

Planning Committee

Agenda Packet

January 19, 2016 |
Room 280
5:00 p.m. |

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission
Planning Committee Meeting Agenda
January 19, 2016 – 5:00 p.m.
CMGC – 2nd Floor, Room 280

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Approve December 15, 2015 Minutes. *Attachment 1*

2. M.R. #16-01: Proposal by the City of Charlotte to Acquire Property Located in the Hickory Grove Area for Tree Canopy Preservation

Background: The City of Charlotte proposes to acquire four parcels of land totaling approximately 74 acres located near Robinson Church and Plott roads, adjacent to Reedy Creek Greenway (Tax Parcels 108-071-13, 108-112-03 & 04, 108-042-10A) for preservation of the tree canopy. The properties are to remain in a natural state following acquisition. ***Attachment 2***

Staff Resources: Amanda Vari, Planning
Amanda Byrum, City Real Estate

Action Requested: Approve Planning staff's recommendation for M.R. #16-01.

3. M.R. #16-02: Proposal by Mecklenburg County to Acquire Land Located on Wilkinson Boulevard for Medic Facility

Background: Mecklenburg County proposes to purchase a 0.38 acre vacant parcel located off of Wilkinson Boulevard (Tax Parcel 115-091-03) to assemble with other recently purchased properties for the relocation of Medic (Mecklenburg County Emergency Medical Services Agency). ***Attachment 3***

Staff Resources: Catherine Mahoney, Planning
Jacqueline McNeil, County Asset and Facility Management

Action Requested: Approve Planning staff's recommendation for M.R. #16-02.

4. FY16 Action Plan Follow-up

Background: Staff will share information on development in SouthEnd as a part of the continued discussion on Livable Cities.

Staff Resource: Alan Goodwin, Planning

Action Requested: For Committee discussion.

5. Adjourn

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2015 – 5:00 p.m.
CMGC – 2nd Floor, Room 280

ATTACHMENT 1
DRAFT

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Planning Commission Chairperson Tony Lathrop, Planning Committee Chairperson Dionne Nelson, Vice-Chairperson Cozzie Watkins, Commissioners Emma Allen, John Fryday and Bolyn McClung

Commissioner Absent: Deborah Ryan

Planning Staff Present: Alberto Gonzalez, Garet Johnson, Sonda Kennedy, Melony McCullough, Cheryl Neely and Amanda Vari

Other Staff Present: Katie Daughtry and Jennifer Morell, County Asset and Facility Management

Call to Order and Introductions

Planning Committee Chairperson Dionne Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m., welcomed those present and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Approve November 17, 2015 Minutes

A motion was made by Vice-Chairperson Watkins and seconded by Commissioner Allen to approve the November 17, 2015 minutes. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes.

M.R. #15-57: Proposal by Mecklenburg County to Exchange Property Located in the Belmont Neighborhood with Duke Energy

Mecklenburg County proposes to exchange 0.9 acres of land located at the intersection of Belmont and Alexander streets (a portion of Tax Parcels 081-082-08 and 04) for 0.4 acres of land owned by Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC located at the corner of N. Myers Street and E. 13th Street (a portion of Tax Parcel 081-082-01) to facilitate the construction of a new substation.

M.R. #15-58: Proposal by Mecklenburg County to Accept the Donation of Land Located on Seymour Drive Adjacent to Southwest Park

Mecklenburg County proposes to accept the donation of land located on the south side of Seymour Drive adjacent to the Norfolk Southern Railroad Line (Tax Parcel 115-032-01) for land assemblage adjacent to Southwest Park.

A motion was made by Commissioner McClung and seconded by Commissioner Fryday to approve by consent Planning staff's recommendations for M.R. #15-57 and M.R. #15-58. The vote was unanimous to approve staff's recommendation for both mandatory referrals.

FY16 Action Plan Follow-up

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson stated that she understands that the FY16 Action Plan discussion by the Planning Committee has focused on livable communities. Although Commissioner Ryan was not at the meeting, Chairperson Nelson acknowledged Commissioner Ryan's leadership on this subject. The Chair asked if there were any follow up questions or comments on livable communities.

