

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 03-30
Proposed Acquisition of Trolley Barn Site at South Boulevard & Bland Street

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

This proposal is to acquire the land/location of the old trolley barn operation at the corner of South Boulevard and Bland Street. The property is part of Tax Parcel #123-041-26. Approximately .378-acre of the 6.04-acre parcel is to be acquired in fee simple; an easement over another .150-acre segment would accommodate trolley ingress and egress to the rear of the "barn" structure. This property is part of a larger site proposed for mixed-use redevelopment (by others). The site is zoned MUDD (Mixed Use Development District), which is established to encourage mixed development and its accompanying support commercial and office uses while maintaining a strong emphasis on pedestrian scale, urban development and amenities.

As part of the redevelopment of the whole site, a new trolley barn would be built as a replica of the original structure using portions of existing exterior walls and/or materials that are part of the existing structure. This would be a joint project by the County (land purchase), Historic Landmarks Commission (consulting) and CATS (building and operating the new structure under a lease from the County).

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The new structure would be utilized as a trolley maintenance facility and museum, and for other trolley related activities. The project is in theory consistent with preserving the historic fabric of the community (although the majority of the original barn will need to be re-built). It also supports the economic redevelopment of the SouthEnd area and the reintroduction of the trolley as a transportation option, as well as supports the pedestrian environment that is being recaptured in this area.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This project supports: (1) historic preservation; (2) pedestrian means of travel; (3) trolley use; (4) economic redevelopment of formerly blighted areas. It also supports the goal of linking land use and transportation public policies.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The proposed land use is consistent with the land use plans and policies for the area. The *South End/Uptown Rail Corridor Plan* (1998) is the governing land use plan. This plan calls for mixed-used development at the subject location.

Planning staff is in the process of developing a new land use plan for the area entitled the *South End Pedscape/Transit Station Area Plan* that will update the earlier plan in light of planned transit stations in South End. The draft version of the *Pedscape Plan* calls for transit-oriented mixed-use development at the subject location. Finally, the council-adopted *Transit Station Area Principles* (2001) encourages "special traffic generators – such as cultural, educational, entertainment, and recreational uses – to locate within or adjacent to station areas."

PROJECT IMPACT:

The new facility will be one of the attractions for this neighborhood as it is redeveloped, and will represent one of a number of public and private sector investments in the SouthEnd. Public sector investments of this sort tend to serve as catalysts for other private investments.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This proposed action will complement the development of the south corridor light rail line that is to be constructed between uptown and I-485 near Pineville. It will also complement a significant number of other public and private investments either planned or underway in the area, including the infrastructure investments the City has made in the trolley corridor and trolley operations in South End.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The property could be closed as soon as the end of 2003 and demolition/reconstruction would follow within 18 months to two years thereafter. Acquisition is to be funded from 1999 land bonds.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

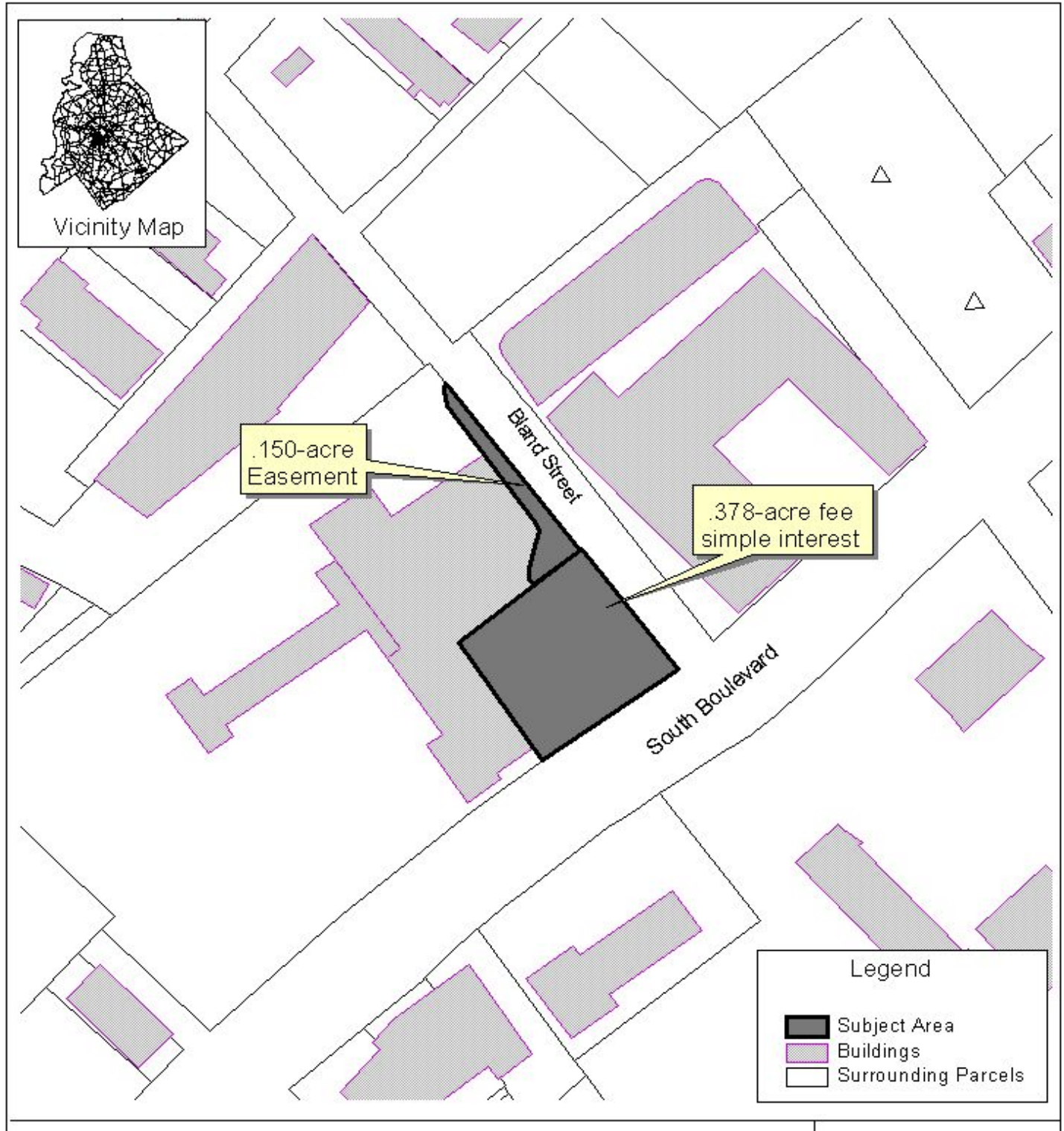
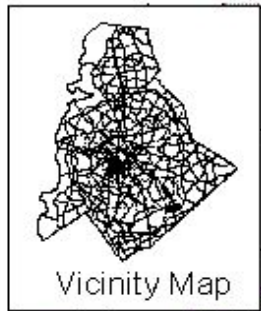
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their November 5, 2003 meeting and no joint use opportunities were identified.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff recommends approval of this purchase.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Committee recommended approval by a 7-0 vote at their November 18, 2003 meeting.



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