

## **Questions Received from CAC members at the October 28, 2009 CAC Meeting**

1. How useful a transit system would be for her if she only needed to travel a short distance?

How would it affect driving?

*Answer:* A transit system can be useful for *any* length of trip if it provides a more appealing method of travel between two points than other modes. People use transit for various reasons: some find it more convenient or economical and save on gas, or environmentally friendly, or more in line with a pedestrian lifestyle, or because they save time. Very short trips often occur within transit corridors that feature routes with close station spacing and frequent service (be they buses, streetcars, or light rail) and often provide a better option than walking or driving the same trip. When transit systems attract riders who would otherwise have driven, traffic is reduced since those riders no longer use their cars on the roadway.

2. How loud will the construction and finished transit line be for bordering neighborhoods?

*Answer:* As any construction project, there are instances of associated noise, but every attempt is made to minimize impacts to surrounding areas. The noise associated with the finished transit line will depend on the transit technology used. In operation, a BRT vehicle would sound like a MAX commuter bus. A LRT vehicle which draws its propulsion power from overhead electric catenary wires is very quiet.

3. Which communities will be directly impacted by the transit line and stations? Will station placement be based on neighborhood demand? Will stations be placed near heavily used businesses? Where would the stations be?

*Answer:* As presented during the December 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup> Station Area Workshops the following transit station areas being evaluated as part of the VBTES:

- Witchduck
- Independence (Town Center area)
- Lynn Shores/Thalia
- Lynnhaven Road
- Great Neck/London Bridge
- Oceana
- Birdneck
- Va. Beach Convention Center
- Oceanfront

As the study progresses, specific station locations will be evaluated and identified based on factors that include accessibility, ridership demands, available property, local traffic and circulation impacts and neighborhood/community compatibility.

4. What is the percentage of park and ride versus walk and ride for those who will use either BRT or LRT?

*Answer:* A detailed traffic impact analysis will be conducted to determine the effect of proposed transit station locations along the corridor, including at high volume

intersections. The analysis will also examine current and future traffic conditions and pedestrian activity along with proposed transit operations, schedules, and ridership estimates. The analysis will estimate whether the higher level of service and accessibility provided by fixed guideway transit will enable more people to reach the area by local bus service. The analysis will also examine the multiple means to arrive at the station areas-- walking, biking, transit and by automobile.

5. Can you describe what the potential characteristics of each station would be like?

**Answer:** There will be certain elements that are consistent at each station, such as fare vending machines, benches, overhead canopies, windscreens, bicycle racks, and trash receptacles, etc. More defined characteristics of each station will be based on the results of the ridership analysis and the compatibility with the surrounding community.

6. Is it possible that Newtown Road and Witchduck Road may be future stations but not now during this phase of the planning?

**Answer:** There will be a station at Newtown Road as part The Tide, Norfolk's light rail system currently under construction. Potential stations for the Virginia Beach extension will be analyzed as part of the VBTES project.

7. Will the transit line follow a linear design or something like a spoke and wheel configuration?

**Answer:** The transit extension under study would operate from the end of the The Tide at Newtown Road to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront along the inactive Norfolk Southern Railroad right of way. Future corridors currently not under study could connect other sections of the city to the transit line.

8. Can we look at options that include residential park and ride outside of original destinations? Will park and rides consist of surface parking only?

**Answer:** As a part the VBTES analysis, stations will be studied to determine the need for park-and-ride facilities with appropriate capacity, based on projected system ridership, and appropriate locations for those facilities.

9. Do we have other options other than the LRT and BRT to consider?

**Answer:** LRT and BRT are the transit technologies that will be examined within the Build Scenarios for the AA/SDEIS. The other alternatives that are part of the AA/SDEIS are a No Build option and an Enhanced Bus option.

10. What will the wait time be for the train to cross?

**Answer:** For most existing LRT systems, it takes approximately 30 seconds for a LRT vehicle to completely clear an intersection.

11. What type of fuel?

**Answer:** A BRT vehicle uses clean diesel fuel. A LRT vehicle operates from overhead electric catenary wires.

12. Will they lose access to back roads near the corner of Lynnhaven Pkwy and Va. Beach Blvd? Will the overflow parking along Southern Blvd. be affected?

**Answer:** As a part of the VBTES analysis, efforts will be made minimize impacts to properties adjacent to the inactive Norfolk Southern Railroad right of way.

13. Will there be barriers? Will there be fencing for protection and safety?

**Answer:** Generally fencing is not installed along the right of way or areas where the tracks are at grade level. Fencing is placed on the outside areas of the stations and may extend about 50 feet in each direction.