Commissioner McClung commented that he has enjoyed the livable communities discussion and asked if it is possible to have a developer come and discuss livable communities. Commissioner Fryday asked Commissioner McClung if he is referring to someone who does this type of development within the confines of our City. Commissioner McClung used SouthEnd as an example and said he would like to know if there were things that a developer would do differently now.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson said that time spent with developers will be more productive if the request is in the context that a developer can get their mind around. She used the goal or objective of the zoning ordinance rewrite as an example - we want to rewrite our zoning ordinance to accomplish "blank" for the City. The Commission needs to determine what questions they would like answered and to determine how to use the livable cities concept to make recommendations. After this takes place, maybe have 2 or 3 developers form a panel to share information with the Commission.

Planning Commission Chairperson Tony Lathrop, thanked Garet Johnson (Planning) for her research on existing principles/guidelines related to planning for healthy, livable communities. This document is in the Planning Committee's agenda packet. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked Ms. Johnson if there have been any conversations about how communities have been built or developed within the confines of existing principles. She also asked her to talk about how livable communities relate to existing policies. Ms. Johnson explained that livable communities is a broad concept. She stated that some developments may incorporate different components or elements of these principles but there are a lot of principles that overlap. Ms. Johnson further stated that it is important to understand what the Committee wants to hear when discussing livable and healthy communities. She also explained that livable communities could be different depending on where you live.

Commissioner McClung asked what is a "complete street." He said that complete streets may be different depending on where you live. Livable cities are the same, they may vary depending upon where you live. Ms. Johnson explained complete streets.

Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop said the Committee and the Commission needs to decide what they would like to do with the livable cities information and how long it should take. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked if it is the Committee's desire to move toward some type of recommendation. Commissioner Fryday said he thinks so and the Committee needs to decide what type of recommendation(s). He said that because of the timeframe for the zoning ordinance rewrite, the Committee may want to consider a shorter timeframe for developing recommendations. He mentioned the SouthEnd critique comparing it to the building of NorthEnd. He explained that SouthEnd is being heavily critiqued today because of things that it does not have and the NorthEnd is being built just like SouthEnd.

Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop agreed with Commissioner Fryday and stated that there are several options to help organize thoughts around this subject. He noted that “wordsmithing” the current ordinance is not necessary at this point because the zoning ordinance rewrite will address that level of detail. The Commission needs to find ways to articulate principles in general and communicate priorities sooner rather than later.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson clarified that the Committee should ask for specific suggestions that focus on principles and priorities. She questioned if that may transfer into a text amendment. Commissioner Fryday suggested that the Committee identify principles and priorities more holistically and develop a separate plan of action as to how those principles and priorities might be applied to a specific submarket such as SouthEnd and NorthEnd.

Commissioner Fryday suggested a discussion about SouthEnd with developers to talk about what has not worked well. This could help guide the discussion. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson agreed with starting the conversation with SouthEnd. Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop said a lot of principles already exist if the Committee would like to affirm them.

Planning Committee Vice-Chairperson Watkins stated that it is important for everyone to understand livable cities and what it means for them. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson mentioned that Commissioner Ryan gave a definition- health, safety and transportation. She asked if the Committee wants to agree on this definition for livable cities.

Vice-Chairperson Watkins said that if the Committee wants everyone on board, the community has to understand the issue. She thinks that a visual of a livable city would help sell the concept to the community. Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop said that the opportunity exists for public engagement through the zoning ordinance rewrite. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson said that starting a short list of topics to start the discussion of broader recommendations and education needs to be a part of the zoning ordinance rewrite process.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked staff if there are any specific examples of cities that are referenced as a guide for livable cities. She is especially interested in any kind of planning work specific to the City. Are there examples that have been discussed internally as a guide to how staff thinks about area plans or the principles and priorities? She does not want staff to recreate the wheel.

Ms. Johnson told the Committee that when she thinks of a livable city, she thinks of it as more of a concept and it has components. Charlotte is a livable city, it has some of the components but it is missing some things. She explained that the first step to address this is the zoning ordinance rewrite and the second step is the Community Character Manual.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson referenced the information in the agenda packet that addresses some of the livable cities principles. She shared her concern about creating new policy. Planning Commission Chairperson Tony Lathrop is also concerned about creating policy since there are already so many.

Chairperson Lathrop referenced the chart put together by staff (see chart below) and asked about having people come in to talk about what this information means to them. He stated that these principles mean different things to different people but they are good principles.

