

Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project

Scoping Summary Report Update

October 2005



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration, is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) to evaluate the proposed Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. The Draft EIS will allow decision-makers to evaluate the social, economic, environmental, and transportation effects associated with a proposed light rail extension between Center City Charlotte and I-485 near the Mecklenburg-Cabarrus County line, relative to a no-build alternative and a series of lower cost transportation investments.

The scoping process is the first step in preparing an EIS. Scoping is intended to provide an early opportunity for the public, elected officials, and interested governmental agencies to participate in the decision-making process for the proposed project. The process also helps to determine the level of analysis for the EIS, the scope of issues to be addressed, and the alternatives to be considered. Scoping for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project was initiated in July 2000, at the beginning of the Major Investment Study/EIS process for the Northeast Corridor. Following the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative at the conclusion of the Major Investment Study (MIS), additional outreach activities were conducted to kickoff preparation of the Draft EIS and more advanced technical studies. These activities were intended to supplement and update the scoping activities held at the beginning of the MIS/EIS process. Therefore, the kickoff activities were performed following the Federal Transit Administration's scoping guidelines set forth in Section 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations part 771.123 (23 CFR 771.123), "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures", and other rules and regulations promulgated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The purpose of this *Scoping Summary Report Update* is to document the additional scoping outreach activities undertaken at the kickoff of the Draft EIS for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project. The report provides information on the project description and background, the alternatives being considered, the project participants, and schedule. In addition, it also documents the public involvement activities for the EIS kickoff/scoping update, including public meetings and outreach efforts, public agency coordination and review, and comments solicited. Changes in project definition or scope, made in response to public and agency comments, are also summarized. Scoping activities held at the beginning of the MIS/EIS are fully documented in the *Northeast Corridor Major Investment Study Scoping Summary Report* (January 2001) (MIS Scoping Summary Report). This report can be viewed on the CATS web site at www.ridetransit.org.

1.1 Project History

The planning of a regional transit system has been under study in Charlotte for the past decade. In 1994, the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County approved the *Centers and Corridors* vision, a comprehensive guide for future land use and development in the region. As part of this plan, future development and redevelopment in the region would be focused along five major transportation corridors that were strong candidates for transit service and transit-oriented development. These recommendations were reaffirmed by the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization and included in its *2015 Transportation Plan* for the region.

In support of the *Centers and Corridors* vision, the *2025 Integrated Transit/Land-Use Plan* was completed in 1998. A key element of this plan was the development of a regional rapid transit system that would improve mobility, encourage balanced growth, and support the proposed land use initiatives in each of the region's five growth corridors. A wide range of alternative transit options and land use scenarios were evaluated for each of the five major corridors: South,

North, Northeast (University), Southeast (Independence), and West (Airport). The most promising alternatives for each corridor were recommended in the *2025 Plan*. In November 1998, Mecklenburg County citizens approved a local sales and use tax (one-half percent) to support implementation of the *2025 Integrated Transit/Land-Use Plan*. In February 1999, Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, and the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville entered into an Interlocal Agreement to plan, finance, and implement a regional transit system, now known as the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS).

During 1999, CATS conducted an MIS to evaluate potential transit options in the South Corridor. Detailed analyses of ridership, costs, transportation issues, major environmental impacts, and land use issues were completed for the South Corridor transit alternatives identified in the *2025 Integrated Transit/Land-Use Plan*. The results of the MIS analysis reaffirmed the *2025 Plan's* findings. In February 2000, the Metropolitan Transit Commission adopted light rail transit operating within the railroad alignment as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for a new fixed-guideway transit system serving the South Corridor. An EIS was prepared for the South Corridor Light Rail Project, and, after public circulation, the Light Rail Alternative was reaffirmed as the LPA and carried into final design. Operations on Charlotte's first light rail line are expected to begin in late 2006.

In 2000, CATS began MISs in the other four corridors included in the *2025 Plan*. The MISs provided the necessary land use and transportation technical analysis, stakeholder and public outreach, and framing of issues and trade-offs for the selection of an LPA. A public scoping process in compliance with NEPA was carried out at the initiation of the MISs. The scoping process included public and agency meetings and a 45-day public comment period. This scoping process, as well as public and agency comments, are documented in the MIS Scoping Summary Report.

At the conclusion of the MISs, an LPA was chosen for each of the four corridors. In the Northeast Corridor, the adopted LPA combines light rail and BRT elements. A light rail line would extend the South Corridor Light Rail Project from Center City Charlotte to the University of North Carolina, Charlotte (UNCC) and the I-485 vicinity, primarily following the North Carolina Railroad and US-29. A BRT line would connect University Research Park and Concord Mills to UNCC via I-85, and would connect to the light rail line at UNCC.

In the Summer of 2004, the Federal Transit Administration approved the advancement of each of the MIS LPA selections to the EIS phase of study. This phase allows for a more detailed analysis of the costs, ridership, and environmental benefits or consequences of the LPA. Outreach activities for the EIS kickoff were conducted from September 2004 through February 2005, including an intensive public involvement effort providing opportunities for the public to learn about the LPA and to provide input into the decision-making process. During this phase of the study, the project's purpose and need and the project goals from the MIS were restated, the selection of the LPA was described, an explanation of the alternatives being carried forward in the EIS was provided, and the potential impacts of the alternatives were identified.

1.2 Project Description

The Northeast Corridor is approximately 14 miles long and generally follows Interstate 85 (I-85) and US-29 between Center City Charlotte and the Mecklenburg-Cabarrus County line. The corridor encompasses several regional activity centers, including the Center City, UNCC, and University Research Park. The Concord Mills regional mall is located just beyond the Northeast Corridor in Cabarrus County.

Land uses in the corridor are characterized by higher density office and commercial development in the southern portion of Center City; a mixture of uses including commercial, light industrial, warehouses, and manufacturing with some scattered low-density residential areas in the central portion; and a mixture of low-density commercial, institutional/business park, and residential developments, with pockets of medium-density residential to the northeast. Major destinations in the corridor include University City, UNCC, University Research Park, and Blockbuster Pavilion.

The proposed Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project would extend the South Corridor Light Rail Project from its planned terminus in Center City Charlotte to the vicinity of Interstate 485 (I-485). The proposed project would include 13 stations, which would serve current and growing activity centers, include the NoDa district at Davidson and 36th streets, University City, and UNCC.

The proposed project would include a feeder bus network to connect the light rail line to a wider array of neighborhoods and employment sites. The project would also include ancillary facilities, such as substations, but would not include a vehicle maintenance facility because Northeast Corridor trains would be able to use the facility developed for the South Corridor Light Rail Project.

The purpose of the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project is to promote the desired shape of development in the region and ensure future mobility in the Northeast Corridor. The proposed project would provide high-capacity, fixed transit service in the corridor, offering a convenient and time-competitive travel alternative and reducing dependence on single-occupant automobiles. As one component in the planned regional transit system, the proposed project is expected to increase transit ridership, help meet the region's air quality goals, and leverage other investments in the transportation system.

1.3 Project Initial Alternatives

Alternatives under consideration in the Draft EIS include:

1. No-Build Alternative, which involves no change to transportation service or facilities in the corridor beyond already committed projects;
2. A Transportation System Management Alternative, which consists of low to medium cost improvements to the operations of the CATS local bus service, in addition to the currently planned transit improvements in the corridor; and
3. Light Rail Transit Alternative, which would use existing railroad right-of-way from Center City Charlotte to 36th Street. Between 36th Street and Sugar Creek Road the alignment would transition to North Tryon Street (US-29). The alignment would then follow North Tryon Street through the University City area, past UNCC, to the northeastern terminus near I-485. The light rail line would be constructed as an extension of the South Corridor Light Rail Project.

1.4 Project Participants

The EIS process involves the participation of several groups. The study process is being coordinated by CATS, in accordance with the project development guidelines administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Metropolitan Transit Commission is the local decision-making body for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project and is assisted by the Citizen Transit Advisory Group (CTAG), CATS, the Program Management Team, and the City's Corridor Project Management Team. The appropriate local, state, and federal agencies are also involved

to ensure that all applicable rules and regulations are followed. The Metropolitan Transit Commission and CTAG meet as needed to review information at key steps in the study process and receive public comment as part of their decision-making process.

The Northeast Corridor Project Management Team (PMT) has been established to provide guidance and technical assistance for the project. The PMT also coordinates project development with major stakeholders in the study area. The PMT meets biweekly throughout the EIS process and includes representatives of the following agencies:

- CATS
- Charlotte Department of Transportation
- Engineering & Property Management
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission
- Neighborhood Development
- Economic Development

The general public has participated in the scoping process through public workshops, scoping meetings, neighborhood, business and civic events, the project web site, and information and comment opportunities provided at libraries, town halls, and citizen centers.

1.5 Project Schedule

Preparation of the Draft EIS for the Northeast Corridor began in November 2004 and is expected to conclude in late 2006. The official scoping notice was published in the Federal Register on September 29, 2000 at the onset of the MIS. Additional public meetings were held to kickoff the EIS phase of study on February 22, 24, and March 1, 2005.

The technical analyses will be conducted during the next 18 months and the results will be documented for public review and comment in the Draft EIS. Additional rounds of public meetings will be held during the course of the project to solicit input throughout to ensure that affected and interested parties will have the opportunity to review project information and provide input on the project. Key milestones of this process are:

- Station Location Workshops
- Station Area Plan Workshops
- Station Site Plan Workshops
- Draft EIS Public Hearing and Circulation Period
- Final EIS/Preliminary Engineering
- Record of Decision

2.0 NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

The scoping process for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project was designed to encourage the participation of the public, elected officials, and all interested governmental agencies. The process was intended to ensure that information about the project was available to interested and affected parties and that opportunities were provided for comment on the alternatives and issues to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project. This chapter provides a summary of the information tools and techniques that were employed to ensure interested and affected parties were aware of the scoping process for the project and their continuing opportunities to participate.

2.1 MIS/EIS Scoping Activities

In accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on September 29, 2000, which described the project and included the public scoping meeting schedule. A separate scoping meeting notice was sent in advance to governmental agencies with jurisdiction in the corridor, inviting them to attend the agency scoping meeting. Copies of these notices are included in the *Northeast Corridor Major Investment Statement Scoping Summary Report* (MIS Scoping Summary Report).

Other methods used to provide notification of the public scoping meetings included mailings, newspaper announcements, government channel programming, press releases, posters at Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) transit stops and on buses, announcements on the CATS website, and inclusion on the City of Charlotte Public Meetings Calendar. A complete listing of media outlets used for scoping notifications and samples of the notices are included in the MIS Scoping Summary Report.

Other scoping outreach activities for the MIS included project updates and public meeting information presented at the monthly meetings of the Metropolitan Transit Commission, the Citizens Transit Advisory Group, the Transit Management Group, and the Northeast Corridor Technical Team. CATS also presented information about the corridor projects at several civic organization meetings, special events, and stakeholder groups. Community events at which CATS provided information about the transit programs and the corridor projects are identified in the MIS Scoping Summary Report.

In addition, a quarterly newsletter, *Transitions*, prepared by CATS provided project information and updates on the progress of the major investment studies. This newsletter was issued to an extensive public mailing list that includes the media, elected officials, government and agency staff, community representatives, special interest groups, business, professional and civic associations.

2.1 Draft EIS Kickoff Outreach Activities

After the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved the advancement of the Locally Preferred Alternatives for each of the region's four corridors to the EIS phase of study, CATS contacted agency representatives to provide a status update on the proposed projects and to solicit additional scoping comments for the EIS. Update packages were sent on September 29, 2004. It was noted in the packages that additional project briefings could be held upon request. The contents of the update packages are described in more detail in Section 3.2.2.

Public meetings for the EIS kickoff were held in February and March 2005. Public notification of these meetings included mailings, newspaper announcements, and other types of communications.

2.1.1 Mailings

Approximately 8,000 notices announcing the meeting were mailed during the first week of February to residents and property owners within one-half mile of the proposed stations, and to citizens and groups who previously have expressed interest in the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project. Citizens, churches, and neighborhood groups who provided their names and addresses during previous public outreach efforts were included in the mailing. A complete list of the elected officials and places of worship that received notice of the public meetings is included in Appendix A. Copies of the meeting notices are included in Appendix B.

2.1.2 Newspaper Announcements

An advertisement inviting the public to attend the EIS kickoff meetings and comment on the project appeared in the following publications on the following dates:

- Charlotte Observer (and Website) February 8, 2005
- La Noticia (Spanish) February 9, 2005
- Charlotte Post February 10, 2005

Copies the paid advertisements are included in Appendix B.

2.1.3 Other Communications

The City of Charlotte uses a cable government channel to inform its citizens of events and decisions. The channel uses an Electronic Billboard (also known as an Electronic Bulletin Board) to post information on public meetings, road closings, employment opportunities, etc. These series of announcements aired several times a day between February 2nd and March 1st.

On February 14th, a press release from CATS Marketing Department was sent via fax to newspapers and radio and television stations throughout the Charlotte area. In addition, a meeting announcement for the public meeting was placed on the City of Charlotte and CATS websites; and in the Charlotte Center City weekly update e-mail.

An electronic version of the meeting notice was e-mailed to all CATS employees and citizens and organizations in the Corridor Database. The meeting notice was also included in the City of Charlotte's Corporate Communications' CMail and FYI. CMail is the City's electronic weekly news update, which anyone can sign-up to receive. FYI is a newsletter mailed to all City employees.

3.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION

One of the primary means of encouraging early public and agency participation in the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project was through public and agency meetings conducted when the preparation of the Major Investment Study (MIS)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the corridor was initiated. After selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the corridor, supplemental outreach activities were conducted to kickoff preparation of the Draft EIS and update the original scoping activities. A summary of activities and outcomes during both the initial scoping and the supplemental activities is provided in this chapter.

3.1 Public Scoping Meetings

The public scoping meetings for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project include those held in July and September 2000 during the Northeast Corridor MIS, as well as meetings held in February and March 2005, as part of the scoping outreach activities to kickoff the preparation of a Draft EIS for the project.

3.1.1 MIS/EIS Scoping Meetings

As described in the *Northeast Corridor Major Investment Study Scoping Summary Report* (MIS Scoping Summary Report), scoping meetings for the MIS/EIS were held between July 2000 and September 2000. Four meetings were held, including an initial Corridor Studies Kickoff Meeting (July 20, 2000) and three follow-up meetings at various locations throughout the corridor:

- Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church (September 26, 2000)
- Center City, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center (September 27, 2000)
- Sugaw Creek Recreation Center (September 28, 2000)

The initial Corridor Studies Kickoff Meeting was attended by 93 members of the public. The subsequent scoping meetings were lightly attended with 10, 12, and 25 attendees for the Mallard Creek, Center City, and Sugaw Creek meetings, respectively.

Specifics regarding meeting purpose, format, and handout materials are included in the MIS Scoping Summary Report. The report also provides a detailed listing of the written and verbal comments received at the various public scoping meetings. Most comments were related to:

- Location of the alignment;
- Appearance and appeal of various transit technologies;
- Planned density increases and changes in land use;
- Access to stations for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians;
- Speed and travel time of transit;
- Process for selecting alignment/technologies; and,
- Goals for transit and land use in the corridor.

Specific comments and questions received during the initial scoping process are included in Chapter 3 of the MIS Scoping Summary Report.

3.1.2 Draft EIS Kickoff Outreach Activities

Following the completion of the Northeast Corridor MIS, the findings from the MIS were used to help develop the *2025 Corridor System Plan*. This plan, which was adopted in November 2002, identifies the LPA for the Northeast Corridor. As described in Chapter 1, the LPA includes a light rail line between Center City and the I-485 vicinity, primarily following US-29; and, a BRT line between UNCC, University Research Park, and Concord Mills, primarily using I-85.

Following Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval of the LPA in Summer of 2004, the preparation of a Draft EIS and conceptual level engineering to support the EIS completion was initiated. A series of public meetings were held in February and March 2005 to kickoff the Draft EIS and to solicit additional scoping comments. The purpose, format, and outcome of these meetings are summarized in the following sections.

Meeting Information

Date and Time	Location
February 22, 2005 (6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.)	Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center 600 East 4 th Street Charlotte, NC
February 24, 2005 (6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.)	Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church 1600 Mallard Creek Church Road Charlotte, NC
March 1, 2005 (6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.)	Sugar Creek Services Center/Library 4045 North Tryon Street Charlotte, NC

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the public meetings was to update the public on the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project. In addition to introducing project staff, the meeting also served to update the public on:

- Project Purpose and History;
- Locally Preferred Alternative;
- Conceptual Engineering;
- Station Area Planning;
- Environmental Impact Statement;
- Project Schedule; and,
- Public Participation.

Meeting Procedure

Presentation. The meetings began with a formal presentation, which included a brief overview of the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project purpose and history. The presentation also included discussions of the LPA resulting from the MIS; the major components of conceptual engineering

and the EIS; station area planning principles; the project schedule; and public involvement opportunities.

After the presentation, a question and answer period focused on obtaining verbal input on the information in the presentation. The comments received during the question and answer periods are documented in Section 3.1.2.5 of this report.

Handouts and Displays. Informational materials available at the public meetings included:

- Aerial maps with MIS alignment (display);
- Light Rail Vehicle rendering board (display);
- Northeast Corridor EIS Kickoff Informational Booklet (handout);
- Copies of PowerPoint presentation (handout);
- Mailing list sign-up cards (handout);
- Step Into the Future brochures (handout); and,
- Northeast Corridor Fast Facts brochures (handout).

Copies of meeting handouts are included in Appendix C.

Meeting Attendance. To assist attendees and answer questions one-on-one, representatives from the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) and other City of Charlotte departments were present along with representatives from the CATS and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission consultant teams.

Public attendance at the meetings was as follows:

- Center City, February 22nd 9 attendees
- Mallard Creek, February 24th 10 attendees
- Sugar Creek, March 1st 25 attendees

Summary of Public Comments

Listed below are the questions asked by the public and the responses given during the question and answer period. General comments received at the meetings are also noted. No written comments were collected at the three public meetings.

February 22, 2005

Q: Will the station area plans developed a couple of years ago still be used?

A: CATS will still use the station locations from the Major Investment Study. The next stage of this process is defining how many stations will be needed in the corridor and their locations. After the number and location of stations is determined, consultants will begin developing the station area plans. Yes, we will still use the recommendations from the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) committee to which you are referring.

Q: When the station area plans are put in place, will the current uses be precluded?

A: City Planning has always allowed existing developments to remain. TOD applies to future development.

Q: Please address the situation of present uses. Will any businesses along the corridor be considered a public safety issue after light rail is built?

A: I cannot think of any business along the corridor that presents a public safety concern.

Q: Do you plan any street closures along the corridor? In particular, 33rd Street?

A: When there are two types of rail operating in the same area, some crossings could be considered unsafe and need to be closed. There was only one road closure in the South Corridor and it was a minor road. I cannot think of any closures in the Northeast Corridor. Please understand that it is our goal to maintain accessibility, so we try to minimize road closures. No, we do not plan to close 33rd Street.

Q: Are the overhead electric lines obsolete? Have you considered a light rail system with a third rail?

A: No, we cannot power it with a third rail like a subway, because the third rail is electrified and we would have to secure the entire alignment to keep people from walking across the tracks. Building an entire light rail system in a secured, separate right-of-way is extremely expensive. Light rail with overhead wires is the current industry standard. It is definitely not obsolete.

February 24, 2005

Q: When is the earliest that anything will be done on this project?

A: The Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project may be completed in phases to speed up the process. The actual date is not certain at this time because we are competing with other corridors for funding. The first phase to 36th Street may be completed by 2010.

General Comment:

My comments are limited to University City. Please eliminate the station at the 29/49 split because there is no pedestrian scale there with the current grade separation. Combine the McCullough and City Blvd stations to be more functional. Please provide a centrally-located station that serves the University because it will be a major trip generator. Combine the University and Harris stations and move it away from vehicular traffic access to the hospital. It will be one of the most important stations in this area. Thank you.

March 1, 2005

Q: When will you complete the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project?

A: CATS plans to have some level of investment in all corridors by 2012. We are currently developing an implementation plan for all the corridors. The 2025 Plan updated in November 2002 calls for light rail to 36th Street by 2012 and to the University area by 2017. We are reevaluating the schedule for the Northeast Corridor.

Q: Is the alignment set in stone?

A: No. What you see on the maps is the general route for light rail in the Northeast Corridor, but it may vary throughout planning and design. For example, the exact route from North Davidson over to North Tryon has not been determined.

Q: Why does the alignment follow US 29 instead of the existing rail road?

A: There are economic development opportunities along US 29 and better service to the hospital and university than along the existing rail road right-of-way. CATS is different from other transit agencies in that it doesn't make transportation decisions without considering land use options.

Q: Where could we find plans for the City's future growth pattern?

A: The City of Charlotte's Corridor Plan from 1994 can be found on the City's Planning Department webpage.

Q: Will CATS have an EIS for the Northeast Corridor by 2006?

A: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Northeast Corridor should be completed by summer 2006. CATS started this process for the South Corridor in 2000. As a comparison, it would take five to six years for the Northeast Corridor to begin construction. There's a lot of work to be done with the federal government to reach that phase.

Q: When will CATS begin buying the necessary right of way?

A: After the project receives a Record of Decision (ROD) from the federal government.

Q: This looks great, but I'm concerned about the distance from the nearest light rail station to UNCC's campus.

A: The stations indicated on these maps are general locations. We will approach UNCC about locating a station on the campus to better serve the university.

Q: Will one leg of the Northeast Corridor begin before the other?

A: We are considering completing the project in phases. It's an option to extend the South Corridor light rail line to 36th Street as a first phase and then further extend it to the university area as a second phase.

Q: How are you determining which corridor comes next?

A: All of the remaining corridors will compete for federal funds through the New Starts Program. CATS is working on each of the corridors but they will naturally advance through the federal process at different rates.

Q: How difficult has it been to obtain federal money for the South Corridor Project?

A: It has been very difficult. The Federal Transit Administration has changed the process over the last few years. This year Charlotte was one of the four or five projects recommended for funding out of 200. It is very competitive and difficult to advance projects. Political support here in Charlotte helps in moving these transit projects forward.

3.2 Agency Coordination

Agency participation in the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project scoping process included attendance at an agency scoping meeting in September 2000 and the submission of written comments. Subsequently, at the start of Draft EIS preparation in September 2004, agency representatives were again asked to review the proposed project and provide comments on what should be considered during the environmental review process. These scoping activities and outcomes are summarized in the following sections.

3.2.1 MIS/EIS Scoping Meetings

The agency scoping meeting was held on September 27, 2000 at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center in Center City Charlotte. Advance notification of the meeting was distributed to agencies in scoping invitation letters dated August 17, 2000 and August 31, 2000. A comprehensive list of the agencies invited to participate is included in the MIS Scoping Summary Report.

The purpose of the agency scoping meeting was to present information on all four corridor MISs (Northeast, North, Southeast, and West) and provide federal, state, and local agencies an opportunity for questions and comments on the four corridors. The meeting also allowed the study team to initiate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental study process, discuss initial alternatives, identify key land use, transportation, and environmental issues, and provide an opportunity for questions and comments. Prior to the meeting, scoping packets were mailed to each agency. These packets provided background information on the CATS system and presented an overview of the four corridors and alternatives under consideration for each.

Agencies attending the scoping meeting included the US Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, North Carolina Department of Transportation, Mecklenburg County Department of Environmental Protection, and the Charlotte/Douglas International Airport.

Comments received at the scoping meeting were primarily related to how various resources should be addressed in the definition and analysis of alternatives. Specific questions and comments received at the meeting are detailed in Chapter 4 of the MIS Scoping Summary Report. Written comments received following the meeting are summarized in Chapter 5 of the MIS Scoping Summary Report.

3.2.2 Draft EIS Kickoff Outreach Activities

To supplement the original agency scoping activities, CATS contacted agency representatives at the beginning of Draft EIS preparation for the four corridors. In a letter dated September 29, 2004, CATS provided an update on the status of the proposed projects in each corridor and sought additional input and comment. Written comments were requested by October 29, 2004.

Included with the letter was an information packet which had detail sheets for the selected LPAs in the North, Northeast, Southeast, and West corridors. The detail sheets for each corridor included a map of the LPA, as well as descriptive information on the corridor boundaries, the LPA, and the land uses in the corridor. Also included in the information packet was a copy of the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Transit Administration and the Charlotte Area Transit System on Addressing FTA's New Starts and NEPA Requirements for Charlotte's 2025 Transit Plan" (June 22, 2004). A copy of the information packet is included in Appendix D of this document.

The agency contact letter stated that, upon request, meetings could be scheduled for project briefings or for more detailed descriptions of the corridor projects and the proposed Draft EIS process. The US Environmental Protection Agency in Atlanta requested a briefing for Atlanta and Raleigh staff. This briefing is currently being scheduled.

The agencies that received update letters are:

- Federal Transit Administration;
- Federal Aviation Administration;
- Federal Highway Administration;
- Federal Emergency Management Agency;
- Federal Railroad Administration;
- US Advisory Council on Historic Preservation;
- US Army Corps of Engineers;
- US Department of Agriculture;
- US Department of Commerce;
- US Department of Health and Human Services;
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- US Department of the Interior – National Park Service;
- US Environmental Protection Agency;
- US Fish and Wildlife Service;
- US General Services Administration;
- US Geological Survey;
- US Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- North Carolina Department of Crime and Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management;
- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources;
- North Carolina Department of Transportation;
- North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources,
 - Division of Forest Resources;
 - Division of Water Quality;
 - Division of Parks and Recreation;
 - Natural Heritage Program;
- North Carolina State Clearinghouse;
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission;
- Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization; and,
- Mecklenburg County Land Use & Environmental Services Agency.

Written responses to the agency outreach letter were received from the US Department of Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), US Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Carolina Division of Water Quality, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, North Carolina Department of Crime and Public Safety (Division of Emergency Management), and North Carolina State Clearinghouse. Specific comments are summarized in the following chapter.

4.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC AND AGENCY WRITTEN COMMENTS

The formal comment period for the scoping phase of the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project was held from September 1, 2000 through October 16, 2000 at the initiation of the Major Investment Study (MIS)/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process (as stated in the Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register). In addition to verbal comments received at the public meetings, written comments were received through letters, faxes, and comments cards from the public, interested and affected parties, and governmental agencies. A summary of these comments is presented in the *Northeast Corridor Major Investment Study Scoping Summary Report* (MIS Scoping Summary Report).

For the outreach activities conducted at the beginning of Draft EIS preparation, no formal comment period was held. At meetings, members of the public were encouraged to submit written comments if they had additional concerns or questions that were not addressed at the meetings. As described in Chapter 3, government agencies were encouraged to submit comments in response to the update package sent in September 2004. Written comments received during these Draft EIS kickoff activities are summarized below.

