

Frequently Asked Questions

LYNX Silver Line Light Rail

January 2022

Property Impacts & Acquisitions

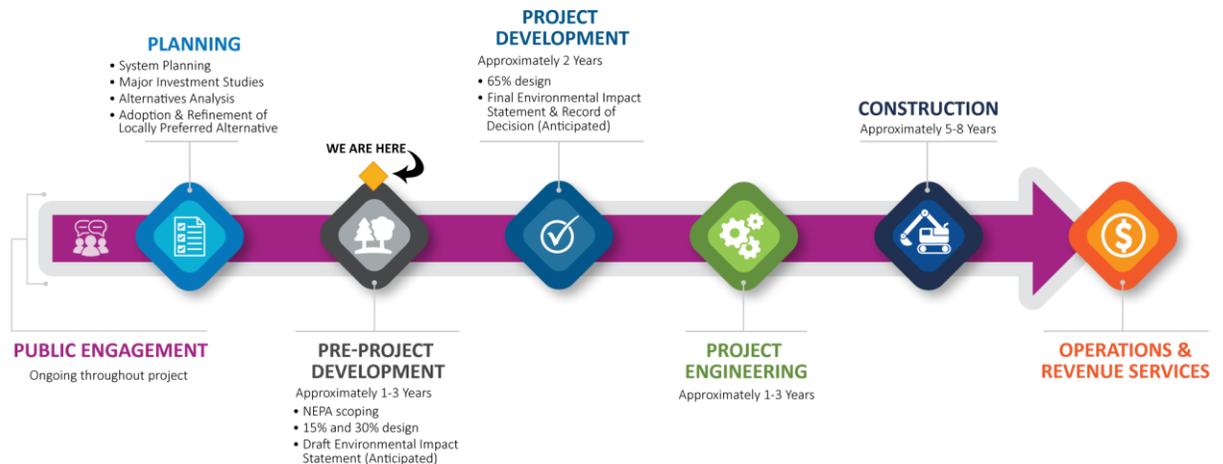
Will my property be impacted?

The LYNX Silver Line is very early in the process, where CATS is narrowing the “thick alignment line” to a more thin, precise alignment line. Changes to design due to public input, coordination with stakeholders, and regulatory agencies during the environmental review process may result in additional modifications to the line. Therefore, it is difficult at this early phase to identify parcel-specific impacts. CATS will continue with its robust public involvement program as the LYNX Silver Line progresses.

When will acquisitions begin for each phase?

CATS is still early in the planning and design process for Phase A, between Charlotte Gateway Station in Center City and Central Piedmont Community College Levine Campus (CPCC Levine) in Matthews. As Phase A moves into the Project Development process and environmental review (also known as the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA process), CATS will identify parcels that may be needed to construct Phase A. Acquisitions for Phase B, from Charlotte Gateway Station westward, will not be known until a similar NEPA process is later conducted for Phase B.

CATS will comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policy Act of 1970 when conducting acquisitions to ensure that displaced persons and property owners are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably.



Phasing

Why not build the entire Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) at once instead of Phase A and Phase B?

Major transit investments such as the LYNX Silver Line are typically implemented in phases due to funding constraints. Additionally, the longer the light rail alignment is, the longer it will take to construct. This 29-mile alignment, also referred to as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), would be one of the longest in the country, and as such, it is appropriate to consider it in phases to provide service to a segment earlier rather than waiting for the entire alignment to be constructed.



How were the phasing segments decided?

The origin of the LYNX Silver Line dates back to the mid-1990s, when the CATS policy board, the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC), adopted the *2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan*. The plan identified a West Corridor alignment along US 74/Wilkinson Boulevard and a Southeast Corridor alignment along US 74/Independence Boulevard. Both were studied between 2002 and 2016 to evaluate transit technologies (bus rapid transit, light rail, streetcar, etc.) and alignment options, and CATS conducted extensive public and stakeholder engagement. It was not until 2019 that the MTC adopted the current LYNX Silver Line LPA that combined the West Corridor and Southeast Corridor alignments into one line. Generally, the recommended Phase A is the original Southeast Corridor and Phase B is the West Corridor.

There are several factors that weigh into the phasing plan:

- Service to key destinations: Each phase must be able to operate independently and have logical end points such as key destinations or major roadways. The Southeast portion of the LYNX Silver Line serves a greater number of key destinations than the West.
- Cost effectiveness: Each phase must serve key destinations that have high ridership potential and costs that rate well in the federal process. The Southeast portion of the LYNX Silver Line is anticipated to have higher ridership than the West.
- Project length & schedule: Phasing would reduce the number of years to implement different segments, bringing service to the public faster.

Why doesn't the initial segment go to the airport?

Based on previous studies and current evaluations that CATS is undergoing, the recommended Phase A from Charlotte Gateway Station to Central Piedmont Community College Levine Campus would provide access to more key destinations (such as the Bojangles' Coliseum, Ovens Auditorium, Town of Matthews, Sportsplex, and CPCC Levine Campus) than the Phase B segment. Access to these key destinations potentially results in higher ridership and a higher chance of receiving federal funding to implement the first phase of the LYNX Silver Line.

