Charlotte-Mecklenburg Rapid Transit and Land-Use Integration

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Austin, TX Chamber of Commerce
September 26, 2011
Charlotte Region

• Statistics
  • Mecklenburg County population: 935,300+
  • Metro area population: 1.7 million+
  • City square miles: 287
  • State population: 18.5%
  • Transit (total fleet vehicles): 548
  • Rapid transit (rail) miles: 10
  • Lane miles (freeway/arterials): 2,180
Developed Land: 1976
Developed Land: 1985
Developed Land: 2006

- **Population**
  - 630,500+ (today)
  - 980,000+ (2030)

- **Employment**
  - 470,000+ (2000)
  - 850,000+ (2030)

- **Vehicle Miles Traveled**
  - 30.6M (2007)

- **Annual Hours of Delay**
  - 23 (1995)
  - 45 (2005)
Rapid Regional Growth

Vehicle Miles Traveled vs. Population Growth Rates
Mecklenburg County

Source: CDOT TDM & Charlotte Chamber
1985 base year
* estimate

www.RIDETRANSIT.org
Mecklenburg County is the major employment destination in the region.

- Over 150,000 people commute to work each day to Mecklenburg county.
- 20% of the region outside of Mecklenburg county work within Mecklenburg county.
Potential Conformity Lapse

- 10th worst metropolitan air quality
- 20+ days/year above 8 hour ozone standard
- Non-attainment designation in 6 North Carolina counties and 1 South Carolina county
- Transit $’s Affected Same as Highway $’s
- Lapse would freeze all federal approvals
  - Federal Earmark grants
  - Federal Formula Funds
  - Record of Decision for Blue Line Extension (4/11)
In 2000, 40 mile Atlanta’s region had just over 4 million residents.

In 2000, Portland’s 40 mile region had almost 2 million residents.

By 2035, Charlotte’s 40 mile region will approach 4 million residents, growing from about 2 million.

**2000 Census**

- **Persons per Sq. Mile**
  - 0
  - 1 - 224
  - 225 - 1337
  - 1338 - 3516
  - Greater than 3516
2025 Transit / Land Use Plan

- 1998 -- Business and Elected leaders initiated a vision for a long-term growth management strategy for Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Integrates rapid transit and mixed-used development along 5 transportation corridors
- Expands transit system to serve between the rapid transit corridors
- Provide more transportation choices to meet mobility needs
- Support sustainable growth for region
Recommended 2025 System Plan

• Serves 205,000 – 215,000 daily transit riders by 2025

• 28 miles of BRT guideway

• 21 miles of LRT

• 11 miles of streetcar

• 29 miles of commuter rail

• Extensive network of bus and other types of transit services throughout the region
1997: General Assembly provided enabling legislation for Mecklenburg County citizens to locally fund public transit projects through sales tax revenue.

✓ 58% of voters overwhelmingly approved the ½ cent sales tax for public transit in 1998

✓ 70% of voters reaffirmed their commitment to funding public transit through sales tax in 2007.
Growth of System

1998 vs 2010: Expansion of the CATS transit system.
More and More People Ride

Transit usage up 47% from 2006 – 2008, highest growth rate in nation.*

CATS Historical Ridership

* Source: US Census
  Ridership source CATS
Bus System Services

• One of the safest in Country

• Accident rate reduced by 64% in past 9 years to less than .44 per 100,000 miles

• 89% of all routes are on-time

• 86% of Customers rate Quality of Service high

• Administrative Overhead decreasing – less than 8%.
LYNX Blue Line Success

- Opened November 24, 2007
- 9.6 Miles
- $462.7 Million
- 15 Stations (7 park and rides)
- Operates 7 days a week, 5:30 a.m. - 1:30 a.m.
- Service Frequency
  - Rush hour: 10 minutes
  - Non-rush hour: 20 minutes
- Bus/Rail Integration serves Blue Line directly
  - 15 new and modified routes
• Better than expected operations
  – Trains performing well
  – Systems performing well
  – 99% On-Time performance

• Very good safety / security record
  – 1 Preventable accidents
  – Crossing gate damage
  – Minimal vandalism
  – Very few assaults, larcenies, etc.

• Emergency response
Ridership

• December 2009 Ridership
  – 10 millionth rider
  – Highest increase in U.S.A. (35\%)*

• Average LYNX Weekday Ridership
  – >15,000
  – Exceeds year 1 projection by 40\%

• Special Events (90,000+ riders)

*National Transit Database
The Future Is Now

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
Regional Vision

Land Use Policies:

- Established a standard set of land-use guidelines necessary to support rapid transit stations.
  - Promote more compact, pedestrian friendly development
  - Encourage mix of residential, retail, employment and civic developments at or near rapid transit stations.
  - Supports sustainable communities

- Each Mecklenburg jurisdiction with rapid transit plans has adopted land-use policies supporting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
The Ashton
East/West Station Area

- Approx. 3 acres
- 310 Rental Units
- Approx. $80M
3030 South Development

Before

After

310 units at 120 units per acre at LYNX Blue Line station
The Summit

- 266 residential units
- Approximately 70,000 SF office and retail
- Immediately adjacent to rail corridor

- 465 parking spaces
- $70 million project cost
Civic Venues

Bank of America Stadium

Time Warner Arena

Plus,
Children’s Theatre
Mint Museum
Discovery Place, etc.