4.1 Citizen Comments

A limited number of written comments on the Northeast Corridor were received from the public between November 2004 and March 2005. The issues addressed in several emails received by CATS are summarized below. Copies of the written comments received are included in Appendix E.

- Will the CATS consultant team working on the South Corridor also be working on the Draft EIS for the Northeast Corridor?
- What is the current status of the Northeast Corridor project, and when will public involvement begin again?
- Is more current information about station locations and station area plans available?
- Thanks for providing a transit project update at an Asian Corner Mall meeting. Illustrations from the South Corridor were especially helpful in envisioning the possibilities for the Asian Corner Mall in the future.

4.2 Governmental Review Agencies

Written comments were received from federal and state agencies during the Draft EIS kickoff activities for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project. A summary is provided below of the comments submitted by each agency. Copies of the comment letters are included in Appendix E.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (10/11/04, 12/7/04)

- Referred the project team to the agency website for guidance and recommendations on wildlife considerations as the Draft EIS is developed.
- Secondary and cumulative effects on listed or rare species should be thoroughly evaluated and appropriate mitigation provided.

- Attached general guidelines and recommendations for reference during document preparation: Guidelines for Environmental Reviews; Utility Line and Sewer Line Avoidance and Minimization Recommendations; Piedmont Stormwater Pond and Mine Planting Recommendations.

North Carolina State Clearinghouse (10/12/04)

- Acknowledged receipt of project information and assigned a State Application Number for all inquiries and correspondence with the State Clearinghouse regarding the corridor projects.

US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (10/25/04)

- Directs project team to National Geodetic Survey's home page for information on available geodetic control monuments. Should review information to determine whether monuments may be affected by proposed project.
- Advises that the National Ocean Service requires 90-day notification if monuments will be disturbed or destroyed.

US Natural Resources Conservation Service (11/5/04)

- Indicates that planned projects are primarily located in urban, suburban, and other developed areas and that use of existing transit corridors and rights-of-way would minimize adverse impacts.
- Encourages project team to minimize land disturbing activities, implement appropriate sediment and erosion control practices, and use native plant materials whenever possible.

North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management, Floodplain Management Branch (11/2/04)

- Advises that future project construction must receive certification to develop in mapped regulatory floodways and floodway fringe areas.

North Carolina Division of Water Quality (11/8/04)

- Requested maps detailing the location of the proposed corridors so that agency can complete its review of the projects.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (12/7/04)

- The agency supports enhancing public transportation in urban areas. However, they are concerned that station facilities (such as parking lots and sidewalks) will increase impervious coverage, which could cause a decline in the health of receiving waters, the quality of fish habitat and wetlands, and water quality.
- Recommend use of non-impervious materials for construction and low impact development techniques to manage stormwater quantity and quality.
- Outlined the agency's general information needs to facilitate document preparation and their review process. Will require information related to:

- Fishery and wildlife resources in project area, including designated threatened, endangered, or special concern species;
- Affected streams or wetlands;
- Maps showing acreage of affected wetlands and upland wildlife habitat;
- Mitigation plans for direct and indirect effects on habitat; and,
- Secondary development effects on natural resources.

5.0 SUMMARY OF MODIFICATIONS TO INITIAL ALTERNATIVES

As a result of the extensive public involvement program conducted for the scoping phase of the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project, a significant number of public comments and suggestions were received from the communities in the study area. This public input was considered in the analysis performed for the Major Investment Study (MIS), and in the refinement of the alignments, modes, and station locations for the proposed transit corridor. The modifications made to MIS alignments based on public and agency comment are summarized in Chapter 6 of the *Northeast Corridor Major Investment Study Scoping Summary Report*.

Because the public and affected agencies were involved in the development and evaluation of alternatives for the MIS and in the selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Northeast Corridor, comments received at the kickoff for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were primarily limited to station area plans and the schedule for the proposed project. Few comments were made regarding alternate alignments or technologies to be considered in the Draft EIS. However, based on these few comments, some additions or modifications were made to the alternatives to be carried forward for the Draft EIS evaluation. These modifications are summarized below.

- Based on public concerns about the proximity of the University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC) station to the UNCC campus, the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is initiating discussions with UNCC to discuss the possibility of an alignment that penetrates the UNCC campus.
- Based partly on public concerns about pedestrian/vehicular conflicts at busy intersections (such as W.T. Harris Boulevard and the US-29/NC-49 split), the station spacing and locations were adjusted in the University City area.

APPENDICES

The following appendices contain information referenced in Chapters 1 through 5 of this *Scoping Summary Report Update*.

Appendix A: List of Elected Officials and Area Places of Worship Receiving Public Meeting Notices

Appendix B: Public Meeting Notifications and Advertisements

Appendix C: EIS Kickoff/Scoping Meeting Handouts and Presentation

Appendix D: Agency Update Package

Appendix E: Written Comments from Public and Agencies

Appendix A

List of Elected Officials and Area Places of Worship Receiving Public Meeting Notices

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Mary Barker
CTAG
16811 America Cup Rd
Cornelius NC 28031

Eric Cebula
CTAG
3042 Pinewood Hill Drive
Matthews NC 28105

Bob Collins
CTAG
P.O. Box 1087
Davidson NC 28036

David Creech
CTAG
3701 Selwyn Ave.
Charlotte NC 28209

Jef Freeman
CTAG
10320 Appleway Court
Mint Hill NC 28227

Todd Lange
CTAG
9717 Van Stratten Court
Huntersville NC 28078

Mike Payton
CTAG
8427 Quintrell Lane
Charlotte NC 28277

Kit Cramer
Vice-chairperson (At-large)
CMS Board
P. O. Box 32785
Charlotte NC 28232-2785

George Dunlap
District 3
CMS Board
4728 Garvis Drive
Charlotte NC 28269

Kaye McGarry
At-Large
CMS Board
P. O. Box 30035
Charlotte NC 28230-0035

Carolyn Carpenter
County Commissioner
Cabarrus County
P. O. Box 707
Concord NC 28026

Robert Carruth
County Commissioner
Cabarrus County
521 Todd Drive NE
Concord NC 28025

Robert Freeman
County Commissioner
Cabarrus County
250 Branchview Drive, Suite G
Concord NC 28025

Coy Privette
County Commissioner
Cabarrus County
306 Cottage Drive
Kannapolis NC 28083

Richard Suggs
County Commissioner
Cabarrus County
5643 Mt. Pleasant Road, South
Concord NC 28025

Leda Belk
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
130 W. Innes Street
Salisbury NC 28114

Al Black
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
309 Hugh Crocker Drive
Matthews NC 28104

Dennis Brown
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
315 M. Main Street
Landis NC 28088

Deloris Chambers
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
P. O. Box 134
Badin NC 28009

David Choate
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
204 Julia Drive
Lincolnton NC 28092

Carroll Heavner
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
501 S. Academy Street
Lincolnton NC 28092

Pattie Huneycutt
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
28312 Millingport Road
Albemarle NC 28001

Charles Lowery
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
110 S. Elm Street
Lowell NC 28098

Bud Norris
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
P. O. Box 141
Lilesville NC 28091

Bill Thacker
Executive Committee
Centralina Council of
Governments
646 West Avenue
Wadesboro NC 28170

Warren Cooksey
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning
Commission
1404 Lyon Court
Charlotte NC 28205

Chet Helt
Zoning Committee Member
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning
Commission
1136 Greenwood Cliff
Charlotte NC 28204

Bernard Johnson
Zoning Committee Member
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning
Commission
P.O. Box 32051
Charlotte NC 28232

Henry Lafferty
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning
Commission
725 Providence Rd., Suite 215
Charlotte NC 28207

Mark C. Loflin
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning
Commission
9128 Royal Highlands Ct.
Charlotte NC 28277

James Ramsey
Planning Committee Member
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning
Commission
4131 Hyde Park Drive
Charlotte NC 28216

George Sheild
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning
Commission
13777 Ballantyne Corporate
Plaza, Suite 320
Charlotte NC 28277

Bob Bischoff
CTAG
Citizens for Efficient Mass Transit
3300 Providence Plantation Lane
Charlotte NC 28270

Susan Burgess
Councilmember (At-large)
City of Charlotte
1333 Carlton Ave.
Charlotte NC 28203

Patrick Cannon
Mayor Pro-Tem
City of Charlotte
312 West Trade Street, Suite 300
Charlotte NC 28202

Nancy Carter
Councilwoman (District 5)
City of Charlotte
1401 Cavendish Court
Charlotte NC 28211

Patsy Kinsey
Councilmember (District 1)
City of Charlotte
2334 Greenway Ave.
Charlotte NC 28204

John Lassiter
Councilmember (At-large)
City of Charlotte
2632 Winding Oak Drive
Charlotte NC 28270

Don Lochman
Councilman (District 7)
City of Charlotte
6915 Linkside Court
Charlotte NC 28277

Pat McCrory
Mayor
City of Charlotte
600 East 4th Street
Charlotte NC 28202

James Mitchell
Councilman (District 2)
City of Charlotte
4110 Doublecreek Crossing
Drive, Apt. 111
Charlotte NC 28269

Pat Mumford
Councilman (At-large)
City of Charlotte
2208 Dilworth Rd. W.
Charlotte NC 28203

Greg Phipps
Councilmember
City of Charlotte
10223-B University City Blvd.
Charlotte NC 28213

Pam Syfert
City Manager
City of Charlotte
600 East 4th Street
Charlotte NC 28202

John Tabor
Councilman (District 6)
City of Charlotte
2425 Sharon Road
Charlotte NC 28211

Warren Turner
Councilmember (District 3)
City of Charlotte
P. O. Box 35465
Charlotte NC 28231

Lamar Barrier
Councilman (District 5)
City of Concord
29 Brookwood Avenue NW
Concord NC 28025

Alfred Brown
Councilman (District 4)
City of Concord
103 Cabarrus Avenue W.
Concord NC 28025

Randy Grimes
Councilman (District 7)
City of Concord
3332 Garrett Drive
Concord NC 28025

Hector Henry II
Councilman (District 6)
City of Concord
824 Rothmoor Place
Concord NC 28025

Scott Padgett
Mayor
City of Concord
P. O. Box 308
Concord NC 28026-0308

David Phillips
Mayor Pro-Tem (District 1)
City of Concord
507 New Castle Court NE
Concord NC 28025-2575

Jim Ramseur
Councilman (District 2)
City of Concord
P. O. Box 288
Concord NC 28026-0288

Allen Small
Councilman (District 3)
City of Concord
160 Boger Court SW
Concord NC 28025

Jennifer Stultz
Mayor
City of Gastonia
P. O. Box 1748
Gastonia NC 28053

Judy Davis
Mayor
City of Monroe
PO Box 69
Monroe NC 28111-0069

Douglas Echols
Mayor
City of Rock Hill
P. O. Box 11706
Rock Hill SC 29731-1706

Dean Bartlett.
CTAG
Coventry Woods Neighborhood
Association
4706 Wildleaf Court
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1132 ProAm Drive
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Jefferson W. Brown
Co-chair, CTAG
Kennedy Covington Lobdell &
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Hearst Tower, 214 N. Tryon, 47th
Floor
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County Commissioner (District 4)
Mecklenburg County
2124 Kenmore Ave.
Charlotte NC 28204

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County Commission (At-large)
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1500 Two First Union Center
Charlotte NC 28202

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County Commissioner (District 2)
Mecklenburg County
5300 Reedham Court
Charlotte NC 28208

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5801 Paper Whites Place
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Charlotte NC 28277

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Metropolitan Transit Commission
5939 Reddman Road
Charlotte NC 28205

Lisa McCarthy
Transit Services Advisory
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Metropolitan Transit Commission
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Raleigh NC 27601-1096

Karen Ray
Representative (District 95)
N.C. House of Representatives
1315 Legislative Office Building
Raleigh NC 27601-1096

John Rhodes
Representative (District 98)
N.C. House of Representatives
1017 Legislative Office Building
Raleigh NC 27601-1096

Doug Vinson
Representative (District 105)
North Carolina House of
Representatives
1015 Legislative Building
Raleigh NC 27601

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14313 Lissadell Circle
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2010 Legislative Office Building
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PO Box 3189
Matthews NC 28106

Edward Goodall
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1414 Legislative Building
Raleigh NC 27601

Malcolm Graham
Senator (District 40)
North Carolina Senate
3404 Cresta Ct
Charlotte NC 28269-8680

Malcolm Graham
Senator (District 40)
North Carolina Senate
1113 Legislative Building
Raleigh NC 27601

Fletcher Hartsell
Senator (District 36)
North Carolina Senate
PO Box 368
Concord NC 28026-0368

Fletcher Hartsell
Senator (District 36)
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518 Legislative Office Building
Raleigh NC 27603-5925

Robert Pittenger
Senator (District 39)
North Carolina Senate
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Raleigh NC 27603

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Davidson NC 28036

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Mayor
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Davidson NC 28036

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Town of Harrisburg
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Timothy Hagler
Mayor
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408 Dogwood Lane
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232 Matthews Station Street
Matthews NC 28105-6713

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846 East Center Avenue
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Cass Ballenger
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2182 Rayburn House Office
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U. S. Senate
Senate Russell Building
Washington DC 20510

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Town Council
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Harrisburg NC 28075

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Huntersville NC 28078

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Mooresville NC 28115

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U. S. House of Representatives
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North Carolina Senator
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office
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Washington DC 20510

Jim DeMint
South Carolina Senator
United States Senate
825 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

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Harrisburg NC 28075

Rick Morrison
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Town of Harrisburg
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Harrisburg NC 28075

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Huntersville NC 28078

R. Todd Lamb
Town Administrator
Town of Mint Hill
P. O. Box 23457
Mint Hill NC 28227-0272

George Fowler
Mayor
Town of Pineville
214 Linwood Lane
Pineville NC 28134

Elizabeth Dole
North Carolina Senator
U. S. Senate
225 N. Main Street, Suite 404
Salisbury NC 28144

Richard Burr
North Carolina Senator
United States Senate
2000 W First Street, Ste 508
Winston-Salem NC 27104

AREA PLACES OF WORSHIP

Rev. R.L. Kennedy
15th Street Church Of God
PO Box 36466
Charlotte NC 28236-6466

Rev. James Hawthorne
1st Mount Calvary Baptist
209 W 28th St
Charlotte NC 28206-2654

Rev. Dick Little
Advent Lutheran
8840 University City Blvd
Charlotte NC 28213-0566

Church Reverend
All Saints Episcopal
6600 The Plz
Charlotte NC 28215-2500

Rev. Wayne A. Frazier
Back Creek ARP Church
1821 Back Creek Church Rd
Charlotte NC 28213-7774

Rev. Doug R. Ardis
Bible Presbyterian Church of
Charlotte
6237 Rumble Rd
Charlotte NC 28262-3127

Rev. Jerry L. Cannon
C N Jenkins Presbyterian
1421 Statesville Ave
Charlotte NC 28206-3008

Pres. Kenneth R Coonley
Carolina Conference - 7th Day
Adventist
2701 E Wt Harris Blvd
Charlotte NC 28213-4109

Barbara Neff Hutchison
Catholic Campus Ministry - Ora
UNCC
9201 University City Blvd
Charlotte NC 28223-0001

Bishop William Curlin
Catholic Diocese Of Charlotte
1123 S Church St
Charlotte NC 28203-4003

Office of Communications
Catholic Diocese Of Charlotte
1123 S Church St
Charlotte NC 28203-4003

Rev. Robert Meachem
Cedar Grove Presbyterian
1039 Foxborough Rd
Charlotte NC 28213-5738

Rev. Kathy Nelson
Christ Unity Church
7300 Mallard Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28262-2224

Rev. Terry Wallace
Christian Family Missionary
Baptist Church
3030 Allen Rd S
Charlotte NC 28269-4512

Church Minister
Church Of Jesus Christ
600 E 36th St
Charlotte NC 28205-1106

Jeff Black
Pastor
Concord First Assembly
150 Warren C. Coleman Blvd.
Concord NC 28025

Rev. Al Tinnen
Derita Baptist Church
2835 W Sugar Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28262-7342

Rev. Catherine Northrup
Derita Presbyterian Church
PO Box 26216
Charlotte NC 28221-6216

Elder S. Ford
Derita United House Of Prayer
4100 W Sugar Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28269-1915

Rev. Bob Arnold
Duncan Memorial Methodist
Church
420 E 15th St
Charlotte NC 28206-3319

Church Pastor
Ebenezer Baptist Church
2020 W Sugar Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28262-4954

Rev. Al Campbell
Galilean Baptist Mission Church
1224 E 10th St
Charlotte NC 28204-2049

Rev. Sam Case
Gloryland Baptist Church
3001 Gloryland Ave
Charlotte NC 28213-5669

Rev. Fred Gibson
Greater Providence Baptist
Church
2000 Milton Road
Charlotte NC 28215

Rev. Frank Harrison
Green Memorial Baptist Church
1324 The Plz
Charlotte NC 28205-3428

Rev. George McNeely
Greenville AME Zion Church
6116 Montieth Dr
Charlotte NC 28213-6229

Rev. J.R. Farrington
Harbor Baptist Church
5801 Old Concord Rd
Charlotte NC 28213-7111

Evangelist Darren Wyndham
Harris Blvd Church Of Christ
5424 E WT Harris Blvd
Charlotte NC 28215-4077

Rev. Jeff Andler
Hickory Grove Baptist Church
6050 Hickory Grove Rd
Charlotte NC 28215-4197

Dr. Joe B. Brown
Hickory Grove Baptist Church
6050 Hickory Grove Rd
Charlotte NC 28215-4197

Rev. E. Roy Coates
Hickory Grove Church Of Christ
5424 E Wt Harris Blvd
Charlotte NC 28215-4077

Greg Gillespie
Hickory Grove Presbyterian
Church
5735 E Wt Harris Blvd
Charlotte NC 28215-4072

Dr. N. Fred Jordan, Jr.
Hickory Grove United Methodist
Church
6301 Hickory Grove Rd
Charlotte NC 28215-4299

Rev. Randall Mishoe
Holy Covenant United Church Of
Christ
3501 W Wt Harris Blvd
Charlotte NC 28269-8510

Rev. Dorothy Adams
Jesus Christ Outreach Ministry
Church
2717 Cowles Rd
Charlotte NC 28208-7001

Church Minister
Johnston Memorial Presbyterian
Church
729 E 36th St
Charlotte NC 28205-1107

Dorothy Davis
Mallard Creek Presbyterian
Church
1600 Mallard Creek Church Road
Charlotte NC 28262

Rev. George W Jacobs
Mallard Creek Presbyterian
Church
1600 W Mallard Creek Church Rd
Charlotte NC 28262-2341

Apostle S. L. Mills, Jr.
Mallard Creek United House Of
Prayer
1739 Grace Ln
Charlotte NC 28262-1414

Rev. Harold Diggs
Mayfield Memorial Baptist Church
700 W Sugar Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28213-6196

Rev. Thomas Rogers
Mt. Zion Church Of God Church
1504 N Davidson St
Charlotte NC 28206-3470

Rev. James Frieson
Nazareth Primitive Baptist Church
2230 Bancroft St
Charlotte NC 28206-2521

Rev. J. R. Caldwell
New Bethlehem FBH Church
6609 Heatherbrook Ave
Charlotte NC 28213-6040

L. Bryant Parker
New Hampton Presbyterian
Church
PO Box 561808
Charlotte NC 28256-1808

Church Minister
New Life Baptist Church
1413 Anderson St
Charlotte NC 28205-1722

Rev. Ken G. Meeks, Jr.
Newell Presbyterian Church
PO Box 68
Newell NC 28126-0068

Rev. Steve Triplett
Northeast Baptist Church
9920 Newell Hickory Grove Rd
Charlotte NC 28213-6506

Rev. Glenn Stevenson
Northside Baptist Church
333 Jeremiah Blvd
Charlotte NC 28262-4997

Rev. Ray Medcalf
Parkwood Institutional CME
Church
802 Tom Hunter Road
Charlotte NC 28213-8007

Rev. Wyman Rousseau
Piedmont Unitarian Universalist
Church
9704 Mallard Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28262-9738

Rev. David Gales
Plaza Baptist Church
3321 The Plz
Charlotte NC 28205-1664

Rev. Thomas Tate
Plaza Presbyterian Church
2304 The Plz
Charlotte NC 28205-2404

Rev. Randy Kivett
Plaza Road Baptist Church
7041 The Plz
Charlotte NC 28215-0903

Rev. Percy Reeves
Plaza United Methodist Church
5600 The Plz
Charlotte NC 28215-2148

Rev. Stephen Stout
Prosperity Presbyterian Church
5533 Prosperity Church Rd
Charlotte NC 28269-1104

Rev. William M. Jordan, III
Rockwell AME Zion Church
PO Box 26634
Charlotte NC 28221-6634

Rev. Daryle J. Garner
Seigle Avenue Church Of God
1620 Seigle Ave
Charlotte NC 28205-2668

Rev. C.A. Summers
Seigle Avenue Presbyterian
Church
PO Box 36524
Charlotte NC 28236-6524

Rev. William Lee
Silver Mt. Baptist Church
PO Box 26142
Charlotte NC 28221-6142

Dr. James Logan
South Tryon Presbyterian Church
931 Wilann Dr
Charlotte NC 28215-2147

Rev. Wayne Goodwin
Spencer Memorial United
Methodist Church
1025 E 36th St
Charlotte NC 28205-1652

Rev. L. D. Parker
St. Luke Baptist Church
1109 Rodey Ave
Charlotte NC 28206-1849

Dr. Rev Gregory Moss
St. Paul Baptist Church
1401 Allen St
Charlotte NC 28205-2897

Rev. Thomas Crangle
St. Thomas Aquinas Church
1400 Suther Rd
Charlotte NC 28213-0551

Rev. William Ralston
Sugaw Creek Presbyterian
Church
101 W Sugar Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28213-6699

Rev. Judah Jones
United Methodist General
Evangelist Church
5801 Venedale Rd
Charlotte NC 28212-2112

Rev. Charles W. Wilson, III
University City United Methodist
Church
6100 W Sugar Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28269-0965

Rev. Claude Alexander
University Park Baptist Church
2348 Keller Ave
Charlotte NC 28216-4310

Rev. Sheldon Shipman
Walls Memorial AME Zion Church
2722 Bancroft St
Charlotte NC 28206-3540

Rev. Wardell Henderson
Weeping Willow AME Zion
Church
2220 Milton Rd
Charlotte NC 28215-3321

Rev. George Thompson
Charlotte District Superintendent
Western North Carolina
Conference
4108 Park Road, Suite 101
Charlotte NC 28209-2559

Church Pastor
Whiting Avenue Baptist
3117 Whiting Ave
Charlotte NC 28205-1648

Elder O. J. Hatcher
Zion Primitive Baptist Church
827 E Sugar Creek Rd
Charlotte NC 28205-1319

Appendix B

Public Meeting Notifications and Advertisements

- Copy of Meeting Notice Mailed in Persons in Corridor Database
- Copies of Paid Advertisements in Local Newspapers

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

PUBLIC MEETINGS



This is your opportunity to get involved and help make decisions that will affect the future of your community.

Please Plan To Attend!

February 22, 2005

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
600 E. 4th Street
Room 267

February 24, 2005

Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church
1600 Mallard Creek Church Road
Sanctuary

March 1, 2005

Sugar Creek Services Center/Library
4045 N. Tryon Street
Community Room

- All meetings begin at 6:00 pm.
- The same information will be presented at all three meetings.

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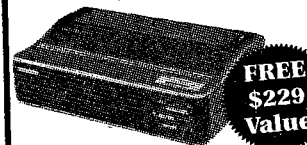
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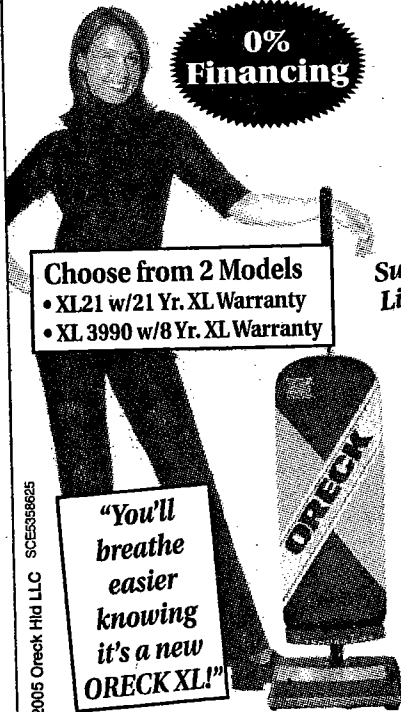
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Charlotte Observer
2/15/05

A twist to SAT prep

Continued from page 1A

have something that's free and helpful."

That's right. The sessions are free of charge. But that apparently does not mean free of quality.

Crystal Little, a sophomore at Victory Christian, which is located just off Beatties Ford Road, once paid \$200 for an SAT prep course.

"I didn't learn anything (in the \$200 course), but this course is different," Little said. "Although we've only had two classes so far, I can tell that I'm better prepared. I've taken the PSAT and the SAT, and they were hard. But it's very relaxed here, and I really feel like I'm learning more. I'm definitely coming back."

The current course at the library is divided into four one-hour sessions - "Powering Up the Brain," "Critical Reading," "Prefixes and Math Preparation," and "Understanding the Math Section."

The sessions also place an emphasis on the new essay component of the SAT, which is slated to make its debut March 12. Students will have 25 minutes to complete the essay, which is making students and parents across the country nervous.

"But I think, after this class, I'll be well-prepared for the essay portion," Darian Johnson said. "That's how good this class is."

This week, the students will use the library's computers to do a timed, simulated SAT.

While the prep sessions at the library will end on Feb. 24, Brittani Johnson said a new course will begin on March 24. The sessions, held on Thursdays, run from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. The sessions are not just for high-school students, though. Some middle-school students, including seventh graders, have

taken the course. In addition, adults who are returning to college take the course to prepare for the SAT, as well as grownups as who aspire to graduate school and must take the GRE.

Cheryl Riley said she heard about the sessions and immediately enrolled her son Alvin, a ninth-grader, so that he could get a jump on thinking seriously about college.

"It was a mutual thing," Riley said. "I wanted him here, and I think he wanted to be here so he could do well on the test. I know SAT scores are very important. We have a (high-school) senior (Crystal, who is hoping to get into Georgetown University), so we knew about the process. We want Alvin to be as prepared as he possibly can."

Darian Johnson feels the

same way.

While most people would be satisfied with an 1,100 on their first try, Johnson said he's enrolled in the sessions because he's striving for excellence.

"An 1,100 is not good enough," said Johnson, who wants to become a neurosurgeon. "In saying that, I don't mean to sound cocky; it's just that I have high goals for myself. I really want to achieve."

