

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 08-12
Proposed Expansion of Allison Farm Park Property in the Town of Davidson's ETJ

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County, working in cooperation with the Town of Davidson, proposes to purchase approximately 3.8 acres to expand the Allison Farm park property which was acquired by the County in 2005 and subsequently leased to the Town for future parkland development (Mandatory Referral MR05-09). The original acquisition consisted of 34.34 acres (tax parcel 003-051-06) located on Shearer Road just south of the Iredell County line. The proposed 3.8-acre expansion is the rear portion of the 7.55-acre tax parcel 003-051-03 (the front portion of this parcel will continue as a private residential property). The property to be acquired is undeveloped and consists of woodland and agricultural field/pasture. This property is zoned by the Town of Davidson as RPA (Rural Planning Area).

The purpose of the acquisition is to enhance the size of the proposed active recreation Allison Farm Park whose design will begin in Spring, 2008.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Through its Parks Master Plan, the Town of Davidson is striving to meet the recreational needs of its residents while preserving the rural character of the community. Once acquired by the County, this property will be added to the lease with the Town of Davidson for future park development. This expansion will enhance the configuration of the current park property.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Land acquisition will enlarge the proposed park and will allow better connectivity to adjoining properties, particularly getting closer to Fisher Farm Park, thus supporting Town connectivity goals. The developer of Abersham (52 single family homes just north of the park) has built a road connection to the park as well as a multi-use trail along Grey and Shearer Roads that will bring park users to the park without having to use arterial roads. The Town of Davidson also supports the proposed action.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The proposed project is consistent with the Town of Davidson's land planning goals. According to the Town Planning Department, the Town Land Use Plan describes the area as rural and is within a viewshed of the Shearer Road area planned for protection. The open nature of the proposed recreation fields supports that goal. The proposed land use is therefore consistent with the Town's land use policies in the Rural Planning Area.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition of this property will increase the Town's open space and parkland acreage and improve the configuration of the park boundary for developing recreational amenities.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The subject property and the Allison Farm park property are located in close proximity to Fisher Farm Park (parcel # 003-111-04 and Brackett Bluff Nature Preserve (parcel # 003-071-15; 003-071-04), also located along Shearer Road (see map). Fisher Farm Park is a 200-acre park site (currently being developed) owned and operated by the Town of Davidson. This park will be primarily developed with low-impact, passive recreational amenities (greenway trail, hiking/biking trails, picnic areas, playgrounds, playfields). Mecklenburg County holds a conservation easement on this property in accordance with the Open Space/Parkland Acquisition Challenge Program Interlocal Agreement. The conservation easement limits the size of the active recreation area and serves to protect the rural viewshed, riparian corridors and forest habitat. The Allison Farm park property, located just north of Fisher Farm Park, will be developed as a more active-recreation oriented facility. The Town is planning to eventually connect the two sites via the West Branch Rocky River Greenway. The two park sites are currently separated by an 84.62-acre parcel (003-331-02) slated for residential development.

The 60-acre Brackett Bluff Nature Preserve (undeveloped) is a natural heritage site of Regional Significance owned and managed by Mecklenburg County. As a nature preserve, this property is afforded the highest level of protection within the Mecklenburg County parkland classification system. In accordance with the 1997 Nature Preserve Master Plan, the property can only be used for passive recreation purposes (i.e. hiking, nature study, etc.). The site is identified as a natural heritage site by the State based on the presence of diverse natural communities, rare plant species and unusually steep topography. As such, the State places a high priority on the preservation of this property. This site is located on the east side of Shearer Road and adjoins the Rocky River. This property is protected by a conservation easement held by the Catawba Lands Conservancy. Any future development of this site will be limited to pedestrian trails.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Acquisition of the subject park expansion land is expected to be completed in Spring 2008. Preliminary design of the Allison Farm park property will soon be underway. Development will occur as funding becomes available.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

