

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 05-21
Proposed Acquisition of Land for an Elementary School Site – Hucks Road

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposes to locate an elementary school on 32.77 acres of a Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation site (future “Hucks Road Park”) in North Mecklenburg County within Charlotte’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. The property – parcel 027-194-97 – is located on the south side of Hucks Road which connects Arthur Davis and Browne Roads. This vacant property has an R-3 Single Family Residential zoning classification, according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance.

The property is surrounded by newer residential subdivisions, with vacant land acquired in 2001 by Mecklenburg County for a future community park north across Hucks Road.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan (Interim Report – 2005)* identifies the need to locate a new elementary school in this approximate location by 2008. The proposed Hucks Road Elementary School site is approximately 1.2 miles north of David Cox Elementary School and lies within its attendance boundaries. David Cox is currently at 162% utilization without mobile classrooms. Mallard Creek Elementary School is approximately 2.3 miles southeast of the Hucks Road site and is currently at 127% utilization without mobile classrooms. The property is located near existing densities of CMS students, as well as near future growth areas, thus providing for the long-term populating of school at this site.

This property is part of a 130-acre purchase that County Park and Recreation completed in 2001 and for which a Mandatory Referral (MR00-41) was conducted. The goal of the purchase was to landbank for a future district park and a possible elementary school site.

The *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan (Interim Report – 2005)* also identifies the need to locate a new middle school in this approximate location by 2013. CMS has explored the feasibility of purchasing 25 adjacent acres for a middle school. Property owners have been contacted. In the event CMS wishes to proceed with that transaction, it will be subject of a separate Mandatory Referral. The co-location of multiple schools on single or contiguous campuses provides operating and facilities economies that may not otherwise be realized. For instance, it may be possible for two adjoining schools to share bus loading facilities, athletic facilities, parking, etc.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Acquisition of land for an elementary school is consistent with the *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan (Interim Report – 2005)*. Development of parks is allowed by right and development of schools is allowed under prescribed conditions in R-3 zoning districts in the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The property size meets both CMS and State guidelines of developable acres for an elementary school. In the longer term, the purchase of 25 additional acres would meet CMS and State guidelines of developable acres for a combined elementary and middle school site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The Northeast District Plan (1996) recommends single family land uses at a density of four dwelling units per acre for this and surrounding parcels. Elementary schools are considered compatible with single family land uses.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The site is strategically located to address future (longer term) elementary school growth in this region of the district and to relieve overcrowding in nearby elementary schools. Increased traffic around the school site is expected for two 30 minute periods in the morning and afternoon. CMS will work closely with NCDOT, CDOT, and the site designers to minimize this impact. The site could potentially create a safe walk zone for the neighborhood students as well as some of the surrounding neighborhoods.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The site will be a joint use venture with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. The site offers significant reciprocal benefits to both parks and schools. The school will provide parking and two athletic fields for Park and Recreation’s use. Park and Recreation will provide the property for the elementary school site.

The portion of the original County acquisition north of Hucks Road may be affected by the future Hucks Road realignment. This realignment is contained as a major thoroughfare in the MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan, and has a 2030 “horizon year” in the *2030 Long Range Transportation Plan*, meaning that in all likelihood it will not be constructed with public funds before that year.

Several other transportation projects are planned for this general area, including Charlotte Area Transit System north transit corridor station in the vicinity of Hucks Road and Arthur Davis Road. Strong transit oriented development has been proposed, and is expected within a half mile of the station.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The expected elementary school move-in date is 2008-2009.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this proposal at its November 2 meeting and the partnership with Park & Recreation was noted. School District staff also noted their sensitivity to the Hucks Road re-alignment issue and stated their intent to design site access accordingly, so that an eventual re-alignment could be accommodated.

