

**MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 06-19**  
**Proposed New Location for Hickory Grove Branch Library**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

This project will replace the existing Hickory Grove Branch Library (7209 East W.T. Harris Boulevard) with a new facility to be located on the site of the old Hickory Grove Elementary School at 6300 Highland Avenue in Charlotte (parcel 10801324). The existing location is leased space in a small shopping center directly across the street from the Hickory Grove Baptist Church. The lease terminates in 2008. The existing location is 5,100 square feet, while the new facility is envisioned to be 16,500 square feet.

This project is part of a series of agreements between Mecklenburg County, Park & Recreation, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and the Library. The County has acquired property adjacent to the school site (parcel 10801323), which was discussed in Mandatory Referral 01-50. There is an agreement between the County and CMS to swap land so that CMS would be able to build a new school on the property that had been acquired by the County. CMS would vacate the old school, demolish the building, and transfer title of the previous school property to the County which would use the property for a park and for the library. The envisioned final complex would consist of a school, library, and park.

The Library completed a feasibility study to verify that the site was adequate for the Library and to analyze renovation of the old school building vs. demolition and new construction. The result of that study showed that there was marginal cost savings to renovate but there were significant program and design compromises. Therefore the decision was made to not attempt to retrofit any portion of the old school building to serve as the new library.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The existing library facility is inadequate because the size limits all significant program elements such as collections, reader seats, public access computers, meeting room space and staff workstations. The proposed new facility will overcome these restrictions.

The physical proximity of the proposed library to the school and to the park creates significant opportunities for physical coordination (e.g. internal pedestrian connectivity) as well as programmatic collaboration (e.g. shared use of facilities).

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

This project is consistent with the Library's Ten Year Facilities Master Plan. It was identified by the Libraries as the highest priority project out of the five submitted for FY07, and was recommended for funding by the Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

This project will have minimal impact because it is a reuse of property that has already had intensive public use for many years. Potential negative impacts arising from proximity of the proposed library to the school and the park (such as on-site traffic congestion, etc.) will be collaboratively addressed by all the involved partners.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:**

This project involves an elementary school, a public library and a park on the same property. Every effort will be made to eliminate duplication of development and operating costs by sharing site amenities.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

By prior agreement, CMS will vacate and demolish the old school in the summer of 2007. Therefore, the Library will design and bid construction so that library construction will start directly after demolition. Completion and opening is projected for summer 2008.

This project is funded by County FY07 Certificates of Participation (COPS) funding.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

**CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

Defer, per applicant