Local Transit Funding
The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Story

Presented by
John M. Muth, P.E. – CATS Deputy Director

Tennessee MPO Planning Conference
June 7, 2017
### MSA Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population*</th>
<th>Square Miles</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
<th>Density (Sq/Mi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area</td>
<td>2,474,314</td>
<td>3,198</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN Metro Area</td>
<td>1,865,298</td>
<td>7,484</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memphis, TN-MS-AR Metro Area</td>
<td>1,342,842</td>
<td>3,013</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*US Census, 2016 Estimate
Charlotte Mecklenburg Centers & Corridors Vision

- Adopted by the community in 1994
- Long-term growth framework
- Five primary transportation and development corridors
- Goals:
  - Focus most growth in Centers & Corridors
  - Maximize use of transportation system & infrastructure
  - Encourage redevelopment & reuse of underutilized sites
Committee of 100 (1994)

Composition

• 100+ members from Mecklenburg County and 5 adjacent counties
• Included elected officials and business community reps

Charge

• Develop Community Consensus on Vision for Land Use and Transportation
• Define Major Revenue Sources
• Determine Organizations Structure
Composition

• Chair of Committee of 100
• 2 Charlotte City Council members
• Area representatives on NCBOT
• Several key business leaders

Charge

• Review and Reaffirm/Revise Recommendations of “Committee of 100”
• Determine Which Recommendations are Most Feasible and Develop Strategy for Implementation
• Collaborate with State’s Transit 2001 Commission to Address Charlotte’s Needs Through Their Proposals
Committee of 10 Results

- 5 Year Transportation Plan
- Support for “Local Option” Revenue Sources for Transit Improvements
- Led to Enabling Legislation for ½ Cent Local Option Sales Tax
Goals

• Support Centers and Corridors Land Use Vision
• Provide Choices in Mode of Travel
• Develop a Regional Transit System
• Support Economic Growth and Sustainable Development
Success in 1998!

- Voter referendum on ½ percent sales use tax for public transportation on November 1998 ballot
- Promoted by Chamber and paired with $100 million Road Bond
- Sales tax approved 58% to 42%
• **Public Transit System Governing Board**
  - Provides policy direction for system development and operation
  - Oversees management activities

• **MTC Composition – 23 members (9 voting)**
  - 16 from Mecklenburg County (8 voting members)
  - 1 NC Board of Transportation (1 voting member)
  - 5 ex-officio from 5 surrounding counties
  - 1 SC Board of Transportation (ex-officio)

• **Citizen Advisory Committees**
  - CTAG (planning and finances)
  - TSAC (service delivery)
Variety of Services
GOOD NEWS!
IT'S NOT A QUESTION
OF IF CHARLOTTE'S
GONNA HAVE LIGHT
RAIL, BUT
WHEN!
LYNX Blue Line Characteristics

- Opened November 24, 2007
- Uptown Charlotte to I-485
  - 9.6 miles
- 15 stations (7 park & rides)
- Operates seven days a week from 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.
- Service frequency
  - Rush hour: 10 minutes
  - Non-rush hour: 15 minutes
- Bus/rail integration serves the Blue Line directly:
  - 20 new and modified routes
LYNX Blue Line Success!

• LYNX Blue Line ridership averaging 14,000 - 17,000 daily trips
  – Original projection: 9,100 by the end of the first year; 18,100 by 2025
  – Vehicles often at capacity
  – 1100 space deck often full; more parking needed
  – Ordered 4 more LRV’s

• Special Events

• Exemplary Operations
Oct, 2007:

Light rail's a boondoggle! A waste of taxpayers' money! No one will ride it! Their budget's obscene! They want to spend how much on parking lots? Ridiculous! Cats can't do anything right!

June, 2008:

Light rail's a disaster! The trains are too crowded! The rail line doesn't go far enough! There's nowhere to park! Cats can't do anything right!

Used with permission, Kevin Siers, The Charlotte Observer
Economic Impact on Sales Tax


Current projection based on long-term annual growth rate of 3.5% from the June 2012 FFGA Financial Plan.

