

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 06-18
Proposed Parcel Acquisition on Westmoreland Road in Cornelius for Addition to
Washam Elementary School Campus

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposes acquisition of a .57-acre parcel contiguous to the J.V. Washam Elementary School campus on Westmoreland Road in Cornelius. The parcel (#005-142-10) currently has a single family residence on it and is zoned Neighborhood Residential (NR). J.V. Washam Elementary school is currently under construction and is scheduled to open in August, 2006.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Acquisition of the parcel will give J.V. Washam Elementary School a contiguous Westmoreland Road frontage instead of its current fragmented frontage. The original goal of the school district was to assemble a campus with greater street frontage than that which the school campus currently enjoys. However, that goal was initially not achieved as the result of unsuccessful negotiations with several Westmoreland frontage property owners in assembling the campus. Acquisition of this parcel would bring the school closer to the original goal.

The subject parcel is surrounded on three sides by the school site, making it an "island" amid the school site. Ingress to and egress from the school campus are on both sides of the property with the school campus directly behind the property. The house which sits on the property is uncomplimentary to the new school building as well as to the campus in general. The additional .57 acres would provide ample space to eventually widen and/or add more lanes to the school's main entrance and exit, and would enhance the visibility of the school from the street and the wider community. The property would be landscaped and maintained as part of the school campus. No parking is planned for the property.

Owners of the property (owner-occupants) approached CMS about selling their home to the school district for school campus expansion, inasmuch as its proximity to the new school altered the residential environment and character of their property.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The Cornelius Neighborhood Residential (NR) zoning designation is intended to preserve the traditional building pattern of mixed neighborhood development, which historically has been integrated to form a vibrant, active and cohesive neighborhood unit. Generally, school campuses are regarded as land uses that are consistent with residential land uses.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The Cornelius Land Use Plan designates the area within which the parcel is located for single family residential use. Schools are permitted, as evidenced by J.V. Washam Elementary School, subject to conditions relating to setbacks, parking and other site planning considerations (to which the Washam campus conforms).

PROJECT IMPACT:

The acquisition of the .57 acres could eventually be used for future enhanced entrance and exit lanes to the school to relieve traffic congestion/back-ups that might occur on Westmoreland Road.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

Several new residential subdivisions are being constructed in the vicinity of the school. Such residential communities could serve to strengthen the school's future walk zone.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

J.V. Washam Elementary School opens fall 2006. Funding for the acquisition of the parcel would be from 1999 land bonds.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at its July 5, 2006 meeting. The suggestion was made that the proposed property acquisition might create some joint use opportunities between CMS and the Town of Cornelius Park & Recreation department. Staff could not confirm whether Cornelius Park & Recreation had joint use interest in the property.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

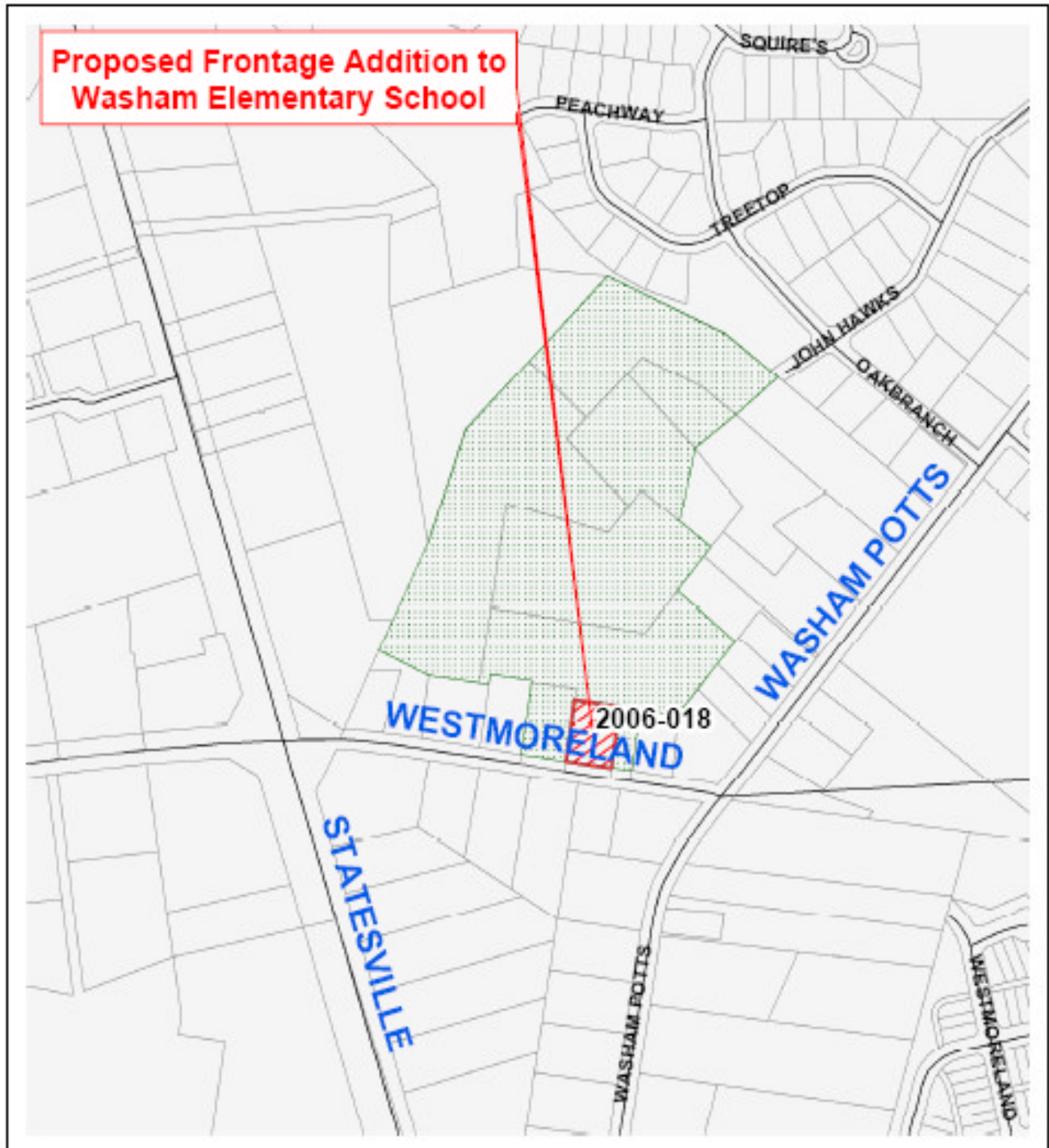
Staff recommends approval of the acquisition of this parcel for addition to the Washam Elementary School campus.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their July 18, 2006 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 7-0 vote.

Staff resource: Jonathan Wells

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Department: CMS



Washam Elementary School Boundary

