

**APPLICATION 2018-684 STAFF REPORT
ELIZABETH LANE ELEMENTARY
MOBILE CLASSROOM SUNSET REQUEST**

Pre Public Hearing Staff Analysis • June 2018



Location

121 Elizabeth Lane

Ownership/Applicant

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

Zoning

R/I (CD)

Use

Elementary School

Request Summary

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools requests a one year extension to the mobile classroom sunset provision for 8 classrooms located outside of the original 1995 boundary.



SITE INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND

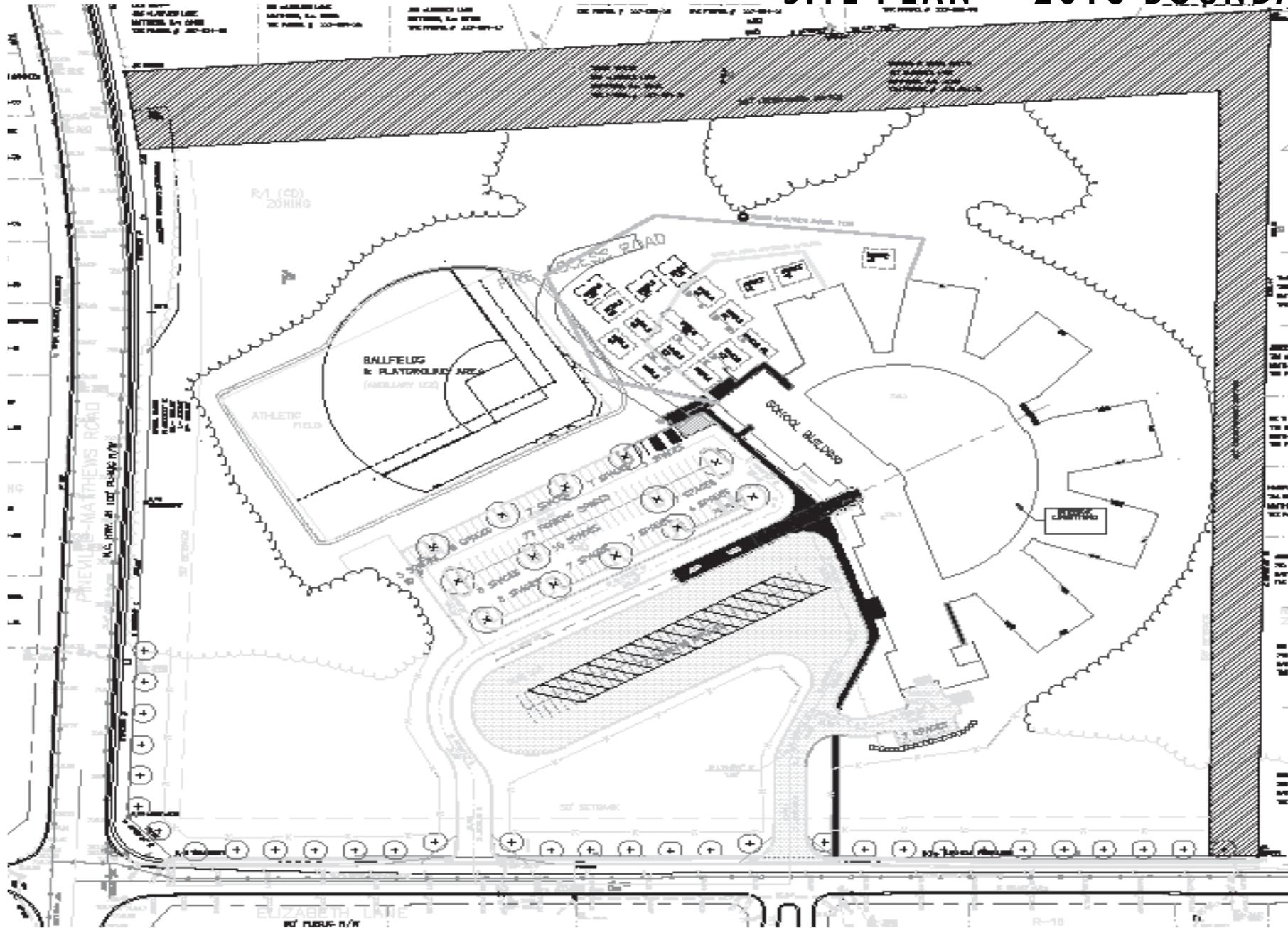
Site Summary

The original rezoning for Elizabeth Lane Elementary occurred in 1995. The 1995 plan included a dedicated area for mobile classrooms to the east of the main school building. In 2001, CMS requested a change of conditions to enlarge the mobile classroom area to allow for 3 new units and to bring two existing units within the mobile classroom envelope for a total of up to 17. Renewals of the sunset clause have been approved in 2016 and 2017.

