



Metropolitan Transit Commission



July 27, 2022

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

5:30pm

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center

2nd Floor, Conference Room 267

AGENDA

- I. Call to OrderCommissioner Leigh Altman
 - Attendance (Roll Call)
- II. Approval of the June 22, 2022 Summary (p.5-15)Commissioner Leigh Altman
- III. Chief Executive Officer’s Report (p.17-26) John Lewis, Jr.
 - Report from RATP Dev (p.28-32) Robert Smith
- IV. Report from the Chair of the Transit Service Advisory Committee (TSAC)Krissy Oechslin
- V. Report from the Chair of the Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CTAG)..... No Meeting
- VI. Public Comments
- VII. Informational Item
 - Advancing the 2030 System Plan (p.34-41)Jason Lawrence
- VIII. Action Items
 - Temporary Service Modifications (p.43-51)Jason Lawrence
- IX. MTC Commissioners’ Business
 - None
- X. MTC Hybrid Meetings
- XI. Adjourn

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION
MEETING SUMMARY
June 22, 2022
(Approved on July 27, 2022)

Presiding: Vice Chairman Mayor John Higdon, Town of Matthews

Present:

Mayor Vi Lyles (City of Charlotte)	Brian Welch (Town Manager, Mint Hill)
Marcus Jones (City Manager, Charlotte)	Mayor Jack Edwards (Town of Pineville)
Andrew Grant (Town Manager, Cornelius)	Bill Thunberg (Town of Mooresville)
Mayor Rusty Knox (Town of Davidson)	Mayor Walker Reid III (City of Gastonia)
Mayor Melinda Bales (Town of Huntersville)	Mayor Marion Holloway (City of Monroe)
Anthony Roberts (Town Manager, Huntersville)	Brian Borne (City Manager, Monroe)
Mayor ProTem Renee Garner (Town of Matthews)	Mayor William Dusch (City of Concord)

CATS Chief Executive Officer: John Lewis, Jr

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of Metropolitan Transit Commission was called to order via WebEx conferencing at 5:30pm by MTC Vice Chairman Mayor John Higdon, Town of Matthews.

II. Review of Meeting Summary

The meeting summary of May 25, 2022 was approved.

III. Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) Chairman's Report

Krissy Oechslein (Chairwoman) reported the following recap: In our June TSAC meeting, we voted to approve the Title VI COVID-19 review and the 2022-2024 service plan, as well as to skip our July meeting and resume meeting in August. We also discussed the South End station that we'll be hearing about here tonight, as well as the FTA Route Restoration Grant Award and the CTC redevelopment.

I'd like to shift gears and focus my remarks on the bus operator shortage, which I consider to be a public transit emergency. I knew that CATS had many open bus operator positions, which John Lewis had mentioned at the last MTC meeting, but I had no idea how bad the impact could be on riders until I experienced a 2-hour wait for a bus this Sunday. I arrived at CTC at 5:15 PM and saw that the next #9 bus was scheduled to arrive at 5:30 and was running every half hour. 5:30 came and went, no bus. 6:00 came and went, no bus. 6:30 came and went, no bus. By now many people were waiting and everyone was frustrated, people just trying to go home after their shifts working at a hotel or other businesses in Uptown. I found a bus dispatcher who was speaking with a woman in a mobility scooter. This woman had taken the #39 bus to the Blue Line and then took the train to CTC, where she needed to get on a #16 bus to go home to South Charlotte. Unfortunately, the next #16 bus wasn't coming until 7 PM, at which point this poor woman would have been waiting 2 hours for a bus after already taking a train and another bus. I asked her if she had tried calling STS and she said it's a 5-day wait for an STS ride. I personally paid for a Lyft for her to get home because it was unconscionable to strand her at CTC for hours.

The bus dispatcher told me that the next #9 for me to get home would also be at 7 PM. Remember, I had been there since 5:15 and the bus is supposed to come every 30 minutes. At this point I said, "Look, this is unacceptable. I'm chair of the riders advisory committee and I will be talking to the MTC about this at this meeting right now. And the dispatcher told me, "Please do. Please tell people that this is unacceptable." They said they are ashamed and embarrassed to tell people it's a 2-hour wait for a bus, and they had worked in transit for decades and this is the worst level of service they've ever seen.

I am fortunate that the Gold Line goes near my house, not as close as a bus but close enough, that I gave up waiting for a bus and got on the streetcar. Just as I was getting home, I saw a #9 head out Central Avenue. It was 7:15 at that point. Two hours after I first arrived at CTC, a bus finally came. I was lucky to have the option of the streetcar, even though it didn't get me home any faster than the bus would have, but most of the people who ride the #9 live much farther out Central Avenue and have no other option.

Nobody there deserves to wait 2 hours for a bus. I understand that solving the bus operator shortage is not an easy thing, but there are things CATS can and must do in the meantime. We need radical transparency from CATS. I tweeted about this experience on Sunday, and I am pleased that today CATS started one of my suggestions I made, which is publicly announcing how many bus operator absences they have each day. This is a great start. There are 107 absences today. I think we need a little bit more transparency. Are those people who are sick, are they unfilled positions, what percent of the bus operator workforce is that? In other words, what are the odds a passenger will encounter a missed bus if 107 drivers aren't there?

Second, CATS absolutely must find a way to reflect missed buses in the CATS-PASS app. TSAC has asked for this, but it's urgently critical now that we know the extent of the labor shortage. I know CATS said on Twitter today people should use the CATS-PASS app, which is great if your bus actually shows up, but missed buses are still in the app; they're still showing up as like your bus is going to come, even if it's not.

Another thing CATS needs to do is announce major delays in ways that reach riders. Most of the people waiting for a bus are not on Twitter like I am, and just like I just said, the CATS-PASS app doesn't show missed buses. If I hadn't gone and found a bus dispatcher at CTC, I would have had no idea there was a 2-hour wait for a bus. And this was not just the #9 bus, this was multiple other routes at the same time.

Lastly, I would just urge CATS, MTC, and the City of Charlotte and the County to use every tool at their disposal to create a labor contract and working conditions that make operating a bus an appealing job to more people, whether it's by raising pay, increasing opportunities for advancement, giving operators more of a voice in CATS' governance and operations, or other tools. This is a real crisis for the transit-riding public when there is a 2-hour wait to get a bus.

Discussion:

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Thank you, Ms. Oechslin, and I will say that Mr. Lewis and I discussed prior to the start of the meeting that he will address the labor shortage during his CEO report later in the meeting, but are there any other questions or comments for Ms. Oechslin before we move on?

MAYOR LYLES (City of Charlotte): I am not going to be able to stay until the executive officer's report, but I think that this experience is one that we've got to address sooner than later, and I would like for us to not only have the report on the labor shortage today, but if there

is any option, all the way from using some of our federal money that we have for emergencies and pandemic use, to figure out ways to do this because it's going to be a bus driver shortage, operator shortage, I get that, but what are the options that we have? Are there passes, tickets, are there other ways to use the microtransport, other services that we've been talking about and planning on? I would just like for Mr. Lewis to provide us what the choices are, and even if there is a cost to do them, I think we ought to have a list of what they are and what we could do.

IV. Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CTAG) Chairman's Report – No Meeting

V. Public Comments

Steve Yaffe: I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the proposed underground uptown CATS transit center. I'm Steve Yaffe, a transit consultant quoted in Transit Time and a new resident of Charlotte.

I oppose the proposed transit center and don't like the current one either, for four reasons.

1. Any gathering of diesel buses, especially underground, is inherently unhealthy, especially for those with Asthma.
2. Transit centers tend to attract pickpockets. Underground or covered transit centers are worse – fewer people watching. Tel Aviv's is a notorious public-safety nightmare and Denver's has been described as such.
3. The optics are bad - most bus riders in Charlotte are minority. One might wonder if a motivation behind these facilities is "out of sight, out of mind".
4. A Charlotte transit center is unnecessary and constrains connectivity. Uptown isn't that strong. We are seeing major construction slated for surrounding areas including South End.

Instead,

1. create a square of 4 transit hubs around uptown using Gold and Blue Line stations as transit hubs with bus bays.
2. Strong CATS bus routes with frequent service would serve a hub on the way into uptown, take parallel streets in uptown, and terminate at a hub on the other side. No need for every bus to use Tryon, as the transfers would be outside uptown. This strategy has worked in Houston for decades.
3. Weaker less frequent CATS bus routes would serve a hub just outside uptown, go around uptown to the other 2 or 3 hubs either clockwise or counterclockwise, and terminate at that first hub.
 - a. Each hub would have restrooms.
 - b. Uptown Riders would transfer to the Gold or Blue Line or frequent routes.
4. Those circumferential routes would be designed to serve South End and other nearby transit-oriented development districts.

Discussion:

CATS CEO LEWIS: Mr. Yaffe -- you are certainly welcome to take a look at our Envision My Ride report, which I think will answer some of the questions you're talking about, especially in the areas of our strategic energy action plan where we are converting all of our diesel buses to electric, and in our five-year program we have funded that enough of our vehicles will be converted to electric that there will be no diesel vehicles serving the transit center at that time, but other than that, thank you for your comments, sir.

VI. Informational Item

A. South End Station

Kelly Goforth

Kelly Goforth -CATS Director of Transit Development – presented a presentation concerning the South End Station; based on pages 15-22 in the MTC Agenda Packet for June 22nd, 2022 meeting.

Discussion:

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Thank you, Ms. Goforth. Particularly when you're talking about pedestrian safety I was wondering if the hybrid option, if there's a concern there with the pedestrian crossing, like there would be a very much-used corridor there.

MS. GOFORTH: Yes, I think that's part of the evaluation process, is to assess the safety considerations at the pedestrian crossing from one platform to another, as well as just for the general public, seeking to go from one side of the trail to the other.

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Yeah, that option looks the most intriguing to me, but I would be concerned about the pedestrian crossing. Any other questions or comments?

MAYOR LYLES (City of Charlotte): I was just wondering, this plan, and I understand the process, but the timeline, what is being done now since it's been identified as a place that you're very concerned about; what are the interim solutions or are there going to be an opportunity to have interim solutions in place to protect pedestrians more?

MS. GOFORTH: At this point the goal is to implement this project as soon as possible and to look at potentially the building of the crossing of that part of the station construction to see if we can build that first as part of the project so it doesn't have to wait until opening of the station.

MAYOR LYLES (City of Charlotte): I guess since it's been identified as a risk factor for us, I just wondered what we should be doing to mitigate that risk. Is it signage, is there temporary fencing, I don't know the answer? I know the area, but I would like to hear more about, since it's identified and it's a risk, I think we ought to look at some interim solutions.

