

Planning Committee

Agenda Packet

March 19, 2013 |
Room 280
5:00 p.m. |

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission
Planning Committee Meeting Agenda
March 19, 2013 – 5:00 p.m.
CMGC – 2nd Floor, Room 280

1. Call to Order and Introductions

2. Approve February 19, 2013 Minutes. *Attachment 1*

3. Discuss and consider making a recommendation on the draft *Park Woodlawn Area Plan*.

Background: A public meeting was held in the community on January 29th to receive comments on the draft plan. The Planning Committee received public comment on the draft plan at the February 19th meeting.

You may access the draft plan by clicking the following link: [DRAFT Park Woodlawn Area Plan](#).

Staff Resource: Alberto Gonzalez, Planning

Action Requested: Consider making a recommendation on the draft *Park Woodlawn Area Plan*.

4. Receive Public Comment on the draft *Blue Line Extension Station Area Plans*

Background: The Blue Line Extension (BLE) is the second segment to be developed in Charlotte's comprehensive rapid transit system. It is comprised of a 9.4 mile route that extends from 9th Street in Center City through the North Davidson (NoDa) Street area to UNC-Charlotte. The alignment generally parallels the Norfolk Southern / North Carolina Railroad rail line and transitions to the median of US 29/North Tryon Street at Old Concord Road.

The BLE Transit Station Area Plans are policy documents that provide the framework for future growth and development along the transit line. A public meeting to receive comments on the draft plan was held on January 31st. You may access the draft plan by clicking the following link: [DRAFT BLE Station Area Plans](#).

Staff Resource: Kathy Cornett, Planning

Action Requested: Receive public comment on the draft *Blue Line Extension Station Area Plans*.

5. M.R. #13-02: Proposal by Mecklenburg County to Acquire Land on Little Rock Road for Park Expansion

Background: Mecklenburg County proposes to purchase approximately 1.8 acres of land located at 1300 Little Rock Road (Tax Parcel 055-311-08) to expand Robert L. Smith Regional Park.

Attachment 2

Staff Resources: Marci Sigmon, Planning
Jacqueline McNeil, County Asset and Facility Management

Action Requested: Approve Planning staff's recommendation for M.R. #13-02.

6. Area Plan Status and Meeting Report

Background: Committee members will provide an update on area plans.

Area Plans	Assigned Commissioners	Scheduled Meetings
Park Woodlawn Area Plan	Commissioners Labovitz and Chairperson Zoutewelle	City Council Public Comment Monday, April 22 nd 7:00 p.m.
Blue Line Extension Station Area Plans	Commissioners Nealon and Ryan	Planning Committee Tour Friday, March 22 nd 10:00 a.m.
Prosperity Hucks Area Plan	Commissioner Low	Planning Committee Tour Monday, April 1 st 9:30 a.m.

Action Requested: None, for information only.

7. Adjourn

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Andy Zoutewelle, Vice-Chairperson Tracy Finch-Dodson, Deborah Ryan, Greg Phipps, Thomas Low, Lucia Zapata Griffith (arrived at 5:45 p.m.) and Karen Labovitz

Commissioners Absent: Steven Firestone

Planning Staff Present: Michael Cataldo, Sonda Kennedy, Claire Lyte-Graham, Kent Main, Melony McCullough, Bryman Suttle and Jonathan Wells

Others Present: Tracy Newsome (Charlotte Department of Transportation) and Jason Lawrence (Charlotte Area Transit System)

Call to Order and Introductions

Chairperson Zoutewelle called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Ryan and seconded by Chairperson Tracy Finch Dodson to approve the November 20, 2012 minutes. The vote was 6-0 to approve the minutes.

Chairperson Zoutewelle explained the Planning Commission's role to the audience. He explained that the Commission is divided into two committees, Planning and Zoning. One of the primary responsibilities of the Planning Committee is to make recommendations to City Council on area plans. He further explained that the Zoning Committee makes recommendations to City Council on rezonings.

