

Virginia Beach Transit Extension Study Public Meetings  
Princess Anne High School – September 9, 2009  
Va. Beach Convention Center – September 10, 2009

Public Comments Received  
(Written and via Email)

"Where's the \$ coming from? V-Pilot Headline – CHOP. Deficit nears 7 billion. VB Teachers forgo raises – why? So we can enrich developers!!! With this rec-depression it will be many years before companies will have the discretionary income to relocate to VB."

"If the Tide is not extended to Ocean Front/Va. Beach convention center – we should not build it. VB will go to Norfolk but the Norfolk hotel residents won't come to the beach. Right of way to oceanfront/convention center should be settled prior to buying Norfolk Southern right of way. Stations should have restrooms or the local businesses will be inundated w/pee customers – this costs more and raises security and maintenance issues to. I really would like to know the relative costs (capital & maint) of BRT vs LRT. Are the daily costs of using either of the above systems going to be reasonable? Enough to attract daily riders."

"A system worth building needs to be:

- Accessible – dedicated buses should bring folks living near major N-S corridors (like Independence Blvd.) to the stations and back home again.
- Affordable – I would prefer to see tolls on I-264/ drivers to subsidize riders/ keep ticket prices down – that would take the burden off the many taxpayers who don't use the route.
- Aesthetically pleasing – put bike/jogging path next to light rail trains, separated by lug strum or vegetation.
- Across the water (that's where the real traffic jams are!)"

"I believe any transit study is a plus for the community. The speaker for HDR has good federal experience and that should be a big positive for the study."

"The "Tata bill" passed for study of extension of the Tide through Virginia Beach to the oceanfront. At the same time we need to have a Virginia Beach referendum to see if the residents support light rail or alternative (high speed or improved bus service) or no change."

"Last week I watched three boys 12-14 yrs old attempting to cross Virginia Beach blvd from Pembroke --- across to the "Cheesecake Factory". They were nearly hit by a car. We need a bridge now to cross safely. Let us not think so far into the future that we can't afford today's needs."

"Regardless of what many people say, this is the right move for our region. If we are going to continue to grow & be competitive, this is a necessary step. Please emphasize the next step to connect Chesapeake to the light rail network next!"

"My wife and I both support the extension of the TIDE light rail system into Virginia Beach. The extension should, if at all possible, go to at least 1 or 2 blocks from the Oceanfront. Or have a bus/trolley system to complete the final link. More stops need to be added to the plan, if feasible. There should be a stop at every major N-S feeder street that crosses the line – N. Plaza Trail, First Colonial, etc. Measures should be taken to improve bus service, particularly routes on the N-S feeder streets, so it is an integrated system. Expansion into Norfolk Naval Station is

essential. Need to consider extending an invitation to Chesapeake and Portsmouth to evaluate southward and westward extensions."

"MUST have sufficient number of stations, preferably one-half (1/2) mile apart. To catalyze transit-oriented development. MUST have MANY stations."

"Public referendum."

"I'm from DC. I have lived in VB since 1959. Will HRT operate the Tide better than it did the bus system? It was poorly managed. People won't use the HOV because they need their cars, esp. working mothers and caretakers. On top of the fares, there will be a cost for parking the cars to get to the Tide. I worked in Norfolk for 13 years and commuted, but needed my car to get to my young son. I couldn't carpool. I live 2 short blocks from the Norfolk Rail road track. Noise is a great concern the traffic on my narrow street is bad. The safety is another concern. Norfolk is payment \$54M (?). Virginia Beach's line is double in length. The cost will be 3 times as much. We are in a recession now. How much more does Mayor Sessoms and (his) not our City Council want from the citizens? Even the Gov. is cutting its budget!"

"My home is adjacent to the right of way. My concern is that if the area is going to be rezoned commercial and my property is going to be taken by eminent domain that I have been given fair market commercial value at the time the property is taken."

"- Concerned once cost and how we will pay for it.  
- Any chance it will be self supporting?  
- How interface with VB plan to have high density population areas near the rail.  
- Good idea – but of little value to date – does not go anyway with until connected to Naval Station Norfolk."

"This project is essential to regional transportation needs. The primary objective will be for ease of movement of people to and from work. Large employers should endorse this project. It should connect to the Peninsula in the future."

"I think the LRT extension to the oceanfront is a great idea. I am looking forward to realizing this new development."

