LYNX Blue Line Extension

Preliminary Engineering Kick-off Meetings

March 3-4, 2008

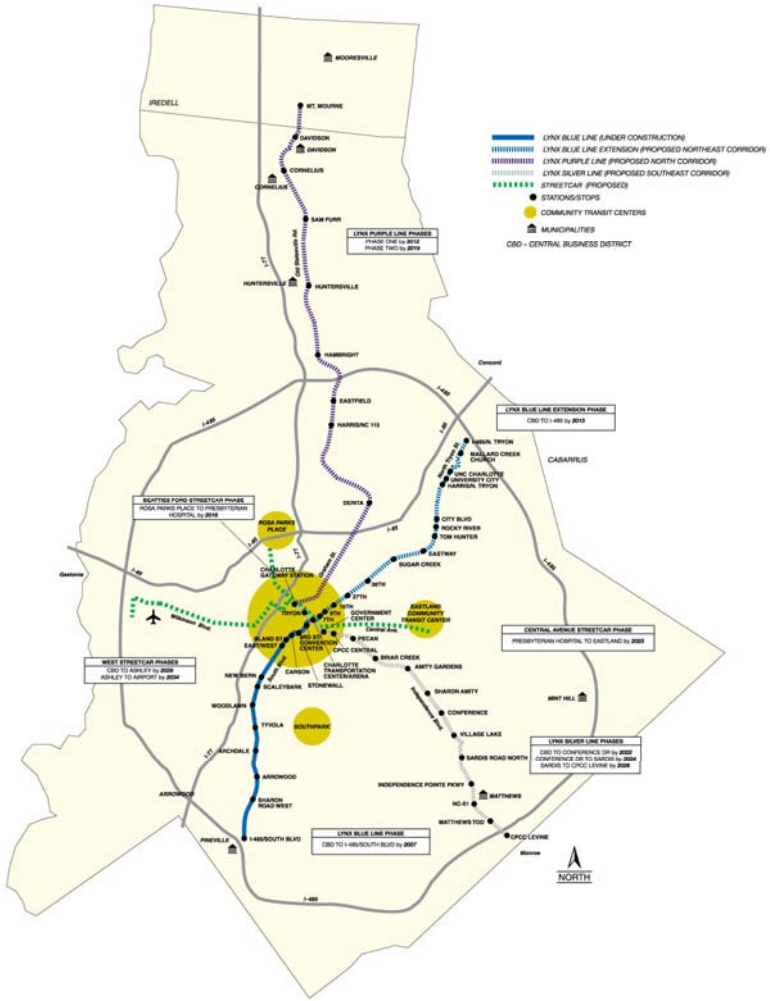
Tonight's Meeting

LYNX Blue Line Extension

- Expanding transportation options
- Progress to date
- Project development
- Key issues
- Station area and land use planning
- Growth strategy
- How you can be involved

Destination: 2030

- 2030 Transit Plan:
  - Offers mobility choices
  - Supports mixture of land uses
  - Enhances quality of life
  - Supports sustainable growth
  - Enhances pedestrian safety
  - Reduces road dependence
  - Contributes to attainment of air quality standards
- Key evaluation factors
  - Land use
  - Environment
  - System integration
  - Mobility
  - Financial



LYNX Blue Line Success!

- Ridership system-wide is up 18.1% compared to last year
- LYNX Blue Line ridership averaging 12,000 daily trips
  - Original projection: 9,100 by the end of the first year
- Ticket vending machines
  - Systems continue to improve and stabilize
  - Added round-trip ticket
  - Will add credit/debit card function this month
  - Ordering additional machines
- Over $1.5 billion in actual and proposed corridor development through 2011

