

**MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 07-18**  
**Proposed Purchase of Norfolk Southern Property for Charlotte Gateway Station Project**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

It is proposed that Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) acquire property owned by Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS) located between West Trade Street and West Fourth Street in Uptown Charlotte. The property lies west of the NS track and east of the proposed Johnson and Wales Business School. The Parcel Identification Number is 073-15-S01. The site is approximately 380 feet by 52 feet (0.45 acre) and abuts the existing NS tracks. The purchase of the property is required for the construction of commuter rail platforms as part of the Charlotte Gateway Station (CGS) project that will be constructed on property to the east.

The site is currently vacant and zoned UMUD under the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. Land uses adjacent to the site are active rail line and current Greyhound Bus Service to the east and vacant land which Johnson & Wales University is proposing a business school to the west.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The CGS is to be jointly developed by CATS and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and will be a new multimodal facility serving CATS North Corridor Commuter Rail, the Center City Streetcar, CATS buses, other rapid transit lines, Amtrak and Greyhound. The CGS is to be constructed adjacent to the subject site (across the NS tracks) and bounded roughly by the tracks, W. Trade and S. Graham Streets, and private properties to the south. In accordance with the joint development agreement among the various partners, the proposed platform is to be constructed on property to be owned by CATS (the subject property) while the CGS itself will be built on land owned by the NCDOT and by Greyhound, because the platform will be essential to the function of the north corridor.

CATS intends to build a new off-street bus facility at CGS; a new Greyhound depot is planned as well. Passenger platforms will be built on both side of the NS tracks for commuter rail and Intercity rail (Amtrak) service. The platform on the west side of the tracks (on the subject property) will be a center island platform with two new passenger tracks. NS property is required to construct the platform and tracks. The station will replace the current West Trade Street Greyhound station as well as the Amtrak station currently located at 1914 N. Tryon Street. The Station block will also include building footprints that will accommodate private development and joint use possibilities as well as a public plaza.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

The CGS project (including platform that is the subject of this Mandatory Referral) is a component of the region's 2025 *Transit and Land Use Plan* and CATS System Plan approved by the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) in July 2006 and is included in numerous planning documents relating to Uptown Charlotte. NCDOT also did a Feasibility Study for the Charlotte Multi-Modal Station completed in May 2002.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The proposed project is consistent with on going discussions between the City, County and the State. A land use plan was developed for the area, but has not been adopted by City Council. This proposal is consistent with the vision of that plan.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

The CGS is a critical component of Charlotte's and the region's transportation plans. In addition, it will serve as a catalyst and focal point for development of some 27 acres of property in Uptown Charlotte owned by NCDOT along the NS tracks. A major mixed-use, transit-oriented development is under planning by NCDOT for this adjoining property, including design and construction of the public facilities to be located at CGS. NCDOT already has acquired or is acquiring the property east of the NS tracks required for the CGS project; in accordance with the applicable cooperative agreement, CATS is responsible for acquiring the needed NS property west of the tracks. (Additional property south of West Fourth Street will be required by CATS upon formal approval of the North Corridor Commuter Rail Project; this proposed transaction will be subject to a separate Mandatory Referral).

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:**

NCDOT plans to issue an RFQ (Request For Qualifications) in January 2008, to be followed by an RFP (Request For Proposals), for a master developer to plan, build and operate a public/private mixed-use development, which would include the public facilities at CGS.

The North Corridor Commuter Rail Project is an important component to the Charlotte Gateway Station and the activity it will generate will help in determining what level of development will occur on the State property. In addition, CGS is planned as a stop for the Amtrak service, Greyhound, CATS local and express bus service and the Center City Streetcar, which will link the station to centers around the city and beyond.