"The idea that a "study" is being done to discover what is "best" for the city became a complete joke by this meeting. The bias toward extending the light rail system was extraordinarily obvious.

"It is embarrassingly obvious that this "study" is in fact, not a study at all but that the lean and intention is for the light rail system to extend from Norfolk to Virginia Beach Ocean Front. It was insulting to the intelligence of the citizens of Va. Beach to waste our time with a warm-up session that was ultimately no more than a sales pitch."

"In the long process of Norfolk getting light rail, those adamantly opposed appeared to have a great ease in putting negative images out to those who might have been supportive, but were easily influenced by the loudest voices in the debate."

"Mr. Wood's earlier statement expressed on TV was right. It is sometimes the job of City Council to lead, not waffle to every whim of the public, many of whom are uninformed. Va. Beach leadership must lead if this is going to succeed, and it will be a fight."

"Please send me emails."

"We are interested in providing public art the for the system. Can you tell us what to do to connect with you?"

"I live in the neighborhood Eureka Park near the intersection of Lynnhaven Parkway and Southern Blvd. I am very concerned about a station being put in my neighborhood. I do not want to lose my house nor do I want a station across the street from me."

"Parking needs to be determined once stations are identified. Stop all other work until accomplished."

"What will happen to the residential streets? Ex. Budding Ave. Will cars be able to cross from north to south?"

"Light rail to Oceanfront. I think it will cost too much and will not relieve traffic congestion to any relevance. The only ones that may benefit will be tourists going from Downtown Norfolk to Oceanfront. I am not sold and feel that it will be a heavy tax burden on the citizens of Virginia Beach."

1. Rapid transit is not the answer for congestion.
2. Raise taxes on gas
3. Encourage car pools
4. Fix roads

"Let each station be aesthetically unique. Let the community be reflected in their stations."

"Please include in the study:

Relocation of the Pembroke HRT transfer point closer to the Town Center station. Route 20 could retain stops at Va. Beach Blvd. and Market St., Va. Beach Blvd. at Constitution (east bound) and Va. Beach Blvd. at Independence (west bound) Additional revenue generating tenants, possibly lower floor (s) retail, if the Circuit City site will be used as a part and ride."

"Good Day:

Although I basically disagree with this option, overall; our area could use some better system of public transportation (either dedicated bus routes or a light rail system) but I have one important concern.

Has the HRT or the city thought about the traffic backups this will cause on Lynnhaven Pkwy, Witchduck Rd, Rosemont Rd, etc...while commuters(in vehicles)wait for the trains to pass? We all know that these locations are overcrowded during rush hour and now you are planning to stop traffic for a train that runs every 10-20 minutes? The city can't synchronize the lights on Virginia Beach Blvd so traffic flows smoothly, how are HRT and the city going to resolve this? The best solution would be an overhead track (like the one near NSU) but we all know that HRT and the city would never go for this due to the expense. I feel, once again, the city of Virginia Beach has put the wishes of the businesses and political contributors over the wishes of its citizens. Also, what happens when the train gets to the Oceanfront. Norfolk Avenue no longer has train tracks, as they were torn up to put in more condos (additional tax revenue) so the city could improve this area. I can only guess that HRT will divert the tracks near Birdneck Rd to the parking lot of the Convention Center, which will eventually wind up at Atlantic Ave since the city wants to close 19th Street and make it a walking mall. The rail could go right down the middle of the mall to the Boardwalk.

I voted against this before and (hopefully) I won't be in Virginia Beach to see my tax dollars wasted on this project. I've had enough of the "City" and their big ideas for change on the backs

of the tax payers. Big city tax payer money and small minded politicians makes for bad judgement."

"Light rail is essential to the future of Virginia Beach. With restrictions of the green line and Oceana to limit development, the only way forward is to increase developmental density. Light rail will be the engine in such development, as well as the showcase to the city for both tourists and residents.

"Some may argue that Light rail will only be used by poor or will drain retail from Virginia Beach to downtown Norfolk. Both statements have been proven to be untrue, as the linking of cities by rail has shown a net increase in spending and visitors in all cities. Charlotte has shown the amazing results of light rail, and Virginia Beach deserves to take its place as a leader in the Mid-Atlantic region."