Growing Our Success: Blue Line Extension

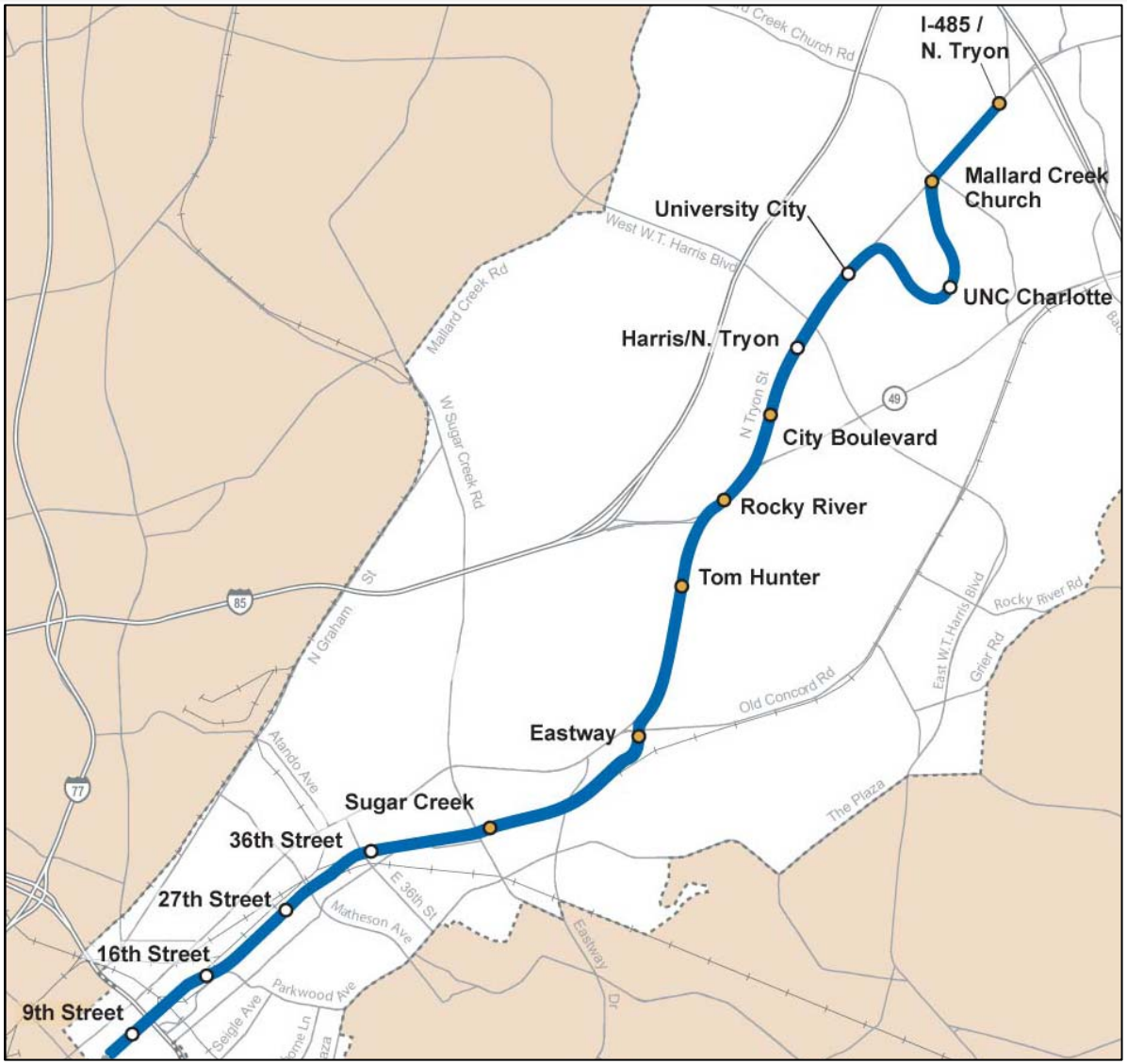
- Purpose is to address:
  - Increasing travel demand
  - Deficiency of existing road network
  - Auto dependence
  - Air pollution
  - Growth

- Benefits include:
  - Improved reliability and travel time savings
  - More commuting choices
  - Special events and tourism
  - Economic development

Blue Line Extension Characteristics

- Uptown Charlotte to I-485
- Total project length: 11 miles
- Extension of the LYNX Blue Line- South Corridor
  - Improves operational effectiveness
  - Better leveraging of public investment
- 14 stations
  - 7 Walk-up stations
  - 4 Surface park & rides
  - 3 Parking decks
- Supports development in NoDa and along N. Tryon Street

