

ABSTRACT

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), prepared this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the proposed extension of the LYNX Blue Line, called the LYNX Blue Line Extension Northeast Corridor Light Rail Project (LYNX BLE), in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), this Final EIS evaluates the social, economic, environmental and transportation effects associated with a proposed light rail extension from Center City Charlotte to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte). Two alternatives are fully compared in this Final EIS: the No Build Alternative and the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative includes a 9.4 mile light rail line with 11 stations, park-and-ride facilities, and a storage yard with dispatch facility. The Preferred Alternative will provide more frequent, reliable, and time-competitive transit service in the congested Northeast Corridor, where population and employment are projected to increase significantly by 2035. The project will improve mobility and access to regional employment, educational, entertainment and retail destinations, including Center City Charlotte, University City, and UNC Charlotte. The project also supports regional land use plans that seek to focus development in growth corridors. The potential impacts of the Preferred Alternative are identified through an evaluation of land use, public policy and zoning; socio-economic conditions; neighborhoods, community services, and environmental justice; visual and aesthetic considerations; cultural resources; parklands; natural resources; water resources; noise and vibration; energy use; hazardous and contaminated materials; safety and security; acquisitions and displacements; construction impacts; and secondary and cumulative effects. Where substantial environmental impacts are anticipated and cannot be avoided, this Final EIS includes a plan for mitigating these impacts. This Final EIS also responds to comments received on the Draft EIS. A 30-day period has been established for public review of this document. Written comments may be submitted to the address below.

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