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PUBLIC MEETINGS

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Please Plan To Attend

February 22, 2005

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600 E. 4th Street
Room 267

February 24, 2005

Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church
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March 1, 2005

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- All meetings begin at 6:00 pm.
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24 de febrero de 2004

Iglesia Presbiteriana Mallard Creek
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Santuario

1 de marzo de 2005-02-11

Biblioteca de Sugar Creek Services
4045 N. Tryon Street
Salón Comunitario

- Todas las reuniones comienzan a las 6:00 p.m.
- En todas ellas se presentará la misma información.

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THE CHOICE IS YOURS

CATS NEEDS YOUR HELP PLANNING FOR RAPID TRANSIT IN THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR. YOUR PARTICIPATION WILL HELP SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE AND ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE A VOICE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.



NORTHEAST CORRIDOR PUBLIC MEETINGS

February 22, 2005

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- All meetings begin at 6:00 pm.
- The same information will be presented at all three meetings.

Public Involvement: How to make better transit and land use decisions

**This is your opportunity to get involved
and help make decisions that will affect
the future of your community.**

Please Plan To Attend!

Northeast Corridor Public Meetings

February 22, 2005

February 24, 2005

March 1, 2005

(See other side for more details.)

**For more information,
contact (704) 336-RIDE or visit www.ridetransit.org.**



Appendix C

EIS Kickoff/Scoping Meeting Handouts and Presentation

- Northeast Corridor EIS Kick-off Informational Booklet
 - Meeting Presentation
 - Mailing list sign up card
 - “Step Into the Future” Brochure
 - “Northeast Corridor Fast Facts” Brochure
-

Charlotte Area Transit System, 600 East 4th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202

Transit Planning Milestones for Charlotte-Mecklenburg:

- 1994: *Centers and Corridors Vision* completed.
Five transit corridors recommended.
- 1998: *2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan for Charlotte-Mecklenburg* completed.
½ percent sales tax to fund the plan approved.
- 1999: Transit Governance Interlocal Agreement created.
Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) formed.
- 2000: South Corridor MIS completed. Light rail selected as Locally Preferred Alternative.
- 2002: Major Investment Studies for North, Northeast, Southeast, and West Corridors completed. Light Rail selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Northeast Corridor.
Corridor System Plan adopted by the MTC.



Environmental Impact Statement Kick-Off



Transit Plans Move Forward

The next step to extending light rail transit into the Northeast Corridor will kick-off this month with public meetings to introduce the start of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and supportive conceptual engineering.

During this phase of the project, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The *Corridor System Plan*, published by the Charlotte Area Transit System in 2002, calls for an extension of light rail into the Northeast Corridor from the South Corridor. It also calls for Bus Rapid Transit (or BRT) service linking the University Research area to the light rail corridor.

As currently envisioned, the light rail would use existing railroad right-of-way from Uptown Charlotte (the Center City) to 36th Street where it would transition over to an alignment along

US 29 around Sugar Creek Road. The alignment would remain along US 29 through the University City area past UNC-Charlotte to the terminus near I-485.

The light rail line would be constructed incrementally as an extension of the South Corridor Light Rail Project to improve operational effectiveness of Charlotte's transit system and leverage the public investment already made in the South Corridor.

Included in this Booklet

This booklet explains the planning process that the City of Charlotte and CATS have taken in planning for transit improvements in the Northeast Corridor. It also explains the current phase of study and how you can assist by providing your comments on the project, the alternatives to be studied, and the potential environmental impacts.

This booklet includes the following:

- Transit Plans Move Forward..... Page 1
- Northeast Corridor Definition Page 2
- Purpose and Need for Improvements Page 2
- Planning, NEPA Process , and Scoping Page 3
- Major Investment Study and Findings Page 4
- Locally Preferred Alternative Page 5
- Corridor System Plan Page 6
- Potential NEPA Issues Page 7
- Alternatives to be Studied in Draft EIS..... Page 7
- Capital Costs and Funding Page 8
- Next Steps Page 8
- For Further Information..... Page 8



“Major roads across the region are experiencing serious congestion and delays, particularly during peak travel times. Air quality problems are increasing. And, as a result the quality of life for the people living in the region is being negatively impacted.”

Northeast Corridor Definition

The Northeast corridor extends approximately 14 miles from Uptown Charlotte in Mecklenburg County to the Concord Mills area near the Mecklenburg-Cabarrus County line. The corridor generally follows Interstate 85 (I-85) which runs in a northeasterly direction from the Uptown Charlotte and encompasses major arterials that parallel I-85 including US 29 and NC 49.

Land uses in the corridor are characterized by higher density office and commercial development in the southern portion of Center City; a mixture of uses including commercial, light industrial, warehouses, and manufacturing with

some scattered low-density residential areas in the central portion; and a mixture of low-density commercial, institutional/business park, and residential developments, with pockets of medium-density residential to the northeast. Major destinations in the corridor include the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University Research Park, and Blockbuster Pavilion.

Purpose and Need for Improvements

It is estimated that the population in Charlotte-Mecklenburg will increase 43 percent and that regional employment will increase by 60 percent by the year 2025.

Although Charlotte-Mecklenburg has established the Centers and Corridors vision as its preferred land use pattern, previous growth trends contradict this vision.

Growth has been occurring in patterns that make transit and land use planning more difficult by scattering office and higher density housing throughout

the County. This lower density, diffuse pattern of development causes people to drive more and make longer trips. Consequently, the number of vehicle miles traveled is growing at a rate far in excess of population growth.

Major roads across the region are experiencing serious congestion and delays, particularly during peak travel times. Air quality problems are increasing. And, as a result the quality of life for the people living in the region is being negatively impacted.

To address these needs, the 2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan for Charlotte-Mecklenburg was developed to change land use patterns and provide greater mobility. In 2002, the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) adopted a 2025 Corridor System Plan to create the foundation for a regional public transportation system. A combination of Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit improvements were proposed to be implemented over the next 25 years in the Northeast Corridor.

Planning, the NEPA Process, and Scoping

When a proposed project requires a major federal action, such as a grant, the federal agency involved is required to document the potential environmental effects of the project.

For the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project, the federal agency is the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The FTA, in conjunction with the City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. An EIS is a decision-making document that helps the community make an informed decision about the best action to take, if any.

The EIS will document the detailed assessment of the social, environmental, economic, and transportation related effects of the Project. The effects identified include those that are positive, negative, permanent, and temporary. Cumulative impacts as a result of other on-going projects in the region are evaluated and the irreversible and irretrievable loss of natural resources is identified. The EIS will be circulated to local, state, and federal government agencies to ensure that issues are resolved, the project is compliant with regulations, and is consistent with local and regional goals.

Two documents will be prepared during the development of the EIS. The first is a Draft EIS, which is circulated publicly

for comment. A public hearing is held after it has been made available to formally share the results of the Draft EIS with the public and agencies. The second document, a Final EIS, is prepared to respond to the comments received on the Draft EIS and update the alternatives and impact studies in the event of design changes. After the Final EIS is made available for review, the FTA will publish a Record of Decision to document the selection of the preferred alternative and mitigation commitments.

The first major effort in the preparation of the Draft EIS is scoping. Scoping is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to ensure that the public and agencies are involved while the proposed transportation solutions, called alternatives, are developed and refined and before the detailed environmental assessment begins. During scoping the public and agencies are informed about the alternatives under study, the public involvement activities that will take place, and how the alternatives will be evaluated for their potential social, economic, and environmental effects. MIS Scoping was completed for the Northeast Corridor at the initiation of the Major Investment Study in the fall of 2000. CATS is currently conducting EIS Scoping and seeking comments on the alternatives under study, the potential environmental impacts, the project schedule, and the overall scope of the project.



Major Investment Study and Findings

Following the completion of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission's *2025 Integrated Transit/ Land Use Plan* and the citizens' approval of a ½ cent sales tax to implement the plan, Major Investment Studies (MISs) were initiated for each corridor identified in the Plan. The South Corridor was the first MIS initiated in 1999 and in March of 2000, light rail was chosen as the Locally Preferred Alternative. The remaining four corridors: the North, Northeast, Southeast and West; began the MIS process in the fall of 2000. The outcome of these studies was the definition of a system plan and the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative for each of the corridors.

The major investment studies were completed to evaluate the land use, mobility, operational, environmental, financial, and system development characteristics of a variety of transit modes and alignments. From this evaluation, LPAs were selected for each corridor. The selection involved picking the best mode(s) and alignment based on the evaluation criteria set forth by the Metropolitan Transit Commission for all of the Corridors.

In the Northeast Corridor, light rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), and commuter rail were studied on a variety of alignments. Commuter rail and several alignments were dismissed from the study in the earlier phases. Light rail and BRT were evaluated in more detail as follows:

- BRT on I-85
- Light Rail via Brevard and US 29
- Light Rail on North Tryon with dedicated right-of-way
- Light Rail on Brevard to UNCC plus US 29 BRT
- North Tryon Streetcar & Bus Rapid Transit on Graham/Research Park/US-29

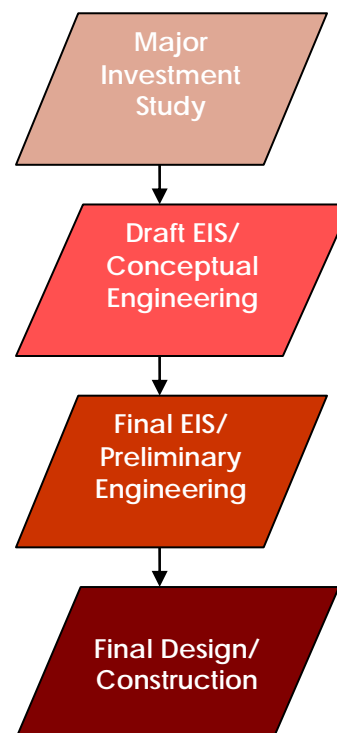
Locally Preferred Alternative. The LPA selected for the Northeast Corridor by the Metropolitan Transit Commission is a combination of alternatives studied in the MIS. It includes an extension of the South Corridor Light Rail Project from its currently planned terminus at Seventh Street in Uptown Charlotte to 36th Street where it would transition over to an alignment along US 29 around Sugar Creek Road. The alignment would remain along US 29 through the University City area past UNC-Charlotte to the terminus near I-485. The BRT component of the LPA would focus on the portion of the corridor beyond Harris Boulevard, the King's Grant/Concord Mills area, and University Research Park. The buses would use the existing roadway system with exceptions only when dedicated guideways are needed to pass congested roadways. This is a reduced version of the BRT alignment studied in the MIS, which lowers capital construction costs. If needed to maintain high-quality service and operational reliability, additional guideways could be built later.

The extension of rapid transit improvements into Cabarrus County is a long-range regional goal dependent on the jurisdiction financing the local share of required capital improvements as well as a share of on-going operating costs. At this time, the LPA does not include service into Cabarrus County.

Findings. The LPA includes light rail and BRT components that work together to serve the multiple transportation markets in the corridor. The light rail component provides an extension of service from the South Corridor through Uptown through the Northeast Corridor and the University/Research Park area. The single light rail and BRT options studied in the MIS did not provide the land use, mobility, and system development advantages of the LPA.

Because the LPA could be built as an extension of the South Corridor Light Rail line it improves the operational effectiveness of that line and leverages the public investment in the South Corridor. The light rail service in the Northeast Corridor would use the tracks, guideway, and stations that will be built through Uptown Charlotte and the storage, maintenance, operations facility that will be developed.

Because light rail in the Northeast Corridor could be constructed as part of the South Corridor Light Rail Project, it can be built incrementally. In addition, the LPA would intersect with east-west BRT, bus and streetcar service on Trade Street.

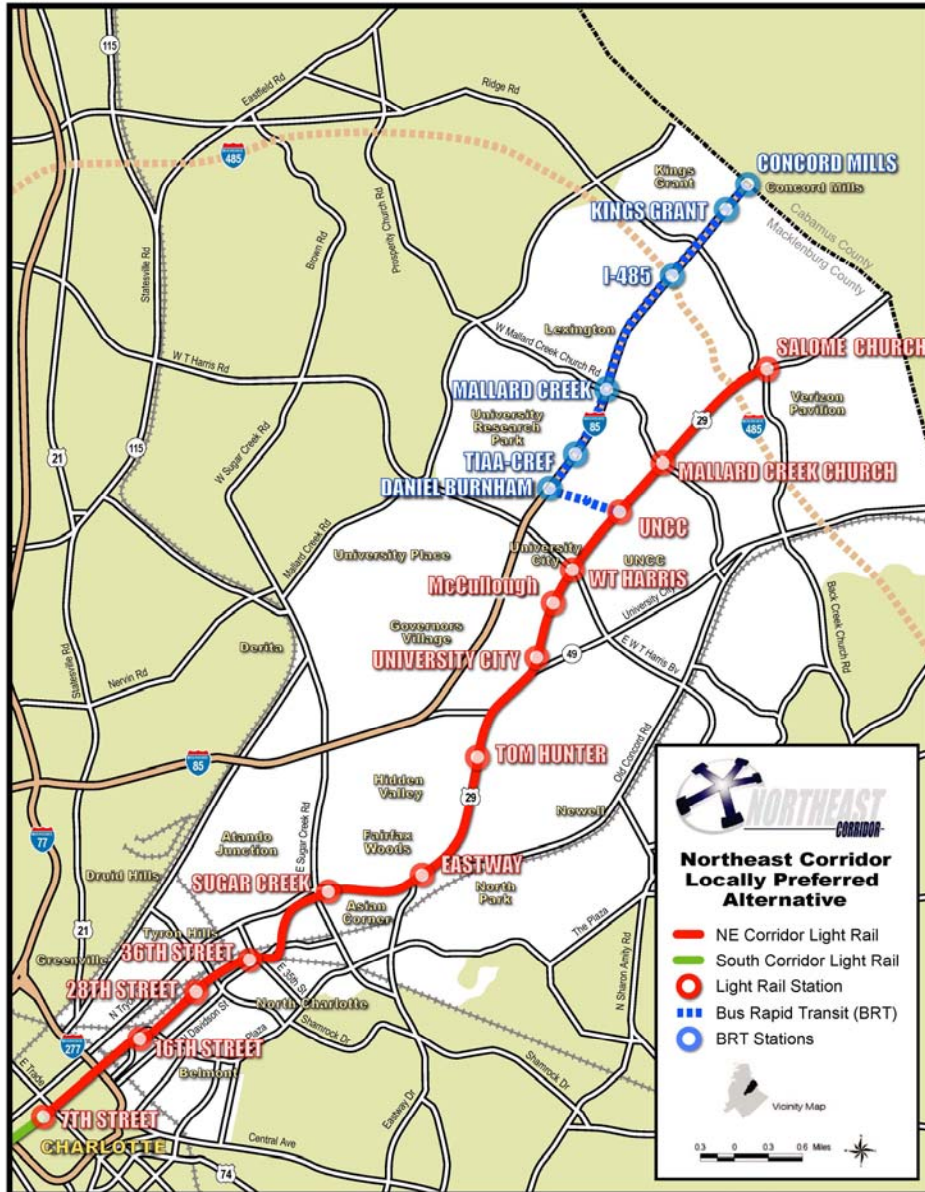


Locally Preferred Alternative

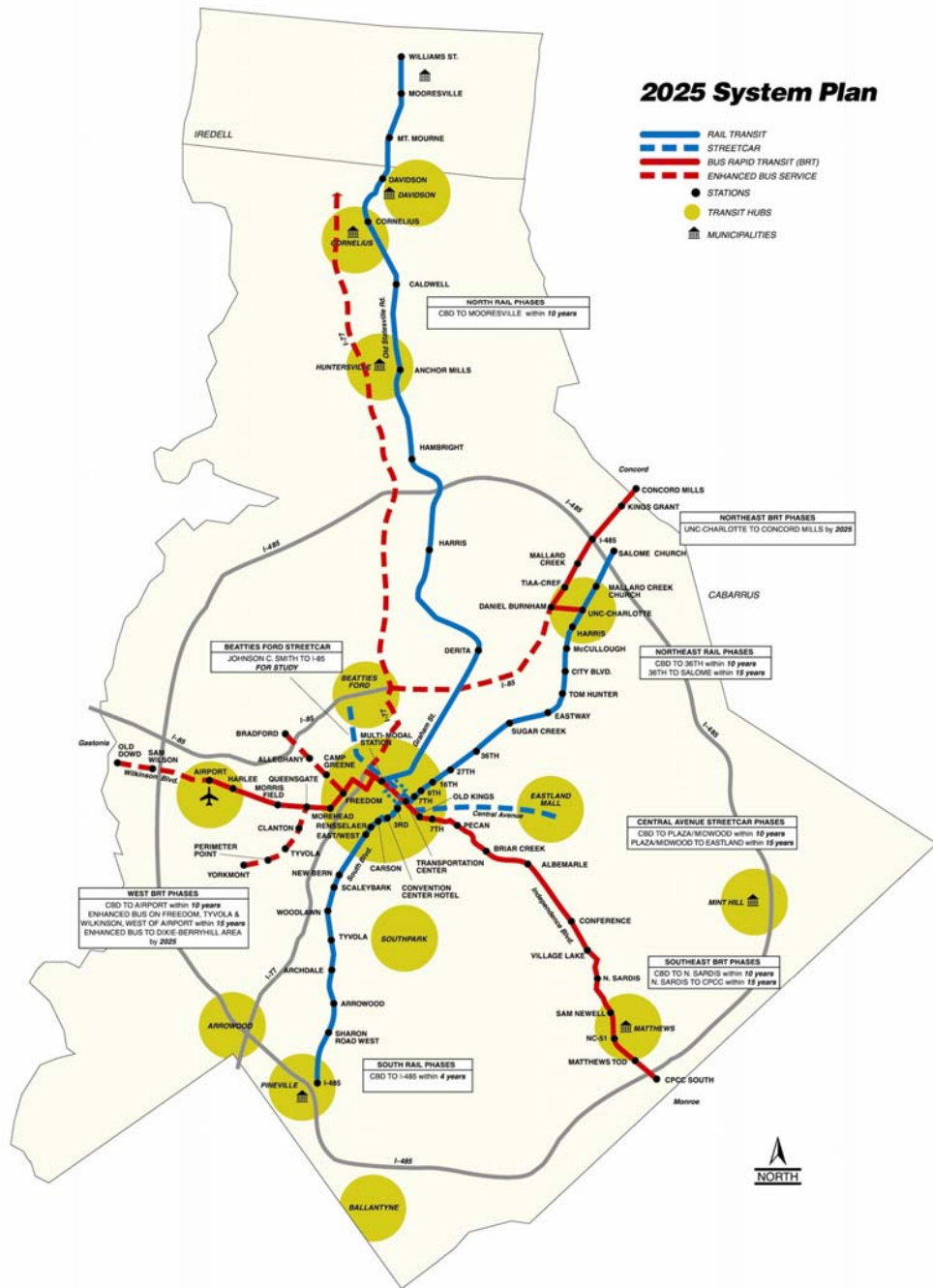


Northeast Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative:

- Light Rail to 36th Street by 2013
- Light Rail to I-485 by 2018, and
- Bus Rapid Transit to Concord Mills by 2025



Corridor System Plan



By using a mixture of transit technologies, the 2025 System Plan will:

- Encourage the emergence of communities,
- Reduce sprawling impersonal subdivisions,
- Reduce dependence on overloaded roads,
- Ease air and noise pollution, and
- Enhance overall quality of life.



Light Rail typically operates in a semi-exclusive right-of-way and serves stations that can be spaced as close to a mile apart. Light rail can also operate in mixed traffic on track embedded in the street.

Potential NEPA Issues

Over the period of planning and system development to date, potential issues have been identified in the corridor. The preliminary list of issues is based on past experience with light rail projects nationwide, as well as the known issues that have surfaced during the preliminary planning and development process.

The environmental team needs input from the communities potentially affected by the proposed LPA, as well as resource and government agencies, to ensure that a

comprehensive list of issues is studied. Potential issues include:

- land use,
- neighborhoods,
- land acquisition,
- displacements and relocations,
- community resources,
- the economy,
- secondary development,
- cumulative effects,
- historic/archaeological resources,
- parks and recreation,
- aesthetic qualities,
- environmental justice,
- air quality,
- noise and vibration,
- contaminated materials,
- wetlands and water resources,
- natural resources,
- rare, threatened, and endangered species,
- traffic and parking effects near station areas and throughout the corridor,
- pedestrian and bicycle access,
- changes in traffic patterns and travel times,
- transit operations, and
- financial issues.

Alternatives to be Studied in EIS

The following three alternatives will be studied in the Draft EIS:

- **No-Build,**
- **Transportation System Management, and**
- **Light Rail.**

The **No-Build Alternative** serves as the baseline against which the other alternatives are evaluated. It includes all existing highway and transit infrastructure and services within the corridor, and any that are committed to be implemented by 2025, aside from the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project.

The **Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative** would consist of low to medium cost improvements to the facilities and operations of local bus service (the Charlotte Area Transit System or CATS) in addition to the currently planned transit and roadway improvements in the corridor.

As shown on the map of the LPA on Page 5, the **Light Rail Alternative** in the Northeast Corridor would serve as an extension of the South Corridor Light Rail Project from its currently planned terminus from

Uptown Charlotte to 36th Street where it would transition over to an alignment along US 29 around Sugar Creek Road. The alignment would remain along US 29 through the University City area past UNC-Charlotte to the terminus near I-485.

Additional reasonable alternatives suggested through the scoping process also will be considered.

The Bus Rapid Transit component of the Northeast Corridor LPA will be advanced in a separate environmental document.



Bus Rapid Transit is similar to light rail in that it can employ exclusive rights-of-way with on-line stations and off-vehicle ticketing for fast convenient service. A major benefit of BRT is that the buses can also operate outside of busways to travel through neighborhoods to pick up passengers at local stops.



Capital Costs and Funding

As shown on the System Plan (see Page 6), it is anticipated that light rail between Uptown Charlotte and 36th Street in the Northeast Corridor in the next 10 years and that light rail will be extended to I-485 in the next 15 years. BRT is anticipated to be in place by 2025.

Funding sources for these improvements have been identified as follows:

- 25% CATS local sales tax,
- 25% North Carolina Department of Transportation, and
- 50% Federal Section 5309 New Starts Transit Funding.

The project's capital and operating costs will be evaluated once conceptual engineering activities are completed. These costs, and CATS' financial plan for funding the project, will be reported in the EIS.

Next Steps

Conceptual engineering and station area planning is already underway for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project. During conceptual engineering the locations of the stations and alignment will be defined in

more detail. In addition, details about the cost of the project will be refined and the limits of construction will be defined for the EIS analysis.

It is anticipated that public

workshops will be held this spring to present the results of the station area planning and locations of the stations. By next summer, it is anticipated that the Draft EIS will be complete.

For Further Information

- **Visit our Website:**
www.ridetransit.org
- **Call or email our staff:**
Jennifer Green – 704-336-2267
Senior Community Relations Specialist
Charlotte Area Transit System
Jagreen@ci.charlotte.nc.us
- **Attend Public Meetings**
 - EIS Kickoff Meetings – February 2005
 - Station Area Planning and Site Selection Workshops to be held this spring and summer

Wheels of Change: A Community in Motion

I am interested in keeping up-to-date on the transit planning process. Please sign me up.



Name _____ Phone _____
Street _____ Fax _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Email _____

I am especially interested in the progress concerning the following areas: (please check all that apply)

Northeast _____ North _____ West _____ Southeast _____ South _____ Center City _____

Which category best describes your interest in the transit corridor(s): As a

_____ Government employee _____ Civic group _____ Consultant If other, please specify:
_____ Neighborhood association _____ Business owner _____ Developer _____
_____ Concerned citizen _____ Elected official _____ Utility www.ridetransit.org

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Northeast Corridor EIS and Station Area Planning Kick-Off

February/March 2005

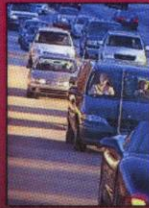
Kick-off Meetings

- Project Purpose and History
- Locally Preferred Alternative
- Conceptual Engineering
- Station Area Planning
- Environmental Impact Statement
- Project Schedule
- Public Participation



Purpose & Need

- Regional Population estimated to increase by 43% by 2025
- Regional Employment estimated to increase by 60% by 2025
- Automobile use has increased resulting in congested traffic conditions
- Few major arterials with minimal cross-town connections

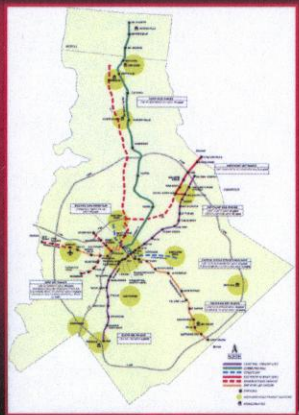


Purpose & Need

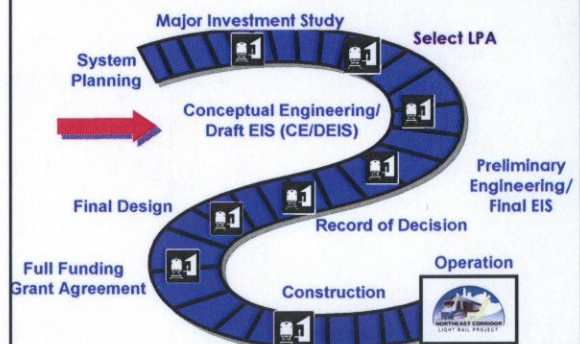
- Existing land use patterns delay bus service
- Few alternatives to the automobile
- Worsening air quality
- Reduced safety on area roadways



CATS 2025 System Plan



FTA Project Development Process



Project History

- Major Investment Study (MIS) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) initiated on September 29, 2000
- MIS completed in 2002
- MIS Examined numerous mode and alignment alternatives



Project History

- Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement published September 29, 2000
- Public Scoping Meetings held during September 2000
- Comments incorporated into MIS study



MIS Alternatives

- No-build
- Baseline (formerly Transportation Systems Management or TSM)
- Light Rail via Brevard and US 29
- Light Rail on Tryon with dedicated right-of-way
- Light Rail on Brevard to UNCC plus US 29 BRT
- Commuter Rail
- North Tryon Streetcar & Bus Rapid Transit on Graham/Research Park/US-29



Bus Rapid Transit

- Can use existing streets combined with new bus-only facilities
- Service is flexible
- Distance between stations can vary



Light Rail

- Powered by overhead electric line
- Can operate in exclusive right-of-way or with mixed traffic
- Stations every mile or less



Commuter Rail

- Powered by diesel locomotive
- Operates in exclusive right-of-way
- Stations every 2 to 5 miles



Locally Preferred Alternative



Locally Preferred Alternative



Locally Preferred Alternative



Locally Preferred Alternative



Funding Source

- 25% CATS local sales tax
- 25% North Carolina Department of Transportation
- 50% Federal Section 5309 New Starts Transit Funding



EIS Alternatives

- No Build Alternative – do nothing more than currently planned/funded
- Transportation Systems Management Alternative - low cost improvements to existing infrastructure and bus service
- Light Rail via Brevard and US 29 – operational service from Uptown to I-485



Conceptual Engineering/ Environmental Impact Statement

- Three major components of the CE/EIS:
- 1) Station Area Planning
 - 2) Alignment and Station Definition
 - 3) Environmental Impact Assessment



Station Area Planning



Many Communities Have Tried the Transit Pill -
Without Good Planning



Station Area Planning Principles

"America . . . devised many odd inventions
for getting somewhere, but could think of
nothing to do when they got there."

