

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 06-08
Proposed Property Trades and Acquisition on Little Sugar Creek Greenway

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County and Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) seek to trade ownership of several properties in the vicinity of Little Sugar Creek to consolidate ownership within two separate areas for development that has been previously approved as part of the long-range capital plans of the County Park and Recreation Department and the College. Currently, ownership of land is divided between the County and CPCC at each of these two major development sites. For parcels between East Seventh Street and the Duke Power Substation (hereafter, Seventh St. Site), County-owned property would be transferred to CPCC so the College can proceed to design and construct a Culinary Arts Facility with a large lawn area that may include a plaza type amenity, water feature, and/or green space to complement the Little Sugar Creek Greenway in this stretch of the creek. For parcels between Elizabeth Avenue and East Fourth Street (hereafter, Elizabeth Site), CPCC-owned property would be transferred to the County for greenway development along both sides of the creek.

Currently, the Seventh Street Site is asphalt surface parking (serving CPCC), vacant land, a fenced storage yard with storage building, a parcel containing a billboard, and the adjacent creek. Adjacent to the Seventh Street Site are I-277 and the Fifth Street connector to Independence Boulevard, the Duke Power substation, CPCC facilities, the Grady Cole Center (across Kings Drive) and other CPCC asphalt surface parking.

Currently, the Elizabeth Site is used for asphalt surface parking for the college and a utility transmission tower. Land to the southeast (across Little Sugar Creek) has already been acquired by the County to serve future greenway purposes. Adjacent to the site are I-277, the Duke Power substation, and College facilities.

The primary parcels in this transaction include:

Owned by Mecklenburg County; to be transferred to CPCC at Seventh Street Site:

- 080-131-09 – 1.96 acres currently an asphalt parking lot and zoned O-2; to be redeveloped as large lawn area for CPCC's Culinary Arts Facility
- 080-131-08 – 0.09 acre currently an undeveloped natural area along a portion of East Fifth Street and zoned B-2; to be included in the redeveloped site and lawn of Culinary Arts Facility
- 080-132-02 – 0.111 acre currently a small lawn adjacent to the tunnel underneath Kings Drive and leading to the Seventh St. Site and zoned MUDD-O; to remain as a small green area for the College to maintain in conjunction with keeping the tunnel in use for access to the Seventh St. Site from Central Campus
- A greenway easement will be retained through/around this site to maintain the continuity of the trail.

CPCC plans to re-zone all parcels to MUDD-O for consistency with the remainder of the CPCC Central Campus.

Owned by Central Piedmont Community College; to be transferred to Mecklenburg County at Elizabeth Site:

- 125-096-01 – 1.19 acres currently an asphalt parking lot zoned B-2; to be redeveloped as part of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway
- 125-096-02 – 0.29 acre currently an asphalt parking lot zoned B-2; to be redeveloped as part of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway
- This site will not be required to be re-zoned to serve as a greenway/park area.
- Parcel 080-172-12 – 0.26 acres at the corner of Kings Drive and E. Seventh Street in front of the Grady Cole Center (and currently improved with a corner of a parking lot) is proposed to be transferred to Mecklenburg County as part of this transaction. Transfer of this property (currently zoned MUDD-O) furthers the intent of the College and County to provide contiguous ownership of parcels within the Central Campus instead of the checkerboard pattern that currently exists.

The County is also seeking to obtain several other parcels as part of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway development or the College's project. Within the Seventh St. Site, there is a privately owned parcel that would be transferred to the College, if the County is successful in acquiring this site. This parcel is 080-131-07 and currently houses a billboard (0.08 acres owned by AOA Leasing Co. & Adams Outdoor Advertising and zoned B-2). At the Elizabeth Site, the County is seeking to acquire 125-095-01 (0.39 acres owned by Duke Power Company and zoned B-2) and seeking use a small portion of right of way along I-277. The Duke Power parcel houses a tower for transmission lines (which would remain unless other options were identified for relocating or burying these overhead lines). The NCDOT right of way piece is currently used for surface parking.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The College's current culinary facility has outgrown its present space on the main campus; a replacement facility was included in the county bonds approved by the public in November 2005. Because the County owned the middle parcel of the Seventh St. Site, the College identified that it would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, to fit a new Culinary Arts Facility on the portions of property owned by CPCC, thus requiring some property trade or permanent easements and

variances. As a result, the College and County began discussing the option of trading ownership of parcels. This property is shown on the Little Sugar Creek Master Plan renderings developed essentially as proposed.

