Lessons in City Redevelopment from the Rose Center
October 26, 2016
Assistant City Manager
City of Charlotte
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2030 Transit System Plan Status

Operating
• LYNX Blue Line Light Rail Service
• Sprinter Airport Enhanced Bus Service
• CityLYNX Gold Line Phase 1

Under Construction
• LYNX Blue Line Extension

Under Design
• CityLYNX Gold Line Phase 2
• Charlotte Gateway Phase 1-Track & Structures

Under Study
• LYNX Silver Line Rail Technology/Alignment
• Charlotte Gateway Station
• North Corridor Mobility Study

Unfunded
• LYNX Red Line
• CityLYNX Gold Line Extensions: Beatties Ford Rd, Central Ave, and Airport
• LYNX Silver Line
Independence Boulevard

- Completed in 1950 the roadway was North Carolina’s first urban expressway.
- Suburban communities quickly developed along the spine.
- Commercial strip retail and entertainment facilities quickly developed.
The conversion of Independence Boulevard from a commercial arterial into a limited-access expressway has been an expensive, slow, and painful process.
Much of the planning efforts focused on how to complete the expressway. Transit and Land Use planning worked within that constraint.

- 1966 - Expressway Plan
- 1977 - Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- 1982 - US 74 Final Environmental Impact Statement
- 1988 - US 74 Supplemental FEIS
- 1998 - 2025 Transit Land Use Plan
- 1999 - Independence Busway Demonstration Project
- 2002 - 2025 Transit Corridor System Plan (MIS)
  - MTC adopts BRT but directs staff to study rail further
- 2006 - 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan (DEIS)
  - MTC adopts BRT but public doesn’t accept recommendation
  - MTC again directs staff to study rail further
- 2011 - Independence Area Plan adopted
Independence Blvd Area Plan

1. Strengthen and Build Neighborhoods
2. Create Nodes
3. Reclaim/Showcase Natural Systems
4. Orient Toward Monroe and Central
5. Leverage Opportunities
6. Provide Transportation Choices
7. Balance Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Needs

KEY PLAN ASSUMPTION: Area Plan DID NOT reconsider transportation planning decisions!
What are the implementation steps to re-energize, reposition, and ensure the long-term viability of development in the Independence Boulevard study area?
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The Panel

• Co-Chair: Hilary Bertsch, Associate Principal, EEK Architects, New York, New York
• Co-Chair: Carlton Brown, Chief Operating Officer, Full Spectrum of New York, LLC, New York, New York
• Cathy Crenshaw, President & CEO, Sloss Real Estate, Birmingham, Alabama
• Karla Henderson, Group Executive of Planning and Facilities, City of Detroit, Michigan (Rose Fellow)
• The Honorable Glenda Hood, Hood Partners LLC, Orlando, Florida (Rose Center Advisory Board)
• Jeremy Klop, Principal, Fehr & Peers, Denver, Colorado
• Thomas Kronemeyer, Associate Principal, Community Design + Architecture, Oakland, California
• Mike McKeever, Executive Director, Sacramento Area Council of Government, Sacramento, California (Rose Fellow)
• John Sedlak, Executive VP, Houston METRO, Houston, Texas (Rose Fellow Alternate)
• A lot of good work has been done by the City

• **Unique** cooperative spirit between Charlotte and NCDOT

• Project **uncertainty** is harming local market
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Key Recommendations

• Be clear about difference between solutions for regional challenges vs. local challenges

• Build on what you know has worked

• Three main ideas (or refinements to the current plans)

  1. BRT/Express bus on Independence in HOT lanes

  2. Streetcars on Central and Monroe

  3. Promote auto-oriented retail on Independence and neighborhood serving, mixed-use development on streetcar lines
Limited Access Express Way
BRT/Express Bus

Street Car

Local/Feeder Bus

ULI Rose Fellowship Concepts
Independence Boulevard with Exclusive Busway*

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Combine Busway and Managed Lanes

ULI Recommendations with Combined Busway and Managed Lanes
A fresh start for transit

The ULI recommendations “tipped the scale” towards a new look at rapid transit.

1998
2002
2006
2009
2011
2015

2025 Transit & Land Use Plan
(established five transit corridors)

Major Investment Study
(BRT selected; LRT to be studied further)

Draft EIS
(BRT reconfirmed; LRT to be reevaluated in the future)

Fast Lanes Study
(initial review of managed lanes)

Independence Blvd. Area Plan
(reassessed land use role of corridor)

ULI Study
(focus rail away from US 74)

LYNX Silver Line Southeast Corridor Transit Study
(“fresh look” at corridor options)

MTC Decision
(remove preservation of US74 median for rapid transit; initiate new transit study)
A fresh start for transit

Corridor conditions have changed...

Transportation network characteristics are different

Socioeconomic characteristics are changing
A fresh start for development

Views regarding the corridor are changing...

New perspectives on the role of Independence Blvd.

New and different development patterns
LYNX Silver Line Study Goals

Define a **rail fixed guideway alignment** (not in the median of Independence Blvd.)

Provide an interim **bus transit strategy** that utilizes the future express lanes

Develop strategies to **protect and preserve** the rail alignment
LYNX Silver Line Study Recommendations

Bus
In the median combined with managed lanes

Rail
13 miles side running
Light Rail recommendation can create new development patterns
Results

• With a publicly supported light rail alignment property owners and developers have a higher level of certainty.

• For the first time the Transit, Transportation, and Land Use visions have broad support from the public.

• City of Charlotte Community Investment Programs such as new street connections and pedestrian improvements can compliment the new visions.

• Although NCDOT will not complete the Independence Expressway Conversion for another 10-12 years, the coordination between the city and the state will continue.

• CATS will need to seek additional funding for the light rail, however is seeking corridor preservation through coordination with Charlotte Planning and the Town of Matthews.
Questions

STOP
After considering the ULI recommendations the MTC in 2011 passed the following actions that directed CATS staff to:

- Remove special provisions in the 2030 Transit System Plan that required preservation of Rapid Transit in the median of Independence Blvd.

- Work closely with NCDOT and Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) to incorporate bus services into the design of the Independence Blvd Managed Lanes.

- Bring back a process and plan/schedule for an alignment study to evaluate a rail transit alignment on the Southeast Corridor that is not in the median of Independence Blvd.

- Ensure that the alignment study will review the technologies of light rail, streetcar and commuter rail, and recommend a rail transit alignment, which will involve examining all potential rail alternatives in the corridor, including those previously studied.
- Side running along Independence Blvd to Village Lake Drive Area to median running Monroe Rd to Sam Newell Rd to Independence Pointe Parkway
- 13 miles long from I-277 to CPCC Levine Campus
- 13 stations with 8-10 Park and Rides
- 7-10 miles of Rail Trails
- Uptown alignments should be studied as part of a System Integration/West Corridor/Airport Study
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With a transit alignment no longer in the median new station area planning will need to occur.

The area plan is already in action with new nodes developing along Monroe Road.

CATS Staff Recommendation strengthens the Independence Blvd Area Plan land use vision and ULI recommendations.