- Will Rogers, 1936



Coordinated **STATION LOCATIONS**,
STATION AREA PLANNING, and
STATION DESIGN can make transit
more efficient and more competitive
with automobile travel



Station Area Planning Principles

Guides for planning station area improvements and
creating a more pedestrian environment



Land Use



Mobility



Public Spaces



Character



Land Use



Public Spaces

Mobility



Character



Land Use and Development

Allow for an increase in land use intensity around stations

More Intensity

Less Intensity

Land Use and Development

Provide a mix of land uses complimentary to transit

Land Use

Mobility

Public Spaces

Character

Mobility

Create a network of streets

Same Lane-Miles

Greater Capacity

Dense Network

Sparse Hierarchy



Mobility

Create a network of streets

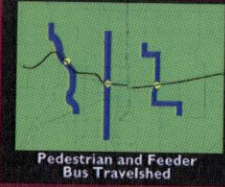
Mobility

Create a network of streets

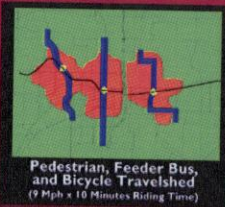
Mobility
Provide links to important community facilities


Mobility
Create a comprehensive network of bicycle facilities





Pedestrian and Feeder Bus Travelshed






Pedestrian, Feeder Bus, and Bicycle Travelshed
(9 Mph x 10 Minutes Riding Time)



Land Use **Mobility**

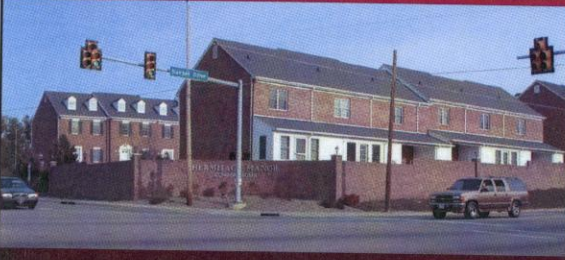

Public Spaces **Character**

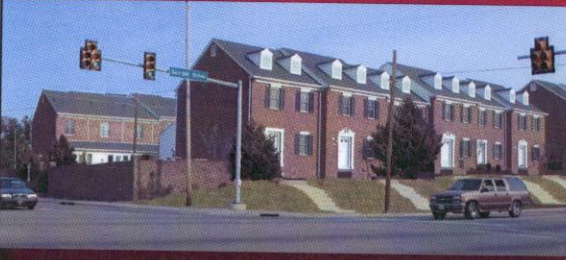

Public Spaces
Integrate plazas and small parks into station site designs




Public Spaces
Treat the street as a public space

Public Spaces
Treat the street as a public space

Public Spaces
Treat the street as a public space

ATS
CONCRETE AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

Public Spaces
Treat the street as a public space

ATS
CONCRETE AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

Land Use **Mobility**

Public Spaces **Character**

ATS
CONCRETE AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

Character
Protect the character of existing neighborhoods

ATS
CONCRETE AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

Character
Build in a pattern that is adaptable through time

ATS
CONCRETE AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

Character
Build in a pattern that is adaptable through time

ATS
CONCRETE AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

Character

Build in a pattern that is adaptable through time



Character

Build in a pattern that is adaptable through time



Character

Promote development that fits within the character of existing development



Character

Promote development that fits within the character of existing development



Character

Promote development that fits within the character of existing development

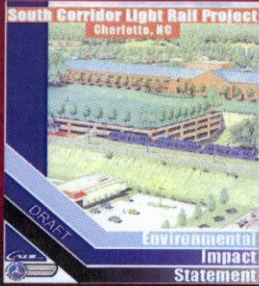


Conceptual Engineering

- Provides early engineering activities on the Locally Preferred Alternative
- Defines where the alignment and stations will be located
- Provides cost detail and limits of construction for basis of the EIS



Environmental Impact Statement



- Required for federally-funded projects
- Thorough examination of the proposed use of local and federal funds



Environmental Impact Statement

- Examines the positive and negative impacts of a proposed action and details the:
 - Social
 - Economic, and
 - Environmental impacts
- A decision-making document that helps the community to decide on the best action to take, if any



EIS Process

EIS Scoping

Station Area
Planning/Station Site
Selection/Engineering

Social, Economic,
Environmental Impact
Assessment

Draft EIS

Draft EIS
Public Review
Period

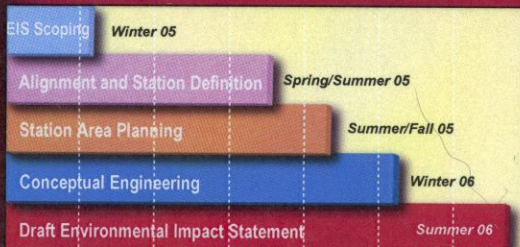


Environmental Impacts to be Studied

- Threatened & endangered species
- Parks & recreation facilities
- Cultural resources
- Environmental justice
- Hazardous & regulated materials
- Visual impacts
- Energy
- Construction impacts
- Relationship of short term uses vs. long term productivity
- Irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources
- Cumulative impacts
- Permits
- Air Quality
- Land use and zoning
- Social
- Relocations
- Economics
- Joint development
- Pedestrians & bicyclists
- Safety & security
- Air quality
- Noise & vibration
- Water quality
- Wetlands
- Vegetation & wildlife
- Floodplains
- Farmlands



Project Schedule



Upcoming Public Involvement Activities

Spring 2005:
Station Site Selection Workshops

Summer/Fall 2005:
Station Area Planning

Summer 2006:
Draft EIS Public Hearing



Your Participation is Needed

- Sign-up for the project mailing list
- Visit our web page - www.ridetransit.org
- Contact our staff:

Jennifer Green: 704-336-2267
CATS Senior Community Relations Specialist
jagreen@ci.charlotte.nc.us

Adrienne Boone: 704-336-3547
CATS Community Relations Specialist
aboone@ci.charlotte.nc.us



Your Participation is Needed

- Please let us know if you have any questions, concerns or comments regarding:
 - Project purpose and need
 - Schedule
 - Public participation process
 - Environmental issues
- Are there other specific issues that you would like to see addressed that we did not cover tonight?



Questions?



Comments?





NORTHEAST CORRIDOR FAST FACTS

704-336-RIDE • 866-779-CATS
www.ridetransit.org

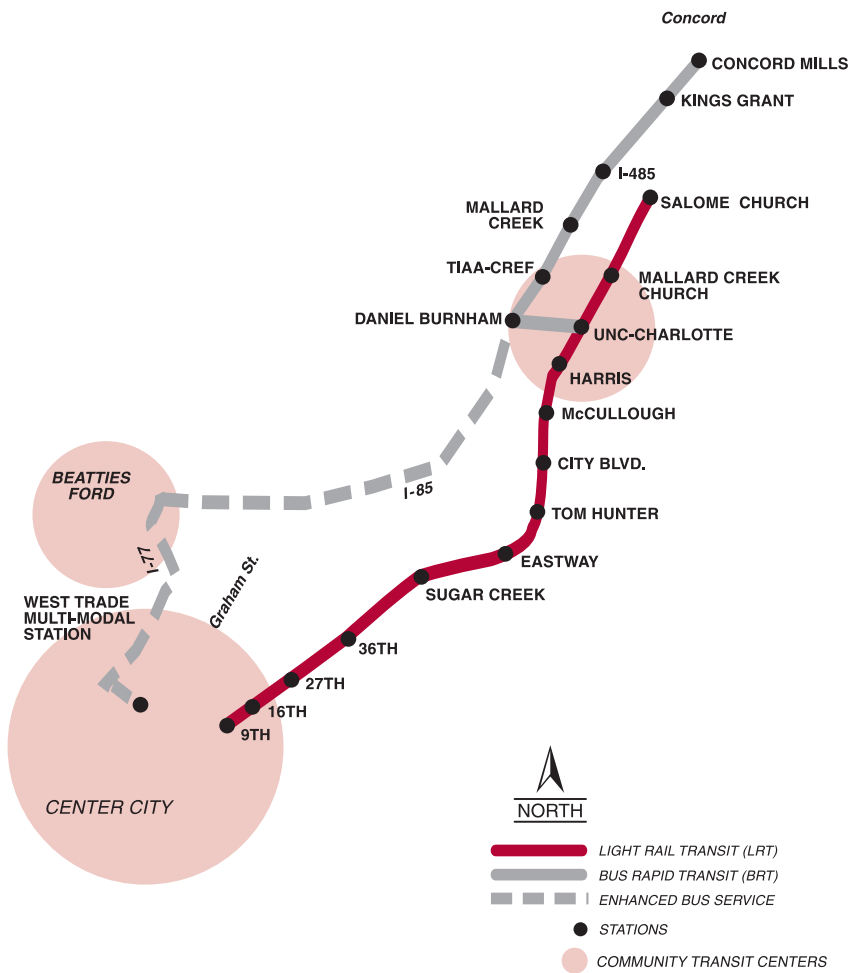


To be added to the mailing list for public meeting notices, quarterly newsletters and updates about the Northeast Corridor, call (704) 336-3547 or email aboone@ci.charlotte.nc.us.

Fast Facts About The Northeast Corridor:

- Dual-track light rail system combined with bus rapid transit
 - Light rail runs from Uptown Charlotte through the North Davidson (NoDa) and the University areas to I-485 north of UNCC
 - Bus rapid transit runs from UNCC to Concord Mills in Cabarrus County
 - Total corridor length: 14 miles
 - Considered an extension of the South Corridor Light Rail Project
 - 19 proposed stations:
 - 13 light rail stations
 - 6 bus rapid transit stations
 - All stations will be serviced by the CATS' bus network
 - Trains will operate seven days a week from 5:00 am until 1:00 am
 - Service frequency:
 - Rush hour: every 7.5 minutes
 - Non-rush hour: every 15 minutes
 - Anticipated daily ridership (2025): 15,000
- Light rail vehicles:
 - Propelled by electric motors
 - Steel wheels rolling along steel rails
 - Propulsion power is from an overhead electric wire
 - Top speeds of 55 mph
 - 68 seats with a total capacity of 236
 - Level boarding (low floor vehicles)
 - 4 wheelchair-designated areas and 4 bike racks per car
 - Land use planning goal: define land use strategies that are supportive of transit and compatible with adjacent neighborhoods
 - Light rail phases:
 - Center City to 36th Street by 2013
 - 36th Street to Salome Church by 2018
 - Bus rapid transit phase:
 - UNCC to Concord Mills by 2025

Proposed Northeast Corridor Light Rail/ Bus Rapid Transit Alignment & Station Locations



NORTHEAST BRT PHASE
UNC-CHARLOTTE TO CONCORD MILLS by 2025

NORTHEAST RAIL PHASES
CBD TO 36TH by 2013
36TH TO SALOME by 2018

STEP INTO THE FUTURE



A FUTURE REFLECTING THE PAST



In the early years of the 20th century, transit was the key to Charlotte's growth. Today, we see the results in such neighborhoods as Dilworth, Wilmore, Plaza-Midwood and Myers Park. The early trolley lines encouraged the growth of neighborhoods, not sprawling subdivisions. That's the fundamental idea behind the 2025 Transit System Plan.

Using the half-cent sales tax approved by the citizens of Mecklenburg County in 1998, significant transit improvements were begun as part of the 2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan for Charlotte-Mecklenburg. This plan acted as a vision, focusing growth along five primary transportation corridors, linking our area's key centers of economic activity.

After years of careful study, open public discussion and thoughtful consideration, the future of the Charlotte region is evolving. The South Corridor, running from Center City Charlotte to I-485/South Blvd. along the existing railroad right-of-way, is scheduled to begin Light Rail Transit (LRT) service in 2007. Now, the final plans for the remaining four corridors are ready to be implemented.

This is an exciting time in the history of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region. Just as those early 20th century trolley lines created vibrant communities, the transportation system we're creating today will shape the communities of the 21st century.

By using various transit technologies, this Transit System Plan will:

- Support development of pedestrian-friendly urban neighborhoods with a mixture of land uses
- Offer people a choice in meeting their mobility needs
- Increase transit's share of the local travel market
- Reduce our dependence on overloaded and gridlocked roads
- Ease future air and noise pollution
- Enhance our area's overall quality of life
- Support sustainable regional growth in the future

WHAT TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES WILL THE SYSTEM USE?



Light Rail Transit (LRT)



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)



Commuter Rail



Streetcar

Since no single mode of transportation can serve the travel needs of our citizens, the 2025 Corridor System Plan will use several types of services.

Light Rail Transit (LRT). Powered by an overhead electric line, LRT typically operates in exclusive rights-of-way serving stations that can be spaced as far as a mile apart. LRT also can operate in mixed traffic on tracks embedded in the street.

Streetcar. This is the 21st century's version of the early 20th century streetcar. Innovations in vehicle design and in-street construction techniques have shown that this mode can be a viable option for corridors that have high bus patronage. Modern streetcars are smaller and lighter than LRT vehicles and operate similar to a bus with passengers getting on and off at stops along the street rather than at stations.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). BRT operates in similar ways to LRT. BRT offers fast, flexible service by employing signal prioritization, on-line stations, and off vehicle ticketing. The low-floor, high-capacity, rubber-tired vehicles can operate in exclusive busways, dedicated lanes or general traffic.

Enhanced Bus. Enhanced Bus refers to buses operating with several of the features of BRT, including enhanced passenger stops, off-vehicle ticketing, and more frequent service. The use of bus guideways could be limited to locations of severe highway congestion or where a lack of available streets necessitates guideway construction.

Commuter Rail. This mode serves longer distance trips from outlying areas, with stations typically spaced two or more miles apart. Commuter trains are engineered to operate on existing freight railroad lines and consist of passenger cars pulled by a locomotive or individually motorized passenger cars called diesel multiple units or DMUs. Passengers typically use the train to commute to and from their place of employment.

Buses. Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) buses provide riders with the most choices for destinations, routes, stops and accessibility. The 2025 Corridor System Plan calls for creating crosstown routes and feeder connections to link with rapid transit lines and

increasing bus services in the areas between rapid transit corridors.

Other Services. While the above services will accommodate the vast majority of riders, CATS will also expand its other important services, such as neighborhood shuttles, employment center shuttles, Special Transportation Services, Vanpool and carpooling services.

HOW ARE THE TYPES OF SERVICE FOR EACH CORRIDOR DETERMINED?



Five basic criteria were used for determining the services for each corridor: land use, mobility, environmental factors, financial requirements, and system integration.

Land Use. Along with mobility, the 2025 Corridor System Plan supports the region's land use vision. Making Charlotte-Mecklenburg's future transit system successful will require making land use decisions that encourage residents to use transit as an alternative for their daily and occasional travel. Transit-oriented development (TOD) around transit stations will sustain economic growth and vitality within close proximity to the stations, while contributing to the enrichment of the Center City and key activity centers.

Mobility. Mobility has several components. One is ridership; both in terms of how many people will ride new services and how many new transit trips are attracted away from automobiles. Reducing automobile use minimizes congestion, air pollution and energy consumption. Mobility also includes serving a variety of travel markets, such as work trips or off-peak travel. Mobility involves improving access to selected areas, providing savings in travel times, and improving service reliability.

Environment. Promoting Charlotte-Mecklenburg's air quality goals will minimize disruptions to communities, natural areas and cultural resources. This principle also involves not creating undue adverse effects on communities that receive little of the transit program's benefits.

Financial. The level of investment in capital costs to build the improvements and ongoing operating and maintenance expenses should be balanced by the capacity of local sales tax revenue and federal, state, private, and other potential revenue sources. Because many of the federal and state revenue sources are grants, and appropriations could be limited, the ability of certain improvements to attract federal and state grants and opportunities to leverage CATS investment with other projects is an important consideration.

System Integration. Each corridor is part of a larger system. An alignment and transit technology solution for a given corridor should be balanced against its ability to operate as part of an overall system, including considerations of passenger distribution within Center City Charlotte, provision of through-service between corridors of the region, and balanced use of system capacity.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENTS: MAKING COMMUNITIES PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY



By the end of the fiscal year 2002, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the towns of Matthews, Huntersville, Davidson and Cornelius had adopted the Transit Station Area Joint Development Principles.

Successful transit-oriented developments (TODs) offer a pleasant, vibrant environment that is conducive to pedestrians traveling to and from the transit station. TODs are high quality urban environments that are carefully planned and designed to attract and retain transit ridership.

TODs provide for a pedestrian-friendly environment, connected to transit with an increased density of residential and employment opportunities. A TOD may be a single building, a group of buildings or multiple blocks. Successful TODs are supported by high quality transit service and usually based on the following development principles:

- Mixed-use development, with a range of higher intensity uses including residential, office, service-oriented retail and civic uses that are transit supportive.
- Strong sense of place or community.
- Concentrated or compact development with higher densities closer to the transit station and transitioning to lower densities adjacent to existing single family neighborhoods.
- Complementary land uses connected to each other.
- A pedestrian and bicycling environment where the pedestrian has priority access, and greater emphasis is placed on walking, bicycling and transit.
- Good access on inter-connected, two-way streets designed for slower speeds.
- On-street parking and structured parking adjacent to or behind buildings. Typically, the street-front is characterized by storefronts and buildings with minimal, if any, setbacks from the sidewalks. Amenities such as parks, services for users and quality streetscapes (landscaping, lighting, public art, benches, fountains, etc.).

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

- Transit encourages pedestrian activity at and around transit stations, contributing to the community vitality and activity.
- Integrating land use and transit can help to manage and direct growth.
- Because transit transports more passengers in each vehicle, it makes better use of existing investments in rail and road systems, reducing future needs for new lanes, new signals and additional capital investments in the transportation infrastructure.
- Slowing the increase in vehicle trips means less increase in congestion and travel time, and less impact on air quality.

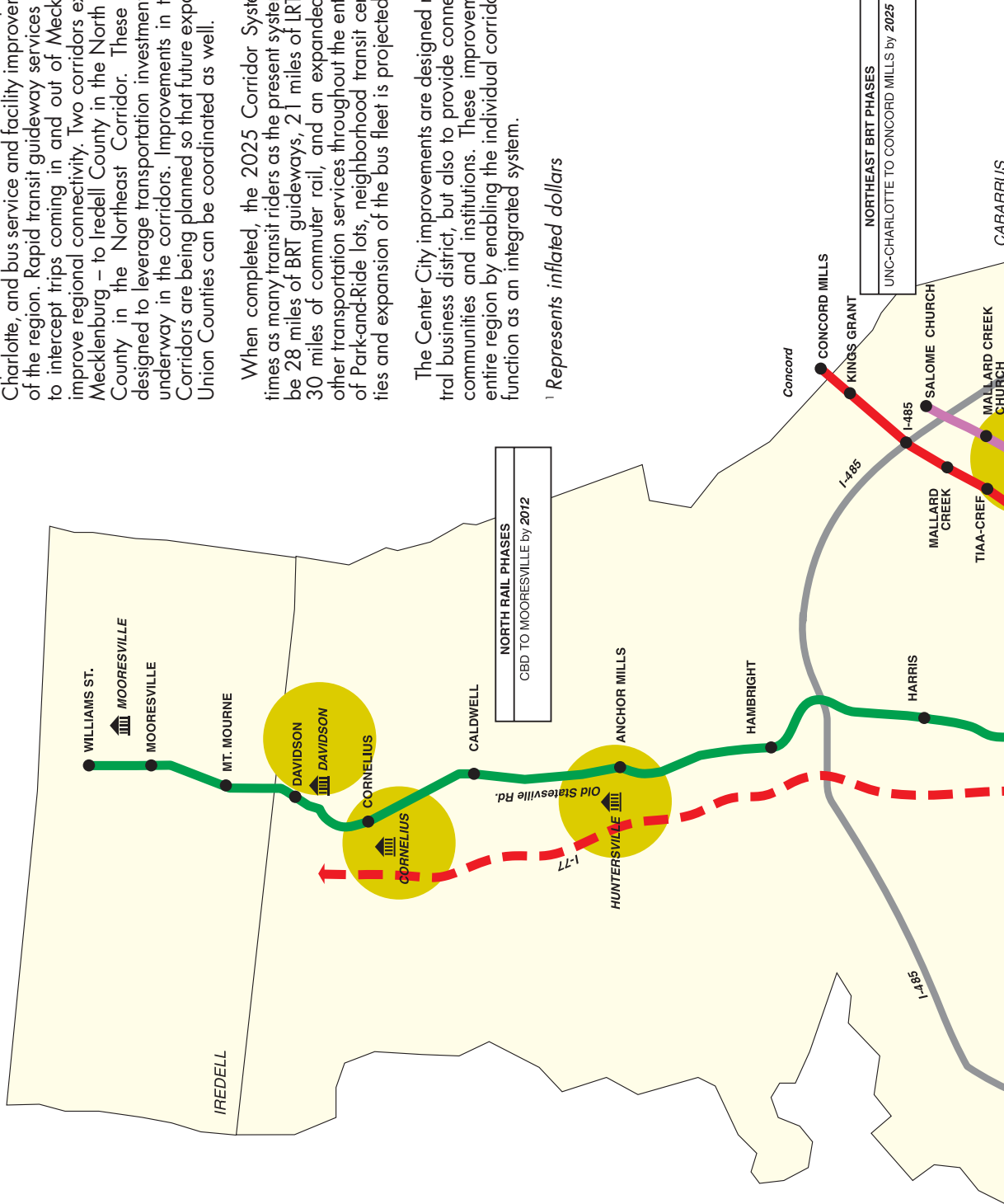
THE SYSTEM PLAN

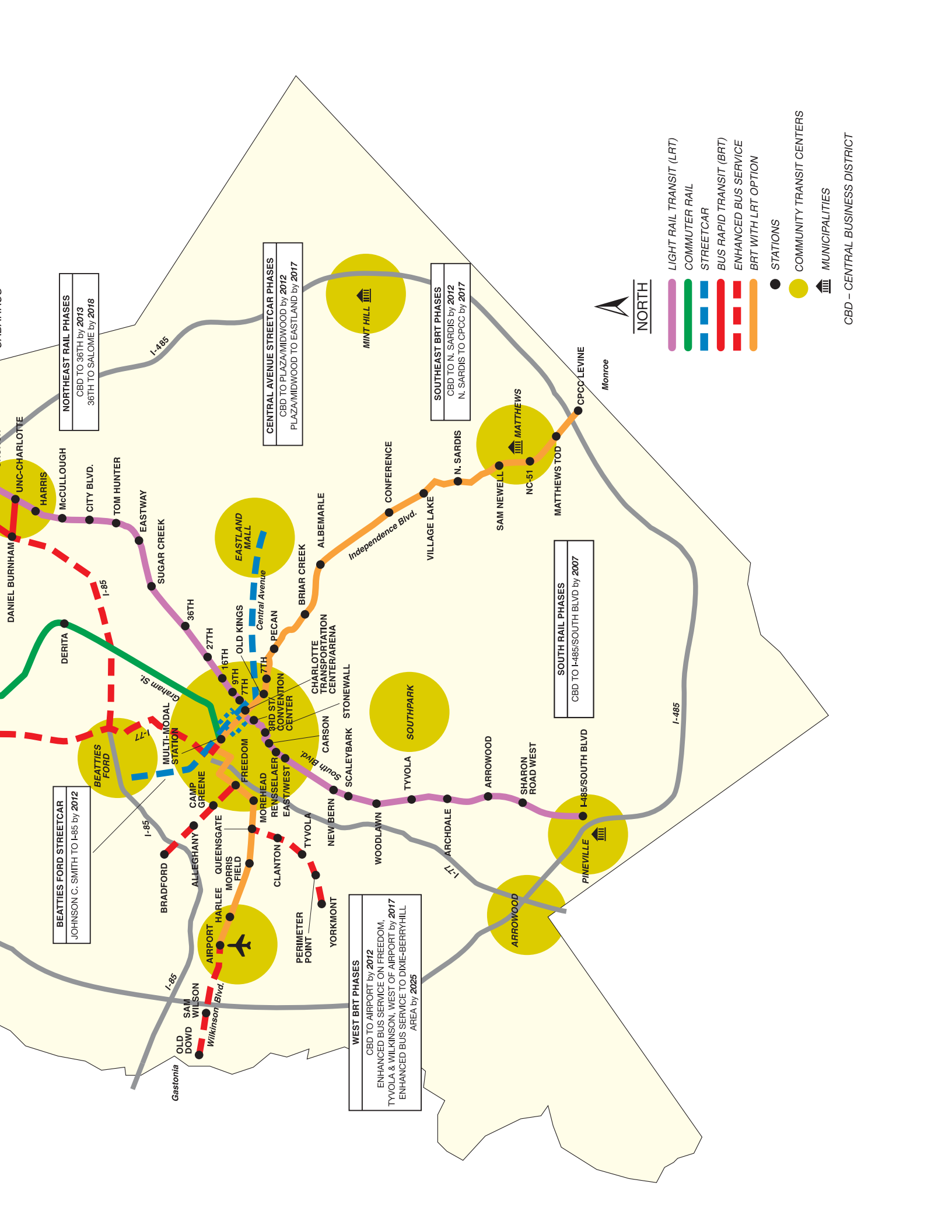
The 2025 Corridor System Plan consists of multiple rapid transit improvements in five corridors, a series of improvements in Center City Charlotte, and bus service and facility improvements throughout the rest of the region. Rapid transit guideway services extend to I-485 in order to intercept trips coming in and out of Mecklenburg County and to improve regional connectivity. Two corridors extend beyond Charlotte-Mecklenburg – to Iredell County in the North Corridor and Cabarrus County in the Northeast Corridor. These recommendations are designed to leverage transportation investments already completed or underway in the corridors. Improvements in the West and Southeast Corridors are being planned so that future expansions into Gaston and Union Counties can be coordinated as well.

When completed, the 2025 Corridor System Plan will serve four times as many transit riders as the present system does today. There will be 28 miles of BRT guideways, 21 miles of LRT, 11 miles of streetcars, 30 miles of commuter rail, and an expanded network of buses and other transportation services throughout the entire region. The addition of Park-and-Ride lots, neighborhood transit centers, other transit facilities and expansion of the bus fleet is projected to cost \$952 million.¹

The Center City improvements are designed not only to serve the central business district, but also to provide connectivity with surrounding communities and institutions. These improvements would benefit the entire region by enabling the individual corridors and local services to function as an integrated system.