NASCAR Hall of Fame
Projected development of $1.46B along light rail through 2013 is estimated to generate approx. $18M in annual property taxes vs. just $6M in 2003.
ECONOMIC IMPACT ON TRANSIT
SALES & USE TAX

Sales Tax Gap FY2007-FY2035

FY2007 - FY2035
Total Gap = $2.3 Billion

2006 System Plan
Current Forecast

CITY OF CHARLOTTE
www.RIDETRANSIT.org
ECONOMIC IMPACT ON TRANSIT

FY2011 Expenses, Revenue, Service and Ridership Comparison

- Sales Tax @ the FY2005 Level
- Operating Exp. below the FY2008 Level
- Service HR below the FY2008 Level
- Ridership Rising - up 38% since 2005
• **LYNX Blue Line (LRT)**
  – FTA considers very successful
  – Needs capacity for 3-car trains

• **Blue Line Extension (LRT)**
  – Strong New Starts project
  – Schedule is now late 2016 / early 2017

• **Red Line (Commuter Rail)**
  – Tracks and crossings at 90% design
  – Seeking PPP

• **Streetcar Line (Modern)**
  – City of Charlotte funding PE
  – Phase 1 funded by ARRA

• **Silver Line (LRT or BRT)**
  – Reevaluate transit technology decision
  – Corridor land use and road solution

• **West Corridor**
  – Enhanced Bus Service started in 2009
  – Convert to Streetcar
• LYNX Light Rail Extension
  - +9.4 miles
  - Implementation in 2016-17
  - +25,000 daily riders
  - improvements to Tryon Street

• FTA Approved Project

• Recent MTC direction
  • reduce capital cost by 20%
  • reduce annual O&M by 6%

• Cost goal achieved
  • project shortened by 1.1 mile
  • now ends at UNCC
  • 7.5 / 10 minute headways
  • Use Surface lots & eliminate PnR
  • 18 LRVs
Blue Line Extension
MTC Direction

Reduce Cost and Accelerate Schedule

• Cut capital cost by 20%
• Reduce annual operating and maintenance costs by 6.5%
• Open project in 2016 / 2017
• Commuter Rail From Downtown Charlotte to Town of Davidson (or Iredell County)

• Currently not eligible for Federal funding

• Seeking N.C. DOT participation
  - Financial partners
  - Leadership with private railroads

• Proposed Build-Out in 2018
  - P3 (Public-Private-Partnership)

• Candidate for Design-Build
**Charlotte Gateway Station**

**Partnership with NCDOT**

**Legend: Rail & Transit Lines**
- Intercity Rail (DC-Raleigh-Charlotte-Atlanta)
- Future CATS Commuter Rail (from Davidson)
- Commuter Rail (from Monroe)/Intercity Rail (from Wilmington)
- Commuter Rail (from Rock Hill)
- Commuter Rail (from Gastonia)
- Future CATS Trade Street Streetcar/Bus Rapid Transit Corridor
- CATS Blue Line Light Rail

**Site serves all major corridors in Charlotte**
Presbyterian Hospital to Charlotte Transportation Center (CTC)

- Approximately 1.5 mile segment
- Utilizes the half mile of track on Elizabeth Avenue
- Utilizes the replica trolleys already owned by the City
- Connections
  - Elizabeth Ave. Business Corridor, Charlotte Transportation Center, CPCC and Presbyterian Hospital.
  - Existing Lynx Blue Line for system flexibility and access to existing maintenance facility
In July 2010, the City of Charlotte was awarded a $24.99 million Urban Circulator Grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

- Estimated Cost is $37 million
  - $24.99 million from Urban Circulator Grant
  - $12 million from the City of Charlotte
- Estimated annual operating cost of $1.5 million
- Construction should begin in 2012
- Revenue service anticipated to start in 2015
Presbyterian Hospital to Charlotte Transportation Center
Transit Governance Interlocal Agreement (1999)

Governance Structure Characteristics

- 8 equal votes amongst 8 Mecklenburg County jurisdictions
  - 1 vote each on the MTC
- Ex officio involvement of surrounding jurisdictions and State DOT’s

- Chair rotation between Charlotte Mayor and Mecklenburg County Board of Commission Chair

- City Administration of transit system:
  - CATS is a City department
  - CEO reports to the City Manager
  - Administration under City policies
  - City Council approves contracting actions

- City Council and Board of County Commissioners must approve annual transit program/budget
• Public Transit System Governing Board
  - Provides policy direction for system development and operation
  - Oversees management activities

• MTC Composition – 23 members
  - 16 from Mecklenburg County
  - 1 NCDOT
  - 5 ex-officio from 5 surrounding counties
  - 1 SCDOT (ex-officio)

• Citizen Advisory Committees
  - CTAG (planning and finances)
  - TSAC (service delivery)
Thank You