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SUMMER 2007



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LYNX Blue Line Extension Making Tracks to the Northeast Corridor

The LYNX Blue Line Extension light rail project extends 11 miles from Uptown Charlotte at 9th Street to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC), ending just south of I-485. The line will feature a stop in NoDa, one of the city's liveliest art districts and a great place to find distinctive restaurants and music venues. The line will also serve University City, anchored by UNCC with connecting service to the Research Park area and numerous retail and commercial developments.

The project is an extension of the LYNX Blue Line - South Corridor and will address both transportation needs and support the region's land use policies and goals for a sustainable growth and development pattern. Specifically, the project's purpose is to:

- Improve mobility within the corridor by offering a convenient alternative to the automobile;
- Enhance the region's quality of life by reducing dependence on automobiles and improving access to jobs, entertainment, shopping and other destinations;
- Support the region's land use vision by focusing future higher density development in key growth corridors;
- Leverage the region's transit investment by extending an existing light rail line; and
- Preserve and protect the environment.

There are several conditions affecting the Northeast Corridor area that will be addressed and improved with the addition of the light rail transit project.

1. **Increasing Travel Demand.** Over the next 25 years, the following growth trends are projected for the Charlotte area:
 - 75% increase in regional population to approximately three million people
 - 60% increase in employment in Uptown – from 58,700 to 93,300
 - 300% increase in Uptown population – from 7,200 to 29,000
 - 70% increase in population and 90% increase in employment in the Northeast Corridor
2. **Existing Roadway Network is Deficient.** Ten of the City's most congested intersections are located within the Northeast Corridor. Despite planned



A current view of the Northeast Corridor at the Harris Boulevard/N.Tryon Street intersection

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NEWS FROM THE CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM
FEATURING THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR LYNX BLUE LINE EXTENSION



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Making Tracks to the Northeast Corridor cont.

roadway and intersection improvements, increased travel demand in the corridor will cause conditions on roadways and intersections to deteriorate or remain severely congested.

- 3. Auto Dependence and Air Pollution Threaten Region's Quality of Life.** Travel demand over the last 20 years has increased at a rate (194%) nearly double the population growth rate (106%). The Charlotte-Mecklenburg region is currently designated an air quality non-attainment area for ozone. Competitive alternatives to the automobile are needed to reduce car dependence, decrease pollutant emissions, and sustain the region's appeal as one of the most livable and economically attractive large cities in the nation.
- 4. Land Use and Transportation Integration is Needed for Projected Growth.** Future rapid transit in the Northeast Corridor is an integral part of the region's coordinated growth strategy and is needed to support the desired concentrations of development in the corridor.

The Blue Line Extension will provide a convenient, time-competitive transit alternative that supports the region's land use policies and goals. The project has the following specific transportation benefits:

- Improved Reliability and Travel Time Savings –**
Because it will operate in a dedicated right of way, the Blue Line Extension will be time-competitive with the automobile, with greatly improved transit travel times and dependable service.
- Improved Commuting Choices –**
By including the Blue Line Extension in a comprehensive transportation system, CATS can offer an alternative to congestion on I-85. In addition to a cost effective commuting choice, riders will enjoy improved ride comfort and amenities of rail.
- Special Events and Tourism –**
Light rail will provide an additional transportation option while avoiding heavy vehicular traffic to attend sporting and cultural events and high parking costs.
- Economic Development –**
Significant additional economic development is expected in station areas as a result of the project, which would further enhance the benefits and cost effectiveness of the light rail project.

Economic Development Benefits of the Project

The Northeast Corridor light rail project will extend the LYNX Blue Line- South Corridor and continue the region's implementation of its integrated transit and land use vision. The over \$1 billion in new and

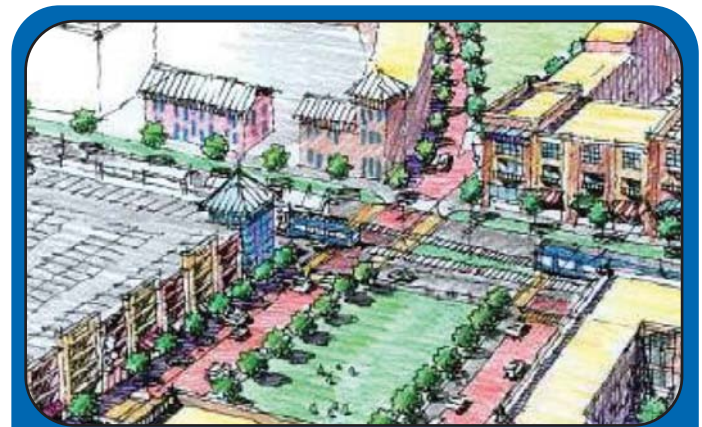
proposed development near stations in the South Corridor illustrates how Charlotte's land use policies are successfully redirecting development into transit corridors.



