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# Request for Information and Ideas (RFII) Response

Prepared for:

City of Virginia Beach Development Authority  
Department of Economic Development

Proposal Issued:

July 25, 2022

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# THANK YOU

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## FOR CONSIDERING US!

Thank you of the opportunity to submit a concept for the development of a park and related amenities on the "Rudee Inlet Property" owned by the city and more commonly referred to as the "Rudee Loop".

The Virginia Gentlemen Foundation (501c3) has participated in two successful public private partnerships with the city.

Grommet Island, the first ever fully accessible Beach Park and playground in the United States, was designed, developed, and funded (3.5M) by the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation (VGF). Grommet island park has received national recognition for its inclusive design and set a standard for similar projects in other seaside communities. The Park not only has serviced the disabled community but also highlighted the cities commitment to inclusiveness and expanding its tourism offerings to EVERY-BODY.

Camp Grom, a 15-million-dollar camp for disabled children and veterans, was developed in partnership with the city. The City provided the property, and it was designed, constructed, and funded by the VGF. The camp provided every camp amenity one would find at most any abled bodied camp but once again designed for those with physical and emotional disabilities .

Through the highly successful JT Walk and Beach party and other fundraising events the VGF has designed and funded a neo natal ambulance (the Grombulance) for the Kings Daughters Children's Hospital. The VGF JT walk over its 13-year history has also raised and donated over 15m to support both ALS research and clinical operations.

VGF is desirous of partnering with the city of Virginia Beach Once again to develop and world class park at Rudee inlet and build upon its legacy of providing unique amenities for the citizens and visitors of VA BEACH. We would work with the community including other non-profits to build consensus around a plan that will provide opportunities for action sports, entertainment and comfortable spaces for people watching, fishing, and surfing.

We are submitting a two draft plans for the park to begin discussion with the community and city as to programing and design. These plans are based upon a survey that the VGF has conducted online over the past year to determine a baseline for public interest in the design elements as well as a potential name for the park.

Lastly, the VGF will assume the responsibility as they have in the past for similar projects to raise all the funds for the park improvements. The city will fund the infrastructure and parking deck. The VGF will design and construct all the improvements as they have in past projects with the city.

We look forward to working with you on this exciting opportunity.

Scott Taylor  
VGF Board Chair

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# BACKGROUND

Since 2007, the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation (VGF) has been leading community-focused fundraising efforts in the City of Virginia Beach. As a non-profit organization with a primary focus of helping area families and individuals affected with disabilities, the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation has partnered with the City of Virginia Beach on various projects to redevelop land and open spaces in a way that would attract new visitors to the city while offering new and unique amenities for residents and tourists that promote an environment for everyone. Ensuring that the city maintains inclusive open spaces that compliment the city's tourism efforts has been an important part of our mission.

As a result, in 2019 after learning that the city was beginning to explore the possibility of developing Rudee Loop, the VGF initiated an online survey to raise community awareness about the opportunity and to gather feedback from the community on the possibility of various proposed uses. The primary focus of the survey was to gauge the community's input for the future of Rudee Loop.

Table 1 below illustrates the general survey results. Respondents were able to score various amenities on a scale of "Love It", "Like It", "Not So Much", and "Please No". The highest scoring amenities included public art structures, recreation areas, bike amenities, a skate park, and shade structures. On the other end of the spectrum, the lowest scoring uses included hotel, restaurants, and commercial development. These survey results provide a fairly clear message from the community, indicating that the overall preferred use of the Rudee Loop area be used as open recreational space and a public park.



Amenity	Love It / Like It	Not So Much/Please No
Shade Structures	76%	18%
Skate Park	72%	21%
Recreation Areas	72%	19%
Bike Amenities	68%	21%
Public Art Structures	67%	21%
Artistic Public Seating	65%	22%
Discovery Meadow	61%	25%
Stage & Plaza	59%	31%
Playground	57%	31%
Dog Park	56%	24%
Game Deck	54%	30%
Basketball Courts	46%	42%
Restaurants	43%	48%
Hotel	13%	55%
Commercial	29%	64%

Table 1 .

With suggestions based on the online poll, Imagine Rudee Loop, and open to continuing feedback, the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation suggests these "Park Only" concepts with the hope that the development of Rudee Loop and the rich history and spacious feel of the area will remain intact. We believe in the Park Only Concept based on the survey results above and feel this proposal will be the most beneficial for not only the City of Virginia Beach but also the community and visitors it serves.

For more information, you can access the online survey at [www.imaginerudeeloop.com](http://www.imaginerudeeloop.com).



