

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. MR02-32
ACQUISITION OF SEVERAL PARCELS TO ACCOMMODATE EXPANSION AT MARIE G. DAVIS MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposes to purchase 2.212 acres (parcels #145-051-01, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 10 & 11) located at 3110, 3038, 3032, 3024, 3016 & 3008 Bank Street and 3329 & 3331 Griffith Street in the City of Charlotte to provide additional space for a school expansion. All parcels currently contain commercial buildings that will be demolished. The parcels are situated on the northeasterly boundary of the school site.

The two predominant land uses in the area are apartments and industrial uses. The existing school site backs up to Interstate 77; the Charlotte Housing Authority has a large apartment complex, built in 1951 on about 41 acres to the north of the school, and 77 Corporate Park (40.8 acres), a business park of office, warehouse, and industrial uses is located to the south.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: The present school is approximately 107,500 square feet in size, spread among at least 9 buildings, some of which are connected, and some of which are independent structures. The school buildings were constructed beginning in 1951 through 1971, with the majority of the buildings being 51 years old. It is proposed to raze the existing school and replace it with a larger school of 145,000 square feet. The new school design will be the mirror image of the middle school under construction at North Tryon and Lambeth Drive. The current school site is 30.33 acres, but 5 acres are unusable due to topography and wetlands. The standard site size for a middle school is 32 usable acres.

Acquisition of adjacent properties permits a design improvement for the new replacement school, and its paved parking areas and driveways that allows for the following:

- A. Compliance with CEPTED recommended safety practices by increasing visibility from a public thoroughfare.
- B. Increased community visibility of a significant capital improvement
- C. Improved vehicular circulation by increasing the number of access points from two to three.
- D. A reasonably level footprint for the new four-acre building and hard-surfaced areas unconstrained by property line/buffering considerations.
- E. Reduced costs of grading/access on the steeply sloping site.

Ninety percent of the students attending Marie G. Davis are from low socio-economic backgrounds. In order to meet the needs of these students, Marie G. Davis is classified as an Equity Plus II school. As a part of this program, the school will receive differentiated staffing, which will reduce teacher-to-student ratios. The expansion is needed to ensure that the school has enough space to allow for this service.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS AND PUBLIC POLICY: The majority of the parcels to be purchased are zoned I-1 and one is zoned I-2. CMS will file a rezoning petition prior to acquisition. The addition of these parcels will bring the site closer to the CMS and state guidelines for suggested developable acres for a middle school site.

The school site is located within Sub-area 3 of the Central District Plan. The general area known as "Southside Park", and is noted as a fragile, lower income neighborhood. The district plan 1) recommends industrial uses along Bank Street, 2) states that it is important not to allow additional non-residential zoning in Southside Park, 3) recognizes the need for redevelopment of older industrial uses in the South Tryon Street area, and 4) seeks to improve the overall image of the west side, particularly in the area along South Tryon which serves as a gateway into Charlotte.

PROJECT IMPACT: This project will replace a school that is significantly below standard with a new facility that meets all current educational standards.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS: Based on the City's Project Strategy Report, there are no other projects scheduled in this area.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: The parcels will be purchased with 1999 Land Banking funds, and construction will be funded with 2000 Bond funds. The estimated cost for construction at the school is \$15 million. The estimated project completion date is August of 2006.

