

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 07-17
Proposed Acquisition of Spirit Square Complex by Mecklenburg County from City of Charlotte

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The proposed transaction is the conveyance of ownership from the City of Charlotte to Mecklenburg County of all interest in the complex known as Spirit Square (parcels 080-023-03, 080-023-04, 080-023-11 and 080-023-12) located at 324 N. Tryon Street, 345 N. Tryon Street, 345 N. College Street and 319 N. College Street, respectively. These parcels are currently either entirely owned by the City of Charlotte, or whose ownership is shared between the City and Mecklenburg County. The goal is to get the entire complex under single ownership in order to make it easier to dispose of the property to realize its highest and best future use.

Once this conveyance unites these tracts under single ownership, a redevelopment plan will be devised through a request for proposal (RFP) process that combines some element of the public arts now existing (galleries, studios for dance, art, photography and music education, etc.) with the private redevelopment of the site for retail, office, and residential use. The review and selection process would involve staff from the City, the County, Center City Partners, and representatives of the Spirit Square Community Task Force.

The successful development team would be required to respect the historic significance of the former First Baptist Church building (designated a local landmark in 1976), would need to accommodate arts programs scheduled to remain at Spirit Square, and would not be conveyed the historic portions of the property (which would remain in County ownership).

This proposed transaction is an element of the proposed land exchange involving the City and the County (and other parties) and including Marshall Park and the proposed Third Ward Park. Both the City Council and County Commission have authorized their respective Managers to negotiate and execute this exchange.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The conveyance and redevelopment of this property will create a highest and best use of this prominent property and preserve the original First Baptist Church component that houses the McGlohan and Duke Power Theatres within the new redevelopment scenario. It is also an element of a larger series of transactions involving (among other properties) Marshall Park and the proposed Third Ward Park.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The redevelopment scenario preserves an historic structure (First Baptist Church) and is expected to house additional components of the visual and performing arts and arts education entities that enrich our community.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Center City 2010 Vision Plan* (adopted by City Council and County Commission in 2000) recommends integration of existing remaining historic buildings into its modern urban fabric and recognizing these structures' importance in telling Charlotte's history. The use of Spirit Square as a cultural facility is consistent with this notion. Since this property is only changing ownership, the land use is not impacted.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The transfer from City to County ownership will have no physical impacts upon the site or its surroundings. The redevelopment of this property will cause short-term impacts on the tenants currently located within the complex in that the site will need to be vacated for renovation and new construction. Also, impacts on the immediate area relative to vehicular and pedestrian traffic will occur during construction. An improved, expanded mixed-use complex will replace the existing facility.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The redevelopment of this property will enhance the tax base, preserve historic facilities, increase residential opportunities within the I-277 Loop, and house some components of the arts community. No adverse effects are known at this time other than relocation of existing tenants. There is some potential for joint use within the redevelopment of this property, undetermined at this point.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Redevelopment of this site will be privately funded along with a public contribution (County) as yet to be determined. A recommendation plan to launch this project is currently being formulated by a stakeholders group.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force was polled by e-mail on this matter the week of July 2, 2007, and the following comments were offered:

- CMS currently occupies six studio spaces and one rehearsal hall in Spirit Square and wishes to continue to be able to occupy those spaces in the future
- While not a joint use issue, the issue of whether air rights over the historic church structure would be made available as part of site redevelopment was also raised

