

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 03-16
PROPOSED NEVIN COMMUNITY PARK/RIBBONWALK EXPANSION – LAND ACQUISITION

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation proposes to expand land holdings at Nevin Community Park in northeast Charlotte by entering into an option agreement to acquire 21.29 acres adjoining the park (tax parcel #045-391-12). The property is currently vacant and is zoned R3.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The subject parcel adjoins Nevin Park and would expand the park from 363.47 acres to 384.76 acres. (Community parks are 300 to 500 acres in size.)

A portion of Nevin Park contains the “RibbonWalk Forest”, which adjoins the subject parcel, and which contains natural vegetation and mature trees that are somewhat unique to an urban location. Acquisition of the subject parcel would expand the forest to 192.707 acres and would ensure preservation and public enjoyment of the mature trees on the site. Adding this property to Nevin Park and to RibbonWalk will also prevent degradation of the existing forest by run-off. It will particularly protect a stand of large, mature beech trees within the forest that is down gradient from the subject property and as such would be susceptible to run-off damage if the subject parcel were to be developed.

Nevin Park also adjoins both Ranson Middle School and Winding Springs Elementary School, which could both benefit from proximity to an expanded park with enhanced recreational and educational opportunities.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This acquisition supports protection of special natural areas and provides a larger area of old forest very near to Charlotte's central urban core. It is also consistent with the County's policy of continuing to improve and expand its urban facilities.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The land is zoned R-3 and the Northeast District Plan calls for the property to be developed with low-density residential development. A park would be considered to be consistent with a low-density residential environment.

The property lies within the proposed North Transit Corridor. Development within ½ mile of transit stations is proposed to consist of a mixture of uses, compact in scale, and urban in character. However, the property is situated between potential transit stations and as such is not within a ½ mile radius of a station. Therefore, its location within the corridor should not be a factor in determining appropriate future land use.

PROJECT IMPACT:

This action should have no impact on traffic, as it represents an incremental increase (about six percent) of the park's size. Acquisition of the area by Park & Recreation will actually cause a positive impact on vehicular traffic, since the action will reduce the area in this portion of the community that can be developed. In addition, more preserved natural open space enhances water and air quality, expands recreational/educational opportunities, and expands a public preserved open space close to the center of the city.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This property is located adjacent to an existing park/open space area. Acquisition of the subject parcel would expand the park space and would ensure preservation of the features within RibbonWalk.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

This specific land acquisition is not currently funded from 1999 Land or 1999 Park Bonds; exercising the option agreement would depend on availability of unspecified funding through a future bond or other funding source.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter on July 2, 2003 and had indicated no joint use opportunities.

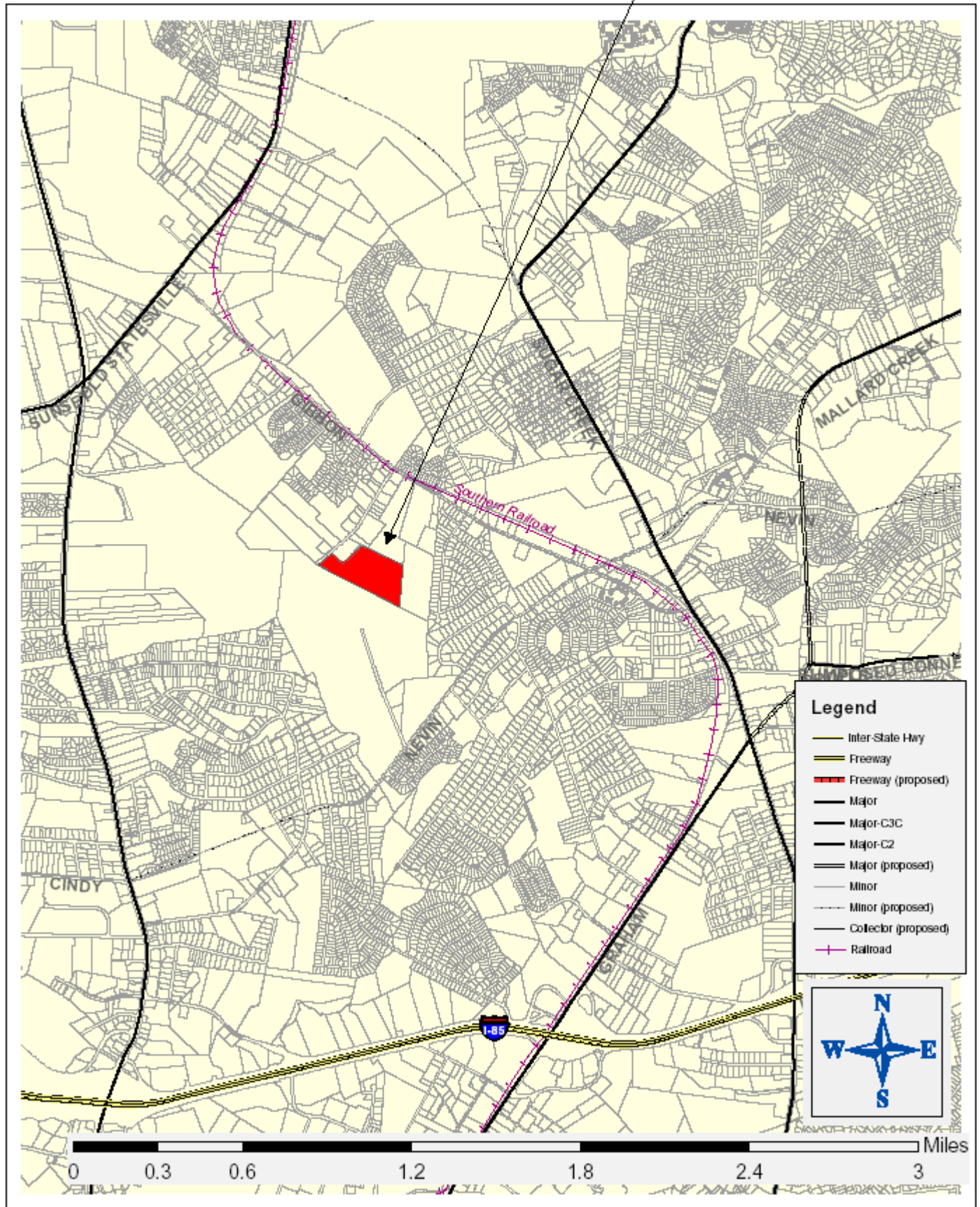
CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the acquisition of the property for the stated purpose. It is also recommended that Park & Recreation should establish and maintain good connectivity between the park and adjoining residential areas as improvements are made to the property.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their July 15, 2003 meeting, the Planning Committee approved the staff recommendation by a 7-0 vote.

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Nevin Community Park Expansion/RibbonWalk Expansion