"I am all for light rail. I hope the routes are expanded instead of just from oceanfront to Norfolk. Getting around in Chicago is easier than Va Beach without a car. I wish they'd expand HRT routes as well!"

"Exactly how does this create less traffic when the proposed station is at the busiest intersection in the city? Light rail is a ridiculous option in a city that has no central work district and housing scattered all over the city. Everyone will need to drive to get to the station(s). SO what is the point? Think bigger...high speed rail between VB and Williamsburg and Richmond, light rail spurs off of that line to each Hampton Roads community. Then you are really doing something."

"Will the DEIS analyze feeder bus routes or alternate methods to get VB resident to the proposed stations?"

"The LRT sounds like a plausible alternative if the area is committed to expanding networks to places like the airport and other major employment centers."

"After the HRT public meetings on the alternatives, when will the public have the opportunity to dialogue with City Council before a final decision is submitted to HRPDC?"

"I have concerns about traffic at the suggested stops. How much input will the local citizens have concerning traffic issues? How global is the future planning? Is a plan in the works for a corridor to the airport being considered down the road"

1. The transit option selected must include the capacity to carry bicycles.
2. The right of way should allow for a bicycle path to parallel the right of way.
3. The City of Virginia Beach must tailor the zoning of land adjacent to the transit right of way to support the type of development that the transit system will support. This synergy is critical.
4. Some transit stops will be simple transfer points whereas primary stops such as at Town Center should be designed as dynamic public gathering places that will be enhanced by the presence of the transit stop.
5. The current Master Transportation Plan (2003) for Va. Beach does not even address light rail options. I am concerned about the potential success of obtaining Federal funding without the explicit support of the City of Virginia Beach.
6. Expansion of the existing roadways will definitely not address the congestion that is now a major negative characteristic of this region. The combined Tide and extension of some form of rapid transit must demonstratively contribute to the resolution of the current transportation system.
7. The extended Tide/Va. Beach transit system is likely to be the beginning of a more comprehensive system developed over a longer time frame.

8. Primary transit station areas must support a "walkable form of development" including housing, business, entertainment and parking for all the cars that will not be used as frequently."

"Attending the forum on Sep 9th, I didn't hear much that assures me that this project (light rail to Oceanfront) takes into account the true needs of the people of Va Beach and the other Hampton Roads area; i.e., transportation bottlenecks are primarily associated with our tunnels and bridges...NOT moving people between VB and Norfolk. At this point, I would only vote for a lowest cost enhanced bus service. Our planning staffs should be working the higher priority issues noted above. Thank you for your attention."

"I am totally in favor of this project and I like the BRT more than the light rail for the following reasons: it is more flexible, there are no overhead wires or rails (something the oceanfront spent lots of money burying the overhead power lines) and it could be achieved faster.

I would like to see feeder buses off the main BRT route for the following roads: Newtown, Witchduck (including Princess Anne), Independence (including S. Indep. & Holland), Rosemont, Lynnhaven (including Great Neck), Laskin Rd, First Colonial and Birdneck.

Don't let the nay sayers stop this long overdue project!!!!"

"The LRT could be a great backbone and beginning to a long term solution to the transportation issues that affect ALL of Hampton Roads. We must begin somewhere."

"I have lived in the Hampton Roads area for 36 years 24 of them in VA Bch. The traffic situation is only getting worse. I don't understand why it is taking so long to make a decision about the light rail system. All you need to do is get on any main road during rush hour to see that something needs to be done. "

"Wouldn't bus rapid transit suffice, instead of spending all that money, time and inconveniences with LRT? There would be more accessibility to BRT than LRT. "

"My wife and I are all for the extension of light rail. Please keep us updated on the project in the future. Thanks"

"There is NOTHING on Newtown road! that would draw interest. You need to extend the rail to go to a more popular area such as Lynnhaven Mall!!

Norfolk residents would love a more direct line to VB where they work and shop. Lynnhaven Mall would be the ultimate spot !! Also, i really need to see the #12 bus go on every half hour, extended past 6 pm especially and run on Sundays. The #12 is convenient for those who work in VB and live in Norfolk (and vice versa)"

"I have been a resident in Virginia Beach for 27 years. Thank you for considering the option of extending the light rail from Norfolk to Va. Beach. I commute from Chick's Beach to Norfolk everyday and I will gladly use public transportation. I currently use the HRT max bus as well as carpooling in my personal vehicle. I would love to just glide by traffic on the Tide. Please move forward with this idea. "

"I am very interested in this project, as we all should, since this effect the future of the beach."