# OPTION 1

We set out to revive and redevelop the waterfront open space and turn it into a green urban fabric that connects to existing uses and creates a sense of place for both active and passive activities. Our goal is to create a boardwalk destination, remediate the site with native plants and create a sustainable community.

The design mimics the flow of water, creating a community park with curved patterns and earth art. The park provides a kid friendly playground, splash pad, and an expansion of our successful Grommet Island Park. Our plan also includes uniquely designed skate park that would incorporate local graffiti artists. The park has an event stage with multipurpose event lawn. We also wanted to honor the surfing community that has utilized the site for decades by creating a surfing museum and surfer walk paying homage to local legends in the surfing community.

The existing uses of the site (Grommet Island, fishing and surfing) make proximity of parking very important. Our plan includes on- street ADA, surface parking and an approximately 665 space parking garage. The parking structure is wrapped with a park office & maintenance area, restrooms, bath house, a non-profit concessions space, and the surfing museum.

One of the key elements of the site is its' relationship to the water. We utilize the space under the existing overpass for a waterfront exercise deck and created fishing decks to maintain the rich fishing culture at Rudee Loop but in a more intentional fashion. Another key element of this design is the extension of the oceanfront walking path onto the jetty. These iconic features will make the new Rudee Loop Park a place making destination.



# OPTION 1 – Plan View



## LEGEND

- |                                 |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Exercise Decks under Overpass | 8 Plaza Parking                 | 15 Existing Residential              |
| 2 Skate Park                    | 9 Grommet Island Park Expansion | 16 Garage                            |
| 3 Fishing Decks                 | 10 Event Stage                  | 17 Park Office & Service             |
| 4 Playground                    | 11 1 Acre Events Lawn           | 18 Restrooms and Bath House          |
| 5 Splash Pad                    | 12 Dune Landscape               | 19 Concessions Space for Non-profit  |
| 6 Sunken Garden                 | 13 Existing Plaza & Memorial    | 20 Surfing Museum                    |
| 7 Entry Plaza with Gateway      | 14 Jetty Walk                   | 21 Surfer Walk with Potential Statue |
|                                 |                                 | 22 Boardwalk                         |

WAV Surf  
Camp & Lessons

Strommel  
Island Park  
Accessible  
Beach park  
with  
lifeguard



# OPTION 2

With a focus on redeveloping Rudee Loop to provide a community activity zone, this site plan is more geometric in nature rooting back to urban fabric of the Virginia Beach waterfront grid. This plan creates an extensive interaction with the waterfront promenade that includes barrier free sloped paths with seating steps that are part of an international design trend to further engage the public with waterfronts. The overall nature of the plan incorporates a more nautical feel with a large sailboat shade structure, plaza and boardwalk destination as a prime focal point. A multifunction lawn and kids splash park promote activities for all ages and community events. The plan also strives to expand the Grommet Island Parking and further emphasizing the natural beachfront ecosystems.



# OPTION 2 – Plan View



Parking: Garage: 665  
           Surface: 82  
 Existing Parking: 65  
 Park Office & Service: 2075 Sf  
 Restroom and Bath House: 4833 Sf  
 Concession Space for Non-profit: 7510 Sf  
 Surfing Museum: 9293 Sf

## LEGEND

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>1</b> Exercise Decks                  | <b>8</b> Playground                     | <b>15</b> Garage                         |
| <b>2</b> Skate Park                      | <b>9</b> Splash Pad                     | <b>16</b> Park Office & Service          |
| <b>3</b> Stepped Fishing Plaza Edge      | <b>10</b> Grommet Island Park Expansion | <b>17</b> Restrooms and Bath House       |
| <b>4</b> Open Lawn                       | <b>11</b> Existing Plaza & Memorial     | <b>18</b> Concessions                    |
| <b>5</b> Covered Stage                   | <b>12</b> Grommet Island Remains        | <b>19</b> Surfing Museum                 |
| <b>6</b> Drop-Off with Sculpture Element | <b>13</b> Jetty Walk                    | <b>20</b> Surfer Walk & Potential Statue |
| <b>7</b> Plaza Parking                   | <b>14</b> Existing Residential          |  |



WAV Surf  
Camp & Lessons



Cremet  
Island Park

Accessible  
beach park  
with a  
background

# SUMMARY

We firmly believe that based on our experience and dedication to the City of Virginia Beach, we are the right team to redevelop Rudee Loop and bring an iconic park to life. We want to see a park that is by the people and for the people, allowing the existing uses of the park to flourish while making an attraction for everyBODY. We are ready to work with the City and citizens to incorporate additional feedback and create the best park the East Coast has ever seen! If selected, we would engage Gold Key PHR as construction manager for this project as they have done with past projects involving the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation.