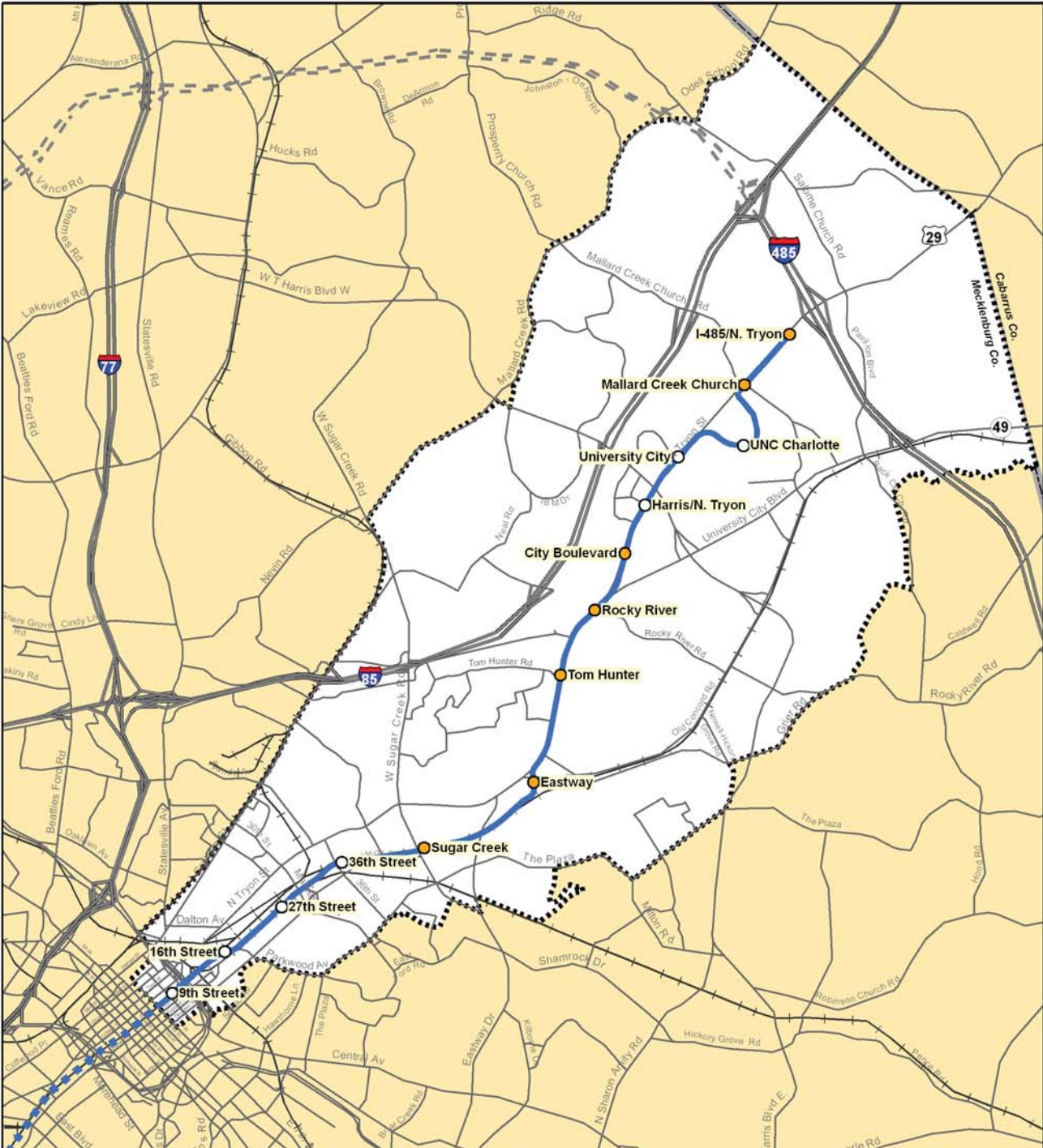
University City Station rendering with median station on N. Tryon Street

The Northeast Corridor is one of the region's fastest growing areas, with new development and redevelopment occurring at high rates. "The work we're doing today will have a major impact not only on the future of transit in Charlotte, but also on shaping the future of the area's economic development, especially the University and NoDa areas," said Danny Rogers, Senior Project Manager for the Northeast Corridor. Like the South Corridor, the Northeast Corridor is already realizing economic development benefits related to the project, particularly in the NoDa area, which is already seeing mixed use transit-oriented development (TOD) projects under construction. A recent TOD analysis projects 25,000 new multi-family units, 9 million square feet of office, and 2.3 million square feet of retail in station areas by 2030.

