

## BLE Alignment: Making Room for Charlotte's Future

Summer is traditionally the season of orange barrels. Roadway projects are exploding throughout the region and those orange barrels are about to multiply along North Tryon Street. The future Blue Line Extension (BLE) is designed to occupy the median of the roadway between Old Concord Road and Institute Circle in front of the UNC Charlotte campus. The Advance Utility Relocation contracts are nearly completed and the heavy construction is beginning.

Motorists, cyclists and pedestrians will experience a traffic corridor with frequent pattern changes and multiple work locations throughout the end of the summer, during the fall season and well into 2015. Construction crews will be building a wider new roadway for North Tryon Street. The travel lanes will extend beyond the edge of the existing pavement. In some instances traffic lanes may be narrowed and traffic may be shifted to create room for the crews to work. Along with the widening of the road, the BLE project involves the addition of sidewalks on both sides of North Tryon. During this construction period, there will be times when pedestrians will have to follow sidewalk detours to safely reach their destinations. The roadway work will be in full swing by later this summer and the beginning of fall. Everyone who uses North Tryon will need to be far more alert to the warning signs, detours and directions from construction flaggers.

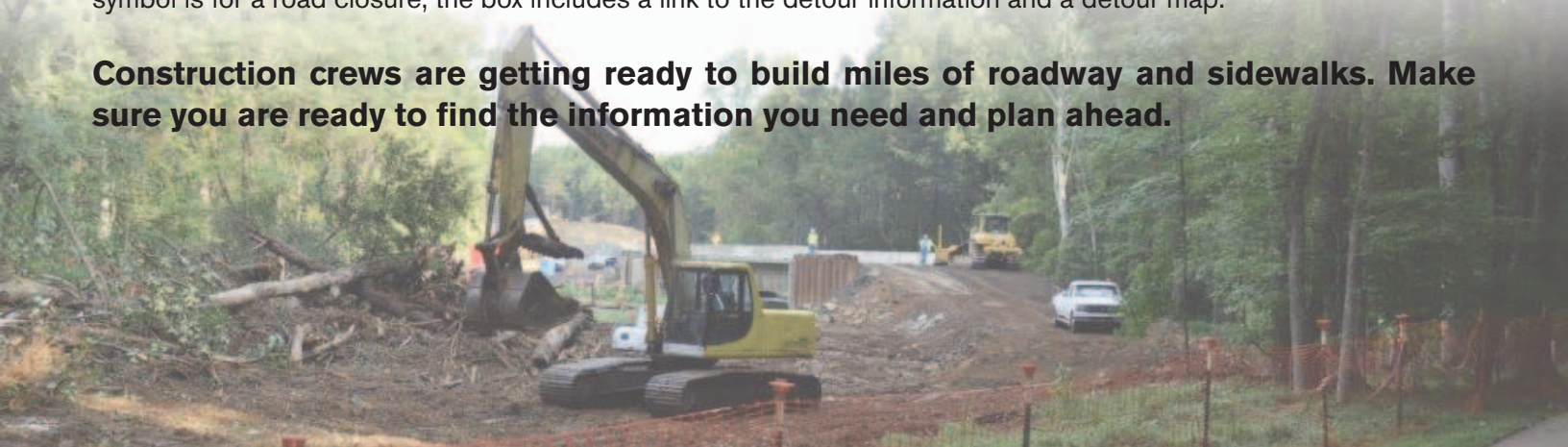


Temporary detour sidewalk on North Tryon Street

The BLE Communications Team will provide advance notice about any significant changes and traffic impacts. You can find the latest information on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CATSBLEExtensionUpdates> or by following us on Twitter @BLEupdates.

One of the best ways to stay informed about traffic impacts is by visiting our main page BLE Construction Updates or [www.charlottefuture.com](http://www.charlottefuture.com). The information for traffic impacts is displayed on an interactive map. You can zoom in on the map and click on any symbol for a closure or traffic impact which displays an extra box of detail information. If the symbol is for a road closure, the box includes a link to the detour information and a detour map.

**Construction crews are getting ready to build miles of roadway and sidewalks. Make sure you are ready to find the information you need and plan ahead.**



# We Will Cross that Bridge

By Jen Thompson, NCDOT Communications Officer

As you drive along North Tryon Street in Charlotte's University City area you find lots of activity. The LYNX Blue Line Extension construction is underway. In the near future, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is going to replace two bridges on Tryon Street (U.S. HWY. 29) over Mallard Creek, just south of the intersection of U.S. 29 and Mallard Creek Church Road. CATS and NCDOT have been coordinating efforts and resources for months to create a seamless work plan.

NCDOT awarded a \$4.4 million contract to Devere Construction, Inc. in April to replace both bridges. The department has been coordinating efforts with CATS to mitigate traffic impacts due to this project while maintaining access to local businesses. Starting in mid-October, the contractor will close U.S. 29 South at Mallard Creek Church Road to begin demolition work on the southbound bridge. While this work is underway, motorists will have to follow a detour from Mallard Creek Church Road to I-85 South to Harris Boulevard back to U.S. 29. This detour will be in place for up to 8 months.



After the southbound bridge opens, traffic will be maintained in a two-way pattern while construction activities shift to the northbound bridge. BLE construction will continue alongside with NCDOT's work on this side of U.S. 29. We are proactively working to maintain access to this greenway with a temporary detour, and want to make sure Mallard Creek Greenway enthusiasts keep enjoying their activities and beautiful greenway.

