



RESOLUTION TITLE: RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT OF THE CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM (CATS) WEST CORRIDOR EXTENDING INTO DOWNTOWN GASTONIA

- WHEREAS, more transportation options are needed to provide greater mobility to our existing residents, as well as the growing population in Gaston County; and,
- WHEREAS, the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2009-2013) indicates that 25,653 Gaston County residents are traveling into Mecklenburg County each weekday for work; and,
- WHEREAS, the Charlotte region is home to over 1.8 million people and is expected to grow to over 2.5 million by 2030 and the key to supporting this economic growth is a rapid transit system integrated with land-use planning creating a sustainable, economic-environment which improves the quality of life and attracts businesses and people to the region; and,
- WHEREAS, the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO), formally the Gaston Urban Area MPO, completed the Gastonia Rapid Transit Alternatives Study in 2005 which identified the need to link to the Charlotte Area Transit's (CATS) West Corridor service via rapid transit to improve its accessibility to and from other parts of the Greater Charlotte area; and,
- WHEREAS, CATS is currently conducting a study to reevaluate and update the transit recommendation for the West Corridor with the primary purpose to conduct the necessary transportation and land use analysis to select a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to update the 2030 Transit System Corridor Plan, which will be approved by the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC); and,
- WHEREAS, since the current West Corridor LPA was adopted in 2006, land use changes have continued along Wilkinson Boulevard, the CLT Airport has continued to expand, and the Charlotte City Council recently approved the River District, a large mixed-use development along the Catawba River; and,
- WHEREAS, Gaston County stakeholders have expressed renewed interest in exploring rapid transit options into Gaston County from Mecklenburg County; and,
- WHEREAS, the transit options that will be considered may extend beyond Mecklenburg County, and at a minimum, will not preclude extensions into Gaston County as part of future investments; and,

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WHEREAS, based on the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) Law, public transportation projects with service spanning two or more counties and serving more than one municipality are eligible for funding at the Regional Impact Tier; and,

WHEREAS, there are two light rail transit corridor options currently being studied with both utilizing the US 74 Catawba River Bridge to connect into Gaston County; and,

WHEREAS, the replacement of both the US 74 Catawba River Bridge and the US 74 South Fork Catawba River Bridge are funded projects and there is a feasibility study currently underway to examine the potential for the design of the new bridges to include a future light rail corridor; and,

WHEREAS, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners supports the proposed light rail West Corridor extension into Downtown Gastonia, providing better access for Gaston County residents; and,

WHEREAS, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners understands that the West Corridor study is intended to define a project to move forward and is not identifying a “shovel ready” rail project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners hereby supports the Metropolitan Transit Commission’s (MTC) Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the West Corridor extending into downtown Gastonia.

Adopted this 12th day of November 2019.

Chairman, Gaston County Board of Commissioners