The College expects to occupy the facility in 2009. Development of this entire section of Little Sugar Creek Greenway is consistent with the project's master plan and capital improvement plans utilizing greenway development bonds approved in November 2004.

The parties considered leaving the properties in the current ownership and jointly developing each of the two sites. Due to the coordination and approval issues created by the different timings and funding sources of the projects and due to issues relating to long-term operation and maintenance, the parties agreed it would be more efficient and cost effective to consolidate ownership within each site.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This project is consistent with public policies for park and recreation, planning, zoning, transportation and transit. See *RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS* for coordination efforts. The College will seek to rezone properties at the Seventh St. Site to MUDD-O for consistency with the remainder of Central Campus. The redevelopment of both sites will ensure an appropriate and consistent environment throughout this stretch of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway, as opposed to the intensive parking operations currently housed at the sites.

The 1999 Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan describes objectives that include preserving the 100-year floodplain as open/green space as well as providing greenway trails from point to point as much as is feasible through the floodplain. This property exchange supports these objectives by removing impervious surfaces from the floodplain while increasing public accessibility to and along the greenway.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Central District Plan* (1993) recommends greenway for most parcels; however, a small portion of parcel 080-131-09 is recommended for institutional use. Parcels 080-132-02 and 080-172-12 were included in the 2001 CPCC rezoning to MUDD-O. The Central District Plan recognizes the mixed use zoning, by recommending institutional, office, and commercial land uses for these sites. The continued use of 080-132-02 as open space is deemed appropriate because it complements the institutional use. There are no plans to change the existing land use of parcel 080-172-12. The transfer of this site to the County would provide contiguous ownership with an adjacent parcel. Thus, the proposed land trade will allow County Park and Recreation and CPCC to develop these parcels in a manner consistent with the adopted District Plan.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Trading ownership of the property has no impact as the respective projects at the two sites have been previously reviewed and approved as part of the long-range capital plans of the parties. Trading ownership makes the execution of these projects more efficient and cost effective.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The Seventh Street Site will become an amenity adjacent to the greenway trail planned along Kings Drive in this stretch of the greenway. The Elizabeth Site will provide development of another key segment of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway in the downtown area. The block bounded by I-277, Elizabeth Avenue, Kings Drive and Fourth Street will ultimately be entirely utilized as green space/greenway providing an aesthetic view from the surrounding roadways and will be totally accessible to pedestrians from all directions except I-277.

The College is reconsidering the amenities planned for the lawn area of the Seventh Street Site (as shown in the Little Sugar Creek Master Site Plan) to better accommodate potential future easements or rights of way for a possible extension of the Fifth Street connector to Kings Drive, a potential light rail line or bus/rapid transit way on an alignment between East Fifth Street and Sam Ryburn Walk, and a potential future greenway trail alongside these transportation options.

Staff of the County and College have discussed joint use opportunities for educational programming related to the Greenway, overflow of greenway users to the Culinary Arts Facility's lawn, and potential partnering in other aspects of greenway development.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Both projects are funded through Mecklenburg County General Obligation Bonds. The Seventh Street Site is funded through 2005 County bonds, with an estimated occupancy in 2009. The Elizabeth Site is proposed to be at least partially developed utilizing 2004 Park and Recreation (greenway) development bonds. Acquisition by the County would be funded by 1999 Land Bonds.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at its March 1, 2006 meeting. CATS staff noted that they had worked with County and CPCC staffs in formulating their plans for the Seventh Street site to enable a future Sam Ryburn/Fifth Street connector that might be necessary as part of the Southeast Corridor transit alignment improvement. It was also noted that CPCC college parking – proposed for acquisition by the County – would continue to be made available as long as development schedules permit to CPCC students and staff. No other comments were offered.

