

**MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 05-24**  
**Proposed Acquisition of Property on Oliver Hager Road in Huntersville for Parkland**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

Mecklenburg County, working in cooperation with the Town of Huntersville, proposes to purchase the “Pennington property” (parcel 009-011-08) in the Town of Huntersville for future parkland development. The property consists of a mixed-hardwood pine forest surrounding an abandoned house (circa 1936) located near the middle of the property. A power transmission line corridor passes through the property. The 38.56-acre parcel is located on Oliver Hager Road and is zoned by Huntersville as TR (Transitional Residential District).

The area is rural in character. Properties lying to the south and east have been acquired by Mecklenburg County for the purpose of watershed protection, open space preservation and parkland development. East of the site lies the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department’s McDowell water treatment plant.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

Through its *Parks Master Plan*, the Town of Huntersville is striving to meet the active and passive recreational needs of its residents and preserve open space in the McDowell Creek watershed. Once acquired by the County, this property will be leased to the Town of Huntersville for future park development by the town.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

This project is consistent with the Town of Huntersville’s *Parks Master Plan*, adopted by the Town in 1998 and revised in 2003. The plan identifies “a strong need for both new facilities and for additional park acreage for the Town.” The plan recognizes that the Town has no recreational facilities west of I-77 – and area within which the subject property is located. In conjunction with other Town and County facilities, acquisition and development of this land will provide the Town with greater geographical balance and diversity of recreational amenities.

In addition, County Stormwater has conducted water quality modeling studies of McDowell Creek as its watershed is a priority geography for initiating Best Management Practices (BMP) to ensure stormwater protection. The investment in the modeling is a clear indication of the importance of the McDowell Creek basin to water quality in Mountain Island Lake. Acquisition and use of this property for parkland purposes will contribute to these stormwater goals.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

Development of a park is allowable by right within Huntersville’s Transitional Residential district.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

Acquisition of this property will increase the Town’s open space and parkland acreage and enhance the geographic distribution and diversity of recreational opportunities in the community. Low impact parkland development will also serve to protect a portion of the McDowell Creek watershed.

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

The Pennington property is located immediately adjacent to several other publicly owned parcels. Tax parcel 009-351-01 (immediately to the east) is owned by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities (CMU) and is the site of the McDowell water treatment plant. The Town is actively pursuing a long-term lease/agreement with CMU for the development of active recreation amenities on a portion of that property. Tax parcels 009-041-03 and 009-041-05 consist of 147 acres of farmland recently acquired by Mecklenburg County for watershed protection, open space preservation and parkland development. These two parcels will be leased to the Town for the development and operation of recreational amenities and the management of open space. Combined with the Pennington property, the Town will ultimately manage a +/- 185-acre park site for this rapidly expanding population base.

The future McDowell Creek Greenway (that runs through the adjoining County-owned property) will provide pedestrian connectivity between the park and surrounding residential communities that it intends to serve.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Thoroughfare Plan shows a future minor thoroughfare (Birkdale Commons Parkway) passing through a portion of this property. The MPO *2030 Long Range Transportation Plan* does not assign a horizon year for the completion of this roadway, meaning the road will be either publicly-funded sometime after the year 2030, or will be constructed as part of the land development process. In the long term, this roadway should provide improved vehicular access to the park.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

The property will be land-banked until funding is available for parkland development by the Town of Huntersville. The Town has no timeline on future development since there is no current funding available for site development.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their November 2, 2005 meeting and CMS staff indicated that this may eventually prove to be an attractive location to consider a future elementary school site, although this location is not reflected in their *Long Range School Facilities Master Plan*. CMS could either incorporate their future school plans into the parkland, or acquire an adjoining parcel to take advantage of the adjoining recreational amenities afforded by the park.

