



MOVING CHARLOTTE FORWARD

Blue Line Extension: Northeast Corridor

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LYNX Blue Line Extension to Begin Service in March 2018

Charlotte, N.C. – The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) has determined that the LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE) will not open in August 2017 as previously communicated. This updated schedule opening is due to construction coordination challenges and remaining system integration testing, vehicle burn-in, signalization testing and safety reviews. The BLE project remains under budget, and any additional costs due to schedule lengthening will not increase the original \$1.16 billion budget. Although the new opening date for the LYNX BLE service is March 31, 2018, CATS is committed to work with contractors to identify any time-saving activities that will allow the system to open earlier than March 2018, a requirement of the Federal Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

CATS has pursued every available option of schedule compression in an attempt to deliver the BLE to the Charlotte region by the August 2017 schedule. Contract incentives and additional staff added to construction contracts in 2015, done to mitigate early delays due to utility relocation, construction, weather, etc., were valuable investments that kept the project from extending past the March 2018 required opening. Even with these mitigation efforts, the ambitious schedule and ongoing construction coordination continue to be a challenge, and light rail service will not begin in August as previously communicated.

“CATS is truly eager to deliver the next phase of the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan to the Charlotte region. The Blue Line Extension will provide key connections between Uptown Charlotte and UNC Charlotte, and we are grateful for the public’s patience as we work to do that. A strong transit system that offers a variety of mobility options is important for the economic well-being and quality of life in a growing region like the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community. We are committed to moving the region forward with this light rail project,” said John Lewis, Jr., CEO of CATS.

With ninety-one percent (91%) of construction complete businesses along the alignment will see less and less lane closures. Access to businesses along the alignment will continue to be maintained as the final steps of the project are completed. Following successful completion of construction activities, the public should expect to see test trains on the alignment in spring 2017. CATS expresses our gratitude to the community for its support and ongoing patience with light rail construction as we work to move the Charlotte region forward.

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