

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 06-25
Proposed Sale of Property Along South Corridor Light Rail at I-485 Station & Parking Garage

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) purchased a 1.8 acre parcel (PID # 205-102-30) on the west side of South Boulevard adjoining the proposed South Corridor light rail line, which was formerly an Exxon service station site but is now vacant. After reserving a portion of this land for the rail right-of-way and the primary ingress/egress to the proposed I-485 commuter parking garage, there will be .998 acre of excess land proposed to be sold.

The land – zoned TOD-M - is located along South Boulevard at the southern-most South Corridor light rail station just north of the I-485 interchange near Carolinas Pavilion Shopping Center. It is the City's goal to see the property occupied by uses that complement the Light Rail Station.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This property is surplus to CATS' light rail project, and as such the goal is to sell it for a land use that will complement the station area.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Under the City of Charlotte's Asset Management Guidelines, any surplus property, not needed for City use needs to be either offered for sale to other governmental agencies or sold to the highest bidder. Since federal funds were used to purchase this site, the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) needs to be assured that the sale process provides for competition to the extent practicable and results in the highest possible return. CATS has contacted the FTA to request "disposition instructions" as required by the federal funding grant agreement in place for the South Corridor project. The disposition process relative to this parcel remains subject to the final instructions and final requirements of the FTA.

The purpose of the "TOD" zoning districts "is to create a compact and high intensity mix of residential, office, retail, institutional and civic uses to promote the creation and retention of uses in areas of high potential for enhanced transit and pedestrian activity", according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The TOD-M district is "established to support a blend of high density residential, high intensity employment/office, civic entertainment, and institutional uses as well as a limited amount of retail uses in a pedestrian friendly area" according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *General Development Policies—Transit Station Area Principles* (2001) recommend the establishment of transit supportive development within a ½ mile walk of a rapid transit station. The subject property is immediately adjacent to a future South Corridor light rail station. A Transit Station Area Plan for the I-485 Station will be prepared in the future as the other station area plans closer to Center City are completed and approved. There is no preliminary or draft plan at present.

The *South District Plan* (1993) indicates future land use for the subject property to be Transit-Supportive mixed use development by virtue of its rezoning to TOD-M in November 2004. Surrounding properties are still mapped as appropriate for commercial use. Until adoption of a Transit Station Area Plan, the South District Plan, in combination with the General Development Policies, provides adopted land use policy for this site.

The subject property is vacant, immediately adjacent to the entrance of the major parking garage that serves the CATS light rail station. While it is surrounded at present by typical suburban pad retail/ restaurant establishments, it provides the opportunity to begin transformation of the area to the transit supportive land use pattern anticipated by the General Development Policies.

PROJECT IMPACT:

This site provides an opportunity to sell the property for development that would complement the light rail project, the station area, and the surrounding community. There are preliminary indications that there's strong retail potential at this location, as City Real Estate has been contacted by the Mecklenburg County ABC Board which has expressed interest in the site for a retail location.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

Development of the property (including pedestrian and vehicular access) will need to be closely coordinated with the CATS Light Rail project, since the site adjoins both the rail right-of-way and access to the proposed CATS parking deck.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The marketing and sale of the land is expected to be finalized by Spring, 2007.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

This matter was discussed at the October 4, 2006 Joint Use Task Force meeting. No joint use opportunities identified, but several observations were made. It was observed that while sufficient market may exist for an ABC store or other retail outlet, in order to successfully complement the proximity to the light rail station, the site should contain development of higher density than a single freestanding retail use. It was noted that the site is "only" an acre and everything else along there is new; limiting opportunities to enlarge the site by acquiring neighbors. However, maximizing intensity on-site could be achieved by moving parking off-site and using the adjoining 1,200-space parking deck under construction. The station platform is at the top of the garage, aligning with approximately the third level of what could be built on this site.

