

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 09-14
Proposed New Police Station Location for Providence Division of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

City of Charlotte Real Estate proposes that a facility be designed and constructed to meet the specifications for a new Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) Providence Division headquarters that would replace the current 7,000 square foot leased facility at 3500 Latrobe Drive. The new 12,500 square foot facility would be constructed and owned by the City of Charlotte. Government buildings up to 12,500 square feet are allowed in the current R-22 MF zoning district. The proposed site is 2.5 acres at the northeast corner of North Wendover Road and Ellington Street in the Grier Heights neighborhood of Charlotte (consisting of parcels 157-054-05, 157-054-06, 157-054-07, 157-054-08, 157-054-09, 157-054-32, and a portion of 157-054-10).

The current land use is residential (the site currently contains approximately 15 dwelling units, although some are currently unoccupied) and the site is zoned R-22 multi-family residential, according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. Land use in the area is a mix of residential and commercial. The current owner of the property states that she has made arrangements for relocation of tenants in occupied units on the site to other suitable units nearby.

It is the intent of Real Estate to seek re-zoning of the property from R-22 MF to NS (Neighborhood Services) to accommodate the proposed land use and in order to minimize setbacks and therefore minimize community impact and site size (and property acquisition costs). The preliminary plan is to submit a re-zoning petition for an October, 2009 public hearing.

The residential units that currently occupy the rear (northern) portion of the block (on the remainder of parcel 157-054-10) not affected by this development are proposed to remain, with access by way of a cross-easement north to Billingsley Road.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The current Providence Division is located in 7,000 square feet of leased space in a flex space building on Latrobe Drive. The CMPD wants to have highly visible and easily accessible division offices, with 12,500 square feet of space. The current Latrobe Drive location is too small and not visible from a thoroughfare. It also lacks direct access to the Grier Heights Neighborhood which the new site would provide.

The search for a replacement facility for the Providence Division was initiated in July 2007. The following criteria were developed by CMPD to identify a site suitable for this facility:

- Site must be highly visible
- Site must be easily accessible from patrol division area.
- Site must be sufficient to accommodate a facility containing a minimum of 12,000 square feet of floor area, secured parking for 95 vehicles and public parking for at least 10 vehicles.
- Site must be centrally-located within the patrol division boundaries

Initially, several existing buildings within the Division boundaries were evaluated, but no existing and available buildings would meet CMPD requirements and criteria, so new construction was then considered. In mid-2008, a short term lease renewal for the Latrobe Drive location was negotiated and a search for a site commenced early in 2009.

Several alternate sites were considered before selecting the Grier Heights location, but these sites did not meet the above criteria to the extent the selected site does. Specifically, the other sites exhibited relatively:

- poor accessibility/visibility,
- higher acquisition costs,
- greater distance from core response area,
- poor development conditions (e.g. located in floodplains, bad topography, etc.),
- difficulty locating minimum acreage needed, and,
- difficulty assembling site relatively unencumbered by current owners' desire to find alternative accommodations.

By having the building designed and constructed specifically to be a police station, the efficiency of the space will be improved over the existing facilities (initially designed as flex space), while avoiding the potential need to spend a significant amount of funding in renovation of the existing leased facilities.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Policies governing facility placement are contained in the criteria listed above. Additionally, priority is given to owning (as opposed to leasing) station locations as it is over time more cost-effective.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Central District Plan (1993)* recommends multi-family residential development on the subject parcel. Though the Central District Plan recommends multi-family land uses Institutional developments are typically considered complimentary uses in residential areas. In addition, staff rarely identifies Institutional land uses in adopted plans unless the site is developed or zoned as such.

PROJECT IMPACT:

The development group that currently owns the property has an adequate number of vacancies in the housing immediately adjacent to the land to be used for the CMPD station so the tenants currently occupying units to be displaced by the proposed station will have suitable replacement housing available to them.

The redevelopment of this site has the potential to be a catalyst for reinvestment in the Grier Heights Neighborhood. Several smaller sites along Wendover Road appear to be suitable for development or redevelopment.

The presence of a highly visible police station located in the Grier Heights neighborhood should have a positive impact on crime in the area.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

There are no other public or private projects currently planned in this area.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The project would be completed by December 2010.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their January 7, 2009 meeting and no joint use suggestions were made. The Joint Use Task Force again discussed the topic at their July 1, 2009 meeting and the representative from City Stormwater cautioned that the site would need to meet the requirements of the Post Construction Controls ordinance with respect to storm water runoff.