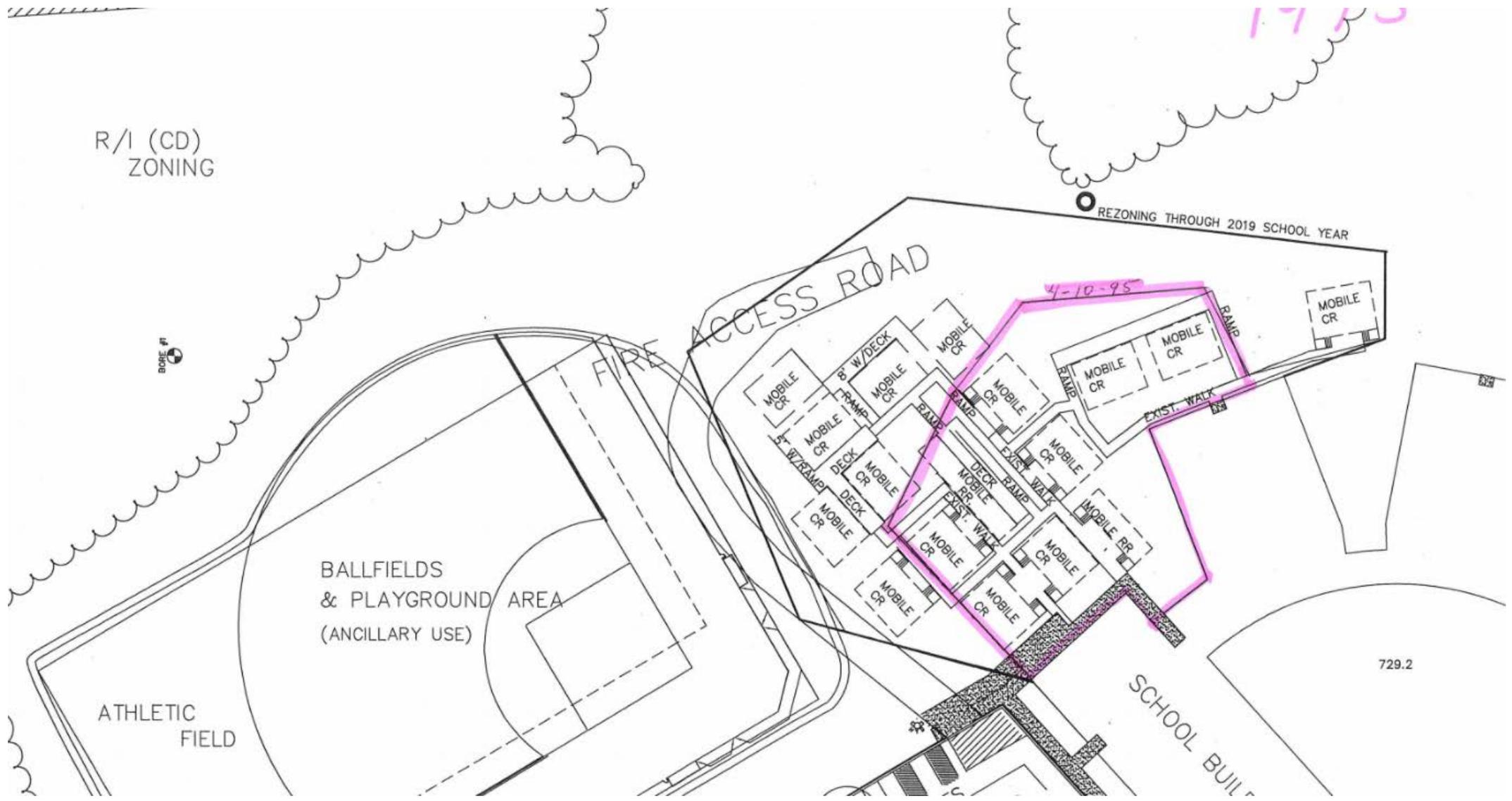
In 2017, the sunset provision was renewed for one year. Conditions of the approval included CMS providing a queuing study and commitment to work with Town and County on potential joint use of vacant portions of the campus.



