

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 06-32
Proposed Expansion of Thereasea Clark Elder Park

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County proposes to acquire 6112 Carver Boulevard (tax parcel 043-011-18) in the Rockwell Park neighborhood (approximately 1.12 acres) to expand the adjoining 18-acre Thereasea Clark Elder Park. The neighborhood park currently consists of five tax parcels fronting on Rockwell Church Road (PID #s 043-011-41, -37, -53, -39, -40) and one tax parcel fronting on Carver Boulevard (PID # 043-011-19). The 1.12-acre subject property adjoins the existing park property along its south and east boundaries. The property is primarily forested and includes a small dilapidated one-story house (circa 1958). This property is zoned R-5 Residential. Park & Recreation has neither specific development plans nor funding for site development at this time, so the land will likely remain vacant for the foreseeable future.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The expansion of this park will provide community residents with additional open space for outdoor recreation purposes. Acquisition of this parcel (and subsequent integration into the park) will also increase visibility and accessibility of the park from the street, and from the adjoining residential neighborhood.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This acquisition is consistent with the 1989 Parks Master Plan which provides for neighborhood parks up to 25 acres in size; acquisition will expand the current 18-acre park to closer to the 25-acre goal.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

According to the *Northeast District Plan* approved by City Council in 1996, residential development up to 8 units per acre is recommended for this property. The remainder of the current park property also carries this land use recommendation. Parkland is generally considered to be an acceptable land use in areas designated for future residential development.

In addition, this property (as well as a good portion of the current park) falls within ½ mile of the proposed Derita station on the North Corridor commuter transit line. The *Transit Station Area Joint Development Principles Policies and Guidelines* (approved by City Council in 2003) establishes a principle to “Encourage complementary public facilities (such as schools, parks/open space, libraries and social service organizations) at or near transit stations to serve both transit users and surrounding neighborhoods” (emphasis added). Finally, the *Transit Station Area Principles* (adopted by City Council in 2001) recognize (1) that open space should be an integral element of transit station area land use, and (2) that less land use development intensity should be located between ¼ and ½ mile of transit stations, with greater intensity within ¼ mile (note that the subject parcel is just under ½ mile from the proposed station). While the expansion of a park of close to 20 acres might not be considered appropriate within ¼ mile of the transit station, the park’s location ½ mile from the station represents an appropriate land use transition from station area to lower developmental densities beyond ½ mile.

PROJECT IMPACT:

This project will have a positive impact on the Rockwell Park Community by preserving additional open space for outdoor recreation. This project should have no negative impacts on the neighborhood.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This property is located immediately adjacent to Thereasea Clark Elder Park and will serve to expand the acreage of this neighborhood park.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Mecklenburg County anticipates acquiring this property in December 2006 or January 2007. Once acquired, this property will be added to the neighborhood park, but construction of additional improvements will not occur in the foreseeable future.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

At their December 6, 2006 meeting the Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter, and no substantive comments were offered.

CMPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff supports this proposed transaction and recommends approval of the property acquisition for the stated purpose.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At its December 19, 2006 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 4-0 vote.