14. Will the new fire station being built in the Witchduck/Cleveland/Aragona areas have to cross the rail tracks?

**Answer:** Emergency vehicles responding to any emergency heading south from the station would need to cross the right of way. Light rail vehicle operators would be required to yield to emergency vehicles crossing the tracks at any point along the route. As with The Tide in Norfolk, HRT's Safety & Security staff would coordinate with city staff in emergency planning.

15. How much space is needed (how wide) for the bus or light rail and stations?

**Answer:** The amount of space needed for a station varies. The largest land area required in the station area would be for parking and storm water management. The amount of parking required will be identified as part of the ridership forecasting effort now underway. It is anticipated that the inactive Norfolk Southern right of way will be able to accommodate the two tracks and station platform for LRT or the roadway for BRT.

16. Will it run 24-hours a day?

**Answer:** No, the transit system will likely run to match the hours of The Tide in Norfolk and HRT bus service.

17. How will the park in the Eureka Park neighborhood be affected?

**Answer:** The park in Eureka Park will not be significantly impacted by the transit extension. No land is anticipated to be taken from the park for either the light rail or bus rapid transit alternative. New elements would be placed in the proximity of the park's viewshed, including new tracks or roadbed and overhead electrical wires along the alignment (for the LRT alternative).

18. Is there a historic site at back of Mustang Road?

**Answer:** As part of the VBTES, all historic structures along the transit alignment will be identified.

19. Which direction is being considered for travel? (17<sup>th</sup> Street to Birdneck and down 19<sup>th</sup> Street, or Norfolk Avenue through the trailer park to 19<sup>th</sup>)

**Answer:** Several options are being evaluated for the area east of Birdneck Road, including the options mentioned above. No specific recommendations for east of Birdneck Road have been made yet.

20. There is already a major bus station at 19<sup>th</sup> and Pacific. How will it be dealt with? Where will you cross? Norfolk and 17<sup>th</sup> or Norfolk and 19<sup>th</sup>? How will you cross?

**Answer:** It's important to remember that even for the LRT alternative, transit connections to bus and shuttle operations are very important for the riding public and the study will consider the current configuration of service and how to maximize it. Regarding that particular property, known as the "Dome Site," it is currently being considered for a large scale redevelopment not associated with the transit improvement. Potentially, this development would impact the location of the HRT facility at 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Pacific. Future scenarios could integrate a transit station with a redeveloped site.

21. How much would it cost to ride?

**Answer:** The cost of riding the new transit service is anticipated to be same as HRT's local bus service when it opens. At this time, the regular one-way fare is \$1.50.

22. Buses stop within the vicinity of 86<sup>th</sup> Street. If they are ahead of schedule – no one is on the bus. The buses at 19<sup>th</sup> Street are packed. How do you even out the ridership?

**Answer:** At 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Pacific (transfer point) the #20 and #33 enter and head North towards 68<sup>th</sup> Street (not 86<sup>th</sup> Street). At 68<sup>th</sup> Street they lay over because it is too crowded at 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

23. Will the light rail be elevated? Would an elevated/overpass solution work?

**Answer:** The technical analysis that will be completed as part of the AA/SDEIS will examine where elevated crossings may be necessary.

24. Will there be a transportation alternative to get people to Lynnhaven Mall from the train?

**Answer:** The VBTES includes identifying feeder bus options to provide connections to the transit extension under consideration, which could include the mall. Currently, the mall is served by HRT's bus route #26, 29 & 37.

25. Are there any turning issues for the trains?

**Answer:** No, the LRT vehicles can operate from both directions and do not need to turn around. Turning radii on the streets in the area east of Birdneck Road are sufficient for both the LRT and BRT alternatives with minor modifications.

26. What happens when the trains stop running? Do they just sit there?

**Answer:** A vehicle storage and maintenance facility will store the LRT vehicles when not in operation.

27. Will cars be stacked to control the crowds, especially at large events?

**Answer:** The study will develop an operations plan for both the fixed guideway investment and the related feeder bus improvements.

28. Will there be end of line stations?

**Answer:** Yes. The east end of line station for The Tide in Norfolk is currently being constructed at Newton Road. As a study of transit extensions of that system, the VBTES project is analyzing the potential locations for a new east end of line station.

29. Where will the maintenance/storage areas be located in regards to the end of the line?

**Answer:** Several locations for a vehicle maintenance facility are under consideration. The facility would be located in an area of compatible (industrial) land use types with sufficient access for both employees and the transit vehicles.