

LYNX Blue Line Extension - Northeast Corridor

Charlotte, North Carolina

(December 2017)

Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is constructing a light rail transit (LRT) line that would extend from Uptown Charlotte, the region's central business district (CBD), northeast to the University of North Carolina-Charlotte (UNCC) campus. The project alignment follows the existing Norfolk Southern and North Carolina Railroad right-of-way between 7th Street in Uptown Charlotte and Old Concord Road, and US 29 (North Tryon Street) between Old Concord Road and the entrance to the UNCC campus. The project includes construction of four park-and-ride lots with approximately 3,200 total spaces, the purchase of 22 new light rail vehicles, and construction of a vehicle storage yard and dispatch facility.

The hours of operation in both the opening and forecast years will be 5:30 AM to 1:30 AM on weekdays; 6:00 AM to 1:30 AM on Saturdays; and 7:00 AM to 12:30 AM on Sundays. Opening year service would be provided with two-car trains every 7.5 minutes during peak periods and every 15 minutes during off-peak periods. In the forecast year of 2035, service would be provided with up to three-car trains every 10 minutes during peak periods and every 15 minutes during off-peak periods. The project is expected to serve approximately 24,600 average weekday trips in 2035.

The project will provide a reliable alternative to automobile travel in the congested Interstate 85/US 29 corridor, where population and employment are anticipated to increase significantly by 2030. The project will improve transit service to regional employment, entertainment, and cultural and retail destinations, including Center City Charlotte, professional sports and entertainment facilities, the Charlotte Convention Center, the NASCAR Hall of Fame, and UNCC's University City and Uptown campuses.

The total project cost under the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) is \$1,160.08 million. The Section 5309 New Starts funding share is \$580.04 million.

Status

Following completion of the alternatives analysis in September 2002, CATS selected an LRT line as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) in November 2002. In April 2005, the LPA was adopted into the fiscally-constrained long-range plan. FTA approved the project into preliminary engineering in November 2007. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published in August 2010, the Final (EIS) was published in October 2011, and a Record of Decision was issued in December 2011. FTA approved the project into final design in July 2012. CATS and FTA executed an FFGA on October 16, 2012, with revenue operations scheduled for March 2018. The Project is progressing well and near completion and is expected to open for revenue service on schedule.

Section 3005 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation ("FAST") Act (Pub. L. 114-94; Dec. 4, 2015) authorized FTA to award Federal major capital investment (New Starts) funds for final design and construction of the Northeast Corridor (Blue Line Extension) project. Through FY 2017, Congress has appropriated \$505.81 million in Section 5309 New Starts funds for the project.

Reported in Year of Expenditure Dollars		
Source of Funds	Total Funding (\$million)	Appropriations to Date
Federal: Section 5309 New Starts	\$580.04	\$505.81 million in total appropriations through FY 2017
State: State Full Funding Grant Agreement funded from DOT Trust Fund	\$299.07	
Local: ½ Cent Sales Tax	\$250.05	
City of Charlotte In Kind Contribution	\$13.42	
City of Charlotte Northeast Corridor Infrastructure funds	\$17.50	
Total:	\$1,160.08	

NOTES: The Source of Funds and Total Funding numbers are as established at the signing of the FFGA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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