

22.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

This chapter describes the early and continuous efforts to involve the general public, interested and affected parties, and federal, state and local agencies. Public involvement and agency coordination includes the review and selection of alternatives, identification of topics assessed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and the minimization, reduction or avoidance of potential social, economic and environmental impacts.

22.1 Public Outreach Processes

22.1.1 Scoping Process

The process of project scoping initiated the public involvement activities for the initial phase of the “Transportation Improvements within the Northeast (University) Corridor” (i.e. LYNX BLE). Project scoping, required by federal law as part of the preparation of an EIS, is designed to encourage active consultation and participation of the public and all interested parties (including state and federal regulatory agencies) early in the EIS process. Scoping helps to identify alternative transit alignments and modes to be evaluated, as well as social, economic or environmental issues related to the proposed alternatives.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on September 29, 2000. The NOI described the proposed project and the project alternatives, the proposed scoping process, and included the public scoping meeting schedule, as well as the contact information for the Project Manager. In addition to the NOI, a separate scoping meeting notice was sent in advance (August 17, 2000 and August 31, 2000) to governmental agencies with jurisdiction in the corridor, inviting them to attend the agency scoping meeting. The advertised public scoping meetings were held: September 26, 2000 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church (ten people in attendance); September 27, 2000 at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center (12 people in attendance) from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; and on September 28, 2000 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Sugaw Creek Recreation Center (25 people in attendance). The purpose of these meetings was to receive input on the alternatives analysis and the potential impacts to be included in the scope of the EIS.

The agency scoping meeting (joint meeting with all of the corridor projects with a Center City Charlotte focus) was held on September 27, 2000 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center (CMGC). The comprehensive list of invited agencies can be found in the *Major Investment Study (MIS) Scoping Summary Report* (2001). The purpose of the agency scoping meeting was to present information on all four corridor MISs and provide federal, state and local agencies an opportunity for questions and comments on the four corridors. Input and comments received at the agency scoping meeting were primarily related to how various resources should be addressed in the definition and analysis of alternatives. Specific questions and comments from all scoping meetings can be found in the *Major Investment Study (MIS) Scoping Summary Report*.

At the initiation of the Draft EIS, CATS solicited public and agency input through a scoping update process in 2005 and 2006. The purpose of these additional scoping outreach activities was to keep the public and other interested parties informed of the proposed LYNX BLE progress and to receive additional input as conceptual engineering and the Draft EIS progressed. During these efforts, concern was expressed to CATS regarding the alignment not entering and serving the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) campus and regarding the proposed station spacing in the University City area. As a result of the scoping update process, the proposed project alignment was modified to include a campus alignment with a station and the station locations were adjusted within the University City area. The additional scoping outreach activities, including the public and agency written comments, are documented within the *Scoping Summary Report Update* (October, 2005).

In June 2006, the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) adopted these changes and the Refined-Locally Preferred Alternative (R-LPA). The R-LPA was incorporated into the agency's *2030 Transit Corridor System Plan* and CATS subsequently entered into the Preliminary Engineering phase.

22.1.2 Draft EIS Review Process

In November 2007, CATS began the Preliminary Engineering phase and the development of the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS was completed and signed by CATS and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in August 2010. On August 17, 2010, CATS distributed the Draft EIS to Federal, State and local agency officials, interested parties, affected parties and local libraries and other depositories. The notice of availability (NOA) was published in the *Federal Register* on August 27, 2010. The NOA to solicit public comment was circulated to over 10,000 elected and appointed officials, agency representatives, interested parties, property owners, stakeholders and entities potentially affected by any of the alternatives. Bilingual posters and flyers were distributed along the alignment. Advertisements announcing the Draft EIS ran in four local papers, the Charlotte Observer, La Noticia, Charlotte Post, and Que Pasa. Bilingual alerts were placed on all bus and rail vehicles. This notification commenced the 45-day circulation period, which concluded on October 12, 2010. Public meetings for the LYNX BLE Draft EIS were held on September 9 and 14, 2010 and the public hearing was held on September 22, 2010. A summary of the comments and responses to comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period are included in the Chapter 23.0: Draft EIS Review Comments and Responses and in Appendix B: Agency Correspondence and Appendix I: Public Comments.

22.1.3 Scope Reduction Process

In November 2010, the MTC directed CATS to reduce the project scope by approximately 20 percent to achieve a project cost of about \$800 million. CATS initiated an extensive coordination and evaluation effort to redefine the project to fit within this budget. Coordination took place interdepartmentally within the City and County as well as with UNC Charlotte, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), FTA and stakeholders. Project team members led a series of meetings, which are summarized in Table 22-1. Additional information about the scope reduction process can be found in the *LYNX BLE Scope Reduction Report* (May 2011).