Johnson & Wales University (J&W) intends to build a business school immediately west of the CGS property between

West Fourth and West Trade Streets. CATS has discussed with J&W the need for a public accessway between Fourth and Trade Streets at the boundary between the CGS property and the J&W business school. The parties intend to negotiate the terms for building this accessway over the next year.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

CATS seeks to complete the purchase of the NS property before the close of calendar 2007. Acquisition of the property is timed to be completed prior to the January 2008 issuance of the RFQ for the CGS master developer. The public facilities are planned for completion by the end of 2011.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

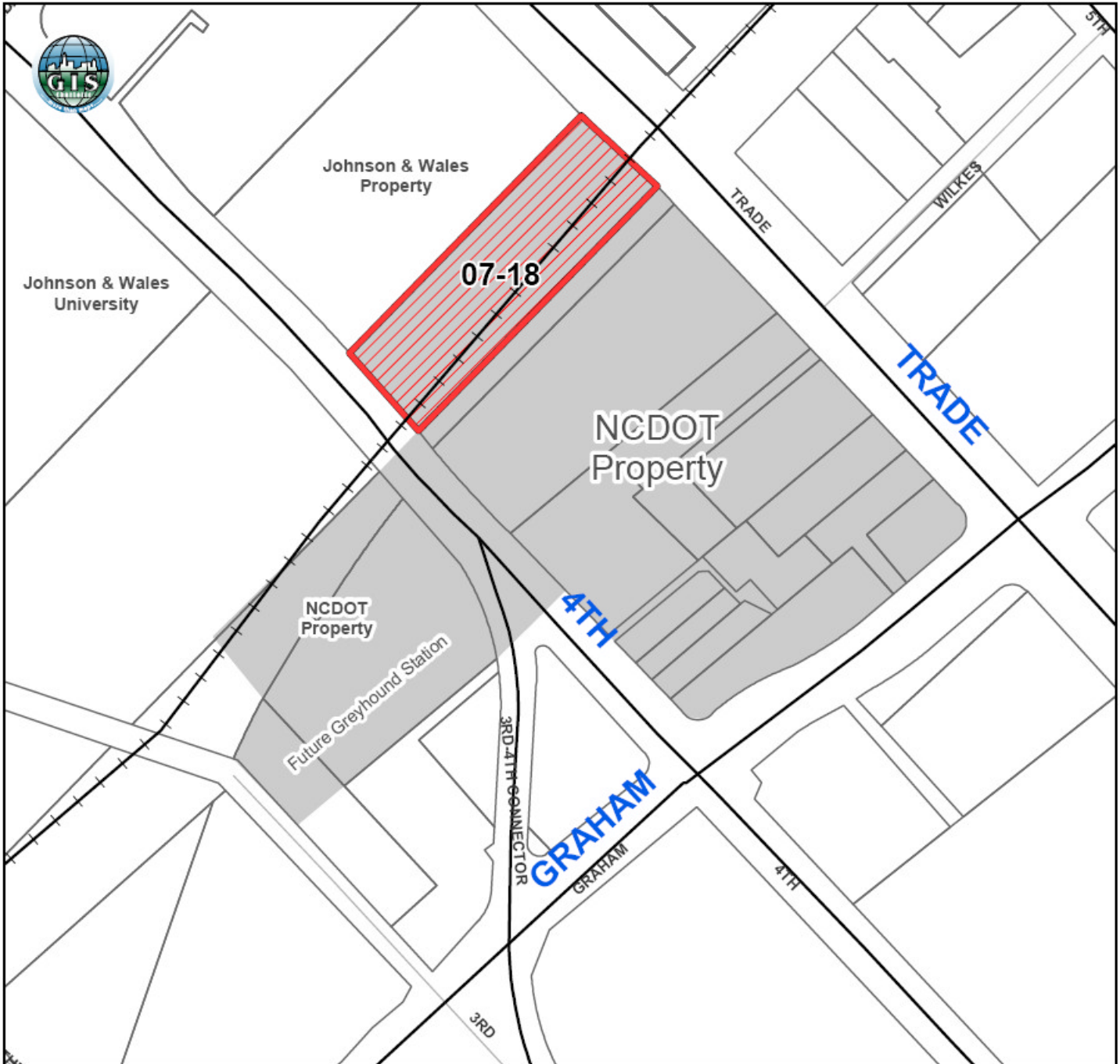
This proposal was discussed at the October 3 Joint Use Task Force meeting and no relevant comments were offered.

**PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Planning staff recommends that CATS purchase the property for the intended purpose.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At its October 16, 2007 meeting the Planning Committee voted to recommend approval by a 6-0 vote.



## Mandatory Referral 07-18

*County Real Estate Services*



Mandatory Referral



Planned Gateway Station

# Charlotte Gateway Station

