

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 08-23
Proposed Acquisition of Property for the Mallard Creek Park and Ride Lot Expansion

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is seeking to acquire approximately 3.85 acres of vacant land in the University area of Charlotte to expand the existing Mallard Creek Park and Ride Lot located on parcel 04713183. The facility currently serves commuters in the University area and those from areas north on I-85, on Routes 22 and 54X. Currently, commuters using the bus are forced to park on the street, thereby causing disruption to adjoining businesses. The proposed acquisition should be able to accommodate approximately 250 additional spaces.

Agents from the City of Charlotte Real Estate division have identified a parcel meeting requirements set forth by CATS and an Option to Purchase has been submitted to the seller. CATS has identified the need for land in close proximity to the existing park & ride facility, and this land is next door. The parcel is a portion of Westbrook Business Park located off of Mallard Creek Road. It is bounded by Mallard Creek Road on the west and J.N. Pease Place on the east. The parcel number is 047-131-07 and a portion of it is zoned O-1 (CD), while the remainder (including the portion proposed for acquisition by CATS) is zoned RE-1 (Research district) according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. Approximately 3.85 acres will be subdivided from a parent tract consisting of approximately 30 acres.

The Park & Ride facility is conveniently situated near residential developments, while also having proximity to major thoroughfares, such as Mallard Creek Road, W.T. Harris Blvd., Mallard Creek Church Road, I-85, I-485, as well as U.S. Hwy 29 and 49. The location can serve as a central point of transportation for area travel as well as commuter travel from the University Area to Uptown.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

CATS has a capital program to serve existing passengers and to attract new riders. Owning commuter parking as opposed to short-term use agreements on property owned by others, provides stability and reliability for riders, and allows marketing of innovative express and custom bus services. There is high demand for park and ride in the subject area.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

CATS' adopted capital budget and strategic plan includes a specific Park and Ride line-item.

Parking lots are not allowed as a primary land use in the RE-1 zoning district, but they are allowed as an accessory use (supporting a primary use such as an office building) on the site. The Zoning Administrator's interpretation is that a CATS bus shelter located on the site may be considered a primary use to which the Park & Ride lot may be considered an accessory use. Therefore, presuming a bus shelter is constructed upon the subject property, the Park & Ride lot would be allowed within the RE-1 district.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The parcel is within the 1996 *Northeast District Plan* boundaries and the Plan recommends research land uses for the parcel. Though not specifically addressed, a park and ride facility can be considered a compatible use with the recommended research and office land uses.

PROJECT IMPACT:

With a convenient location along Mallard Creek Road, near the W.T. Harris intersection, the proposed site is well situated to attract bus commuters in the Northeast/University City corridor. Increased ridership will serve to provide transportation options in a rapidly growing part of the county.

The Park & Ride location itself will be a parking area and transportation hub, which will mesh seamlessly with the surrounding commercial development.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

We are not currently aware of any other public projects in this vicinity. There are numerous single-family and multi-family residential developments in this general area. There is also a large office and retail development under construction at Mallard Creek and Mallard Creek Church Road. The Park & Ride facility will serve commuters and shoppers in this region.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

If approved, the property should be acquired within the next 120 to 180 days.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed the matter at their July 2, 2008 meeting. County Park & Recreation staff in attendance reported much interest among area residents to connect the Mallard Creek greenway (immediately

