing, transportation). Need to make neighborhoods livable before economic investment. • Not sure what that does for crime – how does this help a safer VB? • Does this mean racially diverse? • Poverty is a driver of crime. • This needs to be reframed.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION – ENVIRONMENTAL & PLACE-BASED PILLAR				
Potential Actions	**Support**	**Learn More**	**Do Not Support**	**Comments and Discussion**
				• Taxes are the same across the city but investment isn't equal across the city. • Economic investment can help break cycles – contributes to homeownership, business, jobs, etc. • Each area of the City should have a long-term plan. • Investment reduces crime.
D. Fund HRT bus corridors	8	2	4	• Consider multimodal solutions, not just HRT bus corridors. • Need to consider safety at bus stops and safety for bus drives. • Support but need more multimodal. Not a walkable city. Need sidewalks – disabled people – not an accessible city. (DOJ sued for curb cuts) • Caveat/support microtransit • Already spend too much money – doesn't help ASAP • Need to consider microtransit separately.
E. Increase public/private partnerships for physical space activation	6	1	1	• Sounds good but how do you do it? • Need more affordable, safe third spaces – places for kids to go. • We're already doing this.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION – ENVIRONMENTAL & PLACE-BASED PILLAR				
Potential Actions	**Support**	**Learn More**	**Do Not Support**	**Comments and Discussion**
				• Partnerships could be about getting existing resources coordinated. • Hotel taxes contribute to the City but they get nothing back for it.

Additional Discussion:

- There's no short term fix, everything costs money.
- Housing needs to be addressed.
- Oceanfront has different needs than the city as a whole.
- Previous tourist-focused transit services were unsuccessful and created concerns among residents about funding services they did not use.
- Police need a seat at the table when there are economic development proposals. Often, by the time police give feedback on a proposal, it's too costly to address – they need to be there during planning.

LEGISLATION & POLICY				
Potential Actions	**Score**	**No 0 2.9**	**Maybe 3.0 3.4**	**Yes 3.5+**
A. Establish no-gun zones near entertainment districts Comments: • There will be more guns from people trying to prove a point • But could incorporate into HB778? (if not already)	3.3			
B. Advocate for HB778 or successor pop-up gathering legislation	4.4			
C. Increase consequences and penalties for instigators of pop-up gatherings	3.8			
D. Allow/seek cost recovery from pop-up event organizers where possible under existing or future law	3.9			
E. Trespass law enhancements to enable proactive enforcement	3.1			
F. Maintain curfew for unaccompanied minors.	4.3			
G. Curfew authority	2.9			
H. Support restoring DUI checkpoint authority and reclassifying secondary offenses	2.9			
I. Reduce the ~11% Police patrol time currently spent on mental health calls (also related to below) Comments: • Explore opportunities for mental health reform – more of a holistic problem in the Commonwealth, not just VB	3.2			
J. Temporary Detention Order (TDO) reform: allow qualified non-police professionals to perform TDO duties Comments:	4.1			

LEGISLATION & POLICY				
Potential Actions	**Score**	**No 0 2.9**	**Maybe 3.0 3.4**	**Yes 3.5+**
• TDOs allow non-LEOs to do the transports • Working on it currently but not implemented yet				
K. Provide youth and young adults conflict de-escalation training, social-emotional learning// School-based conflict resolution/mediation curriculum (HRPDC 2023 regional legislative priority)	3.2			
L. VBPS currently can negotiate lower credit hour rates for career training programs, but that ability may be going away. Need statewide legislation to protect credit hour costs for students. Comments: • VCCS credit hours will no longer be funded to the same extent it is now – more out of pocket costs locally	2.3			
M. Pass local ordinances on parental accountability for juvenile offenders	2.8			
N. Hold parents of juvenile offenders accountable Comments: • Already have the ability to do this	3.0			
O. Pursue gun storage and straw purchase legislation at state level	3.2			
P. Look at legislative authority for Police use of drones Comments: • Authority needs to come from General Assembly	4.5			

LEGISLATION & POLICY				
Potential Actions	**Score**	**No 0 2.9**	**Maybe 3.0 3.4**	**Yes 3.5+**
Q. Background checks for gun transactions for dealers and individuals	3.6			
R. Establish repeat/violent offender registry	2.8			