

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 06-12
Proposed Lease of County Property for Huntersville Animal Shelter/Public Works Facility
And Dedication for Extension of Verhoeff Drive

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County Real Estate proposes to (1) lease approximately four acres of County-owned land to the Town of Huntersville upon which the Town plans to construct an animal holding shelter to serve the northern portion of the County and a park maintenance facility (both facilities to be operated by the Town) and (2) grant right-of-way involving an adjoining portion of the same property to the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to extend Verhoeff Drive to perpendicularly intersect with Statesville Road. The animal shelter/maintenance facility site is proposed to be situated on portions of Tax Parcels 017-204-01 and 017-421-10; the site is vacant and roughly rectangular shaped with frontage on Statesville Road. The extension of Verhoeff will cross a portion of Tax Parcel 017-204-01 to the rear of the adjoining County-owned Gatling Center facility. The newly-created right-of-way will separate the Gatling property from the proposed animal shelter/maintenance facility. The County proposes to enter into a long-term lease with Huntersville for the shelter site, and to convey title to the road right-of-way to NCDOT.

The land involved in these two projects is currently vacant. The majority of the site fronting on Statesville Road is zoned CI (Campus Institutional, allowing schools, religious facilities, government complexes, and parks) with the rear portion carrying NR zoning (Neighborhood Residential, allowing primarily single family development, parks, greenways, etc.).

Preliminary designs for the relocated roadway show a two-lane cross-section with turn lanes, five-foot bicycle lanes, planting strips and sidewalks.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This project would provide an animal shelter for the northern part of the County which addresses public safety and animal protection concerns; the maintenance facility would provide a center for the town to work out of for the care of town park facilities. The street improvement project will eliminate a dog-leg curve providing a right angle turn onto Verhoeff, which will make the road easier/safer to navigate. These projects have been requested by Huntersville officials.

The proposal allows the town to utilize currently unused public (County) property for productive purposes. The location for the shelter and maintenance facility would be part of a larger public facilities district in the immediate area including a (County –run) mulch site on Statesville Road, the Gatling Juvenile Detention Center, Huntersville Athletic Park, the town's aquatic center and the CPCC campus along Verhoeff Drive. The roadway improvement addresses public safety in accessing these and other facilities in the area by eliminating a hazardous curve in Verhoeff Drive.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The proposed land uses will create an improvement of public services and safety in an area where multiple public facilities/agencies are located (Gatling Center, Huntersville Aquatic Center, CPCC North Campus, and Huntersville Athletic Park).

The proposed use of a portion of the site for an animal shelter and recreation maintenance facility is consistent with the Town of Huntersville's adopted Community Plan. The re-located Verhoeff Drive segment is consistent with the Thoroughfare Plan developed and adopted by the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO).

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The larger (western-most) portion of the property is zoned CI (Community Institutional) under the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance, that allows governmental complexes. The smaller parcel is zoned NR (Neighborhood Residential) allowing governmental buildings up to 5,000 square feet gross floor area. The uses proposed are considered by Huntersville staff to be compatible with zoning and with surrounding institutional uses.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The proposed shelter and maintenance facility are not expected to measurably increase traffic in this area. Any negative traffic impacts are expected to be more than offset by the roadway improvements. Sidewalks and bike lanes planned for the new roadway will improve multi-modal access among the various institutional uses within the district. The proposed roadway will also improve safety in vehicular access to the sites in this immediate area and allow for better traffic circulation in this portion of Huntersville.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The Town of Huntersville is planning the proposed Verhoeff roadway improvements in connection with improvements to the Verhoeff /NC115 intersection about ¾ mile to the east. These projects will collectively serve to enhance both vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle circulation in this area.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Transfer of the land for the shelter and maintenance facility will be in the form of a long term lease from the County to the Town; building the facility will be funded by the Town, which reports that the shelter is a funded project whose construction will likely commence before the end of 2006. The park maintenance facility is not yet funded; financing would be required from a future budget.

NCDOT will construct the roadway improvement in the near future (Huntersville Public Works staff report that the project will begin during the second half of 2006).