CATS CEO LEWIS: Mayor Lyles, you're exactly right, and we are looking at ways to direct people to the safe crossings and we can do that through signage, but the distance between safe crossings, the next intersection, is a good deal away from a distance standpoint. Just the reality of what takes the most direct line between point A and point B, I think that will be an ongoing concern. There is fencing along the corridor, but people climb the fence. We can consider having and install larger fencing, but I think that would impact to the aesthetics of the area, but that is certainly an option.

One of the things that we really wanted to look at is the fact that this is an operating rail line. We considered constructing a pedestrian crossing first and then moving into a full-blown station, but the impact of service, that would just exacerbate the length of the project, it would lengthen the length of the project and impact the level of service and speed that we're able to provide.

This is a tough issue for us. We are looking at ways to mitigate the risk factor in the short-term while we accelerate the long-term solution.

B. LYNX Silver Line Urban Land Institute (ULI) Recommendation

Andy Mock

Andy Mock -CATS Senior Transit Planner – presented the LYNX Silver Line Urban Lane Institute (ULI) Recommendation Interlining Feasibility Evaluation; based on pages 24-35 in the MTC Agenda Packet for June 22nd, 2022 meeting.

Discussion:

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Mr. Mock and Mr. Lewis made this presentation to a Matthews group a few weeks ago, and we found an interesting relationship as we've debated the locally preferable alternative, et cetera, but I told Andy when they made this presentation that the interlining option and what's being suggested makes a lot of sense to me. I had no issues with it due to the increase in ridership, the cost increase, the importance of environmental risk. It really seems that the pros far outweigh the cons.

MR. THUNBERG (City of Mooresville Representative): Andy, you don't really need to respond to this in detail. I'm glad that you're recommending investigating this further. And you've probably experienced this in Europe where you interline to the Carson Street station and then the train goes back through the stations without stopping and picks up the Silver Line wherever it might go, whether it's locally preferred alternative or some other way, to get over to that other than Trade Street. I encourage you to look at that, because I've done that and it's happened when traveling in Europe several times, and it's not a problem to do that and it doesn't take much time to do that. I would encourage you to take a look at that and see if that's an alternative.

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Bill, I'm not sure I understand what you're suggesting. I don't know if anybody else is. Is everybody able to get that; can you maybe explain a little?

MR. THUNBERG (City of Mooresville Representative): Yeah, and the picture is not up there, but when you're interlining and you go down the red route and you stop at Carson, it depends on the track configuration in that area and how many tracks you have, but the vehicle actually goes back up without stopping at the other stations and catches another route, like the Silver Line route. It may not be feasible in that area, and it may require you spending the extra billion dollars on another train set or something like that, but I've encountered that situation in Europe before.

CATS CEO LEWIS: Mr. Thunberg, I think what you are suggesting would require an extra set of tracks that we could dead-head without picking up passengers along the way to then get onto the western route? That is something that Andy and the team will have to look at it to see if there's room for that, but your suggestion is duly noted, and we can look at that.

C. Title VI Equity Analysis COVID Change and Service Plan

Arlanda Rouse

Arlanda Rouse -CATS Civil Rights Officer – presented the Title VI Equity Analysis COVID Change and Service Plan; based on pages 37-47 in the MTC Agenda Packet for June 22nd, 2022 meeting.

Discussion:

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Why was 65X eliminated? What was the determination to eliminate 65X?

MR. LAWRENCE: Thank you, Mayor Higdon, for that question. Route 65X has not been in operation since the beginning of the pandemic. Our practice has been that routes that had underlying local service, that was the service that would provide for that, and the route 64X has been extended into the prior end of the line, which was at the end of Independence Pointe Park & Ride and was extended to downtown Matthews a few service changes ago. That was also the Park & Ride for the 65X, and so the goal would be to roll in the resources that we acquired for 65X, put that in 64X and give more frequent service to downtown Matthews. It was somewhat of a duplicative service already, and we believe the 64X will provide more direct service to downtown Matthews.

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): It will not increase travel time?

MR. LAWRENCE: The travel time difference between 65X was travel primarily down Monroe Road to roughly Idlewild versus 64X that goes up Trade and Sam Newell to Independence Pointe. It was very, very close. There wasn't much difference in travel time.

VII. Action Item

MTC Summer Meeting Schedule

John Lewis, Jr.

John Lewis, Jr. - CATS Chief Executive Officer – present the proposed MTC Summer Meeting Schedule for action; based on page 49 in the MTC Agenda Packet for June 22nd, 2022 meeting.

Discussion:

CATS CEO LEWIS: It has been the practice of the MTC in the past to adjust its schedule, its annual schedule, to provide for a summer break. Typically, that has been to cancel the July meeting. I just want to put that before the MTC to see if it is still your desire to give the MTC a break this summer, and if so, what would be the extent of that. I would pose that to Board members to give me their consensus on what the summer schedule would be.

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): The Mecklenburg County mayors and town managers met earlier in the week, and I believe the consensus of that group was we wish to not take a break, maybe have a short meeting in July, but there is a desire to discuss the Red Line refresh study, and anybody else that was participating in that call feel free to add. I think one of those meetings could be really short. That was the consensus, that we wish to keep both of the meetings.

CATS CEO LEWIS: Well, if that remains the will of the Board, we can certainly keep the currently scheduled meetings and we'll do our best to keep the agenda brief.

MAYOR EDWARDS (Town of Pineville): Yes, we had agreed in the call on Monday to request a July-August meeting because there was not enough information available at that juncture, and I think it's extremely important based on September coming up and having an introduction of the Red Line in July and moving to a vote hopefully in August so that things can move on from there.

MAYOR KNOX (Town of Davidson): I know that this has been a subject that has been on the cusp of being on the agenda for several months now, and I think that's why our discussion led to the fact that having this on the July agenda would allow us to discuss it, number one, but also would allow more information to potentially be available for us to move towards a vote in supporting this in August, and I think that was the main thrust behind. I mean all of us have multiple meetings every meeting week and it's just another meeting, and we're meeting Zoom anyway so I don't think anybody was troubled by adding and keeping that meeting for both July and August.

Resolution: MTC chose to not take a vote on this action item. All scheduled meeting will be held.

VIII. MTC Commissioners' Business

Mayor Jack Edwards (Town of Pineville) shared the following: I had sent an email to Mr. Paulus Ford, and I think it's time to get to live meetings. The interchange of conversation and everything else is there's very few comments, and what my fear is, is that the things and questions are not being asked that are necessary. We've been doing our council meetings for a year-and-a-half. Every other Board I'm on is meeting live. I cannot understand why MTC has still continued on this with no meetings and everything on Zoom. I don't know about everybody else; I am so sick of Zoom and not being able to interact with mayors and other people and people on the Boards, it's getting very tiresome, and I think we're losing some of the ability to communicate with each other and to work with each other a little bit closer. CRTPO did a full meeting last month and they did a partial meeting the month before. I can't understand why MTC cannot follow suit and move to live meetings. That's up to the Board to vote on.

Discussion:

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Thank you, Mayor Edwards. I know we've had those discussions here, and a lot of it is simply for convenience, particularly for those that have to drive a great distance to get to Charlotte, but very fair points. Anybody else have any thoughts on it?

MAYOR BALES (Town of Huntersville): I happen to agree with Mayor Edwards. I've been wondering when we were going to get together and start meeting in person. I think there is some synergy that happens when we do, and I would encourage this Board to seriously consider us moving back toward regular meetings in person so that we can continue to build those relationships with one another across this region, because these relationships are vital to ensure that transit and what we're doing moves forward in a productive way.

CATS CEO LEWIS: As long as we are holding the meetings at their regularly scheduled times that have already been posted for us, I think the manner in which we hold that is really up to the MTC. We could go back in July or August, whenever is at your earliest convenience, to meeting in person. Also, what I can do is look at the opportunity for us to do hybrid. If six members were wanting to meet in person and maybe three due to unforeseen circumstances needed to participate from a hybrid fashion, I believe other entities, including the Charlotte City Council, does that now. I would leave that up to the MTC Board members to give direction. Do we want it to be only in person or would you like us to explore providing hybrid capability?

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): I think the hybrid capability is useful at times. Some of us have day jobs and may be traveling. I've participated in meetings, for instance, when I've been in Colorado or something and was able to participate. The other option is we can do the same as CRTPO and phase it in, maybe have our next meeting a hybrid and the one after that would be all in person. But what's the will of the group?

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): To Mayor Bales' comment, I think there is a lot more synergy and we get a lot more honest, open communication when we're sitting next to one another. And there's also a lot of interchange with some of us that don't see each other too often before the meeting, after the meeting, et cetera, so I would be in favor of meeting in person as well. Has that been a consensus of the group, to meet in person in July? Does anybody not want to meet in person in July?

No Responses

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): It sounds like the consensus is to meet in person in our next meeting.

IX. Chief Executive Officer's Report

John Lewis, Jr. - CATS Chief Executive Officer presented a presentation concerning Current Operational Challenges; based on pages 52-59 in the MTC Agenda Packet for June 22nd, 2022 meeting.

I'm going to give Board members a brief presentation because I want to illustrate to you effectively some of the challenges that we're having from a manpower standpoint and what our short and mid-term solutions will be.

Our TSAC chair so eloquently laid out her personal situation, that situation that Ms. Oechslein described unfortunately is being repeated day in and day out as a result of sort of a confluence and the aligning of stars in the most negative way. One of the things that we've striven to achieve during the pandemic is to get as much service back on the street, as much frequency as we can as quickly as possible to incentivize riders to come back to public transit. I think that was a viable goal, and I think that was a goal that we established with all the best intentions in mind, but unfortunately what has shown up over the last quarter, two quarters, is that it is having an unintended effect and significant impact on our bus operators.

We are seeing an exit from the transit industry, and in my over 24 years of service in public transit I have never been in a position where it has been difficult to hire bus operators, but that is something for whatever reason as an intended outcome of the pandemic, we have a record number of open positions. Our contractors working hard last month, that number of open positions is over 100. We've gotten it down to 74, but there are a number of other. Those open positions are having a ripple effect that is impacting at the end of the day our ability to provide reliable service.

Our total funded bus operator positions. There are 571 funded bus operator positions in our FY22 budget. Right now, as I've mentioned, today there are 74 positions that are unfilled. Think of that rather than the 571 available bus operators, we have 476. We need for average weekday service 292 operators to operate our service Monday through Friday. When you take that 496 and subtract 292, that gives you a number of around 205.

Then when you add in that we operate service seven days a week, 365 days a year, we have to give our employees two days off. Since we operate on the weekends, unlike our administrative staff, we can't just say all our operators can have Saturday and Sunday off. There

are a portion of our operators who are off every day of the week, and for weekdays that's 89 operators are off Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. That's their scheduled day off. We continue to attribute the numbers of operators we have available. When you add to that number the number of excused absences for vacation, our operators take their vacation in January that we can plan for them to be absent at any given time. That averages out we have about 35 operators who are away for a scheduled vacation. That brings our number down even further.