Locally Preferred Alternative



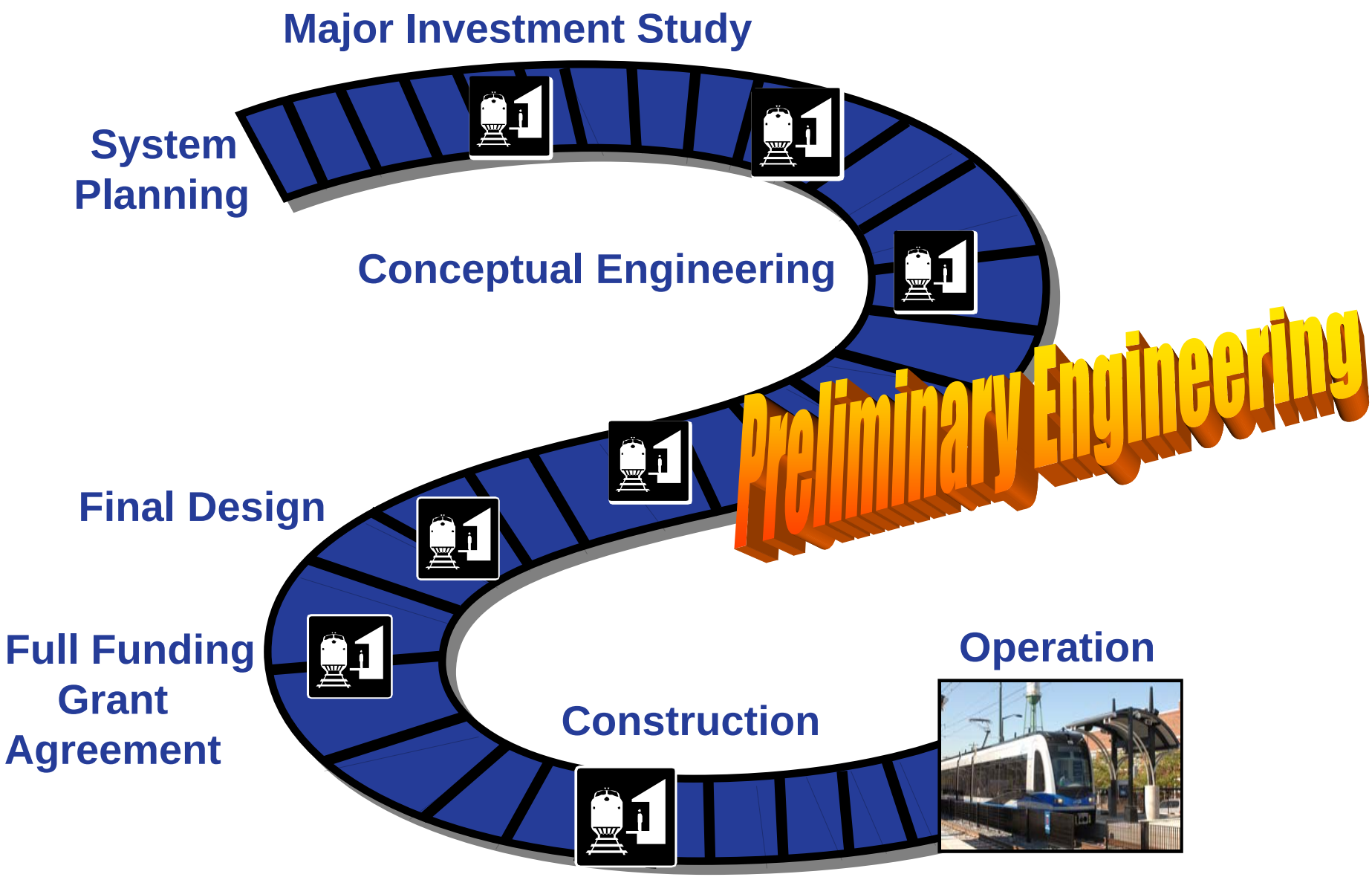
Progress to date:

- November: FTA approval to enter PE
- December: City Council approved $500,000 interim contract
- January: City Council unanimously approved $30M PE contract
  - $10M allocated to progress design to 15% milestone
    - Includes interim contract funds
  - Will ask for future funds based on design milestones

Funding sources for PE:

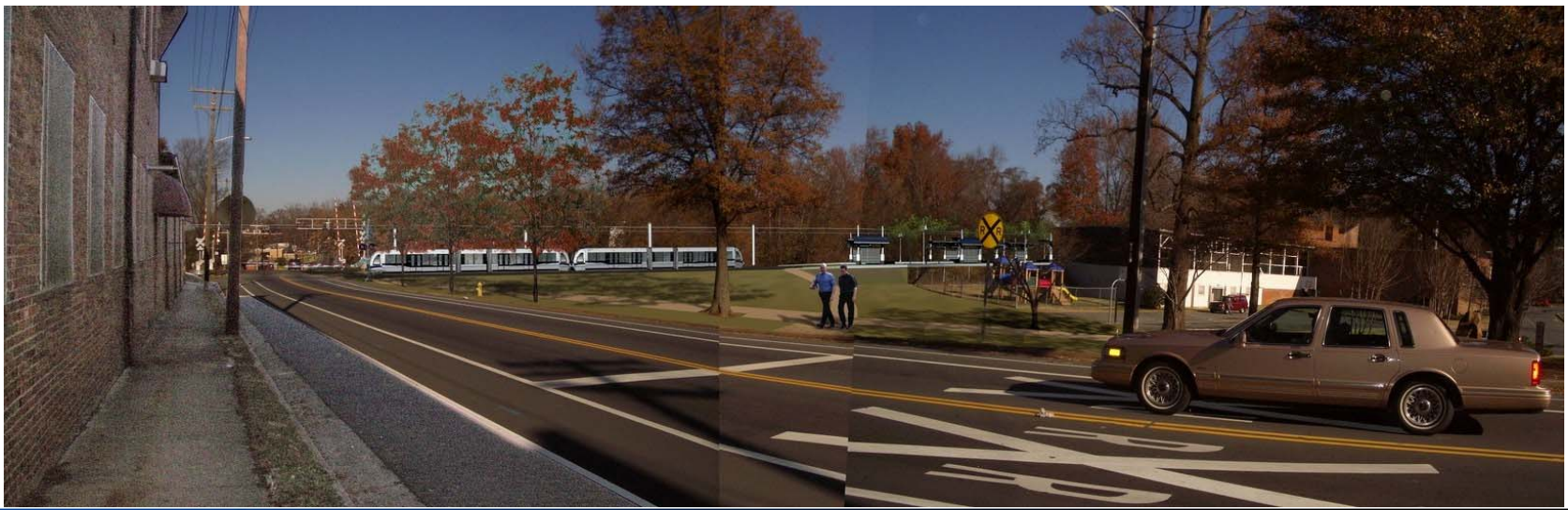
- Half-cent transit sales tax (committed)
- NCDOT (committed)
- Federal earmark (not yet appropriated)

FTA Project Development Process



What's Covered in PE?

- Architectural & engineering services
  - Milestone submittals: 15%, 30% and 65% design
- Public involvement
- Third party coordination
  - Railroads, NCDOT, UNC Charlotte
- Real estate services
- Planning and environmental studies
  - Station site planning and design
  - DEIS and FEIS
- Schedule and budget estimation



Blue Line Extension Complexity

- More complex than the Blue Line (South Corridor)
  - Involves four railroads vs. one
  - 5-6 miles of alignment in NCDOT ROW
    - Propose running light rail in middle of N. Tryon Street
  - More environmental issues
  - Twice as many grade crossings
  - 250-400 ROW acquisitions

- FTA requirements for funding have increased
  - PE sets budget for state and federal participation
  - Project Cost Effectiveness must be a “medium”
    - South Corridor requirement was “medium-low”

