

**MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 04-08**  
**Proposed Land Acquisition for Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Park**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

Mecklenburg County proposes to acquire land in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood for a new neighborhood park. The properties proposed for acquisition are bordered on the north by Cummings Avenue, on the west by Madrid Street, on the east by Kennesaw Drive, and on the south by the rear lot lines of the properties fronting on Lasalle Street. The parcels affected are listed below:

<u>Block #1</u>	<u>Block #2</u>	<u>Block #3</u>	<u>Block #4</u>
075-042-01	075-042-17	075-043-01	075-043-16
075-042-02	075-042-18	075-043-02	075-043-17
075-042-03	075-042-19	075-043-03	075-043-19
075-042-04	075-042-20	075-043-04	075-043-20
075-042-10	075-042-21	075-043-05	075-043-21
075-042-12	075-042-22	075-043-31	075-043-22
075-042-13	075-042-29	075-043-32	075-043-23
075-042-14	075-042-30	075-043-33	075-043-24
075-042-15	075-042-31	075-043-35	075-043-25
075-042-16	075-042-32	075-043-36	075-043-26
	075-042-33	075-043-37	075-043-27
	075-042-34	075-043-38	075-043-28
	075-042-35	075-043-39	075-043-29
	075-042-36	075-043-40	075-043-30
	075-042-37	075-043-41	
	075-042-38		

Collectively, these 55 parcels (and portions of three street blocks) represent approximately 13 acres.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The County plans to develop a new neighborhood park in this inner city neighborhood, that currently lacks sufficient park space. New neighborhood parks are proposed to be 15 to 25 acres in size according to the 1989 *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Parks Master Plan*.

Historically, this area in Lincoln Heights has low homeownership rates, absentee landlords and a reputation of being a high crime area. Acquisition of these blighted blocks of housing will serve to visually upgrade the appearance of the neighborhood and eliminate the negative influence these structures have on the surrounding residential area.

It was felt that the area north of Lasalle Street in particular was deserving of a new park, since the area south of Lasalle contained Waddell Park on Russell Avenue as well as the playfields around Lincoln Heights elementary school on Newland Road.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICY:**

The County proposes to provide a neighborhood park site that will be approximately 12 to 15 acres in size consisting of multiple parcels. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Parks Master Plan describes neighborhood parks as a convenient source of recreation. These parks are usually located within walking distance of the area served. The Parks Master Plan does not recommend specific locations for neighborhoods parks, instead it suggests that locations be determined through the area planning process, by the Park and Recreation Department, and by neighborhood demand.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The *Central District Plan (1993)* designates this area for single family residential development of 4 units per acre. The *Cummings Avenue/Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Action Plan (1996)* does not specify a change in land use for this area. This plan proposes converting land bordered by Newland, Keller, Haines, and Madrid Streets about two blocks northwest from the proposed Park & Recreation location into a "community center".

The current land uses consist of forty-one residential units (single family houses, duplexes, triplexes) and vacant parcels. A number of these units are vacant and boarded and their overall condition ranges from fair to dilapidated. All the properties are zoned R-5 Residential.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

Acquisition and demolition of these dwellings represent a decrease in the supply of affordable housing units in this part of the City, and the existing residents will need to be relocated. Twenty-three of these units are occupied, eight are vacant and ten are boarded. Approximately ten to fifteen units are dilapidated or in need of repair, and the tax records documented all structures in this block to be below average to average in condition.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:**

The proposed project supports ongoing redevelopment/improvement efforts now taking place in Lincoln Heights (elderly housing, town home construction, etc.).

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

The assembly of land will take two years or more, based on past experience with this type of assembly. Currently, there is no available funding for site improvements.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their March 3, 2004 meeting. It was noted that better joint use opportunities would exist if the park were to be developed adjacent to the newly-built Lincoln Heights school. Approximately six acres of vacant land owned by Duke Power adjoin the 12-acre Lincoln Heights school. Park & Recreation staff report that this location was dismissed as being not centrally-located in the community, and too far south to serve the target area.

**CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

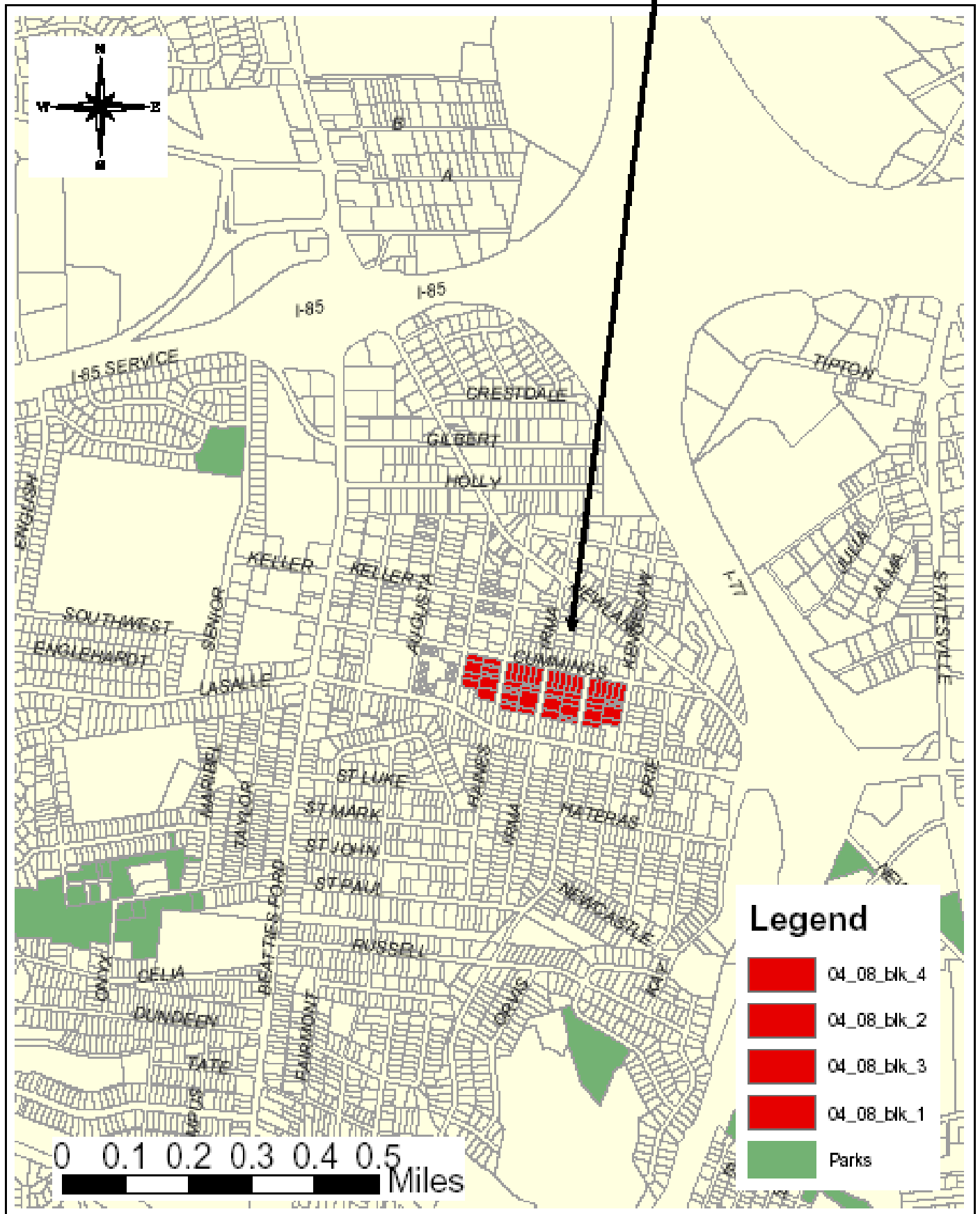
The suggestion regarding joint use and vacant land next to the school made by the Joint Use Task Force has merit. However, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police, Neighborhood Development, Park & Recreation, and residents have identified the proposed site as the most appropriate location for open space. The development of a park at this location will complement other nearby redevelopment efforts while removing several blocks of blighted housing, thus improving the overall appearance of the community.

Planning staff supports this property acquisition for the development of a neighborhood park in the Lincoln Heights community. However, staff recommends that both Neighborhood Development and County Real Estate Services assist with the relocation of the existing residents.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At their April 20, 2004 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.

**MR 04-08**



# MR 04-08