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# FINANCIAL CAPACITY

**We have raised and donated:**

**\$2.5 Million for ALS**

**\$15 Million for Camp Grom**

**\$1.5 Million for Grommet Island**

What we are proposing is a community-oriented effort. The VGF would raise money from the community for the park improvements, as it has done on previous projects. The Virginia Gentlemen have a proven track record of raising the funds necessary to develop this type of project.

For example, the VGF previously partnered with the City of Virginia Beach to develop Grommet Island Park, the first fully accessible beach playground. This 15,000 square foot beach park features wheelchair accessible entrances and an incredible playground that includes poured-in-place surfacing, raised sand tables for sandcastle building at an accessible height, a sensory board for children who are autistic and visually impaired, and a sway boat. The playground also boasts sculptural features such as dolphins, a surfboard, and a wave that are all fully accessible for children to pretend to ride the waves and swim with the dolphins. **The Virginia Gentlemen Foundation raised \$1.5 million to develop and construct the park, which was subsequently given as a gift to the City of Virginia Beach.**

Additionally, the VGF previously partnered with the City of Virginia Beach to develop Camp Grom, a day retreat developed especially for wounded veterans and their families, the families of fallen war heroes and children and adults with and without disabilities. The 70-acre site in Virginia Beach holds an aquatic center, an outdoor lake with fishing, a gym/auditorium, picnic shelters, a sports field, a water spray park and much more. **The Virginia Gentlemen Foundation raised over \$15 million in contributions and in-kind donations to develop and construct Camp Grom.**

Furthermore, The Virginia Gentlemen Foundation has continued to play an active role in supporting the City of Virginia Beach on these projects. **To-date, the VGF has contributed \$200,000 to the City of Virginia Beach to support the ongoing maintenance of Grommet Island Park.** Additionally, the VGF has contributed another \$150,000 to the local YMCA of South Hampton Roads for the ongoing upkeep of Camp Grom.

As we have successfully done on these public private projects with the City of Virginia Beach, The Virginia Gentlemen through active sponsorship relationships, and donor relations will raise the funds necessary to complete this project.

Active and Long Standing Contributors to the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation include:

- TowneBank - GEICO - Hampton Roads Community Foundation -
- PRA Group - BB&T - Gold Key | PHR - Sysco Hampton Roads -
- The Franklin Johnston Group - Ballard Construction - Optima Health -

# PROJECT EXPERIENCE

JT'S CAMP GROM – Public Private Partnership



In our most unique community collaboration, the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation teamed up with the YMCA of South Hampton Roads to create a landmark new adventure park for those who need it most.

YMCA JT's Camp Grom is a day retreat developed especially for wounded veterans and their families, the families of fallen war heroes and children and adults with differing abilities. It is a special place where everyone in the family can spend time and participate, together. Unlike traditional camps, Camp Grom delivers a unique day of activities surrounded by family and friends.

This 70-acre site in Virginia Beach offers a variety of adaptive and integrated outdoor and indoor adventure opportunities. Camp Grom's water features include an aquatic center with a zero-entry pool and resistance area, an outdoor lake for fishing and fun, complete with a cable wakeboarding system, kayaks, and more, and an outdoor splash pad and lazy river combination. A full-sized gym with staging area, athletic fields, archery area, quiet sensory room, and alpine climbing tower are some of the other highlights of Camp Grom.

Thanks to the support of many individuals, groups, and companies, YMCA JT's Camp Grom will allow families and individuals to take place in personal development activities, educational programs, and entertainment and social gatherings. The goal at Camp Grom is to encourage and inspire so that participants go home with a new sense of confidence, empowering them and improving their quality of life. JT's Camp Grom opened in 2018 and cost approximately \$15 Million.



# JT'S GROMMET ISLAND – Another Successful Public Private Partnership

JT's Grommet Island was established in 2010 with a total cost of \$1.9 Million. This oceanfront park and playground is 100% handicap accessible for everyBODY. It's an oceanfront destination that's welcoming to disabled children and adults, and ensures everybody of a day at the beach. About Grommet Island Park: JT's Grommet Island Beach Park and Playground For EveryBODY is the first of its kind in America. The idea was born when Josh Thompson's family wanted to go to the beach, but he stayed behind because of the difficulty of getting his wheelchair to the beach, across the sand and down to the surf. They wondered how many more people never got to the beach for the same reason. The park idea was born.



