

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 03-23

Proposal to locate a High School on land on Johnston Oehler Road within Mallard Creek Park

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposes locating a high school on approximately 52 acres within Mallard Creek Park on Johnston Oehler Road in Charlotte. The land (parcel number 029-331-07) is currently owned by, and is to be donated by the Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Department.

The current use of the property is single family and vacant land. The zoning designation is R-3. The land use immediately surrounding the subject is low-density rural residential.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The site is located in the North Search Zone as identified in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan 2001/02—2010/11*. The plan projects a need for one high school in the North Search Zone.

The site is approximately 3.8 miles east of North Mecklenburg High School and lies within the 2003/04 North Mecklenburg home school boundary. North Mecklenburg is currently 153% utilized without mobile classrooms. Vance High School is the next-closest high school to the site, lying 4.4 miles south of the proposed site. Vance is currently 167% utilized without mobile classrooms.

Hopewell High School may also be affected by the addition of a new high school at the proposed location. Hopewell is 8 miles west of the site and is 143% utilized.

Construction of a new high school in this location would have the potential to relieve overcrowding at North Mecklenburg, Vance and/or Hopewell high schools. The site is located near existing densities of CMS high school students, as well as near areas of anticipated growth, thus providing for the long-term populating of a school at this site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The site is located in the North Search Zone as identified in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan 2001/02—2010/11*, that projects a need for one high school in the Northern Search Zone.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The 1996 *Northeast District Plan* recognizes the park use on this site. From a land use standpoint, a school is an acceptable use at this location as schools are viewed to be compatible uses in residential areas. However, it is expected that there will be a number of site plan issues, especially regarding ingress and egress, that will need to be addressed in conjunction with site design.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Increased traffic around the school site is expected for two 30-minute periods in the morning and afternoon, and during special events at the school. CMS has pledged to work closely with the site designers and with permitting agencies to minimize this impact to the roadway system and to the communities surrounding the site.

Wetlands mitigation will be required for this project. It is anticipated that mitigation can be accomplished on the adjoining park property.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The school district will work closely with Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation to implement the plan for the school and for implementation of the master plan for the adjoining park site.

A future north-south Minor Collector street has been identified that will pass near to the site, although the exact alignment of this roadway has not been determined at this time. CMS staff and its consultants should work with Planning Commission and Charlotte DOT staffs in establishing the potential relevance of this future roadway to the school and its site design.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

This project is a proposed land banking site, with no funding currently available for construction of the school. Consequently, no projected build out date is available at this time. Estimated cost, developed in conjunction with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Capital Needs Assessment process is approximately \$45 million dollars including construction, furnishings and equipment, design and project management.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this matter at its October 1, 2003 meeting. Significant joint use opportunities between the school (and its athletic and public gathering facilities) and Park & Recreation (and its athletic fields) were discussed.

The Public Library system as part of its facility planning initiative has identified the need for a future library in the general vicinity of this site. At this time, it appears that the Libraries and the school district are undertaking joint planning for a school/library complex in the nearby Highland Creek community. If this arrangement proves to be infeasible for the Libraries, this proposed high school site might represent another joint use opportunity worth pursuing at a future time.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the development of this site for a high school, with the stipulation that Planning Commission and CDOT staffs participate in the site plan development process. Planning staff has particular concern with issues of vehicular and pedestrian ingress/egress to and from the site.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their October 16, 2003 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of this transaction by a 6-0 vote.

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