



Statement of Position
Light Rail extension into Virginia Beach
Adopted April 15, 2014

Virginia Beach Vision, Inc. through its Board of Directors continues to be a strong advocate for the expansion of the existing passenger rail line now operating from the Virginia Beach city line at Newtown Road to downtown Norfolk's medical complexes. Despite its relatively short distance, The Tide has exceeded ridership projections and proven to be both widely accepted and supported by the public as an important component of a regional transportation system.

The Tide service is only the first leg of what must now grow to become a truly regional, integrated public transportation system. The citizens of the City of Virginia Beach voted overwhelmingly in 2012 to support city council using "all reasonable efforts" to find financing and develop plans to extend the light rail service to the oceanfront. The City's Strategic Growth Plan and its Envision 2040 project both cite passenger rail as an essential component for the future growth and character of the City.

The federally required DEIS for a Virginia Beach extension will be completed within the next twelve months, despite the delay to examine an extension terminating at Town Center. Three public-private proposals have been received and are under review to extend the rail service. The Governor of Virginia has declared his support for an extension of the line and has pledged state funding resources that may be allocated elsewhere should Council not move forward quickly.

For these reasons, Virginia Beach Vision encourages the Virginia Beach City Council to move expeditiously in selecting a public-private proposal to extend the existing light rail line beyond Newtown Road to the Virginia Beach Town Center area or beyond. Adequate park and ride opportunities at a Town Center station that can be expanded as needed in the future to facilitate links to other destinations within the City and the region should be included in the plan. The selection should preserve the City's ability to seek federal funding support of future expansions to the system and the flexibility to incorporate alternative technologies if found appropriate.