Impacts

Will the proposed refinements result in noise impacts to adjacent neighborhoods?

It is too early to determine if the LYNX Silver Line would result in changes to existing noise levels. Noise and vibration analyses will be conducted during the environmental review to identify potential project-related noise impacts. To determine these impacts, CATS will compare the existing noise levels to the anticipated noise levels associated with the light rail operations (e.g., trains going by, crossing signals, etc.).

If the analyses find that there would be a noise impact, CATS and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will determine the appropriate level of noise mitigation to be applied. The noise and vibration analyses will be available in the published environmental document, which will be available for public review and comment. FTA has published a *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (2018)* to provide technical guidance for conducting noise and vibration analyses for transit projects and how to incorporate the analyses in the FTA environmental document. The manual can be found here:

https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/research-innovation/118131/transit-noise-and-vibration-impact-assessment-manual-fta-report-no-0123_0.pdf

Why doesn't CATS build the light rail in the median of Monroe Road?

As design has progressed, CATS has found that due to the relatively narrow right-of-way available, widening Monroe Road to put the light rail in the middle would result in a larger number of property impacts, displacements, and utility relocations. A median alignment in Monroe Road would also cause temporary and permanent roadway closures and detours during construction. In



comparison, the refinement that was shown during meetings in the fall of 2021 is expected to have more open space for pedestrians, generally maintains access to businesses, and is expected to have fewer displacements.

Wouldn't keeping the light rail in Monroe Road alleviate traffic?

CATS will complete traffic analyses during the environmental review process to evaluate locations where the LYNX Silver Line would result in traffic impacts. However, CATS has evaluated multiple alignment alternatives already and found that an alignment in the median of Monroe Road may create more permanent traffic impacts compared to the alignment refinement shown during meetings in the fall of 2021. The center-running alignment may restrict access to businesses or remove median turn lanes. Additionally, there would be temporary traffic delays and detours associated with the construction of the tracks in the median of Monroe Road.

Why is the First Ward station so close to the 11th St station?

CATS believes that there is a benefit to having an additional station to serve the First Ward neighborhoods within walking distance. Market studies have shown that there is development potential north of I-277, with some development already occurring. By adding a station in First Ward, CATS can support existing residents as well as potential new residents and developments. The station cannot be shifted farther east due to the curvature of the track and inability to place a station along the curve.

Why doesn't CATS build a transfer station between the LYNX Silver and Blue Lines?

CATS intends to provide a well-connected pedestrian experience between the LYNX Silver Line station platform near 11th Street and the LYNX Blue Line station near 9th/10th Streets. Specific urban design concepts will be developed with a goal of creating a smooth pedestrian connection.

Why doesn't CATS build a transfer station between the LYNX Silver and CityLYNX Gold Lines around Plaza Midwood neighborhood?

The adopted LPA, which originally came out of the Southeast Corridor Transit Study (2016), follows the north side of Independence Boulevard with a station at Pecan Avenue. The Hawthorne Lane bridge cannot be extended further based on an agreement reached with the adjacent historic neighborhood as part of a previous NCDOT Independence Boulevard project. Based on that established bridge length, there is not enough space under the Hawthorne Lane bridge for both the LYNX Silver Line rail tracks and a station platform. Additionally, a station requires pedestrian access from the street level, which would require even more space. There is enough space for a station near Pecan Avenue, and CATS will explore other opportunities for pedestrian connections between the LYNX Silver Line and CityLYNX Gold Line stations. Additionally, the Silver Line station at Charlotte Gateway Station's multi-modal transit facility would allow passengers to connect to the CityLYNX Gold Line stop at street level along West Trade Street.

Alignment Near Airport

Why doesn't the airport station go to the airport terminal?

An airport station is proposed along Wilkinson Boulevard. The Charlotte-Douglas International Airport (the Airport) proposes to construct a multi-modal center as part of their 'Destination District' from their [CLT Airport Area Strategic Development Plan Phase II](#). The multi-modal center would function like an extension of the main terminal and would include a "people-mover" transit system to bring passengers directly to the main terminal. Keeping the LYNX Silver Line alignment on Wilkinson Boulevard aligns with the Airport's future plans and enables a more direct light rail route to other key destinations. If the alignment detoured off Wilkinson Boulevard to stop at the airport terminal, it would increase the overall travel time for passengers who may be traveling to other locations in Mecklenburg County.



Extension to Gaston & Union Counties

When will Gaston County and Union County extensions occur?

Counties surrounding Mecklenburg County do not currently have a dedicated funding source for transit, while Mecklenburg County uses local funds from an approved county sales tax that is dedicated to public transit. Currently, only portions of the LPA that are within Mecklenburg County have identified funding to design the light rail and are planned to progress into the environmental review. Additional local funds in Mecklenburg County will be needed in the future for final design, construction, and operations. Advancement of extensions beyond Mecklenburg County can occur after local funding from the neighboring counties has been identified.