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MANDATORY REFERRAL | REPORT NO. 18-03

Proposed acquisition of three properties along Independence Boulevard for new CMPD Independence Division Station

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The City of Charlotte proposes to purchase three parcels for the construction of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) Independence Division station. The first parcel, 5809 East Independence Boulevard (parcel identification number 165-012-01), is 5.05 acres of vacant land and is zoned B-2 (business) according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The second parcel, off City View Drive (parcel identification number 165-041-03), is 0.06 acres, zoned B-2 (business), and improved with a billboard sign. The third parcel, also off City View Drive (parcel identification number 165-041-04), is 0.25 acres of vacant land, zoned B-2 and adjacent to a single-family home to the east.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

NCDOT purchased the 5-acre tract in December 2012 for construction staging for the Independence Boulevard (U.S. Highway 74) widening and improvements project. NCDOT completed this phase of the project in Fall 2017 and has determined that it has no immediate need for the property. Both properties off City View Drive are owned by private citizens. Acquisition of these parcels will increase the usability of the larger NCDOT parcel because it would align CMPD's boundary line with City View Drive and improve access to the Division station.

City Real Estate regularly assists CMPD in the search for property to house Division stations. These three parcels are located within the Independence Division boundaries. The Independence Division is currently housed in leased facilities located at 9315 Monroe Road.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

In February 2010, CMPD adopted the Facilities Strategic Plan, which outlines division facility goals through 2025. In this plan, CMPD prioritized the transition from renting leased spaces to occupying City-owned facilities. This recommendation supports CMPD's objectives to be highly visible and accessible within the community, reduce operating costs, and accommodate future personnel growth. The Facilities Strategic Plan was updated in 2016 to address the progress made since 2010 and to prioritize construction moving forward.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Independence Boulevard Area Plan* (2011) recommends this site for Transit Oriented Development – Mixed Use. The site is within the adopted Conference Drive Station Area Plan. Specifically the plan recommends transit oriented development mixed use on the north side of Independence with improved streetscapes and pedestrian environments along Idlewild Road leading to Conference to facilitate safer and more comfortable access to the station.

The adopted streetscape of Conference Drive is a 5-lane Avenue with 6.5' bike lanes, an 8' planting strip, and a 6' sidewalk. On-street parking may be appropriate in select locations in lieu of a planting strip. Tree planting should be installed as required by the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. The recommended width is 69 feet from back of curb to back of curb (and may be wider near intersections and with turn lanes). Additional street connectivity between Conference Drive and City View Drive is recommended, eventually extending to Wallace Lane.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The proximity of the site to the major thoroughfare of Independence Boulevard is ideal to help CMPD achieve the visibility and accessibility, objectives outlined in the Facilities Strategic Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

- CDOT has efforts underway to increase connectivity in the area, particularly a new 60-foot right-of-way to connect City View Drive and Buick Drive. CATS is searching for a new Park & Ride and/or Bus Transfer facility in the area. CMPD has met with E&PM, CATS and CDOT to ensure the various projects are coordinated with the construction of a new police station. Discussions are still ongoing.
- LYNX Silver Line is expected to run along Independence Boulevard to Village Lake Drive area and will provide maximum visibility and accessibility to the station. Funding has not been awarded or construction dates scheduled at this time.
- Independence Area Sidewalk/Bikeway Improvements Project is located across Independence Boulevard. This project will create a multi-modal facility south of and roughly paralleling Independence Boulevard from the Briar Creek Greenway to Mason Wallace Park. This project will increase accessibility to the Division station but no direct impact is expected.

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ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The Independence Division received CIP funding in July 2016 to acquire land for the project. Construction funding will be awarded from the CIP in July 2018. Engineering & Property Management's Special Projects team estimates that construction will be completed within four years.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force reviewed the proposed transaction at their March 7th, 2018 meeting and no comments were offered.

Agencies Represented: Charlotte Neighborhood & Housing Services, Charlotte Department of Transportation, Charlotte Engineering and Property Management (Engineering, Real Estate & StormWater Services), Charlotte Water Department, Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, County Park & Recreation Department, County Finance Department, County Manager's Office, County Public Health Department, County Asset & Facilities Management, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission (Board of Education)

PLANNING STAFF REVIEW:

Planning staff has reviewed the proposed transaction and below are their key findings:

Conclusions:

- The *Independence Boulevard Area Plan* (2011) recommends this site for Transit Oriented Development – Mixed Use. The site is within the adopted Conference Drive Station Area Plan. However, the Metropolitan Transit Commission adopted an alternative alignment in November 2016 that changed the preferred mode from bus rapid transit to light rail and shifted the alignment. The future station locations and design of the alignment has not been completed and there is not currently funding for this project.
- Police Stations are an important community facility that should be designed and sited to maximize services to the community, and be designed to respect existing surrounding uses.
- Additional street connectivity will provide alternative route choices from Independence Boulevard and improved streetscapes enable more mode choices for people traveling on foot or by bicycle.

Adopted Goals and Policies:

- Charlotte City Council's Community Safety Committee's adopted FY 2018&2019 Strategic Focus Area Plan identifies minimizing loss of life, property, damage and injury and improvement in perception of safety and level of trust in Community Safety as objectives to accomplish. Strategies include improving response times for emergency calls and improving and protecting quality of life in Charlotte neighborhoods and corridors.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE REVIEW:

At their February 20th, 2018 meeting, the Planning Committee reviewed the proposed land donation...

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