

# Charlotte's Transit Sales Tax



**Presented by  
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**New Partners for Smart Growth  
10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
February 4, 2011**



# Committee of 100 (1994)

## Composition

- 100+ members from Mecklenburg County and 5 adjacent counties
- Included elected officials and business community reps

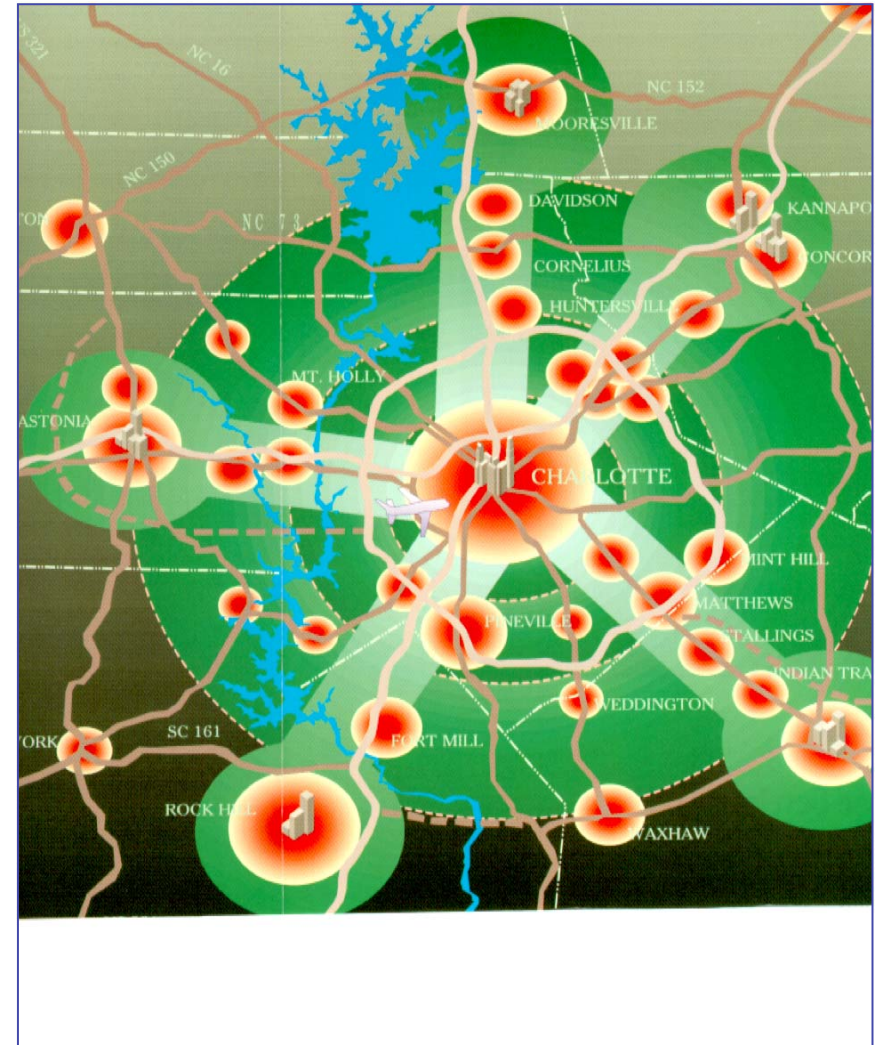
## Charge

- Develop Community Consensus on Vision for Land Use and Transportation
- Define Major Revenue Sources
- Determine Organizations Structure

# Committee of 100

## Land Use and Quality of Life

- Long-term growth management strategies for Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Five primary transportation and development corridors
- Transform unfocused development patterns in corridors and wedges to compact mixed-use development along corridors and in station areas





# Committee of 100 Transit Alternatives

- Improve Express, Local and Regional Bus Service over next 3-5 years
- Improve and Expand Bus Service as Primary Short-Range and Long-Range Solutions
- Plan and Execute High Capacity Transit to Meet Long-Range Needs



# Sales Tax Advantages

## **Least Objectionable form of Tax/Fee**

- Ease of Collection
- Generates Significant Amount of Revenue
- Applies to All
- Generates Revenue from adjacent Counties
- Grows with inflation



# Committee of 100 Final Report

- Adopted by all Ring Cities
- Sales Tax implemented by South Carolina
- York County funding Highway Projects and Transit Studies with new Tax
- So What Happened on the North Carolina Side?



