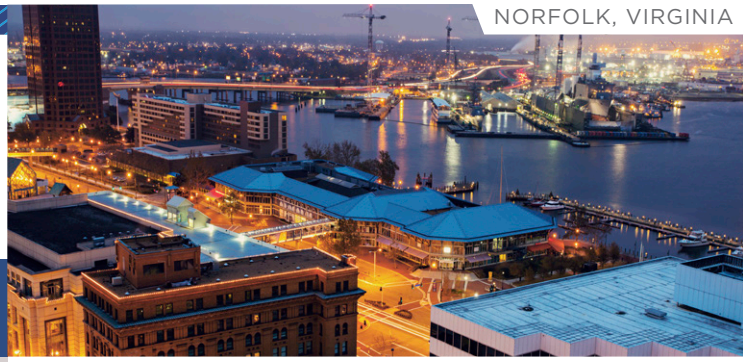
OPPORTUNITY PROFILE:

PRESIDENT & CEO

DOWNTOWN NORFOLK COUNCIL



THE LEADERSHIP VISION

The Downtown Norfolk Council (DNC) seeks an extraordinary, collaborative executive to serve as its next President & CEO. DNC is advancing Downtown Norfolk as the economic, cultural, residential, and civic heart of Hampton Roads. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO will lead DNC and the Downtown Improvement District, strengthen DNC's role as the City's Downtown Development Corporation, and unite public- and private-sector partners around a bold, actionable vision for Downtown's future.

The Leadership Mandate:

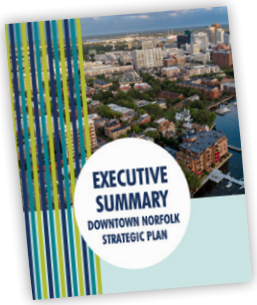
- Champion and implement a compelling vision that advances Downtown's economic vitality, resilience, and authentic urban character.
- Make DNC a more active development partner—attracting investment, supporting business growth, and helping move complex redevelopment initiatives forward.
- Deliver exceptional Clean & Safe, hospitality, beautification, maintenance, and placemaking services with clear standards and measurable results.
- Build trust and consensus among ratepayers, city leaders, businesses, property owners, residents, developers, institutions, and civic partners.
- Assess and strengthen DNC's structure, team, technology, systems, and finances to create a modern, high-performing, sustainable organization.

WHEN YOU SEE THIS ICON, 'CLICK' TO LEARN MORE.
Throughout this document, you'll find links to informative websites and documents.

Downtown Norfolk dn

The Downtown Norfolk Council is an award-winning urban place management organization (UPMO) comprised of more than 300 businesses and individual members dedicated to promoting and enhancing business, cultural, retail and residential initiatives in Downtown Norfolk.

The annual operating budget is approximately $3.4M with a staff of 12 (9 full-time, 3 part-time).



DNC 2024
Strategic Plan

Their Website:
DowntownNorfolk.org

VIBRANT, WALKABLE WATERFRONT
Enjoy scenic river views.



MARITIME & NAVAL HERITAGE
Norfolk is home to the world's largest naval base.

THE NEON DISTRICT
Norfolk's mural-filled creative hub for the arts.

MORE ABOUT THE DNC

Downtown Norfolk Fund

The Downtown Norfolk Fund is an extension of the Downtown Norfolk Council that seeks resources that allow the organization to expand programming and projects in Downtown. A federally recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that can accept charitable gifts, the Fund is an opportunity for both individuals and corporations to support creative placemaking, unique events and improvements to the public realm.

Downtown Improvement District (DID)

The Downtown Improvement District (DID) — *see boundary map below* — was originally ordained by Norfolk City Council on February 9, 1999, renewed in 2003, re-ordained in 2009, 2014, 2019 and, most recently, in 2026. As per the State enabling legislation, Special Services Districts provide property owners with the ability to increase the tax assessment on their properties to pay for an enhanced level of service, above and beyond services offered at the municipal level.




CHRYSLER HALL


COCKTAILS AT CODEX



Downtown Norfolk **2030 Plan**



Downtown Norfolk Annual Report: 2024 – 2025

DOWNTOWN NORFOLK

A great place to live, work, and play.

Downtown Norfolk has a particularly appealing combination of waterfront living, urban energy, culture, jobs, and walkability. You can live, work, eat, see a show, walk by the water, catch a game, take public transportation, and experience major cultural attractions — all without leaving the urban core!

