

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 05-06
ACQUISITION OF AN ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL SITE ON LANCASTER HWY

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) proposes to purchase approximately 39 acres located between Lancaster Highway and Marvin Road in South Charlotte upon which to build an elementary school. The subject property (Tax parcel 223-091-03) is currently vacant. Land uses surrounding the site are a mix of single-family detached and townhome-style residential subdivisions.

Thirty-nine acres is a large tract for an elementary site, although not all of the property is expected to be usable. The shape and topography of portions of the parcel would make development of the entire site impossible. However, CMS intends to explore the feasibility of co-locating this elementary school with a future middle school on this property (note that a middle school is identified for this general area in the 2005 *Long Range School Facilities Master Plan*). The property has been recently rezoned to MX-2 (SPA). The MX-2 zoning classification allows schools under prescribed conditions, although the site plan attached to the zoning for this particular parcel relates specifically to a residential development previously planned for the site, that wouldn't be applicable to development of schools.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This proposed elementary school site is approximately 1.8 miles west of Hawk Ridge Elementary School and lies within the 2004/05 school year Hawk Ridge home school boundary. Hawk Ridge - one of the most overcrowded schools in the district – was 175% utilized during the 2004/05 school year without counting its 22 mobile classrooms.

Endhaven Elementary School is also within close proximity to the proposed property, lying 2.3 miles north of this site. Endhaven is also overcrowded with a 2004/05 utilization rate of 122% without counting its five mobile classrooms. Both Endhaven and Hawk Ridge will be sending their 5th grade students to new Community House Middle School in 2005-06 in order to temporarily relieve overcrowding.

The significantly high utilization numbers at Hawk Ridge and Endhaven Elementary Schools are a result of the population growth that has occurred in the southern portion of Mecklenburg County and the relative under-supply of elementary school space. According to the CMS 2005 *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan*, this growth is expected to continue over the next ten years.

In summary, the construction of a new elementary school at this location would have the potential to relieve overcrowding at Hawk Ridge and/or Endhaven Elementary Schools (depending upon how attendance boundaries are drawn). The property proposed for the new school is in proximity to residences of existing densities of CMS elementary school students, as well as near areas of future growth, thus providing for the long-term student population of a school at this site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The proposed school site has MX-2 zoning which allows schools by right with conditions, although the petition that established the MX-2 development proposed residential development. The site also has an approved site plan that is specific to the previously-planned residential development on the site. Lancaster Highway – upon which the site fronts – is a Major Thoroughfare, a requirement of the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance for school sites. The site size also meets both CMS and NC Department of Public Instruction guidelines of at least 18 developable acres for an 800-student elementary school.

Development of an elementary school in this vicinity by 2009 is called for in the 2005 *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan*, as well as in the 2005 CMS Capital Needs Assessment (upon which a November 2005 bond referendum could be based). The *Master Plan* and the Needs Assessment also prescribe an elementary school by 2009 in "Elon Park" approximately 1½ miles southeast of this site, that was the subject of a Mandatory Referral in 2001 (MR01-04). This Mandatory Referral proposed acquisition of the 118-acre former Elon campus for a park and elementary school site. Staff recommended approval and the Planning Committee concurred.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The land use plan for the area, established by rezoning petition #2001-101 approved by City Council in November, 2001, calls for a mix of residential and non-residential land uses across the majority of the site, although an approved site plan attached to the site established the site for residential use. The land use plan also calls for the southern tip of the site be developed for greenway purposes. This greenway is proposed to extend westward from the site across Lancaster Highway to the County line.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Construction of a school at this site will serve to relieve crowding in at least one (and possibly two) CMS elementary schools. The location of this site – relative to surrounding residential areas - has the potential to create a safe walk zone for students living in some of the surrounding neighborhoods. Increased traffic around the school site is expected for two 30-minute periods in the morning and afternoon. CMS works closely with transportation and public safety agencies to minimize traffic impacts.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

Based on the latest City Project Strategy Report, there are no City projects underway in this area. New private development – principally residential construction - is on-going in the general vicinity.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The parcels will be purchased with 1999 Land Banking funds, and construction will be funded with a future Bond request (proposed by CMS to be placed upon the November, 2005 ballot). Actual construction completion will be determined by construction funding availability.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