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## ABOUT THE VIRGINIA GENTLEMEN FOUNDATION

The Virginia Gentlemen Foundation was formed in 2007 by a group of young men with a desire to make a difference. They decided to pool their resources and talents to help area families affected with disabilities. The Virginia Gentlemen Foundation was born as a non-profit organization.

The following month, the brother of one of the founding members was diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease. In response, the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation narrowed its focus to support the local fight against ALS. With energy and resourcefulness, the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation has since rallied the community and the region in unprecedented ways, quickly becoming a leading fundraiser for the National ALS Society as well as, developing other projects and initiatives to support this community.

The Virginia Gentleman Foundation (VGF) works to make local life more accessible for people with disabilities. VGF raises funds to build community assets and resources in order increase accessibility in our area. VGF partners with city government, nonprofits, and corporations who have the same goal: To help provide equal access opportunities for all citizens within their communities.

VGF seeks to be a resource, sharing information about accessibility throughout our community. Visit this page frequently for information and updates on community resources that make our local area more accessible and fun for people with disabilities.

VGF held the annual JT Walk and Beach Party to raise money for ALS research at the Virginia Beach oceanfront boardwalk from 2008-2020 and now holds Virginia Beach's only Seafood Festival to support their mission. The Foundation has donated nearly \$4M in grants to universities, medical programs, and doctors throughout the nation to support their mission to find a cure and eradicate ALS (Lou Gherig's Disease). In addition, VGF built Grommet Island - the first-ever, fully handicap-accessible beach park and playground in the nation, as well as JT's Camp Grom - The only camp of its kind on the East Coast - an amazing 70-acre, beach-style adventure camp is designed to welcome EveryBody. Wounded veterans, families of the fallen, and adults and children with disabilities or special needs will finally have a place to call their own. In 2011, the JT Walk event donated a mobile intensive care unit to CHKD. We're proud to have helped facilitate support for our community and those affected by ALS.





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# RESUMES



Scott Taylor  
VGF Board Chair  
Manager, Taylor Construction

Scott is the managing director at Taylor Construction and has 15+ years in the Residential, Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Industrial Construction arenas. He has participated in the management, supervision, development, and finance roles he's been responsible to complete, with as many as 125 different projects annually. Scott is currently tasked with business development, strategic planning, and oversight of the Operations, Project Management, Finance, Quality Control, and Safety Departments at Taylor Construction. Scott believes that "with great blessings, comes great responsibility" and has applied this approach to give back to the Community through Taylor Construction.

Through his Board Chair position with the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation, Scott will be responsible to lead VGF through the collaboration, design, submittal, approval, fundraising, and implementation processes with the City and Community to create the next vision for Rudee Loop - with a focus on both accessibility and inclusiveness for EveryBody.



Justin Ballard  
VGF Board Member  
Director of Business Development  
S.B. Ballard

Justin Ballard is the Director of Business Development for S.B. Ballard Construction Company. Justin comes with 15+ years of experience in the commercial construction industry over a variety of different leadership roles and responsibilities within the Company. Working collaboratively with the leadership team, Mr. Ballard oversees all construction operations and corporate functions including strategic planning, project management, estimating, business development, corporate communications, safety, and quality.

Mr. Ballard and his team at S.B. Ballard Construction Company have collectively constructed over 75 parking structures on-schedule and on-budget. Mr. Ballard's well rounded construction experience, along with his overall knowledge of the construction process, assures a smooth and successful completion to the project.

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## RESUMES



James Noel  
VGF Vice Chairman Board of Directors  
Senior Vice President / General Counsel  
The Franklin Johnston Group

James serves as Senior Vice President/General Counsel for The Franklin Johnston Group and is responsible for overseeing the company's legal and insurance divisions. In his role, he provides legal guidance to the company, its executives, and its employees in all areas of operations, development, and dispositions. He also administers the company's risk management and insurance program for its owned and managed properties. James holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, a law degree from William and Mary Law School, and is a graduate of the Financial Management Executive Education Program at UVA's Darden School of Business and the Mini MBA for In-House Counsel Program at Boston University's Questrom School of Business. He continues to be named to Virginia Business Magazine's list of "Legal Elite", and is an active member of the Hampton Roads Chamber Regional Board, and the Board of Directors of Junior Achievement of Greater Hampton Roads, ACCESS College Foundation, CIVIC Leadership Institute, Virginia Beach Vision, and the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation. James is a graduate of the LEAD Hampton Roads Signature Program and the CIVIC Leadership Institute, and served as a Virginia Beach Neptune Festival Triton under King Neptune XLV.



