

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 02 - 25
Land Assemblage for Center City Arena

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION: The City of Charlotte is contemplating building a new Center City Arena to replace the Tyvola Road Coliseum. To facilitate the construction of a new arena, the City needs to acquire the Mecklenburg County owned land bounded by Graham Street, Fourth Street, Third Street, and the land located along the NCDOT rail corridor to the west. In addition, a triangular shaped parcel bounded by West Fourth Street, Graham Street and the Fourth Street connector is also needed. The parcel numbers of the above referenced properties are: 073-161-01, 073-161-03, 073-162-06, 073-163-01, and 073-162-02.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: The Coliseum Authority has stated that the Tyvola Road Coliseum lacks some of the amenities needed by NBA franchise teams as well as amateur athletic leagues. In order for the City of Charlotte to be competitive in securing an NBA team as well as other sports events it has been determined there is a need for a new arena. Over the past year the City of Charlotte has gone through an extensive study of possible sites for an arena. The various criteria utilized to determine the best location for an arena demonstrated the Graham Street location to be the best site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS AND PUBLIC POLICY: The Center City 2010 Vision Plan recommended that if a new arena is to be built in Charlotte, it should be located in the Center City. By locating it here, it can become an economic catalyst for other public/private development. The arena site that is under consideration is in the general location recommended by the 2010 Plan.

PROJECT IMPACT: The parcels being sought for purchase are key for the ability to relocate Fourth Street and to site the arena to maximize the dimensions of the adjacent park being planned by the County. If these parcels are purchased, the City and County have the best chance of jointly achieving their goals of having a major urban park and a Center City arena.

City and County staff have worked together in developing a vision for this entire area known as Third Ward Place. In this visioning process goals and guidelines were created to make the arena and park an exceptional urban place. The study yielded a plan concept that blends the park and arena into the surrounding neighborhoods. Three consulting groups are being hired to validate the plan and refine the concepts into a master plan, which integrates with the entire Third Ward, Fourth Ward and the high-rise core.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS: The properties involved in this referral constitute a portion of one of the alternative sites being considered by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for a new intercity bus station for Greyhound and/or a new mail handling facility, both as part of the State's Charlotte Multi-Modal Station Project. The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is working with the NCDOT to evaluate the scope and exact configuration of the project. If the arena project comes to fruition, the State has indicated a desire to work with the City and County.

These small parcels of land are important to the overall land assemblage success. Other projects that will be affected by combining these properties include: the Jonas Federal Courthouse, the multi-modal station, the recently announced Johnson and Wales University, and surrounding private land parcels that can benefit by development occurring from being in close proximity to the new arena and park.

Planning Commission supported the County purchasing these parcels with the understanding the County was assembling it to exchange it with the City for future park land. (Mandatory Referral #01-12 was approved on May 3, 2001, recommending that the County buy and land and exchange it with the City to locate an arena.) This mandatory referral completes the transaction by having the City purchase the property from the County.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: Proposed Development Schedule:

	<u>Begin</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Planning	February 2002	December 2002
Design	Fall of 2002	Fall of 2003
Construction	Summer of 2003	Fall 2005

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS: While the Joint Use Task Force has not had an opportunity to review this mandatory referral the group did review a mandatory referral for a Center City arena in this approximate location in April 2001, and at the time offered no comment regarding potential joint use opportunities. Since the County owns most of the land, and given the degree of discussion and amount of input opportunities by the City and County Departments (many of whom are represented on JUTF), additional joint use comments are unlikely.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Planning Staff recommends that the City purchase the property for the arena project. Staff believes the site presents the best location for a Center City arena and meets the Center City development goals. Staff recommends City and County staffs continue working together with the arena architect, park designer, and overall urban designer in developing a master plan complementing the surrounding neighborhoods along with becoming a showplace for Center City economic development.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION : At their July 30, 2002 meeting, the Planning Committee voted 6-0 to recommend approval of the acquisition of these properties to serve as a portion of the future arena site. The Planning Committee also strongly suggested that City and County staff (including Planning Commission) continue to work collaboratively on the plan and design for the arena facility, the park, and the surrounding area.