**Table 22-1
LYNX BLE Scope Reduction Decision Process Meetings**

Meeting Date	Entity	Meeting Purpose
November 17, 2010	MTC	To receive direction to re-scope the LYNX BLE project, the goal of which was to reduce capital costs by 20 percent and operations and maintenance costs by 6.5 percent.
November 22, 2010	Key Business Executives (KBE)	To discuss proposed process for evaluation of cost reductions and to receive KBE guidance and policy direction.
November 29, 2010	Project Management Team	To define potential cost saving opportunities and identify pros/cons of each item.
December 1, 2010	Transportation and Planning Cabinet	To receive KBE confirmation of path forward.
December 3, 2010	FTA	To provide an update on the status of re-scoping the proposed project and obtain guidance on the implications of the project development process, including on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
December 7, 2010	Project Management Team	To develop and/or confirm recommendation on one or two overall cost reduction options for the Growth Strategy Steering Team (GSST) and MTC to consider.
December 7, 2010	UNC Charlotte and University City Partners	To discuss implications of the re-scoped project with UNC Charlotte and University City Partners relative to the interests of their constituents.
December 8, 2010	MTC Managers	To provide a preview of the presentation to be made to the MTC on December 15, 2010.
December 9, 2010	Growth Strategy Steering Team (GSST)	To provide KBEs with a review of the recommendations to be presented to the MTC on December 15, 2010.
December 14, 2010	Citizens Transit Advisory Group	To present a summary of the recommendations to be presented to MTC on December 15, 2010
December 15, 2010	Project Management Oversight Contractor	To discuss process for advancing the re-scoped project through 65% design and environmental review.

Table 22-1 (continued)
LYNX BLE Scope Reduction Decision Process Meetings

Meeting Date	Entity	Meeting Purpose
December 15, 2010	MTC	To present recommended project changes to the MTC for consideration.
January 10, 2011	Charlotte City Council	To present a summary of the proposed project changes and review the revised budget.
January 12, 2011	Public Meeting	To present proposed project changes and seek input.
January 14, 2011	Transit Services Advisory Committee	To present a summary of the proposed project changes that will be recommended for adoption to the MTC on January 26, 2011.
January 19, 2011	MTC Managers	To provide a preview of the presentation to be made to the MTC on January 26, 2011.
January 26, 2011	MTC	To adopt the revised project.

Staff presented the proposed scope changes to the LYNX BLE project to the MTC on December 15, 2010. CATS then presented the proposed scope changes at a public meeting held on January 12, 2011. An additional meeting was scheduled for January 11, but was canceled due to inclement weather conditions. CATS distributed public comment cards and posted an electronic version on its website to collect public opinions regarding the proposed project changes. CATS received a total of 298 responses to the question, “Overall, do you support the proposed project changes?”, and 76 percent of respondents supported the proposed scope reduction changes.

On January 26, 2011, staff presented the recommended action item to MTC to revise the LPA alignment and station locations for the proposed LYNX BLE. The MTC approved in Resolution 2011-01, a revised LPA alignment and station locations for the proposed project. Copies of the MTC agenda items, as well as a summary of the public input received, is included in Appendix A.

On April 13, 2011, CATS staff mailed letters to more than 60 property owners along the LYNX BLE alignment (see Appendix I). These letters were notification for properties identified as potential full or partial acquisitions that may not have received notification during the Draft EIS or were not affected by the project design at the time the Draft EIS was submitted. Staff members have responded to numerous calls, emails and meeting requests regarding potential property acquisitions and the right-of-way acquisition process that will begin after the Record of Decision.

22.2 Public Involvement Program

A detailed Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed for the proposed LYNX BLE to involve all stakeholders in the proposed project study process and to help the project team to define the transit and land use issues that characterize the Northeast Corridor. The PIP is a plan for actively seeking input from the public throughout the planning, design and construction phases of the proposed project. The PIP identifies strategies to inform citizens of study activities and milestones and identifies forums and tools for public participation. In addition to traditional outreach methods, CATS incorporated social media and electronic notification into the PIP, increasing the number of individuals receiving project information. The PIP reflects the CATS and the City of Charlotte’s well-established history of conducting proactive outreach programs in the community and focuses on achieving public awareness and interaction throughout the entire project LYNX BLE development process.

The PIP goals include the following:

- Inform/educate citizens in a factual and objective manner about the transit/land use plan and its associated opportunities and challenges in the Northeast Corridor;
- Proactively seek the participation and views of the Northeast Corridor community so transit/land use improvements reflect the needs of the community;
- Incorporate citizen feedback and input at all levels of the decision-making process; and,
- Ensure that all public involvement activities identify and address the needs of special populations in the Northeast Corridor.

Direct public participation includes scoping and focus group meetings, mailings, individual/group contacts and public and neighborhood meetings. These activities are summarized below. Public participation will continue with the Final EIS, final design and throughout construction.

22.2.1 Public Workshops

Public workshops were held, beginning in July 2000, to obtain feedback on the proposed LYNX BLE. Throughout the planning process, representatives from the community have been invited to participate in public workshops to offer input on the proposed project. Between July 2000 and April 2011, 42 public workshops were held with a total of approximately 1,567 people in attendance. Public workshops generally follow an open-house format with a formal presentation. Attendees are given the opportunity to provide verbal and written feedback regarding the proposed project. Table 22-2 provides the dates, purpose, location and number of attendees for each meeting, and if applicable the number of postcards distributed for notification.