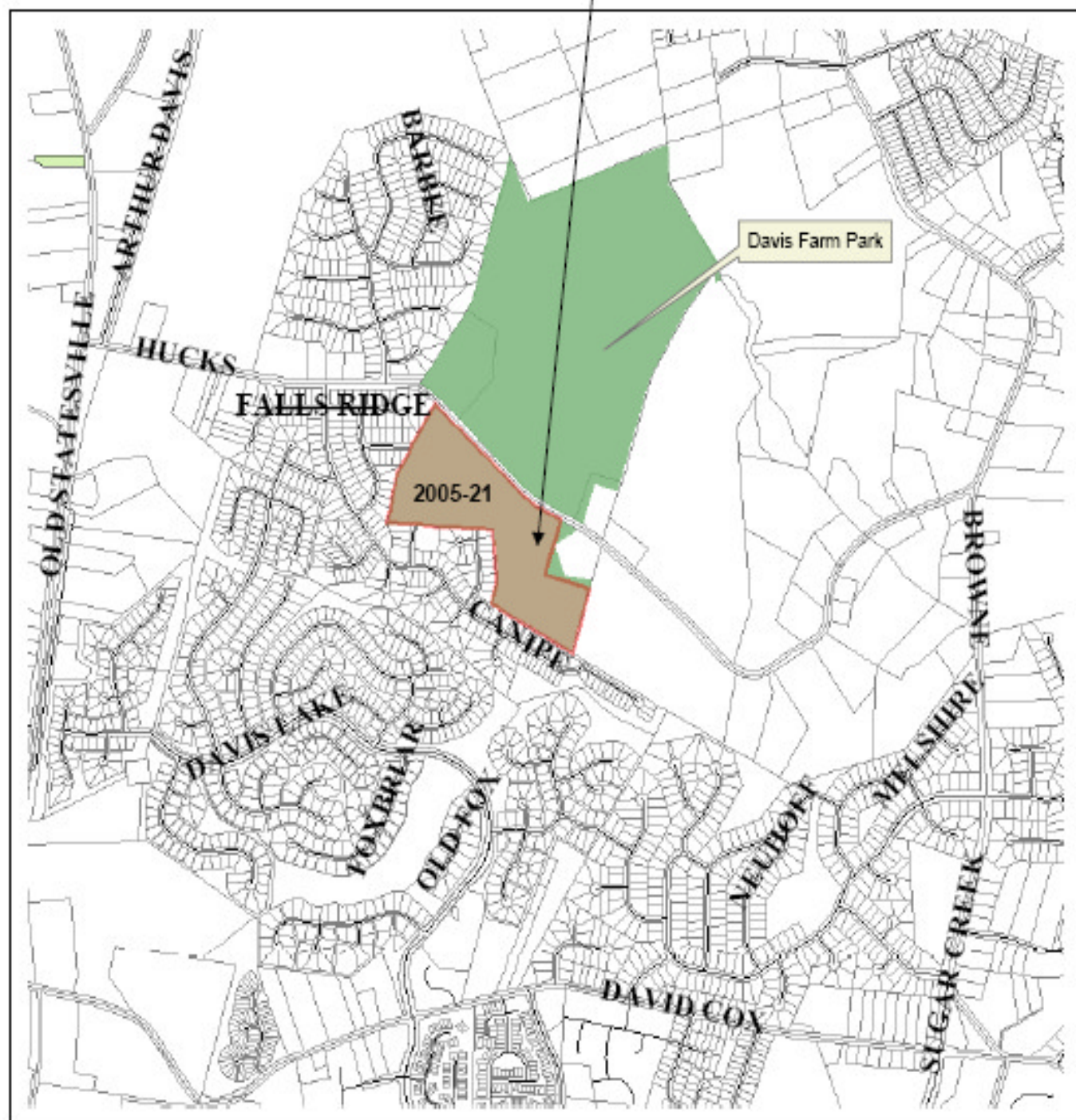
CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff supports this joint use venture between CMS and Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, and recommends the use of the designated portion of Hucks Road Park for an elementary school site.



CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their November 15, 2005 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.

MR 05-21



Legend

-  Mandatory Referral
-  Park Property