Themes from Livable Communities Research	Adopted City Policy from <i>Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework</i>
1. Incorporate a Mix of Land Uses	1. More walkable places with a variety of activities (mix of well-connected uses)
2. Provide Transportation Choices – bike, car, transit, walking	2. Enhanced transportation networks for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and transit users
3. Ensure Housing Choices & Affordability	3. Residential opportunities to accommodate a diverse population in quality and livable neighborhoods
4. Design Public Spaces for All Ages and Abilities and Make them Active	4. Not specifically addressed in the adopted <i>Growth Framework</i> , but may be addressed elsewhere
5. Recognize the Unique Identity of Existing Places	5. High-quality, context-sensitive community design (reflect and build on existing character)
6. Plan for all ages	6. Not specifically addressed in the adopted <i>Growth Framework</i> , but may be addressed elsewhere
7. Protect the Environment, Including the Tree Canopy	7. Diligent consideration of environmental benefits and impacts A healthy and flourishing tree canopy
8. Protect Existing Neighborhoods	8. Protection of established neighborhoods
9. Enhance Urban Centers	9. Revitalization of economically challenged business and residential areas
10. Promote Access to Healthy/Local Foods	10. Not specifically addressed in the adopted <i>Growth Framework</i> , but may be addressed elsewhere

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson said that the Committee should consider the idea of themes. She asked the Committee how they felt about Ms. Johnson's list? She asked Ms. Johnson how did she narrow the list to ten? Ms. Johnson explained that she looked for recurring themes in all of the information and categorized similar information. Planning Commission Chairperson Tony Lathrop agreed with Ms. Johnson that this is a nice way to frame everything. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson suggested looking at the ten themes as suggested by Planning Commission Chairperson Tony Lathrop as a starting point. Commissioner McClung said that the information is well worded and he thinks the wording is appropriate for everyone.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson suggested the Committee start a short list and discuss topics individually. At the end of the discussion, develop recommendations around each topic. Next, the Committee could focus on how to engage the public and help them understand this topic. Ms. Johnson said that this could help discussions during the zoning ordinance rewrite.

Commissioner McClung would like to focus on items #4, #6 and #10. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson said the goal is to determine how recommendations might be incorporated into policies. Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop suggested confirming the ten themes and taking them to the full Commission to affirm. Commissioner McClung suggested finding examples in the City to show how different areas of the City meet these principles. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked if the Committee would like to affirm the guiding themes.

A motion was made by Commissioner McClung and seconded by Commissioner Allen to affirm that the livable cities themes be used as the framework for developing guiding principles for land use and planning decisions. The vote was unanimous to approve this motion.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked if there are items on the list that need to be discussed. She also asked what would be valuable to the Committee when setting future agendas. Commissioner Fryday said that items #4, #5, #8 and #9 are all candidates for further discussion to clarify their meaning. Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop does not want to spend a lot of time on wording.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked where does the Committee want to begin-review existing policies and standards to identify what is working and what is not. Vice-Chairperson Watkins suggested choosing two areas of the City, historic development and newer development, to evaluate how they address the themes. Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop suggested discussing the Blue Line, SouthEnd, NODA and Eastland Mall areas. Commissioner McClung suggested the Gold Line as well.

Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked if there is concern from staff. Ms. Johnson said that the policy documents for the light rail alignment and trolley are different from one another. It may be more useful to review some of the rezoning petitions to evaluate how they meet the themes. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson asked how the Committee feels about taking a look at SouthEnd first for evaluation against the themes and not asking staff for presentations at this time.

Ms. Johnson said that staff has some presentations that can be used to share information with the Planning Committee about SouthEnd. Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop said that Commissioner Fryday could be a resource with his knowledge of SouthEnd. He further suggested starting with two questions – (1) what is going well and (2) what needs to be improved. He also asked how long does the Committee want to take on this. Planning Committee Chairperson Nelson recommends allocating some time during regular meetings and not allowing more than one meeting per topic. She said that what worked and what we would have done differently should be an agenda topic at the next meeting. She would like for staff familiar with SouthEnd to be available at a future meeting. She asked the Committee to contain expectations of staff to their knowledge and not preparing a lot of information. Commissioner McClung would like to see maps showing SouthEnd boundaries.

Commissioner Allen asked if the goal is to influence the zoning ordinance rewrite or is there an opportunity for the Planning Committee to influence the public. Ms. Johnson replied yes. She also said that this is to inform the Committee members about these topics, as a result, they will be able to respond to questions in the future and to help explain to the community. Commissioner Allen said if this is the goal, the Committee should focus on discussion that will translate to tangible recommendations to City Council. She asked if the Commission knows how and who will be involved in the community character updates. Planning Commission Chairperson Lathrop said that the Commission does not know yet but this will also help communicate ideas to the Council.