"I am 100% looking forward to being able to take the kids to a park and ride and go to downtown Norfolk and the Oceanfront on the light rail. I would ditch my car and ride HRT every single day if the train came to Chesapeake. But even though it probably won't come to

Chesapeake any time soon, I would still ride to downtown Norfolk and the Oceanfront just for fun. Keep up the good work at HRT. Let's expand this thing to every city in Hampton Roads!"

"Oh one more thing, I'm anticipating much more people riding light rail than the ridership estimates on this website. On the Norfolk portion of the Tide, are you guys running one car trains or two car trains? If you could email me real quick and let me know, I'd appreciate it."

"It appears to me that the HRT is planning yet another failure. HRT's consultant has predicted large ridership of The Tide. However, if one looks at the ridership of HRT busses on almost identical parallel routes, the ridership is very low.

HRT's bus routes must have been laid out by picking up wet spaghetti noodles after they had fallen somewhere.

It takes unreasonably long transit times to get from point A to point B because it appears the busses ramble at will through various side streets and stop wherever they want to.

Give it up folks. You lost out on the best to get to and from Norfolk and the Beach when the original Norfolk-Southern Rwy. stopped their rail bus service decades ago.

You cannot bring something like that back again, no matter how much taxes you spend on construction or subsidizing the operation."

"I work in Downtown Norfolk and would love the opportunity to be able to access the Tide from a station closer to my home. Right now it will stop at the Norfolk line and that is not the most convenient stop for anyone living in Va Beach. The drive to Newtown Rd can take as long as the drive downtown. I currently ride the MAX route 960. Extending the light rail to the Oceanfront would be such a convenience to both cities. "

"I would like to see a bike trail along side the rail system."

"What is the current cost estimate for the project?"

"Please extend light rail to the Va. Beach ocean front."

"Ok, what about the EAST TO WEST? Nothing goes NORTH TO SOUTH – buses, etc. Not everyone works off the boulevard – no bus goes to Chesapeake Mall at all – We are a car society – we are too big for a "one way" ride – why can't we fix what we've got first – ie – the bottleneck areas, crummy roads – ageing bridges – lack of connecting bus services off the boulevard – Lightrail will just be a passing fancy, as this is a NAVY town and there is nuthin like taking the firebird out – The traffic will be worse as it crosses many main veins of traffic and I don't want the transported flim-flam relieving themselves in my yard. We ain't that kind of town – we need to keep the "old town charm" and forget this metropolis B.S. Its bad enough my summers are crowded with goofy loud tourists that conjest my space and the jets deafen ANY conversations or every day life (even in my business suffers) is halted with the deafing, all consuming jet noise that even sends my pets scurring. NOW I'll have to deal with a transportation service that will invade my well taxed ground space too."

"1. If light rail is chosen as the LPA then the question should be placed on the ballot to ask Virginia Beach taxpayers if they are willing to pay for the proposed light rail project.  
2. The selection criteria needs to be changed to (A) Make reducing existing traffic congestion along 264 the highest criteria. (B) Make economic development the lowest criteria."

"1. How much does Virginia Beach subsidize bus ridership (per ride) now? 2. How much subsidy is required per ride for DC subway now?"

"Elevation is the only way to go!"

**“VERY IMPORTANT!** Bus 33@ Beach to TCC needs to operate til 12:00 midnite; making last pic up from TCC to beach front at 11 PM. “A lot” of people can’t take needed jobs at Nimo Pk area! Bus 29 needs to run up til 11 PM. “A lot” of needed jobs can’t be taken at Lynnhaven! Run these 2 buses every 2 hours after 7PM!”

“URGENT for colleges and businesses and their employees who live throughout the region. Seniors would also benefit.”

“It’s about time this program is getting of the ground!!”

“Has elevated trains been considered? Sufficient satellite parking – especially for outlying areas? Its too bad this issue did not take place when the economy was better. United States is sooo far behind in rapid transit as compared to Europe. The Americans have a love affair with their cars-hard habit to break. Make it attractive enough to people to have them flock to rapid transportation.”

“I would like for the speakers to ask for comments from the audience. I want to hear the citizens input.”

