



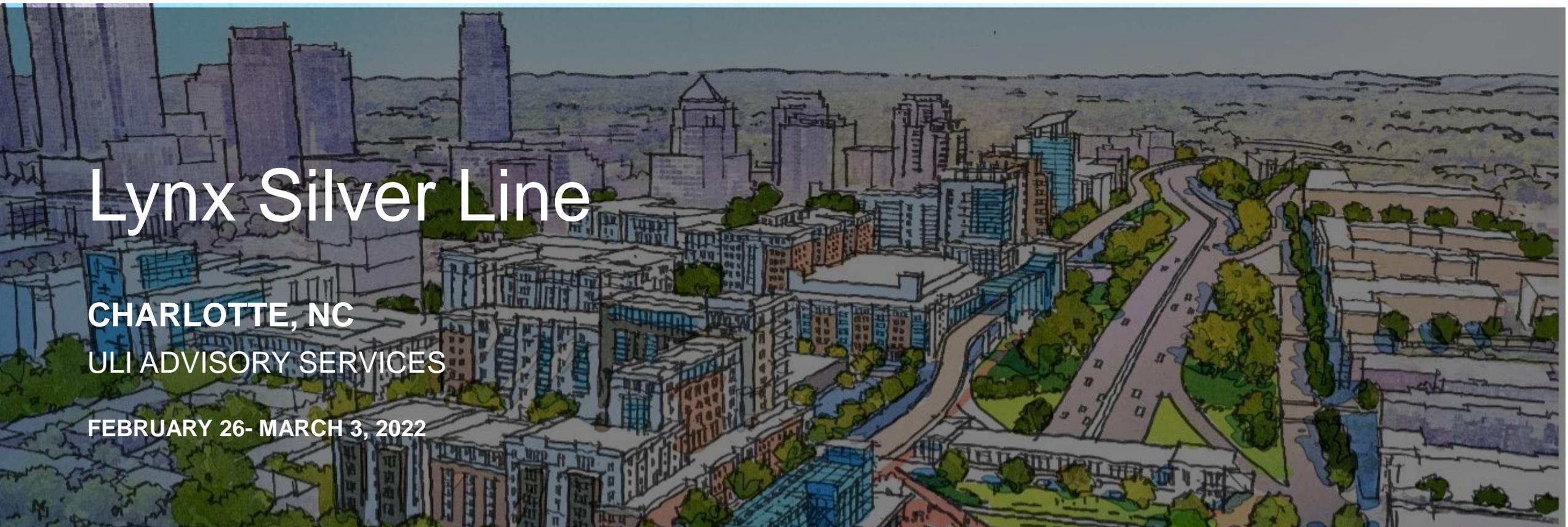
**Urban Land
Institute**

Advisory Services Program

Lynx Silver Line

CHARLOTTE, NC
ULI ADVISORY SERVICES

FEBRUARY 26- MARCH 3, 2022

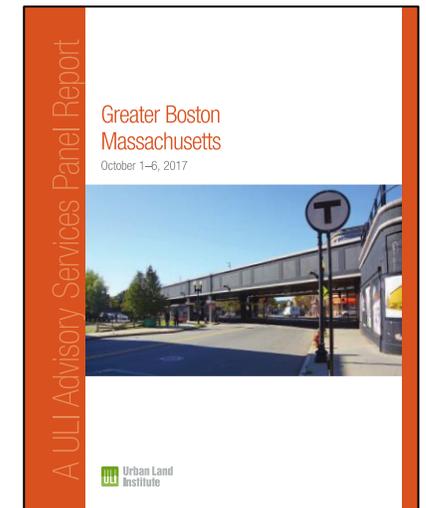
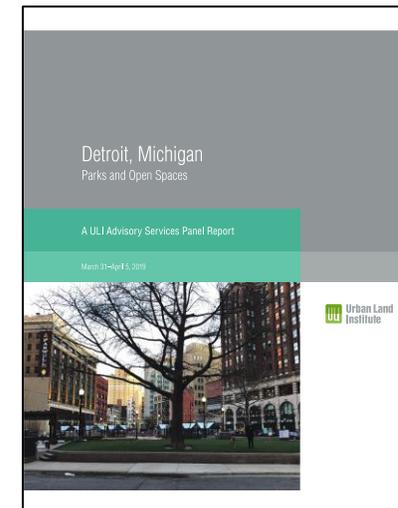
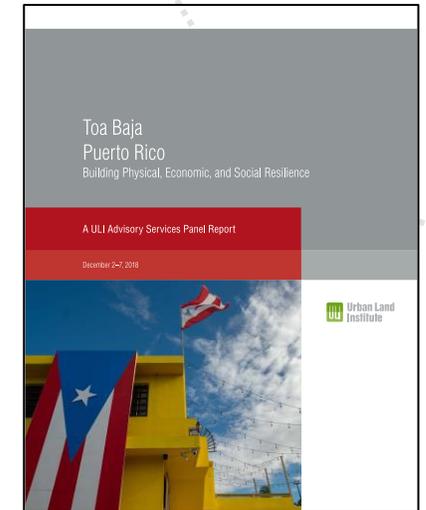
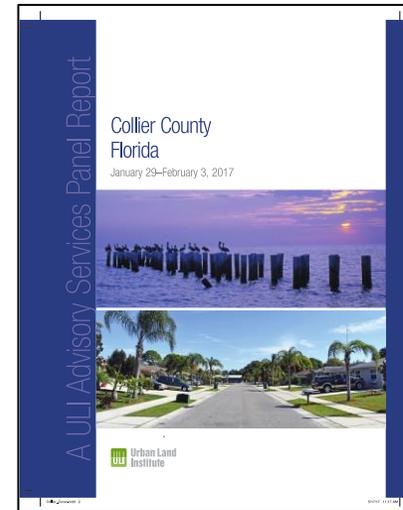


About the Urban Land Institute

ULI Mission: Shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide

- A multi-disciplinary membership organization with more than 45,000 members in private enterprise and public service
- What the Urban Land Institute does:
 - Conducts Research
 - Provides a forum for sharing of **best practices**
 - Writes, edits, and publishes **books** and **magazines**
 - Organizes and conducts **meetings**
 - Directs outreach programs
 - Conducts **Advisory Service Panels**

Charlotte, NC – February 26 - March 3, 2022



ADVISORY SERVICE PANELS

Since 1947, ULI's Advisory Services Program have helped more than 700 communities find independent, strategic, and practical solutions for the most challenging land use issues.

5-Day Advisory Services Panel

The Panel process

- Panelists: team of volunteer experts
- In-depth briefing day and site tour
- Meetings with sponsor representatives
- Interviews with 60+ key community representatives
- Two days devoted to formulating recommendations
- Presentation of findings to the sponsor
- Publication of written report

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Thank you to our sponsors!



Thank you everyone else!

March 3, 2022

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ULI Panelists and Staff

Charlotte, NC – February 26 - March 3, 2022

Selected for their subject matter expertise to provide **objective, volunteer** recommendations

Marilee Utter (Panel Chair)

Citiventure Associates LLC
Denver, CO

Dr. David Abraham

Harris County Toll Authority
Rice University
Houston, TX

Guillermo Aguilar, AIA

Aguilar Architects
Dana Point, CA

Christopher Forinash

Nelson\Nygaard
Washington, DC

Lucia E. Garsys, AICP

Hillsborough County Government
Tampa, FL

Jim Hecht, P.E.

HDR
San Diego, CA

Darryl Jones

Coventry Development Corporation
Lone Tree, CO

Jack Wierzenski, AICP

Dallas Area Rapid Transit
Dallas, TX

ULI Staff

Deborah L. Myerson, AICP

Myerson Consulting
Project Manager - ULI Advisory
Services

Rebecca Hill

Senior Associate, Meetings and Events

Panel Assignment

The questions posed to the Advisory Services Panel are:

1. What are the opportunities for station area development along the 11th St. alignment?
2. Would another alignment (7th Street, Trade St) provide better economic development or transportation/mobility equity opportunities?
3. How can the connection between the Blue Line and Silver Line be optimized?
4. Does an additional station in First Ward along the 11th St alignment provide significant enhancements to station area development opportunities?



Image Credit: Guillermo Aguilar

Helping Charlotte Thrive

- Charlotte will keep growing
- Long term community sustainability:
 - *Economically*
 - *Environmentally*
 - *Socially*
- Transit is a 100-year asset
- Post-pandemic impacts unclear
- Focus on Center City
- Make it more livable
- Transit a tool to deliver stronger communities



Image Credit: Deborah Myerson

Presentation Overview

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1. Regional Implications
2. Evolving Center City
3. Planning & Design: 11th Street Station
4. Silver and Gold Lines
5. Next Steps