Vice-Chairperson Watkins will set up a dropbox or google docs by Monday.

Adjourn: 6:35 p.m.

Submitted by: Amanda L. Byrum, E&PM, Real Estate

Initiated by: Tim Porter, E&PM, Landscape Management

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 16-01

Proposed Acquisition of Property in Hickory Grove area of Charlotte for Tree Canopy Preservation

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The City of Charlotte's Engineering and Property Management Department (E&PM) proposes to acquire four parcels cumulatively measuring approximately 74.08 acres (108-071-13, 108-112-03, 108-112-04, 108-042-10A), all zoned R-3 single family residential per the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance, in the City of Charlotte for tree canopy preservation. The properties which are all vacant are located near Robinson Church Road and Plott Road, as shown on the location map below, and are adjacent to Reedy Creek Greenway. The area to the west of these parcels is developed with single family residential subdivisions while the area to the east is largely undeveloped.

Following acquisition of these properties by the City, the City will donate a conservation easement to the Catawba Lands Conservancy in order to ensure that perpetual stewardship of the tree canopy is provided. The properties are proposed to remain in a natural state following acquisition, and may be used for low-intensity recreational purposes, such as a natural surface trail.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The acquisition of these properties will enable the City to work toward reaching Charlotte City Council's goal of attaining fifty percent tree canopy coverage city-wide by 2050 through the preservation of forested properties in developing areas. This acquisition allows the City, as required by the Charlotte Tree Ordinance, to fulfill its role as administrator of a Tree Ordinance Mitigation Fund and to meet the greater intent of the tree ordinance to preserve and protect tree canopy and promote the benefits trees provide to the Charlotte community (Charlotte, North Carolina, City Code, §21).

Approximately twenty-two contiguous acres of existing mature forest and fifty-two acres of early successional forest will be protected as part of this acquisition.

These properties were identified and considered under the City's scoring model for tree canopy preservation. This model uses criteria including acreage, current vegetative cover, potential for connectivity to greenways, partnering opportunities, and the level of development in the general geographic area.

Since the City lacks the capacity for property stewardship following acquisition, the Catawba Lands Conservancy is a key stewardship partner to maintain properties through conservation easements. This property is adjacent to existing conserved areas and shares with them biodiversity and habitat characteristics important for conservation.

Finally, it was determined that the conservation of fifty-two acres of early successional forest existing on these properties provided a rare opportunity to obtain a significant one-time net gain in tree canopy. This area was completely devoid of tree canopy per the City's 2012 Urban Tree Canopy Analysis.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The acquisition of this property is consistent with the tree canopy goals established in the Environmental Focus Area Plan, adopted by City Council on June 28, 2011.

In order to complete the acquisition, the City will utilize tree ordinance mitigation funds collected by Land Development through developer payment in lieu of on-site tree preservation to acquire these properties for conservation purposes, as established in the City's tree ordinance.

The acquisition of this property is consistent with the general environmental goals associated with the *Charlotte Post Construction Stormwater Ordinance*, the *Rocky River Road Area Plan* and, *North Carolina, City Code, §18*.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Rocky River Area Plan* (adopted 2006) recommends single family land uses up to 4 dwelling units per acre and a greenway (Reedy Creek Greenway) along the northern portions of the property. Open space uses are not always identified for a specific location in an area plan and are considered compatible with single family land uses and consistent with adopted policy.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition will enable the City to work toward reaching the goal of attaining fifty percent tree canopy coverage city-wide by 2050 through the preservation of forested properties in developing areas.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This property is adjacent to Reedy Creek Greenway and could provide connectivity for future trail plans.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Staff has been in communication with the respective property owners and Catawba Lands Conservancy, and plans to move forward with obtaining City Council approval pending completion of preliminary due diligence work.

