

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 06-27
Proposed Sale of City-owned Property on Archdale Drive

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The City of Charlotte owns 2501 Archdale Drive (Parcel 173-061-02) which contains approximately 24.86 acres. The property is currently vacant except that it is crossed by overhead electrical transmission lines, and is crossed by a sewer trunk line. Current zoning of the property is R-4 single family residential. The property is bounded on the west by Charlotte Housing Authority property (Leafcrest apartment complex), on the east by Little Sugar Creek, and on the south by the former Celanese manufacturing property (for which a residential redevelopment is proposed). Duke Power seeks to acquire approximately 6.8 acres of this property on which to build a substation (See attached diagram).

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The former Celanese manufacturing site has been acquired for future residential development. However the project will need additional electrical power, necessitating the construction of a power substation. The subject property was acquired by the Airport for wetland mitigation, and the portion proposed for sale will not adversely affect the property's ability to be used for wetland mitigation in the future.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

One City Council focus area for 2007 is Housing and Neighborhood Development. The sale of this land will enable the construction of 851 residential units on the former Celanese site. This land will be used to provide essential infrastructure for the transformation of a closed industrial site of 120 acres into a residential community that will be home to over 2,000 citizens.

In addition, the City's asset management policy stipulates that properties that are no longer needed should be marketed, sold, and returned to the property tax rolls.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *South District Plan* (1993) calls for the portion of the site proposed for conveyance to be multi-family residential, with greenway along the eastern (floodplain) portion of the site. The use proposed by the transaction (substation) is not consistent with the residential recommendation in the plan, however new utility locations are not typically specified in land use plans. Further, "utility structures" is a use that is allowed – under special buffering and screening conditions – in residential districts in the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance.

The former Celanese property was rezoned MX-2 for a mix of residential development (case 2004-121), in July 2005. Because the property has only one means of egress, the developer was required to provide for a stub road to a future road extension onto the subject City-owned property. The intention was that in the future, when the subject was developed, possibly in conjunction with the adjoining Housing Authority property, the street connection would be made. This would be in support of the City's Connectivity Policy. The proposed sale of the property substantially reduces the opportunity for achieving connectivity through the subject site to Archdale Drive at Rose Valley Drive by placing a large utility structure in the way.

The County's *Greenway Master Plan* calls for greenway along Little Sugar Creek. The subject property is crisscrossed by a number of existing utility lines paralleling the creek, providing a number of potential constraints on the design of the greenway.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The sale of this land will allow the redevelopment of a former industrial site into a mixed residential use project with an estimated investment of \$127 million. When completed, the development is anticipated to produce 851 residential units.

In addition, Mecklenburg County will construct a portion of the Little Sugar Creek greenway across a portion of the eastern segment of the property that is not being proposed to be conveyed.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The development of this substation that will be enabled by the sale of this property will allow for the adjoining residential redevelopment of a former industrial site. At the same time, the proposed substation development inhibits provision of street connectivity to the Celanese property in the future, and limits opportunities for long-term redevelopment of the Housing Authority site.

The proposed development may have impacts on Park & Recreation's development of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway unless property lines, easements, and structure placement are carefully designed and designs carefully coordinated with one another. The proposed development may also impact future sewer trunk needs for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Duke Power anticipates purchasing property prior to March 31, 2007.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed the matter at their November 1, 2006 meeting and a number of issues were discussed. Specifically, it was stated that there is a continuing need by the airport for use of portions of the site for wetlands mitigation, which was the reason for its original purchase. Park and Recreation's need for the greenway trail and other facilities on the west side of the creek, as most of their current land is on the west side of the creek in this general area. This poses a possibility of inconsistency with the need for easements for sewer lines, as Park & Recreation's position is that they prefer that greenway improvements not be constructed within sewer easements, thus possibly requiring additional land area along the creek for both greenway and sewer uses.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities is evaluating the impact of property disposition within the context of future sewer demand in the Little Sugar Creek basin, and that evaluation is not yet complete. The possibility exists that additional sewer easement width (beyond that which currently exists) may be necessary in order to accommodate future sewer needs in the basin.

Charlotte Department of Transportation expressed concern over the prospect of the loss of connectivity and second means of entrance and egress for future residents of the Celanese site development.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

