

**MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 04-15**  
**Acquisition of Land for a Fire Station near Miranda Road and Beatties Ford Road**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

The Miranda/Beatties Ford Road area is rapidly growing in housing and commercial businesses including the construction of the new NorthLake Mall. This growth within Charlotte's corporate limits and within its extraterritorial jurisdiction – coupled with annexations in the area during the past two years – make it prudent for the City to secure land for future construction of a fire station.

The land for the proposed fire station (parcel 025-351-01) is for sale and is located on the east side of Beatties Ford Road approximately one-third mile south of Miranda Road. The triangular property consists of approximately five acres and is currently vacant farmland. The property is not within Charlotte's current City limits, but it is located within Charlotte's extraterritorial jurisdiction, meaning that the site and the area can be considered for future annexation.

This site was selected from a list of alternatives because it meets all of the Fire Department's station location criteria, which involves proper topography, distance from other existing fire stations, and quick access to neighborhoods in the vicinity. Each fire station facility needs to be approximately 2.5 miles from other stations in order to provide proper response times to service areas. This proposed site is strategically located so as to prevent overlap from the nearest existing fire stations. The site needs analysis involved the assumption that Charlotte would eventually annex the remainder of its extraterritorial jurisdiction in the area.

A fire station requires a site that measures approximately 300 feet by 300 feet, or about 2 acres. Since this property is larger than what is needed, there will be sufficient excess land to house a temporary fire station while the permanent one is being constructed, if that need arises. Upon completion of the permanent facility, the excess land can either be sold to the adjacent property owners or there may be other governmental uses identified for the property.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The Miranda/Beatties Ford Road area is developing rapidly. This development activity is increasing the demand for real estate in this area, which will in turn increase land costs while decreasing land availability. It is proposed to secure a fire station site now, before site selection becomes too limited and prices severely escalate, even though there are no immediate plans to construct the station.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

The City of Charlotte has purchased land for fire stations in advance of annexations in the past. This practice not only saves money by purchasing the land in advance of heavy demand, but it also allows the station to be designed such that construction can begin much sooner once funding for construction is identified. When a station site is acquired in advance of need, the station can be completed and in operation one year sooner than if the land is sought once the need is identified. This strategy can eliminate the need to establish a temporary fire station that can typically cost approximately \$600,000.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The *Northwest District Plan* (1990) recommends single-family land use up to 4 dwelling units per acre at this location. The zoning of the subject property is R-3. Within the R-3 zoning district, government buildings up to 12,500 square feet are considered uses permitted under prescribed conditions.

The prescribed conditions are as follows:

1. All buildings and off-street parking and service areas will be separated by a Class C buffer from abutting property located in a residential district, used for residential purpose, or low-intensity institutional use.
2. The use will be located on a lot that fronts a collector street, minor thoroughfare, or major thoroughfare.
3. Primary vehicular access to the use will not be provided by way of a residential local (Class VI) street.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

The proposed fire station on Beatties Ford Road will provide better fire protection for the neighboring communities and the City will be in a better position to comply with the statutory requirements for fire protection that are critical to annexation.

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

A fire station generally requires about 2 acres of land. At 5 acres, the proposed parcel will have sufficient excess land that a location of another public use might be able to co-locate on the site.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

The purchase of this land is in advance of actual need that will be created by additional development within the City limits in the vicinity of the site, and by annexation in 2007 and beyond. The exact construction timeline will be driven by future need and by future funding availability.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their June 2, 2004 meeting, and no joint use comments were offered.

However, the comment was offered that the proposed Fred D. Alexander Boulevard passes north of the site. The proposed major thoroughfare will offer improved access to the area from the site, but the *MUMPO 2025 Transportation Plan* identifies construction as a 2020 horizon year project, and its likely median-divided cross section may prove to be a site design challenge for the fire station.

**CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of this petition to land bank approximately 5 acres of property off Beatties Ford Road for the future construction of a fire station.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote at their June 15, 2004 meeting.

**MR 04-15**