Key PE Issue: Sugar Creek vs. NCRR

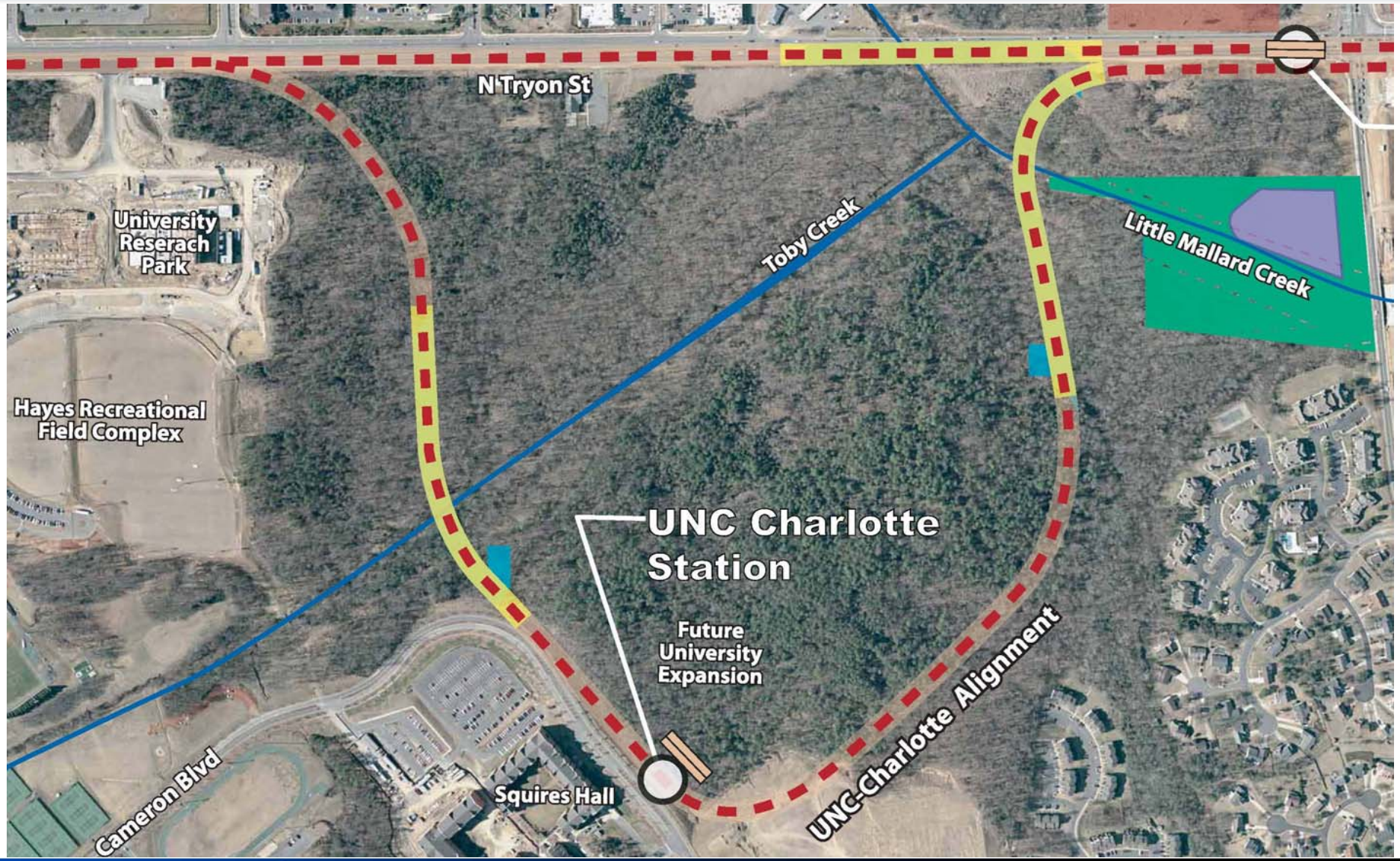
- Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) decision
  - Adopted the NCRR design option as the Locally Preferred Alternative
  - Provision to study Sugar Creek alignment in the DEIS and evaluate it further during Preliminary Engineering
- City to reevaluate potential benefit of Sugar Creek alignment

Sugar Creek Design Option

Key PE Issue: UNC Charlotte Station

- Alignment and station
  - Outcome of joint (City of Charlotte & UNC Charlotte) study to understand best way to serve campus
- Study occurred late in Conceptual Engineering; design will be progressed during PE
- Strong ridership potential
  - Approximately 3,800 riders per day
- Direct connection to UNC Charlotte's Uptown campus

UNC Charlotte Station



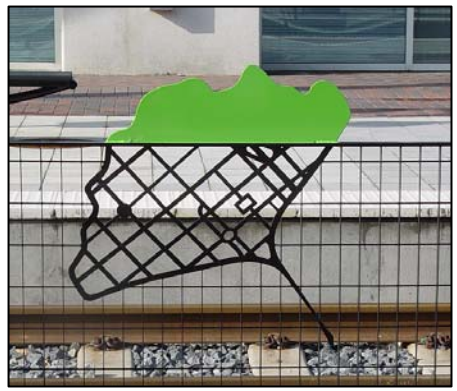
Environmental Impact Statement

- Required for major Federally-funded projects
- Available for public review and comment
- Documents:
  - Project purpose and need
  - Positive and negative social, economic, and environmental impacts
  - Examines areas such as traffic, historical resources, land use, noise and vibration
  - Mitigation efforts

Public Art

Art can improve the appearance and safety of a facility, give vibrancy to its public spaces, and make patrons feel welcome.