When you have unexcused absences, and when I say unexcused, there are people who are calling in each day and saying for whatever reason I'm not coming to work today. When you look at the number that occurred today, 107, that puts us in -34 operators available to provide our service. That's why we're having those cuts to service.

Today, this is just a snapshot, we needed 35 more people to show up to provide those 292 scheduled runs today. I'll give you a snapshot for Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday we need 227 operators to run our scheduled service, but we have 159 who have days off on Saturday. For Sunday we need 151 operators to run our scheduled service, but we have 230 whose normal day off is Sunday. That gives you a snapshot of how many operators we need on a daily basis and the impact that those unexcused absences have on our ability to provide service.

We've gone back and taken a look over the last couple of months of what is our average show-up each day, and unfortunately there have only been six times in the last two months where we had exactly the number or more operators available each day than what we need for service. You can see those outlined in those six lines above the zero. All of the other days have been below, and we have been in a deficit. The average deficit has been 23, and there have been some days with those green and orange bars are weekend days, weekends and holidays, where we have seen that number below 50.

This has been a trend for a little while, and that has put us in a position where we are having challenges providing reliable service each day.

What are our solutions to this? Right now, we are -- and I'm titling these Midterm Solutions because these are things that we can implement quickly but will take time to result in a change in that trend. We are in our contract, or RATPDEV, is currently in negotiations with our bus operators' union, the SMART Union. We are hearing very positive things from that as a result of the significant investment that MTC has made, and CATS has made in increasing employee salaries and benefits. We believe that they will be able to negotiate a significantly higher hourly wage for our bus operators at this contract than they have ever had in the history of CATS. Along with that will be on the benefits side to our operators, more flexible bus route scheduling that will give them more flexible time changes, including more 4-day work weeks. Now, as a result of those enhancements we are drawing the line in that we must close the attendance policy loopholes that are allowing 107 bus operators to call out on days like today without discipline. The current contract that RATPDEV has with their union allows for an employee to have 10 unexcused absences each quarter, and at the end of the quarter those unexcused absences will roll on. An absence that I have today will be gone 90 days from now if I don't accumulate additional ones. This is something that we're seeing that unfortunately our operators are taking advantage of, and we're going to close that loophole.

We are investing significant additional benefits, salaries, and I'm being broad in that and vague because they're still at the negotiating table and I don't want to impact RATPDEV's ability to reach a final agreement, but there are these significant additional investment in salary and benefits that they are able to address in their union negotiations. I think the solution to this is

higher salaries, better scheduling, and closing the attendance policy loopholes that allows so many people to call out on a day-to-day basis.

One of the things that we're looking at that, and these are short-term efforts that we can implement, and I will bring back to you in July, as I've mentioned earlier our current schedule, when you add the number of runs and you add the day-off requirement, we need 382 operators each day Monday through Friday to operate our service, current levels of service, and we don't have enough people to do that. We could cut back to a Saturday level of service with operating express routes, and we would be able to provide a reliable level of service at that number each and every day. To give us some time to catch up with the new contract, the new salary and benefits, and closing attendance loopholes, that would enable us to catch up and get back to our regular service level by sometime this fall or at the latest the end of the year.

I'm not asking for action on this, but these are the things that we are looking into, and I will have a more detailed proposal for you at the July meeting.

Discussion:

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): I've spent my professional career in industry making things, and I'm reminded by our friends at Nucor Steel, which is headquartered in Charlotte, they had an attendance problem many years ago and what they did to address it was they placed their employees in teams. They would have maybe 10 or 20 people on each team. If that team had no unscheduled absence for a week or whatever period they would get a bonus. They'd get paid \$50 or \$100 or something, and their attendance went from horrendous to almost 99%. There was incredible peer pressure because if one person out of 20 didn't come to work and was unexcused or excessively unexcused, then nobody got their bonus.

I just wanted to bring that before the group. I don't know if that's even a possibility with the union, but they had phenomenal improvement in their attendance by implementing a policy like that.

CATS CEO LEWIS: Absolutely! We are looking at ways through this conversation with the union to find ways to reward good behavior, I will say.

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): With 10 unexcused absences per quarter allowable; WOW; that's 40 per year, I don't know of any other -- nothing I've ever been involved with would allow an employee to lay out 40 days a year and maintain their employment. That's excessive in my view.

CATS CEO LEWIS: Absolutely.

MS. OECHSLIN (TSAC Chairwoman): If you could clarify what counts as an unexcused absence and how does it work if somebody is sick?

CATS CEO LEWIS: Sick is an unexcused absence. The only thing that is excused is your regular day off and vacation. Anything outside of vacation or your regular day off is an unexcused absence.

MS. OECHSLIN (TSAC Chairwoman): Okay, interesting.

CATS CEO LEWIS: An individual who calls in sick does get paid for that, but it is still counted as an unexcused absence.

MAYOR HIGDON (Town of Matthews): Again, the policy I was suggesting perhaps would say if nobody had more than two unexcused absences in a quarter or whatever, something more reasonable, then the group would get some sort of financial benefit. That has been very helpful in other industries.

X. Other Business - None

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m. by Town of Matthews Mayor John Higdon, – MTC Vice Chairman.

NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JULY 25TH, 2022; STARTS AT 5:30 P.M.

Charlotte Area Transit System Labor and Operator Update

Metropolitan Transit Commission
July 27, 2022



1

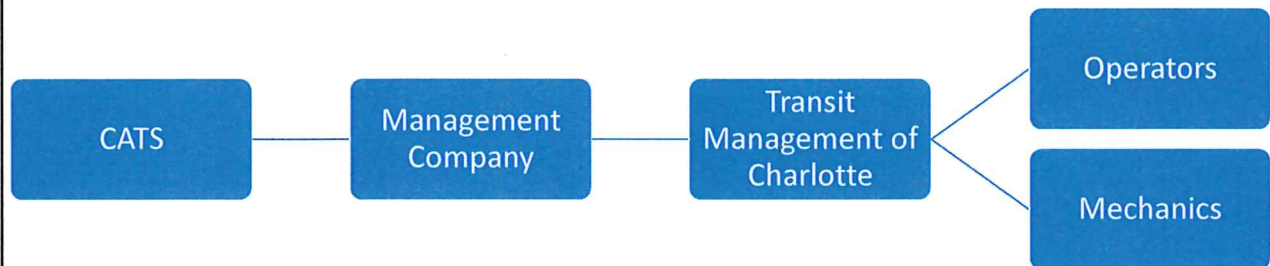
Operator and Labor Update

- ▶ CATS Bus Operations Organizational Structure
- ▶ Labor Issues: Local & National
- ▶ Proposed Strategy



2

CATS Bus Operations Organizational Structure



3

National - Operator Shortages

► TriMet: Portland, Oregon

- "Starting January 10, 2022, 20 of our 84 bus lines will run less frequently on weekdays due to a shortage of bus operators and other workers" Source: [TriMet News Release \(January 2022\)](#)
- "Starting Sept. 18, 2022, ten bus lines will have service reduced, including two that will have service canceled due to a shortage of bus operators." "Temporarily reducing service to match our staffing levels means that buses will run more true to schedule and riders will encounter far fewer canceled buses." Source: [TriMet Service Alert \(July 2022\)](#)

► MARTA: Atlanta, Georgia

- "Ninety-six of MARTA's 113 routes will run less frequently – they'll operate on a Saturday schedule, even on weekdays. The remaining 17 routes will maintain regular weekday schedules." Source: [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution \(December 2021\)](#)

► CapMetro: Austin, Texas

- Service reductions adopted September 2021 due to labor shortages will remain in place through August 2022. Source: [KUT 90.5 Austin NPR](#)

4

Local – Operational Challenges

► Lack of available bus operators to meet daily service levels:

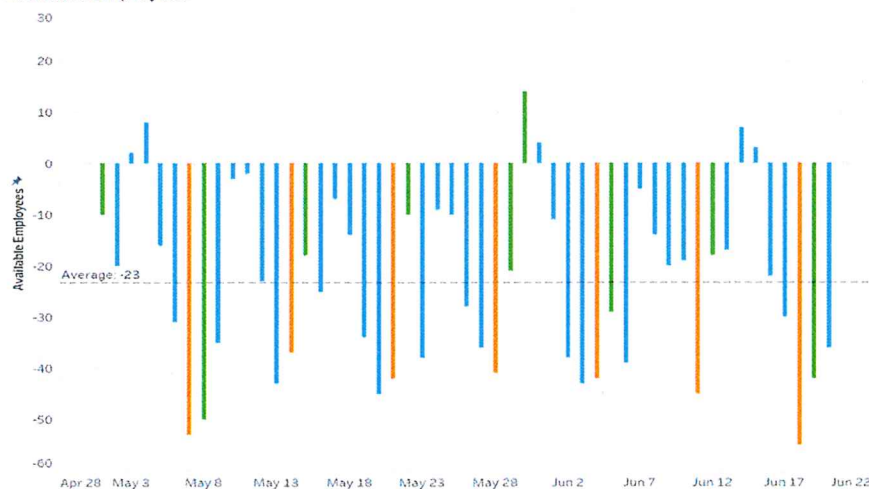
- Total bus operator funded positions – 571
- Open positions – 74
- Operators needed for weekday service – 292/Scheduled Day Off – 89
- Saturday Service – 227/Scheduled Day Off – 159
- Sunday Service – 151/Scheduled Day Off – 230
- Vacation – 35
- Unexcused Absences – 107



5

Current Operational Shortages

Available Employees



- We have been short 23 employees on average per day since May 1, 2022,
- Daily deficit regularly approach 40-50 operators



6

Current Operational Shortages

- ▶ With increased absences, low retention rates, and high level of vacancies, there are not enough operators to cover scheduled bus service.
- ▶ Each day CATS must reallocate operators from higher frequency routes to low frequency routes
- ▶ This approach requires active management of resources throughout the service day
- ▶ Depending on the number of available operators the routes impacted change from day to day
- ▶ Operator shortages have recently impacted the ability to deliver scheduled LYNX Blue Line and CityLYNX Gold Line services



7

Labor Shortages Strategy

- ▶ RATPDEV negotiations with SMART Union
- ▶ Significant investment by CATS in employee salary and benefits enhancements
- ▶ More flexible bus route scheduling
- ▶ Closing attendance policy loopholes



8

Questions?