“Save some of our past please. At Lynnhaven Road south of Mustang Trail, there is an old RR station feet of the tracks. It looks like it may be history to that old building. Is there anyway we could preserve the materials. Reuse. Recycle. Renew. I’m saddened to know that so much of my little town has grown without remembering its rooms.

At the Birdneck Rd Station, I noticed on the map that is goes yellow over my neighborhood. I’m interested in your plans because I do not want my home value to decrease further. Worse yet, I’m I going to lose my existing home?

God bless all those that are at the drawing table to our government representatives. Please be careful redesigning our city of people, places, and history.

Thanks for your time and consideration.”

“Include proposed bicycle criterium, circling the golf course, in comprehensive plan. Emphasize new entrance/exit ramps on 264 using London Bridge instead of Lynnhaven. Describe the configuration of the railroad tracks and 264. Describe station at Convention Center and/or Dome Site and how the Tide will cross Virginia Beach Boulevard to get there. Include rails-to-trails bike path along corridor, particularly between Town Center and Rosemont. Include more details on mag-lev technology, including engines and tracks.”

“I would like to have serious consideration given to electric bus if the BRT plan becomes the chosen solution. I got this impression from Mike at the environmental station that the mode would be gas power. This in my opinion is not the long term solution.”

“1. First and foremost; the citizens of Virginia Beach need more than comments. We need a public referendum.

2. Agreed. We do need a transportation alternative. A better alternative would be to build a rapid transit zone in the center plus both HOV lanes of 264.”

“My obversations. I feel that the speed limit on First Colonial Road should be reduced to 35. there are so many curb cuts. 45 mph and the tendency of drivers to tailgate creates opportunities for accidents. Virginia Beach Blvd. is not pedestrian friendly. A pedestrian cannot

cross completely in a light cycle and has to compete with turning cars. South Hampton Roads should see the need to develop a public transportation system that encourages all workers to leave their cars at home during the work week. Low wage and medium income workers would have a higher quality of life if a large part of their incomes didn't have to be spent on car payments, car maintenance and car insurance, just to get to work. Another issue is the senior population that can remain independent in meeting their daily needs if there is public transportation rather than driving when too old to do so."

"People will not ride buses in Va. Beach."

"Light rail has made an amazing difference in Denver. We lived there from 1976-1986, and went back for the first time last summer. The downtown has really taken off with light rail and free buses up and down what is now a pedestrian mall. PS – Denver's also done a fantastic job redeveloping the former site of the airport and an airforce base. Food for thought for Virginia Beach."

"I've had adverse noise affects regarding Oceana's air noise and I'd like to be assured that doesn't happen with the HRT study. Also there are plans for development in the oceanfront corridor – especially multi use buildings for commercial and residential needs. How will the HRT study import those plans?"

"ALL ABOUT IT."

"North/south traffic in VB is now horrible! Utilization of the NS ROW will only increase the horrible mess!"

"NOT A TREE HUGGER – BUILD IT!"

"Evening HRT service from Shore Drive to the Old Dome site on Fri-Sat. night."

"Does Virginia participate in minority & women setasides for work development and employment? At what percentage rate?"

"It is important to consider how residence in strategic grow areas connect to major transportation lines. It provides relief of traffic that may come from the increased density brought on by the increased development."

"Wondering if there will be an part in the study that talks to job creation from this building of light rail. Creating job opportunities, the maintenance, construction and operation? How will it impact neighborhood in job creation?"

"1. Multi-modal system that includes path for cyclists as well as pedestrians along light-rail corridor. 2. Facilities for locking bikes at the rail stations. 3. In other areas of the country it has been proven that light rail systems bring increase in retail sales to business and increase in property values – this is a win-win situation. 4. VB must come into the concept of thinking beyond cars and buses for transportation. The best alternative is light rail transit, and we have a golden opportunity in development of the rail line. Concurrent with this design should be a path for cyclists. Fully support a link with Norfolk. As a VB resident, I welcome the opportunity to travel by rail to Norfolk to visit such sites as Nauticus, Harbor Park and Town Point Park. I am sure Norfolk would welcome a connection so those citizens can enjoy amenities of VB. This is a great opportunity to bring the two cities together – only positive response can come with economic development."

"We need this very badly to decrease the heavy traffic volume particularly on rainy days."

"I support a light rail system for Virginia Beach. I would also like to see a bike and pedestrian trail built alongside the rail system for a true multi-modal network."