¹ Represents inflated dollars





NORTHEAST RAIL PHASES
 CBD TO 36TH by 2013
 36TH TO SALOME by 2018

CENTRAL AVENUE STREETCAR PHASES
 CBD TO PLAZA/MIDWOOD by 2012
 PLAZA/MIDWOOD TO EASTLAND by 2017

SOUTHEAST BRT PHASES
 CBD TO N. SARDIS by 2012
 N. SARDIS TO CPCC by 2017

BEATTIES FORD STREETCAR
 JOHNSON C. SMITH TO I-85 by 2012

WEST BRT PHASES
 CBD TO AIRPORT by 2012
 ENHANCED BUS SERVICE ON FREEDOM,
 TYVOLA & WILKINSON, WEST OF AIRPORT by 2017
 ENHANCED BUS SERVICE TO DIXIE-BERRYHILL
 AREA by 2025

SOUTH RAIL PHASES
 CBD TO I-485/SOUTH BLVD by 2007

- LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT)
- COMMUTER RAIL
- STREETCAR
- BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)
- ENHANCED BUS SERVICE
- BRT WITH LRT OPTION
- STATIONS
- COMMUNITY TRANSIT CENTERS
- MUNICIPALITIES

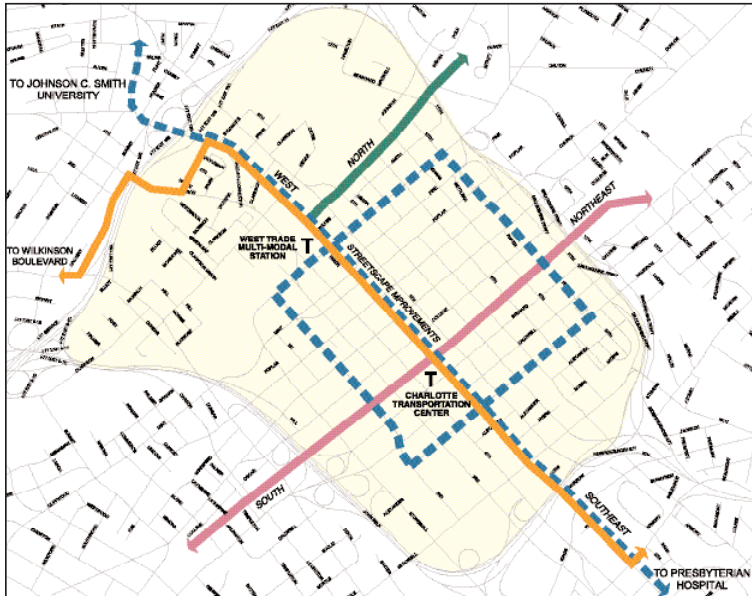


CBD – CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

CENTER CITY CHARLOTTE IMPROVEMENTS

The recommendations for the Center City include:

- Two major nodes, the Charlotte Transportation Center and the West Trade Multi-Modal Station, designed to complement each other. Work on these two passenger facilities is expected to be completed over the next 10 years.
- Two spines, a north-south LRT spine along the trolley/railroad corridor and a new east-west pedestrian/transit way along Trade Street that connects Johnson C. Smith University with Presbyterian Hospital. The extension of the South LRT line out to North Davidson Street should complete this spine within the next 10 years. Pedestrian and transit way improvements along Trade Street also are planned for the upcoming 10-year period.
- Circulation services connecting Center City districts not only with each other, but also with areas just outside of I-277, including streetcars along Trade Street (extending out Central Avenue) and the Center City Streetcar Loop. The Trade Street Streetcar would be implemented within the next 10 years, in conjunction with the rest of the improvements along this street. The streetcar loop should be in place by 2025. The Center City improvements are projected to cost \$307 million.¹



¹ Represents inflated dollars



SOUTH CORRIDOR

Light Rail Transit (LRT) was selected for rapid transit service in Charlotte's South Corridor. The light rail line is approximately 10 miles long running north from I-485 at South Boulevard to 7th Street in Center City Charlotte. The system will operate on two tracks (northbound and southbound) generally within the existing railroad right-of-way paralleling South Boulevard.

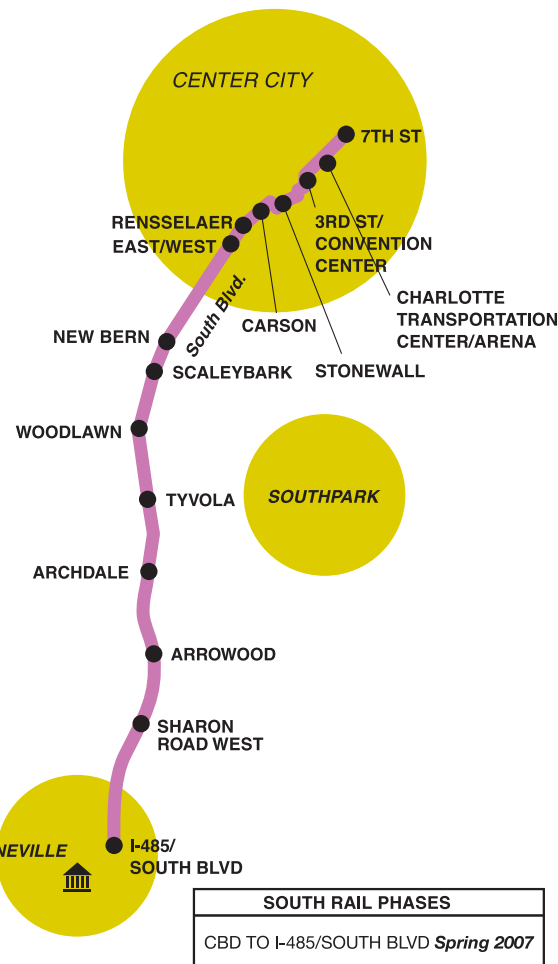
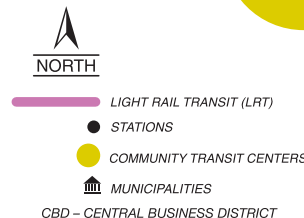
Fifteen stations were designated along the light rail alignment based on access, site characteristics, compatibility with surrounding development, potential development, and public comments. Seven stations from I-485 north to Scaleybark Road will include park and ride lots with a total of over 3,600 parking spaces along the corridor. Stations in the South End and Uptown will be shared with the Charlotte Trolley. The Charlotte Transportation Center/Arena Station in Center City will not only provide connections to the local bus

service, but will also serve as a hub for future rapid transit connections. All stations will be serviced by CATS' network of buses.

Trains will operate seven days a week from 5:00 am until 1:00 am and the fare will equal the cost of local bus fare. Trains will arrive at stations every 7.5 minutes during rush hour and every 15 minutes during non-peak hours. The line is scheduled to open in the spring of 2007.

The South Corridor is projected to cost approximately \$426.8 million¹ with anticipated daily ridership of 18,300 in 2025 and 9,100 in its opening year. ■

¹ Represents inflated dollars



NORTH CORRIDOR

The proposed North Corridor Commuter Rail service extends 30 miles from the proposed Charlotte Multi-Modal Station on West Trade Street in Center City Charlotte to Mooresville. Trains will operate along the existing Norfolk Southern rail line (the "O" line), which generally parallels Old Statesville Road (NC-115). By upgrading the existing rail line and implementing service as demand warrants, CATS will minimize capital and operating costs.

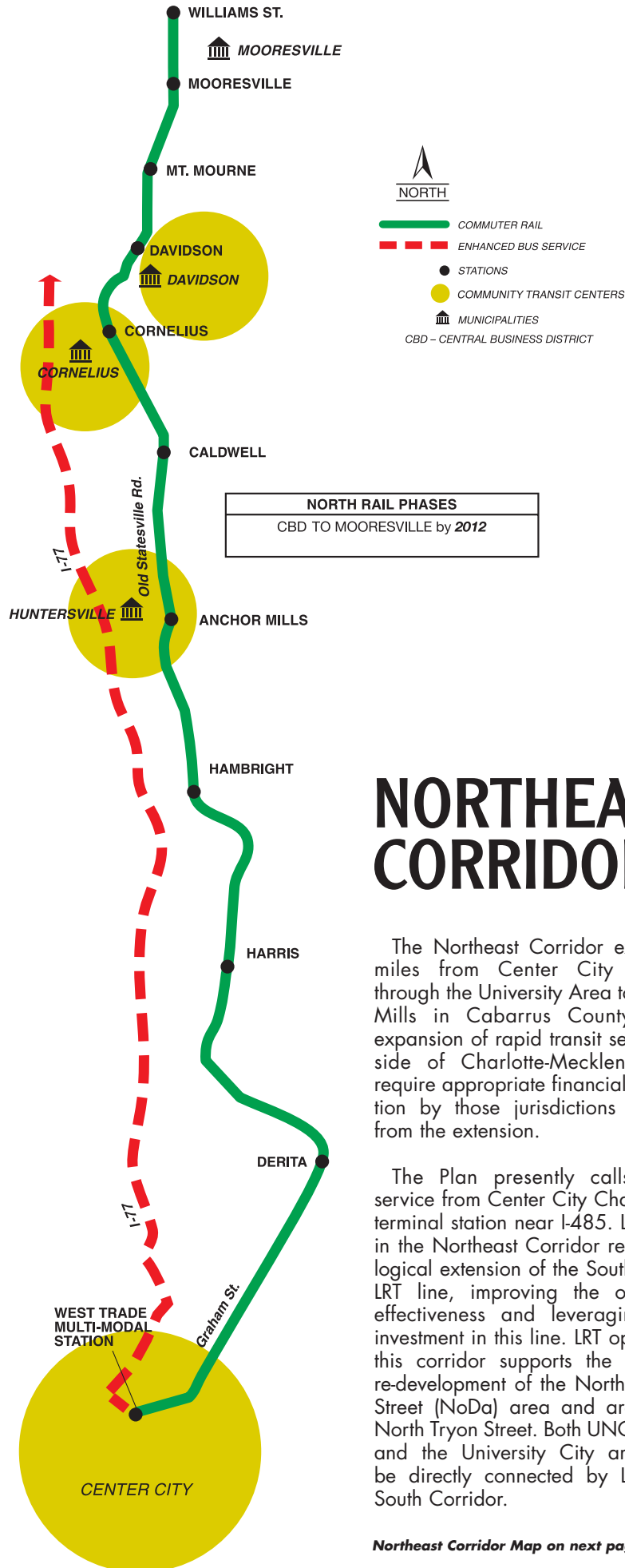
Currently ten stations are being considered along the line, based on access, compatibility with surrounding development, potential development and public comments. The proposed station locations support the adopted land use regulations and policies of Charlotte, Huntersville, Cornelius, Davidson and Mooresville, helping to focus new development east of I-77 and near the historic town centers. The Charlotte Multimodal Station will also be served by Amtrak, Greyhound, the Center City Streetcar, and other CATS transit services.

The extension of rapid transit services beyond Davidson to Mooresville and Iredell County is contingent upon these jurisdictions financing both the local share of required capital improvements within their area and the appropriate share of ongoing operational expenses.

The 2025 Corridor System Plan also includes enhanced bus service along I-77 to take advantage of the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes that were constructed as part of the I-77 widening project. The new HOV lanes will reduce commuting times for CATS bus passengers.

The North Corridor Commuter Rail Project is projected to cost \$207 million¹ with anticipated daily ridership of 9,200 passengers. ■

¹ Represents inflated dollars



NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

The Northeast Corridor extends 14 miles from Center City Charlotte through the University Area to Concord Mills in Cabarrus County. Again, expansion of rapid transit services outside of Charlotte-Mecklenburg will require appropriate financial participation by those jurisdictions benefiting from the extension.

The Plan presently calls for LRT service from Center City Charlotte to a terminal station near I-485. LRT service in the Northeast Corridor represents a logical extension of the South Corridor LRT line, improving the operational effectiveness and leveraging public investment in this line. LRT operation in this corridor supports the continuing re-development of the North Davidson Street (NoDa) area and areas along North Tryon Street. Both UNC-Charlotte and the University City area would be directly connected by LRT to the South Corridor.

Northeast Corridor Map on next page

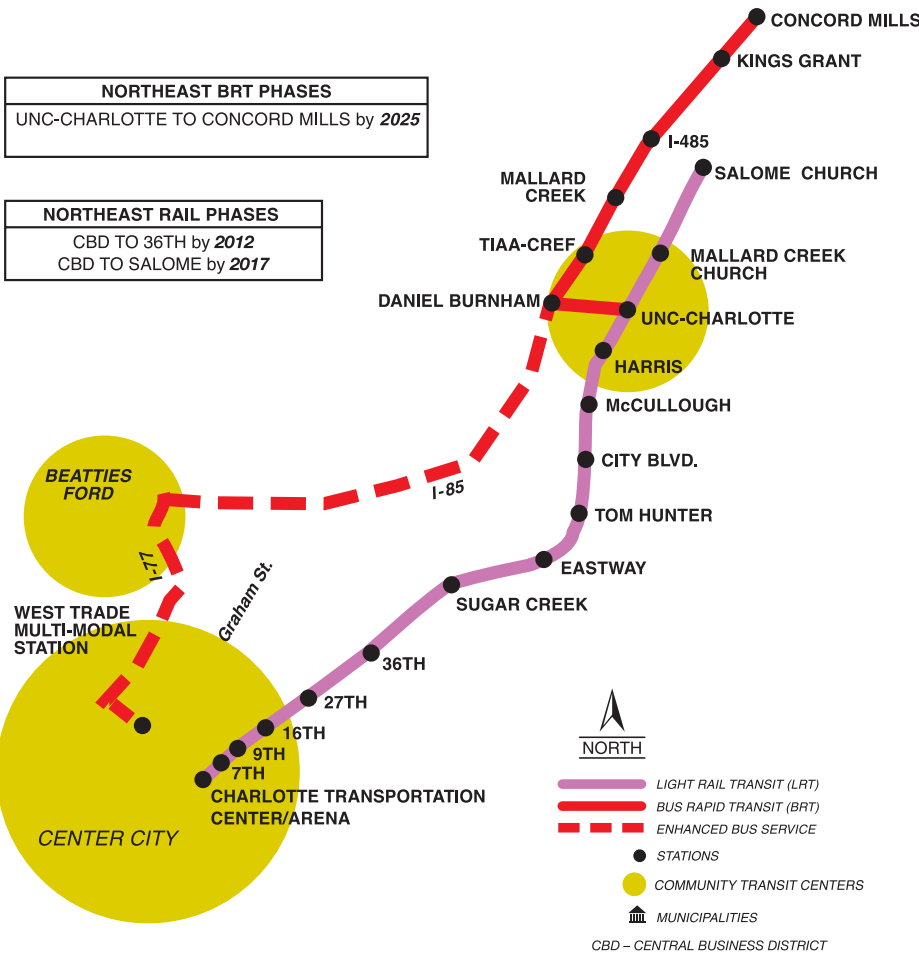
Northeast Corridor Continued

To improve transit service to areas west of I-85, the 2025 Corridor System Plan recommends BRT service from a new transit center at Concord Mills through the proposed Kings Grant mixed-use development and along I-85 to the UNC-Charlotte LRT station. This BRT alignment serves as a passenger collector-distributor for the Northeast LRT line. The 2025 Corridor System Plan also recommends enhancing transit service to and from Center City Charlotte via I-85 in conjunction with BRT implementation.

Because Northeast LRT service could be implemented as incremental extensions of the South Corridor, service to NoDa would be completed within 10 years. The portion of the line from NoDa to I-485 would be completed within 15 years. The Northeast BRT project, including enhanced bus service to Center City Charlotte along I-85, would be finished by 2025.

The Northeast Corridor is projected to cost \$578 million¹ with anticipated daily ridership of 12,000. ■

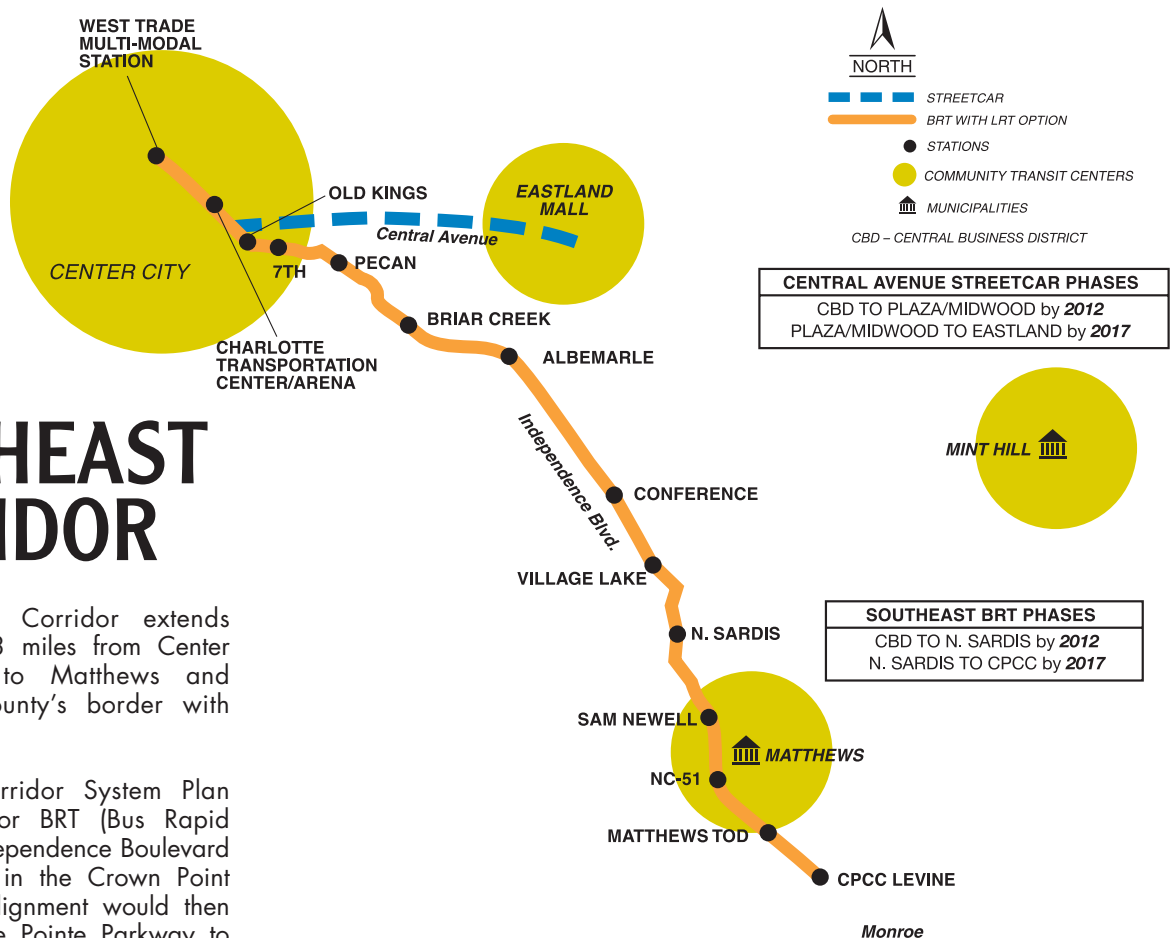
¹ Represents inflated dollars



SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR

The Southeast Corridor extends approximately 13 miles from Center City Charlotte to Matthews and Mecklenburg County's border with Union County.

The 2025 Corridor System Plan presently calls for BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) along Independence Boulevard to Krefeld Drive in the Crown Point area. The BRT alignment would then use Independence Pointe Parkway to



Southeast Corridor Continued

the South Campus of Central Piedmont Community College located just south-east of I-485. A BRT line along Independence Boulevard would leverage NCDOT investments already made on this roadway to Eastway Drive and could be coordinated with the state's planned improvements on US-74 east of Sharon Amity Road. The BRT will serve existing passenger generators such as the CPCC Central and South Campuses, Cricket Arena, Ovens Auditorium and Presbyterian Hospital in Matthews while supporting TOD (transit-oriented development) opportunities in Matthews. In addition, redevelopment opportunities at key locations throughout the corridor will also be served.

Over the next 10 years, the 2025 Corridor System Plan expects completion of the BRT system to the Crown Point area and implementation of streetcar service to Plaza-Midwood. Within the next 15 years, the Southeast BRT line should be completed to I-485, and the Central Avenue streetcar will operate to Eastland Mall.

While the BRT line along Independence Boulevard works well for longer-distance transit trips from I-485 and Matthews, implementation of streetcar operations from Center City Charlotte along Central Avenue to the Eastland area improves the efficiency of serving this corridor that already has a high demand for transit services. Serving Central Avenue with larger-

capacity streetcars will reduce the number of buses traveling along this street, improving pedestrian safety and reinforcing re-development goals for the area. The streetcar improvements are projected to cost \$174 million¹ with anticipated daily ridership of 8,000.

Although the 2025 Corridor System Plan calls for BRT to be the predominant transit mode in the Southeast Corridor, the MTC requested the preliminary engineering study for this corridor evaluate both BRT and LRT (light rail) options.

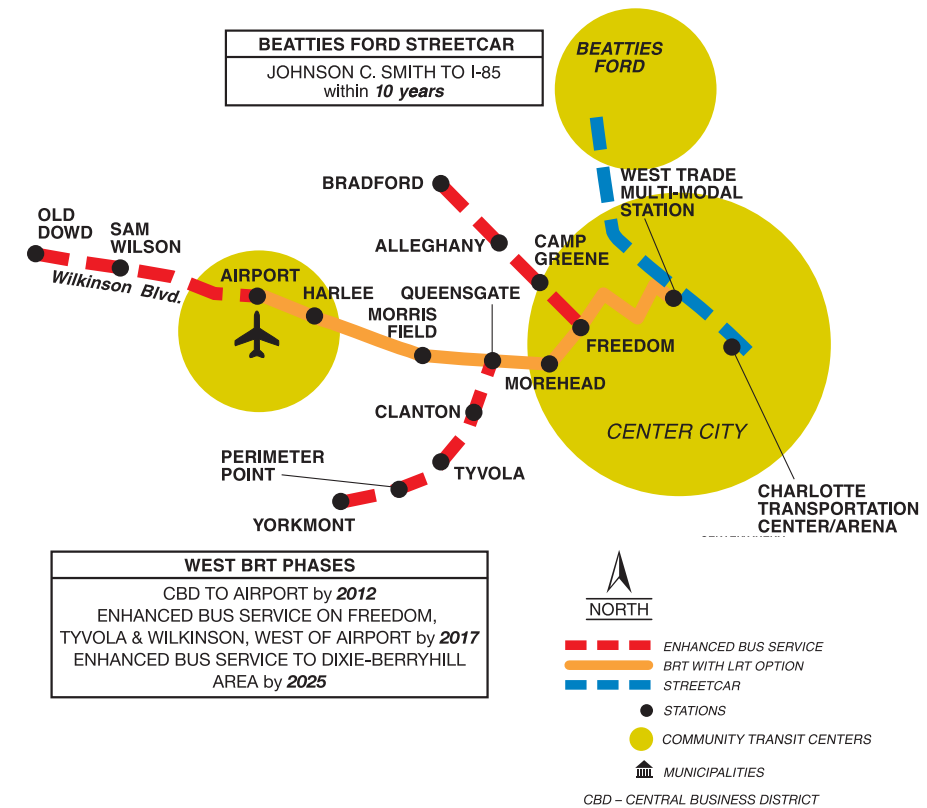
The Southeast Corridor BRT project is projected to cost \$212 million¹ with anticipated daily ridership of 25,000. ■

¹ Represents inflated dollars

WEST CORRIDOR

The West Corridor extends approximately 12 miles from Center City Charlotte to the Catawba River, the boundary between Mecklenburg and Gaston counties.

The 2025 Corridor System Plan presently calls for the West Corridor to include bus service improvements along three sub-corridors – Wilkinson Boulevard, Freedom Drive, and Tyvola Road. A BRT line to be built along Wilkinson Boulevard would connect with a planned intermodal center at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, thus providing front-door service to the airport. The Wilkinson BRT line would serve re-development plans at key stations along Wilkinson Boulevard, as well as new development such as the mixed-use plans for Dixie-Berryhill. The 2025 Corridor System Plan also calls for Enhanced Bus services along Freedom Drive to support re-development plans for this sub-corridor, including the construction of key BRT stations. Enhanced Bus services also would be implemented along West Boulevard and Tyvola Road. The construction of BRT stations along this sub-corridor would serve to focus new development in this portion of the West Corridor and reinforce office development near the Coliseum. Enhanced Bus services along Freedom and Tyvola would use the Wilkinson BRT guideway to reach Center City Charlotte.



Implementation of BRT service to the airport using Wilkinson Boulevard is expected to be complete within 10 years. Enhanced bus services along Freedom, Tyvola, and Wilkinson west of the airport should be finished within the next 15 years.

The expansion of streetcar operations westward along Trade Street and Beatties Ford Road will be studied. Extensions of streetcar services to Johnson C. Smith University and north to Beatties Ford Road would connect the Seversville, Biddleville, and

University Park neighborhoods to Center City Charlotte.

As in the Southeast Corridor, the MTC requested the preliminary engineering study for the West Corridor evaluate both BRT and LRT (light rail) options.

The West Corridor's BRT project is projected to cost \$141 million¹ with anticipated daily ridership of 12,800. ■

¹ Represents inflated dollars

WHERE ARE WE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS?

Much of the initial system planning is complete for all the corridors. The Major Investment Studies (MIS) have been completed, with active public involvement, and approved by the MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission) and MUMPO (Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization).

The locally preferred alternatives (LPAs) for the North, Northeast, Southeast and West Corridors were approved by the MTC in November 2002*. The land use and market potential opportunities for station locations have been identified and some modifications have been made. Ridership projections have been developed and preliminary cost estimates have been determined. Now, LPAs have to be documented to meet Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements.

**In its decision, the MTC decided that preliminary engineering studies will evaluate both LRT and BRT in the Southeast and West corridors, subject to FTA approval. Once the preliminary engineering studies are completed, the MTC will make its final decision.*

The Next Steps

The next phase, Preliminary Engineering (PE) includes opportunities for public involvement. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be developed for each corridor. Ridership models and cost estimates will be further refined as specific station locations are evaluated and selected. Once the station locations have been established, definitive station area development plans will be developed. At the end of this stage, preliminary designs for the corridors will be presented, a Final EIS (FEIS) will be published, and the related FTA criteria will be updated.

Once the Preliminary Engineering stage is completed, the Final Design stage will begin. Once again, the public will be involved as design plans and specifications are drawn up and presented. During this stage, the required rights-of-way can be acquired and construction cost estimates will be developed. Once the final design stage is completed, construction is ready to start. The exact phasing of construction for each corridor will be determined during preliminary engineering.

The South Corridor Light Rail Project received a Record of Decision from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in May 2003. In June 2003, CATS was awarded a

State Full Funding Grant Agreement from North Carolina, securing funds for nearly 25% of the total project cost.