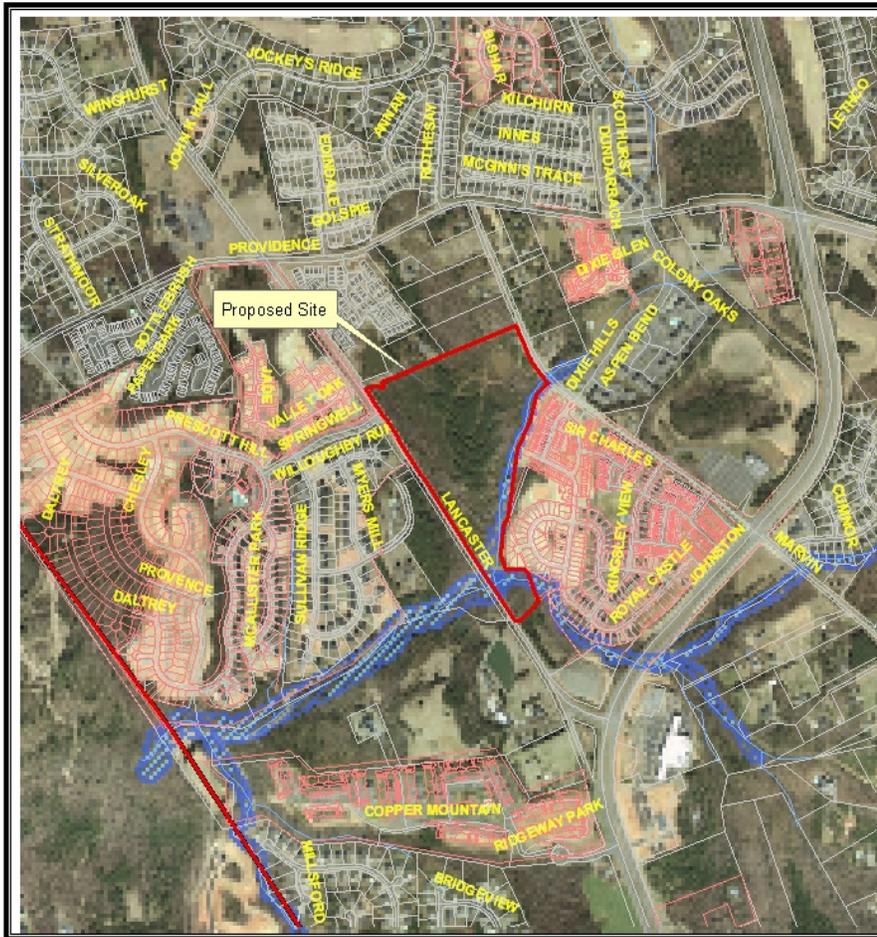
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their July 6, 2005 meeting and two possibilities were considered. First, CMS staff identified the eventual need (as identified in their *Facilities Master Plan*) to construct a middle school in this general vicinity by 2015, and the possibility of co-locating an elementary and middle school on this site would be explored. Second, it was suggested that a neighborhood park might occupy the remainder of the site, if the middle school idea proves to be infeasible (consensus was that the site contains insufficient space for the two schools as well as the park).

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff recommends approval of the acquisition of this property to serve as a future elementary school site, and that the joint use opportunities identified by the Joint Use Task Force be explored. Staff also suggests that CMS and Planning jointly explore amending the previously-established site plan requirements that were specific to the planned residential development on the site, in order to develop (and have approved as part of the MX-2 zoning) site plans appropriate for school development.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At its July 19, 2005 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a vote of 6-0.

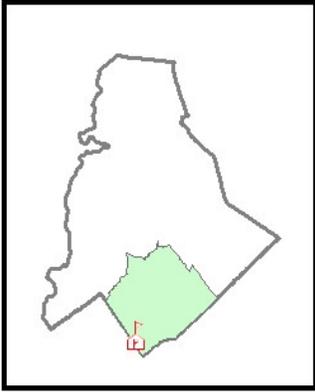


**PROPOSED LANCASTER HY
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SITE
(ES 06/MS 06)**

Size: 39 ac
 Region: South
 Zoning: R-3
 Parcel(s): 223-091-03
 Owner(s): G. D. Kaperonis
 Location: Lancaster Highway
 School Type: Elementary/Middle
 Notes: Proposed move-in 2009

LEGEND

- Streets
- Creeks & Streams
- Near Subdivisions
- Tax Parcel
- Subdiv
- County Boundary
- Lakes



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
 Building Services
 2004 April
 305



MR 05-06