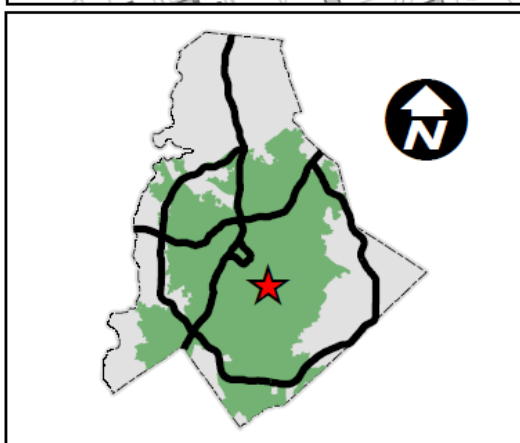
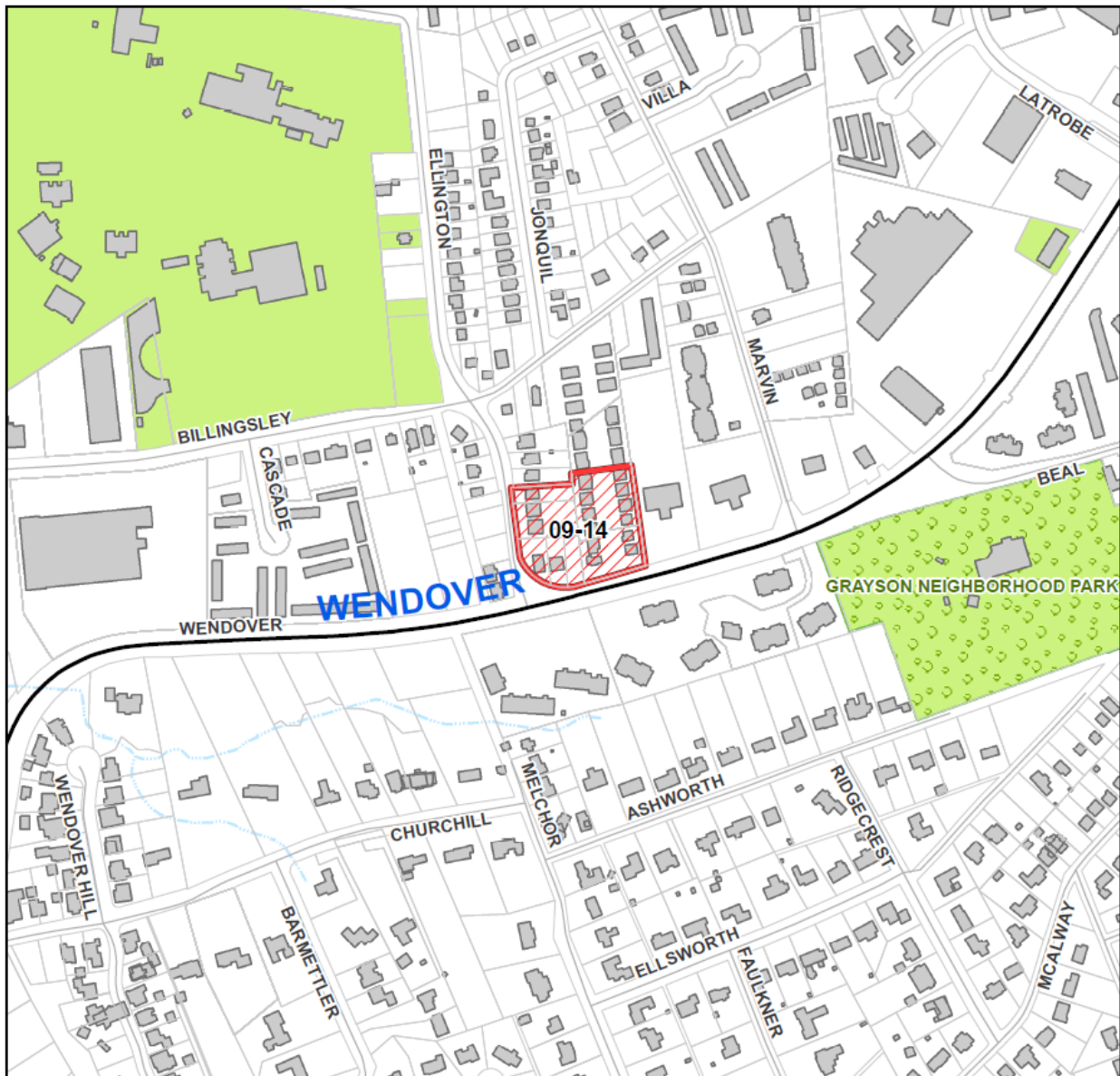
PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the potential of the police station to improve the quality of life in the community staff supports the recommendation to construct the Providence Division police station at this location. The following conditions are placed on this recommendation:

- The new facility should meet urban streetscape and façade design suitable for the surrounding context, i.e. building fronting the streets, high quality façade materials and design, windows, decorative fencing, landscaping, etc. The level should be elevated 4 to 6 feet above grade with foundation plantings.
- Efforts should be made to relocate residents of the existing dwellings.
- The CMPD should continue to engage Planning and other agencies in the successful development of a long range facilities master plan in order to better plan for their facilities in anticipation of their need.
- Planning staff should be involved in the design process of the facility to ensure it meets expected design standards.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:



At their July 21, 2009 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 09-14

Submitted by: City Real Estate

Initiated by: CMPD

-  Mandatory Referral
-  County Property



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department