

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 05-07
Acquisition of Land for Fire Station at Arboretum Area

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The Charlotte Fire Department is in need of a fire station in the general vicinity of the Arboretum at NC51 and NC16 in south Charlotte. The site identified for acquisition is located at 8325 Providence Road (parcel #22708134) on the east side of Providence just south of the Arboretum, and consists of 4.26 acres. The property is vacant and zoned R-3 residential. The lot faces Providence Road and is considered part of the Greenwood subdivision (that lies to the east).

The goal of acquiring this parcel is to construct a City fire station in order to decrease emergency response time and increase service in this area of the City.

The immediate area is principally residential in nature, with single family homes to the north, east, and south, and multi-family residences across Providence to the west. A Lutheran Church lies immediately across Providence from the site, and the Arboretum shopping center is diagonally across Providence from the site.

The search area was defined by response time contours from existing City fire stations. The search exercise identified only this one vacant property that conforms to size, topography, and locational requirements for the fire station.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Currently, the emergency response time in this area exceeds six minutes, which is the desired maximum response time for all fire coverage areas. Average responses in the area over the past three years are in excess of eight minutes. The accompanying map indicates areas experiencing unsatisfactory response rates with the color red; the area surrounding the site shows up as the large red "X" in south Charlotte; the yellow bullet in the middle of the "X" is the proposed site. Many of the properties in the area are not within the desired response time of six minutes. In the area around the proposed site, the first fire company responds within that time only 21.9 percent of the time. Fire protection service is a life and property saving service to which all City properties are entitled. The Charlotte Fire Department provides not only fire protection service, but various medical emergencies as well. The neighboring communities typically find the services provided by fire fighters are a valuable asset to their communities.

In order to identify a candidate fire station, several criteria are used. First, the area must be experiencing unsatisfactory response rates. Then, the following criteria are applied to properties within that area (criteria are not listed in any order of importance): minimum 3 acre square or rectangular parcel, strategically located between neighboring stations to maximize regional coverage, located on main road but not immediately at major intersection, have good roadway line of sight distance, located near a road crest and not in a road valley, parcel at or above roadway elevation, vacant land unless property is for sale.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The Charlotte Fire Department's target is to reach 80 percent of emergencies within six minutes of receiving a call for help. Establishing a fire station at this location will help the Department get closer to this target.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *South District Plan* (1993) calls for the site to be single-family residential. It is a large lot fronting on Providence Road, a major thoroughfare. While the proposed fire station is not consistent with the specific single-family mapping of the *South District Plan*, it is an element of health and safety necessary for single-family neighborhoods. R-3 single-family zoning specifically provides for siting of government buildings subject to buffering and other conditions. The adjacency of the site to existing single-family neighborhoods is certainly a cause for careful consideration; however the size of the site offers sufficient areas for buffers around the facility perimeter. The location of the proposed fire station on a major thoroughfare in proximity to other commercial, institutional, and multi-family uses makes it better than alternatives strictly surrounded by residential uses.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The neighboring residential subdivision (to the east of the fire station site) is a gated community, containing homes on at least five-acre lots. A fire station adjoining this residential community might not initially appear to be the most appropriate land use for this property, but the station at this location will be a valuable asset to the community, as it will reduce response times resulting in saving lives and property.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

No other public or private projects have been identified as being pending or underway in the vicinity of the site.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The City proposes to purchase the property by December 31, 2005, and – presuming design and construction of the station are included in the FY2007 capital budget - it could be built sometime after July 1, 2006.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS: The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their September 7, 2005 meeting. It had no comments on this proposal.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposal, subject to careful building siting to minimize impacts on adjoining properties.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At its September 20, 2005 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a vote of 5-0.