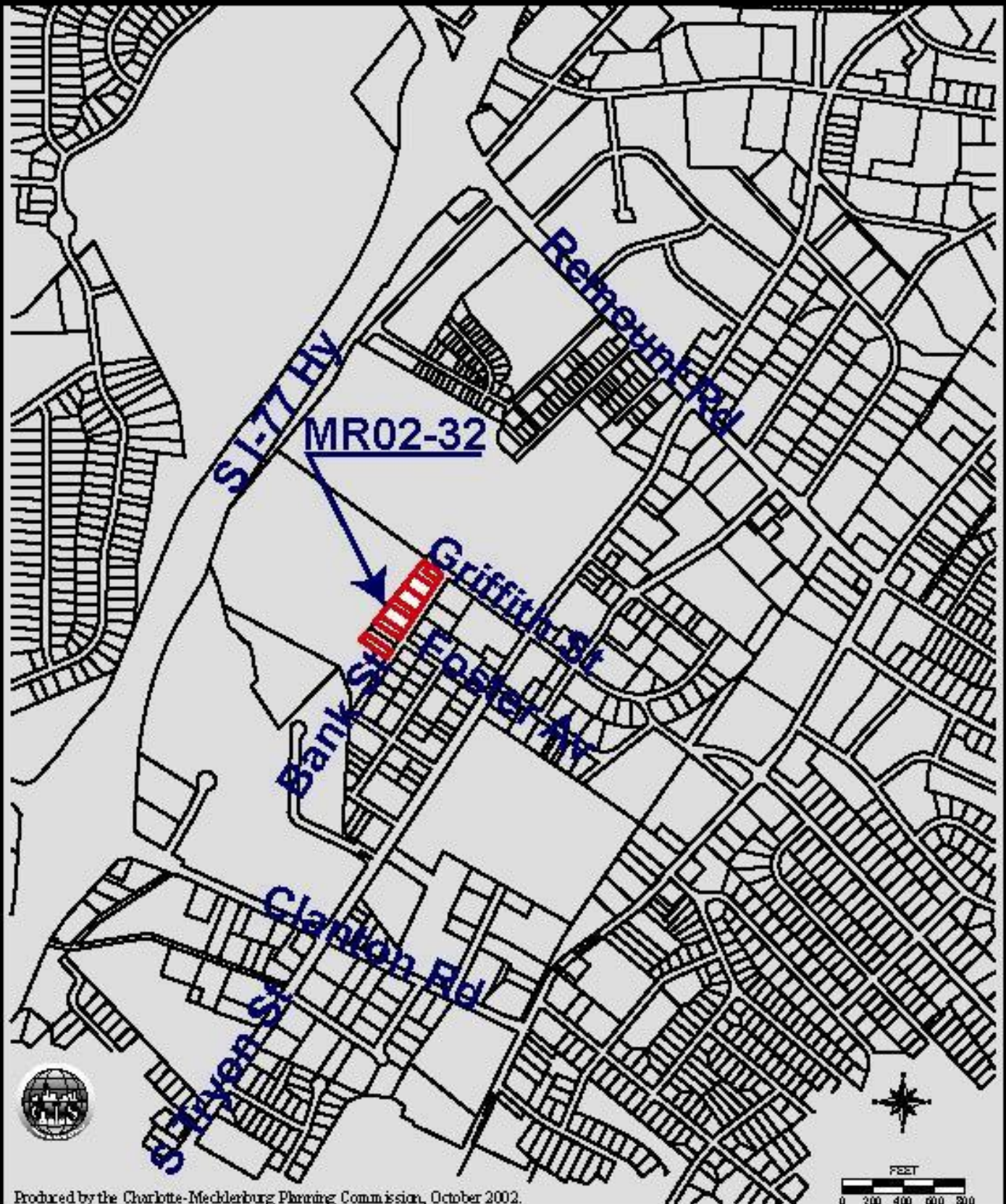
JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS: The Joint Use Task Force discussed the matter at their October 2, 2002 meeting and no significant comments were received about the project.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff supports acquisition of this property for school site expansion in conjunction with building a replacement school. The loss of eight industrial buildings (built between 1948 and 1973) on these parcels are not seen as negatively impacting the community. Although technically the school site expansion is not consistent with the Central District Plan's recommendation to retain industrial uses along Bank Street, replacement of older industrial

uses with a major public investment is seen as a significant step toward achieving the District Plan's goal of improving the area's image. In addition, the visibility of the school will be greatly enhanced along Bank Street.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: At its October 15, 2002 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.

Mandatory Referral: MR02-32



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