Clay Tourault  
Vice President  
Atlantic Foundations and United Contractors

Clay Tourault, Vice President of Atlantic Foundations and United Contractors, has over 15 years experience in the concrete industry and has overseen projects from Camp Lejeune to Washington, DC. A few key projects include: the ODU Football Stadium, Virginia Beach City Hall, Cape Henry Collegiate and John B. Dey additions, and the Virginia Beach Housing Resources Center. Atlantic Foundations, Inc. and United Contractors has provided residential foundations through the area for over 35 years. Clay attended Cape Henry Collegiate School and Arizona State University.

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# RESUMES



Kona Gray FASLA, PLA  
Principal  
EDSA

Strong leadership and a sense of purpose are part of Kona's DNA. Having practiced in 30+ countries, his global management sense has positively shaped the outcomes of many award-winning assignments. He successfully integrates creativity and regional resources into functional environments that invigorate the imagination. With an uncompromising dedication to quality, Kona creates welcoming public places that bring a strong sense of vitality back to neighborhoods. Blending sensitivity with innovative design solutions, he unites a client's vision with his own vanguard designs to produce programs with purpose and presence. Kona has worked on many projects in the Coastal Virginia Region, including a conceptual master plan for Atlantic Avenue to increased real estate values and attracted new residents and guests to the area, residential offerings at Bay Creek and Master Planning and Design for the entire Cavalier Resort. Kona has his Bachelors of Landscape Architecture from University of Georgia, School of Environment and Design.



Craig Stoner PLA, ASLA  
Principal  
EDSA

With a practical eye for design, Craig is a strong proponent of creating environments that seamlessly integrate with their locations on an ecological, cultural, social and economic level. He has the unique ability to cognitively embrace the essence of a site and address the fine details that contribute to a cohesive project design. Craig utilizes his knowledge of design and construction to shape spaces that respond, engage and inspire the people who inhabit them. His strong organizational abilities allow him to streamline and synthesize complex project challenges - - translating concepts into unique and equally beautiful places. Craig has his Bachelors of Landscape Architecture from Pennsylvania State University.

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# ACTIVE PROJECTS

VGF have on going ownership of Camp Grom with YMCA as the vessel in which the camp runs and operates. VGF assists with maintenance costs each year and continue to support the camp through events both monetarily and through volunteer time. VGF's Director of Events is on the Camp Grom Board and other VGF members assist with regular upkeep and preservation by volunteering their time and talent.

Since VGF has recently wrapped up construction of Camp Grom and the previous year's JT Walk was dedicated solely to funding research for a cure for ALS, VGF is in a perfect position to dedicate their focus on the Rudee Loop project. VGF is confident in their capacity to raise funds to support the project's success and transform the Loop into a World-Class fully accessible community resource.



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# DISCLOSURES

At this time, we are not aware of any potential conflicts of interest that could be relevant to this project in any manner.

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# CONTACT US

Missy Griffin  
Director of Events

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757-376-1965

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# REFERENCES

Billy Almond, Principal Landscape Architect  
WPL

242 Mustang Trail, Suite 8  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

[Billy@wplsite.com](mailto:Billy@wplsite.com)

757-431-1041

Mr. Almond was instrumental in assisting the design team and VGF with the Camp Grom project.

Ian Hill, President

A&W Contractors, Inc.

530 Woodlake Circle

Chesapeake, VA 23320

[ian@awcontractors.com](mailto:ian@awcontractors.com)

757-523-8668

Mr. Hill worked with VGF on site preparation and other construction and infrastructure details on the Camp Grom project.

Tom Retnauer, AIA, LEED AP BD+C

RBA Architects

423 South Battlefield Blvd, Suite 101

Chesapeake, VA 23322

[tom@rbapc.com](mailto:tom@rbapc.com)

757-546-2471

Mr. Retnauer and his design group, RBA, designed the Adventure Center at Camp Grom.

George Clarke & Mark Olmstead

MEB

4016 Holland Blvd

Chesapeake, VA 23323

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[molmstead@meb.group](mailto:molmstead@meb.group)

757-487-5858

MEB was the general contractor for the Picnic and Pavilion contractors for Camp Grom.

David Keith, FAIA, LEED AP BC+C

120 Atlantic Street, Suite 100

Norfolk, VA 23510

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757-321-9600

Mr. Keith was responsible for the Master Plan of Camp Grom.

Billy Foster, President

TowneBank

2101 Parks Ave, Suite 200

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757-417-6482

Mr. Foster was a key factor in the financing of the Camp Grom project.

Samantha Sully, Private Banking Officer

TowneBank

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[samantha.sully@townebank.net](mailto:samantha.sully@townebank.net)

Mrs. Sully was the loan administrator, assisting with financing and loan draws, for the Camp Grom project.