Table 22-2
Summary of Public Workshops

Date	Public Meeting	Attendance	Postcard Notification
07/20/2000	Corridor Kickoff Public Meeting, CMGC	93	n/a
09/26/2000	Major Investment Study (MIS) Scoping Public Meeting, Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church	10	n/a
09/28/2000	MIS Scoping Public Meeting, Sugaw Creek Recreation Center	25	n/a
01/08/2001	MIS Screening Public Meeting, Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church	18	n/a
01/23/2001	MIS Screening Public Meeting, Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	36	n/a
10/09/2001	MIS Public Meeting, Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	22	n/a
08/27/2002	MIS Public Meeting, Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	64	n/a
02/22/2005	EIS Kick-off Outreach Public Meeting	9	8,000
02/24/2005	EIS Kick-off Outreach Public Meeting	10	
03/01/2005	EIS Kick-off Outreach Public Meeting	25	
04/05/2005	Northeast Corridor Public Meeting	31	8,000
04/07/2005	Northeast Corridor Public Meeting	26	
06/07/2005	Northeast Corridor Station Location Workshop	18	8,500
06/09/2005	Northeast Corridor Station Location Workshop	20	
09/06/2005	Northeast Corridor Station Area Planning Workshop	23	8,500
09/08/2005	Northeast Corridor Station Area Planning Workshop	28	
12/06/2005	Northeast Corridor Public Workshop	29	6,600
12/07/2005	Northeast Corridor Public Workshop	25	
05/01/2006	Northeast Corridor Design Options Public Meeting	38	8,000
05/02/2006	Northeast Corridor Design Options Public Meeting	26	
06/05/2006	Northeast Corridor Public Meeting - Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) Presentation	40	8,000
06/06/2006	Northeast Corridor Public Meeting - MTC Presentation	34	
03/03/2008	Preliminary Engineering (PE) Kick-Off Presentation - Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	85	12,711
03/04/2008	PE Kick Off Presentation - University Hilton	105	
04/29/2008	UNC Charlotte Public Forum	100	n/a
07/10/2008	Sugar Creek vs. NCRR Alignment - Oasis Shriners Center	52	12,046
07/15/2008	Sugar Creek vs. NCRR Alignment - Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	84	

**Table 22-2 (continued)
Summary of Public Workshops**

Date	Public Meeting	Attendance	Postcard Notification
01/13/2009	Sugar Creek/NCRR Alignment Study Results and Recommendation and Station Site Plans - Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	94	11,580
01/15/2009	Sugar Creek/NCRR Alignment Study Results and Recommendation and Station Site Plans - Oasis Shriners Center	49	
02/16/2009	LYNX BLE Update - CMGC, City Employees	64	n/a
03/24/2009	Community Art Meeting - University Hills Baptist Church	10	n/a
03/31/2009	Community Art Meeting - Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	37	n/a
09/29/2009	LYNX BLE Update - Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	54	11,000
09/30/2009	LYNX BLE Update - Oasis Shriners Center	54	
01/14/2010	Art-in-Transit, Zone 1 – Belmont Regional Library	12	n/a
01/19/2010	Art-in-Transit, Zone 3 – University Hills Baptist Church	5	n/a
01/26/2010	Art-in-Transit, Zone 2 – Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	7	n/a
09/09/2010	DEIS & 30% Design - Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church	30	9,945
09/14/2010	DEIS & 30% Design – CMGC – City Employees	22	
09/14/2010	DEIS & 30% Design – Oasis Shriners Center	19	
09/22/2010	DEIS Public Hearing – CMGC (6 speakers)	6	
01/12/2011	BLE Cost Reductions – Oasis Shriners Center	28	9,200
Total	42	1,567	

22.2.2 Community Meetings

Representatives from CATS’ LYNX BLE staff participated in numerous speaking engagements to inform the community and interested parties on the progress and scope of the proposed project. Several different organizations were involved in the individual meetings such as: homeowners’ associations, chambers of commerce, and neighborhood organizations. As of August 2011, a total of 121 individual citizen meetings have been held, with a total of approximately 4,516 people in attendance. Table 22-3 provides the dates, organizations and number of attendees for each meeting. In addition, CATS meets regularly with major stakeholders in the corridor, including representatives of the railroads, utilities, UNC Charlotte and NCDOT. CATS also met with various development groups and property owners to coordinate project design and property concerns. CATS seeks to design the station and station areas that are representative of the community while meeting CATS project goals and staying within the policy guidelines. As the project approaches the final design phase, meetings will increase with property owners and developers to address right-of-way needs and the real estate acquisition process.