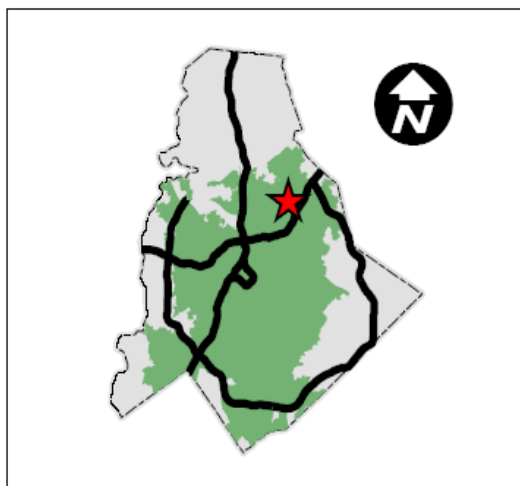
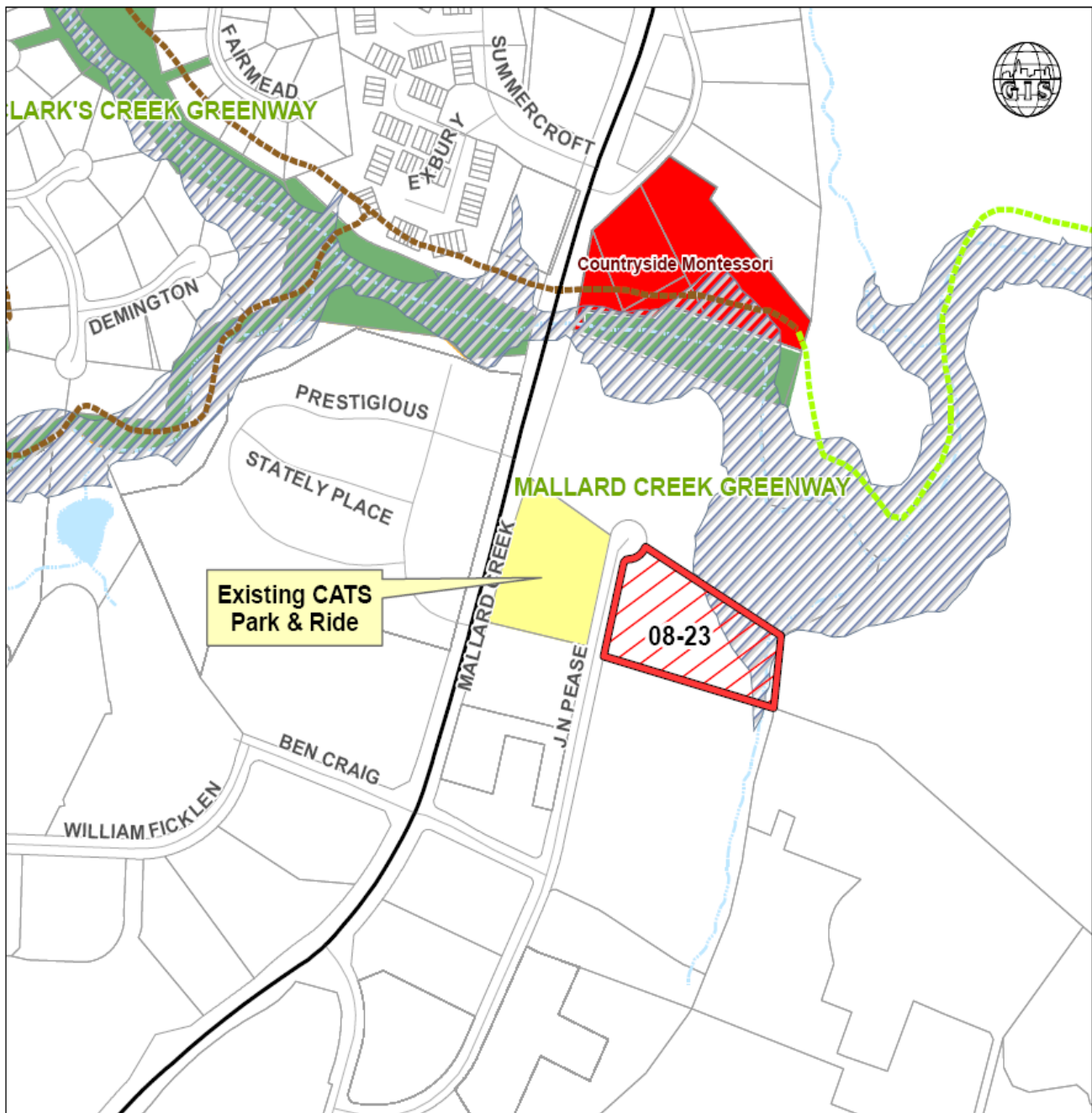
to the north of the larger parcel from which the proposed property is to be subdivided) with the Park & Ride facility, as interest is strong and growing for safe and convenient pedestrian/bike connections from the neighborhoods along the greenway and the bus service serving the Park & Ride lot. The following suggestions were therefore offered: (1) City Real Estate and CATS staff should explore any commitments to construct on-site greenway connections contained in the Conditional plan for the portion of the parcel to the north, and if they exist, determine whether they would serve to link the greenway with the proposed Park & Ride parcel (2) If no greenway extension condition exists, City Real Estate and CATS staffs should explore acquisition of the portion of the parcel immediately north of the current Park & Ride facility (and south of the greenway) to create a contiguous greenway/park & ride connection that can be designed and constructed along with the parking lot expansion.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff recommends approval of the proposed transaction for the property to serve as a Park & Ride lot, on condition that measures be taken (by way of facility design, discussion with property owner to the north, etc.) to maximize the possibility of establishing future linkage between the Park & Ride facility and the nearby greenway.










CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their July 15, 2008 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 08-23

City Real Estate Division

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|---|---|
|  Mandatory Referral |  Existing Park |
|  Existing Greenway |  Proposed Park |
|  Greenway Construction |  Greenway Property |
|  Proposed Greenway |  Nature Preserve |
|  City Property | |