GOOD LUCK!  
- KEVIN MERS



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# Committee of 10 (1996/1997)

## Composition

- Chair of Committee of 100
- 2 Charlotte City Council members
- Area representatives on NCBOT
- Several key business leaders

## Charge

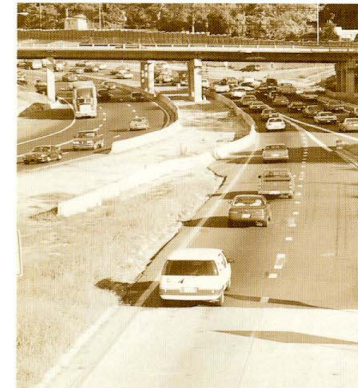
- Review and Reaffirm/Revise Recommendations of “Committee of 100”
- Determine Which Recommendations are Most Feasible and Develop Strategy for Implementation
- Collaborate with State’s Transit 2001 Commission to Address Charlotte’s Needs Through Their Proposals



- 5 Year Transportation Plan
- Support for “Local Option” Revenue Sources for Transit Improvements
- Led to Enabling Legislation for ½ Cent Local Option Sales Tax



## CHARLOTTE'S FIVE YEAR Transportation PLAN



### Giving You More Options Than Ever

As Charlotte continues to grow, easy and convenient transportation is essential for maintaining our City's distinctive character. The Charlotte City Council has approved a five-year transportation plan designed to respond to traffic congestion and pollution while providing more options for buses, carpools, and other alternatives to cars. Funding for the plan is still being determined.

To create the five-year plan, City Department of Transportation officials surveyed hundreds of local citizens, including neighborhood group representatives, community leaders, transit riders, employers, and the general public.

They also incorporated ideas from seven commissioned studies by national experts. These studies looked at the issues and opportunities the City faces as it constructs a transportation system for the future. What is done now to improve transportation will influence Charlotte for generations to come.

### The Next Step

Learning from the experiences of older metropolitan areas, Charlotte is at a critical juncture on its way to becoming a major city. This five-year plan will allow Charlotte to meet its short-term transportation needs. With the population expected to reach 815,000 in Mecklenburg County by 2015, it will be essential for neighborhood groups, employers, community leaders, transit riders, and the general public to continue building on this plan. By re-thinking a traditional “roads-first” approach, Charlotte will foster a varied transportation system that will promote its economic, social, and environmental well-being.