- Station platforms
- Transition sites
- Community landmarks & placemakers

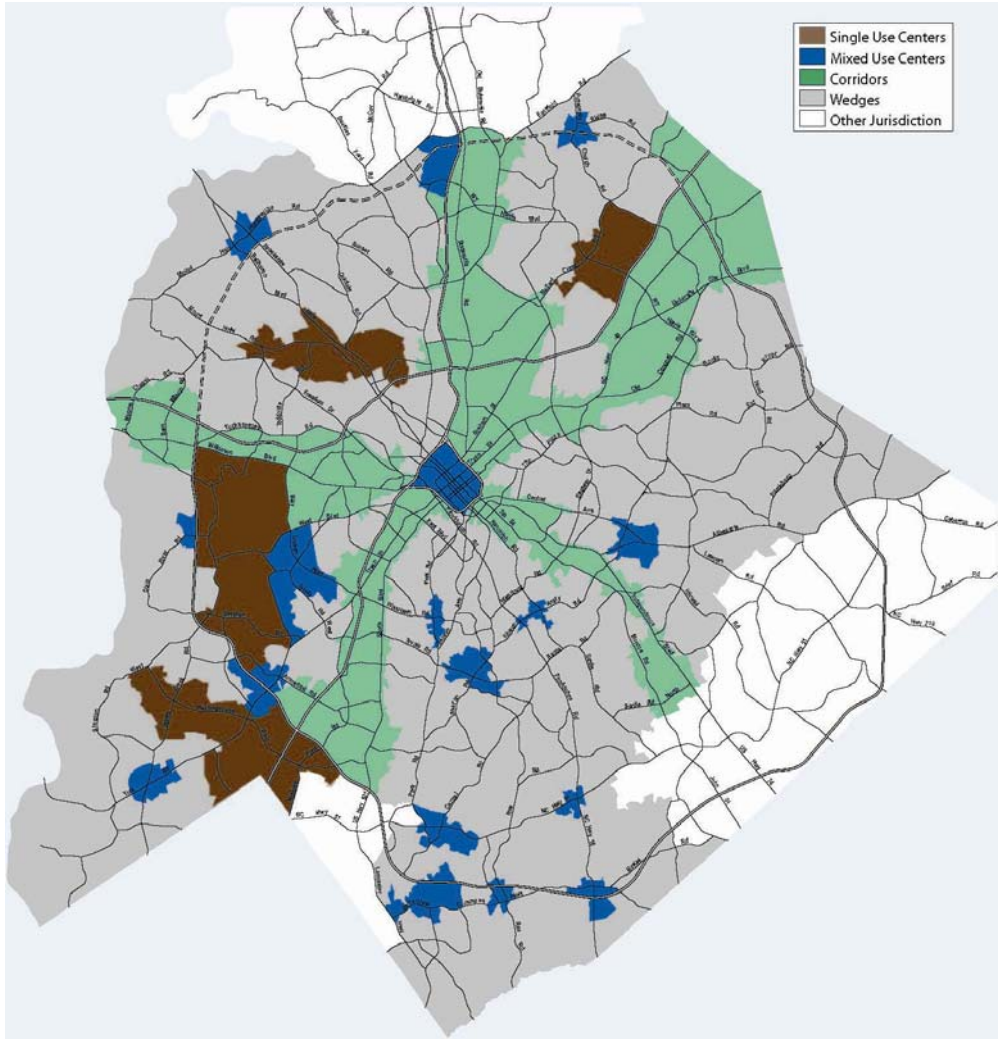


Preliminary Engineering Outcomes

- Final Locally Preferred Alternative
- Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Record of Decision from FTA
- Plans: 65% level of design
- Project budget estimate
  - Basis for Full Funding Grant Agreement

Growth Framework

- Organizes and guides development in centers, corridors and wedges
- Enhances relationship between land use and transportation
- Identifies five radial growth corridors, including Northeast
- Rapid transit designed to support high intensity development called for in growth corridors

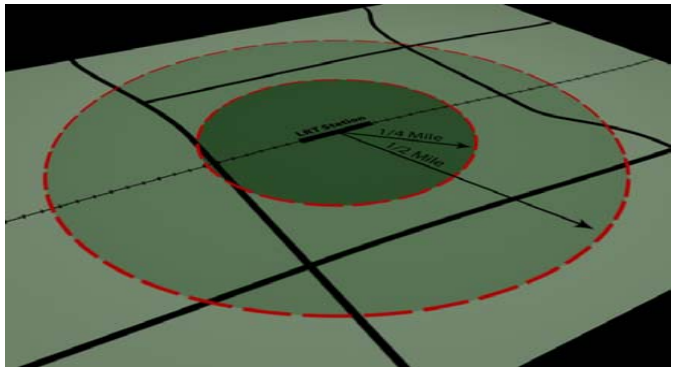


Station Area Planning

- Provides development vision and policies for station areas
- Identifies potential land use changes and desired transportation network
- Recommends implementation actions, including zoning changes and capital improvements
- Encourages pedestrian-oriented, urban development, as recommended in Growth Framework

