

Traffic Switch and Bridge Construction at WT Harris

The Blue Line Extension (BLE) has reached a critical milestone. After a summer of preparation, construction of the light rail bridge over the WT Harris intersection has begun. This bridge is the last on the BLE alignment to begin construction and crosses over one of the most heavily traveled intersections in North Carolina.



Traffic Switch

Over the summer, construction crews on North Tryon Street worked toward completion of the new roadway between Ken Hoffman Drive and JM Keynes Drive. Sidewalk, driveways, curb and gutter were constructed as crews laid pavement for the configuration of new traffic lanes. In early September, traffic was shifted onto the new pavement to open up the median where the new light rail bridge will be located. This traffic shift was paramount to begin construction of the structure that will carry the light rail over WT Harris Boulevard.

Once complete, this structure will have two sets of columns, supporting three spans of girders, which total approximately 550 feet in length. The columns will be constructed outside of the travel lanes, just beyond the crosswalks on the north and south sides of the WT Harris Boulevard intersection. These columns will support the center span of the bridge that crosses over the roadway.

Art will be incorporated on the columns of the bridge in addition to the mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) walls. Pedestrians and motorists passing beneath the bridge will be able to view pitcher plant images on the column tops. Pitcher plant columns will also be included on the MSE walls design amid the trap plants, sun dew, and leaves that are visible on the light rail bridges going over I-85 and University City Blvd.

Currently, crews are in the early stages of constructing the structure that will support the ends of the bridge. When the MSE walls are constructed up to the necessary height, crews will be able to begin end bent construction. End bents are reinforced concrete structures that support the bridge girders at the edge of the MSE walls. Crews are also currently assembling the MSE walls and drilling shafts for four five-foot wide columns.

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Rendering of WT Harris Bridge



Close up rendering of the MSE walls

BLE Businesses

Throughout the past few months communication with the business community along the Blue Line Extension alignment has been constant and very dynamic. Project contractors have accomplished a great deal of significant work over the past few months. In many parts of North Tryon Street new roadway and sidewalks have been constructed. Traffic has been switched to these new travel lanes which provide better access to businesses along North Tryon Street. We thank you for your continued patience, communication and feedback. Moving forward, we ask our local businesses to continue to contact us with any questions and feedback. This allows us to continue evaluating and improving our communication methods. We want to hear from you!

As this is my last article as Business Liaison for the LYNX Blue Line Extension project, I have found it a pleasure to get to know the backbone of northern Charlotte's local economy. I've seen many businesses along the alignment adapt for their customers, and plan for the future - a true taking of entrepreneurial spirit. I can't wait to see what the future has in store for your businesses upon completion of the BLE. Please remember the many resources that are available to you (many of which are at no cost) to keep growing your business far into the future. Moving forward, all businesses should contact Hillary Ryan, Senior Public and Community Relations Specialist, with questions or concerns. Hillary can be reached at 704-432-2549 or hryan@charlottenc.gov.

Jennifer Duru

What should you do if you experience a utility outage?

If you experience a utility disruption, please follow these steps immediately:

1. Notify the utility company
2. If you believe BLE construction may be involved in your outage, then contact City of Charlotte 3-1-1, CATS Customer Service at 704-336-RIDE (7433)

Here are some of the more common providers in the Charlotte area:

AT&T: 866-620-6900

Time Warner Cable: 877-566-4892

Charlotte Water: 311

Duke Energy: 800-PowerOn

Piedmont Natural Gas: 800-752-750

Blue Line Extension Public Meetings

The Blue Line Extension project team will hold three public meetings to inform the community on the progress of the extension, answer questions and share the overall vision for the Blue Line Extension alignment.

Each public meeting will be an open house forum from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. A presentation will be given at 6:15 p.m. ***Please note the October 14 daytime meeting will be drop-in only***

The information presented at each meeting will be the same.

Tuesday, October 13

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The Oasis Shriners
604 Doug Mayes Place
Charlotte, NC 28262

Wednesday, October 14

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Drop-In Only

Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, Main
310 N. Tryon Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

Thursday, October 15

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Sugaw Creek Church
101 W Sugar Creek Road
Charlotte, NC 28213

Other City projects in the close vicinity to the Blue Line Extension alignment will also be represented. Information tables will be on site for the following projects:

- Blue Line Extension Business Outreach
- Northeastern Corridor Infrastructure Projects
- Parkwood Avenue Streetscape
- Tom Hunter Road Streetscape
- McCullough Street Streetscape
- Philemon Extension South Streetscape
- Sugar Creek Streetscape
- N. Tryon and 36th Street Streetscape
- JW Clay Blvd Streetscape
- 25th Street Streetscape
- Orr Road Extension
- Rocky River Road West Street Improvement
- I-85 Bridges (South Bridge/University Pointe Blvd., and North Bridge/JW Clay Blvd-Research Dr. Connector)
- CATS Art In Transit
- CATS Bus Operations
- Cross-Charlotte Trail
- City of Charlotte Corporate Communications
- University City Area Plans
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- Charlotte Department of Transportation



BLE project team with citizens at a public meeting.

For more information about the meetings please contact telltransit@charlottenc.gov or call 704-336-RIDE(7433). To learn more about the project visit www.ridetransit.org or follow us on Facebook (CATSBlueLineExtensionUpdates) and Twitter (@BLEupdates).

Traffic Switch and Bridge Construction at WT Harris cont.



During this construction of the light rail bridge over WT Harris Boulevard, motorists should expect increased traffic control at the intersection with North Tryon Street. CATS has partnered with NCDOT, CDOT and many other agencies to develop plans to manage traffic during construction. The traffic control plans were developed with the safety of the traveling public and the construction crews in mind.

Please note the speed limit on North Tryon Street has been reduced to 35 MPH in the BLE project area. Both motorists and pedestrians should use caution while obeying signage, message boards, and flaggers for direction. Remember to maintain a safe following distance between cars and please do not drive distracted.

North Tryon Street will experience frequent lane closures through the fall as crews continue paving operations. Multiple layers of asphalt will be installed to raise North Tryon Street to the new grade, in many areas a few feet higher than the existing grade. When paving the existing travel lanes, crews pave one layer at a time, alternating right and left lanes. This method allows the crew to maintain traffic flow through the area by installing lane closures that alternate lanes throughout the day. Motorists should expect daily lane closures on North Tryon Street, most prominently between Old Concord Road and University City Boulevard. To alleviate potential traffic congestion, please consider carpooling, public transit and alternate routes as construction continues. Motorists are reminded to drive the reduced speed limit of 35 MPH (within the BLE project limits). **Stay alert, follow all posted signage, and yield to flaggers.**



Stay Connected

CATS has developed tools for you to stay informed about BLE construction updates. We want to hear from you! Your feedback is important to us. Let us know your questions or comments. Here are some ways to make your voice be heard:

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter:  www.facebook.com/CATSBLEupdates

 @BLEupdates

Register to Receive Updates:  www.charlottefuture.com