

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 05-31
Proposed Acquisition of Property on Davidson-Concord Road in Davidson ETJ

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County, working in conjunction with the Town of Davidson, proposes to purchase approximately 23 acres of a 69.8 acre parcel (parcel 007-451-01) on Davidson-Concord Road at McAuley Road for open space and viewshed preservation. The parcel to be purchased is in Davidson's extraterritorial jurisdiction and is used primarily for agricultural fields with two small patches of woodland. A gas line traversing the property serves as the northern boundary of the proposed acquisition.

This area is zoned by Davidson as RPA (Rural Planning Area) and is currently surrounded by farmland, forestland and limited residential development. The Mecklenburg County Bradford Park site is approximately 1,000 feet west of the property.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Acquisition of this property for open space rural viewshed preservation is supported by the Davidson Planning Ordinance, which refers to the need to preserve "rural views". "Rural views" refers to undeveloped forest and farmland that help to maintain the rural character of an area or transportation corridor. Davidson places a premium upon preserving this character in this portion of their extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Acquisition of this property for its preservation as open space also meets Mecklenburg County goals of providing open space as a means of enhancing quality of life, and of protecting watersheds (in this instance Rocky River watershed) for drinking water and habitat.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The preservation of open space and rural viewsheds is clearly identified as a priority in the Davidson Planning Ordinance (Section 1: "We must preserve substantial amounts of open space. Our rural area enhances our quality-of-life. We will go to great efforts to preserve rural views, as well as saving significant hardwood forests, farmland, wildlife habitats, rock outcroppings, parkland, and watersheds in pristine form.")

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

This area is zoned by Davidson as RPA (Rural Planning Area) and is currently surrounded by farmland, forestland and limited residential development and appears to be consistent with Davidson's land use plans.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition of the subject property will preserve open space and farmland as well as the rural viewshed along Davidson-Concord Road. Preservation of this property will not produce any negative impacts to the surrounding area.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

Bradford Park and a pending residential development across from the park are the only known current public and/or private projects in close proximity to the subject property. Preservation of this property will have no impact on either of those projects.

The Catawba Lands Conservancy currently holds conservation easements on approximately 550 acres in the immediate vicinity (Ramah Creek basin) of the subject property. Conveyance of a conservation easement on the subject property to either the Town of Davidson or to the Catawba Lands Conservancy is proposed with this acquisition.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Acquisition of the property is expected to be completed by the end of March 2006. The only future development envisioned on this property is the construction of a biking/walking path. No timeline has been established for construction of the path.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this matter at their December 7, 2005 meeting and offered no comments with regard to joint use. The comment was made, however, that the property may contain an old cemetery that should be preserved in connection with future use of the property.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this application.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

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

Mandatory Referral – Davidson-Concord Road Viewshed Preservation

Bradford Park

Proposed Acquisition (+/- 23 acres)
(PID 007-451-01)