New Bern Station Area Plan – South Corridor

Station Area Planning



Land use

Mobility

Community character

Land Use

- Concentrate a mix of complementary, well integrated land uses within walking distance of the transit station
- Allow for increased land use intensities in station areas
- Provide a range of higher intensity uses, including residential, office, retail and civic uses
- Locate special traffic generators, such as stadiums and colleges, in or near station areas
- Protect the character of existing neighborhoods

Mobility

- Enhance the existing transportation network to promote good walking, bicycling and driving connections to transit
- Develop an interconnected street network designed around a block system
- Design streets to be multi-modal, with an emphasis on pedestrians and bicyclists
- Design the streetscape to encourage pedestrian activity

Community Character

- Use urban design to enhance community identity in station areas and to make them attractive, safe and walkable
- Design buildings to front public streets
- Establish public open spaces around transit stations

So Why Are We Doing All of This?

Regional Growth

Charlotte area: 1.3 million people by 2030

Positive Impacts

- Opportunity for:
  - Jobs
  - Career advancement
  - Higher wages
- Choice of housing
  - By type
  - By price point
- Choices for recreation and entertainment

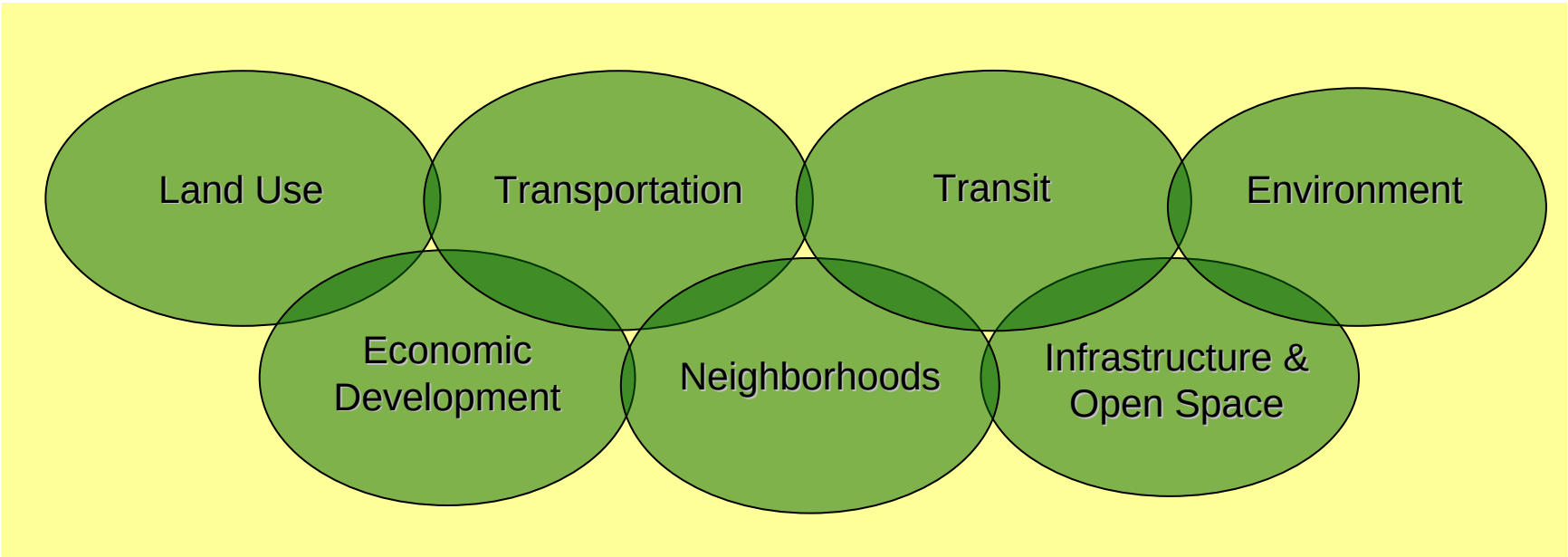
Negative Impacts

- Increases in:
  - Traffic
  - Congestion
  - Commute time
- Sprawling development
  - Increases demand for infrastructure
- Decreased open space
- Environmental stress

What is the City of Charlotte doing to prepare for this unprecedented growth? Just building light rail?