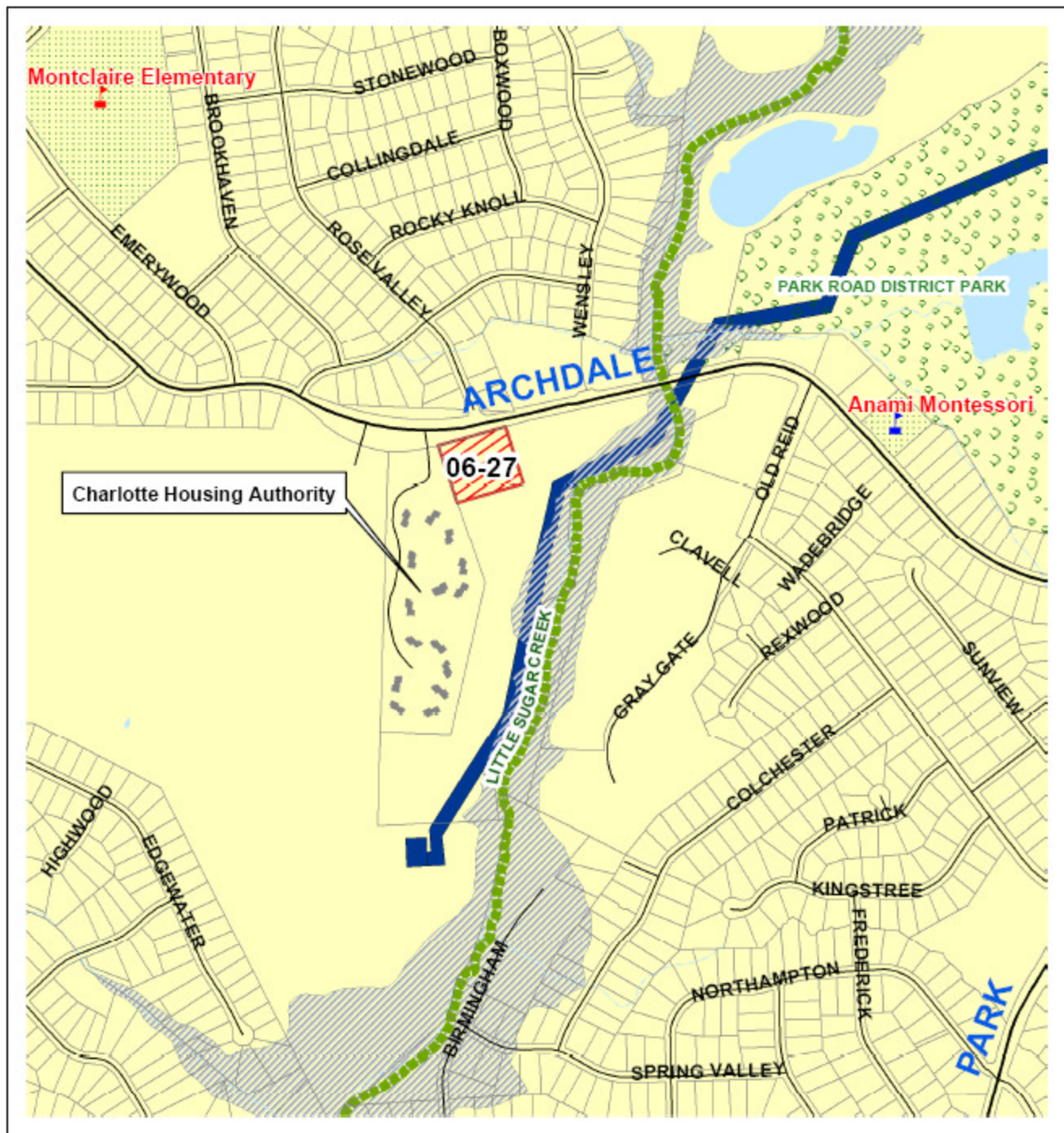
The proposal is not consistent with the residential recommendation contained in the *South District Plan*, (note that new utility locations are typically not specified in the district plans) and has negative consequences for street connectivity and future access to the large housing development project for which the proposed electric substation is purported to serve. However, the subject site is already impacted by the number of utility lines already in place, limiting its developability for residential purposes. Furthermore, the use is allowed in residential zoning districts subject to buffering requirements.

Staff therefore recommends approval of the sale of a portion of the property to Duke Power for purposes of a substation, conditioned upon: (1) boundaries of the area to be conveyed be adjusted to meet the mutual needs of County Park & Recreation for greenway purposes, and Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities for current and anticipated sewer purposes, and (2) that disposition of the property does not preclude installation of a future street connection in the eventuality of redevelopment of the Housing Authority site.




CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:



At their November 21, 2006 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended with a 4-1 vote that this proposed transaction be denied. Reasons given included that the proposed sub-station would be located on the most usable portion of the parcel, thus rendering the remainder of the site useless for future development, and that the sub-station (and associated transmission infrastructure) would be visible from surrounding properties, despite the change in gradient and the buffering requirements contained in the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The minority opinion stated that given the proper amount of screening, this appears to be an appropriate use of the land.

Mandatory Referral 06-27



Department: City of Charlotte Real Estate

-  Mandatory Referral
-  Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
-  Overhead Electrical Transmission Lines

-  FEMA 100 Year Floodplain
-  Greenway



Map Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission for illustrative purposes only.