Public Comment on the draft *Park Woodlawn Area Plan*

Chairperson Zoutewelle provided the guidelines for providing comments on the plan. Kent Main (Planning Staff) stated that in Alberto Gonzalez's (Planning Staff) absence, he will give an overview of the draft *Park Woodlawn Area Plan*. He shared a PowerPoint presentation that included the plan area boundaries, background information about the planning process and key plan recommendations. He explained that the draft plan establishes a vision for the area and provides direction for future growth and development. A public meeting to receive comments on the draft plan was held in the community on January 29th. He then referenced a handout that summarized proposed changes to the draft plan. After reviewing some of the proposed revisions to the draft plan, he explained the process to request other revisions to the draft plan.

Chairperson Zoutewelle stated that the plan impacts many different properties in the area and that multiple comments have been received from persons interested in the area. It was noted that a draft copy of the plan and a comment sheet to provide input on the plan is on the website. The Chairperson stated that the Committee will begin deliberations on the plan at this meeting and make a recommendation in March or April. He asked the Committee members if they have any questions for staff

Commissioner Ryan asked about bike lanes on Park Road and if the proposed overland connector provides opportunities for bike and pedestrian connections. Tracy Newsome (CDOT) pointed out the difference between what is proposed in the Wedge areas versus the Activity Center. She explained the preference for parallel options along Park Road in the Wedge Area.

Commissioner Phipps asked if the Implementation Plan will address project costs. Ms. Newsome said that implementation will occur overtime and will be funded in a variety of ways. Some projects may be implemented and funded as a part of private development. There is not a fund setup specifically for the projects recommended in this plan. Chairperson Zoutewelle further explained that the plan is divided into two parts. City Council will be asked to adopt Part I: *The Concept Plan*. Part II: *The Implementation Guide* will not be adopted by City Council. Mr. Main added that staff tried to clearly convey to the public that there is not a promise of funding for projects recommended in the plan.

Commissioner Labovitz expressed her desire to have the citizens present ask general questions about the plan and provide comments on what they think is appropriate. Chairperson Zoutewelle stated that the Committee can listen to questions as they have in the past during the comment period. He thanked all who participated in the planning process. Commissioner Labovitz thanked Alberto Gonzalez and Kent Main for doing an excellent job addressing issues and concerns at the community meetings.

Richard Huff, Scaleybark Road, thinks Scaleybark Road is a wide street, convenient and has good views. He is concerned about adding bike lanes and changing the road width. He noted that the plan calls for a reduction in the width of travel lanes and an increase in the width of bicycle lanes. He is concerned about the obstruction of vehicle travel and an increase in accidents. He thinks that the current lanes are convenient and said that the benefits of a bike trail and costs were not discussed during the planning process.

Brenda Campbell, Hedgemore Drive, pointed out that Park Road Shopping Center is built on a suburban model and vehicle travel is difficult. She thinks that there should be better connections between neighborhoods and that bike lanes will be wonderful. She does not want too much traffic calming on Park Road and is concerned about the utility poles located in the middle of sidewalks. She states that the utility poles are dangerous for riders on scooters and an impediment to the aging population. In closing, she added that there is a need to improve multi-modal connections to the Center and that bus transportation should be made available to Uptown. She would like to see a transportation center at Park Road Shopping Center.

Lyle Darnell, Edens (owner of Park Road Shopping Center), described the planning process as refreshing, open and inclusive. He further stated that the process has been good and his company was glad to have input. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to hear what is important to area residents. He said that Edens plans to continue to operate the shopping center as a first class retail environment and added that Park Road Shopping Center is special to his company because of its history in the community. However, he would like more flexibility.

Laura Dahlberg asked for clarification on a proposed connection on the concept map. Ms. Newsome explained that this is a conceptual connection. If the area redevelops, the connection will be reviewed to determine its feasibility.

Joe Padilla, Executive Director - *Real Estate and Building Industry Coalition*, recognized staff for doing an excellent job developing the plan vision and acknowledged the challenges involved in developing a plan for such a critical area of Charlotte. He would like to see the plan focus more on cohesive development and find ways to look at policies that may actually bring about specific regulatory incentives. He further stated that the real future and sustainable health of the area depends on how effective that area develops and future rezonings. He said the plan may not provide enough opportunities for density along some of the corridors within the Activity Center.

Mr. Padilla added that economic development is extremely challenging. He spoke of density issues and building heights that will allow you to maximize the economics of a particular project. He thinks that flexibility is needed when considering redevelopment opportunities. He mentioned language in the plan about increasing the tree canopy in the Activity Center area and noted that this will be limited in redevelopment areas.