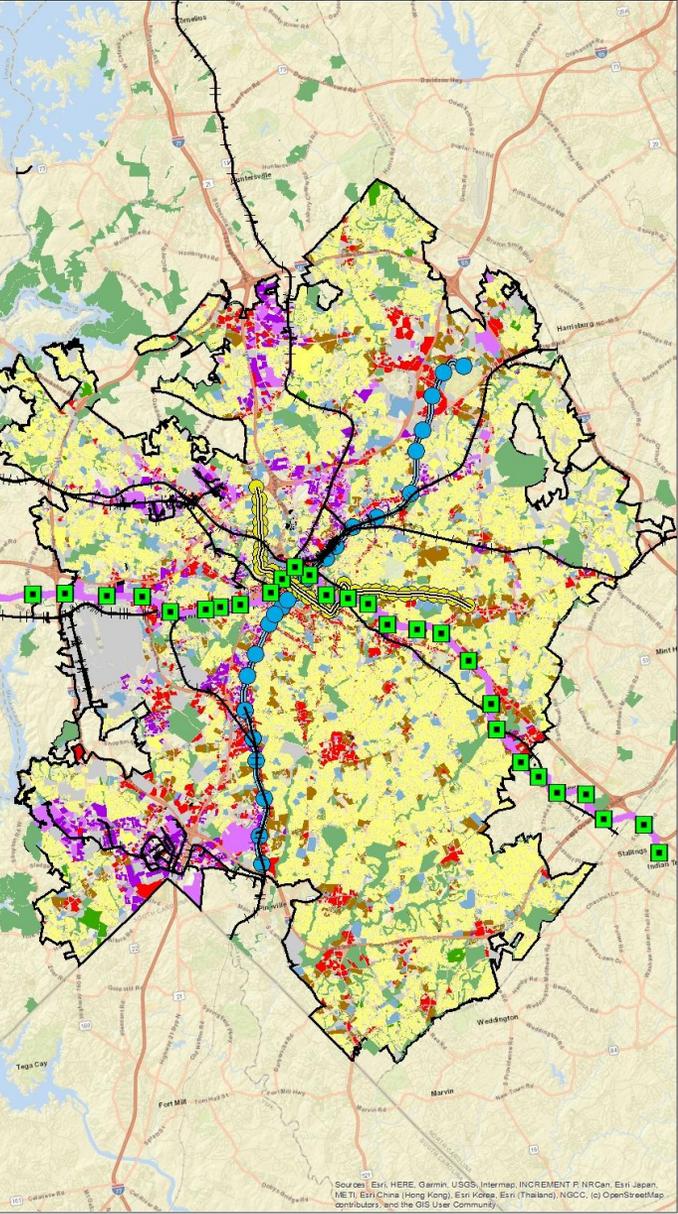
Image Credit: Guillermo Aguilar

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Regional Implications

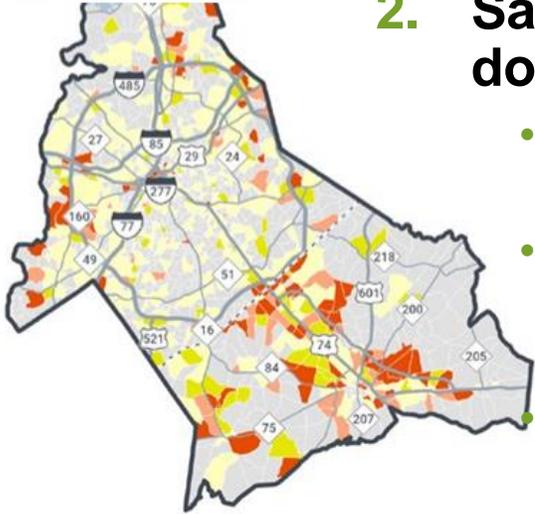
Charlotte East-West Transit Connection

Why is an east-west transit connection important to this region?



Charlotte, NC Land use Map

CRTPO Employment Growth (2018–2050)



Map by Dr. Abraham 2022

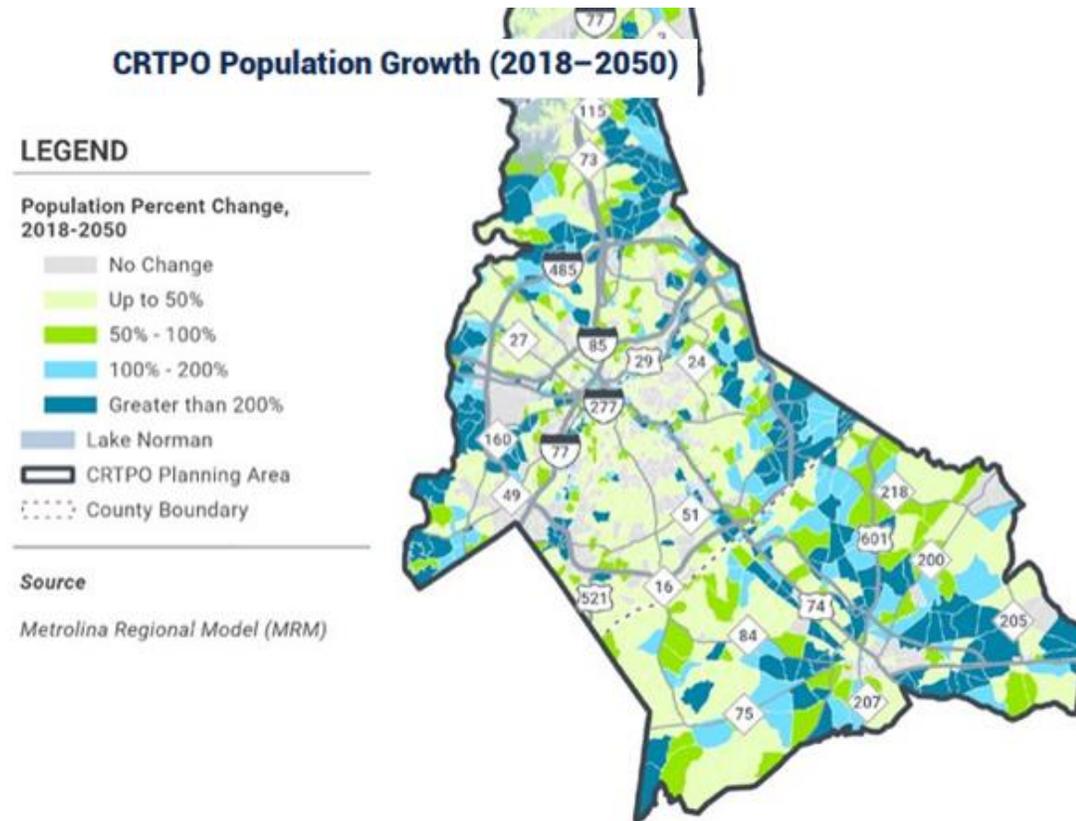
1. Major job growth expected in the southeast over the next 30 years.
2. Saves billions of future dollars in the economy.

- Reduces need to build and maintain new highways.
 - Save individual families time and money from personal vehicle maintenance cost.
- Relieves traffic congestion on the highways and speeds up accessibility.

Charlotte East-West Transit Connection

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Why is an east-west transit connection important to this region?



- The Silver Line offers **fundamental accessibility** for significant numbers of jobs and people in Charlotte/Mecklenburg

- **24%** of People live in a 2-mile buffer

- **20%** of Housing units in a 2-mile buffer

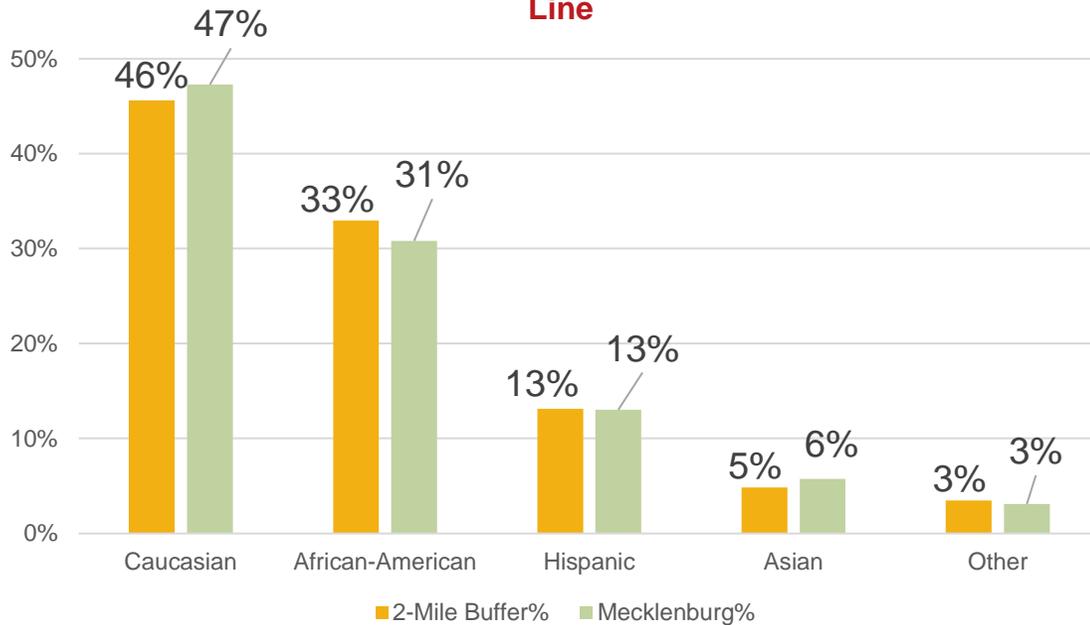
Equity & Affordable Housing

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The Silver Line is a 26-mile opportunity to integrate equity in Charlotte