**Table 22-3
Community Meetings**

Date	Organization/Event	Attendance
06/08/2000	Optimist Park Neighborhood Association Meeting	25
02/07/2001	Historic Rosedale Neighborhood Association Meeting	13
02/18/2001	Hunters Chase Neighborhood Association Meeting	15
03/13/2001	Autumnwood Neighborhood Association Meeting	13
06/22/2001	Belmont Neighborhood Jamboree	16
07/19/2001	Hidden Valley Neighborhood Meeting	21
07/24/ 2001	Derita Area Meeting	34
11/05/2001	Graham Heights Neighborhood Association Meeting	31
04/18/2000	First Union CIC Advisory Group Meeting	18
06/20/2000	First Union CIC Advisory Group Meeting	35
06/20/2000	I-85 Improvement Study Meeting	10
10/12/2000	Tryon North Development Corporation Kick-off	80
11/16/2000	Tryon North Development Corporation Meeting	38
07/18/2001	Tryon North Development Corporation Meeting	25
07/25/2001	UNC Charlotte Urban Institute Meeting	5
07/27/2001	Lowe's Motor Speedway	1
08/02/2001	Mayor's International Cabinet	40
08/21/2001	Landex (developer of King's Grant)	1
08/21/2001	Verizon Wireless Amphitheater (formerly Verizon Pavilion)	2
09/28/2001	University Research Park Stakeholders Meeting	10
10/02/2001	Southwest Cabarrus Rotary Club Meeting	25
11/29/2001	Meeting with Northeast Corridor Business/Neighborhood Leaders	22
06/01/2002	Historic North Charlotte Historic Home Tour and Festival	15
07/07/2002	University City Area Council Luncheon	60
08/15/2002	Tryon North Development Corporation representatives	4
08/15/2002	Cabarrus County Commissioners Meeting	45
11/13/2002	Hidden Valley Community Development Corporation	14
06/24/2004	Tryon North Development Corporation	25
07/08/2004	University City Area Council Luncheon	40
07/14/2005	University City Area Chamber	80
10/18/2005	North Davidson (NoDa) Business and Homeowners' Associations	28
10/20/2005	Northwest Area Council Economic Development Conference	200
04/12/2006	District Four meeting with Councilman Barnes	25
02/06/2007	Rotary Club, Lowes Speedway Club	21
11/01/2007	University City Partners (UCP) Annual Conference	80
11/12/2007	University Research Park (URP) Community Meeting	10
01/02/2008	Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods	40
01/29/2008	Coldwell Bankers	22
02/13/2008	University City Partners	55
02/18/2008	UNC Charlotte Students - History/AIT project	30
03/05/2008	North Tryon Development Corporation	35
05/01/2008	UNC Charlotte Students Exhibit - History/AIT Project	60
06/03/2008	Hidden Valley Community Association	35

Table 22-3 (continued)
Community Meetings

Date	Organization/Event	Attendance
06/03/2008	NoDa Business and Homeowners' Associations	60
06/10/2008	Howie Acres and Herrinwood Community Meeting	8
07/17/2008	Developers Meeting	24
08/05/2008	NoDa Neighborhood Association	40
09/12/2008	UNC Charlotte Engineering Class	60
09/30/2008	NoDa Board	10
10/01/2008	UCP Urban Design Meeting	10
10/02/2008	UCP Annual Meeting	60
11/08/2008	Carolinas Medical Center	8
11/11/2008	NoDa Neighborhood Association	30
12/02/2008	Hidden Valley Community Association	12
01/27/2009	Knollwood Acres Homeowner's Group	15
02/04/2009	North End Partners	20
02/10/2009	Villa Heights	24
02/19/2009	Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting	12
03/24/2009	WBAV FM (V101. 9) radio interview with Bea Thompson	n/a
04/14/2009	NoDa Board Meeting	7
04/22/2009	UCP – Economic Development Conference	80
04/22/2009	Earth Day Event at UNC Charlotte	50
04/26/2009	Welwyn Home Owners Association	25
05/03/2009	Fanta Festival at McAlpine Creek Park	75
05/05/2009	NoDa Neighborhood Association	25
05/16/2009	Neighborhood Symposium	452
05/21/2009	La Tremenda radio station (1310 AM)	n/a
05/27/2009	Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting	8
06/08/2009	Charlotte Area Bicycle Alliance (CABA)	23
06/18/2009	Charlotte Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting	125
08/03/2009	Johnson & Wales University Charlotte (JWU) orientation fairs	100
08/04/2009	Hidden Valley National Night Out	150
08/17/2009	Latin American Chamber of Commerce of Charlotte	35
08/20/2009	Quarterly Stakeholders Meeting	17
08/27/2009	UNC Charlotte WOW! Fall Vendor Fair	30
09/01/2009	Johnson & Wales University Charlotte (JWU) orientation fairs	100
09/09/2009	CATS Interim CEO provided an update to CATS rail operators and maintenance employees	32
09/12/2009	Hidden Valley Neighborhood Annual Parade and Festival	25
09/28/2009	UNC Charlotte - Geography Class	15
10/01/2009	University Research Park	40
10/12/2009	Sixth Annual North Carolina Transportation Hall of Fame	300
10/13/2009	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - Navigating America	14
10/17/2009	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - Navigating America	14
10/26/2009	Professional Engineers of NC (PENC), South Piedmont	25
11/12/2009	Howie Acres Neighborhood Association	23
11/19/2009	UNC Charlotte - Urban Transportation Design	26

