TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

Streetcar was not included as a possible technology for the entire length (>25 miles) of the corridor. Streetcar is intended for shorter corridors with close station spacing; using streetcar for the entirety of a long corridor such as the North Corridor would result in excessive and uncompetitive transit travel times (although streetcar could be considered on a shorter segment within the corridor).

As a result, the primary transit modes to be considered in the North Corridor are commuter rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit.

Streetcar	Light Rail / Bus Rapid Transit	Commuter Rail
		
Neighborhood circulation	Intercity connections	Regional access
– Intended for short connections within a compact urban setting – Focus is on local access and circulation	– Intended for longer - distance trips between neighborhoods across a city – Focus is on corridor and regional mobility	– Intended for longer - distance commute trips from suburbs into a central city – Focus is on access to a central city from outlying areas

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS (6:00 – 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted)

July 19 – Cornelius Town Hall: 21445 Catawba Avenue, Cornelius, NC 28031

July 31 – Davidson Town Hall: 216 S Main Street, Davidson, NC 28036

August 1 – Uptown Library: 310 N Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28202 **(11:00 am – 1:00 pm)**

August 2 – Charlotte Mecklenburg Fire Department Headquarters: 500 Dalton Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28206

August 7 – Huntersville National Night Out: Huntersville, NC 28078 **(TBD)**

August 9 – Mooresville Charles Mack Citizen Center: 215 N Main Street, Mooresville, NC 28115

August 16 – Huntersville Recreational Center: 11836 Verhoeff Drive, Huntersville, NC 828078 **(6:30 – 8:00 pm)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT:
ridetransit.org

CONTACT:
Call Center: 704-336-7433 (RIDE)
Toll Free: 1-866-779-2287 (CATS)
TDD: 704-336-5051
EMAIL: telltransit@charlottenc.gov

Online Survey available at: LYNXSystemUpdate.metroquest.com

CATS CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM

CHARLOTTE.

Last Updated: 7/16/18

LYNX RAPID TRANSIT SERVICES Red Line

July 2018 Update

Downtown Cornelius

CATS is conducting a study to reevaluate and update transit options in the North Corridor

What is the purpose of this study?

The primary purpose of the study is to conduct the necessary transportation and land use analysis for various transit alternatives to update the 2030 Transit System Corridor Plan. The current North Corridor proposal for commuter rail was identified in previous transit plans. However, due to continuing implementation challenges and the need to identify viable near-term strategies to address continuing growth in the corridor, this study will consider other options in addition to the current proposal for commuter rail.

Why is the North Corridor being studied again?

Rapid population growth and development have continued in the study area since the LPA was selected nearly twenty years ago, requiring a reevaluation of the transit technology and alignment that best serves current and future needs. Furthermore, efforts to secure an agreement with Norfolk Southern for shared use of their track infrastructure have been unsuccessful to date, and it is unknown if or when their policy may change to be more favorable toward shared use with transit.

THE CURRENT PLAN

What is the current North Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative?

The current North Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is the LYNX Red Line, a 25-mile commuter rail line from Mount Mourne to Uptown Charlotte. Trains would run along the "O" Line, a single-track freight railroad owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad. The proposed commuter rail line would serve the downtowns of Davidson, Cornelius, and Huntersville, ending at the future Charlotte Gateway Station. The current North Corridor commuter rail proposal is intended to provide peak-period commute service with limited midday service.

What is peak-period commute service?

Peak-period commute service would utilize the single-track rail to offer one-way trips into Uptown Charlotte in the morning and one-way trips out of Uptown Charlotte in the afternoon. Less frequent midday service also could be provided. Additional evening or weekend trips could be provided for special events.

What is Norfolk Southern's Rail Policy on the "O" Line?

Norfolk Southern's Passenger Rail Policy was changed in 2013 to no longer allow transit service on freight corridors including the "O" Line, which resulted from a change of corporate leadership and a desire to protect future capacity. Norfolk Southern also claims a 50-foot of right-of-way on either side of the track centerline, which restricts possible transit use of space adjacent to the "O" Line.

High-ranking officials have met with Norfolk Southern in attempts to negotiate agreeable terms for shared use of the tracks. However, Norfolk Southern has not changed their position to not allow transit service on the "O" Line.