Waterfront living is part of everyday life.

The Elizabeth River is right at your doorstep, with waterfront parks, marinas, restaurants, cruises, and harbor views. Norfolk has an unusually extensive shoreline—144 miles across its rivers, lakes, and the Chesapeake Bay.

A genuinely walkable urban core.

Downtown has a compact, intimate street pattern with residences, restaurants, offices, entertainment, and public spaces close together. The city is continuing to emphasize a walkable, connected downtown.

Great transportation options.

You do not have to drive everywhere. Downtown is served by Hampton Roads Transit's light rail, buses, and ferry connections, while Norfolk's Amtrak station connects to the light rail system.

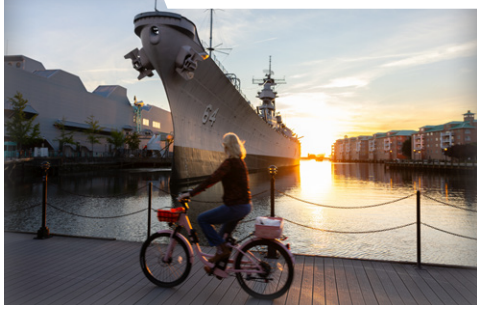
It is a serious employment center.

Downtown is not just a place to go out—it is a major regional business hub. Norfolk's 2050 planning documents identify roughly 1,100 downtown businesses and more than 18,000 workers commuting into Downtown each day, with a particularly strong concentration of office space and knowledge-sector employment.

An impressive arts and culture scene.

Downtown puts you close to venues and institutions including Chrysler Hall, Scope Arena, the NorVA, the Virginia Symphony, Virginia Opera, Harrison Opera House, Wells Theatre, Nauticus, the Chrysler Museum of Art, Perry Glass Studio, D'Art Center, the Hurrah Players, and the MacArthur Memorial.

ELIZABETH RIVER TRAIL



BIKE & WALKABLE URBAN CORE



TIDE LIGHT RAIL SYSTEM



WELLS THEATRE



DOWNTOWN NORFOLK, continued...

You can experience Norfolk's maritime identity up close.

Nauticus and the USS Wisconsin BB-64 are right on the downtown waterfront. Add harbor cruises and the working port, and you get a maritime experience that is difficult to replicate in most American downtowns.

Excellent food and nightlife within walking distance.

Downtown has a growing mix of restaurants, bars, cafés, entertainment venues, and locally owned businesses. The city's current planning data shows restaurants, bars, cafés, and other dining establishments make up **46% of downtown storefront businesses.** *Saltine* is one example of the seafood-forward dining that fits Norfolk particularly well.

Town Point Park gives downtown room to breathe.

Town Point Park is a signature waterfront green space where residents can walk, relax, enjoy river views, and attend concerts and festivals. The city also has more than 100 parks overall.

Downtown is still evolving—and that's exciting.

There's substantial investment happening in the urban core. Norfolk is actively investing in making downtown more residential, walkable, connected, and vibrant. The former MacArthur Center site is being repositioned for a mixed-use future with housing, hotels, retail, open space, and new neighborhood connections. That creates the potential for even more activity and amenities in the years ahead.

It has a distinctive sense of place.

Downtown Norfolk does not feel like a generic office district. It is simultaneously a historic city center, naval hub, waterfront destination, cultural district, residential neighborhood, and gateway to the broader Hampton Roads region. The city's own planning documents describe downtown as the historical, commercial, and cultural heart of Norfolk and the broader region.



CRUISE NORFOLK



SALTINE



TOWN POINT PARK

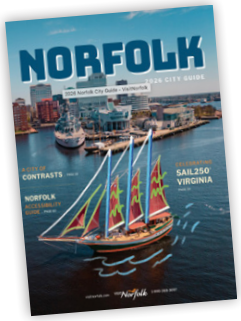


MACARTHUR MEMORIAL

THE CITY OF NORFOLK

Norfolk, Virginia, is a city on the water, but never watered down. Built on character, by characters, Norfolk is a melting pot of people, cultures, and ideas.