**Table 22-3 (continued)
Community Meetings**

Date	Organization/Event	Attendance
12/15/ 2009	Orlando Sentinel Reporter, tour and interview	2
01/20/2010	Wofford College student interview and tour	4
02/15/2010	The Shepherd’s Center of Charlotte, AIT update	110
02/17/2010	Henry County Chamber of Commerce, Cultural Diversity and Cultural Development Committees	35
04/14/2010	UNC Charlotte Business Journalism student interview	1
04/16/2010	Charlotte Chamber Annual Transportation Summit	90
04/20/2010	Frank Bishop Realtors	1
04/21/2010	Levine Properties	3
04/21/2010	WTS Charlotte Metro Chapter Banquet	40
04/22/2010	Earth Day Fair at Lance	45
04/28/2010	District 4, Town Hall Meeting, Councilmember Barnes	60
06/14/2010	University City Partners	25
07/13/2010	Past, Present, and Future to the Southpark Chamber of Commerce	70
07/15/2010	Stockholder’s meeting at Sugaw Creek Church Presbyterian Church	15
08/26/2010	UCP Board Retreat	22
09/07/2010	NoDa	15
09/07/2010	Hidden Valley Community Association	41
10/2010	Norsan Multimedia, Ms. Angles Ortega-Moore, publisher	1
11/17/2010	David Freudberg, NPR	1
11/18/2010	UCP Board Meeting	18
01/04/2011	Gary Ritter, Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) History Instructor, for a documentary, The History of Trains in Charlotte	2
01/18/2011	NECI Bicycle Plan Stakeholder/Public Meeting	16
02/03/ 2011	Plaza Shamrock Neighborhood Association	12
02/24/2011	UCP Board Meeting	25
03/03/2011	CABA – BLE TOD update	15
03/10/2011	Councilmember Barnes Town Hall Meeting	50
03/18/2011	David Anderson, Queens University student	1
03/21/2011	SCETV, Columbia, SC - LYNX Blue Line & land use/TOD	5
03/29/2011	Charleston Trident Association of Realtors	12
04/05/2011	NoDa Neighborhood Association (AIT presentation)	50
04/16/2011	Community Symposium at Central Piedmont Community College	70
04/27/2011	NECI Bicycle Plan Stakeholder/Public Meeting	17
05/03/2011	University Partners Owners Association (UPOA)/CASTO/UCP/UNC Charlotte - JW Clay parking deck design	17
06/09/2011	Villa Heights, Belmont, and Optimist Park (AIT presentation)	5
08/11/2011	Alpha Mill Apartments Meeting	7
Totals	121	4,516

22.2.3 Newsletters

The LYNX BLE project team publishes a newsletter, entitled *Blue Line Extension (Northeast Corridor) Transitions*, to provide interested citizens with updates on the proposed project. The newsletter features articles about the proposed project and includes information about land use, economic development, upcoming meetings and other projects within the corridor. The publication is mailed to those on the project mailing list and e-mailed to those enrolled in the City of Charlotte’s electronic subscription service. The newsletter is made available at, but not limited to, corridor public meetings, neighborhood

presentations, transit fairs and the CATS offices in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center. Table 22-4 lists the newsletter distribution for *Blue Line Extension (Northeast Corridor) Transitions*.

**Table 22-4
Blue Line Extension (Northeast Corridor) Transitions
Newsletter Distribution**

Newsletter Issue Date	Circulation Per Newsletter
Winter 2005	n/a
Summer 2005	1,485
Spring 2006	n/a
Fall 2006	860
Winter 2007 (2030 Corridor System Plan Summary)	n/a
Summer 2007	868
Winter 2008	874
Spring 2008	870
Summer/Fall 2008	762
Summer/Fall 2009	775
Summer/Fall 2010	2,613 (Electronic version)

22.2.4 Website

Throughout the course of the proposed project, CATS has maintained a LYNX BLE project specific website. The website is available through a link on CATS’ primary website located at www.ridetransit.org. The website also includes a free translation tool which can translate transit information in 51 languages. Information contained on the website includes the following:

- Description of the proposed project
- Map of the proposed alignment and station locations
- Maps of real estate and environmental features
- Information about light rail stations and vehicles including renderings
- Transit Station Area Principles
- Published editions of the *Blue Line Extension (Northeast Corridor) Transitions* newsletter
- Notification of upcoming public involvement activities
- Summaries and presentations of past public meetings
- Frequently asked questions about the proposed project
- Comment card allowing users to provide input into the proposed project
- LYNX BLE Fast Facts
- Draft EIS and supporting documents
- Final EIS and supporting documents

22.2.5 Citizens Transit Advisory Group

The Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CTAG) is an ongoing advisory committee of the MTC with system-wide responsibilities. The CTAG reviews long-range transit system planning and proposed operating and capital programs from the community’s perspective, and makes recommendations to the MTC – the policy-setting board for CATS. While the CTAG is not a policy-making body, its recommendations to the MTC ensure public involvement in transit planning. CTAG contains 13 citizens appointed by the MTC members from their respective jurisdictions. The Mayor of Charlotte and Chairman of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners also appoint one member each. The CTAG membership is as follows (with number of appointees from each MTC member jurisdiction in parenthesis):

- Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners (3)
- City of Charlotte City Council (3)
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Board of Education(1)
- Town of Cornelius (1)
- Town of Davidson (1)
- Town of Huntersville (1)
- Town of Matthews (1)
- Town of Mint Hill (1)
- Town of Pineville (1)

CATS staff made regular presentations to the CTAG throughout the project to provide updates and seek input. Table 22-5 includes a list of the meetings that included a discussion of the LYNX BLE project.

