

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 05-30
Proposed Sale of City-Owned First Ward Park Property

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The City of Charlotte's Economic Development Office proposes the sale of a portion of the former First Ward Park (1.988 acres) located on the block between 6th Street, 7th Street, North McDowell Street and North Myers Street in the First Ward neighborhood in Center City. The proposed sale is to LMF/First Ward Associates for a mixed-use project with up to 275 condominium units and up to 40,000 square feet of commercial development (retail and office).

The parcel identification number for this property is 08009601. Its current land use is vacant (formerly park space) and current zoning is MUDD (mixed use). The adjacent 0.9 acre property at the corner of 7th Street and N. McDowell Street (not part of this Mandatory Referral) will also be redeveloped as part of this project. There is currently a small shopping center on the adjacent site.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The proposed mixed-use project will continue implementation of the *First Ward Master Plan's* concept for the Courthouse District (bound by I-277, 7th Street, Caldwell Street and East Trade Street) which envisions development that is a mix of urban uses: primarily residential, office, retail and institutional. The proposed project offers more dense housing in Center City, as well as neighborhood serving retail and office space. The condominium market in the area is growing rapidly and this project will capitalize on this market and need in the community.

The original concept of the redevelopment plan included an expansion of the Afro-American Cultural Center (AACC) at Seventh & McDowell. However, but the AACC Board has decided to expand on a site on Stonewall Street, leaving this site and the adjacent parcel available for mixed-use commercial and residential development that maximizes the development of the entire block.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The adopted *First Ward Master Plan* includes the primary goals of creating a vibrant new, mixed income residential neighborhood in Uptown Charlotte, as well as increasing the value of property in First Ward and the tax base of the City and Mecklenburg County. Both of these prescribed goals would be achieved through development of residential units and commercial in this area of First Ward. The First Ward Park land was acquired by the City as part of a land exchange with Mecklenburg County that will result in the creation of a new park at 9th Street, near the rail corridor. The property is currently tax exempt. The redevelopment of First Ward Park will provide desired retail and office services that were identified in a market study developed with input from the First Ward community.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *First Ward Master Plan* (adopted 1997) calls for an urban mixed-use project with retail and residential on the Seventh Street frontage and office on the Sixth Street frontage of the subject property. While the configuration of uses varies slightly from the plan's recommendation, the proposed redevelopment will meet the intent of the *First Ward Master Plan*.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The proposed project will add additional urban housing to the First Ward neighborhood, consistent with the goals of the *First Ward Master Plan*. The park space will be relocated to another area of First Ward as part of an agreement with Mecklenburg County. The project will also provide needed retail for First Ward residents, as well as a limited amount of office space.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The proposed project will continue a trend of residential development for Center City, and specifically within First Ward. The property is in proximity to other similar type residential developments, including Courtside and Charlotte Housing Authority's mixed-use development adjacent to the Family Services building.

The proposed development will benefit directly from the proposed extension of Myers Street from 6th Street to 7th Street. In addition, a storm water easement across the parcel will be filed at closing for the alignment of a drainage culvert.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The expected time of closing on the property is 12 months after City Council approval of the sale.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their December 7, 2005 meeting and had no comments.

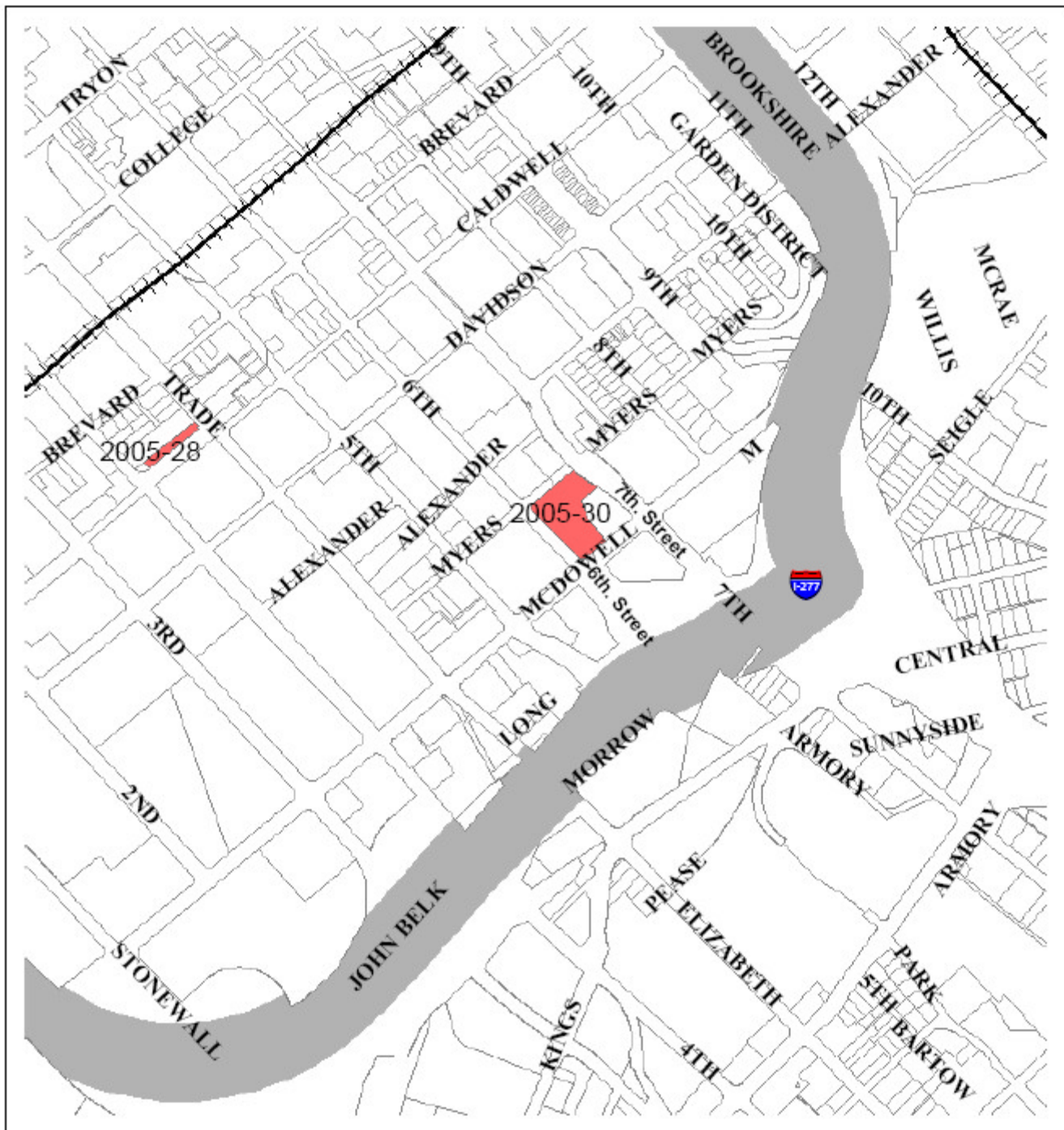
CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff supports the sale of the First Ward property as a further implementation step in the creation of a new urban neighborhood in First Ward.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

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

MR 05-30



Legend

 Mandatory Referral_05-30



