

MANDATORY REFERRAL - REPORT NO. 02-08

ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY FOR SOUTH MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL SITE

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION: The proposal is to acquire property for new South Middle and High Schools at 10409 Dickie Ross Road in Mecklenburg County, Tax Parcel 229-011-17. Subject site contains 105.34 acres, just west of Community House Road. A smaller site located between the subject and Community House Road is already in the process of acquisition for park purposes (and is not a subject of this mandatory referral.) The subject also abuts Ardrey Kell Road, the circumferential roadway currently under construction.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: Subject site would accommodate needs for both a middle school (1200 students) and high school (2000 students) identified for the south portion of the County in the CMS Master Plan. The size guideline is 30 acres for middle schools and 60 acres for high schools. Upgraded fields would be included as part of the middle school site to complement adult-size fields at the Ballantyne district park site east of Community House Road. Acquisition of the subject site would allow 13 acres previously reserved for a middle school within the Ballantyne Park site to be used for park purposes. It also would provide approximately 2 acres for a branch library designed to share vehicular access and parking. Located at the intersection of Ardrey Kell and Community House Roads, it is at a prominent vehicular crossroad.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE AND PUBLIC POLICY:

The South District Plan shows the proposed site as residential. While existing schools are shown on the plan as institutional, proposed or future school sites are not mapped. Hawk Ridge Elementary and Ballantyne Park are shown as institutional just to the northeast. The plan notes, "Planning in advance for schools will be important, particularly as appropriate sites become increasingly scarce and as land costs continue to climb. The School Facilities Master Plan...will project school needs...and will identify general locations for future schools in the South District." CMS School Facilities Master Plan identifies a need for one new high school in the south area based on its demographic projections. As a site selection first stage filter, the plan requires that future sites exhibit a balance among the "SPUD factors" (stability, proximity, utilization, and diversity). It appears that the subject site gives disproportionate weight to proximity at the expense of diversity. Then the plan sets forth a series of criteria for site evaluation. These include: attendance patterns, site as unifying community feature, ability to address crowding at existing schools over time, student diversity, adequacy of roads; potential for public transit utilization, site joint use potential, compatibility to community land use plans, sufficient distance among same-grade schools, availability of sufficient land area. While the subject site meets a number of these criteria, it falls short in some key areas: student diversity and potential for public transit utilization. The City's Centers and Corridors concept and Smart Growth principles stress that major development be focused along transit corridors and within certain other densely developed centers. The purpose is to encourage dense infill development within existing urbanized areas. The subject proposal is contrary to these policies, as it is likely to serve as an impetus for increased development at the City's fringe and between corridors.

The City's Transit Station Area Principles, adopted by City Council in November 2001, encourage the concentration of complementary land uses within walking distance of transit stations. The principles state: "consider special traffic generators – such as cultural, educational, entertainment, and recreation uses, to locate either within or adjacent to station areas." The Charlotte Region Transit Station Area Joint Development Principles also encourage "complementary public facilities (such as schools, parks/open space, libraries and social service organizations) at or near transit stations to serve both transit users and surrounding neighborhoods."

PROJECT IMPACT: The subject site and surrounding properties to the east and south are large rural lots, undeveloped except for farmhouses. Recent single-family development is to the west, although a stream on the west side of the subject site would provide a buffer to neighbors from the more active

uses. Ardrey Kell, the circumferential road, is under construction. A reconfiguration of Community House Road also is in long-term plans for the area. The subject site is in proximity to Ballantyne Park facilities, and would become a part of a complex of civic facilities. It is not on a bus or transit line, and is not located on a likely line extension, enforcing the use of private automobiles for general access.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS: While not directly contiguous to the Ballantyne district park property, this site would be designed to complement the recreation facilities to be constructed on the park property and to include a branch library site. Combined with the district park site/YMCA/Hawk Ridge Elementary School/fire station site, the subject site would be part of a larger public facilities complex to serve this portion of southern Mecklenburg County.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: Middle School planning in 2002; construction in 2003; High School planning in 2005, with construction to follow.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

A National Register eligible structure is at the middle of the property. Present owner has expressed interest and willingness in moving structure to a corner of the site, which could be subdivided in order to preserve the structure. CMS staff stated a willingness to work with the owner in preserving the structure.