Metropolitan Transit Commission
Charlotte Area Transit System Ridership Report
Jun-22

Mode / Service	Jun-22	Jun-21	Percent Increase/Decrease	YTD FY 2022	YTD FY 2021	Percent Increase/Decrease	Avg Daily Ridership per Month		
							WeekDay	Saturday	Sunday
Local									
BOD Local	380,972	476,200	-20.0 %	5,371,621	5,594,424	-4.0 %	14,209	9,992	7,127
Subtotal	380,972	476,200	-20.0 %	5,371,621	5,594,424	-4.0 %	14,209	9,992	7,127
Local Express									
Harrisburg Road Express	827	362	128.5 %	7,458	3,580	108.3 %	38	-	-
Northcross Express	2,155	207	941.1 %	11,963	2,914	310.5 %	98	-	-
Idlewild Road Express	572	323	77.1 %	6,780	3,365	101.5 %	26	-	-
Independence Blvd Express	1,569	304	416.1 %	11,470	1,766	549.5 %	71	-	-
Lawyers Road Express	840	350	140.0 %	6,803	3,681	84.8 %	38	-	-
Northlake Express	1,721	254	577.6 %	9,359	2,702	246.4 %	78	-	-
North Mecklenburg Express	3,744	467	701.7 %	21,563	3,001	618.5 %	170	-	-
Huntersville Express	2,767	467	492.5 %	18,006	4,564	294.5 %	126	-	-
Rea Road Express	993	253	292.5 %	8,676	3,300	162.9 %	45	-	-
Huntersville Greenhouse Express	70	199	-64.8 %	1,586	1,642	-3.4 %	3	-	-
Subtotal	15,258	3,186	378.9 %	103,664	30,515	239.7 %	693	-	
Regional Express									
Gastonia Express	989	563	75.7 %	9,064	6,065	49.4 %	45	-	-
Rock Hill Express	782	300	160.7 %	6,588	2,982	120.9 %	36	-	-
Union County Express	692	304	127.6 %	5,231	2,770	88.8 %	31	-	-
Subtotal	2,463	1,167	111.1 %	20,883	11,817	76.7 %	112	-	
Community Circulator									
Neighborhood Shuttles	11,952	13,712	-12.8 %	149,297	173,971	-14.2 %	455	336	155
Eastland Neighborhood Shuttle	6,830	8,235	-17.1 %	86,738	100,531	-13.7 %	233	263	161
Pineville-Matthews Road	1,217	1,639	-25.7 %	15,024	17,437	-13.8 %	47	47	-
Village Rider	3,227	3,487	-7.5 %	41,089	42,405	-3.1 %	119	88	63
Subtotal	23,226	27,073	-14.2 %	292,148	334,344	-12.6 %	854	734	379
Human Services Transportation									
Special Transportation Services	14,375	14,121	1.8 %	161,786	142,637	13.4 %	580	236	168
DSS	236	452	-47.8 %	20,333	16,060	26.6 %	11	-	-
Subtotal	14,611	14,573	0.3 %	182,119	158,697	14.8 %	591	236	168
Rideshare Services									
Vanpool	3,649	2,904	25.7 %	39,116	35,812	9.2 %	153	36	34
Subtotal	3,649	2,904	25.7 %	39,116	35,812	9.2 %	153	36	34
Rail									
LYNX Blue Line	395,059	236,513	67.0 %	3,880,725	2,599,631	49.3 %	13,878	13,582	8,856



Metropolitan Transit Commission
Charlotte Area Transit System Ridership Report

Jun-22

Mode / Service

	Jun-22	Jun-21	Percent Increase/Decrease	YTD FY 2022	YTD FY 2021	Percent Increase/Decrease	Avg Daily Ridership per Month		
							WeekDay	Saturday	Sunday
CityLynx Gold Line	39,521	-	n/a	341,584	-	n/a	1,447	1,092	831
Subtotal	434,580	236,513	83.7 %	4,222,309	2,599,631	62.4 %	15,325	14,674	9,687
Total	874,759	761,616	14.9 %	10,231,860	8,765,240	16.7 %	31,937	25,672	17,395



June | CATS Sales Tax Report FY2022

April Receipts

Sales Tax Collections and Distribution – April 2022

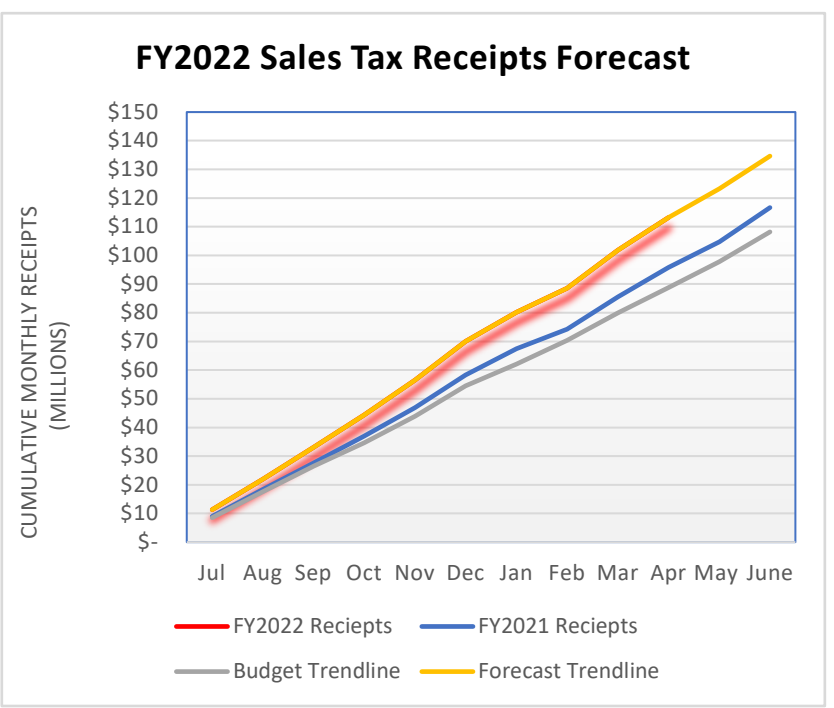
- The April 2022 receipts of \$11,369,039 were \$2,616,186 (29.9%) above budget target for the month
- The April 2022 receipts were \$1,560,393 (15.9%) above forecast for the month
- The April 2022 receipts were \$1,081,592 (10.5%) above April of 2021

Sales Tax Budget Data

- FY2022 sales tax budget is \$108,235,200
- The FY22 model forecasts year-end receipts of \$134,592,943 which is \$26,357,743 (24.35%) above the FY22 budget target of \$108,235,200
- FY2021 actual sales tax was \$116,669,192

Local Government Sales and Use Tax Distribution

- Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue Sales & Use Distribution Report for the month May 31, 2022
- Published by NC Secretary of Revenue on 7/12/2022 with actual receipts through April 2022
- CATS sales tax report only includes Mecklenburg County Article 43 sales tax



FY2022 Budget Sales Tax Receipts (Actuals and Forecasts)

Jurisdiction	Population	% of Total	Jul 21 Actuals	Aug 21 Actuals	Sep 21 Actuals	Oct 21 Actuals	Nov 21 Actuals	Dec 21 Actuals	Jan 22 Actuals	Feb 22 Actuals	Mar 22 Actuals	April 22 Actuals	May 22 Forecasts	Jun 22 Forecasts	Total
Charlotte	863,985	40.4%	\$ 4,561,387	\$ 4,303,529	\$ 4,470,467	\$ 4,579,250	\$ 4,891,177	\$ 5,450,855	\$ 4,126,742	\$ 3,356,977	\$ 5,390,401	\$ 4,589,910	\$ 4,031,012	\$ 4,586,178	\$ 54,337,886
Cornelius	32,144	1.5%	\$ 169,703	\$ 160,110	\$ 166,321	\$ 170,368	181,973	202,796	153,533	124,894	\$ 200,546	170,765	149,971	170,626	2,021,606
Davidson	13,261	0.6%	\$ 70,011	\$ 66,053	\$ 68,616	\$ 70,285	75,073	83,663	63,340	51,525	\$ 82,735	70,449	61,871	70,392	834,013
Huntersville	62,528	2.9%	\$ 330,115	\$ 311,453	\$ 323,535	\$ 331,408	353,982	394,487	298,659	242,950	\$ 390,112	332,179	291,731	331,909	3,932,521
Matthew s	31,071	1.5%	\$ 164,039	\$ 154,765	\$ 160,769	\$ 164,681	175,899	196,026	148,408	120,725	\$ 193,852	165,064	144,965	164,930	1,954,122
Mint Hill	27,692	1.3%	\$ 146,199	\$ 137,934	\$ 143,285	\$ 146,772	156,769	174,708	132,268	107,596	\$ 172,770	147,113	129,200	146,994	1,741,610
Pineville	9,533	0.4%	\$ 50,329	\$ 47,484	\$ 49,326	\$ 50,526	53,968	60,143	45,533	37,040	\$ 59,476	50,644	44,477	50,603	599,551
Meck. County	1,099,845	51.4%	\$ 5,806,604	\$ 5,478,353	\$ 5,690,864	\$ 5,829,344	6,226,423	6,938,889	5,253,305	4,273,401	\$ 6,861,931	5,842,914	5,131,442	5,838,162	69,171,632
Total	2,140,059	100.0%	\$ 11,298,388	\$ 10,659,682	\$ 11,073,183	\$ 11,342,634	\$ 12,115,265	\$ 13,501,568	\$ 10,221,788	\$ 8,315,108	\$ 13,351,825	\$ 11,369,039	\$ 9,984,669	\$ 11,359,793	\$ 134,592,942