Commissioner Ryan asked Mr. Padilla what is his preference for density and building height. He answered in the future 20 dwelling units per acre may be low and suggested considering height with density to determine appropriate development. The Chairperson asked Mr. Main about height limits south of Montford Drive. Mr. Main said there is less concern about heights near the greenway and there is more concern about building heights adjacent to neighborhoods.

Carla Weyrick, Ashbrook Neighborhood, asked Mr. Padilla what increased density means to him. Mr. Padilla responded by saying that when considering density, the plan should not be too restrictive as the area redevelops. Chairperson Zoutewelle asked Mr. Main if the plan recommends building heights exceed 40 feet. Mr. Main answered that greater heights are allowed in some areas. Ms. Weyrick shared concerns about apartments and cut through traffic. She stated that high density means more traffic. She also talked about overcrowded schools and unsafe conditions for children walking to school.

Chairperson Zoutewelle asked about carpooling to the Montessori school. She explained that parking is very tight and the issue with traffic at the school. Commissioner Phipps asked if consideration was given to Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) providing neighborhood circulator type buses. Jason Lawrence (CATS) stated that the draft area plan and the Countywide Transit Service Plan (CTSP) do not recommend shuttle service for this area.

Commissioner Low asked what it means when you hear assemble land or mixed-use. It does not mention if it's big box or high density mixed-use on smaller acreage. Chairperson Zoutewelle acknowledged that the Committee heard a variety of concerns and that there is a fair amount of support for the plan. He stated that the Committee will deliberate next month and asked the public to include Commissioner Labovitz in any comments or emails that are sent to Planning Committee members.

M.R. #13-01: Proposal by Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) to Acquire County-owned Land Adjacent to the CPCC Levine Campus

Jonathan Wells (Planning Staff) presented the Mandatory Referral for the proposed acquisition of land in Matthews by CPCC from Mecklenburg County to allow for expansion of the CPCC Levine Campus. Mr. Wells stated that this Mandatory Referral is complicated and that the Town of Matthews, CPCC, Mecklenburg County, CATS, MUMPO, Park and Recreation and City Real Estate have all worked together on this project. The immediate use of the subject property will be for surface parking to accommodate current parking demands. Parking is not allowed as a principal use in the current zoning category and a rezoning is required. Mecklenburg County proposes to retain ownership of a 22.6 acre rear portion of the site with no specific plans for the property at this time.

After consulting with the Town of Matthews' Planning Director, Planning staff recommends approval of this proposed land transfer subject to the following conditions:

- The various partners (CPCC, Mecklenburg County, Town of Matthews, CATS, Park & Recreation, and MUMPO) work collaboratively to establish an alignment for the future Independence Pointe Parkway in the vicinity of the property that will accommodate vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian needs.
- The edges of the determined alignment right-of-way that cross the subject parcel shall be used as subdivision boundaries (with the eastern portion dedicated to CPCC use, the western portion for future County use, and the right-of-way itself reserved for future transportation/transit use)
- CPCC shall seek and obtain rezoning of the property to a zoning classification suitable to the intended use of the property (parking)
- Prior to the commencement of any "vertical" improvements on this site (e.g. classroom or administrative buildings, structured parking) CPCC shall work with CATS and the Town of Matthews to determine whether any joint development opportunities exist.

Chairperson Zoutewelle asked why the Committee is considering this proposal since it is in the Town of Matthews. Mr. Wells explained that the legislation states that a Mandatory Referral is required when the City or County's jurisdictions propose real estate transactions involving capital investments and is not restricted to the City of Charlotte.

Commissioner Phipps said that it seems like the Mandatory Referral is in a state of flexibility and asked if it is the right time to consider this request. Mr. Wells responded that state legislation requires action on a Mandatory Referral within 30 days of receipt of application. CPCC has already granted an additional 30 days.

Commissioner Ryan said that she appreciated the explanation of the complexity of the proposal and wanted to thank everyone for their input. She asked for clarification on the action requested. Commissioner Griffith also thanked staff and said that the campus is growing and it is good to support the school's growth and development. Chairperson Zoutewelle asked if CPCC was involved in developing the four conditions for approval. Mr. Wells replied yes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ryan and seconded by Vice-Chairperson Finch Dodson to approve Planning staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral #13-01. The vote was 7-0 to approve staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral 13-01.

