

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 06-20
Proposed Replacement for Carmel Branch Library (Little Sugar Creek)

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

This project proposes to replace the existing Carmel Branch Library (6624 Walsh Boulevard, Charlotte) with a new facility located at 2100 Sharon Rd West (PID 207-04-105). The property is currently vacant and zoned R-3 (single family residential). The existing branch is a free-standing building leased to the Library, containing approximately 6,900 square feet that was opened in 1985. The lease terminates in 2010.

The new location is a 33 acre undeveloped parcel that was acquired in 2005 by Mecklenburg County for a greenway park. Library discussions with County Real Estate and Park and Recreation representatives indicated that a portion of the property was suitable for development and that the location is acceptable for a facility to replace the existing branch library. Subsequently, the Library conducted a feasibility study to confirm the viability of the project.

The new facility will be approximately 19,000 square feet. In addition to public library space, the facility will include a nature center (2,500 square feet) to be programmed and jointly used by Park and Recreation and the Library.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The existing library facility is inadequate because the size limits all significant program elements such as collections, reader seats, public access to computers, meeting room space and staff workstations. In contrast, the proposed library site would house a new structure meeting all of the infrastructure requirements of the Library.

The site is in proximity to South Mecklenburg High School, Quail Hollow Middle School, two private schools, multi-family and single family residential areas, that indicate the potential for a large customer base. The proposed library site adjoins the proposed Little Sugar Creek Greenway, enabling a joint venture between the library and the Parks and Recreation Department to house a joint use nature center on the site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This project is consistent with the Library's Ten Year Facilities Master Plan. It was identified by the Libraries as the third highest priority project out of the five submitted for FY07, and was recommended for funding by the County Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee.

The entire parcel appears to lie entirely within the FEMA 100-year floodplain, requiring development to conform to more stringent environmental standards.

In addition, since the proposed structure is in excess of 12,500 square feet, it is not allowed in the current R-3 zoning classification. Consequently, a re-zoning is likely required.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *South District Plan*, adopted on November 30, 1993, designates this property for park and open space use. The location of new public uses (such as schools and libraries) are typically not indicated on future land use plans. The proposed use is regarded as being consistent with park use, particularly since they are proposed to be developed jointly.

PROJECT IMPACT:

This project will require a curb cut on Sharon Road West to serve the library and the greenway. Other than slight traffic impacts on this major thoroughfare, no real permanent impacts of the project are anticipated.

Given the characteristics of the site in proximity to the creek and floodplain, construction impacts could be significant, and should be offset by sensitive site and facility design and appropriate construction practices.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This project will include site work (driveways, parking, and restrooms) that will serve the library as well as the greenway which will be developed on a separate timeline.

Development and Operating Agreements will be executed by the Library and Park & Recreation to govern the relationship between the parties.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

A formal project timeline has not been developed. The preliminary schedule calls for the completion of design in the first quarter of calendar year 2007 and the completion of construction and opening in the first quarter of 2008.

This project is funded by County FY07 Certificates of Participation (COPS) funding.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at its September 9, 2006 meeting. It was brought to the JUTF's attention that the Library will joint venture with Parks & Recreation on building design to include a "herbarium" or a nature museum as part of the library building.

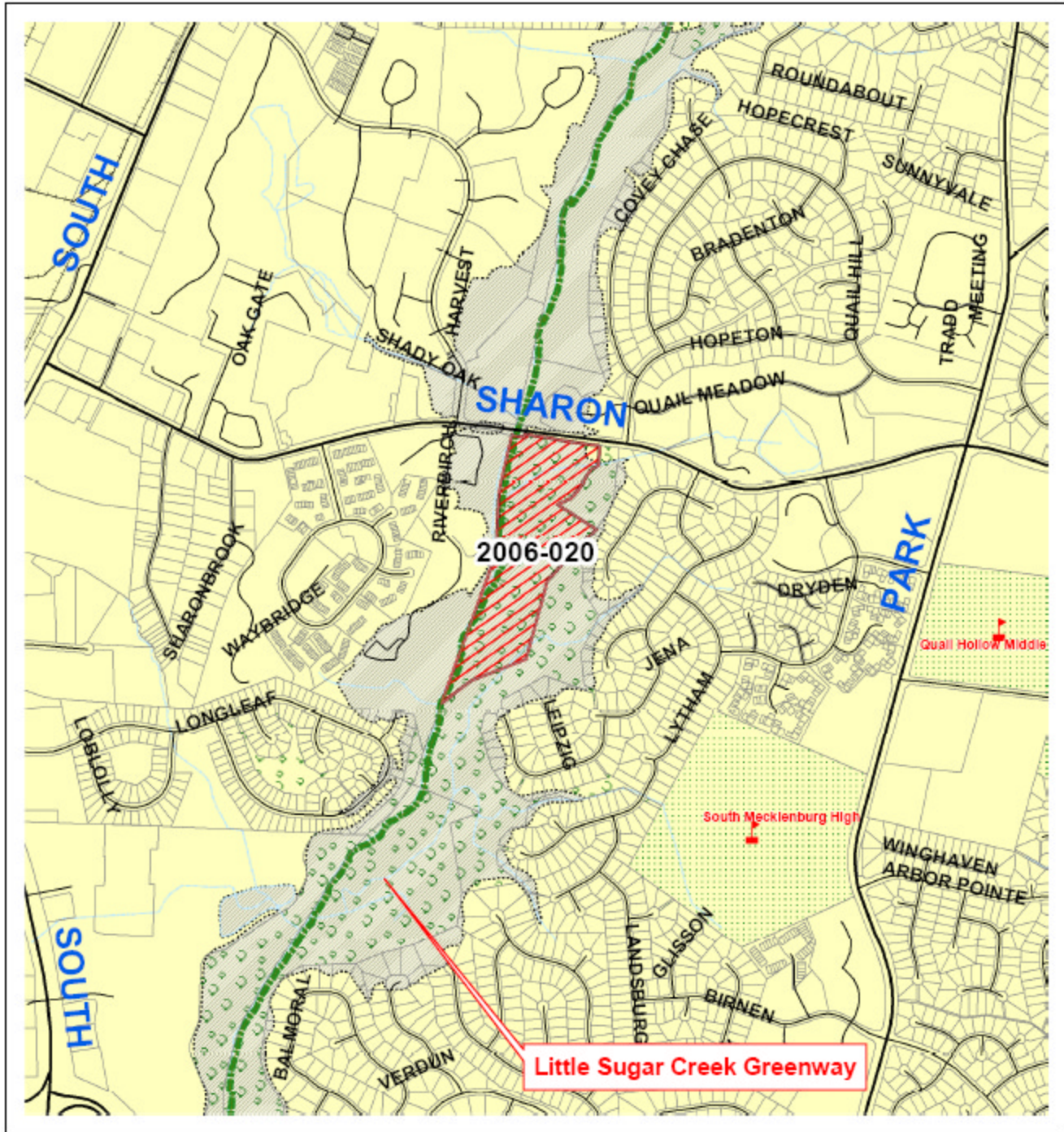
CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval that a portion of the 33 acre undeveloped parcel be used for a facility to replace the existing Carmel branch library, conditioned upon the proper re-zoning being secured for the property.




CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At its September 19, 2006 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.

Mandatory Referral 2006-20



**Department: Public Libraries of
Charlotte and Mecklenburg County**

-  Mandatory Referral
-  Libraries
-  Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

-  FEMA 100 Year Flood Plain
-  Greenway



Map Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission for illustrative purposes only.