

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 09-09
Proposed Acquisition of a Fire Station Site in the Eastland Mall Area of Charlotte

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The Charlotte Fire Department has identified the need to construct a new fire station in the Eastland Mall area. The proposed site is at 5620 Central Avenue in East Charlotte near Eastland Mall. Parcel 103-021-04 is approximately 1.209 acres of land currently zoned B-2 and O-1 and parcel 103-021-12 is approximately 1.151 acres currently zoned O-1, for a total of approximately 2.36 acres. The area is primarily commercial in nature. The site is located across Central Avenue from the Eastland Mall property.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This area has experienced significant change and growth over the years. Not only are there response time issues due to the spacing of current Station 3 (located at 6512 Monroe Road), Station 8 (1201 The Plaza), Station 15 (3617 Frontenac Avenue), Station 23 (7400 East W.T. Harris Blvd.) and Station 29 (2121 Margaret Wallace Road), but the emergency workload in this area is also the heaviest in the city. Engine 15, Ladder 23, and Engine 23 (listed above with the corresponding station numbers) were the first, third, and fifth busiest companies from July 1 2007 through June 30 2008, with 4,311, 3,450, and 3,160 runs respectively. A new station is needed to ease the workload at the surrounding stations and to improve response time to incidents in the area. This station would serve to provide stability to the area and address fire workload and response concerns. The new station would fill a gap in the service area.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The Charlotte Fire Department applies several standards to the placement and operation of fire stations, specifically:

- locate one Engine within 2.5 miles of all structures and a Ladder company within 4 miles of all structures, and
- provide response time of 6 minutes for first truck and nine minutes for three trucks within service area.

Constructing a fire station at this location helps achieve these goals and maximizes the efficiency of their fire protection coverage.

Additionally, the following criteria are used in selecting a fire station site. Site must be:

- Rectangular or square in shape
- Strategically spaced between neighboring stations to provide quick response to each neighboring station's area.
- Located on a main road, but not too close to a major intersection, to allow for easy site exit
- Good street line of sight distance
- Near the crest of a road and not located in the valley of a road.
- Sit at or just above road elevation.
- Preferably vacant (no active business properties or owner occupant homes unless property owners agree to sell).

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Eastland Area Plan* (adopted by City Council in 2003) recommended the subject site for Mixed Use Multi-family/Office/Retail, as an element of the proposed "Town Center" in the Eastland Mall area. Although this plan does not specify locations for civic facilities, it does call out Civic Uses as a desirable element for the Town Center along Central Avenue, on either the north or south side of the street. The health and safety of the community depends on provision of appropriate support facilities such as fire stations. Both business and office zoning classifications permit government buildings.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The property to be acquired is approximately 2.36 acres of land improved with a 3,898 square foot commercial building that was previously leased to a bank. The building has been vacant for more than one year and would be demolished. The property is across from Eastland Mall and would be the first new development in the area for several years. This site was specifically chosen as it provides easy access to both Central Avenue and Albemarle Road.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

Personnel at this location would be the first responders for health and safety issues in the immediate area. They will also provide the much needed backup for Fire Stations 3, 15, and 23.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Land purchase is expected to be completed by June 30, 2009. Funding for design and construction of the station was approved in the FY 2009 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) and funding for land acquisition will be included again in the FY 2010 CIP request. A budget ordinance will be submitted on the May 26, 2009 agenda to enable closing prior to FY 2010 so the City can apply for stimulus funding for fire station construction.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