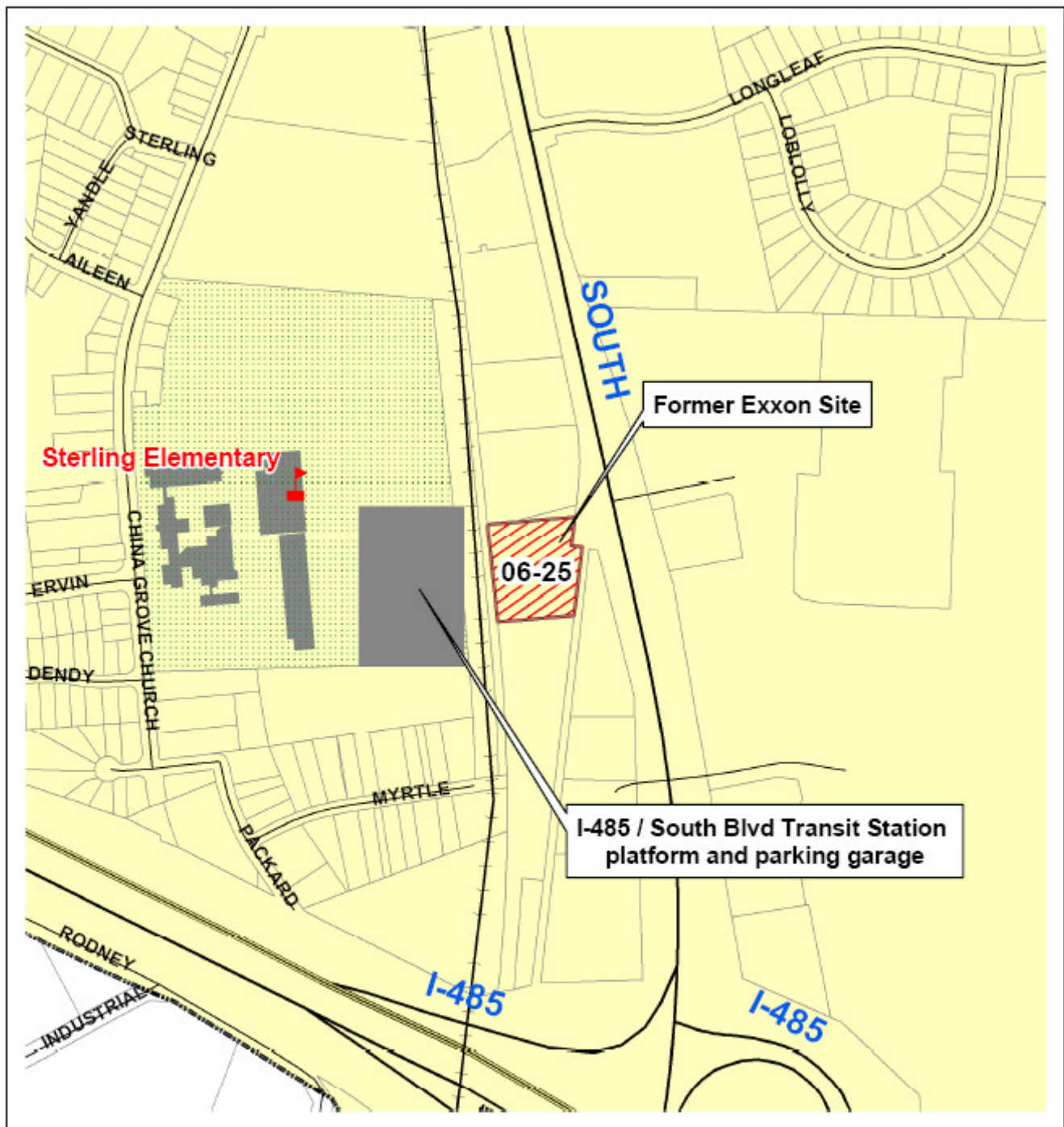
CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposal to sell the subject parcel, on the condition that development be in accordance with the current zoning. The TOD-M district is a by-right classification with specific use, density, and setback requirements intended to establish a dense pedestrian-friendly environment.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their October 17, 2006 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.

Mandatory Referral 06-25



Department: City of Charlotte Real Estate



Mandatory Referral



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

