

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. MR02-35
Land Acquisition for a CATS Park & Ride Lot

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The Charlotte Area Transit Systems (CATS) is proposing to purchase two vacant parcels of land totaling 3.164 acres located on Independence Pointe Parkway near Sam Newell Road (Tax Identification Numbers 193-231-30 and 31) to develop as a park and ride lot. The property is within the Town of Matthews' jurisdiction.

The park and ride lot would accommodate approximately 320 parking spaces, including 8 handicapped spaces (of which 2 are van accessible). This facility would replace the current park and ride lot at Windsor Square Shopping Center, located on the north side of Independence Boulevard near Sam Newell Road. Currently, CATS has a short-term lease agreement (one month termination clause) with Windsor Square. The lease agreement permits transit users to park their cars at Windsor Square behind Sam's Club. However, Sam's Club is expanding into the area currently leased by CATS and the lease agreement may be terminated. The 64X Bus Route serves this corridor and the Windsor Square park and ride lot.

The Planning Committee previously approved MR 01-53 for acquisition of property in the vicinity of the subject site for development of a park and ride. CATS subsequently determined that the site was not appropriate and is no longer pursuing its acquisition.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Development of a park and ride lot at this location will enable CATS to have a permanent lot without having to rely on short-term lease agreements. A permanent park and ride facility at this location will help to promote transit ridership in eastern Mecklenburg County.

The 64X bus route serves this corridor and the Windsor Square park and ride lot. Current ridership on the 64X is approximately 64,000 riders annually. The 65X bus route will likely also use the proposed park and ride lot in the future. Current ridership on the 65X is 48,000 riders per year.

Approximately 100 people use the existing park and ride lot at Windsor Square.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS AND PUBLIC POLICY:

The Planning Director for the Town of Matthews has been included in the site selection process and approves of this site for a park and ride lot with a stipulation that CATS protect the adjoining creek from storm water runoff. CATS has agreed to work directly with Mecklenburg County Water Quality and the Town of Matthews during the design phase of the project to include a retention/detention/treatment system.

The subject property is zoned B-1CD. A parking facility is an allowable use in this zoning district.

Matthews Land Use Plan provides general policy and goal/recommendation statements for corridors in Matthews. The section on Independence Pointe Parkway states *"The portion of the road now open from Sam Newell Road to the Duke Power substation has been about 75% developed with mixed uses. . . . The remaining vacant land in the Matthews Park and East Walk developments (between Sam Newell Road and Duke Power) should be developed with uses that are complementary to those already there, and should not include more retail."* According to Matthews' Planning Director, "The proposed use is not retail and would not conflict with any uses in the immediate vicinity (consignment store, hotels, restaurants, carpet store, video store, and insurance office)."

PROJECT IMPACT:

Traffic: There will be some impact to traffic during peak "rush" hours but it will not be significant. The current park and ride lot at Sam's Club already brings CATS riders by personal cars to a nearby location. Relocating and increasing the potential capacity of the parking site will result in additional traffic on Independence Pointe Parkway, Sam Newell Road, and Windsor Square Drive in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, the peak traffic load for nearby uses (i.e., consignment store, hotels, restaurant, video store, carpet store, insurance office) would not conflict with park and ride lot users.

Land Use: The proposed park and ride lot would not conflict with existing land uses, and is consistent with the adopted land use plan.

Environmental Concerns: Because this site backs up to a creek and vehicles parked there will deposit pollutants on the ground that will flow into storm drains, it is important to address how these pollutants will be kept from getting into the

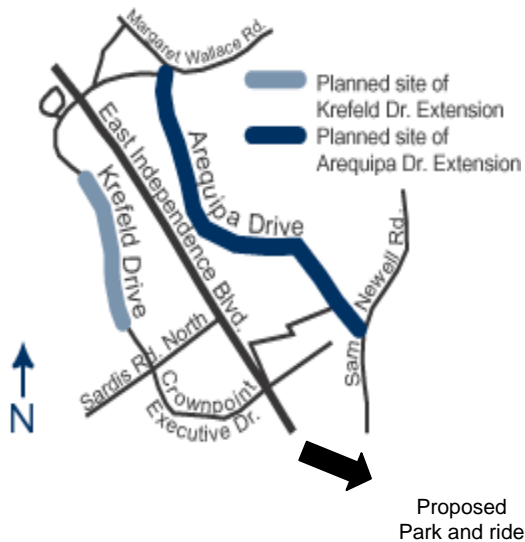
creek. In response, CATS has agreed to construct a retention/detention basin to collect any additional runoff caused by the impervious surface.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The subject property is within the Southeast Transit Corridor and is within ¼ mile of a proposed station on the staff recommended alignment. Purchase of this property would not only serve a current need for a park and ride facility, but could also be used in the future for development of a rapid transit station.

Two new roads are planned in the area of the subject property, Krefeld and Arequipa Drive Extensions. Arequipa Drive is located on the north side of Independence Boulevard and Krefeld is located on the south side of Independence. Both road projects extend existing roads to form parallel collectors to Independence Boulevard. Krefeld Drive Extension will be planned to accommodate future rapid transit if the staff recommended alignment is chosen.

Arequipa Drive Extension plans to link Margaret Wallace Road with Matthews Township Parkway, however, due to the withholding of revenue by the State, the project limits have been shortened, from Margaret Wallace Road to the Cross Creek Apartment complex.



ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: December, 2003

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS: This mandatory referral was presented to the Task Force on November 6, 2002. The Task Force members had no comments.

CMPS STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed land acquisition for development of a park and ride lot.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Committee recommended approval by a vote of 7-0 at their November 19, 2002 meeting.

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