

**MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. MR02-14**  
**ACQUISITION OF SITE IN HUNTERSVILLE TO SERVE AS A FUTURE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education proposes to purchase 17 acres of a 42-acre tract (parcel # 071-471-75) located on Ranson Road in the Town of Huntersville to serve as an elementary school. The site is located on the west side of Interstate 77 between Stumptown Road and Gilead Road. The site is within a proposed residential subdivision being considered for approval by the Huntersville Town Board.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The proposed elementary school site is approximately 1.3 miles west of Huntersville Elementary school and lies within the 2002/03 Huntersville home school boundary (area west of I-77). Huntersville elementary school is projected to be 104% utilized with 4 mobile classrooms in the 2002/03 school year.

Blythe Elementary School is also within close proximity to the proposed property, lying 3.2 miles south of the parcel. This elementary school is projected to be 105% utilized with 7 mobile classrooms next year.

Cornelius Elementary lies 4.8 miles to the north of this site. It is projected to be 106% utilized in 2002/03 with 12 mobile classrooms.

The relatively high utilization numbers at Huntersville, Cornelius and Blythe elementary schools are partially a result of the population growth that has occurred in northern Mecklenburg County. As a specific example, the population of the town of Huntersville has risen from 3,023 in 1990 to 24,960 in 2000, an increase of 725%. Comparatively, Mecklenburg County grew by 36% during this same time period.

The CMS Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan indicates that 10 new elementary schools will be needed in the northern portion of the district within the 2010/11 planning timeframe. This need is based upon projected student growth, as well as other issues related to school capacity needs. Funding for a new north elementary school were approved in the 2000 Bond Referendum.

The construction of a new elementary school in the northern portion of the district would have the potential to relieve overcrowding at Huntersville, Cornelius and/or Blythe elementary schools. The proposed property is located near existing densities of CMS elementary school students, as well as near areas of future growth, thus providing for the long-term populating of a school at this site.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE AND PUBLIC POLICY:**

The proposed school site is located within the Town of Huntersville Planning jurisdiction and has a General Residential (GR) District Zoning classification, which permits schools with conditions. A new school at this location would be in concert with the Town of Huntersville's plans for this area and supports residential neighborhoods, rural compounds, and mixed-use traditional neighborhood developments which are recommended for this area. Charlotte-Mecklenburg School staff met with planning and transportation staff from the Town of Huntersville on a number of occasions to discuss the possible location of an elementary school in Huntersville. Both agree the target area should be west of I-77 in the I-77 corridor close to current growth patterns.

The Town of Huntersville supports the project contingent upon the ability of CMS, the developer of the adjoining residential subdivision, the Town of Huntersville and NCDOT to fund and construct the necessary road improvements to Ranson Road and Gilead Road. The Town of Huntersville would also like CMS and the nearby Catholic school to stagger their hours to lessen the traffic impacts on the roads.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

The proposed school at this location will provide relief from overcrowding at the above referenced schools and room for additional enrollment growth at these schools. The site has approximately 1400 linear feet of frontage on Ranson Road, which allows the separation of bus and car traffic and would help minimize traffic impact on Ranson Road. In addition, the design of the project will allow access to the school from the proposed adjoining residential neighborhood.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:**

The site is part of a submitted subdivision plan up for review by the Town of Huntersville Board. The project consists of an approximate 80-acre tract of land that has 192 single-family lots and 78 townhomes for a total of 270 units. The site has not been approved by the town as of 3/29/02, but is under consideration for approval.

Along Torrence Creek the county has an existing greenway trail in the Cedarfield neighborhood. An extension of this trail downstream is designed and is being set for construction. Under a partnership between the Town, NC-DOT, and County Park & Recreation, a new crossing of Torrence Creek underpass will be created suitable for trail installation when NCDOT rebuilds Gilead Road next year. In the future, the trail will potentially be extended upstream from its current location, under Gilead Road, past the subject property, all the way to the new Town park at Rosedale. This project could provide bike and pedestrian access to the school away from the major roads.

The Town of Huntersville Transportation Department has indicated the Town would participate in the repair and upgrade of Ranson, starting in fiscal year 2004-2005.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

The site would be purchased with 1999 Land Banking funds, and construction would be considered under the 2000 Bonds. Estimated cost, developed in conjunction with CMS Capital Needs Assessment process is approximately 13.5 million dollars including construction, furnishings and equipment, design and project management.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The topography of the site is ideal for school construction; flat  
Ranson Road and Stumptown Road will require intersection improvements  
CMS has reviewed six additional sites and this site better meets the immediate needs of CMS  
There is a possible joint use opportunity with Park and Recreation (playfields; greenway connectivity -- see notes above under Relationship to Other Public or Private Projects)  
Library system evaluated the site, but it is too close to the north regional library to justify building a library at this site

**CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval, contingent upon satisfying the transportation and access goals of the Town of Huntersville.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Planning Committee approved staff's recommendation by a 6-0 vote at their May 21, 2002 meeting.

DEVELOPER TO PROVIDE COMPLETE VISUAL  
SCREENING FROM RANSON ROAD UTILIZING  
EXISTING VEGETATION WHERE POSSIBLE

RANSON ROAD

SCHOOL SITE  
17 ACRES

• AMENITY •

PAGE

PAGE

PAGE

PROJECT INFORMATION  
188 LOTS (61' x 100')  
78 TOWNHOMES  
270 TOTAL  
60.33 AC.  
3.39 UNITS/ACRE

FEMA FLOOD ZONE  
SLOPED LOT (61' x 100')  
SHOWN WITH FLOOD ZONE  
LOT 1 (61' x 100') OF TOWNHOMES  
SHOWN WITH FLOOD ZONE

PROJECT TITLE	SECTION PLAN
PROJECT LOCATION	RANSON ROAD
PROJECT OWNER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT ARCHITECT	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT CIVIL ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT ELECTRICAL ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT MECHANICAL ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT PLUMBING ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT FIRE ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT HISTORIC PRESERVATION	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT TRAFFIC ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT UTILITIES ENGINEER	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT SURVEYOR	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT RECORDS	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT AS-BUILT	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT MAINTENANCE	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT OPERATIONS	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT FINANCIAL	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT LEGAL	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT TAX	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT INSURANCE	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT ACCOUNTING	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT MARKETING	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT SALES	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT LEASING	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT CONSTRUCTION	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT COMPLETION	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT POST-CONSTRUCTION	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT ARCHIVE	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.
PROJECT RETIREMENT	WATSON ROAD DEVELOPMENT, INC.

# Mandatory Referral: MR02-14