CHARLOTTE®  
Department of Transportation





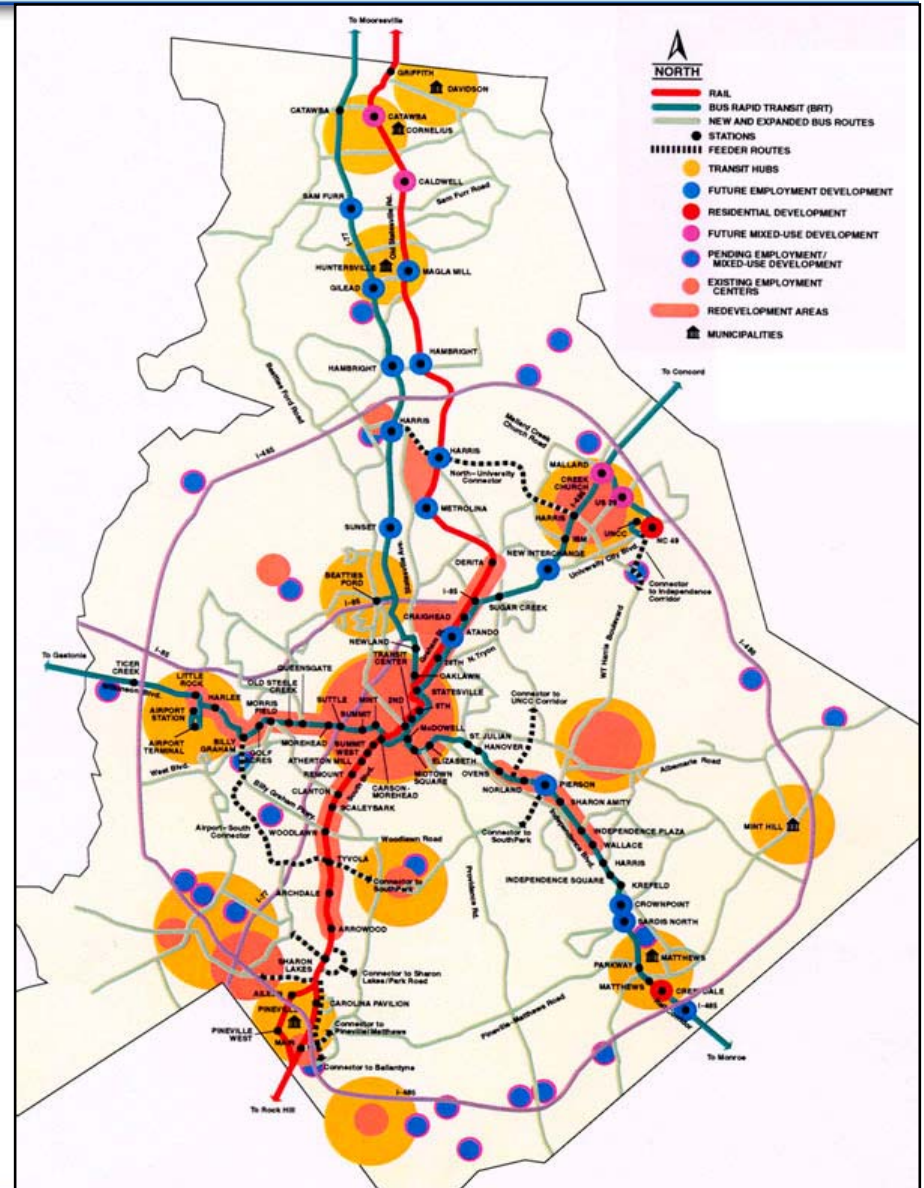
# Determining the Needs

- Intensive 7-month public process (January – July 1998)
- Hired a Land Use/Transit Consultant team
- 3 Community-wide meetings to get feedback on the County's transit needs
- 15 Corridor meetings to get input on technologies, alignments, and land use
- July presentation to elected officials
- August County Commission decision to put sales tax on ballot