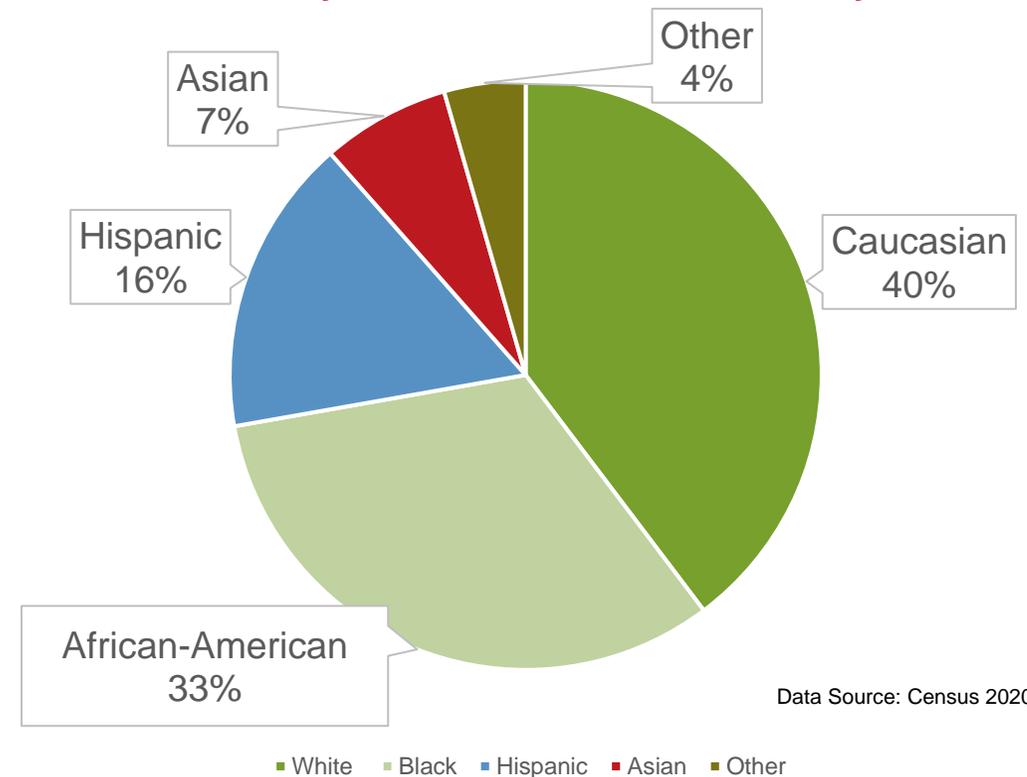
- The Silver Line offers equitable accessibility for significant numbers of jobs and people

Race & Ethnicity Comparison
Mecklenburg County vs 2 Mile Buffer around the Silver Line



Data Source: ACS5Yr_2018

2020 City of Charlotte, Race & Ethnicity

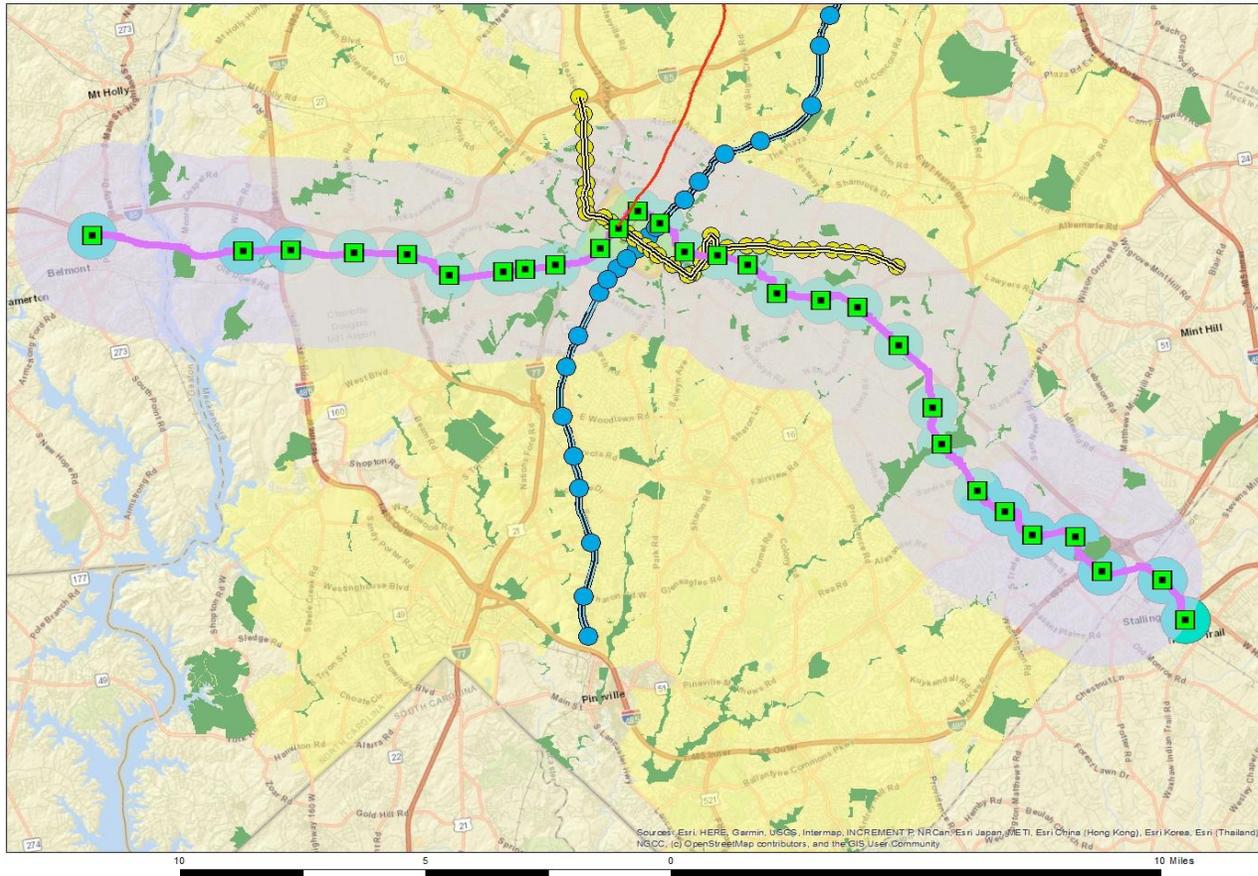


Data Source: Census 2020

Equity & Affordable Housing

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The Silver Line is a 26-mile opportunity to integrate equity in Charlotte



Map by Dr. Abraham 2022

- **Recommendation:** Clearly integrate an Equity Fund in the upcoming transit referendum, to demonstrate a commitment to local communities.
 - Minority business contracting requirements for construction projects.
 - Minority business incubators
 - Affordable Housing Incentives
 - Programs to strengthen existing communities
- *Project Connect* in Austin, TX is a good example of a recent best practice.
 - Austin voters approved a tax increase in 2020 which greenlit a \$7.1 billion transit plan.
 - The investment communicated to the public that \$300 million would be directed for programs and projects that will (1) Strengthen neighborhoods (2) Benefit people most at risk (3) Prevent displacement of those living close to transit lines.

Strengthening Urban Growth

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Charlotte is losing major revenue by not having enough housing around the urban core.



Village Center in Plainsboro.
Photo courtesy of Mark Cannuli,
Sharbell Development Corp.



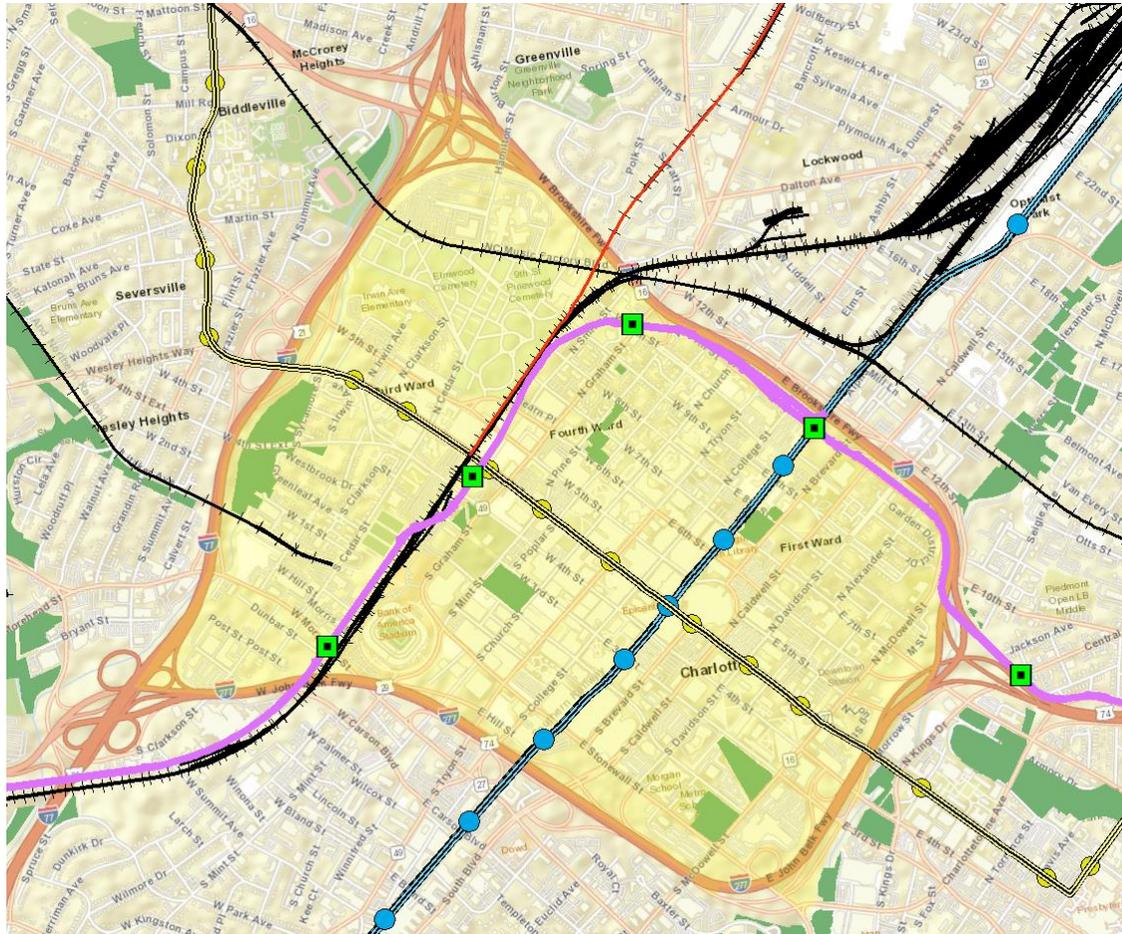
Skyland Town Center, Washington, DC

- This drives up the amount of **traffic congestion in the region** since people have to live further out.
- Increases the amount of dollars needed for **road building and maintenance**.
- **Cannot generate enough revenue** to provide and maintain enhanced quality of life amenities for its residents.
- Not having enough housing **makes it difficult to meet Ridership numbers to qualify for FTA matching funding**.