**Table 22-5
CTAG Meetings**

Meeting Date	Topic
03/18/2008	Project status - BLE Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase
02/17/2009	Sugar Creek/NCRR alignment alternative study results & recommendations
11/17/2009	FFY10/11 – Federal funding priorities update
02/16/2010	2030 Plan update
05/18/2010	Project update 30% design; upcoming Draft EIS review and cost estimate
08/17/2010	New Starts update
12/14/2010	Scope reduction update
01/25/2011	Scope reduction recommendations
02/15/2011	Coordination with NCDOT update

22.2.6 Transit Services Advisory Committee

The Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) reviews, makes recommendations and provides input into short-range transit operations. The TSAC is made up of customers of CATS, appointed by the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and the six Mecklenburg County Towns. The TSAC focuses on day-to-day operations of the transit service to ensure that it meets the needs of the community. It makes recommendations to the MTC on issues within its sphere of interest, and promotes public involvement in short-term transit planning. CATS staff made presentations to the TSAC throughout the project to provide updates and seek input. Table 22-6 includes a list of the meetings that included a discussion of the LYNX BLE project.

**Table 22-6
TSAC Meetings**

Meeting Date	Topic
12/11/2008	Project status update
01/14/2010	Stations, alignment and funding schedule
01/13/2011	Scope reduction recommendations

22.3 Project Notification Lists

CATS maintains a county-wide, corridor database for use in direct mail contacts with corridor property owners, occupants and other stakeholders. The original list of approximately 500 names was obtained from the 2025 *Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan* public involvement efforts. The corridor database has been supplemented with additional individuals, organizations and other interested parties who have requested to be added to the list. The current database for all of the CATS Corridors contains approximately 6,800 contacts.

The LYNX BLE project database is part of the CATS Corridor database and includes a mailing list for people specifically interested in the LYNX BLE. There are currently 870 mailing addresses (as of April 2011) listed in the LYNX BLE project database, including individuals located in and around the Northeast

Corridor study area and/or individuals who have expressed specific interest in the LYNX BLE. The LYNX BLE project database is used for distribution of LYNX BLE public meeting invitations, newsletters and other relative LYNX BLE information, as needed.

CATS maintains a list of property owners and residents within a ¼-mile on each side of the proposed project alignment and/or property owners and residents within ½-mile of the proposed transit stations. This list is developed using the parcels contained in the Mecklenburg County Geographic Information System (GIS). The property owners and residents list supplements the LYNX BLE project database and is used for notifications of public meetings.

Additionally, there are approximately 2,770 email subscriptions to the City of Charlotte's electronic subscription service. These email subscribers receive public meeting, newsletter notifications and other relative LYNX BLE information, as needed.

22.4 Environmental Justice Outreach

The proposed LYNX BLE is committed to meeting all environmental justice requirements necessary to comply with Executive Order 12898. As such, CATS identified specific communities of concern located along the proposed alignment where the community is primarily minority or low-income. Concentrations of transit-dependent populations, such as elderly, children and households without a vehicle, as well as other special population groups near the proposed project, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP) were also identified. Additional information about these communities of concern is detailed in Chapter 6.0: Neighborhoods, Community Services and Environmental Justice.

CATS outreach has been customized and personalized to ensure that everyone in the community has an opportunity to engage in the public process. Given the importance of outreach to the communities of concern with potential project impacts identified in this Final EIS, CATS has designed outreach to specifically target environmental justice communities. As detailed in Chapter 6.0: Neighborhoods, Community Services and Environmental Justice, communities of concern include: Pines Mobile Home Park (located within the Hidden Valley neighborhood), Hampshire Hills, Plaza-Shamrock and Mallard Creek Apartments (located within the University City South neighborhood). To date, targeted outreach has included:

Hampshire Hills

Residents and business owners located in Hampshire Hills received notification and had the opportunity to participate in the public meetings held at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, located adjacent to the Hampshire Hills neighborhood. These meetings were advertised in English and Spanish and made accessible to residents and business owners located within this community of concern. Due to the proximity of the Hampshire Hills neighborhood to the Hidden Valley Neighborhood, the additional meetings described below for the Hidden Valley neighborhood were also made accessible to residents and business owners of Hampshire Hills.

Pines Mobile Home Park (Hidden Valley)

The Pines Mobile Home Park is located in the Hidden Valley neighborhood. Residents and business owners in Hidden Valley received notification and had the opportunity to participate in public meetings held at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, located across from the Hidden Valley neighborhood. These meetings were advertised in English and Spanish and made accessible to residents and business owners located within this community of concern.

