

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 00-18
CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
PROPOSED NEW SCHOOL SITE
MIDDLE SCHOOL SITE – 4449 THE PLAZA

PROJECT LOCATION

The project is located in the northeast quadrant of The Plaza and Eastway Drive (4449 The Plaza). The site consists of two parcels: 097-131-01 (24.88 acres) and part of 097-131-11 (82.32 acres) (See attached map – Potential Middle School Sites – Parcels B and C). The proposed school site is zoned B-1 S.C.D., B-1, R-17MF, and I-1. The B-1 S.C.D. site contains a strip-type shopping center. The B-1, R-17MF, and I-1 zoned site is primarily vacant, except for an old horse barn. The site has access to water and sewer services. Road access is provided by The Plaza (Major Thoroughfare) and Eastway Drive (Major Thoroughfare). The site configuration is very amenable to a school campus layout with good topography. The site is also adjacent to the Norfolk Southern Railroad line.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

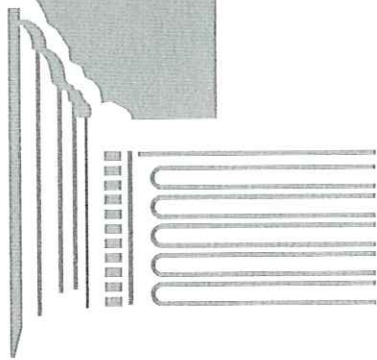
The project proposal involves the purchase of 38 acres of land for a new middle school. The new middle school will house approximately 1200 (6-8 grade) students living in the general vicinity of the school. There is no scheduled completion date at this time.

The remaining land would be land banked for future public uses – an expanded Briarwood Park and /or high school or elementary school.

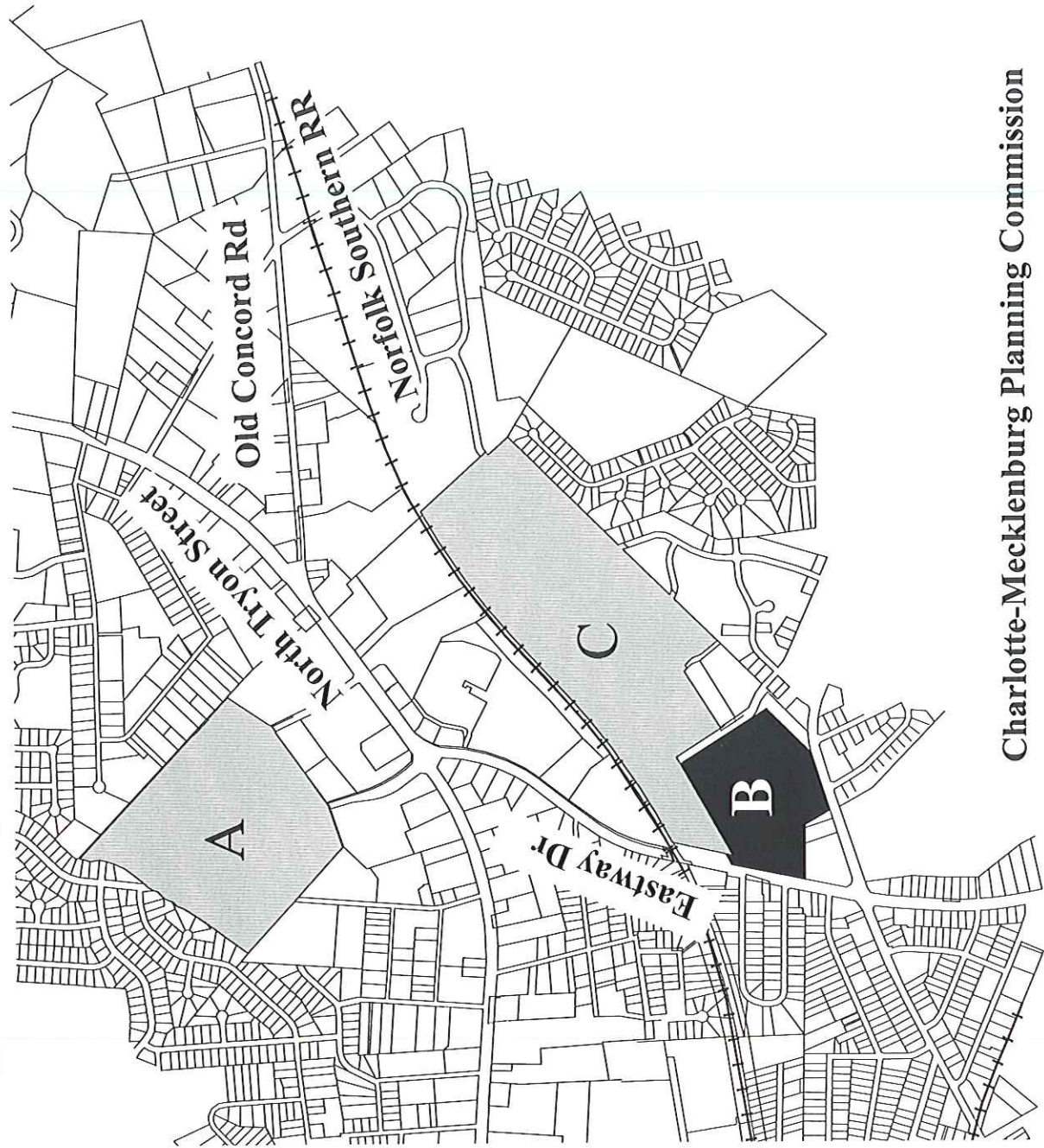
PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The site is located to address future enrollment growth in this region of the district in grades 6-8 to relieve present and/or anticipated crowding in nearby middle schools. Geographically, the proposed site is centrally located between five existing middle schools: Martin, J. T. Williams, Eastway, Northridge, and Cochrane Middle Schools. Most significantly, the current total number of non-magnet students at these five schools is approximately equal to 100% of the capacity of these schools without mobile units. Given growth, potential decrease in the number of students bussed away from the area in which the site is located, and/or a desire to reduce class sizes, a new middle school on the area is justified.