There is joint use potential for park and library uses.

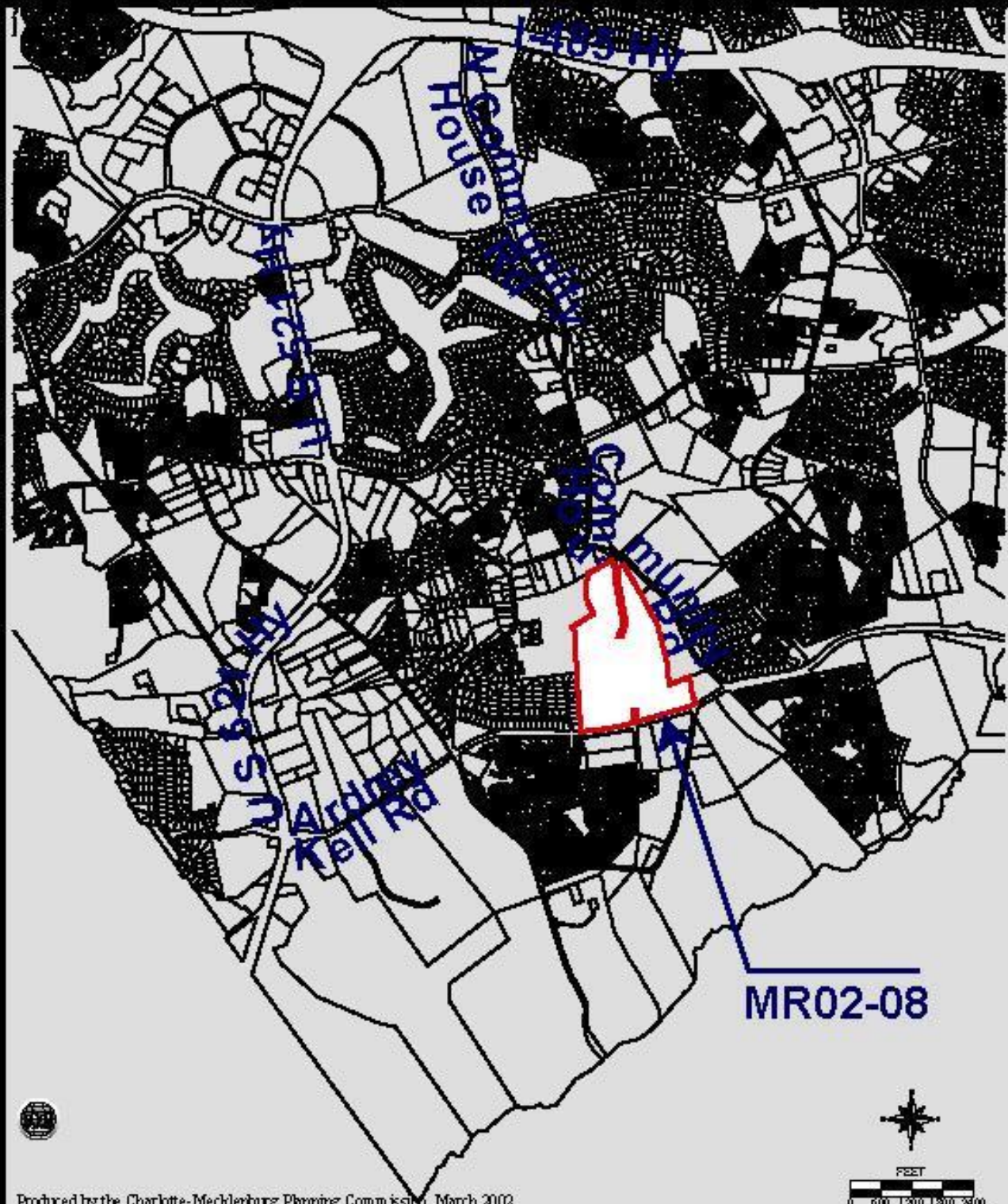
CMS evaluated this site against a candidate site in the South Transit Corridor. The transit corridor site was very close to South Meck and Waddell High Schools. The CMS guideline is to space high schools at least 3 miles apart to provide for geographical distribution.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The site is undeveloped rural land located on the City fringe in an area of intense development pressure. It is located at a prominent vehicular crossroads, adjacent to other civic uses including an extensive park network, and is just beyond the emerging Ballantyne regional commercial center. However it is not served by transit, and general transit service is unlikely.