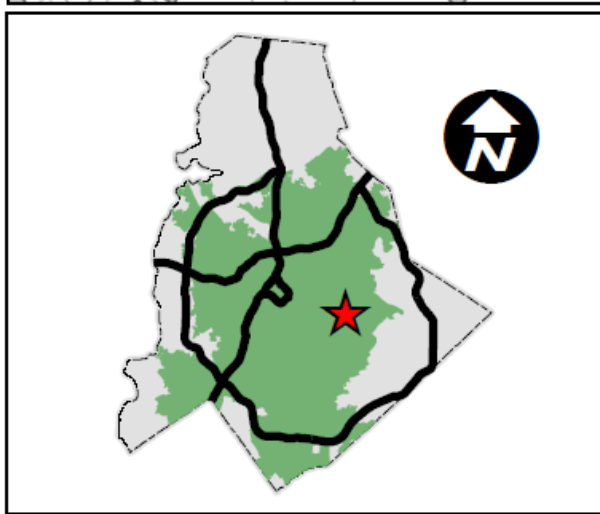
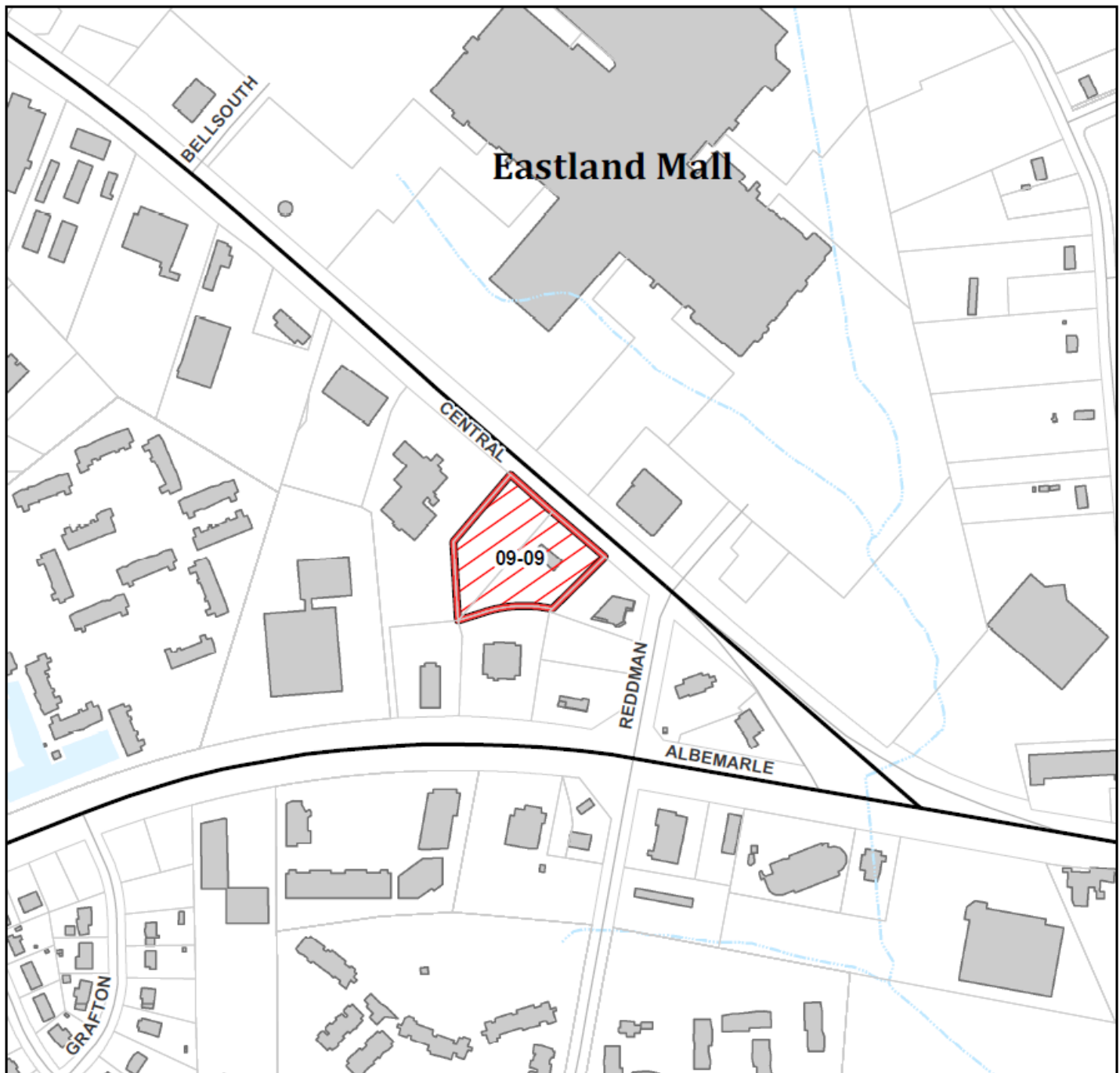
The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this matter at their June 3, 2009 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed fire station is consistent with the mixed use recommendation of the Eastland Area Plan, to include Civic Facilities. It also is an element of health and safety necessary for the community. As such, Staff recommends approval of the proposal.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their June 16, 2009 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 09-09

Submitted by: City Real Estate

Initiated by: Charlotte Fire Department



Mandatory Referral



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department

