

**SILVER LINE TASK FORCE
 REGULAR MEETING
 WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020
 7:00 PM
 REMOTE MEETING**

MISSION: The goal of the Silver Line Task Force is to recommend a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the CATS Lynx Silver Line project. The recommendation will be presented to the Board of Commissioners in late 2020 for its consideration.

The regular meeting of the Matthews Silver Line Task Force will be conducted remotely using the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

TO WATCH LIVE: Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device: <https://zoom.us/j/91418311645>

TO LISTEN LIVE: Dial 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) or 888 788 0099 (Toll Free) Webinar ID:914 1831 1645

I. Introduction and Minutes (10 minutes)

Action RequestedChairperson Stevens

II. Survey Results (60 minutes)

Information Only..... Dana Stoogenke
 Andy Mock, CATS

- Monroe Road
- CXS
- Industrial Drive
- Novant
- W. Matthews Road (near Team Road)
- W. Matthews Road (near CSX)
- Independence Pointe Parkway/CPCC

III. In-person or Zoom for October Meetings? (10 minutes)

Action Requested.....Chairperson Stevens

IV. Upcoming Meetings (10 minutes)

Information Only.....Chairperson Stevens

- October 7, 2020 (Zoom or In-person TBD)
- October 21, 2020 (Zoom or In-person TBD) (NEW)

CATS Public Meetings:

- September 24, 2020 5:30pm (Matthews Portion)
- September 29, 2020 5:30 (Union County Portion)

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF POTENTIAL QUORUM PLANNING BOARD
 September 2, 202: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**

Notice is hereby given that a potential quorum of the Matthews Planning Board will be present at the Matthews Silver Line Task Force public meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

**MINUTES
SILVER LINE TASK FORCE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2020
7:00 PM
ZOOM REMOTE MEETING**

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Kerry Lamson; Members Lou Abernathy, David Blackley, Wyatt Dixon, Natasha Edwards, Chris Hough, Jim Johnson, Lynn Lewis, Scott Phillips, and Jana Reeve; Public Works Director C.J. O'Neill; Planning Director Jay Camp; Transportation Planner Dana Stoogenke; Senior Administrative Specialist/Deputy Town Clerk Shana Robertson

ABSENT: Chairman Bill Stevens; Members Fred Baylor, Bo Hulseby, Jennifer Saunders and Walter Wright

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Kerry Lamson called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Scott Phillips motioned to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2020 meeting as submitted. Lynn Lewis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

PROJECT HISTORY OVERVIEW AND Q/A

Public Works Director C.J. O'Neill presented to the members a history of the Silver Line alignment in Matthews and how the Locally Preferred Alignment (LPA) was chosen (Exhibit A attached and made part of these minutes).

Mr. O'Neill reviewed the different Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) LYNX corridors and their timeline. Mr. O'Neill spoke about the Independence Boulevard Charlotte Area Plan and said that it confirmed a need for mass transit but found Independence Boulevard more suitable for automobile commuters and Monroe Road more suited for rail transit.

In 2002 the Major Investment Study was completed by the MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission). This study declared Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was the preferred technology, however local officials wanted to keep light rail as an option. Mr. O'Neill said that in 2006 the Town Council voted to support BRT, but that it preferred LRT (Light Rail Transit). Mr. O'Neill continued that in 2011 there was a study that concluded that BRT should be located on Independence Boulevard corridor and street car or another type of rail should be along the Monroe alignment. Based on those findings, the MTC passed an action to remove light rail from the median of Independence Boulevard and focus on managed lanes. Another action of the 2011 MTC was to examine rail in the southeast corridor that would not be in the median of Independence Boulevard.

Mr. O'Neill said in 2015 a Silver Line Southeast Corridor Transit Study began. The Silver Line was part of a larger transit system that included bus lines, the Gold Line, future Red Line, Blue Line, and Blue Line Extension. Mr. O'Neill said the study started with a vision to establish high-quality transit to connect and strengthen activity centers, create more transportation options in the corridor, and use transit to focus and shape growth while preserving existing neighborhoods. Staff and residents of the Town also decided the roles of both bus and rail. Bus were seen as a regional connection that was commuter oriented whose purpose was to bring people from Matthews to Uptown Charlotte. Mr. O'Neill further explained that the role of rail was to be more of a destination corridor that would bring riders from destination to destination.

Mr. O'Neill said that the Silver Line Southeast Corridor Transit Study kick off meeting began on February 12, 2015. Goals for the study were outlined in the meeting and included defining a fixed-rail guideway alignment, providing a bus transit strategy, and developing strategies to protect and preserve the rail alignment. The second meeting was April 8, 2015 with the Project Management Team (PMT). The PMT included CATS staff, CDOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation), Planning Commission, Matthews staff, and the project consultant WSP. Mr. O'Neill said the goal of that meeting was to determine how feedback was to be received. In the 4th meeting, the PMT

discussed technology of commuter rail, streetcars, and light rail. Mr. O'Neill discussed the three technologies. The 5th PMT meeting was in September of 2015 and discussions were centered around the public meetings that were promoted digitally and through printed media.

