Buncombe County Government

Acquisition of Real Property at 7 S. Tunnel Road

6/2/2026

Overview and Request

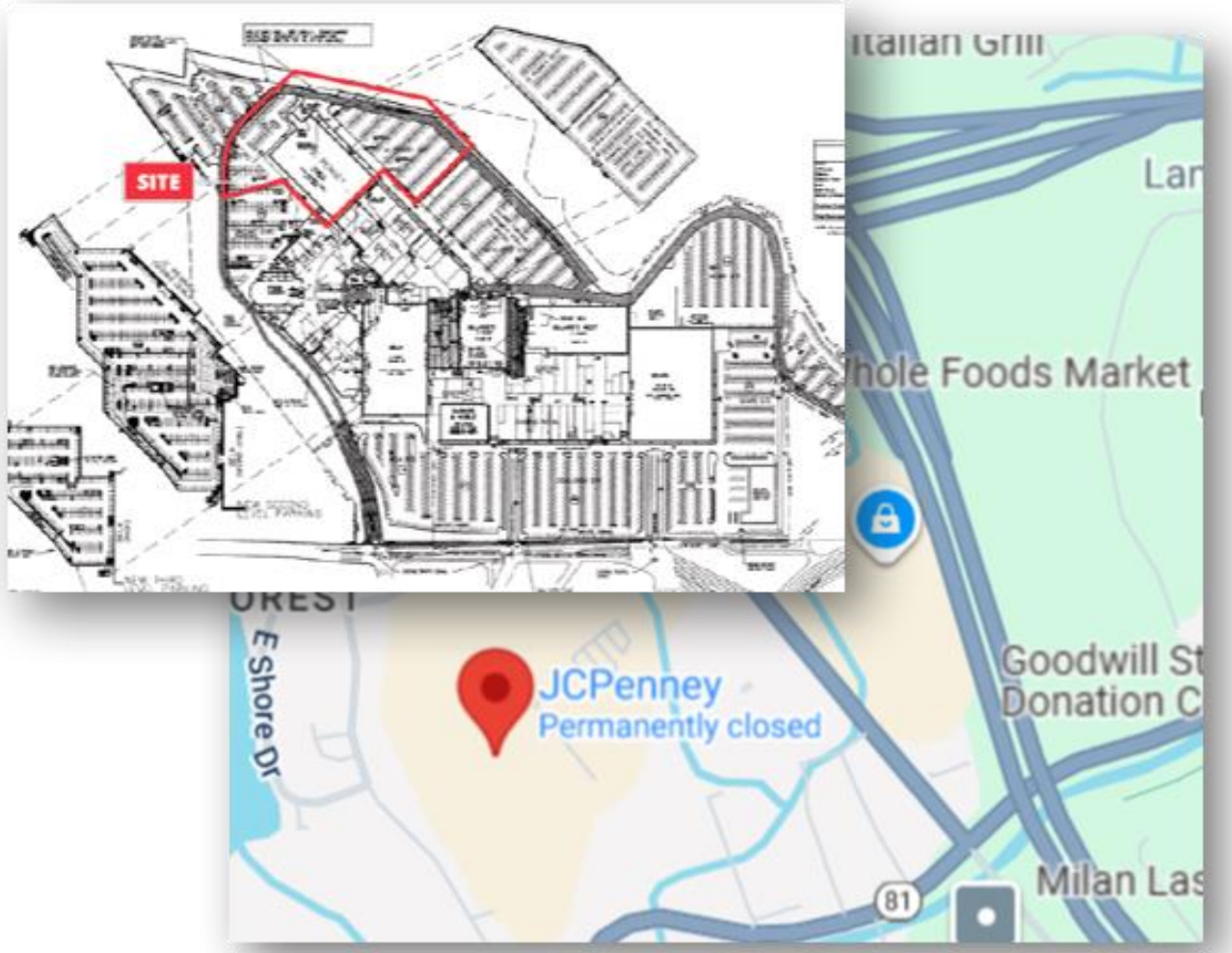
Overview:

- In 2021, Buncombe County adopted the Comprehensive Facility Plan identifying multiple facility needs including replacement/renovation of “The Castle” (EM, 911)
- Since Helene and in 2025, Buncombe County elevated the need to increase resilience and identified an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) as a critical need in the Helene Recovery Plan and the Preparedness Action Plan
- As part of the Annual Budget Process, Buncombe County has included facility renovations in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- To meet Public Safety, Emergency Response and Facility Maintenance needs, Buncombe County has identified the purchase of 7 S. Tunnel Road to serve as a future EOC and Emergency Management Center

Request:

- Approve the resolution authorizing the County Manager to complete the purchase.

Site Location



Site Overview:

- 130,500 sqft (6 acres)
- Proximity to I-240, I-40, I-26
- Existing utility infrastructure
- Existing parking infrastructure

Potential Uses:

- EOC
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety Communications
- Other County Uses

Deal Terms

Price	$5M ($38/sqft)
Earnest Money	$100K
Inspection Period Date	May 22 (complete)
Closing Date	June 8

Due Diligence

- **Appraisal:** Complete
  - $5M appraisal
- **Environmental:** Complete
  - Phase 1: no issues
  - Phase 2: N/A
- **Title:** Complete

Site Benefits

- **Developed Facility**
  - Infrastructure: water, sewer, electric and other utility infrastructure in place
  - Parking: existing parking deck and surface lot parking
- **Proximity**
  - Central Asheville
  - Proximity to road infrastructure
- **Community**
  - Strengthen Asheville Mall and Tunnel Road commercial corridor

Project Benefits

- **Business Need**
  - Provides a resilient hub for Emergency Service functions
- **Consolidation**
  - Combines multiple public safety needs into a single facility (911, EM, EOC)
  - Allows vacated uses (Castle) to be re-purposed
- **Cost Avoidance**
  - Cost avoidance for maintenance and renovation of critical public safety facilities
  - New construction of comparable critical public safety facilities would be more expensive
    - Related projects: EOC and Emergency Management Facility: $45M+, Public Safety Communications: $18M+, Multi-Functional Storage and Warehousing: $50M+

Budget and Funding

- **Project Budget Estimates**
  - Acquisition (actual): $5M
  - Construction (estimate): $30M*
- **Existing Funding**
  - No new funding for acquisition utilizing existing CIP sources (Budget Amendment for FY24 funding on 6/2 Agenda)
- **Additional Funding**
  - Design (budgeted in FY27 CIP)
  - Construction (projected FY28 CIP)
  - Maintenance (projected FY28 operating)

*Note: draft estimate, design and engineering work has not been completed. Additional cost estimates needed for FFE, contingency, inflation, etc.

Next Steps and Request

Next Steps:

- Authorization to Purchase: June 2
- Closing Date: June 8
- Begin Design Process: July 1

Request:

- Approve the resolution authorizing the County Manager to complete the purchase.