In addition to its transit investment, the City expects to continue its capital investment program for infrastructure to support development around light rail stations. The infrastructure program will improve accessibility to the stations for all travel modes, including bicycling, walking, and driving, and to promote higher density development and redevelopment.



Rocky River Station rendering highlights transit-supportive development that focuses on creating compact neighborhoods with housing, jobs, shopping, community services and recreational opportunities all within easy walking distance of a transit station



Legend

- Northeast Corridor
- Light Rail Alignment (R-LPA)
- Stations
- Stations with Park-and-Ride
- Lynx Blue Line (under construction)
- Interstate
- Interstate (Proposed)
- Major Roads
- Railroads
- County Line

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 Miles
 Data Source:
 Charlotte Area Transit System

CATS Art-in-Transit Program Expands in New Directions

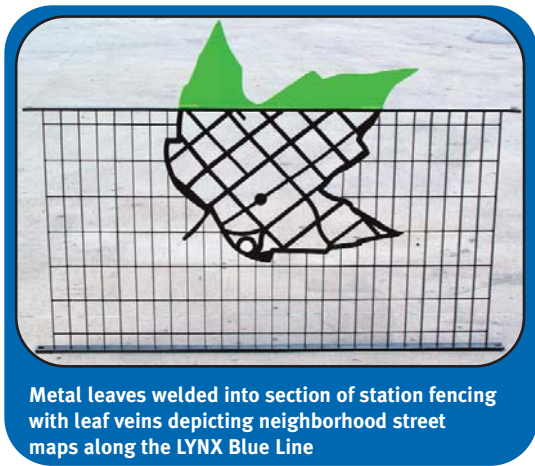
CATS strongly believes in the inclusion of art in our transit projects. The visual quality of the nation's mass transit systems has a profound impact on transit patrons and the community at large. Good design and art can improve the appearance and safety of a facility, give vibrancy to its public spaces, and make patrons feel welcome.

"The CATS art program is committed to creating vibrant, neighborhood-oriented transit facilities with the introduction of quality works of art," said Pallas Lombardi, CATS' Art-in-Transit Program Manager. "Its success results from the collective efforts of CATS staff, community members, artists, architects, engineers, business owners, and many others." CATS commits 1% of design and construction costs to the integration of public art into most major projects in the capital program. This includes rapid transit stations and surrounding areas, park and ride lots, transportation centers, maintenance facilities, and passenger amenities.

When the LYNX Blue Line-South Corridor opens later this year, Charlotte residents will experience the work of 13 artists commissioned by the Art-in-Transit program specifically for the light rail project. Lombardi commented, "An artist might transform a functional object with aesthetics or create a landmark, but ultimately that story is unfinished until the community engages and interacts with the work." For example, riders will see art incorporated into station platforms, shelters, benches, drinking fountains, retaining walls, and fencing, as well as large and small sculptures like those found at stations such as New Bern, Scaleybark, and Tyvola.



Dogwood water fountain basins at the LYNX Blue Line New Bern Station



Metal leaves welded into section of station fencing with leaf veins depicting neighborhood street maps along the LYNX Blue Line

The LYNX Blue Line Extension represents an opportunity to expand this art collection, involving more artists and additional art locations, as well as new neighborhoods along the corridor. Strong community involvement is essential to the art program, with citizens participating in every step of the public art process.

Neighborhood representatives, business owners, planners, historic society representatives, and transit-users work with the art panelists, station architects, engineers, design team members, urban planners, and CATS staff. They provide information regarding the station architecture, neighborhood, demographics, history, and users to panelists prior to the selection of artists.

Three to five panelists typically make up the artist selection committee. They may include artists, museum professionals, designers, art educators, public art administrators, conservators, and other art professionals with a broad understanding of contemporary art and the contributions artists can make to a transit art program. It is the responsibility of these panelists to select artists capable of creating high-quality public art appropriate to each project.

The artists may engage in a variety of methods to create art relevant to the design and station community such as research, public workshops or meetings, or outreach activities. Artists submit design proposals to the Art-in-Transit Advisory Committee, a panel of art professionals who oversees the program. The advisory committee reviews art proposals and budgets to ensure the best use of art funding and maximize the impact of art throughout the program.