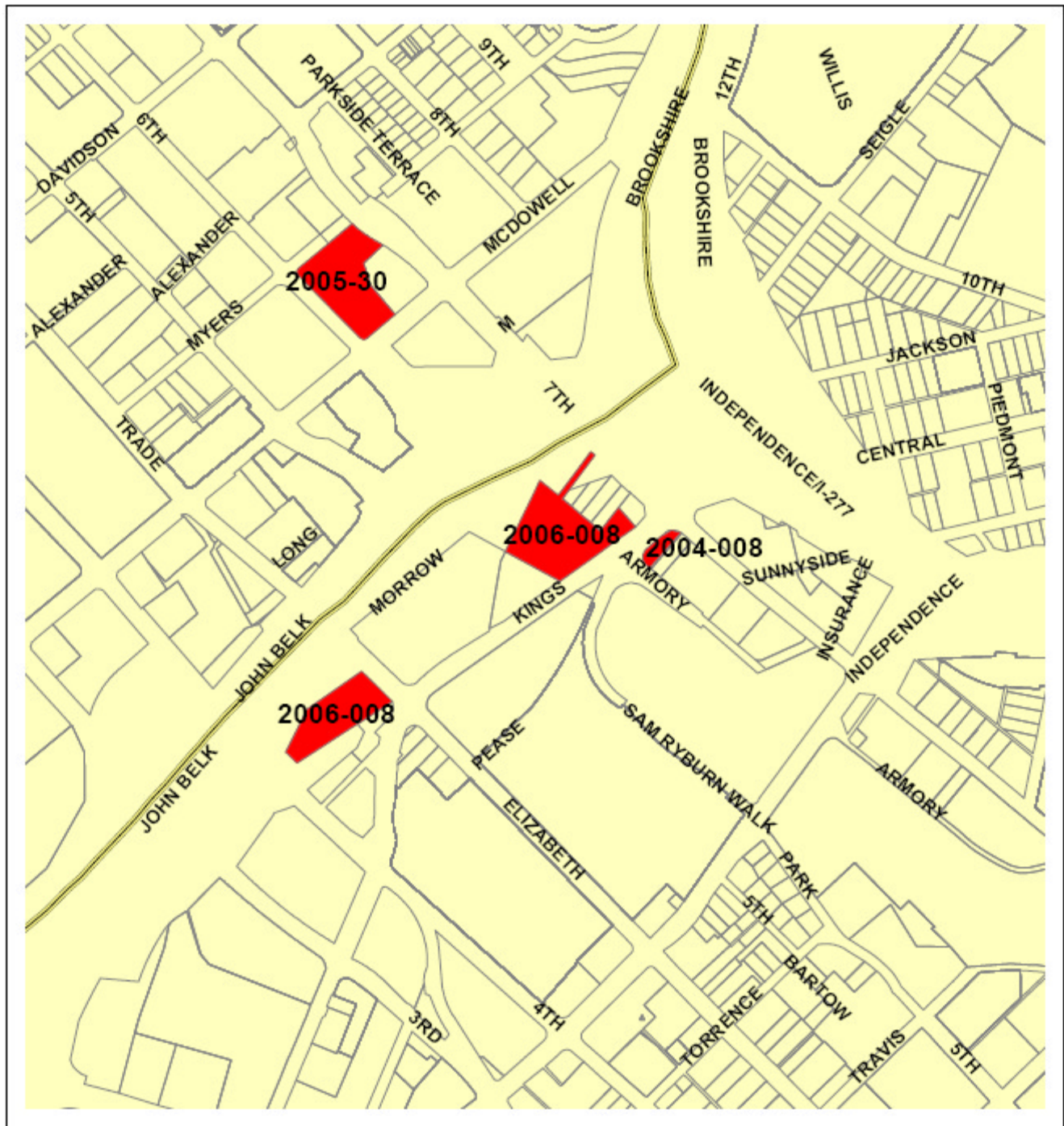
CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff supports this trade of ownership to allow Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation and CPCC to develop these areas in conjunction with their master plans.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their May 16, 2006 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed transactions by a 5-0 vote.