In 2004, CATS reached numerous milestones on the South Corridor. Charlotte City Council awarded the light rail vehicle (LRV) contract in March. CATS' initial order is for 16 LRVs with an option to purchase up to an additional 25 cars over a four-year period. The first LRV will arrive for testing in spring 2006.

In the fall of 2004, CATS began construction work on the South Corridor line with a number of demolition activities, including Queens Park Theater near Scaleybark Road. Future construction work will include roadbed, bridges, trackwork and the vehicle maintenance facility. The real estate acquisition process continues in the corridor as well.

The next major step for the South Corridor is attaining a Full Funding Grant Agreement from the FTA, which means the federal government will fund nearly half of the \$426.8 million needed to build light rail in the South Corridor. State and local funds will make up the remaining costs.



600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

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Appendix D

Agency Update Package

- Distribution List
 - September 29, 2004 Letter to Agencies
 - Information Sheets for each Corridor
 - “Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Transit Administration and the Charlotte Area Transit System on Addressing FTA’s New Starts and NEPA Requirements for Charlotte’s 2025 Transit Plan” (June 22, 2004)
-

Distribution List – September 2004

NC Dept. of Crime & Public Safety
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September 29, 2004

NC Dept. of Crime & Public Safety
Emergency Management
116 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27603-1335

**RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statements for the North, Northeast, Southeast, West ,
and Center City Streetcar Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, NC**

Dear Sir or Madam:

In 2000, the City of Charlotte, in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), initiated the formal scoping process for the preparation of Major Investment Studies (MISs) and subsequent Draft Environment Impact Statements for four of the corridors included in the Charlotte Area Transit System. Following extensive public input and involvement, the City completed Major Investment Studies for each corridor and the region's Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) adopted a locally preferred alternative (LPA) for each of the four corridors. In a Memorandum of Understanding between the FTA and the City dated June 22, 2004, FTA has concurred with the selection of the LPA for each corridor and authorized the City to progress with preparation of corridor-specific Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEISs).

Enclosed please find a copy of the 2025 Transit System Plan, as well as a detailed description and map for each corridor. The adopted Plan includes the following LPAs for each corridor:

- North Corridor: Commuter Rail within the existing Norfolk Southern railroad right-of-way from a new Multimodal Station in Center City Charlotte, connecting the towns of Huntersville, Cornelius, and Davidson, to a terminus 30 miles north in Mooresville
- Northeast Corridor: Light Rail Transit, an extension of the South Corridor LRT line, from the Center City through the University area to I-485
- Southeast Corridor: Bus Rapid Transit from Center City along Independence Boulevard (US 74) and on new alignment to the Mecklenburg-Union County line
- West Corridor: Bus Rapid Transit from Center City along Wilkinson Boulevard (US 74), connecting the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, to a terminus at I-485
- Center City/Central Avenue/Beatties Ford Road: Streetcar along Trade St. in the Center City from Johnson C. Smith University to Presbyterian Hospital; along Central Avenue to Eastland Mall; along Trade St. to Beatties Ford Road; and a Center City loop



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The analyses and results of the MISs will be incorporated into the DEISs. For each corridor, the DEIS will evaluate the LPA, a Baseline/TSM Alternative (as required by FTA), and a No-Build Alternative. The DEIS will also evaluate design, station location, and phasing alternatives, as appropriate. In addition, the Southeast and West Corridor DEISs will continue to evaluate two technology alternatives – Light Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit.

Although the NEPA scoping process for the North, Northeast, Southeast, and West Corridors has already been completed (Fall 2000), the City is seeking any additional input and comment from Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as the general public, regarding implementation of the LPAs. This will supplement agency comments received during the prior scoping phase and help to ensure that all major issues and concerns identified are appropriately addressed in the DEIS.

If you desire a briefing or a more detailed discussion about the overall program, the inter-relationships of the projects, or the proposed DEIS process, we would welcome this opportunity. Please contact me at (704) 336-3373 to schedule a meeting. In addition, if you have any questions or comments specific to a corridor, please contact the following persons:

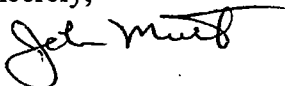
- North Corridor: David Carol, Senior Project Manager, (704) 432-0482
- Northeast Corridor: David Leard, Senior Project Manager, (704) 336-7999
- Southeast/West Corridors: Danny Rogers, Senior Project Manager, (704) 432-3033
- Center City Streetcar: Willie Noble, Senior Project Manager, (704) 432-3028

We would very much appreciate any comments and other input by October 29, 2004. Please address any correspondence to:

John Muth, PE
Deputy Director of Development
Charlotte Area Transit System
600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
jmuth@ci.charlotte.nc.us

We look forward to your further involvement in this next phase of project development.

Sincerely,



John Muth, PE
Deputy Director of Development

Enclosures: Corridor Descriptions; CD with MIS Reports & Scoping Reports;
System Plan Brochure; FTA MOU; and Distribution List

cc: Alex McNeil, FTA
Debra Campbell, CMPC
Laura Harmon, CMPC
Ron Tober, CATS
David Carol, CATS
David Leard, CATS
Danny Rogers, CATS
Willie Noble, CATS

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

The Northeast (NE) Corridor extends northeast from Center City Charlotte to the Cabarrus County line near Concord Mills, a distance of approximately 14 miles. The major transportation facilities in the corridor include I-85, US 29, and NC 49 highways, and the Norfolk Southern Railroad's main line.

The plan presently calls for Light Rail Transit (LRT) service from Center City Charlotte to a terminal station near I-485. LRT service in the NE Corridor represents a logical extension of the South Corridor LRT line, improving the operational investment in this line. LRT operation in this corridor supports the continuing redevelopment of the North Davidson Street (NoDa) area and the areas along North Tryon Street. Both UNC-Charlotte and the University City area would be directly connected by LRT to the South Corridor.

To improve transit service to areas west of I-85, the 2025 Transit System Plan recommends Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service from a new transit center at Concord Mills through the proposed Kings Grant mixed-use development and along I-85 to the UNC-Charlotte LRT station. This BRT alignment serves as a passenger collector-distributor for the NE LRT line. The 2025 Transit System Plan also recommends enhancing transit service to and from Center City Charlotte via I-85 in conjunction with BRT implementation.

Land Use

The land-use characteristics in the Northeast Corridor divide logically into two sections – the older urban lower corridor and the newer highly suburban outer corridor.

1. *Inner Corridor*

The inner part of the corridor extends from the Uptown to the US 29 (North Tryon Street)-NC 49 (University City Boulevard) split. This section is characterized by the following:

- The inner corridor has large areas of older light industrial and warehouse-distribution, much of which is oriented to Graham Street and North Tryon.
- Large rail yard and trucking operations dominate much of the area immediately outside Uptown.
- North Tryon also serves as the corridor's main strip commercial artery, but much of this is struggling.
- The inner corridor has several extensive established residential areas, which include Hidden Valley, north Charlotte and Derita, as well as smaller, often somewhat isolated residential communities such as Lockwood and Tryon Hills.
- Few large vacant parcels remain. Most transit oriented development (TOD) opportunities will be enhancements of existing land-use context or tied to redevelopment initiatives.
- The current Amtrak station on North Tryon is likely to move to the West Trade Street area of Uptown.

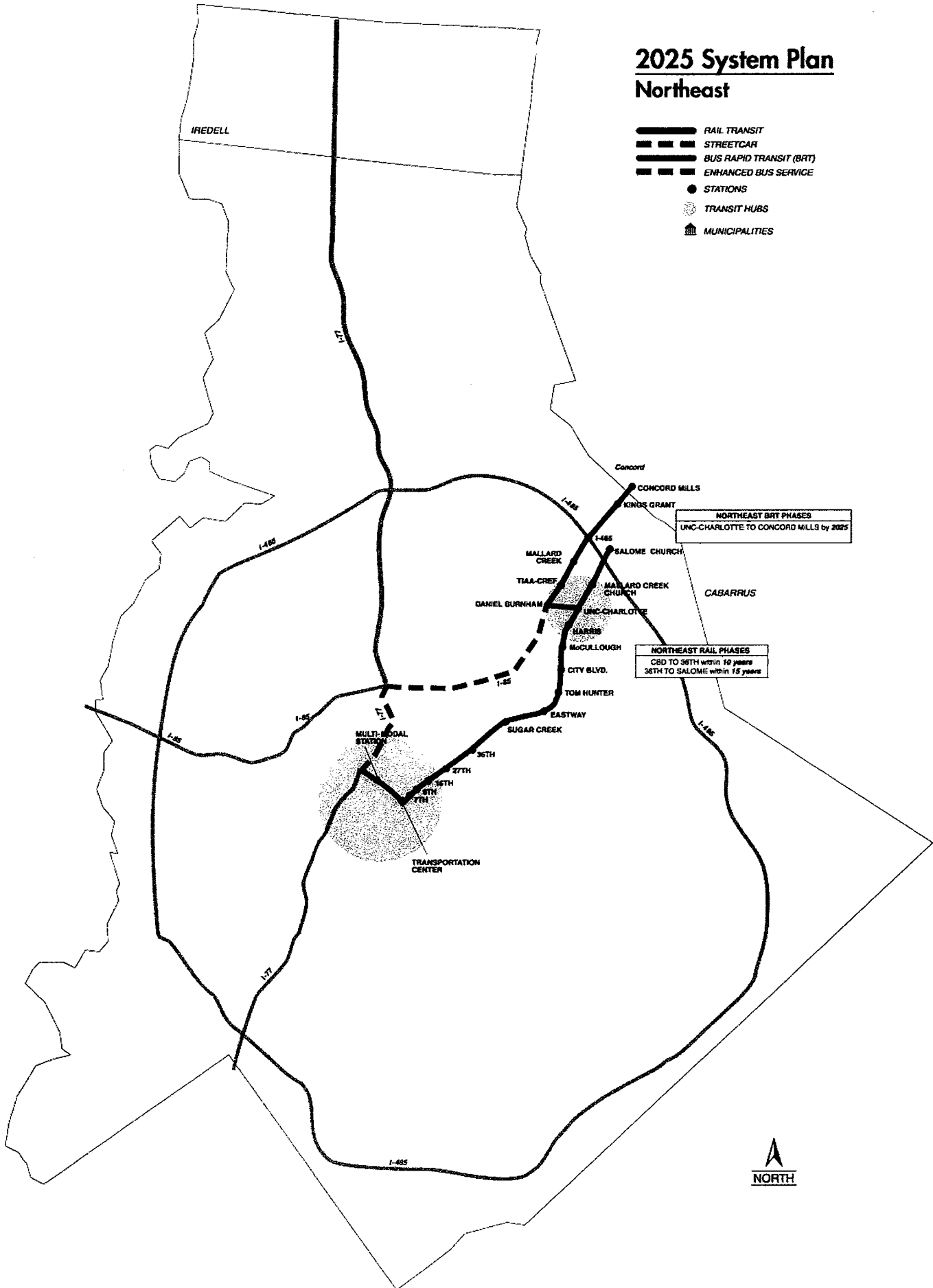
2. Outer Corridor

The outer part of the corridor includes and surrounds the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) and the University Research Park areas. This section is characterized by the following:

- The outer corridor has grown rapidly in the last 20 years with highly "suburban" patterns of development (low gross acreage intensities, scattered locations, very highway oriented).
- The area contains many very large important individual activity centers — UNCC, the future TIAA-CREF complex, University Hospital, and the First Union and IBM complexes in University Research Park, but they are highly dispersed and poorly connected to each other.
- Main roads —US 29, I-85, WT Harris, and University City Boulevard, tend to be high-speed limited access "arterials" rather than "streets." Adjacent development therefore is not oriented to a common right-of-way.
- Many new residential developments have been designed as self-contained communities, with little connectivity between them.

2025 System Plan Northeast

-  RAIL TRANSIT
-  STREETCAR
-  BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)
-  ENHANCED BUS SERVICE
-  STATIONS
-  TRANSIT HUBS
-  MUNICIPALITIES



NORTHEAST BRT PHASES
UNC-CHARLOTTE TO CONCORD MILLS by 2025

NORTHEAST RAIL PHASES
CBD TO 36TH within 10 years
36TH TO SALOME within 15 years



NORTH CORRIDOR COMMUTER RAIL

Program Background

The proposed North Corridor Commuter Rail service, part of a five corridor, integrated transit program operated by the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), will provide competitive, reliable and safe public transportation to Mecklenburg and Iredell County residents commuting to and from Center City Charlotte. It would operate along an existing Norfolk Southern rail line (the "O" line) from the new Charlotte Multimodal Station, located at Graham, 4th and West Trade Streets, through Charlotte, Huntersville, Cornelius, and Davidson to Mooresville. Service will consist of trains every 20-30 minutes during the morning and afternoon rush hour period and hourly service during most of the remainder of the day. Trip time will be approximately 35 minutes from Davidson to Charlotte and under 50 mph from Mooresville to Charlotte.

The Norfolk Southern rail line generally parallels Old Statesville Road (NC-115). Stations currently under consideration include: Mooresville (Williams Street, downtown and Mount Mourne), downtown Davidson (Depot Street), downtown Cornelius (Catawba Avenue), Huntersville (Caldwell Station, downtown (Gillead Road) and Hambright), and Charlotte (Eastfield Road, Harris and Derita).

The new commuter rail service will be a major catalyst for encouraging Transit Oriented Development (TOD) along the North Corridor, much of which is currently undeveloped. Major real estate developments already are planned around proposed train station sites, conforming to the TOD vision adopted by the Charlotte City Council and the four northern Towns.

Commuter rail service will be supplemented by a local feeder bus system. In addition, CATS Express buses operating on Interstate-77 in new HOV lanes will provide convenient public transportation west of the commuter rail line along the highly developed I-77 corridor.

Implementation of North Corridor Commuter Rail service will consist of the following:

- Upgrade of 30 miles of Norfolk Southern rail line to permit safe, reliable passenger rail service at speeds up to 79 mph
- Closure of some 45 public and private at-grade crossings and upgrade of 65 remaining crossings to ensure safe train operations across areas roads; reasonable alternative access will be provided at all closed crossings.
- Construction of the new Charlotte Multimodal Station, serving as the terminus for the North Corridor Commuter rail service, and as Charlotte's Center City station for Amtrak (Charlotte-New York; Charlotte-Atlanta-New Orleans), Greyhound, and CATS local and Express bus service and the Center City Street Car.
- Acquisition of 5-7 new trainsets, consisting of coaches seating 350 or more passengers (either conventional coaches pulled by locomotives or Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs, where each coach is separately powered)), and a facility in which to maintain the equipment.
- Construction of ten additional train stations in Charlotte and the four northern Towns, consisting of passenger platforms, a station building and parking, and development of "station area plans" for each station, detailing infrastructure and other improvements that could be made around stations to enhance and optimize access and to encourage transit oriented development.

SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR
(Independence Boulevard/US 74)
Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC

Project Description

Transit. In 2002, the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) adopted Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for the Southeast Corridor as part of its 2025 Transit System Plan. A Major Investment Study (MIS) for the Corridor found that the proposed project would provide improved transit service for existing riders, a time-competitive alternative for auto drivers, and an incentive for transit-oriented development around station areas. Although BRT was chosen as the preferred alternative in the 2025 plan, the Metropolitan Transit Commission requested that both BRT and Light Rail Transit be studied further during the next phase of detailed engineering and environmental studies.

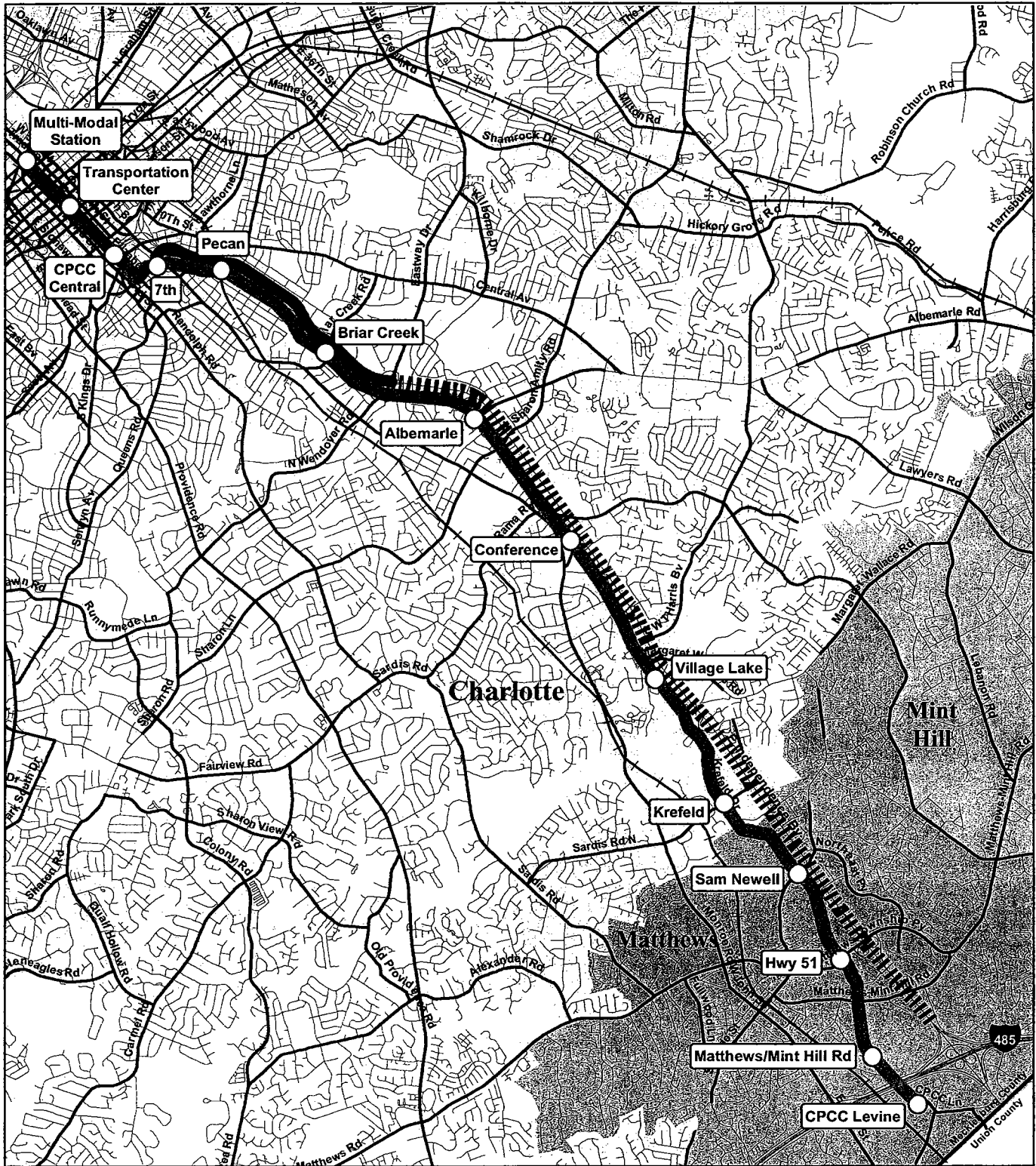
The BRT/LRT transitway would extend approximately 13 miles from center city to the Town of Matthews and the Mecklenburg–Union County border. The preferred LRT/BRT alignment identified in the MIS would be along Independence Boulevard to Krefeld Drive, where it would then use Independence Pointe Parkway to the terminal station at Central Piedmont Community College Levine Campus, just south of I-485. Twelve stations are proposed in the corridor. BRT/LRT would also be supported by a local feeder bus system. The service is projected to carry 25,000 daily riders by the year 2025. The proposed project would include construction of 13 miles of exclusive transitway within existing road right-of-way and on new alignment; construction of 13 stations, including platforms, park-and-ride lots, and other passenger amenities; and the purchase of BRT / LRT vehicles. In addition, CATS is working with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission to develop station area plans that would define the desired land use development and needed infrastructure improvements to support station access and transit-oriented development for the ¼ to ½ mile station area.

Highway. In addition to rapid transit service, several highway improvements are also being planned for Independence Boulevard. NCDOT is planning two future highway projects on Independence Boulevard: (1) converting Independence Boulevard to an eight-lane expressway with High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane from Sharon Amity Road to Idlewild Road (Project U-209B), and (2) extending the expressway and possibly the HOV lane from Sharon Amity Road to I-485 (Project U-2509). The study will also determine the long-term use of the existing median facility between I-277 and Sharon Amity Road that is currently being used as a busway.

Joint Highway/Transit DEIS

The Mecklenburg–Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) has requested that CATS and NCDOT complete a joint Environmental Impact Statement for the highway and transit projects along Independence Boulevard. The Southeast Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will identify the preferred transit and roadway design for the corridor. The study process will include for conceptual engineering (15% level), completion of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), station area land use planning, and significant public involvement. The DEIS will build upon the work completed under the 2002 Major Investment Study for the transit project and the 1982 Final EIS and 1988 Final SEIS completed for the highway projects. The project limits will be from Sharon Amity Road to I-485 for the highway elements, and from Center City to just south of I-485 for the transit elements. The work will evaluate the following alternatives (stand-alone and/or combined):

1. No Build
2. Transportation System Management (TSM)/Baseline (required by FTA)
3. Highway Widening / Conversion to Expressway
4. HOV lanes
5. Bus Rapid Transit
6. Light Rail Transit

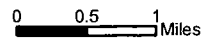
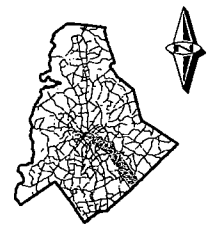


Southeast Corridor:

CATS Locally Preferred Alternative

NCDOT Independence Highway Improvement Phasing U-209/U-2509

- U-209 Constructed
- U-209F Under Construction
- U-209B Future Construction
- U-2509 Future Construction
- Southeast Transit Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative
- Proposed Station Areas



Source: City of Charlotte/NCDOT
August 30, 2004

WEST CORRIDOR
(Wilkinson Boulevard/US 74)
Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC

Project Description

The 2025 Transit System Plan adopted by the Charlotte Area Transit System in 2002 includes Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the West Corridor. A Major Investment Study (MIS) for the Corridor found that the proposed project would provide improved transit service for existing riders, a time-competitive alternative for auto drivers, and an incentive for transit-oriented development around station areas. Although BRT was chosen as the preferred alternative in the 2025 plan, the Metropolitan Transit Commission requested that both BRT and Light Rail Transit be studied further during the next phase of detailed engineering and environmental studies.

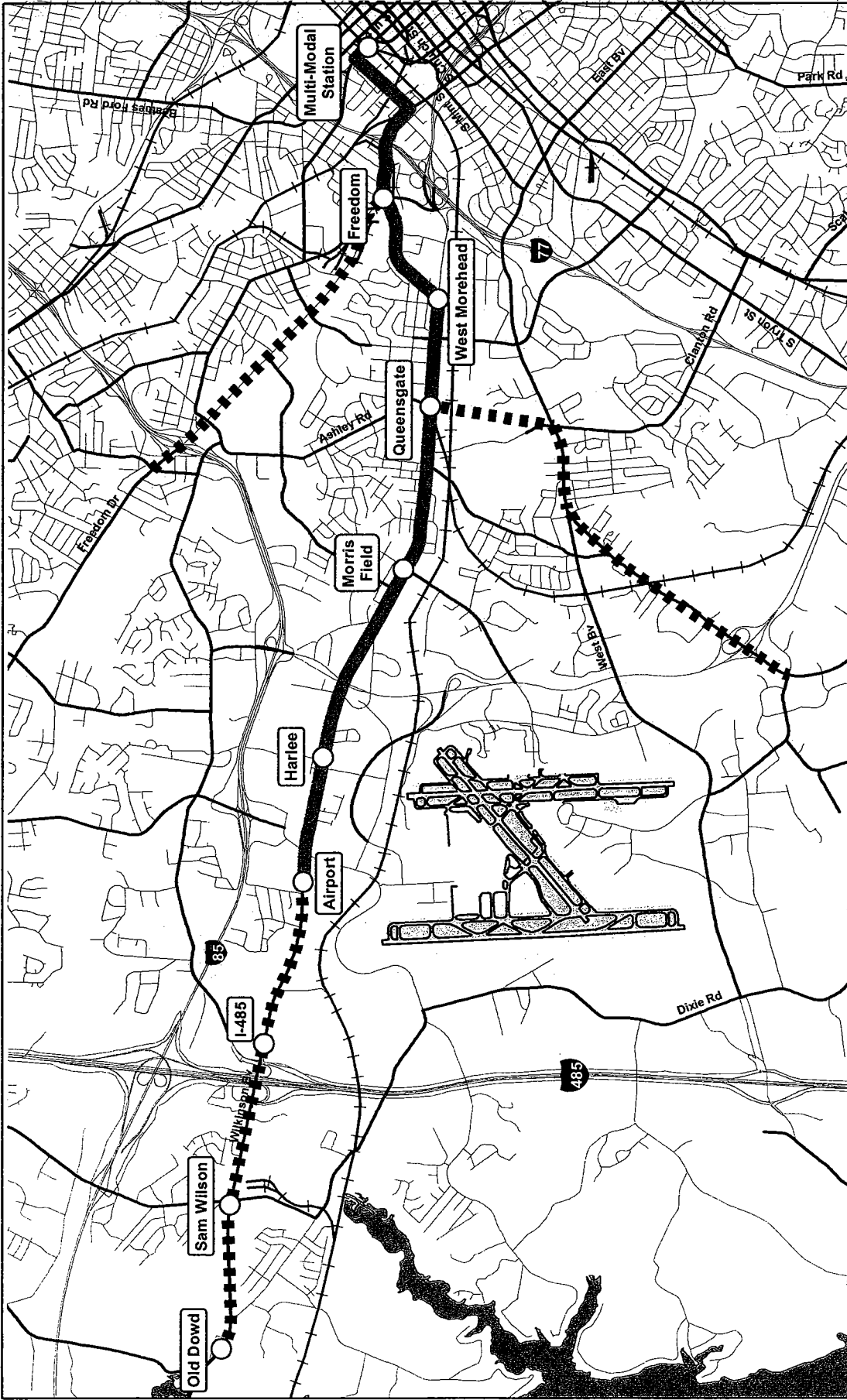
The proposed rapid transit service would operate from center city to the Catawba River at the Mecklenburg – Gaston County border, approximately 10 miles. The preferred alignment identified in the MIS would be along Wilkinson Boulevard, serving re-development plans at key stations and connecting to a planned intermodal center at the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. Nine stations are proposed in the corridor. The Plan also calls for enhanced bus service along Freedom Drive, West Boulevard and Tyvola Road that would connect into the BRT guideway to reach the Center City. In the Center City, the BRT line would serve the future Multi-Modal Station, providing riders the ability to transfer to/from other rapid transit or local routes. The service is projected to carry 12,800 daily riders by the year 2025.


