

**I'm John T. Atkinson and wish I had the opportunity
to Vote No for the Virginia Beach EXTENSION
of Light Rail/The Tide.**

Most proponents are for it because of the \$150,000,000 VDOT has promised to help build it. Their position is that it is free money. It's free only if the Virginia Beach can find the remaining \$175,000,000 and is willing to cover its \$5,300,000 annual operating losses. Free was what attracted Norfolk to the cool aide. Now their taxpayers are saddled with covering its \$12,000,000 annual losses with no relief in sight.

The Norfolk newspaper, The Virginian-Pilot, served no good when they gave over half of the front page to expressing the exaggerated development benefits of the Tide to the City of Norfolk. Then gave a quarter of the second page to Columnist Kerry Dougherty's May 6th attempt to point out the real facts. The only project I agree with is the nontaxable Slover Library. That's because the old library was demolished in order to build the Tide.

The fact is that Norfolk made an expensive cancerous mistake building the Tide, and wants Virginia Beach to jump into the fire with them. On June 6th, the Pilot published a report from the Brookings Institute, a respected Think Tank. It provided utilization and financials for the first time. The results showed the Tide is racking up the largest losses per ride, \$6.63, of any light rail in the country. The proponents point to its low operating cost as a plus. That's because it's new and hasn't been in existence long enough to wear out. These losses can only go higher with the low ridership of the **Virginia Beach EXTENSION**.

When the Tide started running there were 75,000 persons able to ride it for free. New and free things are exciting and cheap entertainment. The parking lot at Newtown Rd was overflowing. Today most people must have to pay, because on May 7th there were only 126 cars plus 2 motor scooters parked at 2:00. Last week there were 118 vehicles. There are a total of 262 parking spaces. This glass is not half full.

I understand Virginia Beach has to underwrite over \$325,000,000 to extent the Tide 3 miles to Town Center, and that only 1,100 people are expected to ride it twice a day. That's a capital expense of \$295,000.00 per passenger, and at \$6.63 per passenger trip, over \$5,300,000.00 operating lost annually after it is built. Following Norfolk's lead Virginia Beach will probably raise Real Estate taxes to cover the annual lost. Another way to state this is, never will so few, 6 city councilpersons, make so many, 160,000 real estate owners, pay so much, \$325,000,000.00, so that so few, 1,100 riders, can ride the Tide an extra 3 miles.

Alternative options for Council: 1. Provide free bus service from Town Center to Newtown Station. 2. Provide free personal limo or cab service between those locations. 3. Give a \$50,000.00 car to each of the 1,100 riders along with a lifetime supply of gasoline. I'd choose 1.

In summary, the Virginia Beach EXTENSION won't move many people, won't eliminate traffic jams, and it won't create much economic growth. It will move Virginia Beach closer to becoming a core city, and with it the problems associated with a core city. I wish I could vote no. How about you?

You can do so by cutting this ad out, write No on it, and mail it to me at the address below. I will see that Council gets the results.

Paid for by John T. Atkinson personally. Contributions to help pay for this and future ads would be appreciated. Make Checks payable to John T. Atkinson, Light Rail Fund, 2411 Whaler Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23451. Otherwise cut it out make copies and pass them out to the people you know.