FY2022 Budget Sales Tax Comparison Year over Year

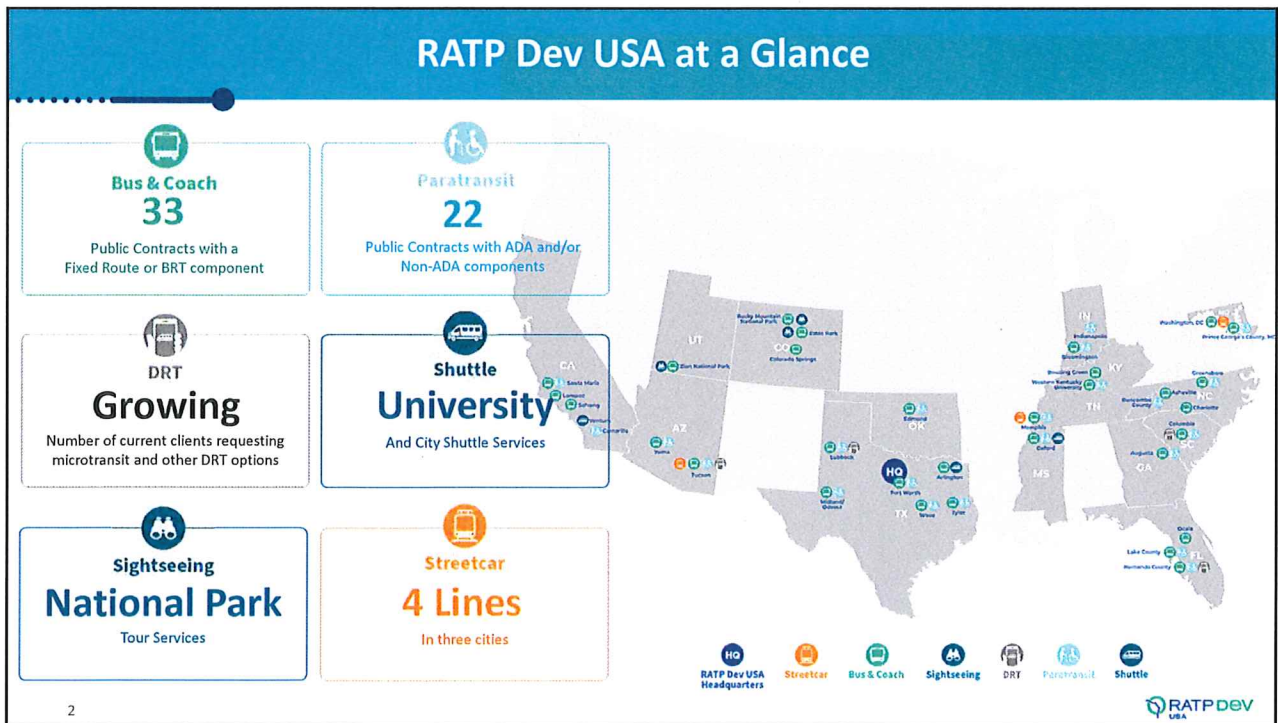
														YTD Budget	\$ 97,849,380
														Variance	\$ 36,743,562
Year-over-Year Comparison (FY22-FY21)			26.6%	12.6%	19.8%	21.7%	21.6%	18.4%	11.9%	22.5%	18.6%	10.5%	11.6%	-4.9%	15.4%
FY22 Budget Target			\$ 8,479,780	\$ 9,053,661	\$ 9,001,133	\$ 8,076,718	\$ 9,319,809	\$ 10,570,984	\$ 7,547,377	\$ 8,322,267	\$ 9,596,200	\$ 8,752,853	\$ 9,128,597	\$ 10,385,820	\$ 108,235,200
% of FY22 Budget Achieved			10.4%	20.3%	30.5%	41.0%	52.2%	64.7%	74.1%	81.8%	94.1%	104.6%	113.9%	124.4%	124.4%

Prior Year Sales Tax Receipts: FY2018 – FY2021

Fiscal Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Total
FY 2021	\$ 8,921,474	\$ 9,466,946	\$ 9,245,058	\$ 9,317,741	\$ 9,964,913	\$ 11,402,907	\$ 9,134,772	\$ 6,785,996	\$ 11,253,531	\$ 10,287,447	\$ 8,942,957	\$ 11,945,450	\$ 116,669,192
FY 2020	\$ 9,683,570	\$ 9,787,973	\$ 8,671,558	\$ 9,890,136	\$ 9,858,570	\$ 9,800,116	\$ 8,278,036	\$ 8,606,547	\$ 8,735,473	\$ 7,635,380	\$ 6,997,727	\$ 9,833,896	\$ 107,778,982
FY 2019	\$ 7,708,503	\$ 9,621,386	\$ 9,103,726	\$ 8,067,019	\$ 9,425,129	\$ 8,906,774	\$ 8,195,787	\$ 7,918,012	\$ 10,155,891	\$ 9,880,419	\$ 9,435,500	\$ 9,117,052	\$ 107,535,197
FY 2018	\$ 8,147,197	\$ 8,436,960	\$ 8,784,051	\$ 7,883,713	\$ 8,884,437	\$ 9,324,267	\$ 6,897,695	\$ 7,842,800	\$ 9,303,951	\$ 8,539,748	\$ 9,277,676	\$ 9,699,263	\$ 103,021,757



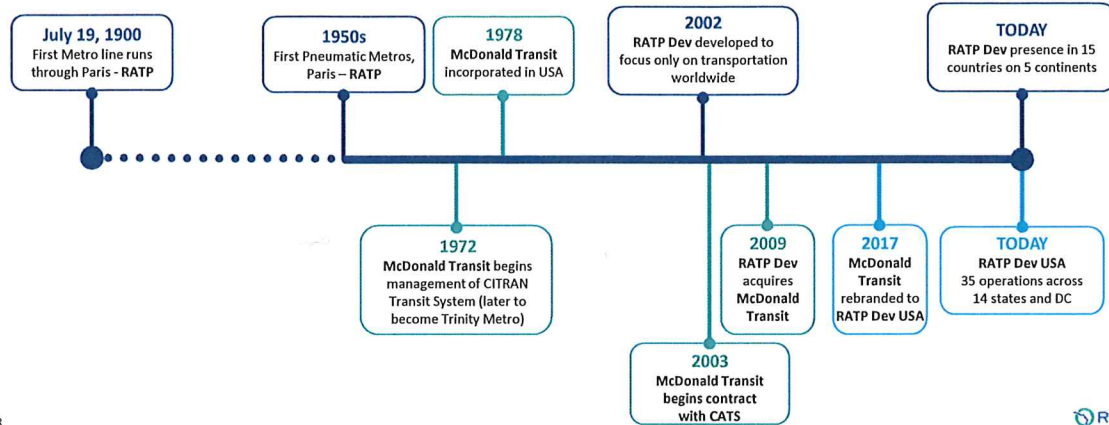
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2

History of RATP Dev USA

RATP Dev USA, Inc. draws upon our parent and predecessor companies, with 50 years of experience in the United States to uphold a legacy of successful turn-key operations, transit management, and maintenance services.

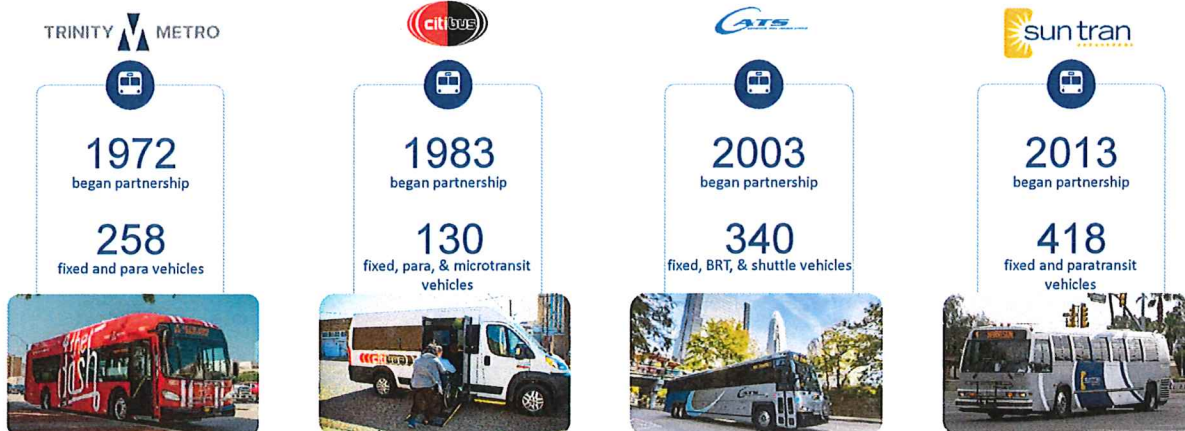


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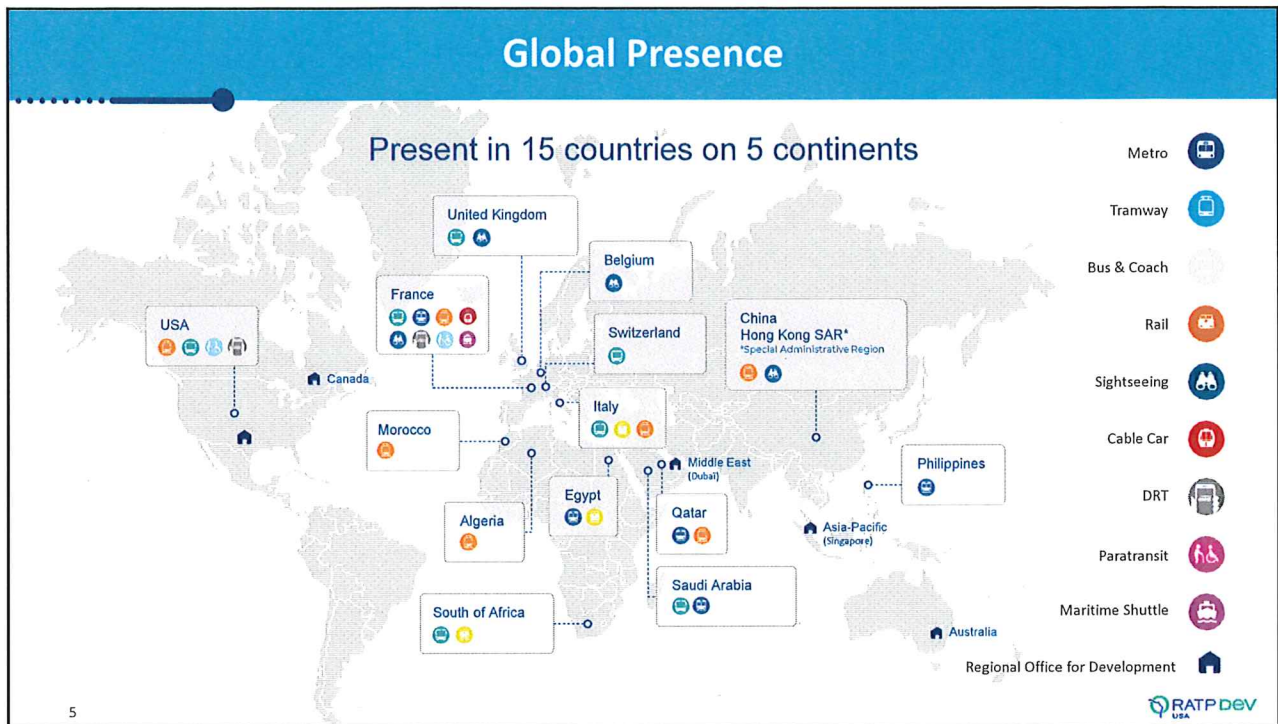