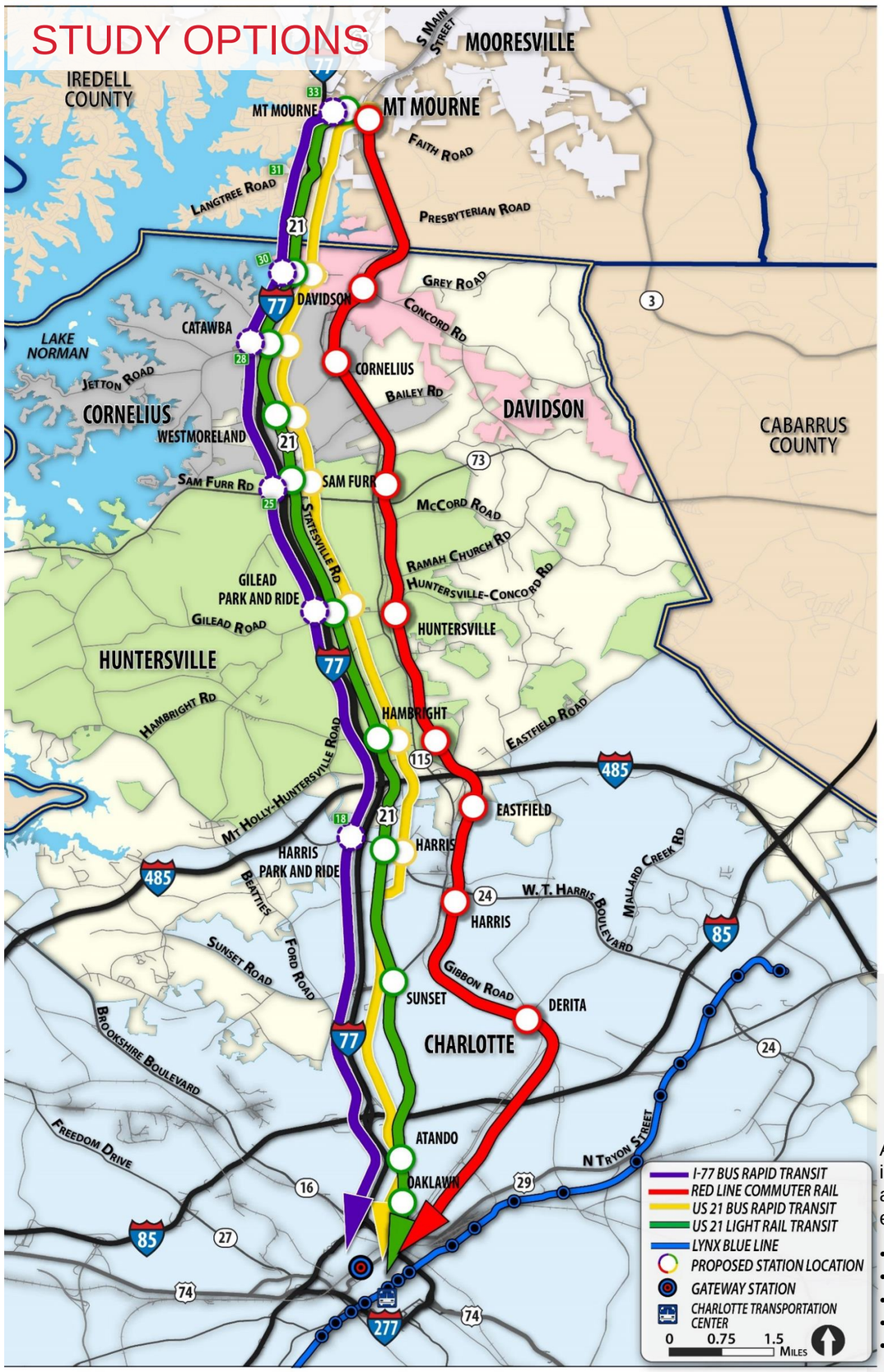
Even if Norfolk Southern were to allow transit usage, the track is currently rated for low-speed freight trains only, and significant rail upgrades would be necessary to accommodate passenger rail cars. Rail stations, train signal systems, and other safety features must also be constructed. Substantial design challenges to access Uptown Charlotte from the north would have to be overcome.

Can the "O" Line property be condemned?

Federal legislation gives railroad companies broad property and usage rights, and public agencies cannot condemn railroad property for alternative uses.

Can we build a new freight line for Norfolk Southern and then use the "O" Line?

Building a new freight line would require identifying locations for a new freight corridor and for track connections from the new corridor to the rail customers located on the "O" Line. Finding suitable locations for multiple new connections through primarily residential areas would be extremely disruptive and expensive, particularly for the more restrictive design standards of freight rail as compared to rail transit. These costs would be in addition to the costs required to upgrade the existing "O" Line for passenger service.



WHAT ARE OTHER OPTIONS?

I-77 Corridor

- The I-77 Express Lanes project is under construction. As currently planned, there will be two express lanes added in each direction between Brookshire Freeway (Exit 11) and Catawba Avenue (Exit 28), and one express lane added in each direction between Catawba Avenue and NC 150 (Exit 36).
- CATS plans to operate bus service within the Express Lanes.
- Opportunities for additional capital investments are being evaluated to further enhance bus rapid transit operations in the corridor (e.g. more direct connect ramps for buses, adjacent stations integrated with park-and-ride lots and other development, etc.)
- Light rail is not practical within the I-77 ROW due to lack of available space.

US 21 Corridor

- Light rail and bus rapid transit are being evaluated along the US 21 corridor.
- Significant ROW is available along much of the corridor. Plans for roadway widening are advancing and will use most of this ROW.
- A new bridge (for light rail) or use of the planned I-77 express lanes (for bus rapid transit) would be required north of Cornelius.

NC 115 Corridor

- Light rail and bus rapid transit were considered along the NC 115 corridor.
- Due to the close proximity of NC 115 to the Norfolk Southern "O" Line, significant property impacts would occur for necessary widening to accommodate a transit guideway.
- Required widening for a transit guideway would change the character of downtowns.
- Significant traffic impacts (restriction on turning movements, etc.) would occur.
- This corridor is not viewed as viable for a new transit guideway.

NEXT STEP:
DETAILED EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

A tremendous opportunity exists to view this project through a lens including a comprehensive mobility, land use, and quality of life approach to advance a wide range of local and regional goals. Specific evaluation criteria will be applied to each option:

- Travel speed & reliability
- Nearby population & employment
- Nearby ridership generators
- Health & community impacts
- Neighborhood impacts
- Traffic impacts
- Physical constraints
- Property impacts
- Environmental considerations
- Construction challenges