Hidden Valley has multiple registered neighborhood groups including a community association, neighborhood association, community development corporation, and a political action committee. CATS has made presentations at several neighborhood meetings. CATS was able to coordinate door-to-door distribution of bilingual project updates and public meeting invitations with the distribution of the neighborhood newsletter. Additionally, CATS was able to distribute bilingual project updates and public meeting invitations at Hope Haven, located within the Hidden Valley community. CATS staff participated with an information booth for both the annual Hidden Valley National Night Out event as well as the neighborhood festival. These neighborhood events were also open to adjacent neighborhoods like Hampshire Hills.

Plaza Shamrock

Residents and business owners located in Plaza Shamrock received notification and had the opportunity to participate in the public meetings held at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, located in close proximity to the Plaza Shamrock neighborhood. The Plaza Shamrock Neighborhood Association (PSNA) invited CATS to present at a PSNA meeting. CATS staff presented the LYNX BLE project alignment and design, cost reductions and design changes after the 30 percent design was complete, next steps and bus connections. Area residents were interested in access and bus connections to the stations, the project's funding, construction timeframe and impact of the Sugar Creek Road grade separation project.

Mallard Creek Apartments (University City South)

The University City South neighborhood area includes several neighborhood and condominium associations as well as multiple managed apartment communities. Since there is no single neighborhood association for this community of concern, public meetings were held within proximity to the University City South Neighborhood; the location of the Mallard Creek Apartments. These meetings were advertised in English and Spanish and made accessible to residents and business owners located within this community of concern.

Additionally, CATS held a forum at UNC Charlotte, which was open to the public, and held adjacent to the Mallard Creek Apartments. This meeting was advertised through CATS and UNC Charlotte with the purpose of reaching out to residents living both on campus, and off-campus in the surrounding apartment communities, which includes the Mallard Creek Apartments. Although this community of concern is still located within the proposed project corridor, due to the recent project scope reductions since the Draft EIS, this community will no longer be directly affected by the proposed project.

Special Population Group - LEP Outreach

The proposed project corridor contains areas with concentrations of heavily Spanish-speaking populations. Specifically, limited English proficient Spanish-speaking populations are located within the Hampshire Hills and Hidden Valley communities of concern. For that reason, CATS provided additional Spanish language outreach to target these special population groups, both within the project corridor and the communities of concern. Outreach to date has included the following:

- A staff appearance on an hour-long talk show on La Tremenda (1310 AM) Spanish radio, providing project information in Spanish to listeners;
- An information booth with bilingual staff and project information at the annual Fanta Festival, a regional Hispanic festival;
- Door-to-door distribution of bilingual project updates and public meeting invitations in the Hidden Valley community;
- Distribution of bilingual project updates and public meeting invitations at Hope Haven, located in the Hidden Valley community;
- Project presentation updates at the Latin American Chamber of Commerce Charlotte, whose members represent Hispanic businesses in the community;
- Project presentation updates to the Latin American Coalition, Charlotte's oldest and largest Hispanic service agency;
- Spanish advertisements published in local Spanish papers to announce all project public meetings;
- Bilingual project materials posted on the CATS' project website, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- Free translation tool provided via Google Language tools on CATS website which can translate transit information in 51 languages, including French, German, Hindi, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese (the most spoken in the Charlotte area);
- Bilingual customer service staff available through the CATS call center to provide translated project information as well as information about public meetings; and
- All public meetings are held at locations in close proximity to and easily accessible to communities of concern.

CATS plans to continue targeted outreach to communities of concern. Postcard notification that the Draft EIS as well as the Final EIS were available for review and public comment, as well as the locations of public meetings and the Draft EIS public hearing, was sent to property owners located within ¼ mile of the alignment and ½ mile at the station areas. Bilingual letter notification that the Draft EIS was available for review and public comment, as well as the locations of public meetings and public hearing, was sent to organizations, groups and associations within the project corridor limits who are listed on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department “Neighborhood Organization Contact List,” including the communities of concern. Bilingual letters were also distributed property owners with potential project impacts, including property owners with potential impacts within communities of concern. An additional bilingual letter was sent to approximately 60 property owners with potential project impacts in April 2011 (see Appendix I).

Additionally, CATS made efforts to distribute bilingual materials to communities of concern and when permitted post materials within common areas of property management offices. CATS sought opportunities to present the Draft EIS findings to the communities of concern during their regularly scheduled meetings. Bilingual staff members have been and will continue to be available as requested during public and community meetings. Staff also appeared on the local Spanish radio station to provide project information in Spanish to listeners, including public meeting and hearing information. Efforts to target outreach to communities of concern will continue with the Final EIS, for the remaining design periods and throughout construction as necessary.

22.5 Agency Coordination

22.5.1 Cooperating/Participating Agencies

A portion of the Preferred Alternative would travel in the median of North Tryon Street/US-29. Due to the jurisdiction/authority over North Tryon Street/US-29, per SAFETEA-LU, FTA sent an invitation to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the proposed LYNX BLE Project. FHWA declined the invitation to be a Cooperating Agency, but asked to be a Participating Agency in accordance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU (see Appendix B: Agency Correspondence).