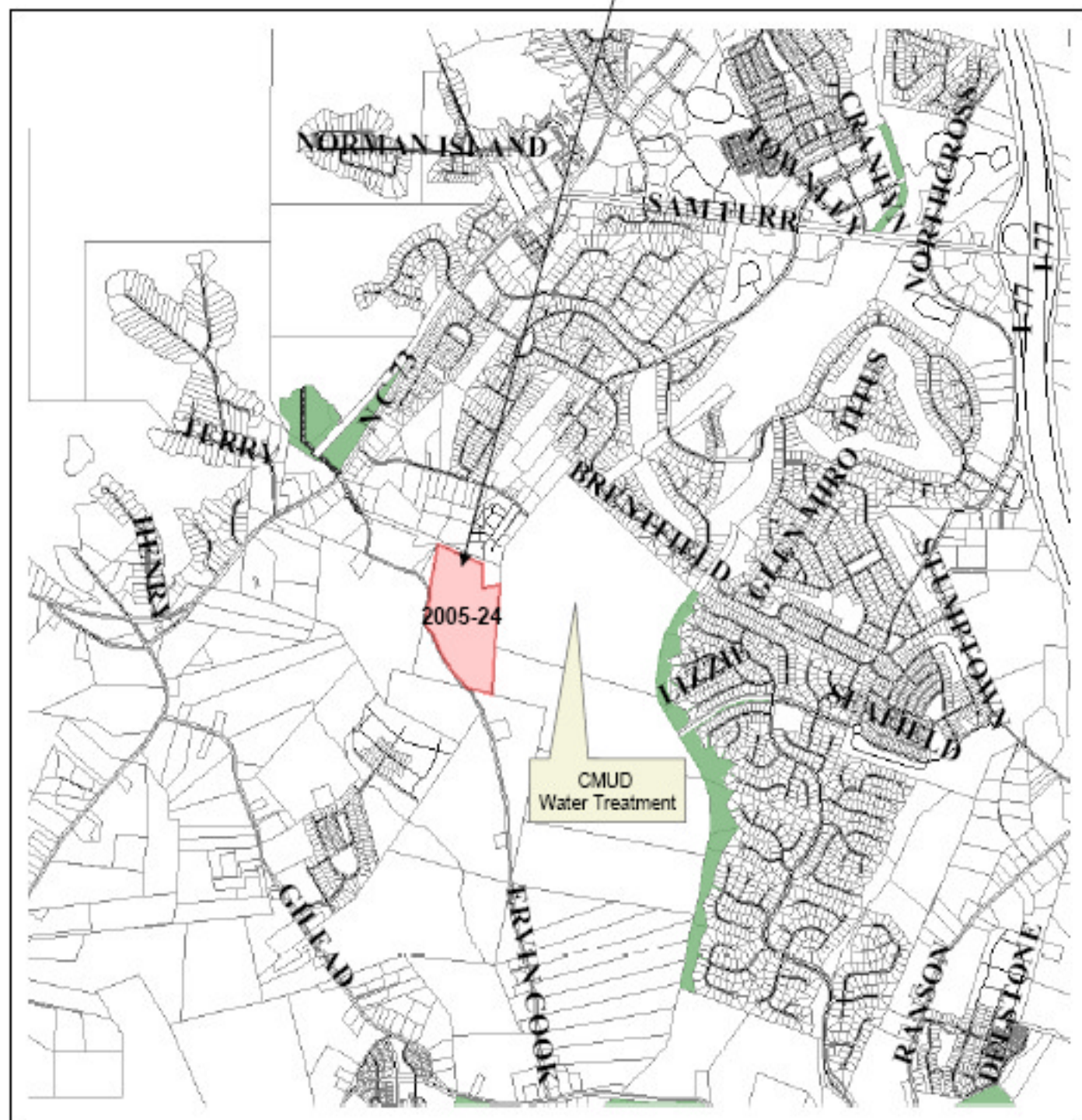
**CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Planning staff recommends County acquisition of this parcel for the development of parkland in partnership with the Town of Huntersville. Staff further recommends that – given development pressure surrounding the site – County and Town staffs make it a priority to work with MPO staff to firmly establish the alignment of the future Birkdale Commons Parkway in the vicinity of the site, and that proper accommodations are subsequently made to dedicate necessary right-of-way through the site (if necessary) for this future roadway.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At their November 15, 2005 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.

# MR 05-24



## Mandatory Referral – Oliver Hager Road Property

**Subject Property**  
(PID 009-011-08)

**Mecklenburg County Properties**  
(PID 009-041-03) (PID 009-041-05)

**CMU Property**  
(PID 009-351-01)