SITE PLAN — 2018 BOUNDARY FOR CLASSROOMS



SITE PLAN – 1995 BOUNDARY FOR CLASSROOMS



SITE PLAN – PROPOSED 2018-2019 BOUNDARY FOR CLASSROOMS



SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CONDITIONS

Conditions

1. The 8 mobile class rooms and 2 restroom buildings outside of the 1995 boundary may remain until August 1, 2019.
2. 100' undisturbed buffer along eastern property line.
3. Commitment to work with Town and County on potential joint use of vacant portions of campus.

SUMMARY OF TRAFFIC STUDY

Conditions

Requested queueing study/traffic evaluation was completed May 24, 2018 (full study [available here](#)). The study recommended the following:

- For morning peak an off-duty officer directing traffic at each of the lot access locations, for the minimum 30-minute 7:15 – 7:45 am period
- For the afternoon dismissal they suggest:
 - i) Implement a traffic management plan similar to the current morning arrival plan;
 - ii) an off-duty officer directing traffic at each of the lot access locations, for the minimum 30-minute 2:25-2:55pm period;
 - iii) Although, the proposed afternoon traffic plan mixes bus and vehicle traffic (not typically recommended), it could be a reasonable solution if all vehicles in the queue are allowed to clear Lot A before bus loading begins (typically a 10 to 15 minute process); therefore, eliminating any conflicts between students and vehicle traffic.



Figure 5

STAFF COMMENTS

Police

The following is an email received from Captain Stason Tyrrell on May 29, 2018. It was sent to Planning staff, Captain Dufresne and Chief Pennington.

I wanted to follow up with comments that were discussed in last weeks planning meeting about Elizabeth Elementary and the sunset clause on mobile classrooms.

We were advised by the school's administration that they instruct their mobile classroom teachers to always keep doors locked and only open them when they can verify who is outside. During spot checks we found that when the weather is nice, some teachers routinely prop doors open and/or allow students to work outside on deck areas. There are some safety concerns about their mobile classroom area since it backs up to a wooded area and there are so many mobile buildings there are many blind spots and areas of concealment. Any corrections to the environmental design concerns would require a significant re-design of the entire area and classroom placement that may not be feasible unless CMS was willing to spend considerable facility improvement money at this school. With regards to the teachers and their personal security choices, it comes down to individual perception about safety. Security protocols are only as effective as the individuals that decide whether or not to follow them.

Traffic concerns are an on-going issue that we have dealt with for many years with no easy solution either. After trying many different plans, it has been determined that the best practice is to have all parents/care-givers lining up for the car rider line drive down into the residential neighborhoods, find some place to turn around and line up on the right side of Elizabeth Lane roadway (closest to school side). This does cause traffic obstruction to residential areas and forces passing traffic to move into on-coming travel lanes in order to pass and reach the traffic intersection of Highway 51. If the vehicles for student pick up are not forced to drive past the school and turn around, they attempt to turn left into the school which is too close to the Hwy 51 intersection. Vehicles then back up onto the highway and a grid lock scenario occurs. So far using the available design options of the way the school was developed, this is our less dangerous solution.

We regularly promote walk/bike to school events in an effort to encourage less vehicles. This is the only school in Matthews that we pay a crossing guard to work in order to provide a layer of safety to those that park, walk or bike rather than add to traffic. We recommend students use available busing as the safest mode of travel to and from school; however, the demographics of this school are such that many parents insist on their children not riding buses. We also regularly use already stretched resources the best we can to have on-duty officers assist in the area, but this is difficult to rely on since the problems occur during a time of day which is our busiest with calls for service throughout the town.

Captain Stason Tyrrell

Fire

No concerns

Public Works

No concerns

Parks and Rec

No concerns

Planning

Vacant property is under review by CMS. Staff has not received a report as of this writing.