22.5.2 Federal Transit Administration/CATS Coordination Activities

CATS and the FTA hold Quarterly Meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to review the status of CATS projects, including the LYNX BLE, address major issues and federal requirements, and for FTA to provide federal oversight and guidance.

22.5.3 City-wide Interdepartmental Coordination

CATS and the City of Charlotte have developed an integrated and coordinated approach to provide oversight and management of the LYNX BLE. A Project Management Plan (PMP) has been developed to assist with the management of all elements of the LYNX BLE. It provides an overview of the management requirements and programs that are needed to implement an efficient and cost-effective light rail system. The PMP describes the coordinated project management approach to planning, design, and implementing the proposed project. To accomplish this, three teams have been formed:

- Growth Strategy Steering Team (GSST);
- Corridor Collaboration Team (CCT); and,
- Blue Line Extension Project Team (BLE Project Team).

The GSST, chaired by the Assistant City Manager, is comprised of Key Business Executives (i. e. , Department heads), and Deputy Directors from CATS, Engineering and Property Management (E&PM), Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department (Planning), Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), Neighborhood and Business Services (NBS), and Corporate Communications. The GSST provides City oversight and policy direction for growth strategy initiatives in all corridors, including the LYNX BLE. The GSST discusses the LYNX BLE on an as-needed basis at their regular meetings which are held twice a month.

The CCT facilitates proactive collaboration among the various city departments that have active projects located within the LYNX BLE corridor. Members of the CCT come from E&PM, CATS, Planning, CDOT, Neighborhood and Business Services (NBS), Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities (CMU) and Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation (MCPR). These members are responsible for program/project development and implementation, including land use planning, economic development opportunities, transit projects, station area infrastructure initiatives and corridor infrastructure initiatives. The CCT meets monthly.

The LYNX BLE Project Team is an interdepartmental team with members from all CATS divisions, and other City and County departments involved in the planning and design of the proposed project, including Planning, CDOT, E&PM, NBS, CMU and MCPR. The LYNX BLE Project Team meets bi-weekly and reviews the status of the proposed project, discusses issues, and reviews and approves the scope of the proposed project.

22.6 Continued Coordination, Required Permits and Agency Approvals

To ensure that issues of the proposed project are fully evaluated, several agencies have been consulted during the planning and preliminary engineering phases of the proposed project, including the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE), NC Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (NCDENR) – North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ), Natural Heritage Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (SWS) and MCPR. Consultation relative to specific regulatory issues is also reflected in letters from these agencies and CATS response letters. These letters are included in Appendix B: Agency Correspondence. Coordination with local, state and federal agencies will continue as necessary.

22.6.1 Section 4(f) De Minimis Findings

As described in Chapter 9.0: Parklands and Chapter 8.0: Cultural Resources, FTA is making a *de minimis* Section 4(f) finding as part of this Final EIS. See also Appendix B: Agency Coordination for correspondence with MCPR and SHPO regarding the *de minimis* Section 4(f) findings.

22.6.2 Required Permits

Table 22-7 lists the major federal, state and local permits and approvals required for the proposed project.

**Table 22-7
Required Environmental Permits and Approvals**

Permit/Approval	Permitting/Approval Agency	Reason
Federal		
Clean Water Act Section 404 Individual Permit	US Army Corp of Engineers (USCOE)	Stream and wetland impacts
State		
Brownfields Program	NC Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (NCDENR)	Redevelopment of Norfolk Southern Intermodal Yard property
Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification	NC Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ)	Stream and wetland impacts
Well Abandonment/Closure	NC Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ)/Mecklenburg County Groundwater and Wastewater Services	Well located on the UNC Charlotte campus within the proposed project alignment
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Permit	NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR)	Storm water discharge during construction activities
Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan	Division of Land Resources (NCDLR)	Land disturbance from construction

**Table 22-7 (continued)
Required Environmental Permits and Approvals**

Permit/Approval	Permitting/Approval Agency	Reason
Local		
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) No-Rise Certification	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (SWS) Floodplain Management	Crossing of Little Sugar Creek and Toby Creek
Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR)	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (SWS) Flood Mitigation Program	Crossing of Little Sugar Creek and Toby Creek
Storm Water Management Plan	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (SWS)	Impervious surface storm water collection and treatment
SWIM Buffers	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (SWS)	Stream buffer encroachment
Post Construction Controls Ordinance (PCCO)	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (SWS)	Reduce storm water pollution and flooding in the corridor
Transportation Facilities Construction Permit (Air Quality Permit)	Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA)	Air quality compliance for the University City Boulevard parking facility
Waterline Relocations and New Water Mains	Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities (CMU)	Public and private utilities are located throughout the project corridor, including water mains that may be in conflict with the project.

22.6.3 Agency Approvals and Agreements

NCDOT Municipal Agreement: The City of Charlotte and NCDOT will execute a Municipal Agreement for the construction of the proposed project within the median of North Tryon Street/US-29.

State Property Office Approval: The UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees and the State Property Office have approved the granting of an easement for the alignment onto the UNC Charlotte campus through state owned property.

Other Third Party Agreements: A number of agreements with third parties would be required to implement the proposed project, including agreements with railroads and utilities, related to the construction, operation and funding of the LYNX BLE.