

# BRUCE L. THOMPSON

November 11, 2019

Mayor Bobby Dyer

Vice Mayor James Wood

Councilmembers Jessica Abbott, Michael Berlucchi, Barbara Henley, Louis Jones,  
John Moss, Aaron Rouse, Guy Tower, Rosemary Wilson, Sabrina Wooten

**Via email**

Dear Mr. Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor and City of Virginia Beach Councilmembers,

Over the past several months there has been a considerable amount of discussion about development opportunities at Rudee Loop. Some of those discussions suggested I was submitting a PPEA proposal for a mixed-use project consisting of hotels, restaurants and a timeshare. Clearly if there was an opportunity, I would submit a proposal but not through a PPEA process as I fully believe the PPEA process does not serve the city or developer well. The best results for all concerned will come as a result of an RFP process, which will allow the city to set out their objectives and give a broad range of prospective developers' ample time to pull together a thoughtful response.

All that being said, I am of the opinion that the development of Rudee Loop for anything other than an iconic park and parking garage is premature. A competitive project to the potential Dome, Pier, Vibe District and Convention Hotel will further complicate underwriting and financing for those projects and dampen tenant interest.

Notwithstanding the foregoing and my interest if commercial development were to occur at this site, I believe the highest and best use for the citizens and tourism industry in Virginia Beach would be a world class park that would complement and expand upon the existing highly utilized recreational opportunities that exist there today. Grommet Island, surfing and the entertainment offerings all receive national attention for our city and are well received by visitors and residents alike. Any commercial development of almost any scale will compromise those activities. Further, I seriously doubt any hotel, multifamily or timeshare developer would be interested in a project if the beach behind or adjacent to their property was compromised by a surfing area and a large playground for kids with disabilities. Nor would any commercial development be as viable if it were set back such that a park for residents and visitors could enjoy the premium vistas and recreational areas. Equally concerning for any developers would be the current use of Rudee for

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a staging area for tractor trailers and support for our major events that occur at Rudee (*SITW, the Marathons, Monster Trucks, ECSC and other regional surfing events, etc*).

There is hardly any place I can think of in the mid-Atlantic and possibly the East Coast that can replicate Rudee Loop. Clearly that is why so many developers have tried to get control of that real estate over the years. The opportunity exists for the city to retain ownership of the "LOOP" and create a venue that would be an asset for the entire tourism industry and a place our residents could enjoy and be proud.

Once again, IF the city were to commit this iconic property to commercial development of any scale, it should pause until the current proposed projects have secured financing and tenants. At that time, the city should state the CITY'S goals for Rudee and have a widely publicized RFP process to which my company along with numerous others would respond.

However, if the city were to encourage commercial development at Rudee, not unlike the arena or pier that had been previously proposed, this would be yet another lost opportunity to create a real defining icon for the city and the tourism industry.

Sincerely,



Bruce Thompson

Cc: Tom Leahy  
Ron Williams  
Kathy Warren