

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 05-22
Proposed Acquisition of Land for an Elementary School Site – Ardrey Kell Road/Marvin Road

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposes to locate an elementary school on approximately 17 acres of a 122.5 acre Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation parcel in South Mecklenburg County within Charlotte's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. The property (parcel #223-521-02) located at 11401 Ardrey Kell Road, was acquired in 2001 to serve as a future community park ("Elon Park"). The property has an R-3 Single family Residential zoning classification under the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance, and is largely vacant except for several structures that served as residential cottages for the previous occupancy, which was a residential facility for troubled youth.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The CMS *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan (Interim Report – 2005)* identifies the need to locate a new elementary school in this approximate location by 2009. The proposed Elon Park elementary school is approximately 1.8 miles southwest of Hawk Ridge Elementary School and lies within its attendance boundaries. Hawk Ridge is one of the most overcrowded schools in the district with current utilization at 177% without mobile classrooms. This utilization does not take into account the 5th grade class which is currently housed at Community House Middle School to temporarily relieve Hawk Ridge's overcrowding.

The property is located near existing densities of CMS students, as well as near future growth areas, thus providing for a long-term populating of a school at this site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Location of an elementary school at this location is consistent with the *Long-Range School Facilities Master Plan (Interim Report – 2005)*. The property meets both the CMS and State guidelines of developable acres for an elementary school site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *South District Plan (1992)* shows the proposed site as institutional, reflecting the site's prior use as a facility for troubled youth and more recent plans for park use. While existing schools are shown on the plan as institutional, proposed or future school sites are not mapped. The Plan notes, "Planning in advance for schools will be important, particularly as appropriate sites become increasingly scarce and as land costs continue to climb. The School Facilities Master Plan...will project school needs...and will identify general locations for future schools in the South District."

PROJECT IMPACT:

The site is strategically located to address future (longer term) elementary growth in this region of the district and to relieve current overcrowding in nearby elementary schools. Increased traffic around the school site is expected for two 30 minutes 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 remainder of the site will serve as a future community park, and was reviewed as a Mandatory Referral in 2001 (MR01-04). The site offers significant reciprocal benefits. The school will provide parking and one athletic field for Park and Recreation's use. Park and Recreation will provide the property for the elementary school site.

CMS will work with the developer of a proposed retail/mixed use development across Ardrey Kell Road to align site access. In addition CMS will work with the owner of an indoor sports complex to the west of the property for driveway alignment.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The expected elementary school move-in date is 2009/2010.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this proposal at their November 2, 2005 meeting. It was noted that the site is part of a large County land holding that includes the Foxhole Landfill. Site construction is expected to include more cut than fill, and excess dirt will be used on the landfill site for needed cover.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The placement of an elementary school in proximity to an active landfill is somewhat unconventional. Because the landfill extends southward from this site to the county line, there are no present or future residential units anywhere to the south of the school. Nonetheless, the site is already owned by the county. It is ample to serve school and park needs, and presents good joint use opportunities with Park and Recreation. It is in a high-growth area with existing severe school overcrowding. Land in the area suitable for school use is limited and expensive. The use of the property is consistent with the institutional land use recommendation of the *South District Plan*. As such, Planning staff recommends approval of the proposal.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

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

MR 05-22



Legend



-  Mandatory Referral
-  Meck County Property
-  Park Property