Area Plan Status and Meeting Report

Blue Line Extension Station Area Plans – Commissioner Ryan reported that the Committee received an update at the recent full Planning Commission meeting.

Prosperity Hucks Area Plan – Commissioner Low stated that since our last meeting there have not been any meetings. A Planning Committee tour is planned for Monday, April 1st.

Ms. McCullough told the Committee that there is a tour of the Blue Line Extension Station Areas scheduled for March 4th. Commissioner Phipps said that he will be out of town that day. It was suggested that the full commission may be interested in the tour. Commissioner Labovitz stated that on behalf of the Zoning Committee, she is sure there will be interest. Ms. McCullough will work with the Commission to reschedule the BLE tour and place the Prosperity Hucks plan area tour scheduled for April 1st on the calendar.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Jacqueline McNeil, BSSA-Asset and Facility Management

Initiated by: Jim Garges, Director, Park & Recreation Dept.

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 13-02

Proposed Acquisition of Land on Little Rock Road in Charlotte for Park Expansion

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

This project is the proposed acquisition of ±1.846 acres located at 1300 Little Rock Road (Tax Parcel 055-311-08) in West Charlotte for the expansion of Robert L. Smith Regional Park that currently contains a playground, walking trails and soccer fields. The property is vacant and zoned R-4 (Single Family Residential) according to the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance.

The area to the north of this property has developed residentially, while the area to the south (including park property) is largely vacant. The majority of the subject parcel lies within the 100-year floodplain.

No improvements are planned to the subject property at this time.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This project is consistent with the *2008 Mecklenburg County Parks Master Plan* objectives which identified the need for additional parkland in this area through its green printing process. Acquisition of this property will help fulfill the need for expanded open space, recreational and greenway trails and amenities in this area of the County to serve nearby neighborhoods. The subject property would also provide expanded visibility for the park along Little Rock Road.

According to the *2008 Mecklenburg County Parks Master Plan*, a regional park should consist of a minimum of 100 acres, and the community should have five acres of regional park space per 1,000 people served. Robert L. Smith Regional park currently consists of 205.794 acres. At the current acreage, the park can serve a little more than 41,000 people at the 5/1,000 ratio.

A future greenway trail is planned along Paw Creek, which runs along the entire northern boundary of the Robert L. Smith Regional Park and along the southern boundary of the subject property. The addition of this acreage would provide the County with expanded greenway opportunities as well.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This acquisition is consistent with the County's *2008 Parks Master Plan* which encourages the expansion of existing parks.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Northwest District Plan* (adopted in 1990) recommends greenway for approximately three-fourths of the subject parcel and single family residential up to four dwelling units per acre for the remaining portion. The proposed use is consistent with the adopted land use plan.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition of this property takes this tract out of play for future residential development and expands the recreational and open space capacity for Robert L. Smith Park.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This property is to be utilized as open space/parkland. It does not affect any other known public projects in this area.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

This project is for land acquisition only and is expected to be completed by spring 2013.