Strengthening Urban Growth

Charlotte, NC – February 26 - March 3, 2022

Charlotte is losing major revenue by not having enough housing around the urban core.



Map by Dr. Abraham 2022

- **Extremely low population living in Uptown**
 - **12,550** people
- **More parking spots than people living downtown**
 - **70,000** spots vs **12,550** people
- **Recommendation:**
 - Ensure a dedicated portion of the referendum is used to **Incentivize more housing development along the Silver Rail line.**
 - More housing will **enhance ridership numbers to qualify for FTA matching funding.**

Total Population in Uptown	12,550
Total Density (Ppl/SqMI)	5,920
Jobs in Uptown	83,516
Parking Spots*	70,000
Transit to Work	256
Jobs Retail	754
Jobs Arts & Entertainment	2,966
Data Source: ACS5Yr_2018	
* Estimated Figure	

Energizing the Mobility Vision

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Observations

Mobility vision and goals are strong

- Strong City and regional vision expressed in Comp Plan, Transformational Mobility Network, Connect Beyond, etc.
- Priority is creating more walkable, mixed-use, compact places supported by safe, attractive, multimodal travel network
- Ongoing and increasing investments in improved streets and greenways
- Transit vision remains the 2030 Plan from 2006, with some amendments
- Support for major transit investments seems fragile

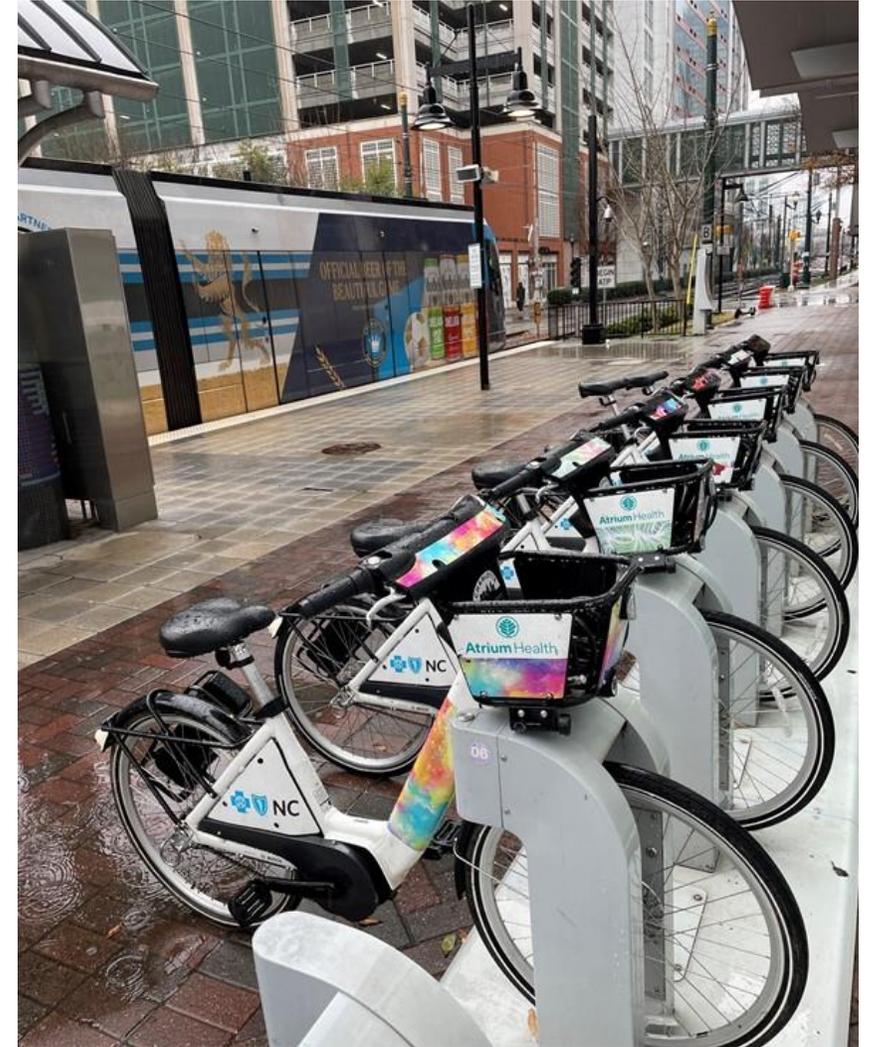


Image Credit: Christopher Forinash

Energizing the Mobility Vision

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Observations

CATS and City working diligently in the face of uncertainty

- Pandemic and other impediments
- Future of the Red Line
- Limited value of Gold Line as currently deployed
- Erosion of bus service quality and perceived safety
- Shifting messages about the Silver Line
- Result: challenges with support and coalition-building

Continued prioritization of driving doesn't align with the vision

- Uptown has the best mobility options, but still prioritizes fast driving on streets
- More parking than places to live, work, and play
- Large investments in freeway expansion

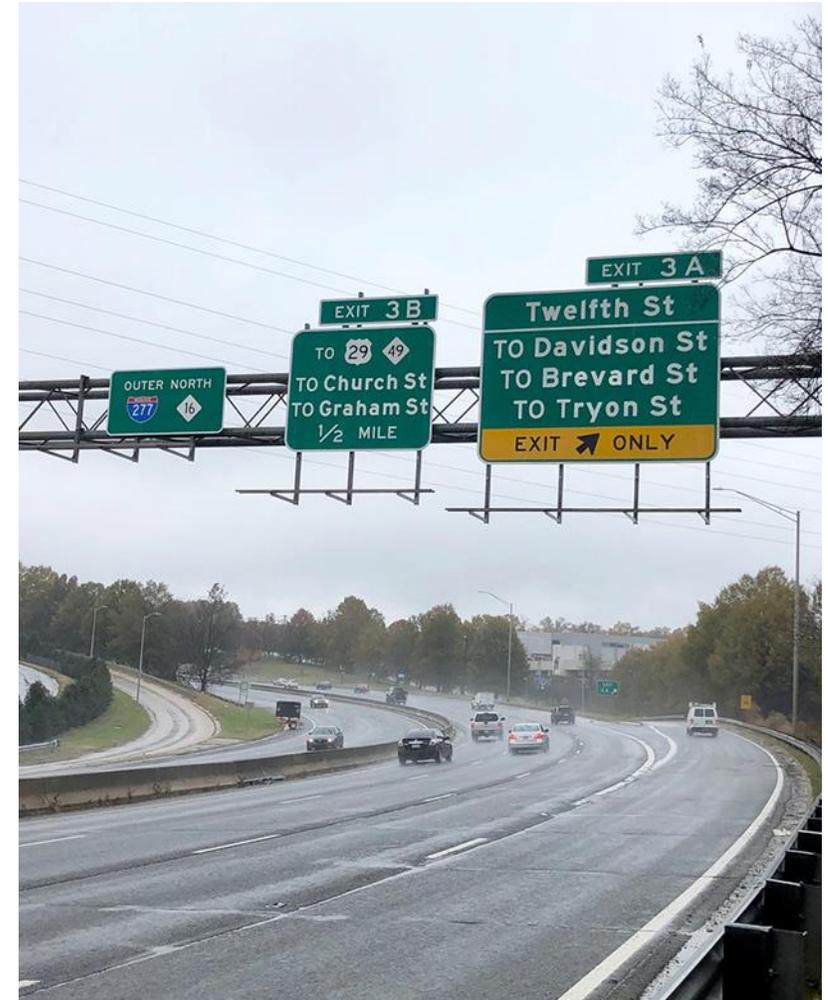


Image credit: Axios Charlotte

Overall Mobility Recommendations

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- Connect transit vision to broader community vision and goals – may require a full update to the 2030 plan
- Study redoing the Brookshire/I-277
- Get bus lanes back on Independence Boulevard
- Improve the Gold Line – signal priority, dedicated space, higher frequency
- Improve other current transit – transformed bus, Blue Line, express bus/BRT
- Support transit with transformed street networks, reallocating public right-of-way
- Build support coalition by pursuing the above with transparency, building trust and inspiring leadership



Image credit: CATS

Trails and Connections

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Observations

- Charlotte and the region have invested in trails for walking and rolling
- Rail Trail, Cross Charlotte Trail, Greenways are particularly loved
- Greenways are increasingly connected to safe and convenient on-street infrastructure
- Successful transit is supported by quality connections to these facilities

Recommendations

- Prioritize integration of high-quality walking and rolling connections to stations
- New TOD should accommodate and celebrate these connections.
- Stations along 11th Street should be directly connected to the Greenways network in all directions.