"1. More specific detail as to the General Assembly cost estimate excess over the regional current estimated mentioned in the September 10 Virginia Pilot attributed to station costs not included in regional estimate. 2. What's involved in the environmental impact evaluation regarding the human factor: e.c. low-income people?"

"This type of transportation is NECESSARY for the area. I have lived in eight areas of this country and Europe. This is the worst area for transportation needs. If Va. Beach wants to boast of keeping a fantastic area for seniors, they have to be capable of effectively moving them. I sit on the Mayor's Commission on Aging for Va. Beach, there my focus is "how do we move our elderly, that cannot drive any longer?" We are at least five steps ahead in this area – we already have the railbed in place – there are numerous areas for stations available. BUT 1. we must feed the stations with adequate transportation from our corridors of Atlantic Ave, First Colonial, Independence Blvd., etc. 2. We must include the military bases to alleviate traffic at high use times. I have also lived in areas that can effectively attach fast transit to bridges, we could elevate so much of the "crossing" problems."

"I am definitely in favor of the light rail transportation running east-west from the end of Norfolk's to the beach. Knowing what a huge improvement light rail has made to the traffic situation/dilemma in other cities in the US, I'm all for it here! Our streets are congested beyond safe levels. Also, I firmly believe that the city would benefit by creating a bike/pedestrian path with the light rail. Cycling is already big here, and it will only increase. Recreational cyclists as well as commuters need a safe way to go East-West in Virginia Beach. I've heard that Charlotte, NC's light rail system's ridership has already surpassed that city's 2025 projection, and now people are wondering why they didn't do this sooner. I can see the same happening here. And what an economic asset this system could be! There's income from riders, plus the easier access to businesses along the way."

"When I applied for jobs at VB local businesses, many where asking if I had reliable transportation stated that the HRT or bus system is not valid transportation."

"I hope we provide minority business participation in the work to be done in any transit project. Also, job training for disadvantaged and minority populations is a must."

"When northern VA implemented its commuter rail system, consideration for multimodal transportation between many rail stations and adjoining neighborhood was either insufficient or neglected entirely. As a result, new traffic jams formed in the parking facilities. With this project there is truly an opportunity to learn from northern Virginia's oversight. A multimodal path alongside the railbed, that connects to adjoining neighborhoods, would provide a method for people to leave cars at home when they commute on the future light rail. Instead, they could go to train stations by foot, bicycle, rollerblade, etc. In my opinion as President of the Tidewater Bicycle Association, pathways that enable multimodal transportation between train stations and homes must be a critical part of this project."

"I support the light rail concept and would like to see it built quickly. I also feel that a bike and pedestrian trail should be built along the rail corridor. Not only would it provide residents with yet another alternative transportation mode, it would also provide better options for people to get to and from the light rail stations."

"Alternatives:

No-Build: Road maintenance and construction are in a tail chase with a problem that won't be resolved by remaining car-centric. The Return on Investment (ROI) would equate to filling the potholes with money.

TMS Alternative: It took me 1 hour to get to this meeting on the expressway in my POV. How long would it take on that same expressway with additional stops along the way? It's the No-Build alternative adding buses to the problem.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) would likely provide highest ROI. However, they fall short in creativity. A more enhanced transportation system that allows for pedestrians or cycling to and from the station points - including small business access and atmosphere would go a long way to a) promoting use of the transit system; b) promoting tourism on a corridor with access to local business. Potential for a consumer corridor from Virginia Beach to Norfolk. "

"I definitely believe light rail is the only viable option for a metro area this size. We can not hide behind a veil of suburbia. Progress is not painless, but future (and current) generations deserve reliable mass transit to make movement easier and affordable. Plus, light rail will contribute to a greener Beach-Norfolk metro area which holds health and financial advantages for the area. Cities that have added light rail have raved about the benefits. I believe naysayers will welcome the rail once it becomes a part of the fabric of the community, just like Town Center."

"How in the world are we seriously considering help from "the Federal government" when the Congressional Budget Office projects the ten year out budget deficit to be NINE TRILLION DOLLARS? This is insanity. We voted it down once, how did this ever rise from the dead? We still don't want it!"

"Opportunities for Q & A, for the entire audience to hear, would have been beneficial. By listening to questions and answers from technical officials, issues and ideas can be thoroughly explored (in people's minds and as public dialogue)."

