

**MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 16-38**  
**Proposed Purchase by Charlotte Area Transit System of Property**  
**from NCDOT for the Charlotte Gateway Station (CGS) Project**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

The *2030 Transit System Plan* recommends that a second Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) transportation center be established in Uptown Charlotte. The Charlotte Gateway Station (CGS) Project has been identified as that second facility and will be the region's "multi-modal" center by including future transportation services such as intercity passenger rail (Amtrak), regional rail, intercity and local bus, CityLYNX Gold Line, taxi, car-sharing, bicycle and pedestrian linkages. The City of Charlotte and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) are jointly implementing the Charlotte Gateway Station.

The CGS Project will be located in the area of West Trade, West Fourth and South Graham Streets (see attachment – Block labeled "C" is primary block for future multi-modal center, and is the subject parcel of this proposed transaction). This block, consisting of 2.9 acres, is composed of 12 parcels: 073-151-10, 073-151-12, 073-151-13, 073-151-14, 073-151-15, 073-151-16, 073-151-19, 073-151-20, 073-151-21, 073-151-22, 073-151-23 and 073-151-24. The property is zoned UMUD (Urban Mixed Use District) according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The land is currently used for surface parking for downtown commuters and for Carolina Panthers football games.

The CGS is the nexus of many years of inter-agency planning, coordination and partnership. The City of Charlotte and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) are partners in the implementation of this important transportation project that will improve both regional passenger rail and regional freight operations. The CGS Project will include a signature multi-modal facility bringing passenger rail into the City's downtown connecting local rail, local and regional buses and inter-city buses.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

In October 2015, the Project was approved for a \$25 million TIGER 2015 grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Federal Railroad Administration. This grant will pay for a portion of the cost to construct the first phase of the Project, referred to as the Track, Structures & Signals (TS&S) Phase.

In order to sign the grant agreement, the City must demonstrate that it has completed the required preconstruction activities, such as completion of right-of-way acquisition and completion of construction drawings of the TS&S infrastructure. It is anticipated that the grant agreement will be signed by September 2017.

NCDOT currently owns all of the parcels outlined in green on the attached map, located between Martin Luther King Drive and 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Uptown Charlotte. These parcels were purposely acquired by NCDOT for purposes of the CGS Project. The block labeled as "C" on the attached map totals approximately 2.9 acres and will be the site of the future permanent CGS station/multi-modal center building. The City is responsible for the planning, design and implementation of the station portion of the CGS Project and needs to acquire the station site in order to advance the planning, design and construction of the future station/multi-modal center. Prior to use as the multi-modal center, the site will be needed in order to relocate certain functions operated by Greyhound that will be displaced due to construction.

The existing Charlotte passenger rail station was built in 1962 and is currently located at 1914 North Tryon Street in Charlotte. The current size, configuration and location of the existing station are inadequate to serve existing and anticipated needs. The configuration of the existing track and station requires a sharing of uses between passenger and freight operations, resulting in inconveniences for passengers, inefficient operation for both passenger and freight rail operations and maintenance issues.

Passenger access to and from the existing train station by private vehicle can be challenging and access via public transit is limited. The existing parking lot floods from time to time.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

Establishment of the CGS is consistent with the following adopted public policies:

- *Centers and Corridors Concept Plan* (1994)
- *2025 Integrated Transit and Land Use Plan* (1998)
- *Smart Growth Principles* (2001)
- *Station Area Plan* (2004) and narrative (2005)
- *2030 Transit System Plan* (2006)
- *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* (2010)
- *Center City 2020 Vision Plan* (2011)

### **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The property falls within the boundaries of the *Charlotte Center City 2020 Vision Plan* (2011) which does not make a specific land use recommendation for the site. The plan supports the development of a new multi-modal regional Gateway Station on the property in question. The future Gateway Station should be a significant, mixed-use architectural icon as well as a major employment center. As a part of Uptown, the property is zoned Uptown Mixed Use Development (UMUD) and planned for a mix of high-density development. The proposed development, as described, meets the expectations of the *Charlotte Center City 2020 Vision Plan*, therefore the intended use is considered consistent with the principles of the Plan.

### **PROJECT IMPACT:**

The CGS Project will:

- likely increase ridership due to its improved location in Uptown and will divert traffic from highways to rail, with the associated reduction in emissions,
- separate passenger and freight service will improve the flow of both freight and passenger trains through Charlotte and will add track capacity for future freight and passenger train growth in the Charlotte area, and
- provide new transportation choices and will further catalyze development along West Trade Street.

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

The CGS Project is well coordinated with several public and private projects. The following is a list of those projects and their sponsors:

- City of Charlotte – LYNX Gold Line (streetcar)
- CDOT – Existing streets and existing bridges as well as future complete street improvements
- Panthers – Existing Stadium and practice fields
- Northeast Strategy Team – CIP Improvements
- Norfolk Southern Railroad – Existing and future freight traffic
- Greyhound – Existing and future bus routes
- Amtrak – Existing and future train trips

### **ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

Construction of the first phase of the CGS Project, referred to as the Track, Structures & Signals (TS&S) Phase is projected to begin in late 2017. In the meantime, the multi-modal site will be needed in order to relocate certain functions operated by Greyhound that will be displaced prior to construction.