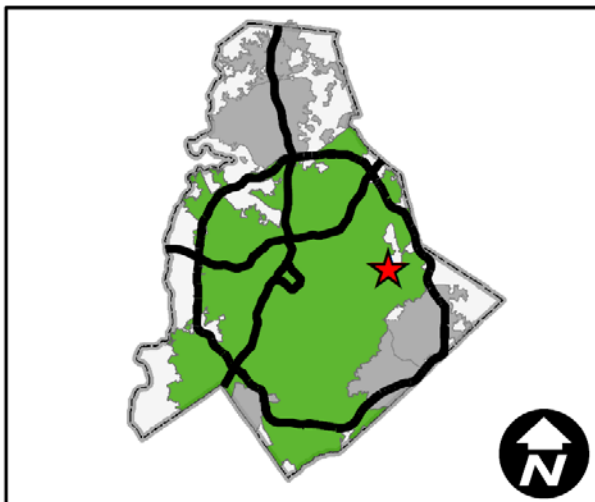
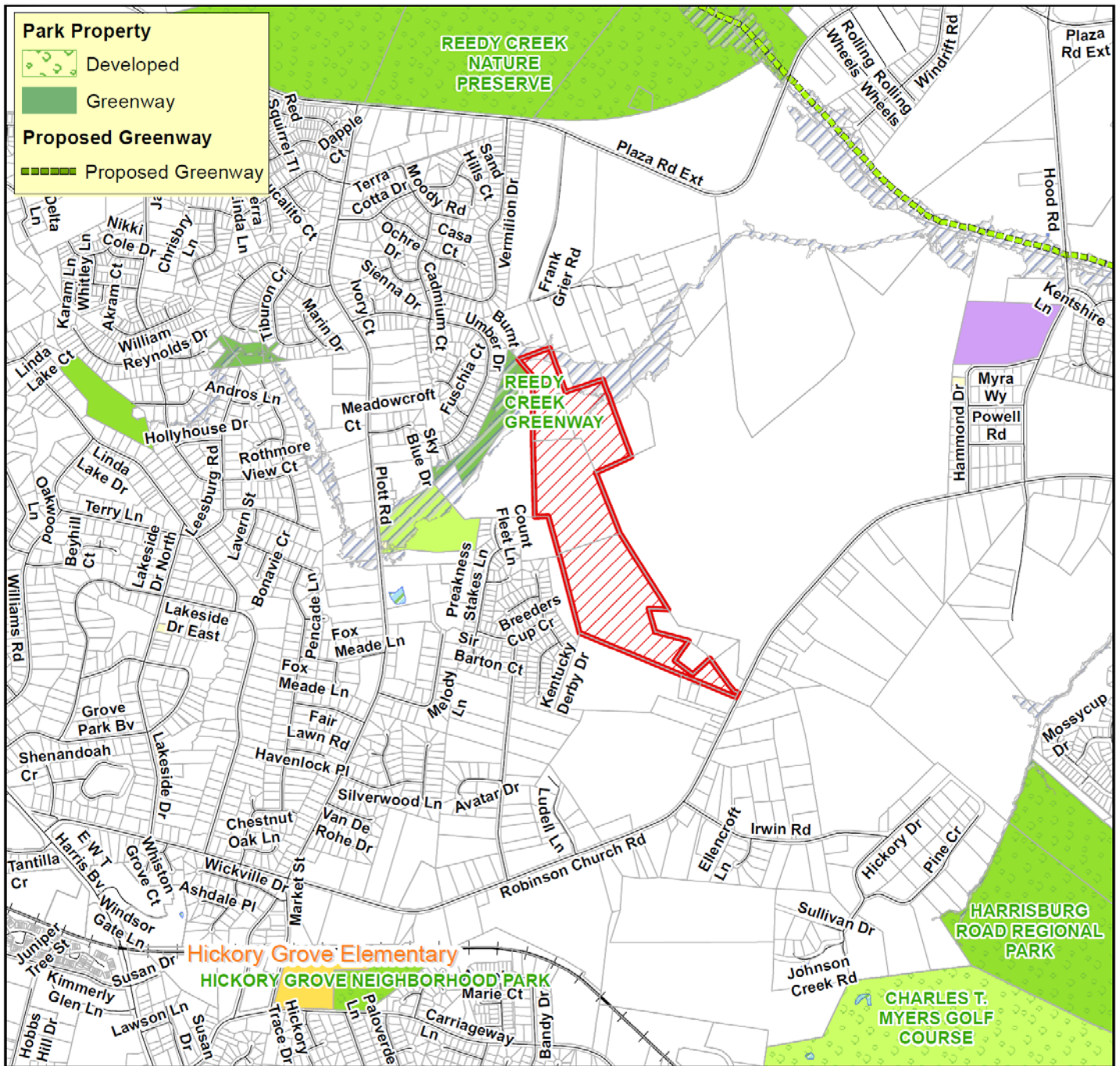
JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their January 6, 2016 meeting and it was discussed that exploration should be made as to the ability to add a future trail extension from Reedy Creek greenway to the north to Robinson Church Road to the south. A representative from City Urban Forestry committed to ensure that the easement to be dedicated to the Conservancy will not prohibit future trail development. No other comments were offered.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed use of the property as open space and a nature preserve is compatible with adopted land use policies. Departments seeking acquisition of the land should work with Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation to ensure land required for Reedy Creek Greenway is sufficiently allocated. Staff recommends approval of the land acquisition.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:



Mandatory Referral 16-01

Initiated by: E&PM, Landscape Management

Submitted by: E&PM, Real Estate

- Mandatory Referral
- Schools
- County Property
- Local Historic Landmark
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department



Submitted by: Jacqueline McNeil, Asset and Facility Management

Initiated by: Mark Hahn, Asset and Facility Management

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 16-02
Proposed Acquisition off Wilkinson Boulevard for MEDIC Facility

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County proposes to purchase Tax Parcel 115-091-03 to assemble with other recently purchased adjacent properties along Wilkinson Boulevard for the relocation of MEDIC (Mecklenburg County Emergency Medical Services Agency). The parcel being proposed for purchase is vacant and approximately 0.38 acres and is zoned I-2 (General Industrial) according to the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. Industrial properties surround this parcel on all sides as well as a Norfolk Southern Railroad right of way that runs along the southern property line.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Mecklenburg County acquired Tax Parcels 115-091-01, 115-091-02 and 115-091-04 (packaged in 2015 as Mandatory Referral MR15-06) and 115-091-05 (packaged as MR15-45) in 2015 for the relocation of MEDIC. The intent of this relocation is to create operating efficiencies and eliminate a lease expenditure at the agency's current facility while providing a facility that would support MEDIC's service to the community for the next 50 years. At the time that other properties were acquired, it was intended that the structures on the properties would be retrofitted to meet the current and future needs of MEDIC. Once a design consultant was engaged on the project, it was determined that the County's resources would be better focused on retrofitting the structures on Tax Parcels 115-091-01, 115-091-02 and 115-091-04, leaving the structure on Tax Parcel 115-091-05 to be renovated at some future time as growth needs present themselves. However, achieving MEDIC's current needs would require acquisition of additional property (Tax Parcel 115-091-03).

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This land acquisition is consistent with the *Mecklenburg County Capital Investment Plan* and the *Mecklenburg County Comprehensive Government Facility Master Plan*.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Southwest District Plan (1991)* calls for a land use pattern that will strengthen Wilkinson Boulevard as an employment corridor. Both light industrial and office uses are appropriate for the property in question. The proposed use will function as an office use and therefore, is consistent with adopted land use policy.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The warehouses on the adjoining recently-acquired parcels have been unoccupied for some time, and this area has yet to benefit from the recent redevelopment activity around Charlotte/Douglas International Airport or the redevelopment activities that have taken place further east down Wilkinson Boulevard, closer to Uptown. The County will be renovating these unused structures and creating an employment center which could have positive impacts on surrounding properties. Additionally, ambulances are constantly stationed throughout the County instead of deploying from one location, thereby minimizing noise and traffic impacts on surrounding properties. Traffic will, however, be generated through employees departing and arriving during shift changes.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The renovation of these buildings and the modification of the grounds will significantly improve the streetscape along this portion of Wilkinson Boulevard. It is anticipated that bringing this facility on-line could allow MEDIC to close Post 64, which is currently on the grounds of the CMPD Freedom Division diagonally across Wilkinson Boulevard in the West Service Center.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

This project is for the acquisition of property only which is anticipated to be complete by late winter/early spring 2016.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

