CATS CELEBRATES LYNX BLUE LINE EXTENTION RIBBON CUTTING AND INAUGURAL RIDE

Charlotte, N.C. – Cheers greeted the LYNX light rail train as it pulled into the UNC Charlotte Main station on Monday, as the Charlotte Area Transit System held a ribbon cutting and inaugural ride to recognize community leadership. Charlotte Mayor Vi Alexander Lyles, UNC Charlotte Chancellor Philip L. Dubois and local and national dignitaries gave remarks about the collaborative effort that went into building the extension and what its opening means for the city and region. "We are excited to celebrate everyone who shared in the vision that was created for a more connective Charlotte and who continue to invest in building a community of opportunities that includes jobs and education," said Mayor Lyles.

The LYNX BLE is fulfilling the vision set forth by regional leaders in the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan. The project adds 9.3 miles and 11 stations to the existing 15 stations of the LYNX Blue Line, which opened in 2007. The new alignment will run from I-485 Station in southwest Charlotte, extending beyond the current 7th Street Station in Uptown, to UNC Charlotte's main campus in northeast Charlotte. The alignment will feature station stops in notable neighborhoods like NoDA (North Davidson) and the Carolinas Medical Center, before ending on the UNC Charlotte campus. The extension also includes four new park and ride stations with approximately 3,000 spaces.

UNC Charlotte Chancellor Philip L. Dubois has praised the project, which gives students a reliable connection to Uptown and easier access to the plethora of opportunities the city holds for students. "Today, we celebrate the arrival of the Blue Line Extension to UNC Charlotte and how being connected will benefit the entire community," said Dubois. "Our students have access to the many business, cultural, and entertainment assets of Center City and the community will be able to take full advantage of the University's many academic programs and to take part in our extensive arts, cultural, and athletic offerings."

CATS CEO John Lewis noted that the event was especially meaningful for the staff who contributed to this project. "This is a great day not only for Charlotte citizens, but also for the hardworking CATS team who dedicated more than a decade to this project," said Lewis. "The completion of the BLE is but another step towards a comprehensive transportation system that will offer more choices and alternatives to traffic congestion."

CATS is still running pre-revenue service along the entire LYNX alignment until opening Mar. 16. Citizens should always stay alert when approaching rail crossings, and obey all traffic signs and signals.

For media of the BLE and of the ribbon cutting event, please visit: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2udyxkzhjzxvhat/AAAi5vw8LBzCsNSrL65GRiwLa?dl=0

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About Charlotte Area Transit System
Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is a department of the City of Charlotte and governed by the Metropolitan Transit Commission. CATS is the largest transit system between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta offering bus, rail, streetcar, vanpool and Special Transportation Services. Click here to watch a video of how to properly turn left when crossing over LYNX BLE tracks. For more information on rail safety and how to use caution at rail crossings, visit: http://charlottenc.gov/cats/rail/Pages/Rail-Safety.aspx.

About UNC Charlotte
UNC Charlotte is North Carolina's urban research university. With fall 2017 enrollment of more than 29,300 students, the University leverages its location in the state's largest city to offer internationally competitive programs of research and creative activity, exemplary undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and a focused set of community engagement initiatives. For more information regarding Light Rail at UNC Charlotte, visit: https://lightrail.uncc.edu/. For resources for the media, visit: https://lightrail.uncc.edu/resources