February 15, 2013
Investing in a Vision
Transit-Oriented Development on the LYNX Blue Line
Today was the first day the CATS light rail came to campus!

Cool!

The trip was surprisingly comfortable, convenient, and quick!

Cool!

It was great to ride it after all those years of delays, setbacks, new completion dates, new delays, more setbacks...

Sorry... gotta run...

Of course, it'll never replace the transporter beam...
LYNX Blue Line Extension

Transformative Project
- Rebuilds North Tryon Street
- Implements urban design framework
- Stimulates economic revitalization
- Serves transit-dependent communities

Service Level Increases
- 9.3 miles of double-track rail
- 11 Stations
- Terminates on campus of UNC Charlotte (26K students)
- 3 new multi-story parking garages
- 1 new park-n-ride surface lot
- Accommodates 3-car trains
- Adds 128 new City positions
- Adds 48 contracted security officers
- Adds $20.6 million to Operating Expenditures
Replica Streetcar Phase 1
The Missing Link – an InterCity Station at the right location
### 1/2% Sales Tax Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Receipts (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY08</td>
<td>$71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY09</td>
<td>$61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY10</td>
<td>$57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY11</td>
<td>$56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY12</td>
<td>$65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY13</td>
<td>$66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY14</td>
<td>$69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY15</td>
<td>$80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY16</td>
<td>$86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY17 (Projected)</td>
<td>$92.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY18 (Budget)</td>
<td>$95.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Sales Tax Receipts Reported on cash basis
- Trendline began in FY13
ENVISION MY RIDE

- New Initiative to Redesign Current Bus System
- Cross-town and Suburb-to-Suburb Service
- Bus-Rail Connectivity
- Frequency of Services
- More Direct Services
Southeast Corridor (Silver Line)
- MTC adopted Light rail to Matthews as LPA in November 2016
- Need to determine how best to access downtown

North Corridor (Red Line)
- LPA has been commuter rail on NS O-Line
- Use of Norfolk Southern O-Line corridor problematic
- NS views O-Line as Strategic option to NCRR lease
- Upcoming study will consider Light Rail on other alignments

West (Airport) Corridor
- Current LPA Streetcar
- Plan to study Light Rail and potential alignments
- Serving Airport is a must
- Can Proposed River District be served

Center City Integration Study
- Determine how best to integrate three corridors into downtown with existing Blue Line and Gold Line Streetcar

Approved by MTC November 2006
• MTC approved recommendation of light rail LPA in November 2016

• 13-15 miles long

• 13 stations with 8-10 park and ride locations

• As part of recommendation System Integration/West Corridor/Airport Study will begin
Corridor System Plan
• Bus Rapid Transit (2002 plan)
• Light rail not FTA cost-effective
• Streetcar extension—post 2030 (2006 plan)
• Sprinter Enhanced Bus (2009)

New Study beginning in 2017
• FTA Criteria more favorable to Light Rail
• Interline/Combine with Southeast Corridor
• Center City System Integration
Original Vision
- Shared track with temporal separation.
- General agreement with NS – term sheet developed.
- No formal agreement executed.

NS Passenger Policy 2013
- No passenger-only operating windows.
- Requires transparency – capacity to accommodate both without any delay or impact on maintenance.

Time for a Fresh Look
- October 2016 Meeting with Railroads & USDOT in Washington DC.
- Study potential for passenger track(s) adjacent to NS O-Line right-of-way.
- Revisit broader corridor to identify possible new alignments.
- Significant growth has occurred.
- Consider Light Rail technology.
Center City System Integration

- What specific destinations to serve; Charlotte Gateway Station, CPCC, Arena/Convention Center, Stonewall Corridor?
- How to integrate with LYNX Blue Line?
- How to integrate West Corridor and North Corridor?
- Development projects need uptown alignment defined.
Top Priorities for the CONNECT Region

- Parks & Open Space
- More Transportation Choices
- Support Our Communities
- Support Local Farms
- Cost of Providing Services
- Improved Water Quality
- Improved Air Quality
- Work Closer to Home
- More Housing Choices
- Cost of My Commute
Context for Transit Engagement
Thank You