Image credit: Christopher Forinash

Equity

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Observations

- Comprehensive Plan and others prioritize equity
- City working to correct historic patterns of disinvestment and underinvestment
- Silver Line connects areas vulnerable to displacement, and equitable outcomes depend on many influences

Recommendations

- Invest in affordable housing around new stations
- Integrate child care and other essential services around new stations
- Prioritize last-mile connections for walking and rolling
- Institute policies and programs to avoid displacement
- Serve the Northside with the future Red Line
- Extend the improved and prioritized Gold Line

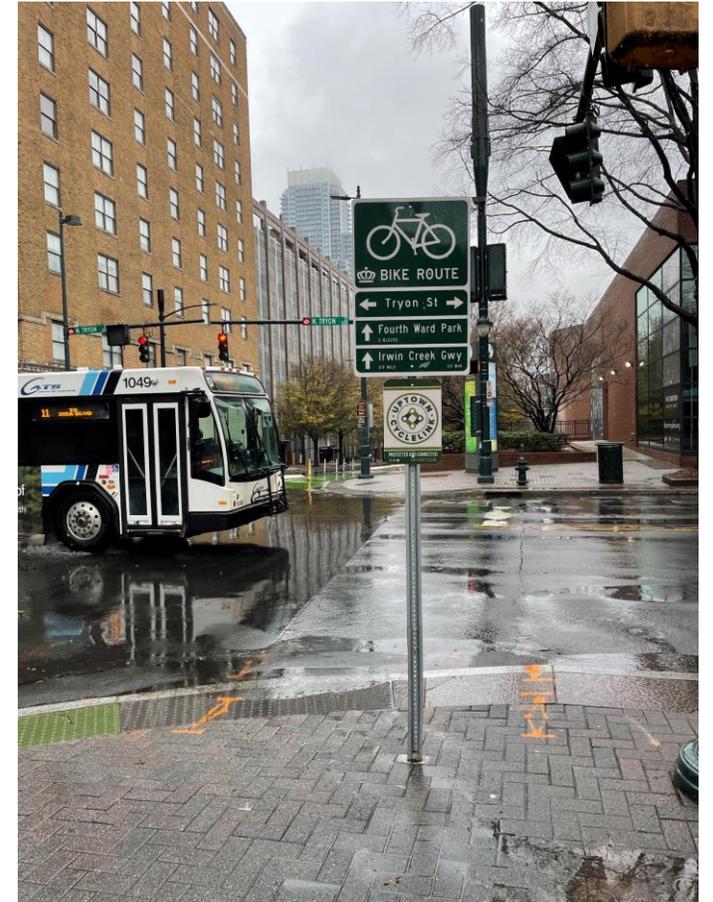


Image credit: Christopher Forinash

Housing and Anti-Displacement

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Observations

- Areas around 11th Street planned mostly as high-density Regional Activity Center
- Zoning code currently offers limited tools for increasing affordable housing
- Affordability often more easily accomplished through preservation or renovation of existing buildings than new construction

Recommendations

- Work with community to design, fund, and implement a range of anti-displacement tools
- Develop tools to preserve and expand affordable housing, including in new transit-oriented development
- New transit investments should be accompanied by investments in anti-displacement
- Consider renovating existing structures near transit for housing

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Evolving Center City

Evolving Center City

- Uptown viability relies on the prior work in creating a vision of a vibrant, resilient, and healthy center city.
- An activated city core consists of factors such as business and employment centers, retail opportunities, complete neighborhoods, housing, multi-modal choices.
- Charlotte already enjoys many of these key ingredients such as a well-defined street grid, employment, transit, and cultural assets to name a few.
- Cities are organic and they grow expand and contract and keeping it alive and vibrant requires change.



Image credit: City of Charlotte

Opportunity Sites Map

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- Charlotte High Impact Investment Areas
 - Maximize densities for highest and best use
 - Diverse mix of uses

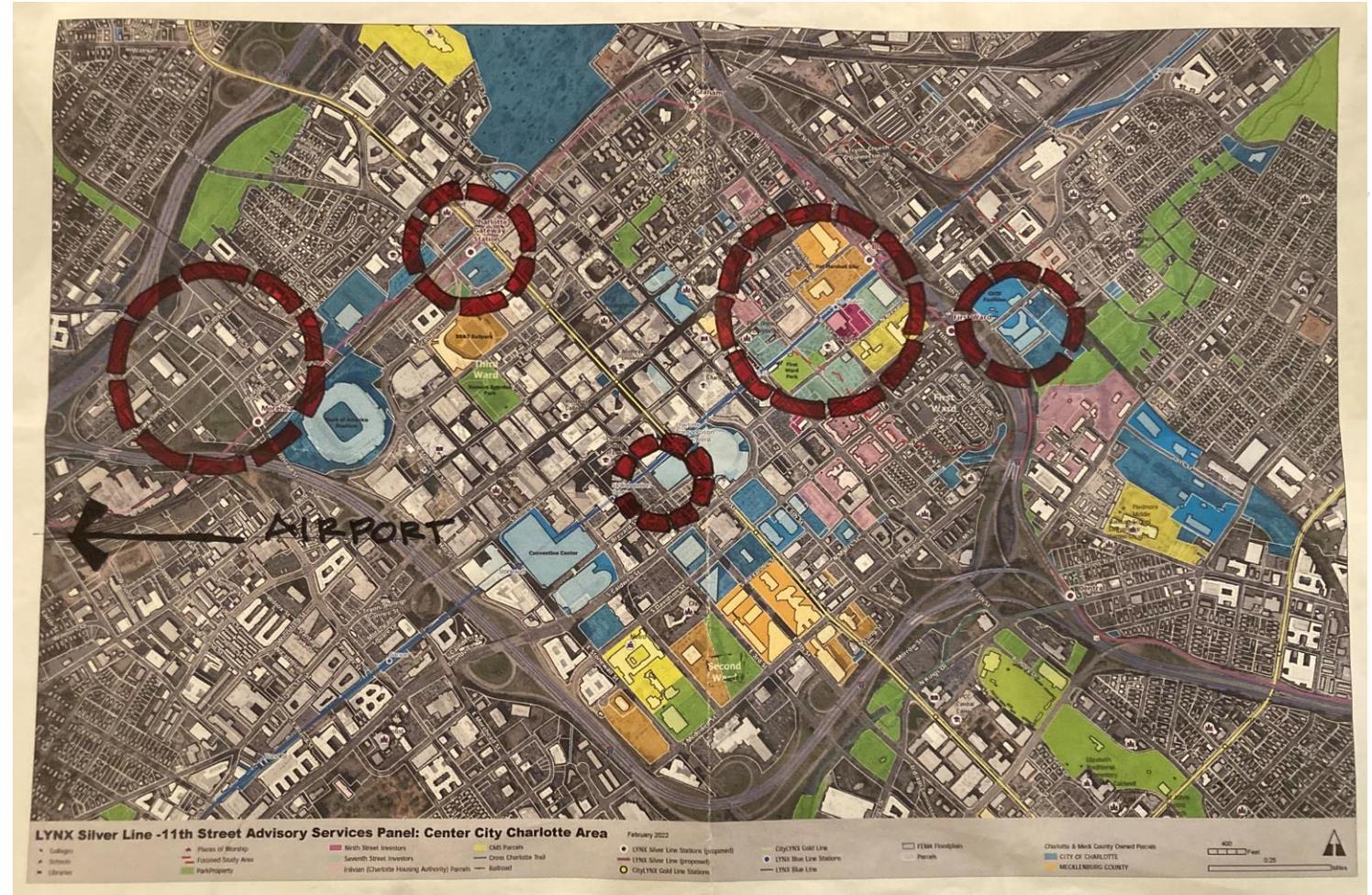


Image Credit: Darryl Jones

Recommendations

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Moving Uptown Forward

- Northside
 - Investment strategy task force
 - Neighborhood needs assessment
 - Alternative Silver Line alignment?
 - CATS facility relocation
 - CAP portion of 277 (potential development area)
- Gateway
 - Re-engage area plan activity
 - Connect with Red Line extension if possible
- Airport
 - Direct terminal connection
 - Additional service to west communities
 - Airport / Uptown connection
- Blue, Gold, Silver, Red Line
 - Strengthen entire system (individual strategy for each)

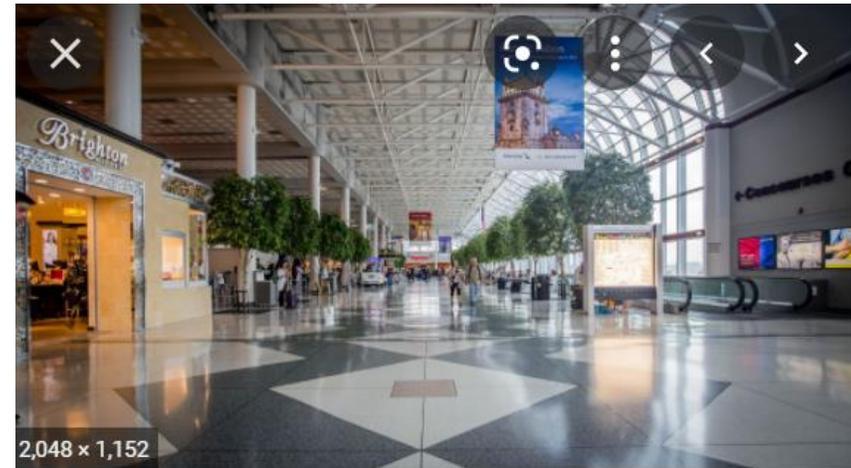


Image credits: City of Charlotte (top); Charlotte Douglas Airport (bottom)

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Planning & Design

11th Street Station

11th Street Station

Charlotte, NC – February 26 - March 3, 2022

Planned 11th Street Station

- The 11th Street Station is within a two block walk of the proposed First Ward Station and 9th Street Station and a challenge for accessibility since the station is separated both vertically and horizontally
- The disconnect between the stations is a significant barrier and particularly important since 40% of projected Silver Line ridership is expected to transfer for jobs in downtown Charlotte via the Blue Line
- Transit riders may enjoy walking in nice weather, however, inclement weather will be a challenge
- Three stations within three blocks