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their April 5, 2006 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

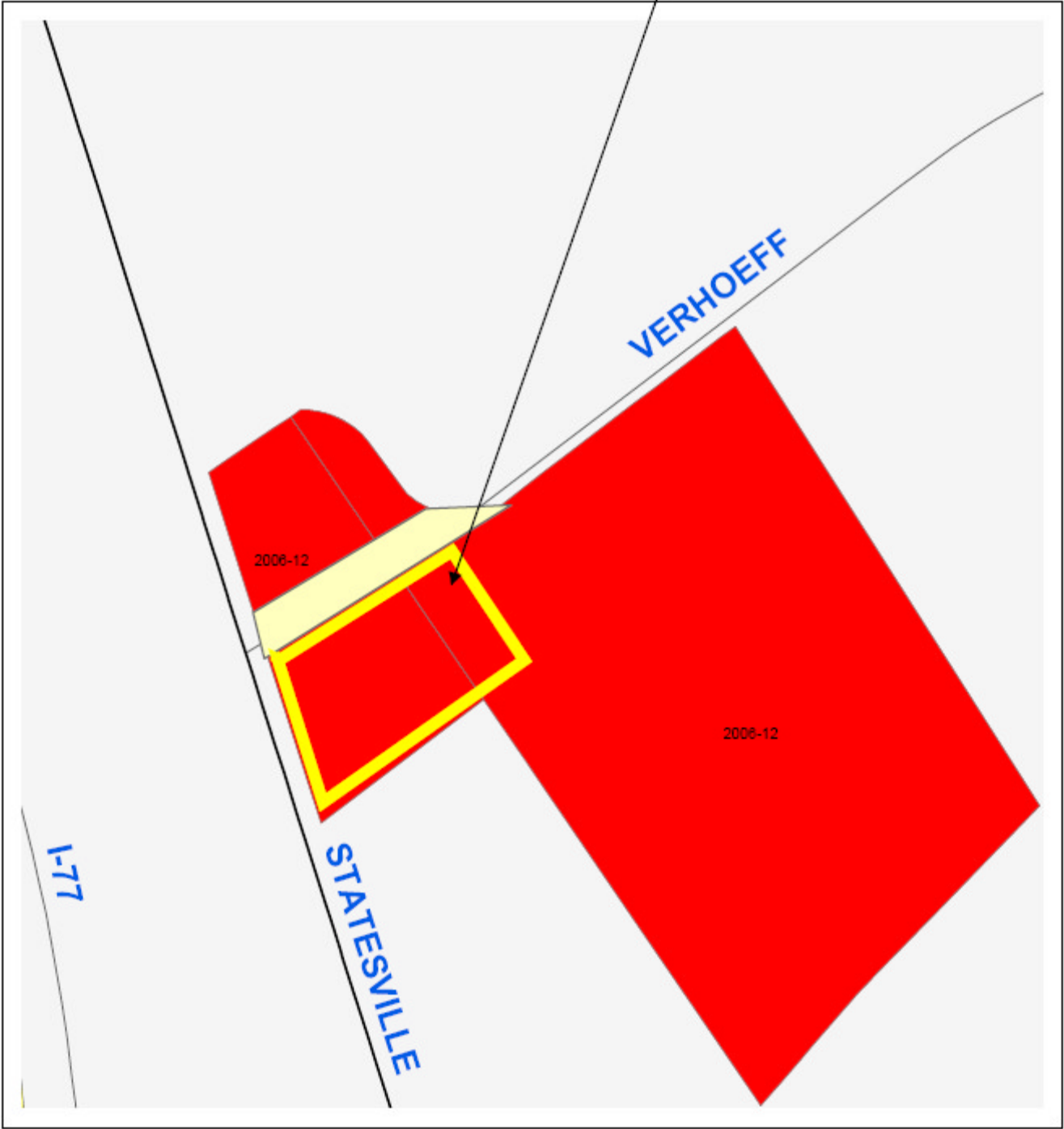
Staff recommends approval of the proposed transactions to serve the intended purposes, subject to the following condition:

- precise boundaries of the road right-of-way should be established by the maximum work limits of the roadway design being completed for the Town of Huntersville by Whitehead Associates, or 70 feet in width (whichever is greater). A minimum 70-foot cross-section is required for minor thoroughfares.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their April 18, 2006 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.

MR 06-12



Legend

 MR_06_12