### **JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

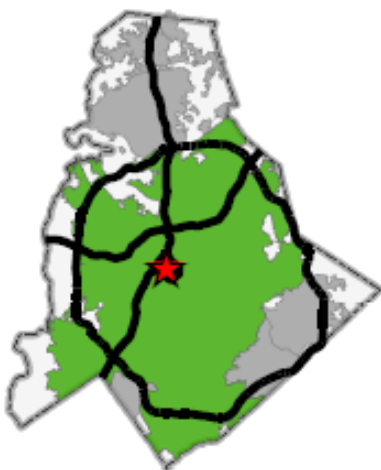
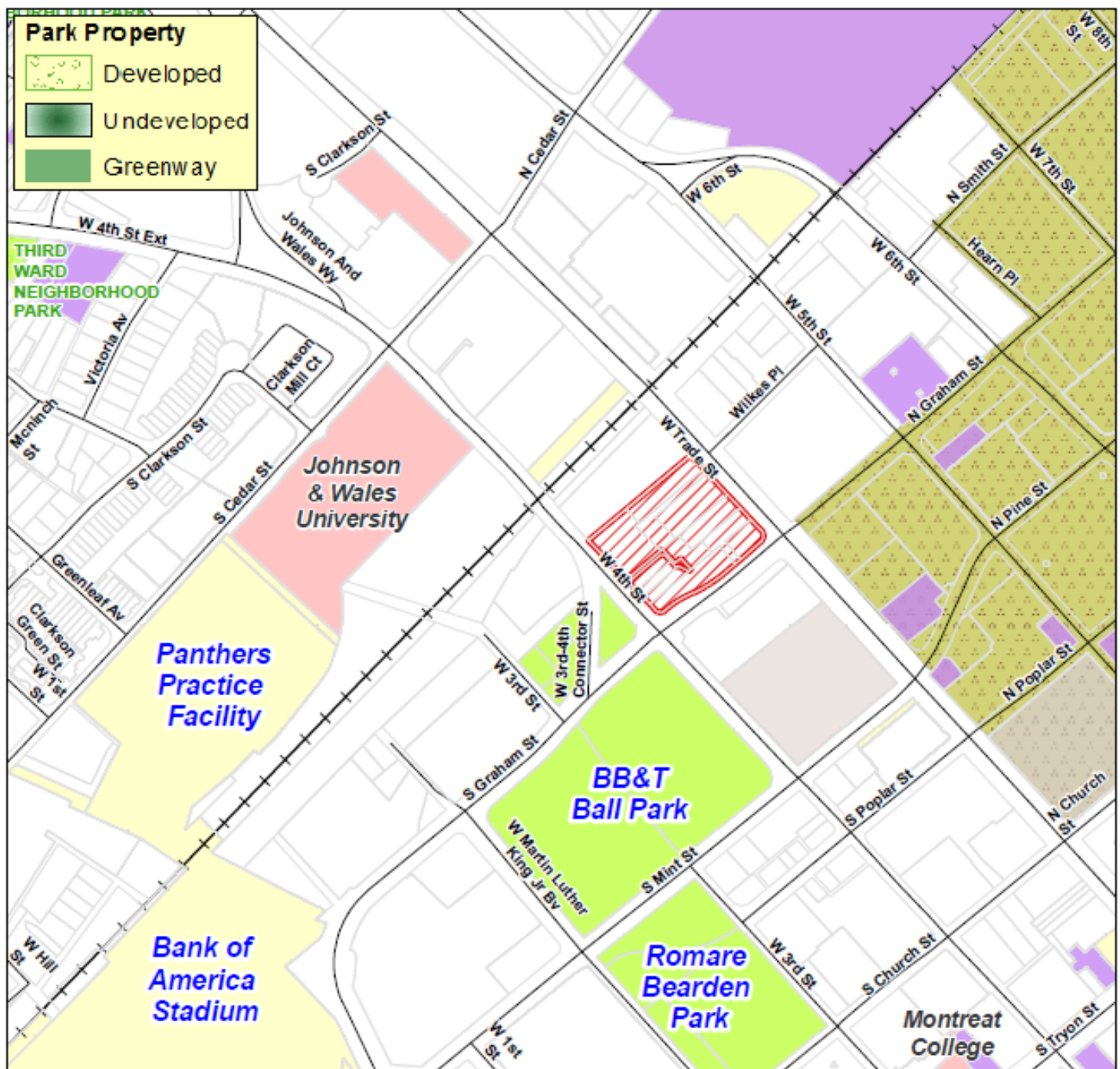
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their September 7, 2016 meeting and discussion included the county-owned property diagonally across from the subject property, and what the county's plans for that property were. County Asset Management staff reported that there are no specific plans for the property although there've been numerous expressions of interest received from prospective developers. CATS staff said they'd like to "vision" the county property along with the Gateway Station property to identify some possibilities and County staff appeared to have interest in the outcome of that process. CATS staff also mentioned that the adjoining Greyhound property will be eventually acquired by the NCDOT for track expansion but for the time being Greyhound will be able to remain on their site.

### **PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposed land use is consistent with the *Center City 2020 Vision Plan* (2011). Staff therefore recommends approval of the proposal.

### **CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At their September 20, 2016 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.



## Mandatory Referral 16-38

**Initiated & Submitted by:**  
**Charlotte Area Transit System**

- |   |                    |   |                          |
|---|--------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Mandatory Referral |  | Historic Districts       |
|  | County Property    |  | Local Historic Landmark  |
|  | Colleges           |  | FEMA 100 Year Floodplain |
|  | City Property      |   |                          |