Norfolk 2026 City Guide

Some of Norfolk's vibrant & historic neighborhoods:

- Downtown
- Historic Freemason District
- Park Place / Railroad District
- Larchmont / Lochhaven
- Military Highway
- NEON District
- Ghent
- Chelsea
- Riverview
- Oceanview

Norfolk is a city of over 238,000 residents and more than 100 diverse neighborhoods. The city holds a strategic position as the historical, urban, financial, and cultural center of the Hampton Roads area, which has approximately 1.8 million inhabitants and is the 33rd largest metropolitan area in the U.S.

The main industries in Norfolk, Virginia, are military and defense, maritime commerce and logistics, and healthcare. Norfolk is home to **Naval Station Norfolk**, the largest naval base in the world. **Sentara Healthcare** is one of the region's largest employers, and Sentara Norfolk General Hospital is a Level I Trauma Center that is nationally recognized for its cardiac and transplant programs. Other major employers in the Norfolk area include Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, Port of Virginia, PRA Group, Dominion Enterprises and Anthem Insurance.

UPSCALE NIGHTLIFE



CLEAN & SAFE AMBASSADORS



GRANBY STREET



NEIGHBORHOOD HIGHLIGHTS

Vibrant art and culture, historic charm, downtown walkability and scenic views — you'll find it all in Norfolk. These are some of Norfolk's most popular neighborhoods:



1: Downtown: Norfolk's walkable, waterfront downtown is the urban hub of the city full of shopping, entertainment, restaurants and excitement!

2: NEON District: The creative center of the city, NEON's 80+ pieces of public art, live performances and eclectic restaurants are destined to inspire.

3: Historic Freemason District: The city's oldest standing neighborhood, Historic Freemason features beautiful tree-lined cobblestone streets, manicured gardens, historic homes and water views.

4: Ghent: Ghent is filled with character, culture and delicious cuisine — not to mention tons of eclectic eateries, unique shops, art galleries and antique stores.

5: Park Place/Railroad District: Lined with local breweries, eateries and street murals, the industrial neighborhoods of Park Place/Railroad District are sure to get any visit on the right track.

6: Chelsea: One of the most walkable and bikeable neighborhoods in the city, with the celebrated Elizabeth River Trail (ERT) passing through its center.

7: Larchmont/Lochhaven: Next door to Old Dominion University, Larchmont and Lochhaven are home to history, local restaurants, outdoor fun and perfect water views.

8: Riverview: From zoo animals to wildly delicious restaurants, this LGBTQ+ friendly neighborhood truly has something for everyone.

9: Military Highway: Ideal for people on the move, Military Highway plays host to Norfolk International Airport and an abundance of shopping options.

10: Oceanview: The relaxing beachside communities of Ocean View and East Beach are the perfect place to unwind with fresh seafood, sand and sun.

GLASS LIGHT HOTEL & GALLERY



CHRYSLER MUSEUM OF ART



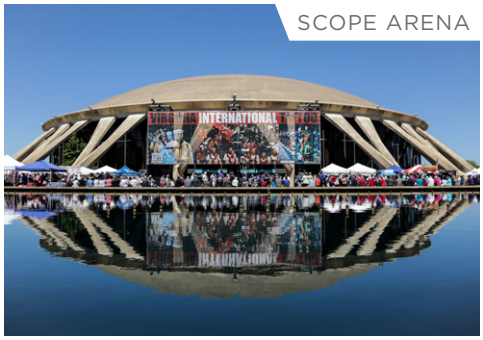
ELATION BREWING



PERRY GLASS STUDIO



SCOPE ARENA



ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW, SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Downtown Norfolk Council

The Opportunity:

The President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) serves as the chief executive and strategic leader of the Downtown Norfolk Council (DNC), an award-winning Urban Place Management Organization responsible for advancing Downtown Norfolk as the economic, cultural, residential, and civic heart of Hampton Roads.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO provides visionary leadership for both the Downtown Norfolk Council and the Downtown Improvement District (DID). The CEO leads organizational strategy, economic development and redevelopment, advocacy, place management, financial stewardship, and organizational excellence. In its role as the City's Downtown Development Corporation, DNC will become a more active development partner—bringing together property owners, businesses, residents, visitors, investors, and public-sector leaders to advance Downtown's future.

As Downtown Norfolk's principal advocate, the CEO builds consensus among diverse stakeholders while positioning Downtown for long-term economic vitality, resilience, and growth. Clean & Safe services are the foundation of this work and the essential operating platform for business growth, investment, placemaking, and an inclusive, welcoming Downtown experience.