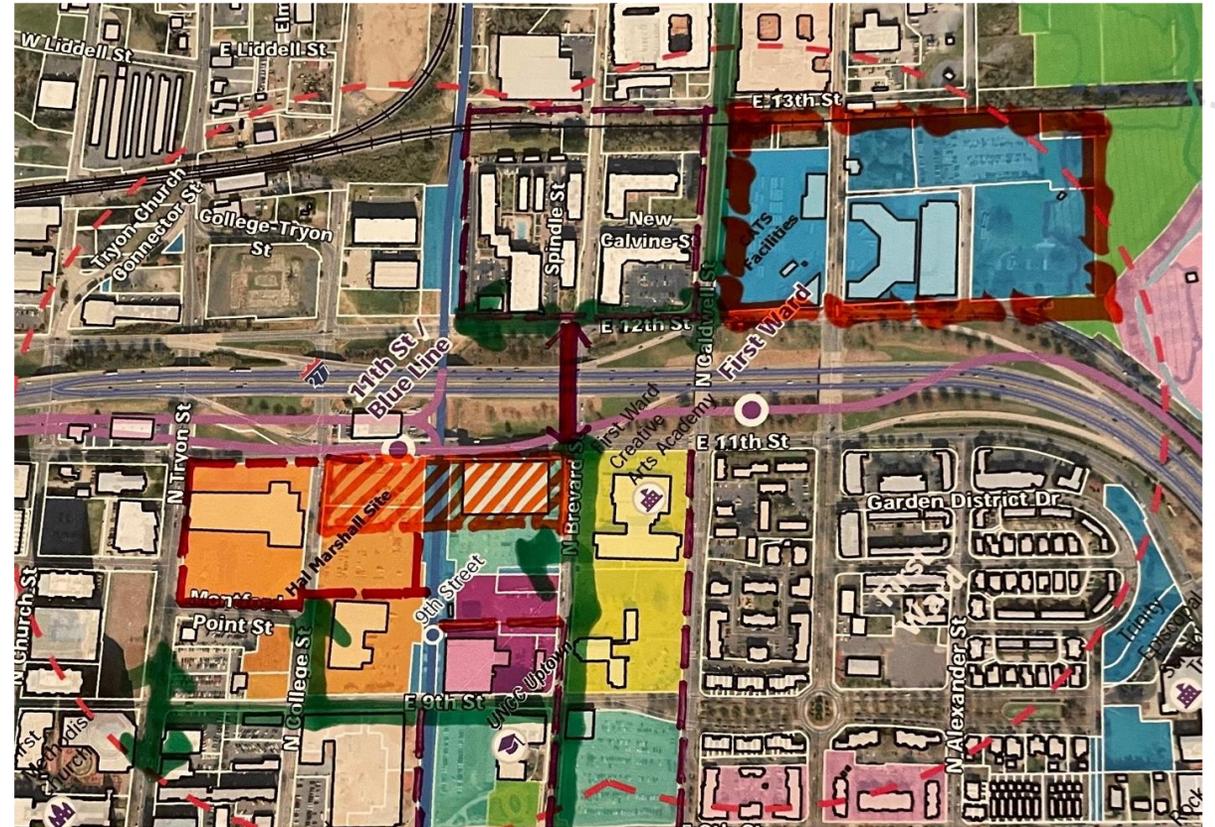


Image credit: Guillermo Aguilar

11th Street Station

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At-Grade Stations

- Consider alternative at-grade alignments to develop a more seamless transfer from the Silver Line to the Blue Line
- Consider the opportunity to use right-of-way north of Interstate 277 near 12th street where a planned non-revenue track is planned.
- Provide for at-grade connectivity between transit riders and the Silver Line and Blue Line
- Open the potential to interline Silver Line trains with the Blue Line



Image credit: DART

11th Street Right-of-Way

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Relocated 9th Street Station

- Relocate the 9th Street Blue Line Station North one block to provide more direct access to the 11th Street platform
- Provide direct aerial connectivity to the 11th Street platform with high quality elevator/escalator access
- Open-air structure on 11th Street under the platform to provide an environment which is perceived to be safe and provide transfer access to bus and alternative modes



Image credit: DART

11th Street Station

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Multimodal Hub and Capped Highway

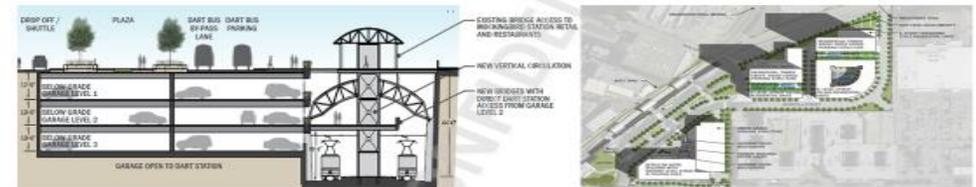
- Combine the function of the three stations, 9th Street, 11th Street, First Ward, and redesign into a single multimodal hub
- If both the 11th Street and First Ward Stations remain elevated, connect both stations with direct access above the relocated 9th Street Station at the western end of the platform creating a multimodal TOD hub
- Extend the highway cap concept north of the First Ward Station to the west over the highway.
- Provide direct access to the station acting as a catalyst for future development.



Developer's Vision for the Mockingbird Station Site

- Enhancing the quality of life and community through the thoughtful architectural design, master planning, and product mix that integrate well with the surrounding area providing a walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment that is easily accessible and highly visible.
- The final development concept for Mockingbird Station East will be developed in concert with DART. The development will be sensitive to the needs and scale of the surrounding area. Our goal is to create a vibrant site that can stand the test of time and provide a transit oriented development encompassing live, work, and play.
- Develop 682 multi-family units through two 20-floor high rise buildings, while phasing in 10k RSF of retail space.

Product Mix	
Office	142,000 RSF
Retail	19,000 RSF
Residential (682 units)	596,125 RSF
Hotel	0 RSF
Total	757,625 RSF



11th Street Station

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Develop Public Private Partnerships

- Champion and convene a public private partnership (P3). Lead the effort to develop a plan for the undeveloped and partially developed property near the 9th and 11th Street Stations
- Work with the property owner to develop the semi-constructed garage/TOD site north of the future 10th Street
- Relatively few property owners in the area minimizes additional property assemblage needed for TOD



Image credit: GPO Ingenieria, Spain

Multimodal Station Planning

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Station Area Plan (Sample Idea)

- Prioritize links from transit stations to other transit modes
- Consider integrating the 11th Street and 9th Street Stations into one transfer station
- Encourage Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), with mixed-use at the station area
- Develop a MASTER PLAN for the Blue Line/Silver Line station vicinity area

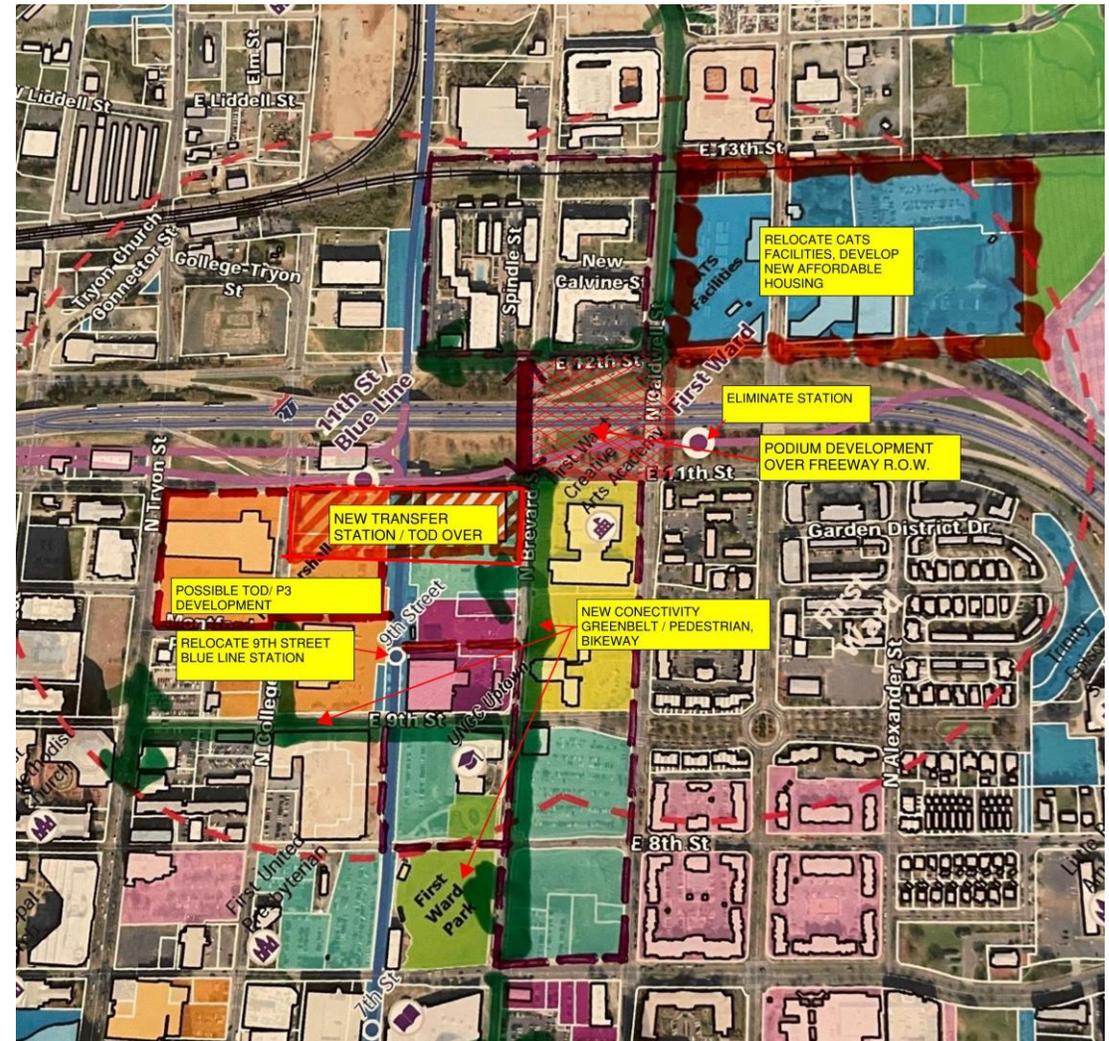


Image credit: Guillermo Aguilar

Station Branding

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System Integration

- Formulate an urban design strategy which responds to the City's land use and economic goals
- Encourage sustainable development
- Establish an effective branding program system-wide

