

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 10-19
Proposed Land Exchange Among Mecklenburg County, City of Charlotte,
and a Developer in the Metropolitan Area of Charlotte

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The Metropolitan development project is a partnership among Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, and Pappas Properties in the mid-town section of Charlotte. Metropolitan is a mixed-use development that consists of mid-rise condominiums, restaurants, and other retail uses along with public open space. Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte are party to an Economic Development Grant Agreement with Pappas Properties that will result in major infrastructure and community development improvements in this area of the city and along Little Sugar Creek that runs parallel to Kenilworth Drive. Infrastructure improvements and real estate transactions that have or will take place per the agreement include:

- Little Sugar Creek Greenway/Stream Restoration – The County uncovered the portion of Little Sugar Creek that was capped and restored the natural elements of the Creek, including its flow. The County envisions this section of Little Sugar Creek becoming the signature section the greenway. The County added additional greenway trail that can be used for recreation and open space purposes
- Old Baxter Street Bridge – The County removed the Old Baxter Street Bridge to make way for a new bridge. The County was also responsible for the removal of overhead power lines in the vicinity of the old bridge. The City was responsible for moving water and sewer lines that ran under the old bridge.
- New “Baxter Street” Bridge (Pearle Street Parkway) – With contributions from the County and the developer, the City constructed the new bridge that replaced the Old Baxter Street Bridge. The new bridge is functionally superior to the bridge it replaced as it is at a height that allows the greenway trail to pass under the bridge. The new bridge is out of the flood zone and has four traffic lanes with six foot sidewalks which is an improvement over the previous bridge.
- Independence Boulevard Bridge – The Independence Boulevard Bridge was replaced. The new bridge was raised and the lanes were widened. The improvements included alignment of the bridge with improvements that were made to the Kenilworth/Independence intersection.
- Transfer of Right-of-Way from County to City – To accomplish the above bridge/road improvements, the County is to transfer right-of-way to the City along Independence Blvd, Pearle Street Park, and additional right-of-way for the new Baxter Street Bridge (Pearle Street Parkway). At a later date, the City will widen Kenilworth Avenue.
- Right-of-Way Abandonment – The City agreed to abandon property at the intersection of the reconfigured S. Independence/Kenilworth. Residual property from the ROW abandonment is to be transferred from the City to the County. The property will be incorporated into Little Sugar Creek Greenway.

Categorically, the transactions involve:

- Acquisition from private parties of land by the City of Charlotte to serve as street right-of-way (e.g. re-aligned Baxter Street)
- Transfer from County to City to serve as street right-of-way (e.g. new Pearle Street Parkway)
- Transfer of former right-of-way from City to private parties (e.g. old Baxter Street)
- Transfer of former right-of-way from City to County (e.g. old S. Independence Blvd./Kenilworth Ave. intersection)
- Transfer of right-of-way from County to City to enable widening of existing streets

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This project will accomplish the following objectives:

- Improvement to creek/floodplain quality at Little Sugar Creek by restoring the creek to its natural state
- Replace the Independence Boulevard and Baxter Street bridges that serve traffic in this area of town, and elevate the bridges out of the flood zone.
- Allow for extension of the greenway trail at Little Sugar Creek, and improve connectivity and pedestrian access to the trail
- Facilitate development in the mid-town area
- Improve traffic flow to and from the mid-town area

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Little Sugar Creek is identified as a priority greenway corridor in the *10-Year Park and Recreation Master Plan* (adopted by the County Commission in 2008). Participation in the Metropolitan project is consistent with the *Master Plan*.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Central District Plan* (1993) does not identify new street or greenway connections. However, the General Development Policies (2003) recommends interconnected pedestrian and street networks.

PROJECT IMPACT:

This project will have a positive impact on the community by increasing public accessibility to the greenway system, improving the quality of the creek, revitalizing this portion of the community, and improving the traffic network.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

Eventually, this section of Little Sugar Creek will connect to Alexander Street Park. It currently connects to Freedom Park, and extends beyond Park Road Shopping Center. This project will inject energy into this area of town, and will complement the private mixed use development (Metropolitan).

