

**MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 05-14**  
**Proposed Acquisition of McWhirter Lake Property in Mint Hill for Park**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

Mecklenburg County proposes to purchase the Cornwell property (also known as McWhirter Lake) in Mint Hill (tax parcel 195-201-01) for open space, parkland and watershed protection. This 78.26-acre parcel is located at 13828 Lake Bluff Road and includes a residence, a 23-acre lake and forested buffers on two sides of the lake. The property is zoned Residential District in the Mint Hill zoning ordinance.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

Acquisition of this parcel of land supports the Town of Mint Hill's open space/parkland initiatives and provides water quality benefits to the Goose Creek Watershed. McWhirter Lake serves as the headwaters of Stevens Creek and functions as a water quality "best management practices" (BMP) by filtering sediment and other pollutants before they flow down Stevens Creek into Goose Creek. Goose Creek provides critical habitat for the federally endangered Carolina Heelsplitter (mussel).

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

The Residential District zoning is designed to encourage the protection of natural and man-made environments by retaining existing farmlands, rural estates, forests and water resources.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

A future passive park at this location is considered by Mint Hill staff to be consistent with Mint Hill's Land Use Plan which focuses on preserving open space.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

Protection of water quality in the Goose Creek Watershed is the primary positive impact of this acquisition. In addition to serving as a water quality "best management practices" (BMP), the property also has the potential of serving as a low-impact/passive recreational amenity for the Town of Mint Hill.

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

Residential development exists west of the subject property and several properties to the north are currently under contract to a developer. The water quality benefits provided by the McWhirter Lake will become even more important as development expands north of the property.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

Acquisition of the property is expected to be completed by the end of 2005. Future park improvements have not been budgeted for at this time.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their October 5, 2005 meeting and no pertinent comments were offered.

**CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Planning Commission staff recommends approval of the acquisition of this property for the stated purpose.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

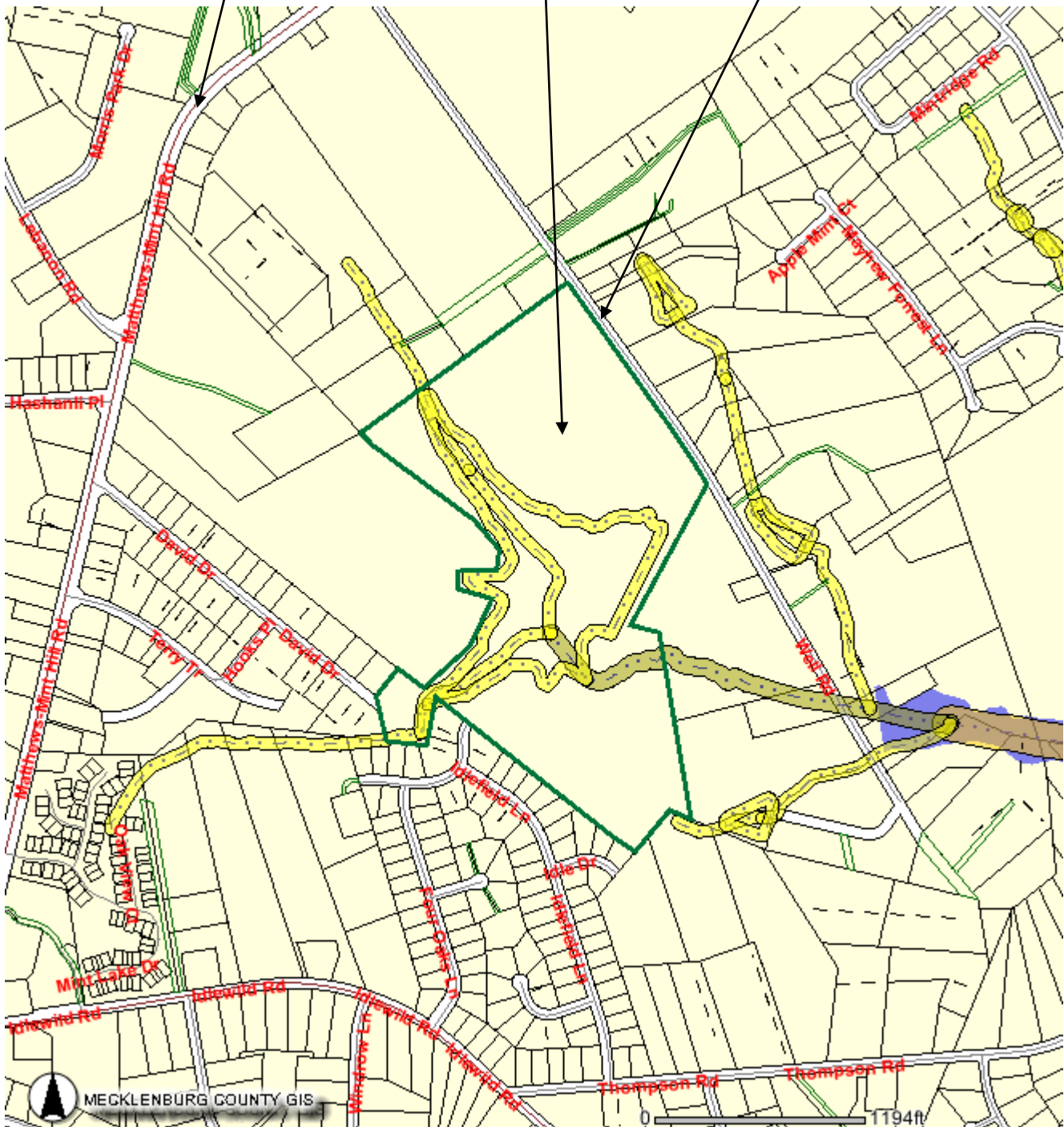
At their October 18, 2005 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval by a vote of 6-0.

