

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 06-06
Proposed Purchase of Land for Westmoreland Athletic Complex in Cornelius

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County Real Estate proposes acquisition of land for development of a baseball complex in Cornelius. The site will consist of Tax Parcels 005-071-18, 005-071-66 and a portion of 005-071-16 on the south side of Westmoreland Road in Cornelius, totaling approximately 23 acres. Currently undeveloped, this land abuts the land proposed to be exchanged for the existing Robbins Park site to create contiguous park land that would total approximately 140 acres. (The Robbins Park exchange has not been completed as of this time but is pending; it was subject to a previous Mandatory Referral MR04-26.) The property is zoned NMX or Neighborhood Mixed Use under the Cornelius zoning ordinance. By right, this allows single family and duplex residential development as well as mixed use/commercial development up to 5,000 square feet.

The 23-acre subject site would be leased to the Town of Cornelius and sub-leased to a private entity for development and operation of the baseball complex. Terms for this agreement with the town and sublease include providing adequate free public access to the site and paid use of the fields by organized leagues.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This proposed project would be a public/private partnership to ensure immediate development of the facility with private funds, in the North Park District. This location ties in to a park site that will be leased to the Town of Cornelius (the previously-mentioned land exchanged for the Robbins Park site) which will include multiple active recreation facilities typically found in County district parks, e.g. fields, courts, playgrounds, trails, picnic sites and passive areas. Locating the baseball complex next to the park site provides a destination for multiple recreation opportunities. Collectively, this property and the adjoining Robbins property will consist of approximately 150 acres.

The project concept has been developed through the Cornelius Parks Department and Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Acquisition of this property and its development are considered to be consistent with the 1989 Charlotte Mecklenburg Parks Master Plan, in that it will provide public active recreation facilities typically found in a district or community park that would accommodate tournament play, and would function as a component of the adjoining district park (Robbins Park). (District parks range in size from 40 to 200 acres).

The 2004 MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan calls for a minor thoroughfare with a 70 foot right of way to bisect at least one of the parcels identified in this proposal.

The Town of Cornelius is in support of this proposed real estate transaction, and its development for parkland purposes.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The Town of Cornelius Land Use Plan (adopted 1999) recommends low and medium density residential development on these parcels, with open space land use immediately to the south. Open space development is generally regarded as being appropriate in residential areas.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The development of this complex will generate increased traffic at times when tournaments are held at the complex. The planning staff in the Town of Cornelius will advise/assist with evaluations of current roadway access/design to accommodate the increase. Noise and night lighting of the fields will also fall under the jurisdiction of the town and will be addressed during the design process.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This project will complement the adjoining park land (once the exchange is completed), providing a destination for active and passive recreation opportunities at essentially a single site in the western portion of Cornelius.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Acquisition of this land will be from 1999 Land Bonds; development will be done with private funding. Development timeframe is undetermined at this time, but could be as soon as within 18 months of the land acquisition.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this matter at their March 1, 2006 meeting, and no comments were offered, although County Real Estate stated specifically that Cornelius Town staff (not in attendance at the meeting) have been very involved in this project. CMS staff reported that at one time they were considering this immediate area for a school, but have since reconsidered.

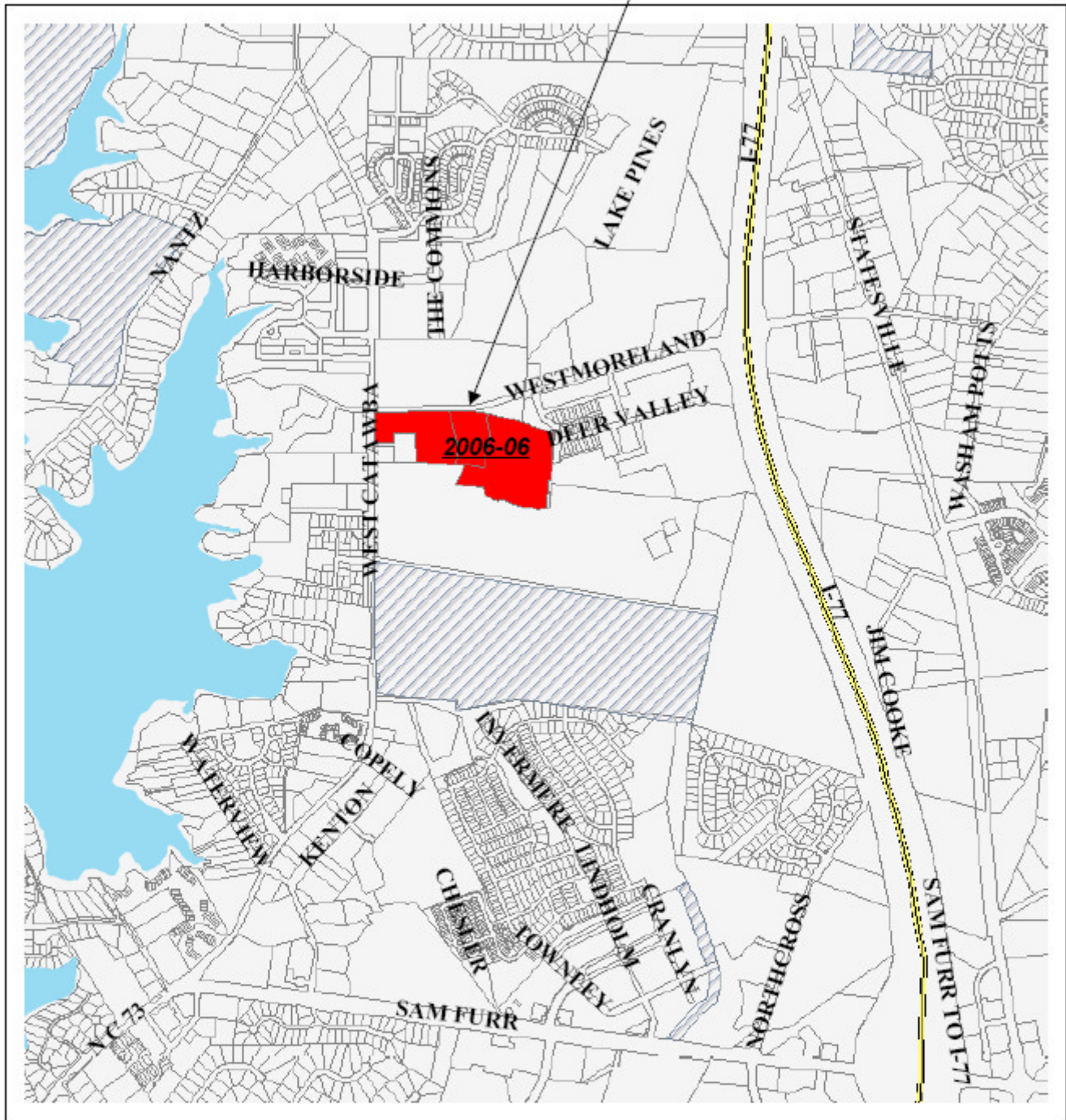
CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning Commission staff recommends approval of the proposed transaction, upon condition that County and Town staffs work with MUMPO staff to more specifically identify the thoroughfare alignment in this area, and to determine what (if any) of the subject property needs to be reserved for future thoroughfare right-of-way.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their March 21, 2006 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 4-1 vote, with the dissenting Committee member expressing concern with potential use limitations that might be imposed on the land through the location of the thoroughfare alignment through the property.

MR 06-06



Legend

- MR_06-06
- Park Property