"I am attending the meeting at the VB Convention Center. I am a long time Great Neck resident and very much encourage light rail. I encourage you to do include in your traffic and potential user study the area of First Colonial Road - better known as the Medical Corridor. There are many nursing and rehab facilities, Sentara VB General Hospital, scores of medical practice offices all along First Colonial road north of Laskin Road/VB Blvd. You should survey each of the practices, nursing facilities and hospital through HR, as you will find MANY of the support, nurses, employees come from out of this area. There are parking challenges in the office parking lots and at the hospital. If there was a regular loop from the stop nearest First Colonial Road, looping down First Colonial Road to Great Neck Road, you will pick up a substantial number of daily riders. It is important to remember that nursing staff do not work regular business hours, so consideration of 12 hour work days is important. I look forward to helping you as you plan the needed future transportation of the VB, Norfolk and areas."

"I think it would be a great idea to have a light rail system in Virginia Beach connected to the Norfolk Tide."

"I'd just like to leave a brief comment in support of the LRT option for the VB transit extension. It would be an excellent opportunity to make use of existing rail right-of-way and improve transit options for commuters. I also like the idea of extending the system currently under construction in Norfolk, rather than requiring riders to switch to a different mode (such as bus rapid transit) when reaching City limits. I think extending LRT makes the most sense and provides the most convenient option for commuters which will encourage ridership. Let me close by saying that I fully support the transit extension as a means to reduce traffic congestion and environmental impacts while also improving commute times in Hampton Roads."

"Looking forward to seeing light rail come to Virginia Beach. Would prefer this option over a BRT scenario given the existing LRT in City of Norfolk and general opinion of the existing bus service in the Hampton Roads area. Hope to see the line extended further to the VB Oceanfront to encourage growth and improved development in additional areas of the city convenient to proposed LRT. Feel LRT will assist with the growth of the Town Center area."

"Extending the Tide to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront could be a great way to go bring business to Virginia Beach from Norfolk and vice-versa without adding more vehicles to our roads. Making this investment could save time and money for the City and commuter in the end. "

"My family has lived on Kenya Lane since before VA Beach was VA Beach and a resort area. My property is adjacent to the Norfolk/Southern Railway right-of-way. My family cemetery touches the Northern/Southern right-of-way line.

The presenter David Vozzolo spoke of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); I don't see where the talk of NEPA is taking my family cemetery into consideration.

I remember the old loud, noisy Norfolk and Southern Railroad train rolling down the tracks at 5 am and 6 pm. I know of people who have died or become amputees crossing the old rails.

We currently have approx 15 families on this lane half have small children with family that live across the bike/walk trail (old tracks), they go visit.

The safety of our families is at stake, the security of our homes is at stake, the value of our property is at stake. In cities where these Light Rails exist, so do crime and the decrease in property value.

The Light Rail may be a convenience for those trying to get to the water and do not want to pay for parking, but it is horror for those who live on the Norfolk/Southern Railway right-of-way and corridor.

I currently can not turn directly onto my lane from South bound Birdneck road and have to make a U-turn at Norfolk Avenue to come back to my lane; I have written the city officials for years of this concern, to no avail; but they can put all this money into a study for a Light Rail system. Prior to 1998, we were able to turn directly onto Kenya lane. What is going to happen when a train is crossing that intersection? How will we get home then?"

(Received after 1<sup>st</sup> draft of comments)

"As a business owner in Virginia beach I feel that we need light rail. I have about 200 employees that are all low income individuals. Most rely on public transportation to get to and from work. I have some employees that ride a bus to work over 2 hrs and then home over 2hrs to work a 3 hr shift. Supporting the transportation needs of these people will help keep the cost of living down for all."

"I think the Virginia Beach Extension is an absolutely fantastic idea. One of the most miserable parts of visiting the beach for me is having to find and pay for parking. In the two years I've lived in Hampton Roads, I think I've been to the beach maybe 4 or 5 times. Being able to take a train from Norfolk would surely make it easier and more pleasant."

"I missed the Sep 9th and 10th public meetings. However, as a resident of Town Center, I would think an ideal spot for a stop along this "guideway" (don't know what that is, actually) would be beside the deserted Circuit City building behind Dick's Sporting Goods. I would think that lot could accommodate an additional parking garage, if necessary.