The redevelopment of this 107-acre site has the potential to be the defining catalyst for revitalization along The Plaza and Eastway Drive. The construction of a new middle school would remove a marginal commercial development and provide the opportunity to develop a community-centered school offering other important neighborhood programs and services at this critical intersection.



Potential Middle School Sites



Site B
25 Acres

Site A
58 Acres

Site C
82 Acres

North Tryon Street

PROJECT IMPACT

The proposed school at this location will provide relief from overcrowding at the nearby middle schools and will allow for future enrollment growth in grades 6-8 in this region of the school district, which is expected to increase in future school-age population.

A new school at this location would be in concert with the Northeast District Plan and supportive of a residential future which is recommended for this area. The Eastside Strategy Plan recommends redevelopment of the northeast quadrant of The Plaza and Eastway Drive to revitalize these two corridors and preserve and maintain the residential character of the area.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROJECTS

The site offers additional development opportunities if the Norfolk Southern Railroad location is selected to provide transit service for the University Transit Corridor.

PROJECT COST

Estimated cost, developed in conjunction with the CMS Capital Needs Assessment process, is approximately \$20 million including land, construction, furnishings and equipment, design, and project management. Land for the school and other future public uses would be purchased with funds from Mecklenburg County's Land Banking Bond funds.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the land be purchased because of the broader community benefits resulting from the investment of public dollars at this location. The redevelopment of this site with a new community- centered middle school offering other neighborhood programs and services would remove a marginal development at this critical intersection. Redevelopment of the northeast quadrant, in combination with the new Eastwood mixed use development in the southeast quadrant of this intersection could be the economic catalyst for development of the entire 107 acres of the northeast quadrant and other revitalization efforts along The Plaza and Eastway Drive. If the Norfolk Southern Railroad line is selected as the transit corridor for the University area, the site becomes even more valuable as a redevelopment and revitalization catalyst for the Eastside community. A new middle school at this location has the potential to create more and broader community benefits than a middle school located behind commercial development along North Tryon Street.

PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

At the March 21, 2000 meeting, Planning Commission approved by a 5 to 1 vote Mandatory Referral No. 00-18 for the purchase of land to construct a new middle school.

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