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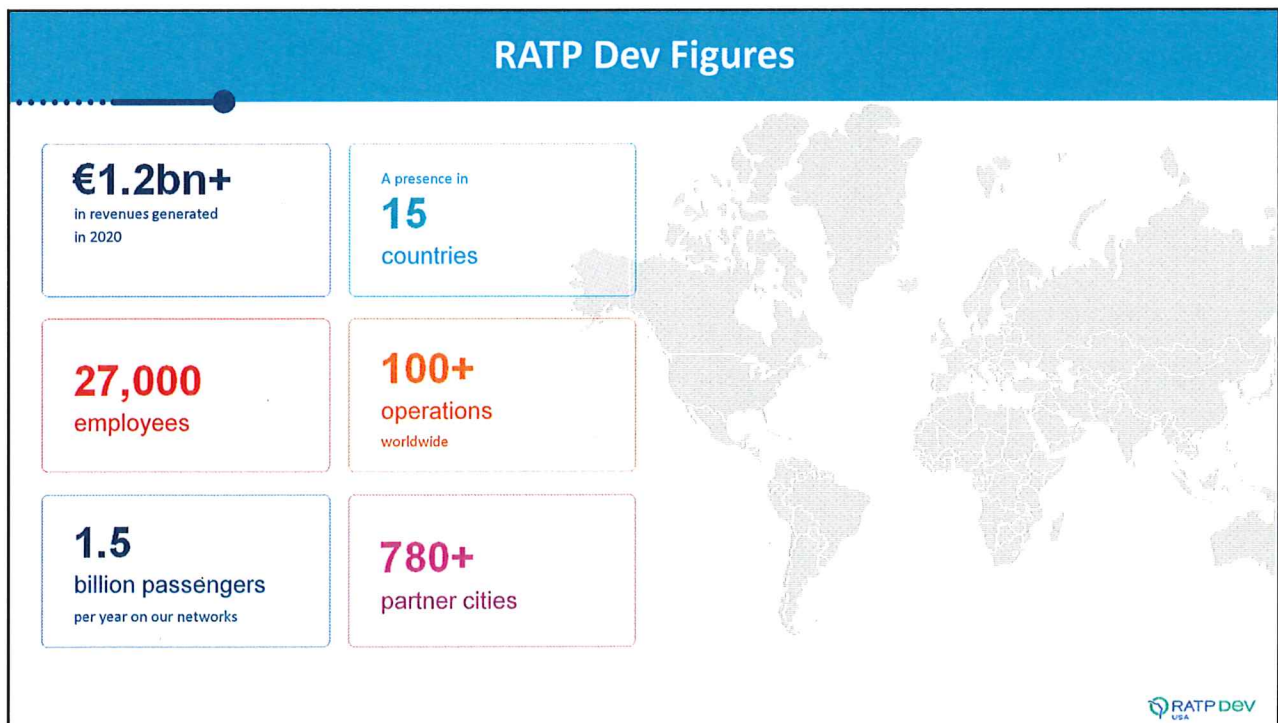
Transit Management Long-Term Partners



4



5



6

Charlotte CATS and RATP Dev USA

- 1972 – McDonald Transit incorporated
- 2003 – (September) McDonald Transit signs first management contract with Charlotte CATS
- 2009 – RATP Dev USA acquired McDonald Transit
- Our relationship includes RATP Dev USA providing:
 - General Manager
 - Assistant General Manager
 - Director of Maintenance

Throughout the last 18 years, RATP Dev USA has continuously worked with the City and CATS through growth and change in Charlotte.

7



7

Management Contracts vs. Operations Contracts

Management Contracts (like CATS)

- The agency retains the policy making, risk and expense related to operating the service while subcontracting the management and oversight of the agency.
- Management contracts typically provide top leadership, such as general manager

Operations Contracts

- Allow significant risk to be transferred from the agency to a private provider (e.g., wages, insurance, benefits).
- The risk transfer influences the cost structure of the provider's contract proposals.
- Most employees (operators, management, etc.) are direct employees of the operator

8



8

Relationship with CATS

Some highlights over the past 18 years include:

- **Action Plan** to hire 100 hundred drivers in 100 day
- **Successfully negotiated** labor agreements without stoppages
- **Thought Leadership** in areas of technology and innovation
- **Technology Introduction** – through nMomentum technology assessments – at no cost to CATS

9



9

Future Focus: Employee Engagement

Main Issues:

- High turnover in transit everywhere
- Post-COVID retention is an issue across the country and around the world
- 46% attrition of new hires in the first 3 months

Our Focus:

- Region VP and HR directors to lead a deep dive in each region and location, focusing on high impact opportunities
- Best Practices from other locations in US and around the globe
- GM, Managers & Supervisor engagement with operators

10



10

**METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION
INFORMATION ITEM
STAFF SUMMARY**

SUBJECT: Advancing the 2030 System Plan

DATE: July 27, 2022

- 1.0 PURPOSE/SCOPE:** The LYNX Red Line was confirmed and adopted through the LYNX System Update conducted from 2017-2019. CATS Staff will present a plan to strategically position the project for future funding opportunities.
- 2.0 BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION:** The LYNX System Update conducted by CATS Staff between 2017-2019 evaluated rapid transit corridor alignments and modes for the North and West Corridors as well as a potential southern extension of the LYNX Blue Line. In 2019 the MTC adopted the following staff recommendations to the 2030 Transit System Plan and key strategies to advance regional transit planning.
- Replace the West Corridor Streetcar with an extension of the Southeast Corridor LYNX Silver Line Light Rail alignment through Uptown Charlotte to Wilkinson Blvd with a proposed terminus station in the City of Belmont
 - As part of a future LYNX Silver Line effort, evaluate potential extensions of light rail into Union County.
 - As part of an upcoming Regional Transit Study, evaluate rapid transit corridors including light rail extensions into adjacent counties
 - A North Corridor Rapid Transit Strategy that includes near-term and medium-term Bus Rapid Transit improvements in the I-77 corridor while continuing a long-term vision confirming the Norfolk Southern O-Line as an important regional transportation corridor for future regional rapid transit.
 - Also recommended for the LYNX Red Line was the need to evaluate access to the Charlotte Gateway Station in Uptown Charlotte.
 - A southern extension of the LYNX Blue Line to serve the Town of Pineville and the community of Ballantyne.

Since 2019 CATS staff advanced the following initiatives following the adoption of the LYNX System Update:

- The LYNX Silver Line team recommended and the MTC adopted in 2021 an extension of the LYNX Silver Line into Union County as well as advanced the project from I-485/Airport to Matthews towards 15% design.
- Implemented the MetroRapid BRT service in February 2020 as well as advanced project definition for future MetroRapid BRT capital projects.
- In partnership with the Centralina Regional Council conducted the CONNECT Beyond regional transit study that was endorsed by the MTC in October 2021.

3.0 PROCUREMENT BACKGROUND: N/A

4.0 POLICY IMPACT: N/A

5.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT: N/A

6.0 ALTERNATIVES: N/A

7.0 **RECOMMENDATION**: This item is presented as information in preparation for action at the August 24, 2022 MTC meeting.

8.0 **ATTACHMENT(S)**: N/A

SUBMITTED AND RECOMMENDED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John M. Lewis, Jr.', is positioned above a horizontal line.

John M. Lewis, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer, Charlotte Area Transit System
Director of Public Transit, City of Charlotte



1

Overview

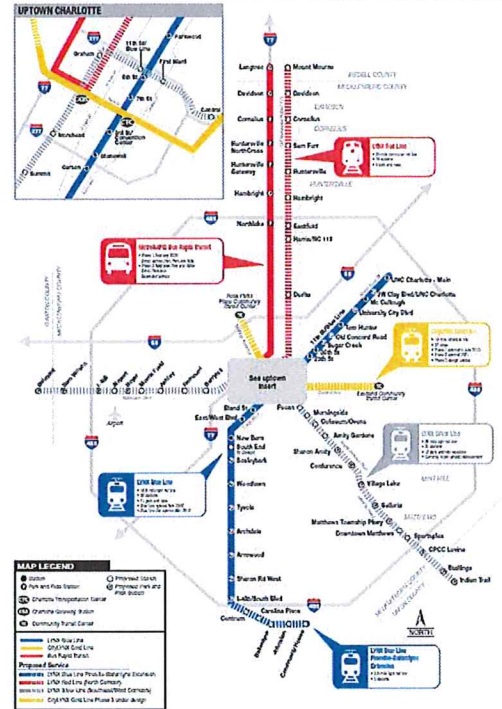
- 2030 Transit Plan | CONNECT Beyond
- Generational Opportunity | North Corridor Changes | Red Line
- Next Steps

2

2030 Transit System Plan: Existing & Future

LYNX Blue Line Light Rail

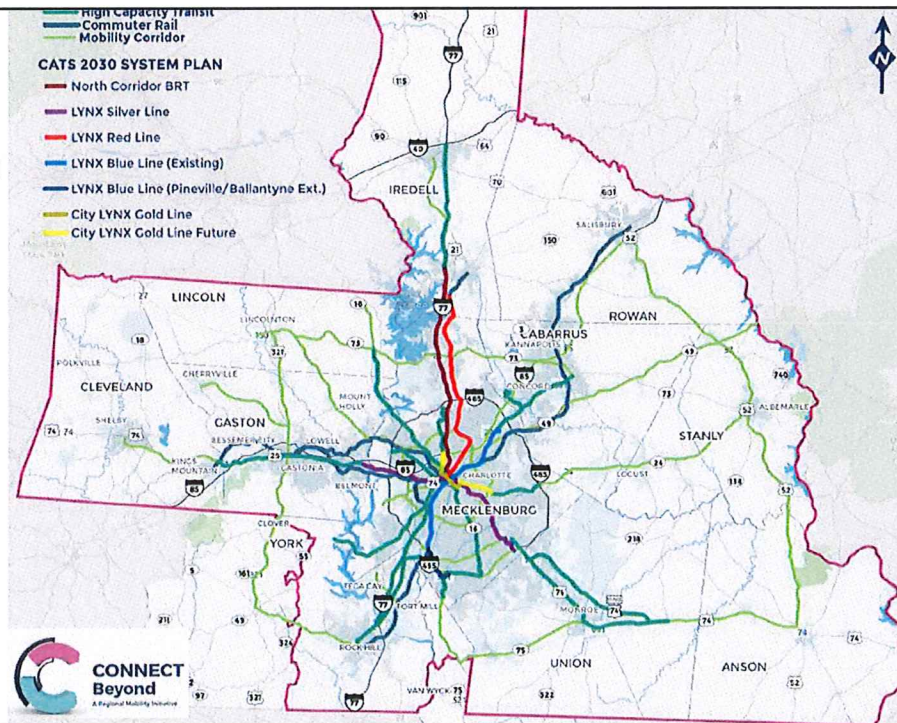
- South Corridor 2007
- Northeast Corridor 2018
- Future Pineville/Ballantyne Extension
- LYNX Silver Line Light Rail
 - Currently in Design
 - 29 miles across three counties
 - Current focus is on Mecklenburg
- CityLYNX Gold Line Streetcar
 - Phase 1 2015
 - Phase 2 2021
 - Remaining six miles in design update
- North Corridor Strategy
 - MetroRapid I-77 BRT Phased Implementation
 - LYNX Red Line Commuter Rail—Continue NS Discussions