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Most land transactions are expected to be completed by Fall, 2010 with design and construction plans finalized for future roadway work shortly thereafter.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

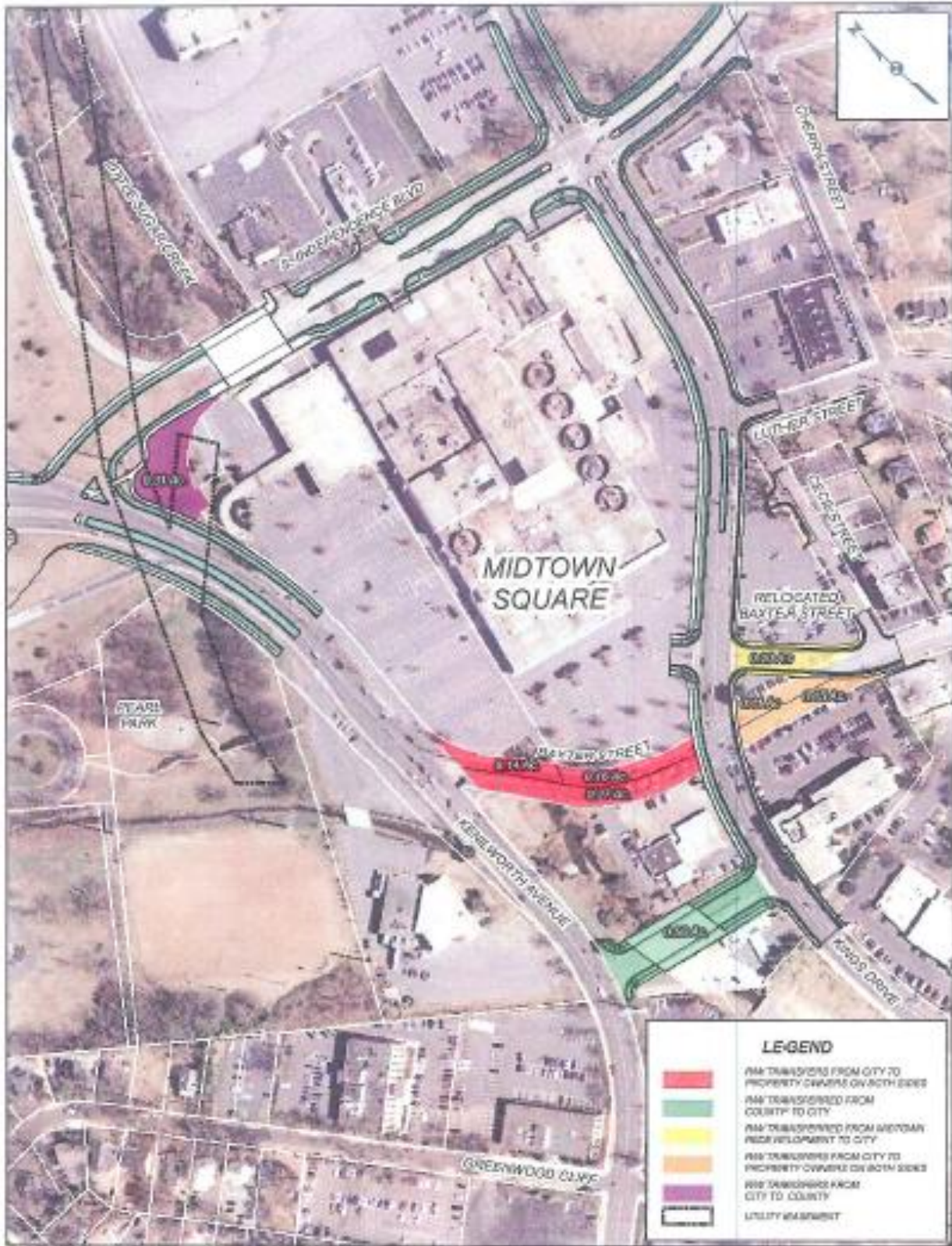
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their October 6, 2010 meeting and no comments were offered.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff recommends approval of the land exchange among the listed entities.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their December 14, 2010 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.



LEGEND FOR MAP ABOVE

Red	=	Property proposed for transfer from City to private entity (Metropolitan developer)
Green	=	Property proposed for transfer from County to City
Yellow	=	Property proposed for transfer from private entity to City
Orange	=	Property proposed for transfer from City to adjoining property owner(s)
Purple	=	Property proposed for transfer from City to County