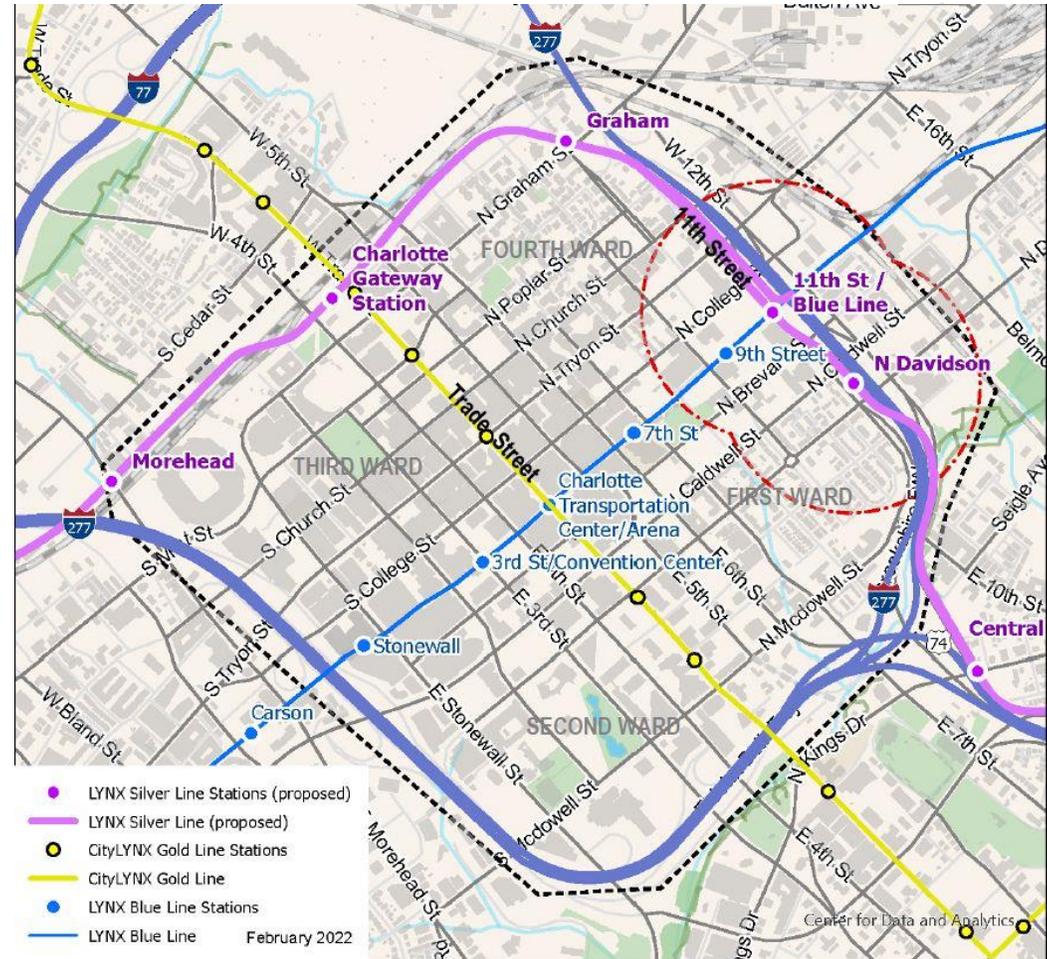


Image credit: CATS

Station Design Guidelines

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A Sense Of Place

- Use placemaking to strengthen the role of the Silver Line train stations as symbolic centers of the City and nearby communities
- Think of stations as active and economically viable transportation hubs with character and a sense of place
- Give prominence and visibility to the site, but also be a good neighbor to the adjacent sites
- Celebrate Charlotte as a conglomerate of different ethnic, cultural, and architecturally-diverse neighborhoods



Image credit: Sasaki Associates

Station Design Guidelines

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Architectural Features

- Develop specific guidelines that address architectural issues such as building details, materials, color palette, fenestration, and storefront signs and graphics
- Make stations compatible with the existing fabric and architectural character of the area
- Avoid blank facades that are uninteresting and alienate pedestrians, and cause security issues
- Signage and wayfinding will be exceptionally important to guide and direct people through the station site



Image credit: GPO Ingenieria, Spain

Station Design Guidelines

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Pleasant Pedestrian Environments

- Create an inviting environment for customers
- Provide design features that can enhance safety by activating the site and increasing passive surveillance
- Provide easy access to platforms, elevators, escalators, etc.
- Design for open floor plans with visible escalators, and stairs.
- Consider glass elevators

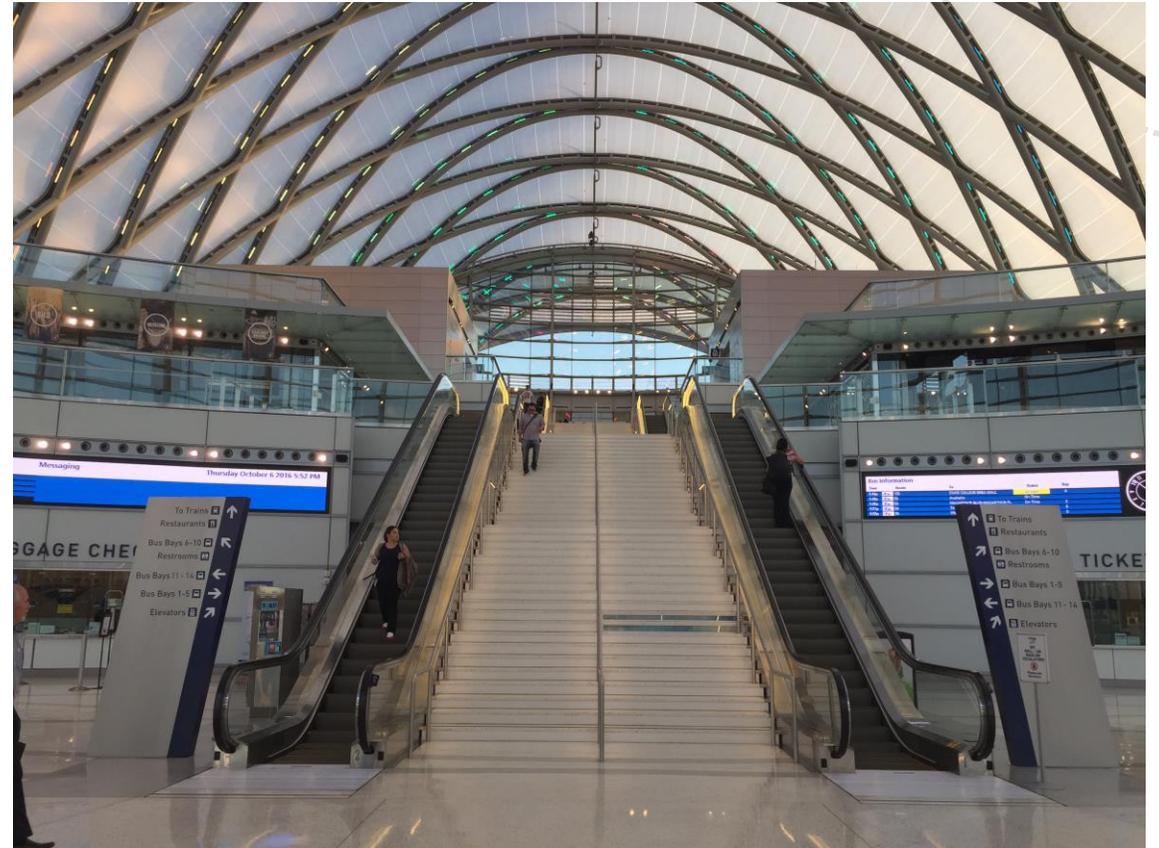


Image Credit: Guillermo Aguilar

Station Design Guidelines

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Landscape Architecture

- Recognize the historic value of diverse centers and incorporate foliage, art, and aesthetic experiences
- Consider incorporating those design elements that emphasize the relationship to the existing built environment using landscaping, lighting, art and signage
- Explore a “linkage system” to help define the aboveground station area through pedestrian links, entry treatments, pavement textures and landscape elements
- Engage the City and non-profits in arts programs and funding to enhance the stations



Image Credits: Guillermo Aguilar

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Silver and Gold Lines

Silver Line Alignment Through Uptown

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We started with CATS' previous work

- The Center City Refined Definition Study was a thorough, thoughtful, and qualitative assessment that started with a wide range of options and narrowed down to what appear to be the four best options:
 - North End Connection (current alignment)
 - Interline with Blue Line
 - Interline with Gold Line
 - Tunnel under Gold Line
- The report did not include **cost, ridership or estimate the FTA rating.**



Image courtesy of CATS

Silver Line Alignment Through Uptown

Charlotte, NC – February 26 - March 3, 2022

- Secondary Recommendation: **Compare ridership, costs and FTA rating** between the current alignment and the Blue Line Interline Option.
- Explanation:
 - We agree with CATS' assessment that the Gold Line's infrastructure could not support Silver Line's requirements for speed and reliability, which would **negatively impact ridership**.
 - We agree with CATS' assessment that a Gold Line tunnel introduces significant cost and schedule risks, construction impacts to Uptown and the Gold Line, that the tunnel portals would add barriers to Uptown, and that the tunnel would **significantly increase cost**.
 - **Interlining with the Blue Line would increase ridership, reduce cost, and improve the FTA rating.**



Image courtesy of CATS

Silver Line/Blue Line Interline Option

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An example of an option that should be tested for Cost, Ridership, and anticipated FTA Rating

Advantages

- **Ridership would be improved.** Silver Line riders from outlying communities and the airport would have direct access to five existing stations in the center of Uptown, the most intensive trip generation in the region.
- Transfers between the two most important lines in Charlotte's rail network would be optimized, which would also **improve ridership**.
- **Costs would be reduced.** Track turnouts and signal interlockings would be required for the Silver Line connections on either side of Uptown.

Disadvantages

- Roadway crossing gates in Uptown would go down twice as often.
- The connection to Gateway would require a transfer to the Gold Line at the Charlotte Transportation Center. This transfer would be more convenient than the transfer proposed at 11th Street and would affect fewer riders.

