

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 15-28
Proposed Lease by CMS of Former Villa Heights School for Use as a Charter School

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) proposes to lease the property located at 800 Everett Place, Charlotte, North Carolina, 28202 (parcel ID# 08310209) near uptown Charlotte to Veritas Community School, Inc. for a term of 9 years and 11 months. The site consists of 5.49 acres of land and one building of approximately 41,000 square feet of classroom space. The proposed lease would also include parking and all grounds. The site formerly housed the Villa Heights Elementary School which was closed in July 2011 and subsequently occupied by CMS staff, which has now relocated to Atrium Corporate Center. The zoning of the site is Residential (R-5), according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The property is bound by Catawba Avenue to the south and Everett Place to the north. Pinckney Avenue abuts the property to the west and is bordered by single family residences to the east.

This site will provide operation of a charter school.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

CMS does not anticipate a need for this site and will benefit by Veritas Community School's planned improvements and maintenance of the entire facility.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The State General Statutes allow for local Boards of Education to enter into operational leases of real or personal property for the purposes of operating the school districts they oversee.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The property lies within the *Central District Plan* (adopted 1993), which recommends single-family land uses on the site. Schools are considered institutional uses and are not typically identified for specific locations in area plans, as they are considered on a case by case basis in terms of compatibility with surrounding uses, character, and access. The reuse of the existing school building with improvements for a school is compatible with the surrounding area and consistent with the adopted plan.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Veritas Community School, Inc. is financially self-supporting and intends to make capital improvements to the property, which will have a positive impact on the property and surrounding neighborhood. CMS will not be responsible for any repairs or improvements during the term of the lease.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

There are no known public or private projects that will be impacted by this project.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The lease is proposed to commence August 10, 2015 and end July 10, 2024.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this matter at their July 9, 2015 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The lease of the property is generally consistent with adopted land use policies. Staff recommends approval of the lease of the land to be used as a school.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their July 21, 2015 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.