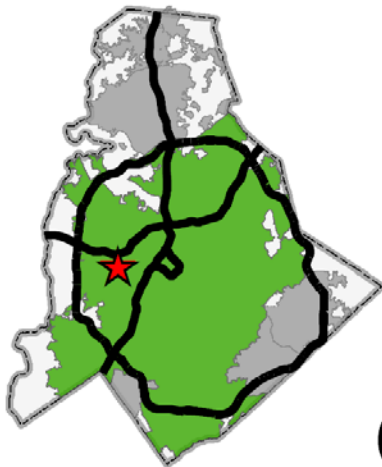
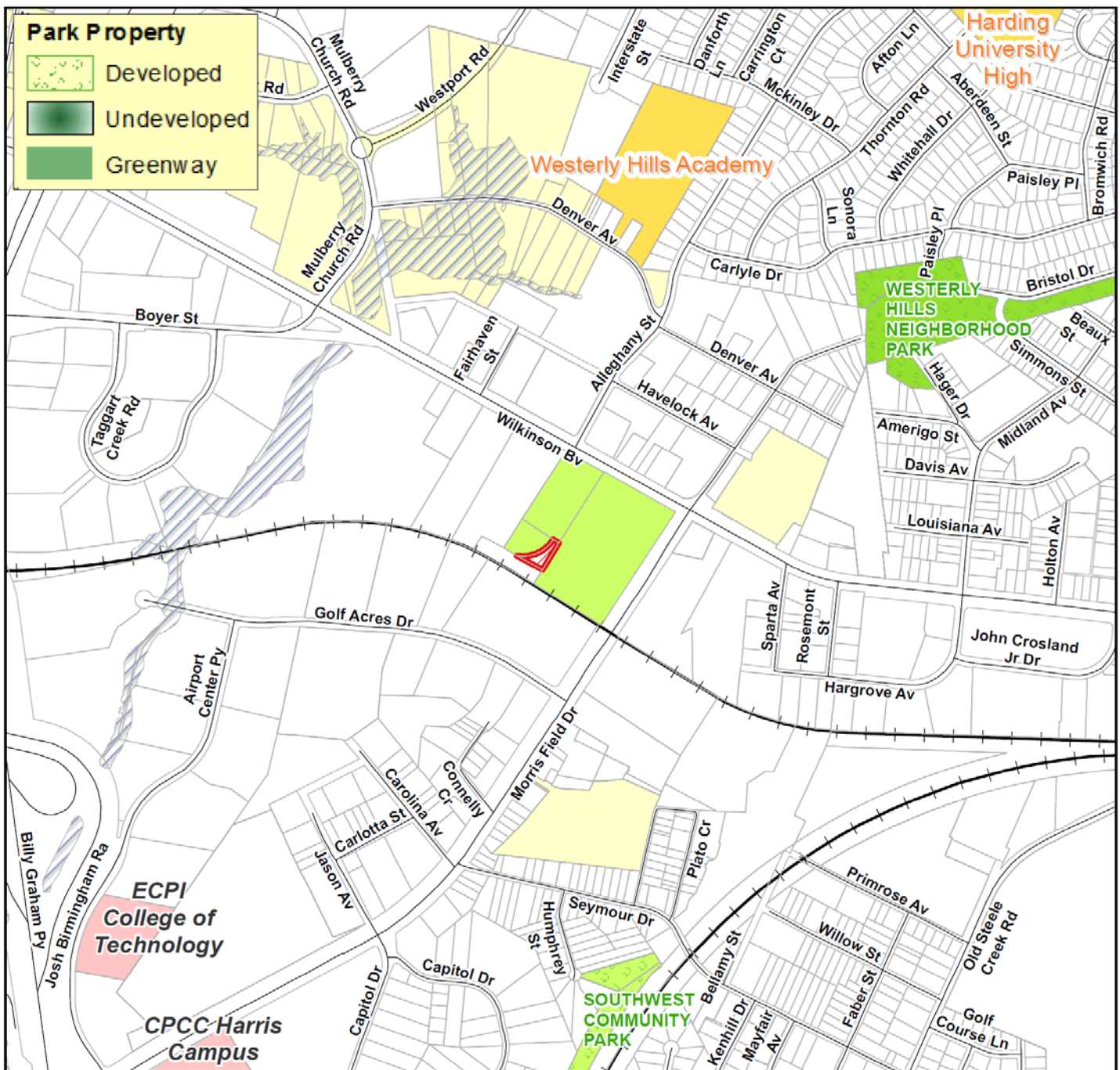
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their January 6, 2016 meeting and no comments were received.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed land use is consistent with the *Southwest District Plan (1991)*. Staff recommends approval of the proposal.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

Staff resource: Catherine Mahoney



Mandatory Referral 16-02

Initiated & Submitted by:

Asset and Facility Management



Mandatory Referral



Schools



Colleges



City Property



County Property



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department