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

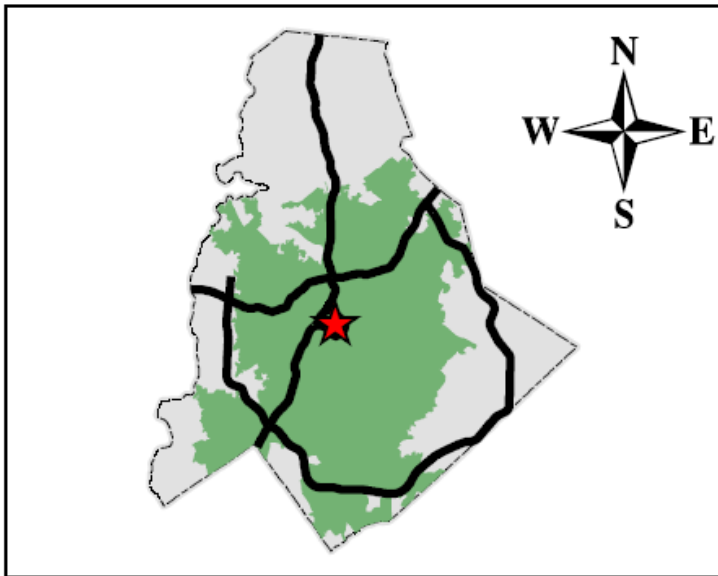
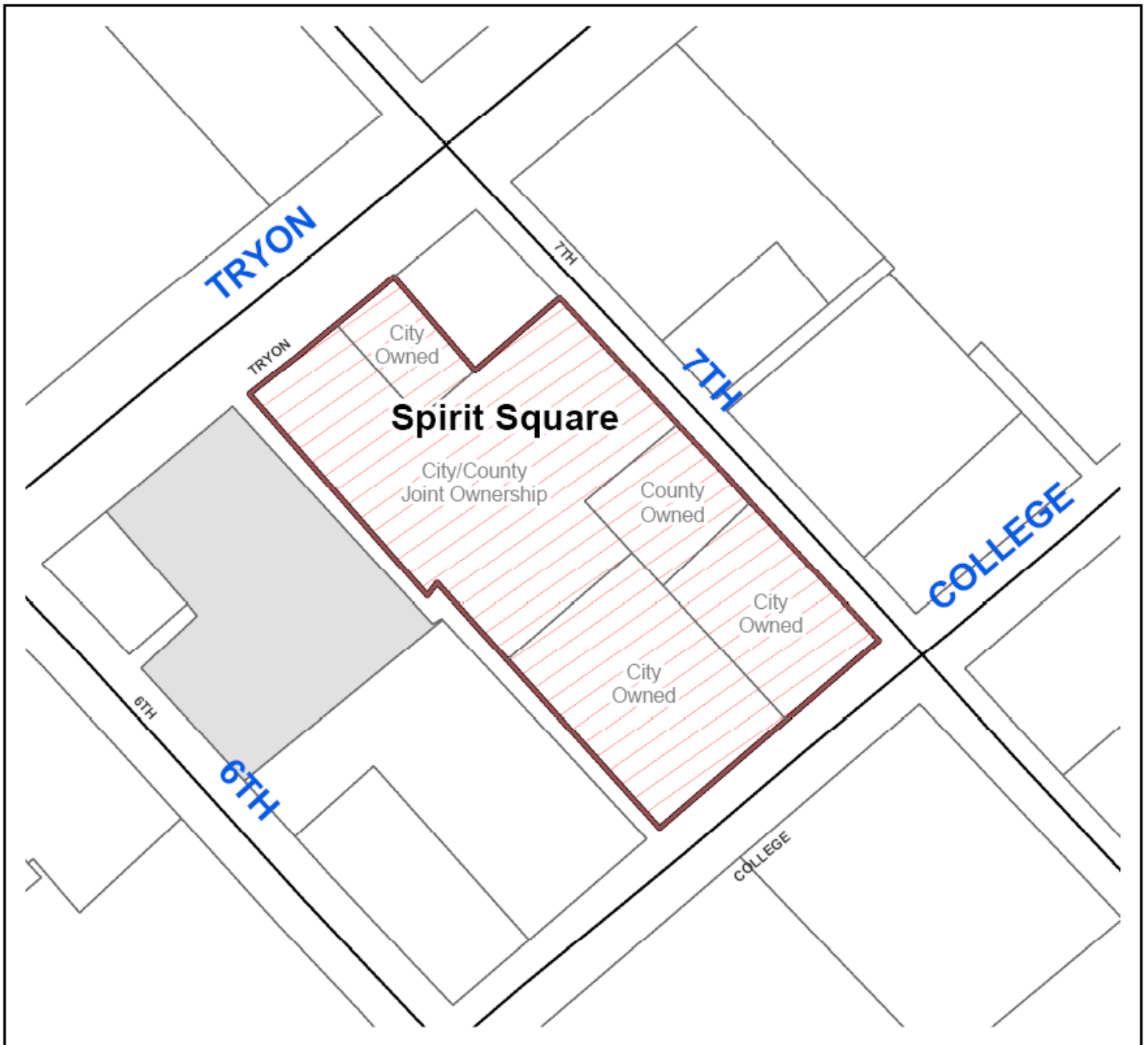
Planning staff supports the conveyance of this property from the City to the County with the following conditions:

- that the historic building is to remain following site redevelopment, and
- that sale of the property to a future developer will be the subject of a separate Mandatory Referral

This recommendation is predicated on the Center City 2010 Vision Plan policy of blending past and present historic character to create a memorable city.



CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their July 17, 2007 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended approval of this transaction by a 5-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 07-17

County Real Estate Services

-  Mandatory Referral
-  Library

SPIRIT SQUARE








0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Miles

Spirit Square Properties

Legend

-  Mecklenburg County
-  City/County Joint Ownership
-  City of Charlotte