Mr. O'Neill said that during the public meetings, data was captured by surveys, tradeoff exercises, and interactive activities. Mr. O'Neill reviewed the results from the tradeoff exercise that showed Matthews residents wanted efficient travel times, even if that meant properties would need to be acquired. The exercise also showed that they preferred to be able to get to a lot of destinations, even if it means a slower trip.

Mr. O'Neill said at the 7th meeting of the PMT took the feedback from the public meetings and started putting together alignment options. There were three sections that were being concentrated on, the Uptown Charlotte area, from Charlotte to Idlewild Road, and the Matthews area. The PMT did an analysis of shared lanes and options that utilized the CSX right-of-way. People wanted reliable service so the option for significant shared lane operation was eliminated because reliability would require an exclusive guideway. For the CSX alignment, Mr. O'Neill said that putting a corridor in an area where there was only one big player who could suddenly say no was a huge risk for CATS. Those two factors eliminated seven route options.

Mr. O'Neill said that the public meeting that was held in Matthews in April of 2016 had 57 attendees that signed in but there was an unofficial count of over 75 people. Four major alignment options were discussed. Those included along Independence Boulevard to Independence Point Parkway, a widened Monroe Road with segments along Independence Boulevard, Independence Boulevard and Monroe Road, and a widened Monroe Road. Mr. O'Neill said that a lot of information was presented and people all seemed excited by the project. The two options that the public seemed to favor were the options that ran along the side of Independence Boulevard and the option that ran from Independence to Monroe Road.

Mr. O'Neill discussed the May 2016 public workshop with 167 individuals that submitted feedback. That feedback showed that 84% of people felt that an ENT or Sportsplex station be integrated into the designed route. 89% of individuals also felt that a station should be close to the hospital and the other 11% felt that a station should be next to the hospital. Mr. O'Neill said that 100% of people felt that rail should serve Downtown Matthews, with 61% of the vote wanting a station in the middle of the Downtown area and 39% wanting a station close to downtown but not in the middle of town. Attendees also felt strongly, by a vote of 80%, that a station be located on the CPCC campus, with the other 20% saying that a station should be close by.

In June of 2016 a smaller group met that included town staff; former Mayor Jim Taylor; Commissioners Jeff Miller, John Ross, Chris Melton, and Larry Whitley; Transportation Advisory Members Lou Abernathy and George Sotillo; and Planning Board members Michael Ham, Kerry Lamson, Greg Lee, and David Wieser. The results from Public outreach initiatives were discussed as were the remaining corridor options, tradeoffs, development opportunities, and route options.

In September 2016 the MTC had their meeting. Mr. O'Neill said at that meeting the MTC discussed all of the public engagement and the evaluation process. Mr. O'Neill said that this meeting was when the LPA was approved by the MTC.

Mr. O'Neill said that information had been loaded to the Town of Matthews website and included the 2016 Silver Line Final Recommendation, The Silver Line Public Outreach, and the Silver Line Evaluation of Rail Alignment.

Mr. O'Neill reviewed the current alternatives to the LPA and said that the Silver Line Task force has been given the task to recommend the best of those alternative options. Mr. O'Neill said there was a little opportunity to incorporate small shifts in the alignment but there was no opportunity to come up with new alignments or shifting the alignment to Independence Boulevard.

Mr. Lamson asked who was presenting the three new alternatives and how those materialized. Mr. O'Neill said that CATS came up with those options. Jason Lawrence, Senior Planner with CATS, said that a couple things lead to the choices. Mr. Lawrence said that in 2016 CATS wanted to have some certainty with the corridor. Once the design portion of the project began, discussions began with CSX. Mr. Lawrence said that because CATS was entering into

the environmental phase of the project, all the options needed to be looked at for environmental impacts. Mr. Lawrence said the Blue Line extension opened in 2018, and had portions in the median of N Tryon Street. CATS had learned things from that design and were planning to approach Monroe Road differently. Other options that have changed around the hospital area are because of new and planned building construction and the past public engagement desire to have stations in Downtown Matthews.

Chris Hough asked if one of the challenges to the LPA was the half mile bridge section. Mr. O'Neill said that the LPA would require a long bridge because of some grade issues. Mr. Hough asked if CATS was not able to engineer around that area. Mr. O'Neill explained that the approved LPA was aligned from point A to point B and it was up to CATS to figure out a way to get that done. What was done in 2015 and 2016 was a study and now that the route is being designed, engineering will be a large part of the process. Mr. Lawrence said that the rail was in the median of Monroe Road and in order to come out of that median and cross over CSX, powerlines, and water features the light rail would require a bridge.