# 2025 Integrated Transit Land Use Plan

## Goals

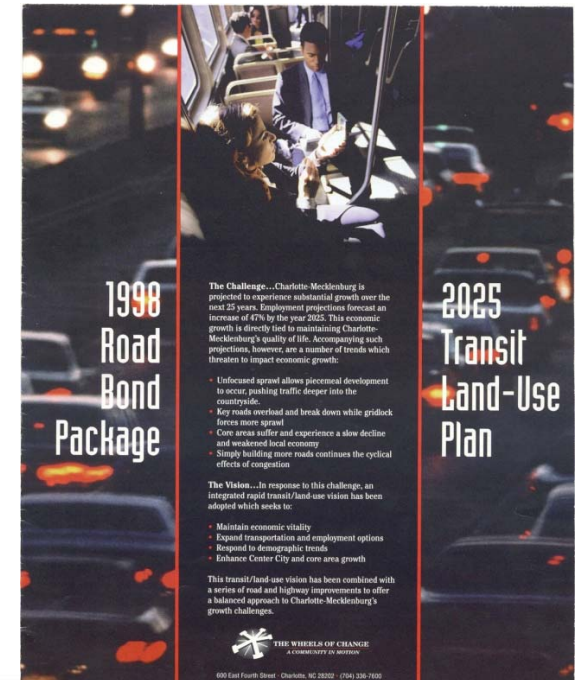
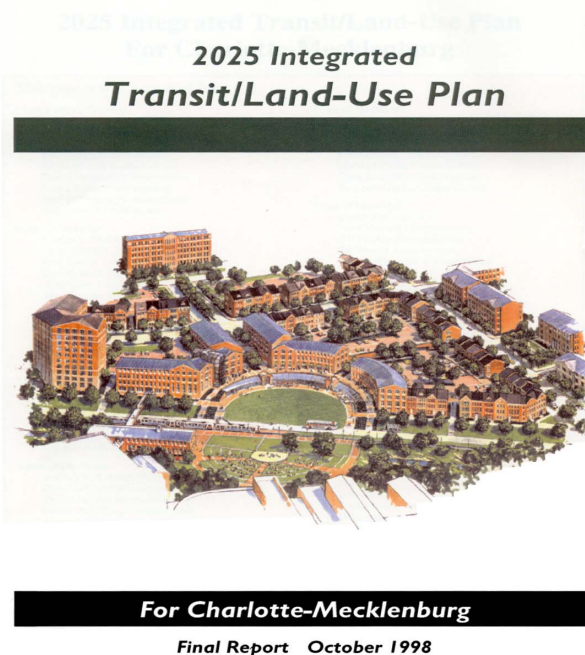
- Support Centers and Corridors Land Use Vision
- Provide Choices in Mode of Travel
- Develop a Regional Transit System
- Support Economic Growth and Sustainable Development





# Success in 1998!

- Voter referendum on ½ percent sales use tax for public transportation on November 1998 ballot
- Promoted by Charlotte Chamber and paired with \$100 million Road Bond
- Sales tax approved 58% to 42%





# Decade of Progress

- 1998: 2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan developed  
Based on Centers and Corridors Vision  
Lead to Transit Sales Tax passage  
(58% approved)
- 1999: MTC established
- 2000: CATS created  
Light rail LPA for South Corridor  
Major Investment Studies initiated in other corridors
- 2002: 2025 Corridor System Plan adopted
- 2000-2006: Transit service expanded and improved
- 2006: 2030 Corridor System Plan Update adopted
- 2007: LYNX Blue Line opened late November

- One citizen funds local petition for the repeal
  - Signatures obtained at CATS' main transportation center
  - Petition misrepresented as a means to reduce Charlotte property taxes
- Elected officials and community leaders support transit and NC's first light rail line
- NC law prohibits public agencies from advocacy