CMPC staff recognizes that the subject site is consistent and compatible with proposed land use plans. However, from an overall policy framework, it is inconsistent with the broader community-wide goal of focusing higher intensity uses in the City's principal development corridors. Therefore, CMPC staff recommends that this site not be purchased for the proposed middle and high schools. As compared to transit corridor site opportunities, the subject site would encourage development on the fringe of the City at the expense of the urban core. Expenditure of public funds for a development of this magnitude should be leveraged more effectively to serve the wider community goals. It is noted that a school site in a more urbanized corridor setting likely could be developed at a higher density, requiring a smaller site area than the usual CMS suburban guideline. CMPC staff recommends that this site not be accepted.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: At a special meeting held on April 1, 2002, the Planning Committee voted, by a vote of 4-2, to not endorse staff's recommendation to not accept the site, thus approving the school district's proposal to purchase this property to serve as a future middle/high school site.

Mandatory Referral: MR02-08



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, March 2002.

MANDATORY REFERRAL:

SOUTH MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL SITES #1 of 2

WEST SIDE OF COMMUNITY HOUSE ROAD

MR02-08

CAPITAL PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

Instructions:

This form is provided to capital project initiating agencies and departments for reporting proposed projects to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission in accordance with the requirements of North Carolina House Bill 855.

Proposed capital projects are to be submitted to the Planning Commission using this form at least 30 days prior to presentation to the governmental unit having approval authority.

Constructive review of a project proposal requires a full description of the project and its objectives. Please provide all of the requested information as well as pertinent graphic information. You will be advised when the project is scheduled for Planning Commission consideration so that your department representatives may be present to respond to questions.

I. Initiating Department: Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools & County Real Estate Services

Date: March 1, 2002

Submitted By: Harold Jenkins, CMS and Mark P. Hahn, RES

Department Representatives: Kevin Bringewatt, CMS and Nancy Brunnemer, RES

II. Project Name: South Middle & High School Site #1 of 2 – West Side of Community House Road

III. Location and Description of Project: The subject property includes Tax Parcel 229-011-17 approximately 105 acres, located north of Landen Ford Road and off Dickie Ross Road. The middle school would accommodate 1200 students; the senior high school would serve 2000 students. The standard size for middle schools is 30 acres, for senior high schools 60 acres.

IV. Project Justification/Need: This property would accommodate both middle and senior high school needs identified for the south portion of the County in the CMS Master Plan; it would include upgraded fields as part of the middle school site to complement adult-size fields at the Ballantyne district park site east of Community House Road. This site would allow 13 acres reserved for a middle school within the Ballantyne park site to be used for park purposes. This site would also provide approximately 2 acres for a branch library site to be designed to share vehicular access and parking spaces.

V. Project Status (check all that apply):

Nothing done but this report	X	Land not yet acquired	
Preliminary plans completed		Land acquisition underway	
Detailed plans completed		Land acquired	
No land acquisition involved		Project under contract	

VI. Proposed Development Schedule:

Task	Begin	Completed
Planning	2002 for middle school site; 2005 for high school site	
Land		
Construction	Early 2003 for middle school site	

(Identify any known external factors that are critical to the timing of this project. For example, the opening of a major shopping center or construction of a new school.) N/A

VII. Relation of this proposal to other public projects: (Is this project part of a series of interrelated capital projects? Is the project affected by or does it affect other public projects in this area?) This site is one of the sites under consideration for the middle/high school facilities. While not directly contiguous to the Ballantyne district park property, this site would be designed to complement the recreation facilities to be constructed on the park property and to include a branch library site. Combined with the district park site/YMCA/Hawk Ridge Elementary School/fire station site, the subject site would be part of a larger public facilities complex to serve this portion of southern Mecklenburg County.

VIII. Project Cost Estimate: (Indicate the estimated total project cost and describe how this estimation has been made.) A market appraisal will establish the value for negotiations.

VIII. Assistance Funds: (If state or federal assistance funds are proposed, indicate the specific assistance program and the status of any application for project funding assistance.) N/A

Map to be attached.