Mr. Blackley said that he has found the review informative and wished this was presented at the first meeting.

Mr. Abernathy asked about a resolution to a bridge engineering problem around the quarry. Mr. Lawrence said that the LPA was what was adopted and there were options to the LPA. The design team and engineers were working on only those options. Mr. Abernathy said that the problem was that the Task Force had to make the choice. Mr. O'Neill said that unless the design team said there was an issue that would stop the route from moving forward, the Task Force should assume that those issues could be overcome.

Mr. Phillips asked if Matthews Street would be widened and what side of the road the track would be located. Mr. Phillips said that he understood that there was also a planned Downtown station along that option that would not include parking and he felt that was a mistake. Mr. Abernathy said that the CATS alignment on Matthews street showed the rail to be side running on the side where Kristopher's is located.

Wyatt Dixon asked if the members were being asked to comment on the side of the street the rail would be placed or just the general route of the rail. Mr. O'Neill said that it was his opinion that the Task Force should look at the general alignment and that the details of the alignment would be looked at in the future.

Mr. Abernathy said that the devil was in the details and members needed to know how wide the required right of way needed to be on Matthews Street and Matthews-Mint Hill Road. Mr. Abernathy said that there would also be a financial impact on the Town and CATS. All these details were important in the decision and related to the impact of the plan.

DECISION MAKING CRITERIA

Ms. Stoogenke said she would be sending a survey to the Task Force members to evaluate the alternative alignments that had been presented by CATS. Ms. Stoogenke reviewed the definitions and sample survey (Exhibit B attached and made part of these minutes).

Mr. Phillips suggested adding redevelopment and development opportunities to the criteria listing. Mr. Phillips said that development occurs all along the route and not just next to the stations. Mr. Lawrence said that CATS used a quarter mile and half mile radius for the Blue Line with different intensities and land uses. Mr. Lawrence said in some areas the Transit Oriented Development was greater than others. Mr. Dixon said that he had completed projects along the Blue Line and the extension and agreed that this would create new opportunities that would need to be addressed in the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) and the Land Use Plan.

Mr. Blackley said that the Task Force should also evaluate the response times for emergency services. If Matthews Street was an option, it needed to be noted that it was the only detour street if anything should occur on Trade Street. Mr. Blackley said insurance rates were based on response times and he would like to hear from the Fire and Police Chief regarding their opinions on those route options.

Mr. Lamson asked Ms. Stoogenke to add “maximizing development opportunities” and “disruption to public services” into the criteria categories.

Ms. Lewis said that it would be helpful to see on the map buffer areas for a half mile development area. Mr. Lamson asked if station locations could also be added. Ms. Stoogenke said that she would get that information and distribute it to the members.

Ms. Edwards said that everyone wanted to consider the long term disruption but she felt that the group also may also want to consider the short term disruptions that the rail could have on families and businesses in the community.

Mr. Lamson asked if there was anywhere in the form where comments could be freely written. Ms. Stoogenke said that she would add a comment section after each alignment option.

Mr. Abernathy asked if CATS staff would be available during future meetings. Mr. Lawrence said that CATS staff would be available to Matthews whenever needed. Mr. Abernathy said there were two important questions, what was happening with the CSX alignment and how far was the Monroe Road route extended into Charlotte. Mr. Lawrence said that was part of the evaluation process and those questions would be answered with the evaluation of the alignment options.

Mr. Johnson said that when evaluating the long term commercial impact of the Downtown station, parking consideration was needed as riders would use the downtown area for long term parking. Mr. Johnson said that the station location at Kristopher’s did not make sense and may be better placed closer to Matthews Building Supply or Andrew Caroline Drive where a parking structure could be built.

Mr. Abernathy asked if the Blue line was still running on a 10-minute schedule. Mr. Lawrence said that prior to Covid, the train was running on a 10-minute schedule. Mr. Abernathy said that with no synchronization for inbound and outbound trains, the traffic arms could be down every 5 minutes. Mr. Lawrence said that CATS could supply data on the experience at the N Tryon crossing. Mr. Blackley said there were more alternative routes to get around Tryon Street than there were for Downtown Matthews. Mr. Dixon said that the Lynx trains were very short and did not cause as much disruption as the freight trains did in impeding traffic.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Silver Line Task Force:

- September 16, 2020 (additional meeting) via Zoom
- October 7, 2020 (Zoom or In-person TBD)

CATS Public Meetings:

- September 24, 2020 5:30pm (Matthews Portion)
- September 29, 2020 5:30 (Union County Portion) CPCC to Union County

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shana Robertson
Senior Administrative Specialist/Deputy Town Clerk