The proposed project would include construction of 7 miles of transitway within existing road right-of-way and potentially on some new alignment; construction of 9 stations, including platforms, park-and-ride lots, and other passenger amenities; and the purchase of vehicles. In addition, CATS is working with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission to develop station area plans that would define the desired land use development and needed infrastructure improvements to support station access and transit-oriented development for the ¼ to ½ mile station area.


West Corridor Rapid Transit DEIS

The West Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will identify the preferred transit technology, alignment and station locations for the corridor. The study process will include for conceptual engineering (15% level), completion of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), station area land use planning, and significant public involvement. The DEIS will build upon the work completed under the 2002 Major Investment Study. The project limits will be from Center City to I-485. The work will evaluate the following alternatives:






1. No Build
2. Transportation System Management (TSM)/Baseline (required by FTA)
3. Bus Rapid Transit
4. Light Rail Transit / Streetcar







 0 0.5 1 Miles

-  West Transit Corridor
-  Locally Preferred Alternative
-  Enhanced Bus
-  Proposed Station Areas
-  Charlotte City Limits

Source: City of Charlotte
August 30, 2004

West Corridor CATS Locally Preferred Alternative



CENTER CITY STREETCAR CORRIDOR

Project Background

The Center City Streetcar Corridor project is a key component of the Charlotte Area Transit System's (CATS) recommended *Corridor System Plan*. The Center City Streetcar system will utilize modern vehicle technology based on the European "Tram" that is a smaller, lighter weight vehicle than those used for "Light Rail Transit" and is capable of operating in the street with mixed traffic. The streetcar will fulfill many roles including:

- Establishing an east-west transit spine that links all five rapid transit corridors in downtown and provides easy movement between the existing Charlotte Transportation Center and the proposed Charlotte Multimodal Station.
- Enhancing Center City mobility.
- Improving connections for neighborhoods that are immediately outside the freeway loop, I-277.
- Connecting key institutional uses, such as Central Piedmont Community College, Johnson & Wales University, Johnson C. Smith University, and Presbyterian Hospital.
- Supplementing CATS heaviest bus routes, improving operating efficiency. The larger capacity of the streetcar will reduce the number of buses needed to meet the travel demand in both the Central Avenue and Beatties Ford Road corridors.

The Streetcar Corridor project will be designed so it is compatible with the existing and planned CATS bus operations as well as connecting bus services. Additionally, the design will be carefully integrated with the implementation of the five transit corridor elements of the *2025 Transit/Land-Use Plan*.

Streetcar service is consistent with the *Center City 2010 Vision Plan*. The Streetcar Corridor project will be an important element in fulfilling the vision for a "Viable, Livable and Memorable Center City." The streetcar system will be designed to contribute toward the key objective of the 2010 Plan: "To create a livable and memorable Center City of distinct neighborhoods connected by unique infrastructure."

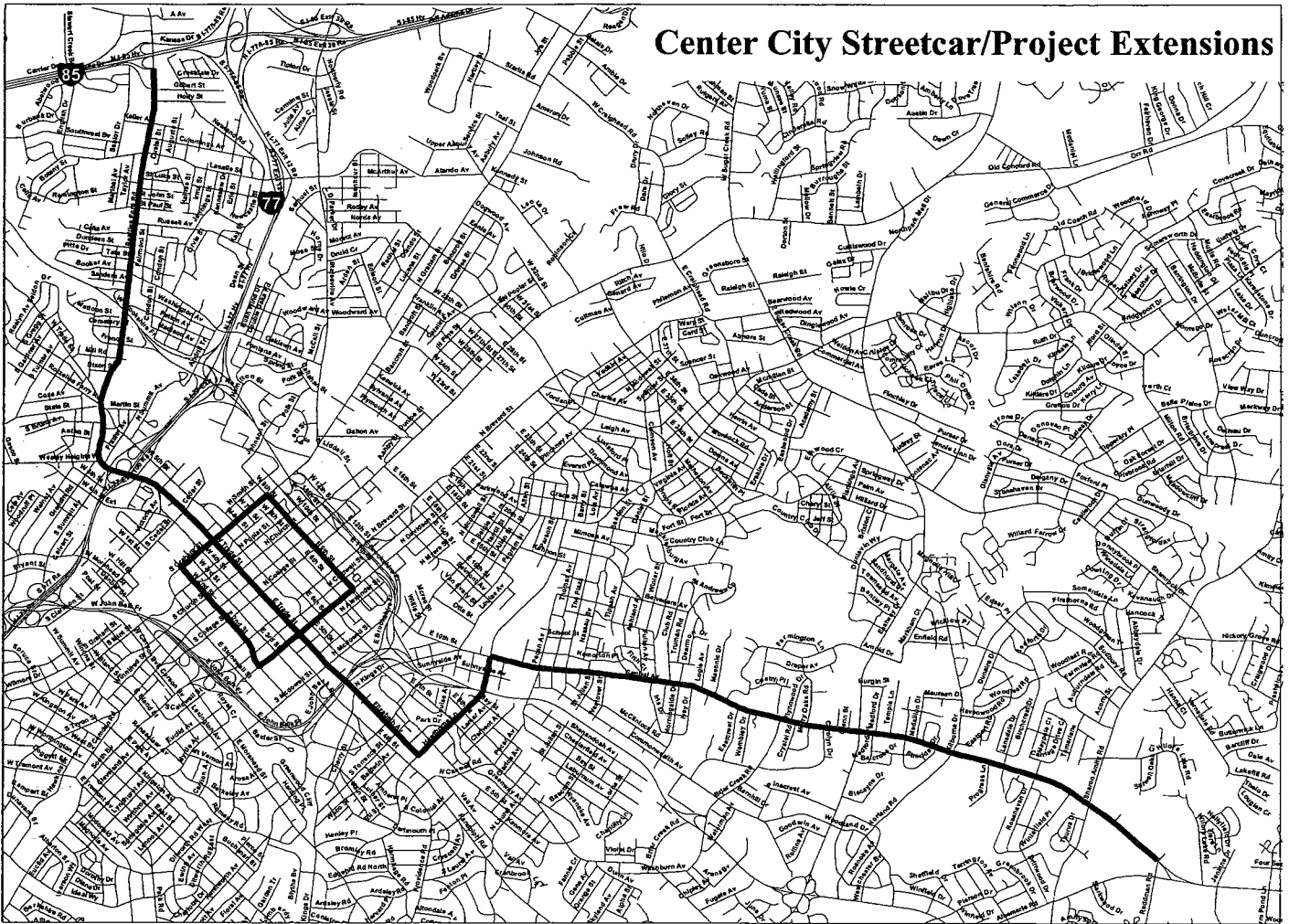
Project Description

As defined in the Corridor System Plan, the Center City Streetcar Project consists of four elements:

- The Trade Street Streetcar extending approximately 3 miles along Trade and Elizabeth Streets from Presbyterian Hospital on the east to the vicinity Johnson C. Smith University on the west.
- The Central Avenue Streetcar extending almost 5 miles from the Presbyterian Hospital end of the Trade Street element to the vicinity of Eastland Mall using Central Avenue for the majority of the route.
- The Beatties Ford Road Streetcar extending 2 miles from the vicinity of Johnson C. Smith University at Trade Street and Beatties Ford Road to approximately I-85.
- The Downtown Streetcar Loop following a 4 mile route that will be defined as some combination of 11th Street, 10th Street, 9th Street, 8th Street or 7th Street on the north side, McDowell Street or Davidson Street on the east side, Stonewall Street or Second Street on the south side, and Graham Street, Mint Street or Pine/Poplar Streets on the west side.

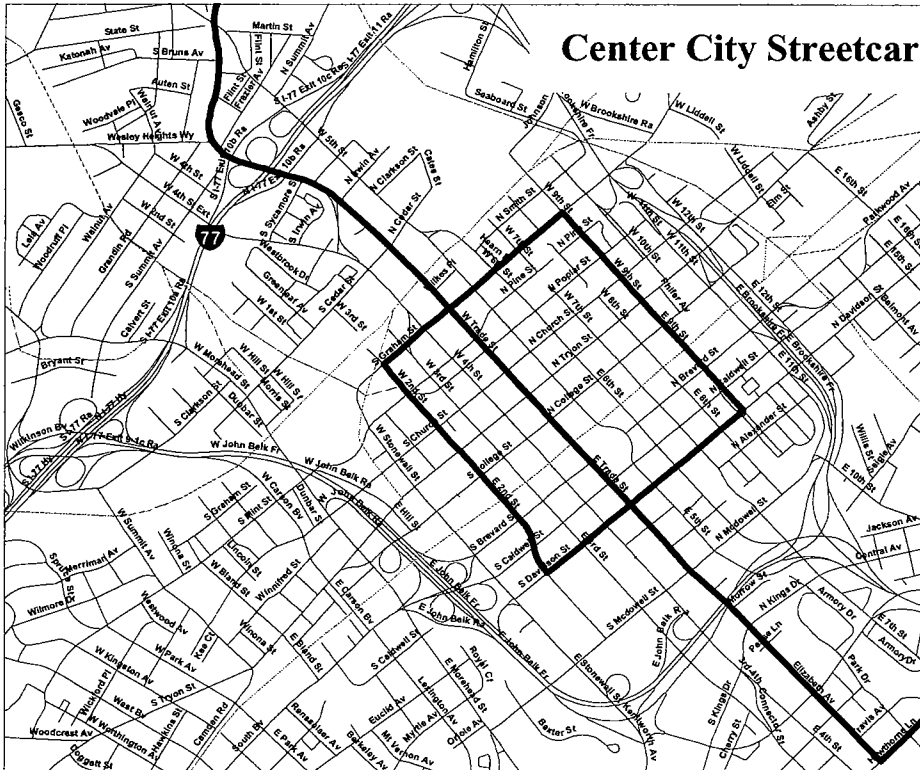
The Streetcar project also includes urban design and streetscape improvements in the Center City along Trade Street to further enhance this street as a pedestrian friendly transit way.

Center City Streetcar/Project Extensions











0 0.5 1 Miles

Center City Streetcar



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

-  Trade St Streetcar
-  Phase One: Trade/Elizabeth
-  Central Ave Extension
-  Hawthorne/Central
-  Beatties Ford Rd Extension
-  Johnson C. Smith/Beatties Ford
-  Uptown Loop Extension
-  Railroad



**Memorandum of Understanding
between the
Federal Transit Administration
and the Charlotte Area Transit System
on
Addressing FTA's New Starts and NEPA Requirements for
Charlotte's 2025 Transit System Plan**

I. Purpose

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have cooperatively developed this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to document their mutual understanding of the procedures to be followed in evaluating and refining Charlotte's 2025 Transit System Plan through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FTA New Starts and MPO planning processes. Because the 2025 Transit System Plan's implementation could extend over 20 years, this MOU documents the current understanding of the process for current and future participants. Both CATS and FTA understand that the MOU may be updated to reflect legislative or regulatory changes, regional or project specific changes, or changing financial conditions or plans, in addition to other reasons.

II. Background

In November 2002, Charlotte's Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) adopted a 2025 Transit System Plan that included an implementation plan and a financial plan. The 2025 Transit System Plan includes a multimodal package of improvements and includes fixed guideway transit (light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and streetcar) for five corridors and the Center City¹. The System Plan was developed through completion of Major Investment Studies for each corridor, which included a combination of corridor and regional analyses of alternative transit modes and general alignments. The MISs involved extensive public participation and community involvement efforts. The MISs resulted in Locally Preferred Alternatives (LPAs) for each corridor, which were included in a System Plan that covers the CATS proposed phasing of transit improvements and CATS funding plans for both capital and operational costs. Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO), the MPO for metropolitan Charlotte, has adopted the System Plan, including the LPAs, into its financially constrained transportation plan for the Charlotte area.

¹ CATS has completed preliminary engineering on the South Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) line and the project is in Final Design. This MOU applies to the remaining portions of the planned fixed guideway system -- the North, Northeast, Southeast, and West Corridors, plus Center City improvements.

The CATS financial plan anticipates that funding for 25 percent of the fixed guideway system capital cost will be derived from an existing local dedicated one-half percent sales tax. It further anticipates that funding for 25 percent of the capital cost will be met from state funds, and 50 percent will be provided from applicable federal sources, including Section 5309 New Starts funds.

This MOU outlines an approach that involves further evaluation and development of the proposed projects in the System Plan by meeting the FTA requirements for Alternatives Analysis, NEPA, and Preliminary Engineering.

III. Approach

CATS and the FTA will perform environmental evaluations in accordance with the regulations implementing NEPA at 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 and 23 CFR Part 771 on the following elements of Charlotte's 2025 Transit System Plan for which New Starts funding will be sought:

- North Corridor Commuter Rail;
- Northeast Corridor LRT;
- Southeast Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or LRT²;
- West Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or LRT; and
- Center City/Central Avenue/Beatties Ford Road Streetcar.

The NEPA document in each corridor will cover the entire project that is included in MUMPO's regional transportation plan (i.e., from a logical terminus in downtown Charlotte to the outermost station or facility included in the MUMPO plan.) FTA will terminate the NEPA review of any project whose Federal funding is no longer reasonably anticipated.

Upon completion of the public review of one or more of the Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEISs), CATS will consider the evaluations in the completed DEISs and the public and interagency comments on those completed DEISs and will identify projects for which CATS will request FTA approval to begin PE and gain entry into the New Starts funding pipeline. The public review of the DEIS must be completed before FTA will consider a request to initiate PE that involves an alternative or operable segment of an alternative evaluated in that DEIS.

CATS and FTA agree that, in each of the corridors, the NEPA document may incorporate by reference the MIS analyses that support the elimination of alternatives other than the adopted element of the 2025 Transit System Plan. The alternatives evaluated in each NEPA document will include the No-Build alternative, a TSM alternative, and the LPA from the System Plan. LPA design options developed to avoid and mitigate adverse environmental and community impacts will also be evaluated. CATS will develop the proposed phasing of the projects to ensure that meritorious, cost-

² Because Southeast Corridor rapid transit improvements may be developed as a joint project with highway improvements along Independence Boulevard, possibly involving Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding, there could be joint sponsorship of the environmental document in this corridor.

effective, and operable segments result at each phase. In addition, CATS will develop a TSM alternative for each corridor, and submit each TSM to FTA for approval of its use as the New Starts Baseline alternative in the computation of the FTA New Starts criteria. The TSM alternatives will be fully evaluated in the DEISs.

Following circulation of one or more of the DEISs and consideration of comments received, CATS can reach decisions on the phasing and prioritization of the various elements and operable segments of the Transit System Plan covered in the DEISs. CATS will seek FTA approval to initiate PE on an early implementation phase (EIP) of the System Plan in accordance with 49 CFR Part 611. FTA will require, among other things, that MUMPO affirm the inclusion of the EIP in the regional transportation plan. When requesting approval to enter PE, CATS is free to package together various operable segments of the planned guideways from multiple corridors into a single EIP for PE approval. However, every logically independent, operable segment of the EIP must be evaluated separately against the New Starts criteria of 49 CFR Part 611. Therefore, CATS will submit the New Starts criteria described in 49 CFR Part 611 on each individual element of the EIP. Notwithstanding the packaging by CATS, FTA reserves the right to approve all, some, or none of the operable segments into PE. In deciding which segments should be approved into PE, FTA will consider: (1) the performance of the individual operable segment in question against the New Starts criteria and (2) the Section 5309 total cost of the candidate for PE approval that would result from inclusion of the segment in question.

If and when FTA authorizes PE to be initiated for one or more projects, CATS will perform PE on the approved projects or project elements. CATS and FTA will complete the Final Environmental Impact Statements (FEISs) that encompass the project(s) approved into PE. In cases where the operable segment approved for PE is only a portion of the corridor element in the MUMPO transportation plan, the FEISs will cover the alternatives over the entire corridor and related cumulative impacts and mitigation in accordance with NEPA regulations. However, for the portion of the corridor not included in the operable segment approved into PE, the engineering activities will be strictly limited to those activities necessary to complete the FEIS.

As a consequence, following the approval of each FEIS, CATS will be in a position to:

- o Request an environmental Record of Decision (ROD) and seek approval to enter Final Design on those parts of the System Plan that were previously approved for PE, and
- o Request a ROD and proceed with right-of-way acquisition and other land use actions to preserve and develop the remainder of each corridor. CATS is aware that the ROD itself carries with it pre-award authority for the acquisition of real property that is specifically identified in the FEIS as needed for the alternative selected in the ROD. Compliance with the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act is expected.

When Final Design approval is requested, every logically independent, operable segment of the candidate for Final Design must be evaluated separately against the New Starts criteria of 49 CFR Part 611. Notwithstanding the packaging by CATS, FTA reserves the right to approve all, some, or none of the operable segments into Final Design.

If any of the corridors lacks an element approved into PE, the environmental process may be brought to closure by circulating the FEIS as a Tier 1 document in accordance with 23 CFR 771.111(g) and 40 CFR 1502.20 and 1508.28. However, if at any time the Federal funding for the project is no longer reasonably anticipated, FTA will terminate the NEPA review.

IV. Implementation

CATS and FTA will assume their usual roles in the preparation of the NEPA documents.

CATS understands that the pre-award authority to acquire real property that accompanies FTA's issuance of a ROD is not a commitment, is not an implied commitment, is not a moral commitment, and is not any other sort of commitment to reimburse CATS for any associated costs or to participate in any project on the acquired property. CATS will use its pre-award authority with discretion and with full knowledge of the risks.

CATS and FTA will add the review and discussion of the NEPA process for elements of the 2025 Transit System Plan to the agenda of the CATS/FTA Quarterly Meeting already in place for the South Corridor LRT project. CATS will provide special briefings on System Plan implementation to FTA staff as needed.

V. Amendment

During the implementation of the 2025 Transit System Plan, the MOU may need to be updated to reflect legislative or regulatory changes, regional or project specific changes, or changing financial conditions or plans, in addition to other reasons. The MOU may be updated or modified upon mutual agreement of the FTA and the CATS.

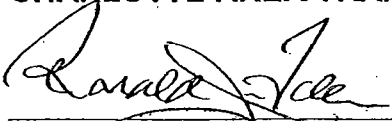
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION



Hiram J. Walker
FTA Regional Administrator

Date: 6/22/04

CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM



Ronald J. Tober
Chief Executive Officer, Charlotte Area Transit System
Director of Public Transit, City of Charlotte

Date: 6/22/04

Appendix E

Written Comments from Public and Agencies

- Emails Received from Citizens
- Letters Received from Agencies



☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

Richard B. Hamilton, Executive Director

October 11, 2004

Mr. John Muth, PE
Deputy Director of Development
Charlotte Area Transit System
600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS): North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and Center City Streetcar Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County

Dear Mr. Muth:

This correspondence is in response to your letter of September 29, 2004 concerning the referenced EIS. This correspondence is in response to your letter of September 28, 2004 concerning the referenced projects. Biologists with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) are familiar with habitat values in the area. The NCWRC is authorized to comment and make recommendations which relate to the impacts of this project on fish and wildlife pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1977, state and federal Environmental Policy Acts, the Endangered Species Act (16 U. S. C. 1531-1543; 87 Stat 884), the Federal License of Water Resource Project Act (Federal Power Act-16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661-667d).

The project includes commuter rail and bus transit throughout the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County metropolitan area. Most of the areas under review are developed urban or suburban areas. Based on our understanding of your letter, an Environmental Review or Environmental Assessment may be more appropriate than an Environmental Impact Statement. This depends on several factors. Accordingly, we recommend that you contact Ms. Melba McGee with the Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at 919-715-4194 to determine which document will best cover your project requirements.

Your letter does not provide substantial documentation about proposed direct or indirect impacts to the environment or habitat values in the selected corridors. Accordingly, we recommend that you visit our website at http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg07_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7c3_impacts.pdf for specific guidance and recommendations as you develop your DEIS or other environmental documents.

We are concerned about Cumulative and Secondary Impacts (CSI) issues associated with the Southwest corridor due to the presence of the Carolina heelsplitter (*Lasmigona decorata*), a state and federal endangered aquatic species in the Yadkin River watershed. Other listed or rare plant and

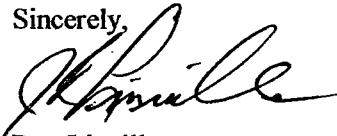
animal species may be present in portions of the proposed projects. Information on plant and animal listed species may be found at <http://nc-es.fws.gov> and <http://www.ncsparks.net/nhp/search.html>. Potential direct and indirect (CSI) issues that could impact listed or rare species from increased growth and development associated with the transportation projects should be thoroughly evaluated. Appropriate mitigation should be provided.

Some general guidelines and recommendations are attached to this document. These may assist you as develop environmental documents. Please be advised that we routinely recommend the use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for new developments and redevelopment activities. Information on LID practices and measures can be found at www.lowimpactdevelopment.org. Any stormwater ponds should provide mitigative habitats for those habitat values lost to urban development.

In conclusion, you should use the attachments and our website for wildlife considerations during the development of any environmental documentation. Please be advised that our website supercedes any of the attachments which are provided herein.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your projects during the early planning stages. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 336-769-9453.

Sincerely,



Ron Linville
Regional Coordinator
Habitat Conservation Program

Attachments: Guidelines for Environmental Reviews
Utility Line and Sewer Line Avoidance and Minimization Recommendations
Piedmont Stormwater Pond and Mine Planting Recommendations

Cc: Melba McGee, OLIA

General Guidelines for Environmental Reviews

Due to staff limitations, this standardized response was developed. Although some of the information, requests and comments may not be applicable to certain projects, these guidelines should facilitate preparation of fish and wildlife Environmental Assessments (EA) or Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). In addition to addressing site specific concerns, the environmental document should include a detailed assessment of existing natural resources within the areas of potential development and should discuss the potential of mitigating development impacts to wetlands, streams and high quality floodplain and upland habitats. To provide a meaningful review of the EA or EIS prepared for the project(s) secondary and cumulative impacts, we request that project consultants and sponsors provide the following information:

- 1) Description of fishery and wildlife resources within the project area, including a listing of federally or state designated threatened, endangered, or special concern animal and plant species in the project area and any areas that may be impacted by secondary or cumulative impacts within the sub-basin. A listing of designated species can be developed through consultation with: Mr. Steven Hall of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (919/715-8703) or Mr. Mark Cantrell of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (828/258-3939, ext. 227).
- 2) Description of waters and/or wetlands affected by the project(s).
- 3) Project map identifying wetlands and intermittent as well as perennial streams in the area. Identification of wetlands may be accomplished through coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If the Corps is not consulted, the person delineating wetlands should be identified and criteria listed.
- 4) Description of activities that will occur within streams and wetlands, such as fill or channel alteration. Acreage of wetlands impacted and linear feet of stream channels to be relocated, channeled, culverted or disturbed by some other means by alternative project designs should be listed.
- 5) Description of project site and non-wetland vegetative communities.
- 6) Description and cover type map showing acreage of upland wildlife habitat impacted by the project.
- 7) Discuss the extent to which the project(s) will result in loss, degradation, or fragmentation of wildlife habitat.
- 8) Discuss any measures proposed to avoid or reduce impacts of the project or to mitigate for unavoidable habitat losses.
- 9) Discuss the cumulative impacts of secondary development facilitated by the proposed utility improvements and any interrelated infrastructure projects, especially the impacts to water quality and habitat in the impacted watershed(s). Such discussion should weigh the economic benefits of such growth against the costs of associated environmental degradation.
 - (a) Include specific measures that will be used to address stormwater at the source. Include specific requirements for both residential and industrial developments and BMPs that will be required.
 - (b) Include specific measures that will be used to protect stream corridors, riparian habitat and a minimum of a 100-year floodplain.
 - (c) Include specific measures that will be implemented to promote water conservation and wastewater reuse.

(d) Include a discussion of any other local ordinances or programs (e.g., industrial pretreatment, infiltration and inflow management, farmland preservation, habitat restoration/preservation, and recycling) that will mitigate the impacts of development.

- 10) Discuss the use of any mitigation, preservation, deed restrictions, and conservation plans and management objectives. These should include detailed site descriptions and maps. A determination concerning which agency or entity (e.g. land conservancy) will own and manage the easements or property should be included.

Note: A list of document preparers should be provided that provides each individual's professional background and qualifications.

Utility Line and Sewer Line Avoidance and Minimization Recommendations

Measures to avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive resources, including wetlands, should be implemented during all phases of construction associated with the area. Where impacts to wetlands (and waters) are unavoidable, we will recommend mitigation of the losses. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, wetland areas perform the important functions of flood control and water quality protection. Whenever possible, utility lines should be placed along existing right-of-ways along roads and previously impacted corridors. Pumping may be economically feasible where direct or secondary impacts can be avoided in sensitive habitats. To avoid or minimize stream and wetland impacts during construction of utility lines, we offer the following generalized recommendations that should be incorporated into project plans:

- 1) Construction corridors should be no wider than absolutely necessary. The 401 certification for Nationwide 12 stipulates that wetland construction corridors are not to exceed 40 feet and permanent maintained corridors are not to exceed 10 feet except at access points. The NC division of Water Quality's 401 Certification for utility lines should be followed specifically for all jurisdictional impacts.
- 2) Where crossings are necessary, sewer lines should cross streams at right angles to minimize impacts to riparian areas. Disturbed stream banks and wetlands must be restored to original contours and revegetated with native plant materials such as silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), silky willow (*Salix sericea*) and hazel alder (*Alnus serrulata*). Riprap may be used to stabilize the bank in the area of the ordinary high water stage and vegetation (bioengineering) should be used above this stage. Aquatic life passage must not be hindered during low flows upon project completion. Directional boring is the preferred method of crossing jurisdictional waters and wetlands.
- 3) Utility lines crossing streams should be buried in the stream bottom or attached to existing bridges to maintain fish movement upstream and downstream and prevent debris from collecting at the pipe and causing a hydrologic change. We do not recommend installing piers in a stream channel to support a sewer line.
- 4) If concrete will be used, work must be accomplished so that wet concrete does not contact stream water. This will lessen the chance of altering the stream's water chemistry and causing a fish kill.
- 5) An undisturbed buffer zone should be left between streams and all construction. We prefer a buffer zone of at least 100 feet to control sedimentation into streams, provide shade, and maintain a travel corridor for wildlife. Buffers should also be left along intermittent drains or streams. Following floodplain edge contours with utility lines is preferable to following the riparian zones and streams. Wetlands should be avoided to the maximum extent possible.
- 6) Temporarily disturbed wetlands should be reseeded with annual small grains appropriate for the season (e.g. oats, millet, rye, wheat, annual lespedeza or rye grass) and be allowed to revert to native natural wetland vegetation.
- 7) A portion of the upland right-of-way (minimum of one acre) should be planted with VA-70 lespedeza, Kobe lespedeza, ladino clover, and/or partridge pea to provide food and additional habitat for wildlife.
- 8) Slash and/or large trees available from corridor construction through forested and stream corridors should be placed along the permanent right-of-way in the form of brush piles and downed logs to provide cover and nesting habitat for wildlife.
- 9) If necessary, ROW areas should be mowed not more than once every 2-3 years. Mowing should not occur between April 1 through September 30 in order to avoid disturbing wildlife utilizing the project corridor during the critical stages of nesting and rearing of young.
- 10) Stringent erosion control measures should be implemented where soil is disturbed and maintained until project completion.