Grand Illumination Parade

Experience Required:

- A strategic, visible, and politically astute executive who can address immediate needs while maintaining a clear long-term direction.
- A proven leader in economic development, downtown revitalization, urban place management, business growth, redevelopment, or public-private partnerships.
- An empowering people-leader who builds capable teams, delegates effectively, establishes accountability, and leads organizational change.
- An exceptional listener, communicator, ambassador, and convener with the executive presence to engage public and private leaders from day one.
- A disciplined steward with sound judgment, integrity, emotional intelligence, humility, courage, and financial acumen.
- An entrepreneurial executive with fund raising expertise in identifying diverse sources of revenue to support dynamic programming and development.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1 ADVANCE DOWNTOWN NORFOLK'S VISION, ECONOMIC VITALITY, AND REDEVELOPMENT

The CEO will champion a compelling vision for Downtown Norfolk that strengthens its role as the region's premier center for business, culture, entertainment, housing, and civic life. The CEO will position DNC as a true development partner capable of converting that vision into investment and implementation.

Key responsibilities include:

- Evaluate and lead implementation of DNC's Strategic Plan.
- Identify emerging trends affecting downtowns, including commercial real estate, housing, mobility, tourism, retail, public safety, and changing workplace patterns.
- Advocate for investments and policies that enhance Downtown's competitiveness and long-term resilience.
- Lead and assist business recruitment, retention, expansion, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse.
- Position Downtown Norfolk as an innovative and nationally recognized urban center.
- Attract private and public investment to Downtown and build the partnerships necessary to move complex projects forward.
- Play an instrumental role in large-scale redevelopment initiatives and transformative opportunities throughout Downtown.

2 DELIVER AN EXCEPTIONAL DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

The Downtown Improvement District and its Clean & Safe services are the foundation of DNC's work. The CEO will ensure that Downtown Norfolk remains welcoming, clean, safe, attractive, and vibrant for businesses, employees, residents, and visitors—and that operational excellence supports every economic development, redevelopment, placemaking, and business-growth initiative.

Key responsibilities include:

- Provide strategic oversight of all Downtown Improvement District services.
- Ensure excellence in Clean & Safe operations, hospitality, beautification, maintenance, and placemaking.
- Establish measurable performance standards and continuously improve service delivery.
- Strengthen partnerships with the City of Norfolk, Norfolk Police, Public Works, and other agencies to address quality-of-life issues.
- Balance long-term improvements with decisive action on immediate cleanliness, safety, hospitality, and quality-of-life needs.
- Support programming, events, and public realm improvements that encourage activity and investment throughout Downtown.


STOCKPOT



LAMIA'S CREPES


DOWNTOWN SHOPPING


AMBASSADOR


METALMATISSE

3 BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC TRUST

The CEO serves as Downtown Norfolk's chief ambassador and convener, bringing together Downtown ratepayers and other diverse interests around a shared vision for Downtown's future.

Key responsibilities include:

- Build trusted relationships with the Mayor, City Council, City leadership, business owners, property owners, ratepayers, residents, developers, institutional partners, and neighborhood organizations.
- Serve as the primary advisor to the Board of Directors while supporting effective governance and strategic planning.
- Advocate for Downtown priorities before City Council, civic organizations, regional partners, and industry associations.
- Cultivate productive public-private partnerships that leverage investment and strengthen Downtown.
- Strengthen collaboration with key arts, events, tourism, and regional business partners, including Festevents, the Virginia Arts Festival, Greater Norfolk Corporation, and VisitNorfolk.
- Foster collaboration, transparency, and trust among stakeholders with diverse perspectives.

4 LEAD A HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

The CEO will build an organization that is collaborative, accountable, innovative, and positioned for long-term success. The expanded emphasis on economic development and redevelopment may require meaningful changes to DNC's structure, staffing, capabilities, and systems.

Key responsibilities include:

- Lead, inspire, and empower a talented professional staff.
- Build a culture of trust, accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.
- Delegate effectively while developing future organizational leaders.
- Assess organizational needs and quickly recruit, coach, and retain a capable team aligned with DNC's strategic direction.
- Establish organizational goals, measurable performance metrics, and systems for accountability.
- Modernize technology, data, operating systems, and performance measurement to improve organizational effectiveness and member value.