# Charlotte Chamber Leads The World Series of Campaigns



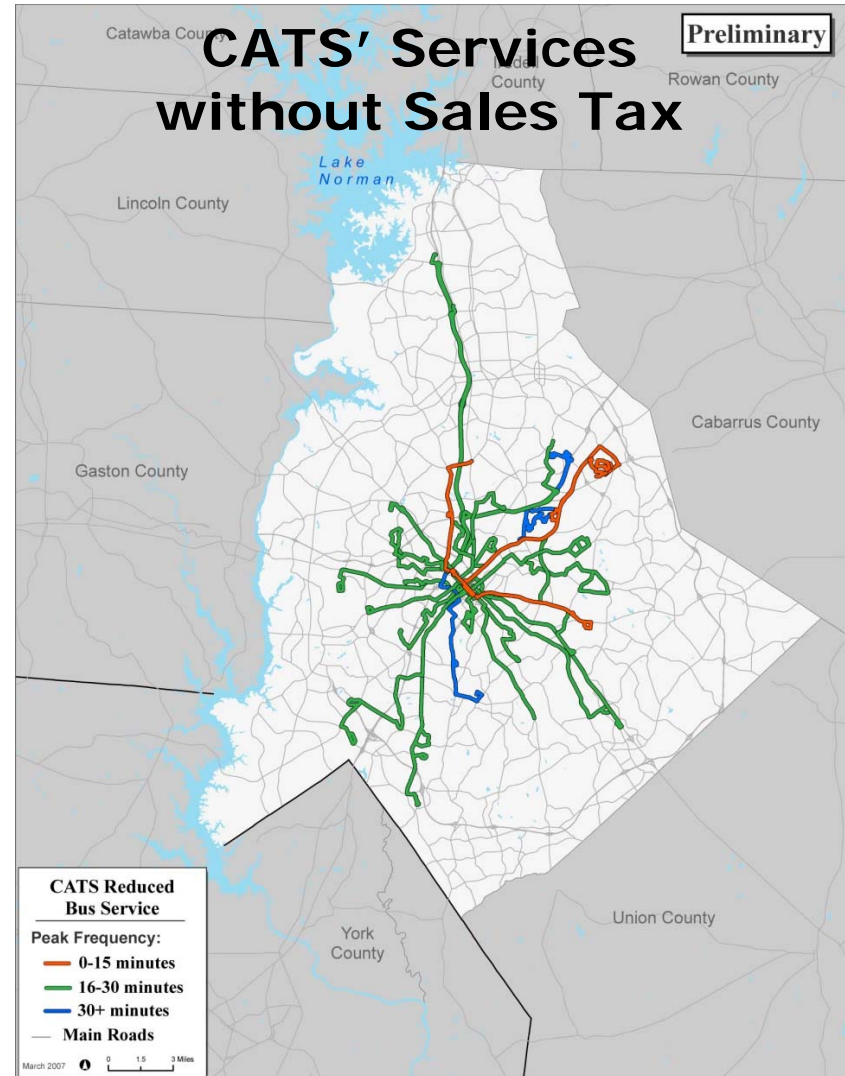
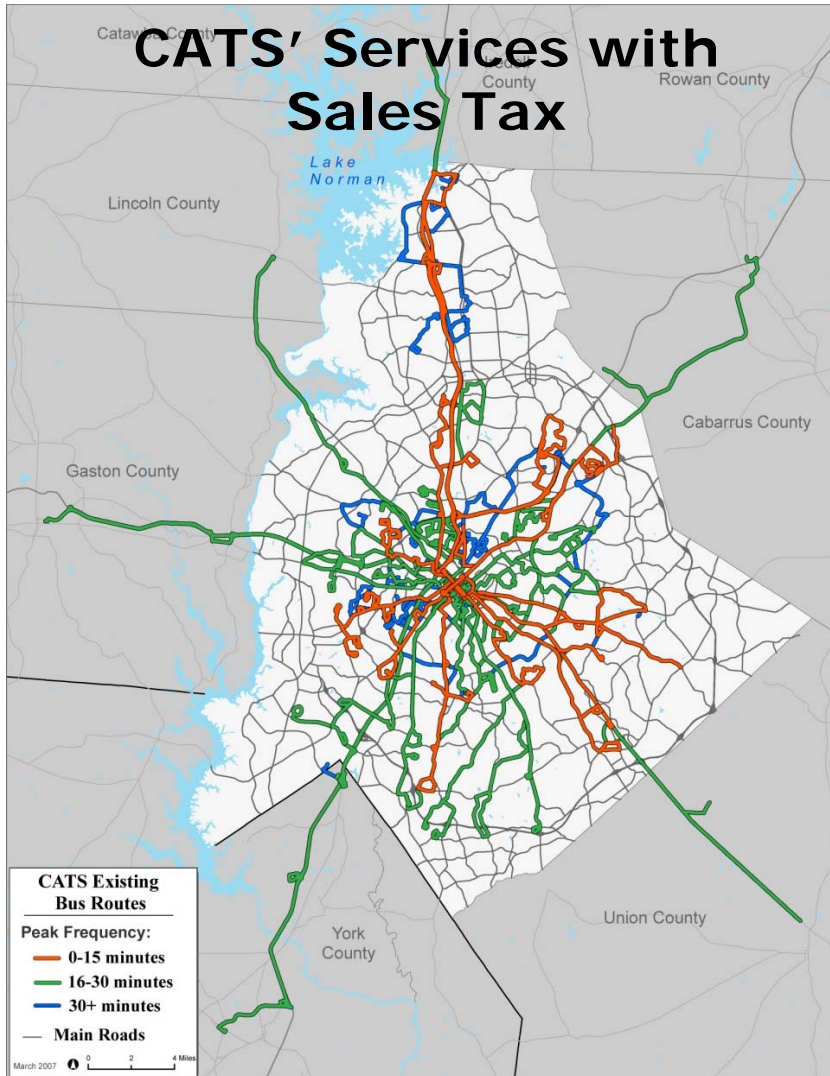
**COUNCIL on AGING**