- 11) Temporary or permanent herbaceous vegetation should be planted on all bare soil within 5 to 10 days of ground disturbing activities to provide long-term erosion control. We prefer a "seed as you go" strategy rather than allowing a large area to remain bare.

Piedmont Stormwater Pond and Mine Planting Recommendations

Instead of using the typical fescue grasses or exotic plant species, the following mixtures should be considered for lower elevation stormwater ponds and mine sites:

Spring/Summer Mixture, May 1 - Sept. 15 *Fall/Winter Mixture, Sept. 15 - April 30*

Browntop millet	20 lbs/a	Winter Wheat	120 lbs/a
Kobe lespedeza	20 lbs/a	Kobe lespedeza	20 lbs/a
Shrub lespedeza	1 lb/a	Shrub lespedeza	1 lb/a
Switchgrass*	5 lb/a	Switchgrass*	5 lb/ac

Add to fall or spring plantings: 'Tioga' Deertongue (*Panicum clandestinum*) at a rate of 7 lbs. Pure Live Seeds (PLS) per acre.

* When possible on slopes less than 3:1 use Switchgrass instead of lespedezas and on slopes greater than 3:1 use Orchard Grass or Creeping Red Fescue. Other native species may be appropriate depending on soil, slope, and region. Korean lespedeza may be appropriate in colder geophysical areas. We do not recommend *Sericea lespedeza*. Native plants and warm season grasses are preferred over exotic plants.

Add one of the following to the above mixture:

Creeping Red Fescue	5 lbs/acre
Ladino Clover**	5 lbs/acre
Atlantic Coastal Panic Grass	5 lbs/acre (PLS)
Alfalfa**	5 lbs/acre (requires fertilizer containing Boron)

** Lime & fertilize disturbed areas according to NRCS soil test results and follow planting guidelines as appropriate and necessary. Depending on elevation and region, other native species may be appropriate. Note that mowing should be limited to late winter or early spring. Mowing should only occur as needed to prevent unwanted tree growth on a 2-3 year schedule.

The provision of shade around impounded waters can significantly reduce thermal impacts. Trees and shrubs (1 year bare root seedlings) should be planted randomly at a minimal rate of 100 trees per acre on the top and upper portions of the structure and at a minimal rate of 150 per acre around the normal water elevation and littoral shelf area. The following list of tree species may assist in providing habitat benefits:

Loblolly Pine*	Red Cedar	Black Gum	American Holly	Dogwood
Hickory	Sumac	White Oak	Willow Oak	Red Maple**
Viburnum	Green Ash	Ironwood	Black Cherry	Persimmon
Water Oak	Spice Bush	Willow (sp)	Serviceberry	Red Oak
Swamp Chestnut		Silky Dogwood		

Other species may be utilized depending on site requirements and native plant availability. Pines* should not exceed 15% of the reforestation. No more than 20% of the tree species will be of a single species. An 80% success rate is acceptable over five years. Large or fast growing trees like Sycamore and Maple** may not be appropriate near detention facility dams. Note: Non-native plants included in this list are routinely considered beneficial and/or agriculturally established non-natives. They have been included as they are readily available commercially and they do not exhibit many of the negative attributes of other non-natives that tend to spread or inhibit native plant propagation and survival.



North Carolina
Department of Administration

Michael F. Easley, Governor

Gwynn T. Swinson, Secretary

October 12, 2004

Mr. John MuthGreen
Charlotte Area Transit System
600 E. Fourth Street
Charlotte NC 28202

Dear Mr. MuthGreen:

Subject: Scoping - North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and CenterCity Streetcart Ttransit Corridor
Add'l scoping information and Major investment Studies.

The N. C. State Clearinghouse has received the above project for intergovernmental review. This project has been assigned State Application Number 05-E-0000-0104. Please use this number with all inquiries or correspondence with this office.

Review of this project should be completed on or before 11/12/2004. Should you have any questions, please call (919)807-2425.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chrys Baggett".

Ms. Chrys Baggett
Environmental Policy Act Coordinator

Mailing Address:
1301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1301

Telephone: (919)807-2425
Fax (919)733-9571
State Courier #51-01-00
e-mail: Chrys.Baggett@ncmail.net

Location Address:
116 West Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

RECEIVED

OCT 28 2004

October 25, 2004

Mr. John Muth, PE
Deputy Director of Development
Charlotte Area Transit System
600 East Fourth Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28202

Dear Mr. Muth:

Enclosed are comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Northeast, Southeast, West, and Center City Streetcar Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. We hope our comments will assist you. Thank you for giving the opportunity to review this document.

Sincerely,

for Susan A. Kennedy
Acting, NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure



MEMORANDUM FOR: Susan A. Kennedy
Acting NEPA Coordinator

FROM: Charles W. Challstrom
Director, National Geodetic Survey

SUBJECT: DEIS-1004-05 Streetcar Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte,
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

The subject statement has been reviewed within the areas of the National Ocean Service (NOS) responsibility and expertise and in terms of the impact of the proposed actions on NOS activities and projects.

All available geodetic control information about horizontal and vertical geodetic control monuments in the subject area is contained on the National Geodetic Survey's home page at the following Internet World Wide Web address: <http://www.ngs.noaa.gov>. After entering the this home page, please access the topic "Products and Services" and then access the menu item "Data Sheet." This menu item will allow you to directly access geodetic control monument information from the National Geodetic Survey data base for the subject area project. This information should be reviewed for identifying the location and designation of any geodetic control monuments that may be affected by the proposed project.

If there are any planned activities which will disturb or destroy these monuments, NOS requires not less than 90 days' notification in advance of such activities in order to plan for their relocation. NOS recommends that funding for this project includes the cost of any relocation(s) required.

For further information about geodetic control monuments, please contact:

Brett Howe
SSMC3 8712, NOAA, N/NGS
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Voice: (301) 713-3197 ext. 115
Fax: (301) 713-4175
Email: Brett.Howe@noaa.gov

Dellert-O'Keef, Judy

From: Muth, John
Sent: Wednesday, November 03, 2004 8:40 AM
To: Dellert-O'Keef, Judy
Cc: Rogers, Danny; Carol, David; Leard, David; Noble, Willie; Goforth, Kelly; Roberson, Jerry; Mock, Andrew; Nadolny, Brian
Subject: EPA Contact Regards DEIS for System Plan Corridors

Info for Public Agency DEIS Contact Notebook

I received a phone call from Ben West (404-562-9643) with the US EPA in Atlanta. Ben was responding to our agency information letter on the System Plan. Ben indicated they would have interest in getting a briefing on the work that we are doing. He felt several people from Atlanta and Raleigh would be willing to come to Charlotte for such a briefing.

Ben is going to develop a list of people on his end that would attend and also look at some potential dates in December/January. We would plan on a mid-day meeting to allow folks the ability to make the roundtrip from Atlanta and Raleigh that day.

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
4405 Bland Road, Suite 205
Raleigh, NC 27609

Mary K. Combs, State Conservationist
Phone: (919) 873-2101
Fax: (919) 873-2156
E-mail: mary.combs@nc.usda.gov

November 5, 2004

Mr. John Muth, PE
Deputy Director of Development
Charlotte Area Transit System
600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

RE: Draft EIS for the North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and Center City Streetcar
Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, NC

Dear Mr. Muth:

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) appreciates the opportunity to review the subject documents. The majority of the planned project is located in urban, suburban and other developed areas. The project planners have utilized existing transit corridors and right-of-ways in order to avoid potential adverse impacts.

NRCS encourages the project sponsors to minimize land disturbing activities in the course of construction and to implement appropriate sediment and erosion control practices. We also encourage the use of native plant materials wherever possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary K. Combs", with the words "acting for" written below it in a smaller, less legible script.

Mary K. Combs
State Conservationist

cc: Diane Gelburd, Director
Ecological Sciences Division
NRCS, Washington, DC



RECEIVED
DEC 14 2004

North Carolina Department of Administration

Michael F. Easley, Governor

Gwynn T. Swinson, Secretary

December 9, 2004

Mr. John Muth
Charlotte Area Transit System
600 E. Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

Dear Mr. Muth:

Re: SCH File # 05-E-0000-0104; SCOPING; North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and CenterCity Streetcar Transit Corridor . Add'l scoping information and Major investment Studies.

The above referenced environmental impact information has been submitted to the State Clearinghouse under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. According to G.S. 113A-10, when a state agency is required to prepare an environmental document under the provisions of federal law, the environmental document meets the provisions of the State Environmental Policy Act. Attached to this letter for your consideration are the comments made by agencies in the course of this review.

If any further environmental review documents are prepared for this project, they should be forwarded to this office for intergovernmental review.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chrys Baggett".

Ms. Chrys Baggett
Environmental Policy Act Coordinator

Attachments

cc: Region F

Mailing Address:
1301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1301

Telephone: (919)807-2425
Fax (919)733-9571
State Courier #51-01-00
e-mail Chrys.Baggett@ncmail.net

Location Address:
116 West Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

MEMORANDUM



TO: Chrys Baggett
State Clearinghouse

FROM: Melba McGee *MM*
Project Review Coordinator

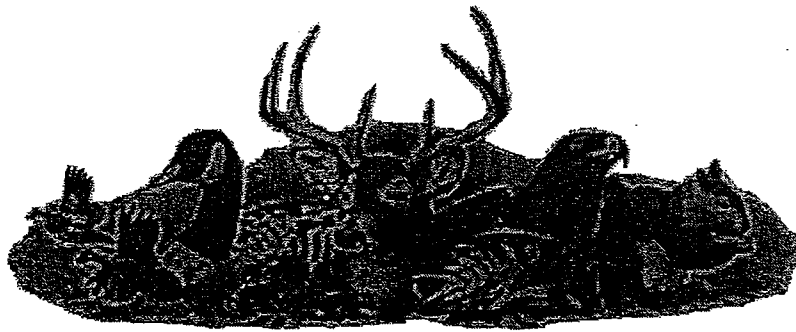
RE: 05-0104 Scoping, N, NE, SE, West and Center City Streetcar
Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte in Mecklenburg County

DATE: December 8, 2004

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has reviewed the proposed project. The attached comments are a result of this review. More specific comments will be provided during the environmental review process.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. If during the preparation of the environmental document, additional information is needed, the applicant is encouraged to notify our respective divisions.

Attachments



☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

Richard B. Hamilton, Executive Director

TO: Melba McGee, Environmental Coordinator
Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, DENR

FROM: Marla Chambers, Western NCDOT Permit Coordinator
Habitat Conservation Program, NCWRC

DATE: December 7, 2004

SUBJECT: Scoping review of the Charlotte Area Transit System's (CATS) proposed North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and Center City Streetcar Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is requesting comments for the subject projects. North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) staff biologists have reviewed the information provided and have the following preliminary comments. These comments are provided in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661-667d).

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) proposes to establish the North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and Center City Streetcar Transit Corridors to facilitate public transportation in the Charlotte area. A Locally Preferred Alternative has been developed for each corridor, which includes Commuter Rail, Light Rail Transit, Bus Rapid Transit, and streetcar routes. NCWRC supports efforts to enhance public transportation in urban areas, which reduces congestion on existing roads and the need for additional road construction projects, reducing impacts to air quality, water quality and open space. No preliminary estimation of aquatic or terrestrial impacts was provided, however it is apparent that numerous stations and community transit centers will be constructed. Parking lots, sidewalks and other facilities associated with this project will add considerable impervious coverage to already highly urbanized settings. Numerous studies have shown that when 10–15% of a watershed is converted to impervious surfaces, there is a serious decline in the health of receiving waters (Schueler 1994) and the quality of fish habitat and wetlands are negatively impacted (Booth 1991, Taylor 1993). Automobile related pollutants in the runoff from parking lots will also have a negative impact on water quality.

We recommend the City of Charlotte use non-impervious materials to construct the parking lots and sidewalks and use low impact development techniques (see www.lowimpactdevelopment.org for information) to manage stormwater quantity and quality. Alternatives to curb and gutter should be employed to provide better treatment of stormwater. Indirect and cumulative impacts associated with this project should be assessed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and measures to be implemented to minimize these impacts should be provided. Measures to mitigate indirect and cumulative impacts can be found in the Guidance Memorandum to Address and Mitigate Secondary and Cumulative Impacts to Aquatic and Terrestrial Wildlife Resources and Water Quality (NCWRC 2002). By constructing project facilities in a manner that minimizes water quality and environmental impacts, the City of Charlotte would not only demonstrate their commitment to environmental protection, but may encourage others to use similar measures for Charlotte area construction projects.

In addition, to help facilitate document preparation and the review process, our general information needs are outlined below:

1. Description of fishery and wildlife resources within the project area, including a listing of federally or state designated threatened, endangered, or special concern species. Potential borrow areas to be used for project construction should be included in the inventories. A listing of designated plant species can be developed through consultation with the following programs:

The Natural Heritage Program
<http://www.ncsparks.net/nhp>
1601 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N. C. 27699-1601

and,

NCDA Plant Conservation Program
P. O. Box 27647
Raleigh, N. C. 27611
(919) 733-3610

2. Description of any streams or wetlands affected by the project. If applicable, include the linear feet of stream that will be channelized or relocated.
3. Cover type maps showing wetland acreage impacted by the project. Wetland acreage should include all project-related areas that may undergo hydrologic change as a result of ditching, other drainage, or filling for project construction. Wetland identification may be accomplished through coordination with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). If the USACE is not consulted, the person delineating wetlands should be identified and criteria listed.
4. Cover type maps showing acreage of upland wildlife habitat impacted by the proposed project. Potential borrow sites and waste areas should be included.

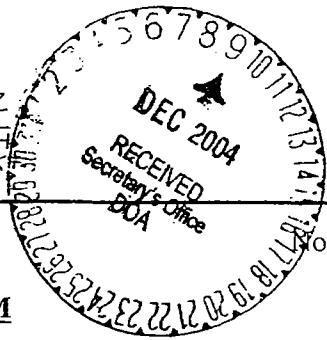
5. Show the extent to which the project will result in loss, degradation, or fragmentation of wildlife habitat (wetlands or uplands).
6. Include the mitigation plan for avoiding, minimizing or compensating for direct and indirect degradation in habitat quality as well as quantitative losses.
7. Address the overall environmental effects of the project construction and quantify the contribution of this individual project to environmental degradation.
8. Provide a discussion of the probable impacts on natural resources, which will result from secondary development, facilitated by the improved road access.
9. If construction of this facility is to be coordinated with other state, municipal, or private development projects, a description of these projects should be included in the environmental document, and all project sponsors should be identified.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in the early planning stages of this project. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (704) 485-2384.

Literature Cited:

- Booth, D. 1991. Urbanization and the natural drainage system-impacts, solutions, and prognoses. *Northwest Environmental Journal*. 7(1):93-118.
- NCWRC (North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission). 2002. Guidance Memorandum to Address and Mitigate Secondary and Cumulative Impacts to Aquatic and Terrestrial Wildlife Resources and Water Quality. NCWRC, Raleigh. Available: http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg07_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7c3_impacts.pdf. (February 2003).
- Schueler, Tom. 1994. The Importance of Imperviousness. *Watershed Protection Techniques*. 1:3 (pp100-111).
- Taylor, B.L. 1993. The influences of wetland and watershed morphological characteristics and relationships to wetland vegetation communities. Masters thesis. Dept. of Civil Engineering. University of Washington. Seattle, WA.

cc: Marella Buncick, USFWS
Brian Wrenn, NCDWQ



Michael F. Easley, Governor
William G. Ross Jr., Secretary
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Alan W. Klimek, P.E. Director
Division of Water Quality

November 8, 2004

MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Melba McGee, Environmental Coordinator
NCDENR Office of Legislative & Intergovernmental Affairs

From: Brian L. Wrenn, NCDWQ *BW*

Subject: Scoping for the North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and Center City Streetcar Transit Corridors, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, State Clearinghouse Project No. 05-0104.

This office has reviewed the referenced document. However, the Division of Water Quality (DWQ) was unable to complete the review because maps of the proposed corridors were not provided. Please provide the maps detailing the location of the proposed corridors. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact Brian L. Wrenn at 919-733-5715.

cc: Steve Lund, USACE Asheville Field Office
Marella Buncick, USFWS, Asheville Field Office
Marla Chambers, NCWRC
File Copy

West

NORTH CAROLINA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

STATE NUMBER: 05-E-0000-0104

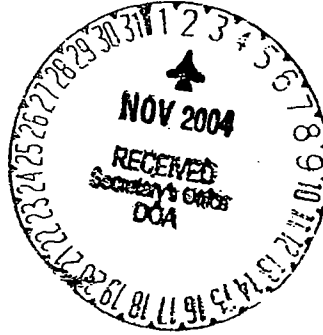
F02

DATE RECEIVED: 10/12/2004

AGENCY RESPONSE: 11/08/2004

REVIEW CLOSED: 11/12/2004

MR PHIL LETSINGER
CLEARINGHOUSE COORD
CC&PS - DEM, NFIP
MSC # 4716
RALEIGH NC



REVIEW DISTRIBUTION
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DENR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
DEPT OF AGRICULTURE
DEPT OF CUL RESOURCES
DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

PROJECT INFORMATION

APPLICANT: Charlotte Area Transit System

TYPE: National Environmental Policy Act

ERD: Scoping

DESC: North, Northeast, Southeast, West, and CenterCity Streetcart Ttransit Corridor .
Add'l scoping information and Major investment Studies.

CROSS-REFERENCE NUMBER: 01-E-0000-0176 03-E-0000-0136 03-E-0000-0295

The attached project has been submitted to the N. C. State Clearinghouse for intergovernmental review. Please review and submit your response by the above indicated date to 1301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1301.

If additional review time is needed, please contact this office at (919)807-2425.

AS A RESULT OF THIS REVIEW THE FOLLOWING IS SUBMITTED:

NO COMMENT

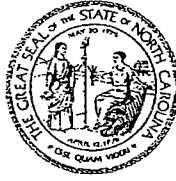
COMMENTS ATTACHED

SIGNED BY:

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE:

10/22/04



North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety
 Division of Emergency Management
 Floodplain Management Branch

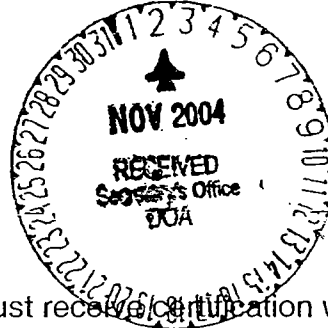
Michael F. Easley, Governor

Bryan E. Beatty, Secretary

Division of Emergency Management
 National Flood Insurance Program

STATE NUMBER: 05-E-0000-0104
 APPLICANT: Charlotte Area Transit System

DESC: Charlotte Area Transit Corridors.



Please be advised that all future project construction must receive certification when any development takes place in mapped regulatory floodways and when structural development takes place in mapped regulatory floodway fringe areas.

All floodway development must obtain a "No Impact Certification" or a "Conditional Letter of Map Revision", or must fully comply with section 65.7 of 44 CFR. All development must be in compliance with the current local Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance at the time of construction.

Good luck with your project

Dave Lentzner
 Division of Emergency Management- NFIP
 919-715-8000 extension: 351

MAILING ADDRESS:
 Disaster Recovery Operations
 Center (DROC)
 4713 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-4713

Fax: (919) 715-5408



www.ncem.org

**NC Division of Emergency
 Management**
OFFICE LOCATION:
 1830-B Tillery Place
 Raleigh, NC 27604

Telephone: (919)715-8000x351

Boone, Adrienne

From: Green, Jennifer
Sent: Monday, November 01, 2004 7:53 AM
To: Boone, Adrienne
Subject: FW: RE: Northeast corridor

-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Reese [mailto:JReese@tryonlg.com]
Sent: Friday, October 29, 2004 4:08 PM
To: dleard@ci.charlotte.nc.us
Cc: jagreen@ci.charlotte.nc.us
Subject: Re: RE: Northeast corridor

David...thanks so much. Forgive me if I ask silly, stupid or uninformed questions sometimes. I just want become as knowledgeable as possible. Have a wonderful weekend.

Jerry Alan Reese
Attorney and Counselor at Law
P.O. Box 32066
Charlotte, NC 28232-2066
704-347-1044 (Telephone)
704-347-1045 (FAX)
JReese@tryonlg.com

>>> "Leard, David" <dleard@ci.charlotte.nc.us> 10/29/04 10:12AM >>>
Jerry, Parsons leads a team of consultants working on the NE Corridor, and
is is the same team that has been working on the South Corridor.
Consultant activity will vary during the Project from a minimum of two or
three during the project initiation phases to a maximum of 25-30 at the
height of activity. David

-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Reese [mailto:JReese@tryonlg.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2004 11:53 AM
To: dleard@ci.charlotte.nc.us
Subject: Northeast corridor

David...which firm is consulting on the northeast light rail line? Is this
the same firm that is doing the south corridor line? Approximately how many
employees would they customarily devote to a project of this magnitude.

Thanks for your response.

Jerry Alan Reese
Attorney and Counselor at Law
P.O. Box 32066
Charlotte, NC 28232-2066
704-347-1044 (Telephone)
704-347-1045 (FAX)
JReese@tryonlg.com

Boone, Adrienne

From: Green, Jennifer
Sent: Tuesday, January 04, 2005 11:18 AM
To: Boone, Adrienne
Subject: FW: Northeast Corridor

For NE files. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Leard, David
Sent: Thursday, December 30, 2004 6:49 AM
To: Green, Jennifer
Subject: RE: Northeast Corridor

Consultants have been given approval to start work, and should begin to get things going in early January.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Reese
To: Leard, David
Cc: Green, Jennifer
Sent: 12/30/2004 2:26 AM
Subject: Northeast Corridor

David and Jennifer....I am composing my monthly newsletter for Tryon North and need to know if there have been any internal developments which I should report. Do you expect any public involvement in January? What are the consultants doing? Thanks for your assistance and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Jerry Alan Reese
Attorney and Counselor at Law
P.O. Box 32066
Charlotte, NC 28232-2066
704-347-1044 (Telephone)
704-347-1045 (FAX)
JReese@tryonlyg.com

Boone, Adrienne

From: Green, Jennifer
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2005 10:00 AM
To: Boone, Adrienne
Subject: FW: Asain Corner Mall Meeting

Please file under NE. Thanks!

-----Original Message-----

From: JohnC217@aol.com [mailto:JohnC217@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2005 10:54 AM
To: twashauer@ci.charlotte.nc.us; Harmon, Laura; Main, Kent; Green, Jennifer; Kopf, Larry; Mock, Andrew
Cc: Bargoil, Richard
Subject: Asain Corner Mall Meeting

Hello All:

Just a note to thank you for coming to the meeting yesterday. I think we have achieved a milestone, in that principals involved had an opportunity to develop contact and first dialog with the City staff.

We appreciate the learning from Jennifer and Andy about the transit update, as also the handouts from Kent on the South Corridor and the Scaleybark Station Area Plan, illustrating what might be possible along the the Sugar Creek-North Tryon corridor, and perhaps the Asian Corner Mall in particular.

I will be updating the owners of New Century and the laundry store cross the parking lot.

Until I can identify someone else to liaise with Mr. Bargoil, please address your E-mails and communications to me.

Regards,
John C. Chen
Vice President, Community Affairs
Carolinas Asian-American Chamber of Commerce

Boone, Adrienne

From: Boone, Adrienne
Sent: Friday, February 04, 2005 12:23 PM
To: 'henry@takeflightproperties.com'
Cc: Green, Jennifer
Subject: FW: A question about the Northeast Light Rail Corridor

Mr. Blanton,

The schedule for the Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project is as follows:

Consultant Contract Approved by City Council	June 2004
Consultant Work Begins	August 2004
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) work	January 2005 - May 2006

- Define rail alignment and station locations
- Transportation impacts
- Land use
- Neighborhoods and communities
- Economic impacts
- Visual and aesthetic impacts
- Air Quality
- Noise and vibration
- Ecosystems and water resources
- Construction Impacts
- Public involvement

Draft EIS complete	June 2006
Draft EIS public comment period	July 2006
Final EIS issued	August 2006
Record of Decision	September/October 2006
Request to enter Final Design	November 2006

To give you a basis of comparison, the South Corridor Light Rail Project has completed the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements and the Final Design. Construction will begin this Spring. Therefore, the Northeast Corridor isn't at the same level as the South Corridor. Although the information on the Northeast Corridor website is dated 2002, it is the most up-to-date information that we have. The alignment and station locations will not be finalized until after the Environmental Impact Statement process is complete and we have considered all of the issues outlined above. The last one mentioned, public involvement, is actually one of the most important.

There are public meetings planned for the Northeast Corridor later this month. These meetings provide the public with an opportunity to get an update on the Project, find out more about the process, ask questions and talk to staff. You can find the dates and locations of these meetings at www.ridetransit.org under Northeast Corridor and Upcoming Meetings (<http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/CATS/Rapid+Transit+Planning/Northeast+Corridor+Meet.htm>).

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me directly at (704) 336-3547 or via email at aboone@ci.charlotte.nc.us. If you would like, I can also add your contact information to the Northeast Corridor database so you will receive invitations to public meetings and quarterly Project newsletters.

Thank you for your interest in transit,

Adrienne C. Boone
 Community Relations Specialist
 CATS - South and Northeast Corridors

2/4/2005

4701 Hedgemore Drive, Suite 810
Charlotte, NC 28209
Phone: 704-336-3547
Fax: 704-336-2421
aboone@ci.charlotte.nc.us
www.ridetransit.org

-----Original Message-----

From: Henry Blanton [mailto:henry@takeflightproperties.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 03, 2005 2:39 PM
To: Green, Jennifer
Subject: A question about the Northeast Light Rail Corridor

Hi there,

I am writing you to find out where the city stands with regards to the NE corridor. I have clients living in the area who are interested as well. We all hear about the South Line, however it is rare to hear about this line. I have tried to look up information on the county website regarding station locations and/or plans. Do you happen to have any of these currently available? Most everything seems to be dated 2002. I have been flipping through the alternatives and if I recall correctly, the last thing I heard was the NE-4 alternative is closest to what may be done. I am attaching a development map from your website that was dated December 2001. Please let me know if there are any updates. In this plan there is a split from the Uptown to just North of 36th Street. Is this planned still?

Thank you for any information you may have!

Kind regards,
Henry Blanton

Henry Blanton, Broker/Realtor
Take Flight Properties, LLC
1626 Woodberry Rd
Charlotte, NC 28212
704.644.2936 m704.763.2051