

## LYNX Charlotte Light Rail

### Related Professionals

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### Back in 2007, nobody knew if light rail transit would work in Charlotte.

But the City held its collective breath in hopes that ridership estimates would be on track.

The first light rail service in Charlotte, the LYNX Blue Line opened to great fanfare, offering commuters a predictable and congestion-free experience over the 9.6 mile long corridor. The Blue Line has fifteen stations, seven park and ride locations, and has spurred redevelopment all along its route.

Fast forward to 2013. The Blue Line now averages over 15,000 riders each weekday. The ridership numbers have consistently surpassed expectations, and now a Blue Line Extension is in progress to the UNC Charlotte Campus.

Nexsen Pruet attorney Joe McCullough has been along for the whole ride. He said, “The Blue Line is a plus for Charlotte, a plus for commuters and a plus for adjoining property owners. We’ve been assisting the City of Charlotte with real estate acquisitions for over twenty years, and have really enjoyed our involvement in its various infrastructure projects. We’ve worked on roadways, utility lines, and now we’ve been fortunate to work on the Blue Line and the Extension.”

Joe and his team of real estate attorneys, associates and paralegals are currently working on over 200 transactions associated with the Blue Line Extension. The parcels acquired for the Blue Line Extension will be used for stations, facilities, park and ride lots, and parking decks. His team handles the transactional work associated with the City’s acquisitions.

The Blue Line route includes a long stretch of existing railroad lines and many of the parcel negotiations have been with existing rail carriers. “Given that most rail rights of way were granted by State Charter in the 1800’s, railroad title work is notoriously difficult. Our paralegals had to search the titles to many parcels back to the charter grants.”

Joe’s favorite part of working with the City Attorneys and the CATS officials is the behind-the-scenes planning of the project. Each parcel of property acquired plays an integral role in the Blue Line and, typically, the

development of the Blue Line substantially benefits the adjoining property. “The ultimate goal with each property acquisition is to achieve a ‘win-win’. Careful planning and sensitivity to the concerns of the parcel owner are equally important.”

“With transactional law, our work product is usually intangible. We can’t take our kids to a building we built or show them a product our company made in the store. The LYNX Blue Line is something we worked on with permanence and visibility, and it’s something we can point to and say, ‘we worked on that project, and it made the City a better place to live.’”