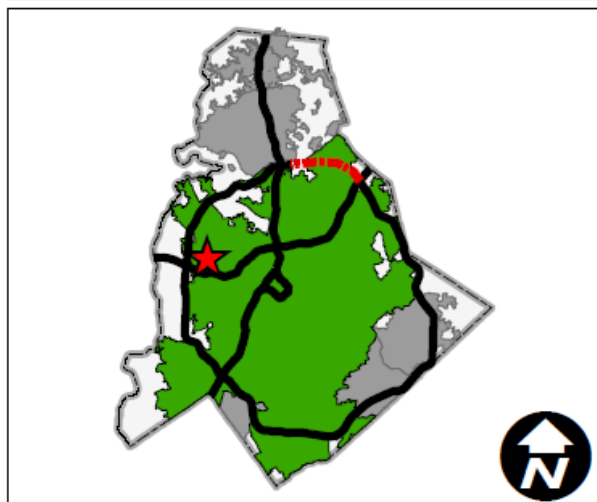
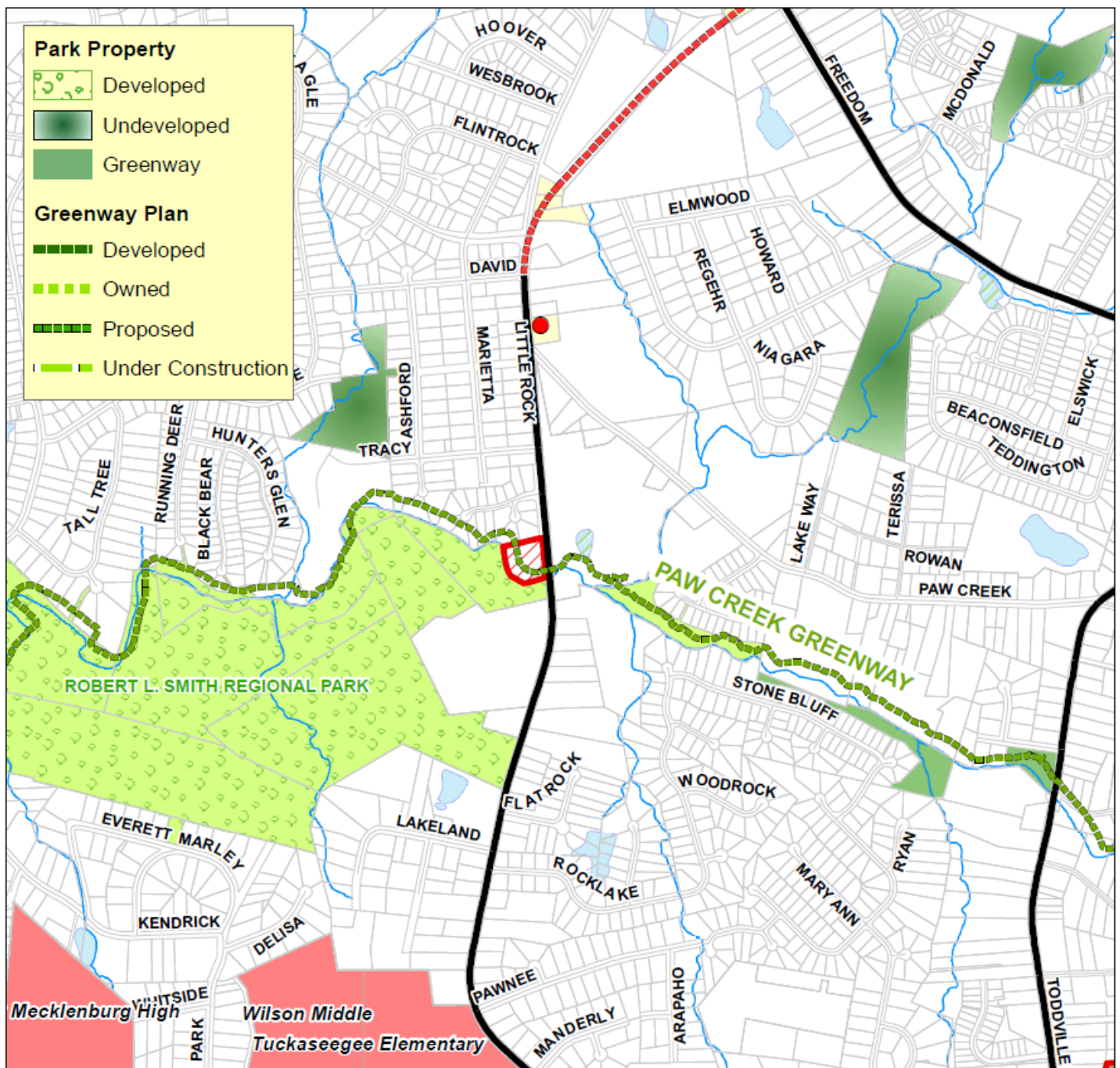
JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed the matter at their March 6, 2013 meeting and no comments were received.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff recommends approval of the proposed transaction due to the proposed land use being consistent with the *2008 Mecklenburg County Parks Master Plan* and the subject parcel being mostly located in the 100-year floodplain.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:



Mandatory Referral 13-02

Initiated by: Park & Recreation Dept

Submitted by: County Real Estate

- Mandatory Referral
- City Property
- County Property
- Existing Thoroughfare
- Proposed Thoroughfare
- Fire Station