## Pedestrian Safety is Our Priority!

BLE construction is ramping up, and with that, pedestrian safety around construction zones is not only a hot topic but a vital issue.



Pedestrian safety signs, construction crews and detour sidewalk on North Tryon Street and Grove Lake Drive

Here are some useful pedestrian safety tips:

- When walking near a construction zone, **LISTEN** for instructions by contractors and **WATCH** for vehicular activity.
- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Do not be a distracted pedestrian.
- Look for "Sidewalk Closed" or "Construction Zone" signs that may be along your walking route and follow "Detour" signs.
- Do not go through construction zones.
- Cross at intersections, marked crosswalks or signalized intersections.

**Mind your surroundings, be extra careful and stay alert near construction zones!**

# The Importance of Preparation

*A Message from Jennifer Duru, Neighborhood and Business Services  
LYNX Blue Line Extension Business Liaison*



*Jennifer Duru  
LYNX Blue Line Extension  
Business Liaison*

In order to reach some level of success, every business owner must be prepared. A restaurant owner must have the utensils and food ready to feed the next day's clientele. A clothing store owner will organize and tidy up the store, so customers can have a pleasant shopping experience. A package delivery service will map out any foreseeable detours or closed roads, so packages can reach their destinations on time. All of us would like to be prepared for the unexpected. Being prepared just makes life easier and more manageable. However, unforeseeable events happen all the time. A new restaurant may open across the street that competes with your existing restaurant. Customer preferences for clothing trends may change, which means you may have to mark your existing inventory for clearance. An accident can happen on the road that delays a driver and prevents the delivery of a package to its destination on time.

So, how do you prepare for the unexpected?

The BLE Construction brings certain challenges and some areas may be more impacted than others. We have been informing and talking to hundreds of businesses about the upcoming work and potential impacts to parking, signage and access. Business owners have shared their appreciation for the information we have provided. They have prepared for changes.



## Here are some tips on how to keep your customers engaged and your business intact:

- Ensure that employees who provide direct service to customers are up to date on the current LYNX BLE road closures and detour information
- Promote delivery and offer website services so customers can avoid traffic inconveniences
- Include information about avoiding the closed roadways in your current messaging to customers (direct mail, website, emails, advertising, voicemail message when business is closed, etc.)
- Make sure you sign up to get the "Notify Me" updates concerning traffic impacts and communicate regularly to employees so they remain informed
- Consider developing a customer referral incentive program. Your existing customers are your most effective sales force
- Create marketing materials that inform about the current construction and provide compelling reasons for customers to do business with you

If you have ideas or best practice suggestions that have worked for your business, please share them with us by contacting me. As always, we are here to support you and would love to hear any feedback you have to offer.

# Rocky River Road West Streetscape Project



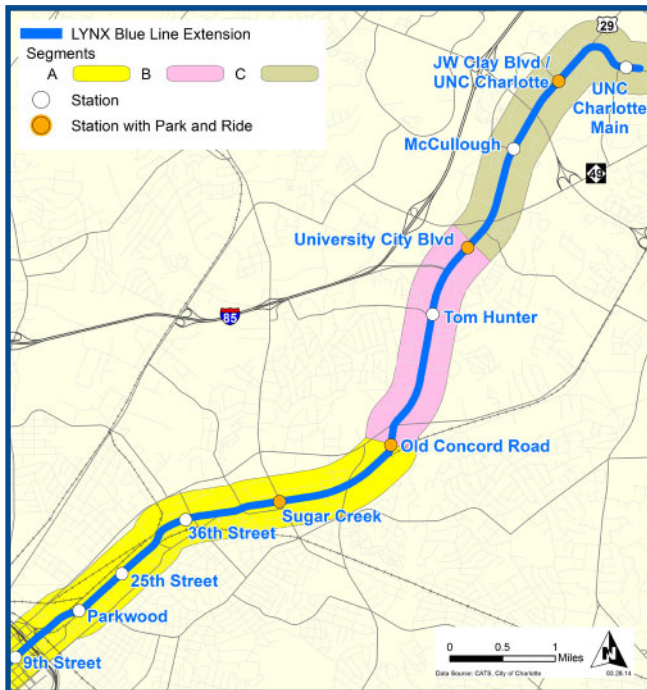
Speaking to the community at a public meeting at Newell Presbyterian Church

A community meeting was held for the Rocky River Road West Streetscape Project on August 26, 2014, at Newell Presbyterian Church. Approximately 50 citizens attended. The Rocky River Road West project will provide turn lanes for new developments taking place along Rocky River Road West, as well as provide sidewalk and bike lanes from North Tryon to Batavia Lane.

The project team shared a proposed cross-section and alignment to the attendees. Representatives from CATS, Corporate Communications, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry, Tree Charlotte and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools were also on hand to answer questions about the Blue Line Extension, the new Newell Elementary School and other area projects.

The Rocky River Road West Streetscape project is part of the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure (NECI) Program. Its primary goals are to improve accessibility to transit and promote economic development. Additional NECI project public meetings similar to Rocky River Road West will be held this fall. For more information contact Jim Keenan at 704-336-4252 or email [jkeen@charlottenc.gov](mailto:jkeen@charlottenc.gov).

## BLE Alignment



## Stay Connected

CATS has developed tools for you to stay informed about BLE construction updates. We want to hear from you! Your feedback is important to us. Let us know your questions or comments.

Here are some ways to make your voice be heard:

**Follow us on Facebook and Twitter**



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