

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 03-28

Proposal to Acquire land on Winget Road and Swap to Create a site for a Future Elementary School

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposes a land swap with Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation for an elementary school site consisting of approximately 20 gross acres on Winget Road in southwest Mecklenburg County. Acquisition of the land to be swapped will be funded using 1999 Land Bonds. The proposal is to acquire a portion of parcel 199-151-04 and to add it to adjoining Winget Park, in exchange for a corresponding amount of land within the park to serve as a future school site.

The current land use is primarily vacant land. A recent zoning decision has changed the site zoning from R-12PUD to MX-1. The land use immediately surrounding the subject is vacant with subdivisions to the southeast.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The site is located in the West 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 up to four elementary schools in the West Search Zone by 2011. The site is approximately 2.6 miles northwest of Lake Wylie Elementary School and lies within the 2003/04 Lake Wylie home school boundary. Lake Wylie Elementary is currently 139% utilized without mobile classrooms. Steele Creek Elementary School is also within proximity to the proposed property, lying 3.0 miles east of the Winget Road site. Steele Creek elementary school is currently 144% utilized without mobile classrooms.

The significantly high utilization numbers at Lake Wylie and Steele Creek elementary schools are partially a result of the population growth that has occurred in the southwest portion of Mecklenburg County. As a specific example, the construction of The Palisades subdivision could potentially add 4500 homes (2380 single family and 2120 multi-family) to the area, creating approximately 367 new elementary school students.

In summary, the construction of a new elementary school in southwest Mecklenburg County would have the potential to relieve overcrowding at Lake Wylie and/or Steele Creek elementary schools. The proposed property is near existing densities of CMS elementary 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 proposed school site has MX-1 zoning, having been recently changed under Petition No. 2003-24. CMS reviewed the rezoning petition, and the potential school site has been included in the conditions imposed upon the petitioner. The size of the site meets both CMS and state guidelines of developable acres for an 800-student elementary school.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The Southwest District Plan recommends single family development at this location. As such, the proposed school location is consistent with adopted plans.

PROJECT IMPACT:

This site could potentially create a safe walk zone for the neighborhood students as well some of the surrounding neighborhoods. Increased vehicular traffic around the school site is expected for two 30-minute periods in the morning and afternoon. The school district has pledged to work closely with permitting agencies and the site designers to minimize this impact.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This project is being designed in conjunction with Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, master plan for the completion of Winget Park. The land swap will allow Park & Recreation the ability to add ball fields to the park.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

This project is a proposed land banking site. No construction funding is available at this time, therefore no projected build out date is available. Estimated cost, developed in conjunction with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Capital Needs Assessment process is approximately \$13.3 million (2003 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 their October 1, 2003 meeting. The joint use with Park & Recreation was identified. No other joint use opportunities identified.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this request. Staff further recommends that site design maximize pedestrian connectivity opportunities to surrounding land uses.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

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

MR 03-28

