

**MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 09-11**

**Proposed Acquisition of Land for an Elementary School Site on Johnston Oehler Road in Mallard Creek Park**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools proposes to build an elementary school on approximately 10 acres fronting Johnston Oehler Road within Mallard Creek Park that is owned by Mecklenburg County. The park is located between Prosperity Church Road and Mallard Creek Road in north Charlotte. The tax parcel number assigned to the park is 029-342-33. (This Mandatory Referral replaces MR 08-34 as that property was not purchased.)

The specific site for the proposed elementary school is vacant and wooded, located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Johnston Oehler Road at the baseball field entrance drive. The site is located within an area which is zoned R-3 (single family residential), according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. Mallard Creek High School is also within the park, located several hundred yards northwest of this proposed school site. The majority of the park is to the west (soccer fields) and to the south (ball fields). The community center and gym are located to the east, beyond several single family homes. The community center has a separate entrance.

Across Johnston Oehler Road to the northeast and northwest is vacant land, followed by a few older single family homes and the Robyn's Glen subdivision.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The proposed elementary school site currently lies within the Mallard Creek Elementary School attendance boundary and will relieve overcrowding at Mallard Creek and Highland Creek Elementary Schools. Highland Creek Elementary is approximately 1 ¼ miles north of the Johnston Oehler Road site. Mallard Creek Elementary is approximately 2 ½ miles southwest. The elementary school under construction at Salome Church Road will open in 2009 and is located 2 ½ miles to the southeast.

The overcrowding of these elementary schools is a result of the population growth that has occurred in the northeast portion of Mecklenburg County and the University area. Highland Creek Elementary School has a core capacity of 670 students and an expected enrollment of 1,207 in 2010. Mallard Creek Elementary School has a core capacity of 1,046 and an expected enrollment of 1,231 in 2010. Growth is expected to continue as the final sections of the I-485 are completed.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2008 *Long Range School Facilities Master Plan* identifies the need to build a new elementary school in this approximate location by the year 2010-2011. Schools are located at or adjacent to park sites at many other locations in the county.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The *Northeast District Plan* (1996) recommends park/open space use for the project site. Land use plans do not always include all appropriate locations for schools, but schools are considered to be compatible land uses with parks.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

The property is strategically located to address immediate elementary school enrollment growth in this region of Mecklenburg County. The opening of a new elementary school in this area would relieve overcrowding at Highland Creek Elementary School and Mallard Creek Elementary School.

Johnston Oehler Road is the main thoroughfare through the area. Increased traffic around the school campus is expected for two 30-minute periods in the morning and afternoon. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools works closely with Charlotte Department of Transportation and the site designers to minimize this impact.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:**

There are no known public or private projects that will be impacted by this project. The development of a school at this location may represent enhanced school/park joint use opportunities.

Outstanding County financial obligations to CMS for Joint Use activities operated by Park & Recreation will be offset in part by County dedication of the site for this school.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION**

School design and construction will be funded by a future bond referendum. Ideally, the expected elementary school completion date and move-in date is for the 2010-2011 academic year (per the *Long Range Plan*), however the completion date will be determined by the timing of the referendum.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

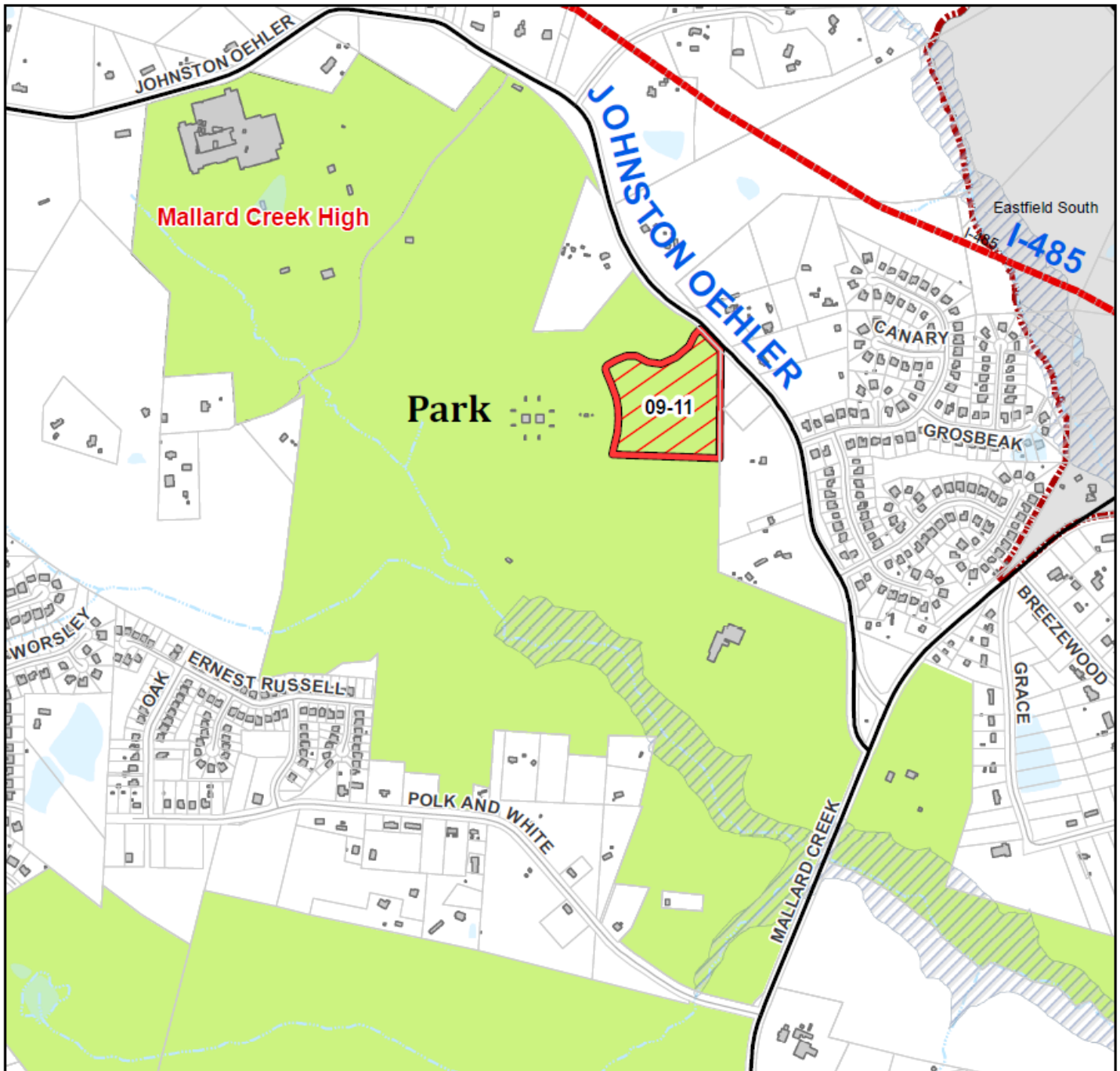
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their June 3, 2009 meeting and no joint use comments were offered, although Park & recreation staff in attendance acknowledged that this was a good joint use project that the department endorses.

**PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Planning staff recommends approval of the proposed acquisition of the 10 acres within Mallard Creek Park to develop an elementary school.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

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



# Mandatory Referral 09-11

Submitted and Initiated by: CMS



Mandatory Referral



County Property



2009 Annexation Areas



Existing Thoroughfare



Proposed Thoroughfare



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department