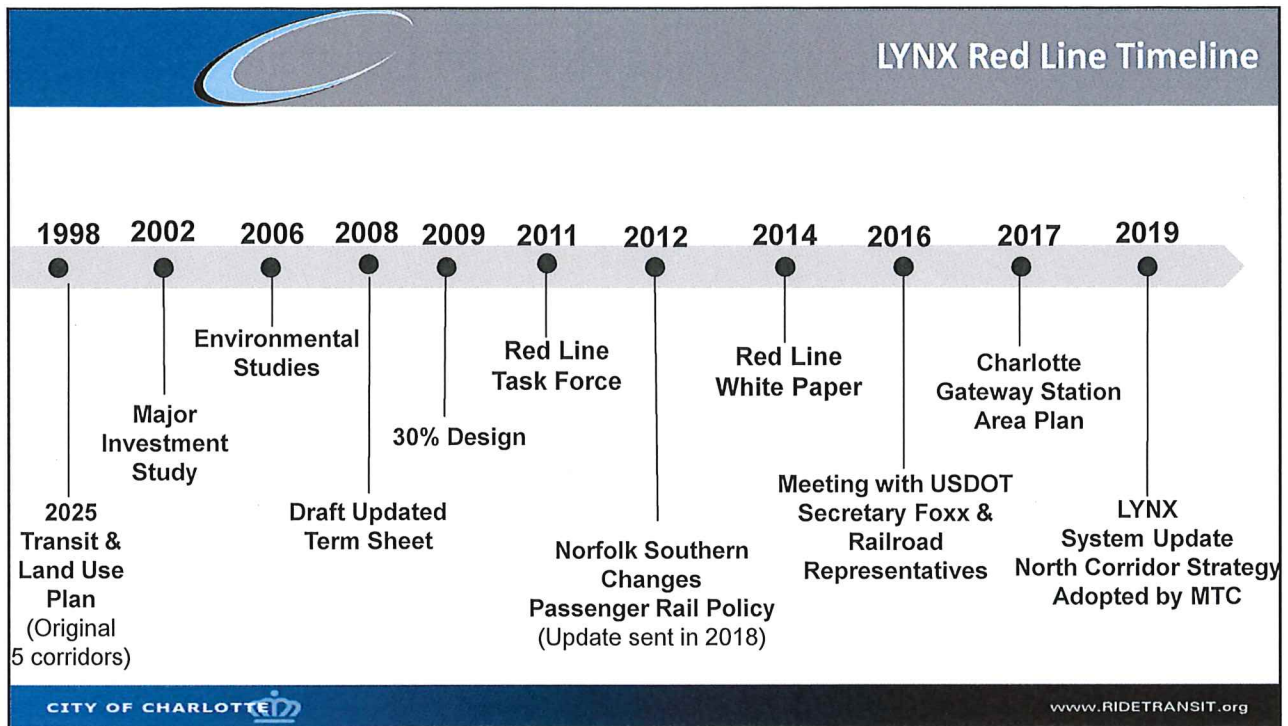
3

CONNECT Beyond builds upon the 2030 Transit System Plan

High
Capacity
Transit &
Emerging
Mobility
Corridors



4




5

LYNX Red Line: The Vision

- Serves directly the hearts of Davidson, Cornelius, Huntersville, and Charlotte.
- Stations are located within easy access of supportive transit developments such as Davidson College, Antiquity, Oakhurst, Vermillion, and Bryton Town Center.
- Provides the opportunity for expansion to Iredell County serving the key destinations of Lowes Headquarters and Downtown Mooresville.
- Project can meet the request of more frequent weekday and weekend service as expressed by the public during the LYNX System Update (2017-2019).
- Public supported and the MTC confirmed the LYNX Red Line during the LYNX System Update.
- Stations will function not only as park and rides but as integrated mobility hubs with bus services and first/last mile connections.
- Provides direct connection to the Charlotte Gateway Station and the surrounding entertainment district including Carolina Panthers, Charlotte Knights, and Charlotte Football Club.
 - Gateway station provides connections to Silver Line, Gold Line, and bus services that include service to the airport, Bojangles Coliseum, Matthews etc.


6




Generational Opportunity

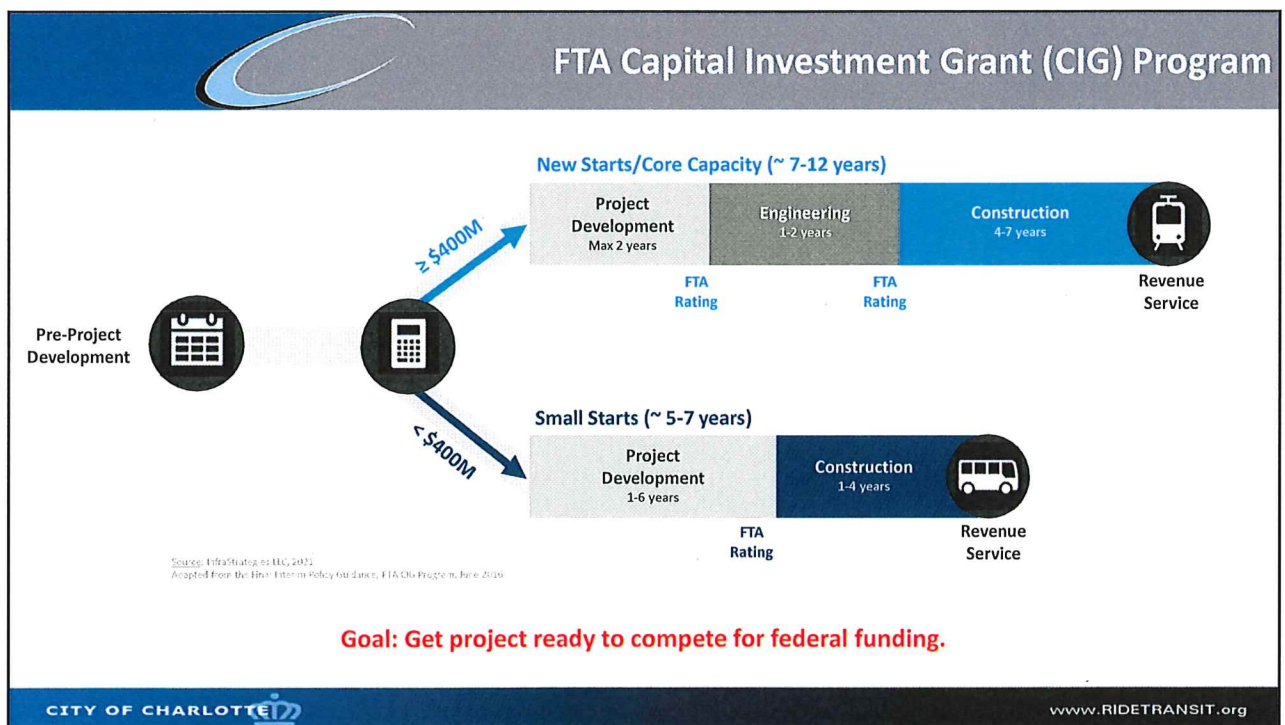
Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

- Surface Transportation Reauthorization (FY 2022-FY 2026)
- Spending Breakdown:
 - Roads and Bridges: \$110B
 - Energy Infrastructure: \$73B
 - Rail Services: \$66B
 - Broadband: \$65B
 - Water Infrastructure: \$55B
 - Climate Resiliency: \$47B
 - Public Transit: \$39B
 - Airports: \$25B
 - Electric and Low Emission Vehicles: \$15B
 - Transportation Safety: \$11B




www.RIDETRANSIT.org

7



8

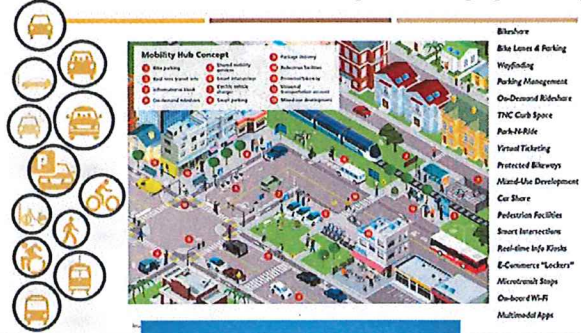
LYNX Red Line can complete the changing mobility landscape



New vehicle technologies have improved and modernized the customer experience inside and out.



Stations can accommodate existing and emerging mobility modes



CITY OF CHARLOTTE

www.RIDETRANSIT.org

9

Changes in the corridor that require updated design

- Development and density
- Projects completed since last design process that will require:
 - Updated grade crossings
 - Updated track design
 - Reevaluation of station locations, drainage etc.
 - New alignment into Uptown



CITY OF CHARLOTTE

www.RIDETRANSIT.org

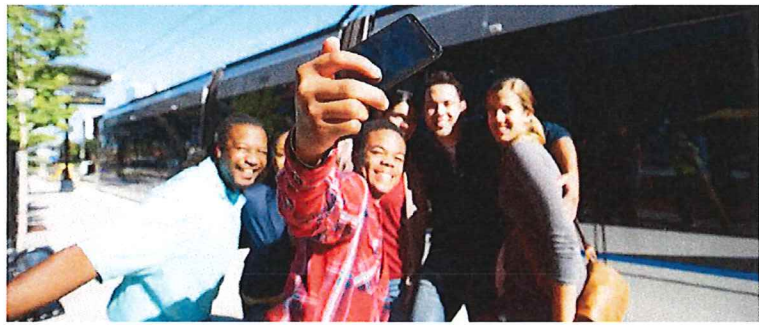
10

Suggested Next Step:

**Request action to update the
LYNX Red Line 30% design.**



11



Thank you

12

**METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION
ACTION ITEM
STAFF SUMMARY**

SUBJECT: Temporary Service Modifications

DATE: July 27, 2022

- 1.0 PURPOSE/SCOPE:** Due to labor shortages, CATS staff will present proposed service modifications to improve bus and rail service reliability system wide.
- 2.0 BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION:** The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted transit agencies across the country. A greater increase of employees working from home, concerns about social distancing and operator shortages are just a few of the challenges impacting transit ridership recovery. Numerous transit agencies have faced the difficult decision to modify schedules to ensure that service is delivered each day. Due to increasing operator absences, lower retention rates, and high level of vacant positions CATS must now modify service to match operator availability. Below is timeline of recent communication and strategies leading to the proposed July 27, 2022 MTC action.
- At the June 22, 2022, MTC meeting, CATS detailed specific service issues related to the nationwide operator labor shortages.
 - Following the MTC discussion, CATS staff developed a ridership-based methodology to adjust bus and rail schedules to improve service reliability.
 - At the July 14, 2022, Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) meeting, TSAC approved CATS approach to modify schedules.
 - Temporary schedules on fourteen local and express routes schedules as well as LYNX Blue Line service levels are proposed to be modified in order to improve reliability system wide.
- 3.0 PROCUREMENT BACKGROUND:** N/A
- 4.0 POLICY IMPACT:** N/A
- 5.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT:** N/A
- 6.0 ALTERNATIVES:** N/A
- 7.0 RECOMMENDATION:** In response to labor shortages, CATS staff recommends adjusting 14 local and express route schedules as well as LYNX Blue Line service levels on August 15, 2022, in order to improve service reliability system wide.
- 8.0 ATTACHMENT(S):** N/A

SUBMITTED AND RECOMMENDED BY:



**John M. Lewis, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer, Charlotte Area Transit System
Director of Public Transit, City of Charlotte**

Charlotte Area Transit System Proposed Temporary Service Modifications

Metropolitan Transit Commission
July 27, 2022



1

Service and Labor Update

- ▶ CATS Bus Operations Organizational Structure
- ▶ Labor Issues: Local & National
- ▶ Proposed Temporary Service Modifications



2

Strategies to Improve reliability

- ▶ Labor Shortages
 - Increased oversight of contractor through contractual mechanisms and requiring hiring/retention strategies
- ▶ Bus Service
 - Development of a temporary modified schedule based upon ridership analysis and operator availability
 - Analyzing absences to better allocate spare operators
- ▶ Rail Service
 - Begin assessment of trip level data to determine modified schedule to match operator availability.



3

Proposed Short Term Modified Bus Service Scenario

Description	Operators Required	Daily Assignments		
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Current Service	382	292	227	151
Modified Schedule	332 -50	242	227	151

- ▶ Adjusted schedules on 14 local and express routes
- ▶ Minor adjustments to late night and early morning trips on 4 routes
- ▶ No service adjustments on 80% of routes
- ▶ Proposed schedule changes save 45-50 operator positions
- ▶ **Provides public with reliable schedule**



4

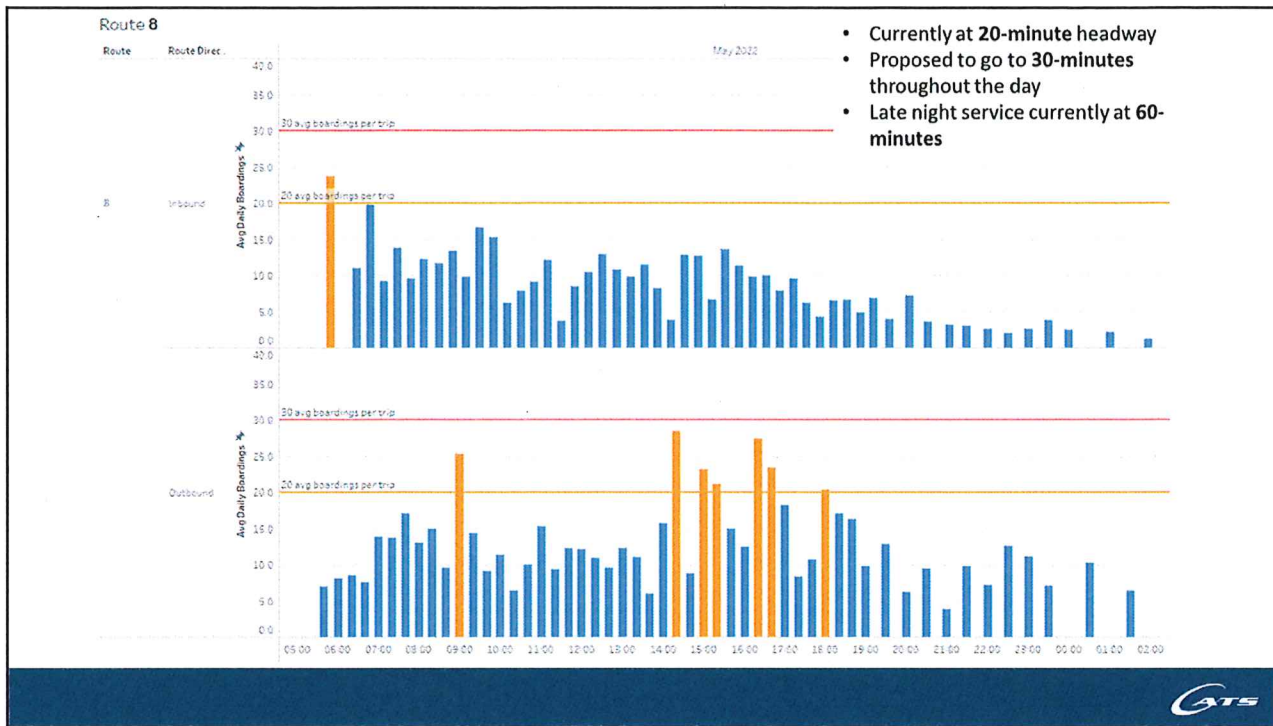
- ▶ Evaluated trip passenger load for all routes.
- ▶ Analyzed time of day and identified trips with 30 or more passengers.
- ▶ Prioritized routes that currently have higher frequency levels for reductions (i.e. shifting 15-minute routes to 20-minutes)



- Currently at **30-minute** headway
- Proposed to go to **60-minutes** for late night trips with low passenger loads



3



7

Proposed Temporary Service Modifications

	Frequency 6am-7pm		Additional Trips	Notes
	Current	Modified		
LYNX Blue Line	15	20		20-minutes from 5:00am-8:30pm, then 30-minutes until 2:00am
9-Central	10	15	5	10-minute service outbound from Uptown: 3:30pm-5:30pm; 1 early morning trip
Sprinter Airport	15	30	2	20-minute service from 1:30pm-3:00pm
7 - Beatties Ford	15	20	2	15 minute outbound from Uptown : 1:30pm-3:30pm
16 - S. Tryon	15	30	2	20-minute service outbound from Uptown: 3:30pm-5:30pm
27 - Monroe	15	30	3	20-minute service outbound from Uptown: 3:30pm-6:00pm
6 - Kings Dr	20	30		
8 - Tuckaseegee	20	30		
10 - West Blvd	20	30		
11 - North Tryon	20	30		
21 - Statesville Ave	20	30	2	20-minute service outbound from Uptown: 3:00pm-5:00pm
34 - Freedom Drive	20	30		

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Proposed Temporary Service Modifications

- ▶ 1 – Mt. Holly: Eliminate 11:41pm and 12:41am Inbound trips and 12:00am and 1:00am Outbound trips
- ▶ 4 – Belmont: Eliminate 1st AM Outbound trip at 5:29am
- ▶ 11 – North Tryon: Eliminate 11:31pm and 12:29am Inbound trips and 11:55pm and 1:00am Outbound trips
- ▶ 12 – South Blvd: Eliminate 6:14am Inbound trip; Eliminate late night short turn trips between Scaleybark and Pressley Rd area at 1:06am (Outbound) and 2:03am (Inbound)
- ▶ 60 – Tyvola : Convert midday trips serving Jackson Park to serve the VA Hospital



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Proposed Temporary Service Modifications

- ▶ Routes 48x, 63x, and 77x reduced by 3 trips each day, and shifted trip times to account for the adjustment
- ▶ Based on ridership levels 2 morning trips, and one afternoon trip were consolidated
- ▶ Adjusted remaining trip times to better cover the service span.
- ▶ Maintained 20 – minute frequency during main peak periods
 - 6:30am - 8:30am
 - 4:00pm - 5:30pm

	Number of AM/PM Trips	
	Current	Modified
77x- North Mecklenburg Express	17	14
48x - Northcross Express	17	14
63x - Huntersville Express	17	14
53x - Northlake Express	8	8
85x - Gastonia Express	6	6
82x - Rock Hill Express	6	6
74x - Union County Express	6	6
64x - Independence Blvd Express	9	9
52x - Idlewild Road Express	6	6
46x - Harrisburg Road Express	6	6
40x - Lawyers Road Express	6	6
62x - Rea Road Express	6	6
47x - Huntersville Greenhouse Express	2	2



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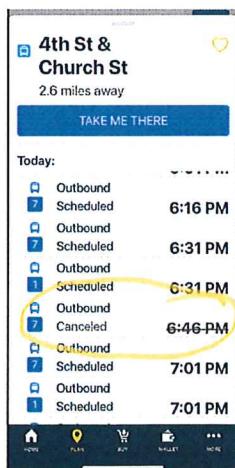
Additional Strategies & Next Steps

- ▶ Working with CATS-Pass app developer to incorporate future on demand transit services and ride share companies (Uber, LYFT)
- ▶ Evaluating Envision My Ride Bus Priority Microtransit zones for early pilot implementation
- ▶ July 14 –Transit Service Advisory Committee
 - Approved Service Modification Strategy
- ▶ July 27 –Metropolitan Transit Commission
 - Action Item: Proposed Temporary Service Modifications
- ▶ Proposed modified service can be implemented on August 15, 2022
- ▶ Improved communication through CATS-Pass app
- ▶ Schedule changes to remain in place until operator availability improves
- ▶ Public Listening Sessions and Pop-Up Meetings will be held early August



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CATS – Pass app Updates



- ▶ CATS – Pass app now details bus route cancelled trips
- ▶ LYNX Blue Line real time in testing phase
- ▶ Developing training plan for bus and rail operations
- ▶ Working with app developer to include ride share companies and on demand services



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Public Outreach

- ▶ Tuesday, August 2: Cornelius and Davidson Park and Rides
6 am – 8 am
- ▶ Wednesday, August 3: Charlotte Transportation Center
4 pm – 6 pm
- ▶ Thursday, August 4: Northcross and Huntersville-Gateway
Park and Rides
6 am – 8 am
- ▶ Thursday, August 4: Virtual Public Meetings
12pm and 6pm



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Recommended Path Forward

- ▶ CATS is recommending a temporary adjustment to 20% of local and express routes as well as modifications to light rail service to improve service reliability.
- ▶ Adjustments are based on trip level ridership to lessen service impacts to current passengers.
- ▶ Adjusted schedules will provide transit users a consistent and reliable schedule to plan their travel.
- ▶ As operator availability improves, service will be added back based upon trip level ridership analysis.



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Action Item

Approve temporary Light Rail and Bus schedule modifications to match operator availability in order to improve service reliability.



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Questions?



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