**Mandatory Referral – Cornwell Property (McWhirter Lake)**  
(Tax Parcel 195-201-01)

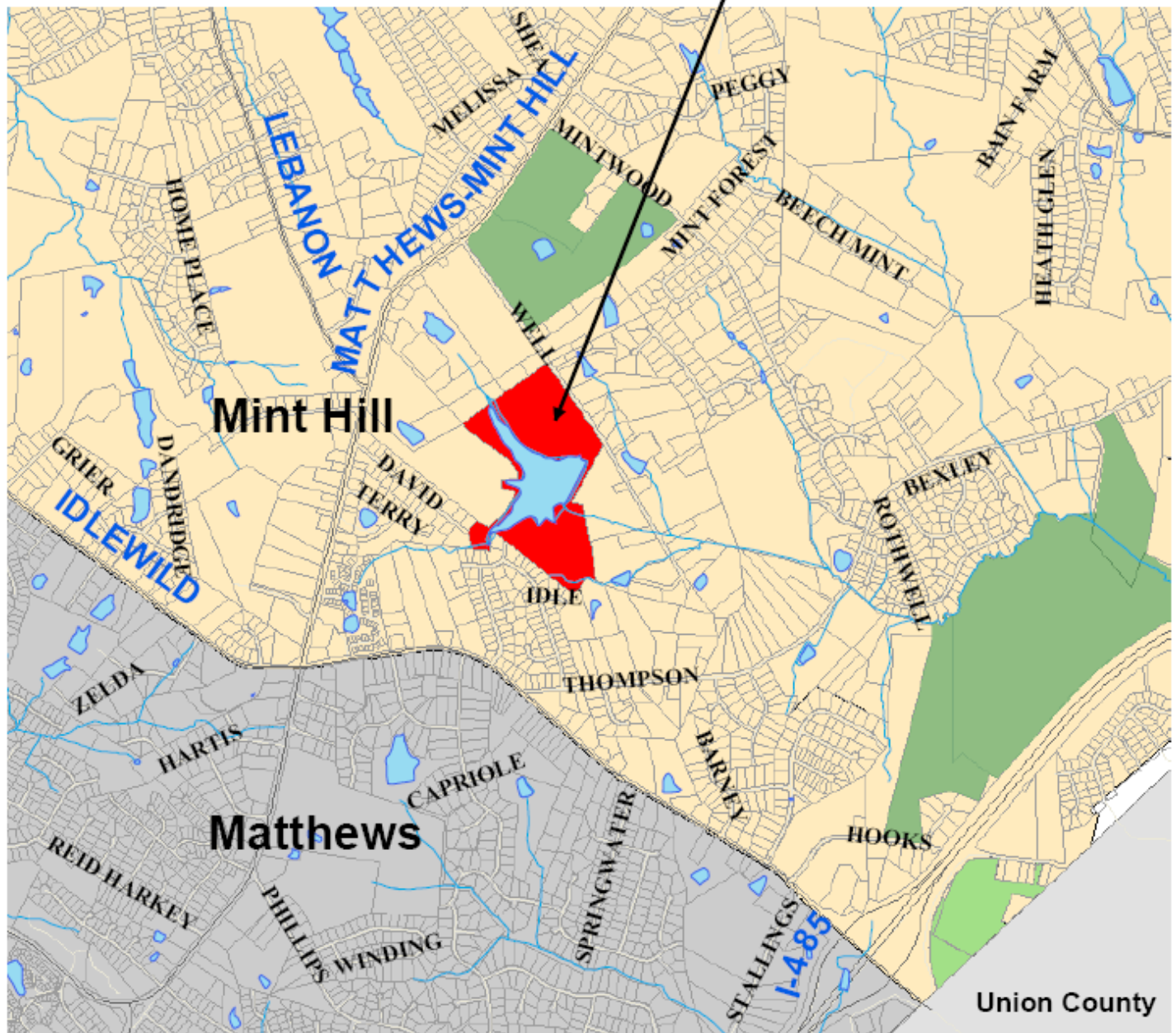
Matthews-Mint Hill Road

Subject Property

Well Road



# MR 2005-14



October 3, 2005

Mr. Greg Burnham  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission  
600 E. Fourth Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202

Re: McWhirter Lake

Dear Mr. Burnham:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on behalf of the Town of Mint Hill with regards to Mecklenburg County's desire to land bank property for the proposed McWhirter Lake Park.

The request to land bank possibly 78.26± acres for a future passive park at 13828 Lake Bluff Road would be an asset to the Town of Mint Hill and its citizenry. The property contains McWhirter Lake which filters sediment and other pollutants before they flow down Stevens Creek into Goose Creek. Having this area permanently protected by keeping all the natural buffers intact is critical to maintaining healthy water quality for our creeks within the Goose Creek Basin. In addition, having an area for Mint Hill's citizens to come out and enjoy wonderful scenery is a tremendous benefit.

Overall, the land banked for a future passive park is consistent with the Town of Mint Hill's Land Use Plan which focuses on preserving open space. In the future, a Special Use Permit is required before construction may commence. Please keep in mind that issues such as road improvements, and sidewalks may be required during the special use permitting process. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at 545-9726. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

John Hoard  
Planner