YOUR SOURCE AND VOICE ON SENIOR ISSUES  
3205 Freedom Dr, Ste 29, Charlotte, NC 28208

*Aging requires choice of transportation to maintain independence. Don't take it away.*

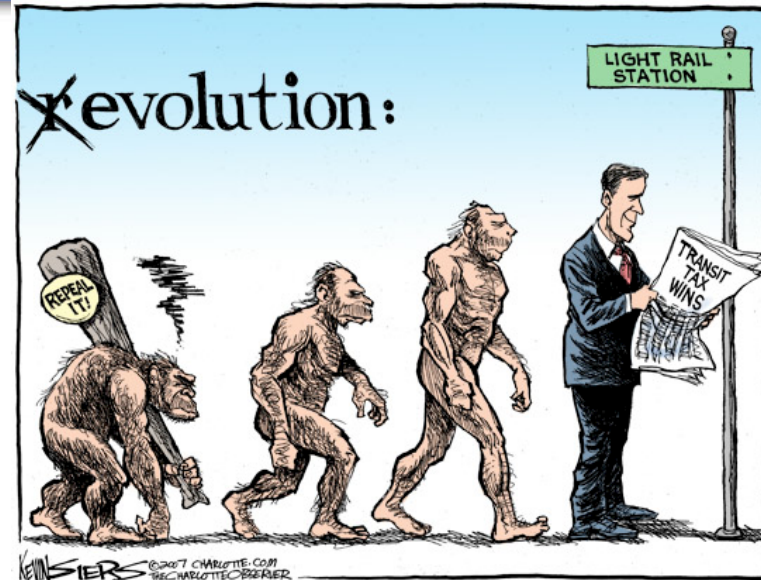


**Vote AGAINST  
Transit Tax Repeal!**





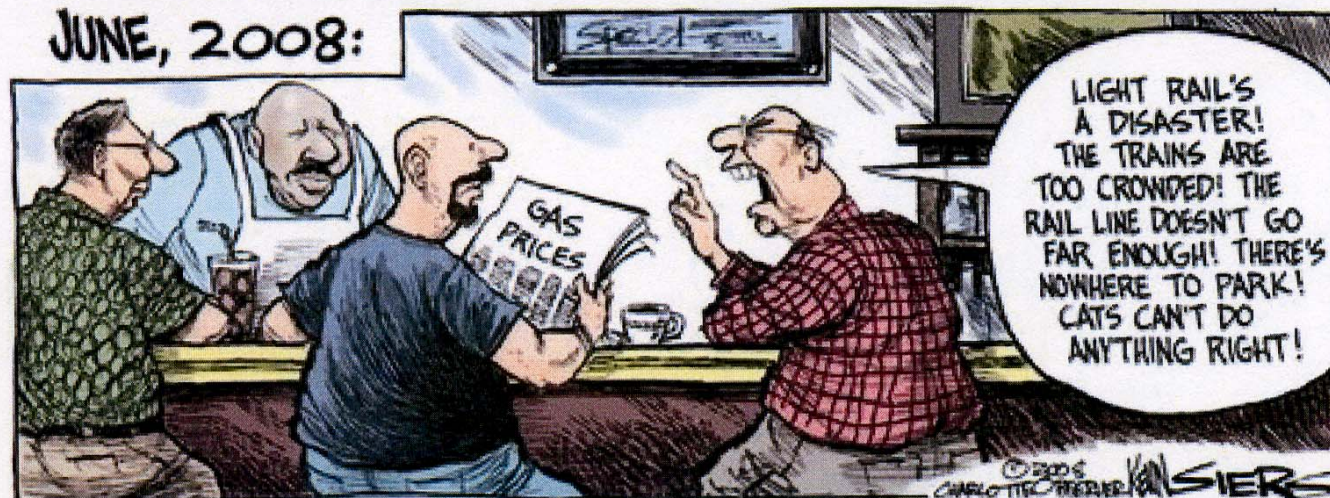
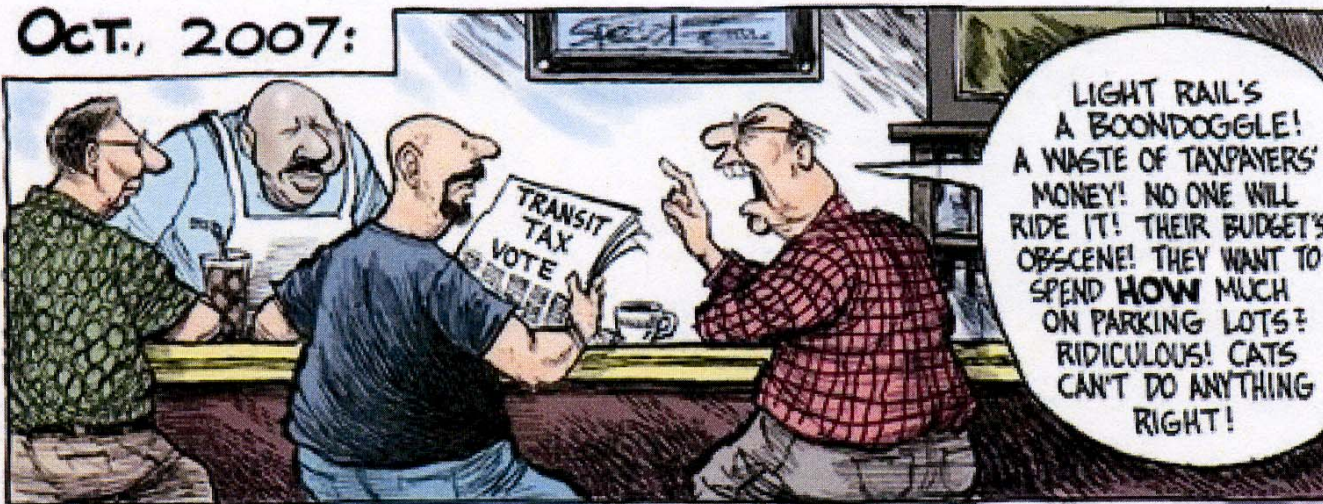
- Unprecedented 70% vote against repeal
- LYNX Blue Line Grand Opening
  - Over 100,000 riders join the celebration
- Transit Ambassadors help patrons navigate the system
- Ridership
  - Starts strong and stays strong
  - Opposition melts away
- **Over two million riders in first six months of service**



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