

Submitted and initiated by: Mike Quinto, City Engineering and Property Management

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 02-36
Request to Sell City-owned Property on Caldwell and Brevard Streets

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The proposed project is to sell surplus properties owned by the City of Charlotte to return them to the tax rolls. The properties involved are parcel numbers 081-034-01, 081-035-02, 081-034-05, and 081-035-01. These parcels total .83 acres and are located between North Brevard and North Caldwell Streets along the Brevard Street - Caldwell Street Connector. An unopened section of Calvine Street bisects the property. Currently, the subject parcels and all those adjacent are vacant. A buyer has expressed an interest in assembling this property with adjacent parcels to develop a mixed-use project.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: The Asset Management Policy of Charlotte has as a part of its objectives the sale/transfer of surplus properties to the private sector in furtherance of good economic development, to provide revenue, to generate future tax income, and reduce maintenance costs.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS AND PUBLIC POLICY: The *Optimist Park Neighborhood Plan* was adopted by City Council earlier this year (2002). The plan recommends that the subject property be developed with a mix of residential land uses at a maximum density of 12 dwelling units per acre. However, the property is currently zoned I-2, which allows heavy industrial land uses. The plan also notes that the land uses may be revisited once a transit alignment and mode are selected for the Northeast Corridor.

PROJECT IMPACT: The properties under consideration lie within the area classified as “threatened” by the Charlotte Neighborhood *Quality of Life Report*, released in 2002. This classification indicates that there are significant issues that must be addressed in order to improve the quality of life in the area. These issues include public safety, lack of homeownership, eroding residential fabric, aging industrial uses, and needed infrastructure improvements. In addition, the property is located within the Northeast Transit Corridor, within ½ mile of the 9th Street and 16th Street stations in the proposed System Plan. The City’s goal for development in corridors in general, and within transit station areas in particular is to require compact, efficient, and pedestrian-friendly developments, which can serve to address other city goals such as providing affordable housing. This site can provide the City with an opportunity to address these goals.

The potential buyer has stated a desire to develop the property with a mixed-use development, not specific to numbers or densities of residential units. This project could impact future development plans in this portion of the transit corridor and staff suggests that extreme care be given to any future development or redevelopment that occurs in this area. Because staff lacks knowledge about the mixture of uses, proposed densities, and more detailed station area plans need to be done for this area, it is difficult to assess the overall impact of this proposal.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS: The close proximity to both the Center City and future transit stations make this a desirable development site. Also, the light rail/trolley, the emerging urban village on North Tryon Street, and the build out of First Ward will make this property more desirable.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Not applicable.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this property at their November 6, 2002 meeting and no one in attendance had any comments. However, staff subsequently received communication from Neighborhood Development staff (who could not attend the JUTF meeting) stating that City-owned parcels (including the subject property) with residential development potential were in the process of being evaluated for affordable housing potential, and as such the property should not be sold until the analysis is completed.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Since a City department has expressed a desire to use the site for affordable housing and a study is underway, staff recommends that the sale of this property be deferred until the City completes its evaluation of the affordable housing potential. The potential may exist for both a mixed use project and affordable housing to be developed at this site; however, additional time to review the appropriateness of selling this land is needed.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION : The Planning Committee endorsed staff recommendation to defer by a vote of 7-0 at their November 19, 2002 meeting.

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