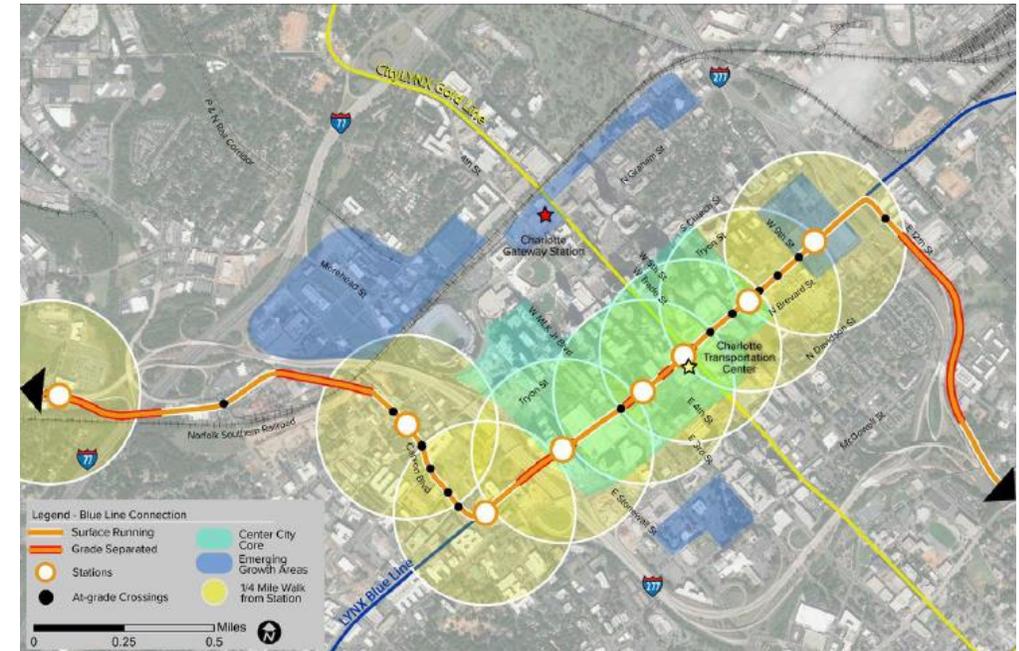
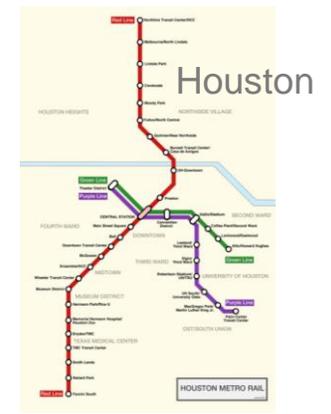
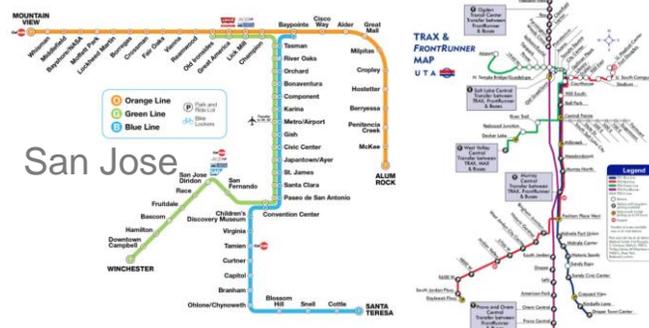


Image courtesy of CATS

Which Systems Interline?

Which don't?

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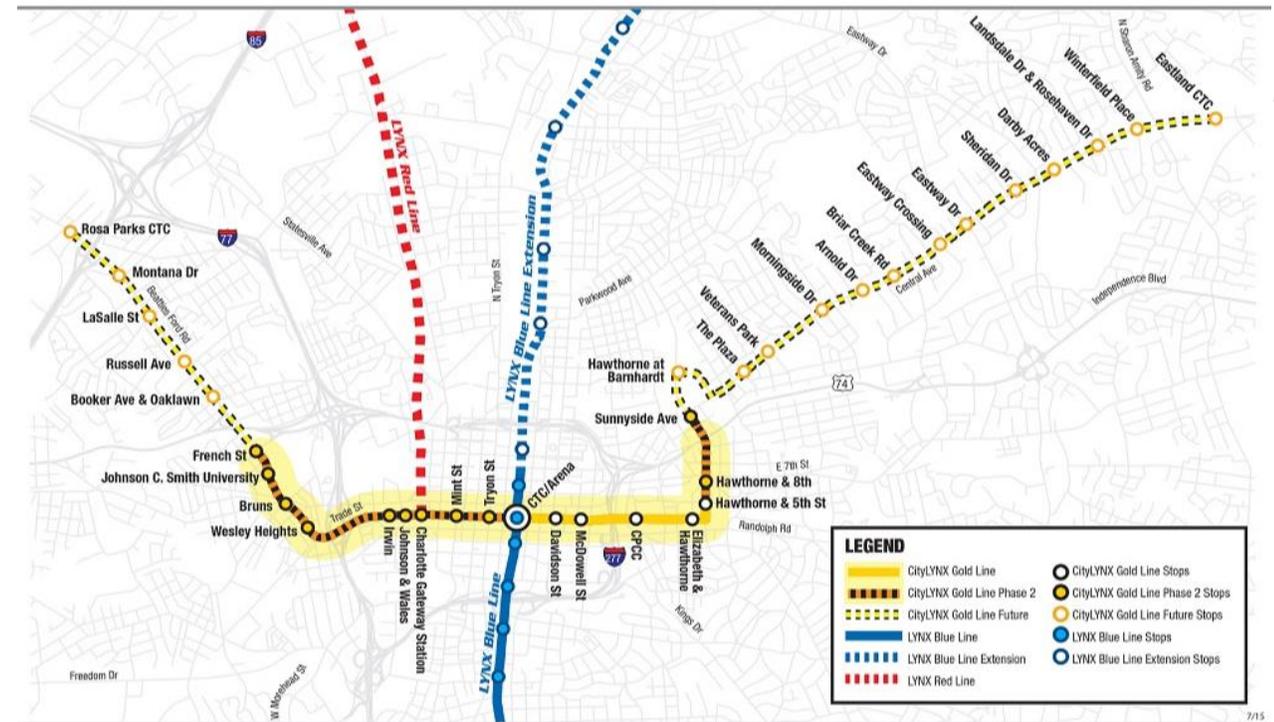
Gold Line Recommendations

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Streetcars are used for short trips. In addition to competing with cars, they compete with walking, biking, shared mobility devices, Uber, Lyft, etc. It is critical to run them frequently.

Recommendations:

- Implement traffic signal priority for the Gold Line throughout the route to increase speed, reduce headway, and improve reliability to **increase ridership**.
- Put more streetcars into service to further reduce headway to **increase ridership**.
- Publicize the changes to **encourage ridership**.
- Extend the Gold Line to CATS' busiest bus route to **increase ridership**.



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Next Steps

Positioning Charlotte for a Successful Referendum

The Proposed Referendum

Charlotte, NC – February 26 - March 3, 2022

Voter-approved
one cent sales
tax

No sunset date

November 2022

Yields over \$6
billion over 30
years

Requires State
of North Carolina
legislative
approval

Increases
Charlotte's sales
tax from 7.25 to
8.25 percent

Factors Influencing a Referendum

Beyond Your Control

- Economic conditions
- Supply chain
- Inflation
- Stock market
- National events
- Global events and conflicts
- Unemployment
- Price of gasoline

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Image credit: Chris Delmas/AFP via Getty Images

Elements of a Successful Referendum

Charlotte, NC – February 26 - March 3, 2022

Within Charlotte's Sphere of Influence

A vetted package of projects

A value proposition -- community benefit

Strong and diverse coalitions – business, civic and interest groups

Broad reaching engagement

Disciplined communications

Trust is the Foundation. Transparency is the Key.

Charlotte's Success Stories

In 1998, Charlotte voters passed its initial referendum for a one-half percent sales tax with a 58 to 42% margin.

In 2007, Charlotte voters confirmed the sales tax on an appeal by a 70% margin.

The Stories, Experiences and Examples We Heard

What The Panel Heard	A Path Forward
Transparency about the Red Line	<i>Be direct and intentional about its future.</i>
Disruptions, delays and poor service on the Gold Line	<i>Get serious about fixing it.</i>
Future of the Gold Line along Central Avenue	<i>Be intentional. Address equity concerns.</i>
Communication gaps on the Silver Line.	<i>Reset. Vet. Re-engage. Set it up for success.</i>
Absent business and developer community	<i>Re-engage. Value their input. Garner their support.</i>
Missing community and civic sectors	<i>Embrace their viewpoints. Earn their trust.</i>

A Deliberate, Disciplined, Equitable Strategy

Positioning Charlotte for Continued Success

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A Package of Financially Feasible/Community Supported Projects

- Demonstrate value to underserved sectors.
- Identify economic and environmental benefit.
- Consider enhancing with trails, bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.
- Commit to anti-displacement with a dedication of a portion of the funds.



An Intense and Robust Engagement Program

- Re-engage with business, civic and community leaders. Reach out to cities, transit agencies, officials.
- Create a diverse leadership advisory committee to be your eyes and ears.
- Invest in a speaker series to reach out to churches, not-for-profits and neighborhood associations.
- Supplement engagement with social media.

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Positioning Charlotte for Continued Success



Wrap it up in a Package. Message it. Communicate.

Be disciplined about the message.

Use simple language and target the message to the audience.

Consider hiring an outside communications expert to work with internal staff.



Balance Voter Approval to Financial Needs

Match your ask to the community's appetite for support.

Consider an incremental approach or sunset time frames, if needed.

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Q&A

Thank you!

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