Growth Strategy Initiative:

An Integrated Approach

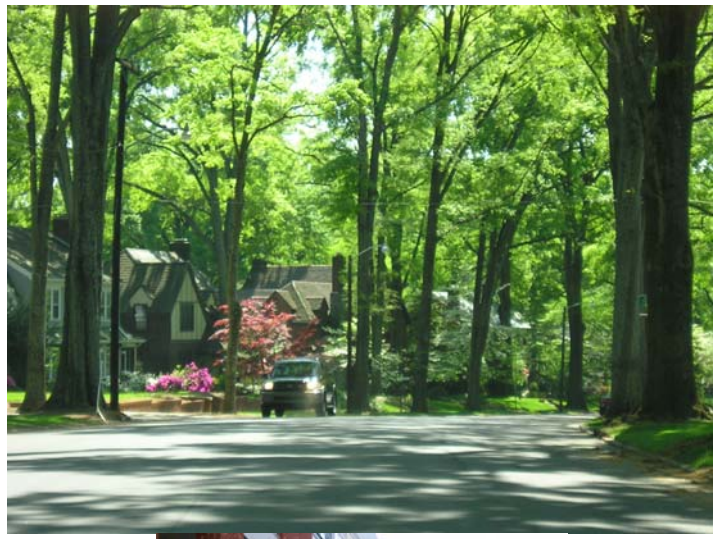


Growth Strategy Goals

- Empowered, informed and engaged citizens
- High quality community design
- Quality and livable neighborhoods and residential opportunities
- A diverse, growing and sustainable economy
- Revitalization of economically-challenged areas

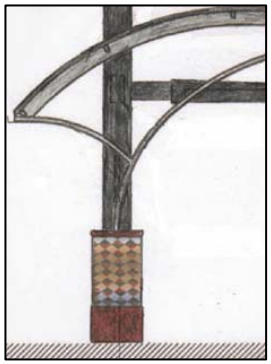
Growth Strategy Goals

- More places where a variety of activities are accessible
- Greater consideration of environmental benefits and impacts
- Healthy and flourishing tree canopy
- Efficient infrastructure investment
- Expanded transportation choices



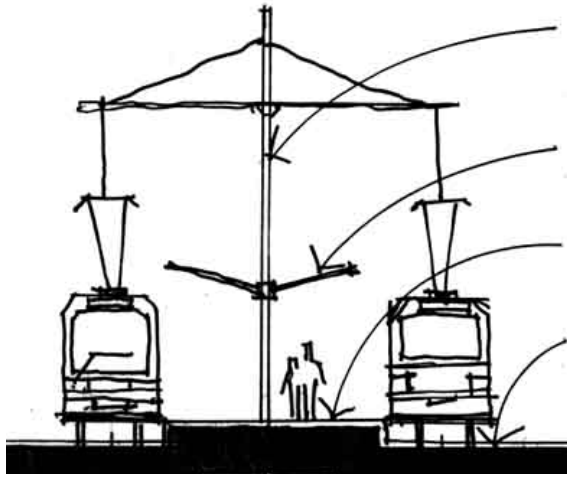
How to Get Involved

Public art



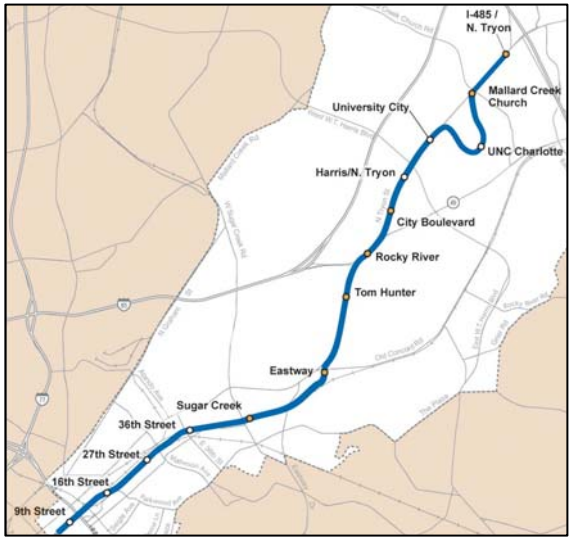
Infrastructure

Station design



Land use

Station locations



Sugar Creek vs. NCRR

Stay Informed

- www.ridetransit.org
  - Notify Me
- 704-336-RIDE
- www.charmeck.org
- 311- City/County customer service

Next Steps

- Coordination with:
  - UNC Charlotte
  - Cabarrus County
- Sugar Creek alignment analysis
  - In cooperation with Planning and Economic Development
- Public workshops for input and feedback

Questions?