Also, the "guideway" should be made aesthetically appealing, blending into its surroundings. Passengers should also be able to relate to a positive experience, too.

It should be as quiet as possible, and easy to purchase passes at stops or via the internet. Express routes should also be identified (e.g., direct non-stop from TC to Oceanfront or Norfolk at certain times)."

## **"PARAMETERS**

I have two benchmarks to lay down at the beginning of the Study.

First, as much of the alignment should be dual tracked as possible. Thankfully, that has been the case with Norfolk's Starter Line. One train shouldn't have to sit waiting for another to pass.

Second, is the need for inclusion of restrooms at as many stations as possible. While HRT frowns on operating and maintaining bathrooms, toilet facilities at transfer centers were a concern at 4 of the 7 public meetings held in late 2008 on HRT's Comprehensive Operations Analysis. As LRT is expanded through the region, longer distances being travelled will only make the need more acute.

I offer as a template Portsmouth's Water Street Parking Garage. It has public restrooms built into the garage, which Portsmouth does a good job of maintaining. Such can be designed for Virginia Beach's stations needing park-and-ride capability.

## **ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

There are three build options being looked at in the AA. I'll touch on all three.

First of all, I don't think the Enhanced Bus option would work in Virginia Beach. It would mean buses having to come off I-264 to stations at points of interest. Anyone familiar with those roads knows that it would be impossible for the buses to keep schedule at rush hour. Both MAX and its predecessor (Route 61, The Crossroads) have had regularly late buses due to the fact that they have to travel the same congested roads as other vehicles. The situation cries for a fixed guideway solution.

While BRT would suffice, I prefer LRT for a few reasons:

1. With Norfolk already building LRT, we would have to extend its LRT to provide a one-seat ride. As we improve mass transit, the ability to get somewhere changing trains and/or buses a few times as necessary will make the region's transit system more rideable.

For example, I live in Virginia Beach while my dentist is in Newport News. It's a 3-4 bus ride. With LRT throughout the region, someday I could catch the train at Witchduck Road Station and take it through The Third Crossing to Newport News. The trip would only take one train and two feeder buses.

2. As a Virginia Beach resident, I'm concerned that it will look tacky if one can take a train elsewhere in the region, but at Newtown Road you have to transfer to a bus. The Beach would

look bush league.

3. LRT has much more economic development potential than BRT, and nicely dovetails with what's already in Virginia Beach's Comprehensive Plan."

"I would like to state my complete support for this project. I think it is a shame that Virginia Beach passed on this opportunity 10 years ago and should not make the same mistake again. I live in Norfolk and work at Town Center. While I will have a Tide stop in front of my doorstep next year, it will be many years before it can take me to my place of work, which is a major activity center in Virginia Beach, even if the City decides to act today. The City needs to act now if they want to continue to remain a place where young professionals and others choose to live and work."

"MAKE VB RAIL EXTENSION A REALITY"

"I was in attendance, and though it was wonderful! Mr. Townes even taught me how to use a touch pad keyboard. Lol! Anyway, I like the BRT or LRT alternatives the best, but believe it would also be beneficial to convert route 26 (Bow Creek) into a circulator, since the route is already designed in a semi-loop anyway, and if we did that, keeping it with just one bus per hour, could keep the same operating hours and days, at or close to current operating expense levels."

Documents submitted as part of public meetings:

- Notes for Mtg. with HRT Light Rail Consultants – no date
- Transportation Policy: Getting the Facts Straight – December 3, 2008  
Wendell Cox and Ronald D. Utt, Ph.D
- Portland: A Model for National Policy? – May 28, 2009  
Wendell Cox
- US Public Transport Expenditures, Subsidies & Passenger Usage from the 1960s -  
No date
- Myths & Factors about Rail Transit – no date  
American Dream Coalition, Fact Sheet #1
- Rails Won't Save America – June 2008  
American Dream Coalition, Fact Sheet #2
- The Tipping Point – May 22, 2009  
By Alan E. Pisarski
- Transit Extension Study - by John D. Moss – September 9, 2009
- Evaluation of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach LRT Draft Environmental Impact Study – June 28, 1999  
Citizens Action Coalition, Inc.
- The Success of Town Center – An Alternate View – no date
- The Success of Town Center – An Alternate View – Part II- August 1, 2009