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Legend

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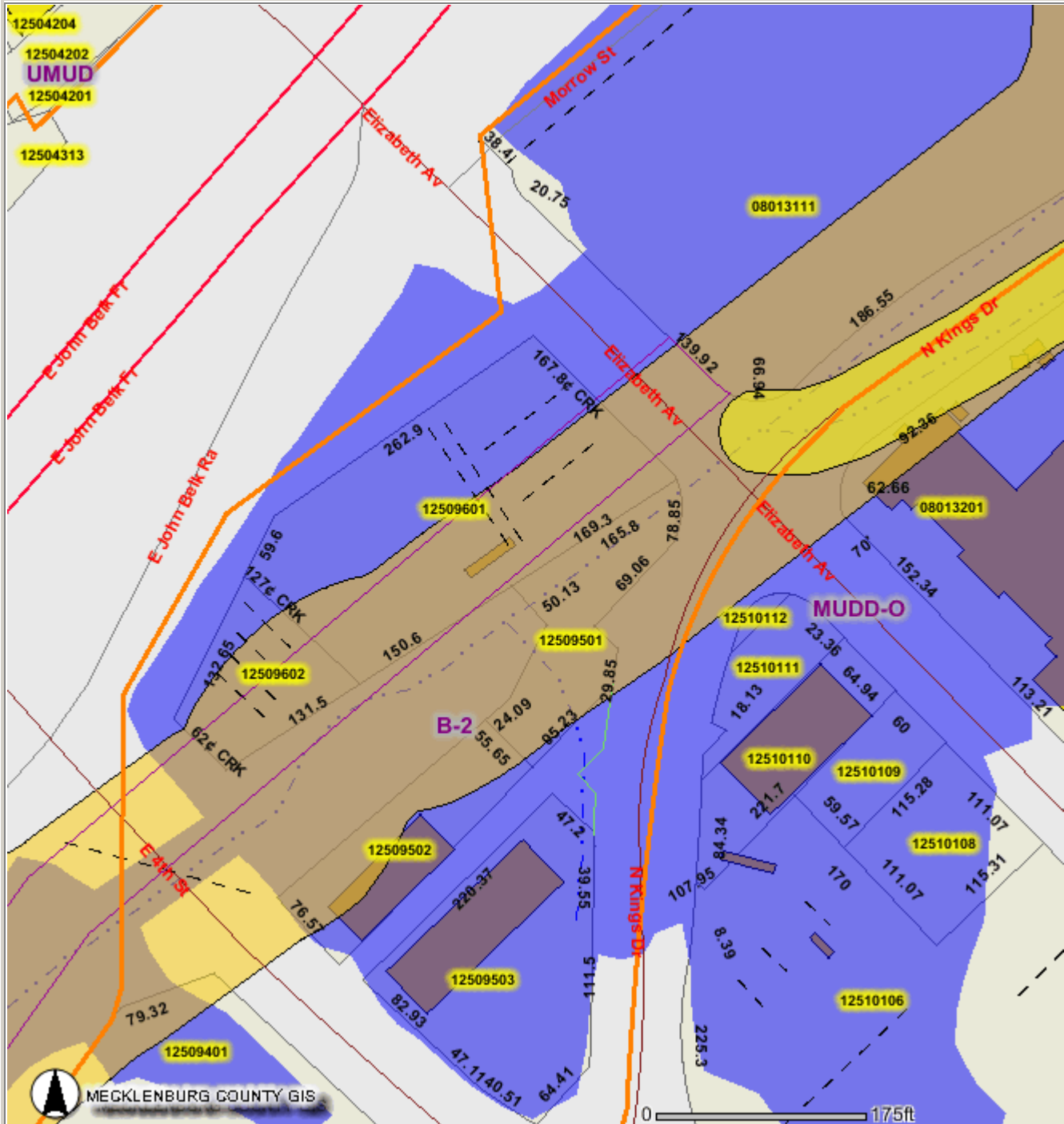
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

POLARIS

Property Ownership Land Records Information System

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Elizabeth Site



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