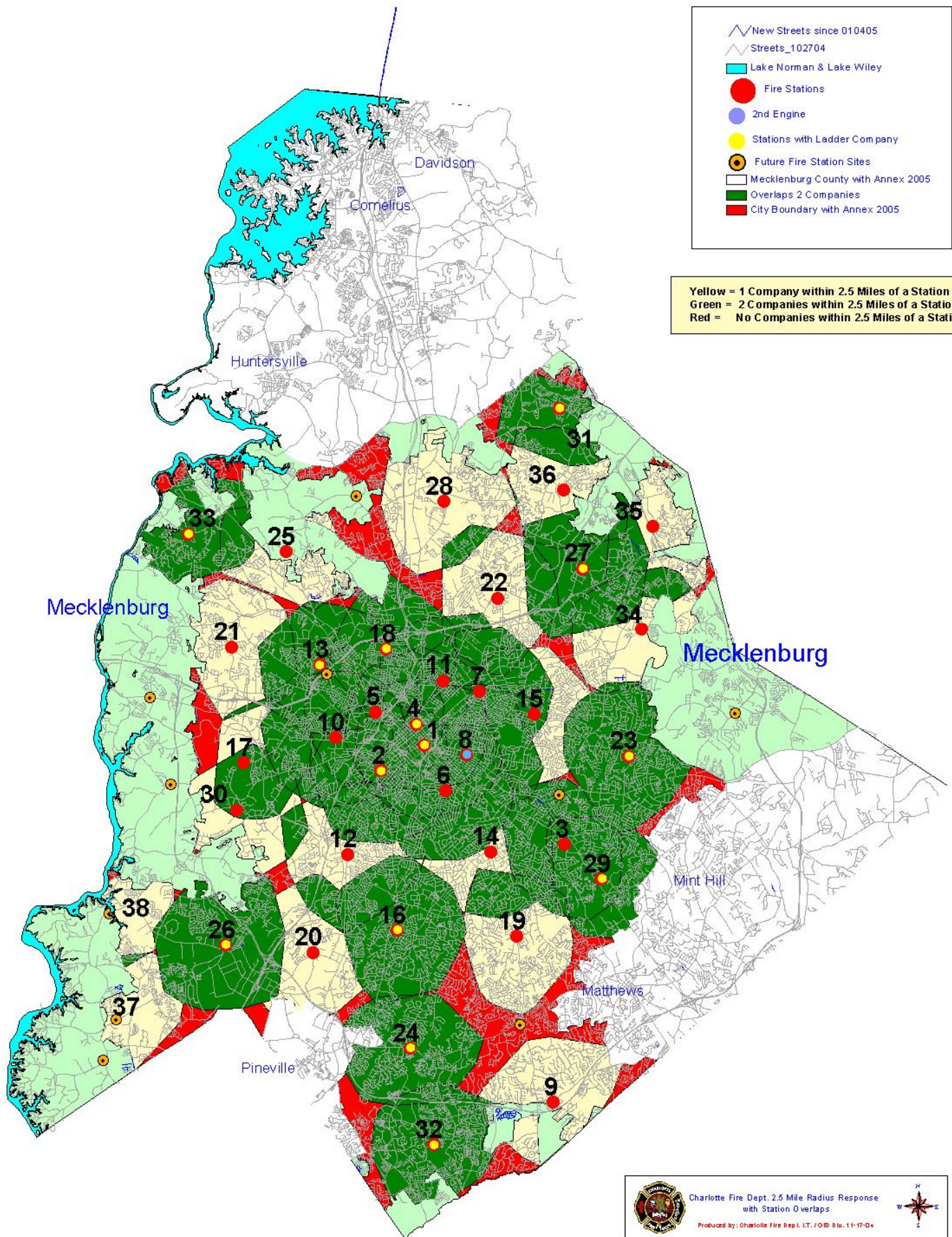
Staff resource: Kent Main

Fire Station Site near Arboretum

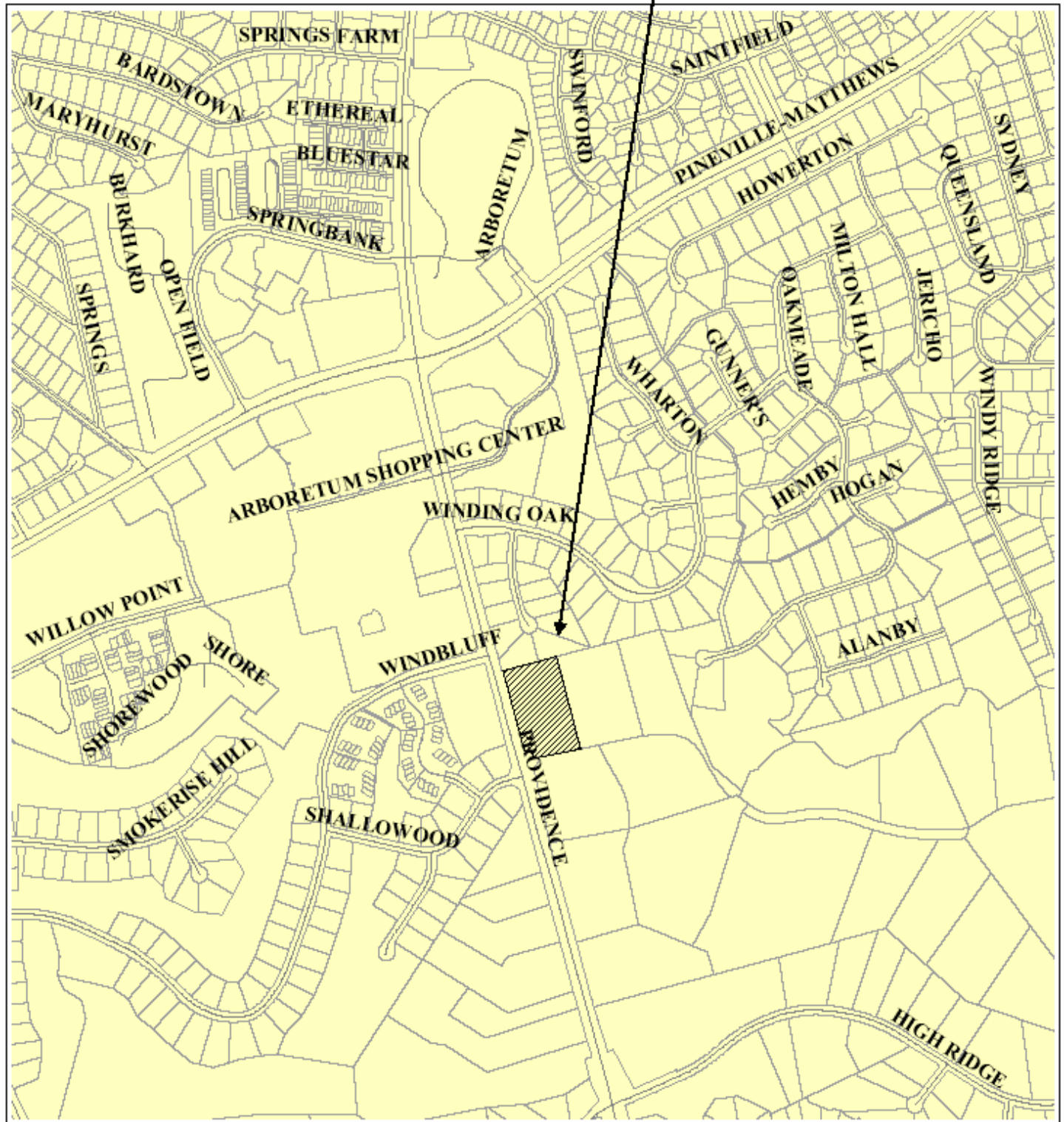




Yellow = 1 Company within 2.5 Miles of a Station
 Green = 2 Companies within 2.5 Miles of a Station
 Red = No Companies within 2.5 Miles of a Station




MR 2005-07



0 375 750 1,500 2,250 3,000 Feet

Legend

 MR 2005_07