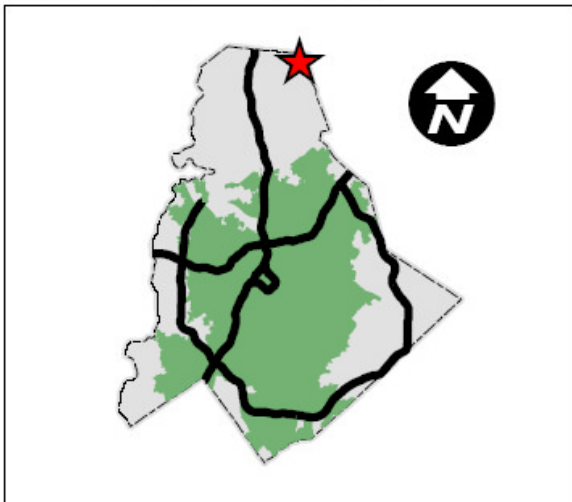
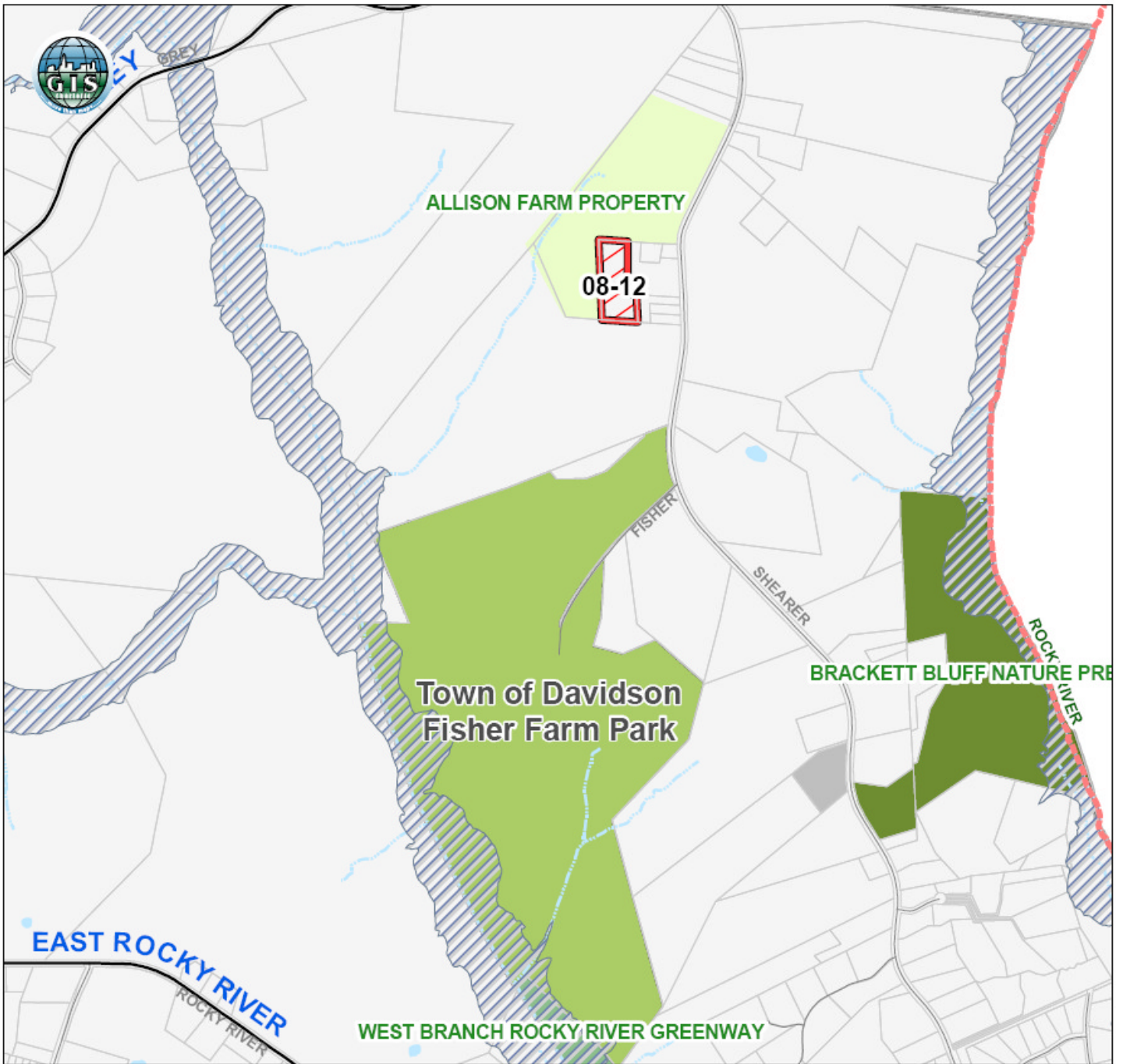
The Joint Use Task Force discussed the matter at their March 5, 2008 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of acquisition for the intended use.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their March 18, 2008 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 08-12

County Real Estate Department

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| Developed Greenway | Mandatory Referral |
| Owned Greenway | Existing Park |
| Proposed Greenway | Proposed Park |
| Greenway Construction | Greenway |
| FEMA 100 Year Floodplain | Preserve |