WINTERFEST


SELDEN MARKET


WAINWRIGHT ROOFTOP


NEON DISTRICT MURAL TOUR

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, continued...

5 ENSURE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The CEO will provide sound financial leadership while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organization and the Downtown Improvement District.

Key responsibilities include:

- Oversee annual operating and capital budgets.
- Ensure responsible stewardship of all financial resources.
- Diversify revenue through memberships, sponsorships, grants, partnerships, and earned income.
- Demonstrate measurable value to Downtown Improvement District ratepayers and DNC members.
- Maintain strong internal controls, transparency, and nonprofit governance.



WATERSIDE HARBORFEST

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

The Board seeks a leader who combines strategic vision with operational excellence and possesses the ability to inspire confidence across both the public and private sectors.

The successful candidate should demonstrate strength in the following areas:

Visionary Leadership

A forward-thinking, strategic executive capable of anticipating change, shaping a strong Downtown, focusing on long-term direction while addressing immediate needs, and positioning Downtown Norfolk for continued success.

Organizational Leadership

An experienced leader who can assess and reshape an organization, quickly build or recruit a capable team, empower others, delegate effectively, develop future leaders, and modernize the systems that allow the organization to thrive beyond any one individual.

Relationship Building

Exceptional ability to bring together Downtown ratepayers, build trust, navigate complex stakeholder environments, facilitate consensus, and engage credibly with elected officials, City leadership, business leaders, community organizations, and residents from the outset.



VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL



NEON CUBE

Place Management and Operational Excellence

A disciplined operator who recognizes Clean & Safe as the foundation of Downtown's success and uses clear standards, partnerships, data, and accountability to deliver a consistently exceptional Downtown experience.

Economic and Community Development

A record of success in economic development, business growth, downtown revitalization, investment attraction, redevelopment, placemaking, and public-private partnerships. Experience in commercial real estate, development finance, or major redevelopment.

Financial Stewardship

Experience managing organizational budgets, diverse funding sources, nonprofit governance, and long-term financial sustainability.

Communication

An engaging communicator with strong executive presence who listens well, communicates clearly, and effectively represents the organization in public settings.

Personal Characteristics

The ideal candidate will demonstrate: politically astute, decisive, visible & influential, executive presence, integrity, emotional intelligence, humility, sound judgment, curiosity, adaptability, optimism, courage, accountability, operationally astute, crisis leadership, and a steward's mindset.

Qualifications

Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred. Ten or more years of executive leadership experience is preferred. Experience with governing boards, elected officials, and diverse stakeholders is essential. Commercial real estate, development finance, or major redevelopment experience is highly desirable. Leadership in Place Management (LPM) certification—*or willingness to obtain it within two years*—is preferred.

NEON FESTIVAL



CEMENTISCOPE



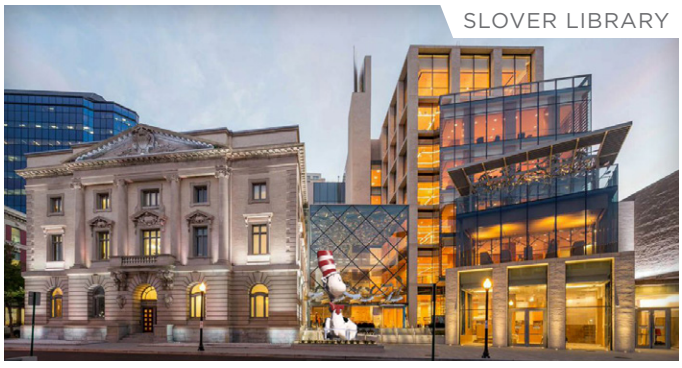
VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL



GRANBY STREET



SLOVER LIBRARY



SUCCESS IN THE ROLE

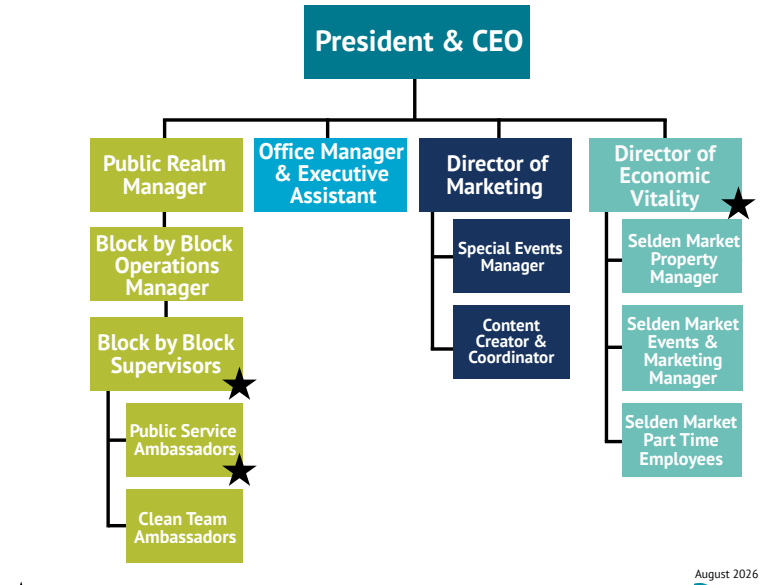
By the end of the first six months, the successful CEO will:

- Complete a productive transition and develop a deep, firsthand understanding of Downtown's people, places, businesses, opportunities, and immediate needs.
- Establish trusted working relationships with staff, the Board, ratepayers, the Mayor, City leadership, and key community and business partners.
- Assess DNC's organizational structure, team capabilities, technology, operating systems, and performance measures; establish a clear action plan; and be fully engaged in leading implementation.

Within three years, the successful CEO will:

- Deliver measurable improvements in Downtown's cleanliness, safety, hospitality, activation, and overall experience.
- Establish DNC as a more active development partner that attracts investment, supports business growth, and helps advance complex redevelopment initiatives.
- Substantially advance DNC's Strategic Plan and strengthen DNC's standing as Downtown Norfolk's leading advocate and convener.
- Build a high-performing, financially sustainable organization characterized by collaboration, accountability, empowered leadership, modern systems, and measurable value for ratepayers and members.

Downtown Norfolk Council's Current Organizational Chart



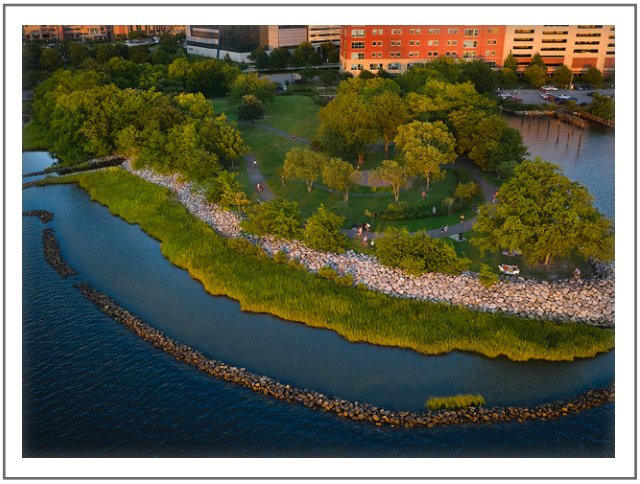
August 2026


S'MORES AMORE


GIANT CHESS


STREET PERFORMER


NEON DISTRICT YOGA



Elizabeth River Trail
credit: @ertnorfolk

Acknowledgments:

A special thank you to the following organizations for providing content and pictures.

Downtown Norfolk Council
www.downtownnorfolk.org

City of Norfolk
www.norfolk.gov

Hampton Roads Chamber
www.hrchamber.com

Hampton Roads Alliance
www.hamptonroadsalliance.com

The City of Norfolk—Norfolk Department of Economic Development
www.norfolkdevelopment.com

Virginia Arts Festival
www.vafest.org

Visit Norfolk
www.visitnorfolktoday.com

Festevents
www.festevents.org

EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTANTS

Integrity
Knowledge
Service

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package will be provided.

Base Salary Range: $225,000 to $260,000

Performance Bonus: Annual Performance Incentives

APPLICATIONS

Electronic applications preferred.

Nominations & Applications should be sent to:

David Smith | dpsmith@hrsinc.com

Please reference the subject line:
Downtown Norfolk Council

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
Open Until Filled

The Downtown Norfolk Council Search Team:

- **David P. Smith**
  Engagement Manager
- **David N. Ginsburg**
  Partner
- **Weida Tucker**
  Partner

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