In keeping with FTA guidelines, CATS subscribes to the following criteria when artists are involved in planning and designing of transit art projects and/or when artists are commissioned to create works of art:

- **Quality of art or design**
- **Impact on transit users or other public audiences**
- **Connection to site and/or adjacent community: art that relates, in form or substance to the cultures, people, natural and built surroundings, or history of the area in which the project is located**
- **Appropriateness for site, including safety and scale**
- **Durability and resistance to vandalism**
- **Minimal maintenance requirements**

Continued on back cover

Vision for University City

“University City will be transformed into a distinct and vibrant people-oriented place that is urban in scale and design... and will be a popular and accessible destination for people of all ages, income levels and backgrounds, offering diverse and unique choices for living, shopping, working, learning and enjoying leisure time.”

University City Partners

Dramatic changes are on the horizon for University City. The possibility of a light rail transit (LRT) line along the Northeast Corridor could be a significant driver of change. Improvements to the US29/NC49 “weave” intersection and extension of City Boulevard will also bring change within the next several years by providing access to hundreds of acres of land that are currently landlocked. In addition, the creation of a major new gateway to the UNC Charlotte campus will be developed off North Tryon Street (US 29), creating a long-needed connection to University Place and other development along the corridor.



University City Area Plan streetscape rendering with sidewalks, planting strips, bicycle lanes, and light rail transit

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department has been working with University City Partners (UCP) and their consultants to develop a plan for the University City Municipal Services District (MSD). The plan boundaries are those of the MSD and are generally described as Mallard Creek Road to the north, University City Boulevard (NC 49) to the east, I-85 to the west and the US 29/NC 49 “weave” to the south.

The purpose of the DRAFT University City Area Plan is to update the 1996 Northeast District Plan. The Northeast District Plan is the official land use policy document currently used to guide development activity in University City. However, conditions have changed in this area, which has led to the need to update the policy guidance. Specifically:

- The corridor has been designated as a light rail corridor and the proposed transit station locations determined.
- The major improvements for the US 29/NC 49 “weave” have significantly changed. The 29/49 Roadway Improvement Project will consist of new, at-grade intersections at the I-85 Connector and at University City Boulevard (NC 49). In addition, the project will connect the new intersection with University City Boulevard to a previously constructed interchange at I-85 (City Boulevard Extension).
- UNC Charlotte plans to create a major gateway to the campus off US 29, including a rapid transit connection to the University.

Planning Process

The process began in 2005, when UCP developed an Urban Boulevard Study that focused on creating a vision and plan for the North Tryon Corridor. During this same period, the City of Charlotte undertook a detailed design study of the US29/NC49 “weave”, the area where these two major thoroughfares currently merge. The Boulevard Study was closely coordinated with the City’s project. Together, these studies provided the foundation for this area plan. A number of public forums, a design charette and numerous one-on-one interviews with property owners and other key stakeholders were held over two years to gather input for both projects. The concept plan will be reviewed and adopted by City Council this fall.

“The adopted plan will prescribe what needs to develop at each of University City’s four transit stations as well as where rail will enter the UNC Charlotte campus,” said Mary Hopper, University City Partners Executive Director.

For more information or to view the full DRAFT University City Area Plan prepared by University City Partners, go to <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Planning/Area+Planning/Plans/University+City+Area+Plan.htm>.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Blue Line Extension SUMMER 2007

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

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To receive project updates via e-mail, sign up for the electronic subscription service at: www.ridetransit.org by clicking on E-mail Updates.

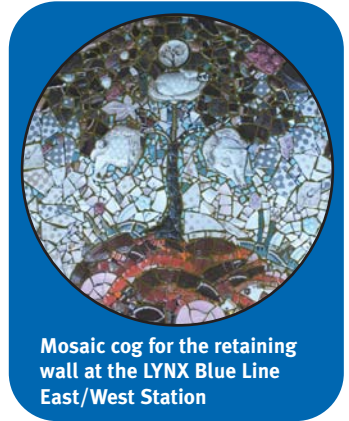
For more information on rapid transit planning, visit the CATS website at: www.ridetransit.org or call CATS at (704) 336-RIDE.



Art-in-Transit cont.

CATS encourages all professional artists from any locale who have been involved in public art, public art-in-transit, the visual arts, as well as professional artists new to public art, to submit current slides and application materials to be considered for the CATS' Art-in-Transit program. The Artist Application and more information about the program can be found at www.ridetransit.org. Information regarding our new policies on electronic submissions will be available in the upcoming year.

For more information on the CATS Art-in-Transit program, contact Program Administrator Lyndsay Richter at 704-432-3017 or email lrichter@ci.charlotte.nc.us.



Mosaic cog for the retaining wall at the LYNX Blue Line East/West Station

NEWS FROM THE CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM
FEATURING THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR LYNX BLUE LINE EXTENSION

CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM
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