

**MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 13-03**  
**Proposed Purchase of Land for the Replacement of Newell Elementary School**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) intends to purchase approximately 22.804 acres of land located at 431 Rocky River Road in Northeast Charlotte (tax parcel numbers 049-231-03 and 049-231-51) for the site of a replacement for Newell Elementary School (now located at 8601 Old Concord Road). The property is zoned R-3 single family residential according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance, and is largely vacant with exception of an owner-occupied dwelling on a corner of the site. The site is adjacent to several residential neighborhoods as well as religious institutions and is within the present attendance boundaries of the current Newell Elementary School (approximately one mile east of the site), so boundaries wouldn't need to be changed to accommodate the new site.

Since it is proposed to acquire a separate site for the replacement school, the existing Newell school building can continue to be occupied during construction of the replacement school. Following construction, the existing school building will be retained by CMS to provide flexibility including but not limited to providing temporary classroom space during future construction projects ("swing space"), administrative use, or other school-related uses.

The current property owner – who lives in a house on the site - will be given a life estate to the residence on the property and the school will be built around it.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

CMS will see significant cost savings by avoiding temporary relocation of students to modular buildings or other sites which would have been required if the current site were to be re-used. There is not sufficient level space on the existing site to enable a new school to be built while the old school remains occupied. Building at a new site provides the opportunity to complete the project sooner and provided needed space relief (the current school enrollment is 749 students and it relies upon 15 mobile classrooms on the site).

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

The replacement Newell facility was a project approved by referendum as part of the 2007 bond package.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The *Newell Small Area Plan* (adopted by City Council in 2002) calls for residential development up to 8 dwelling units per acre. Area plans do not typically specify locations for future institutional uses, but schools are compatible with residential land uses.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

There are no known public or private projects that will be impacted by this project.

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

The new site lies approximately ¼ mile east of the future Toby Creek Greenway and ¼ mile west of the Blue Line Extension.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION**

The exchange will take place after Mecklenburg County waives the right of first refusal and the proposed exchange receives the necessary advertisement. The goal is to complete the transaction in July, 2013.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

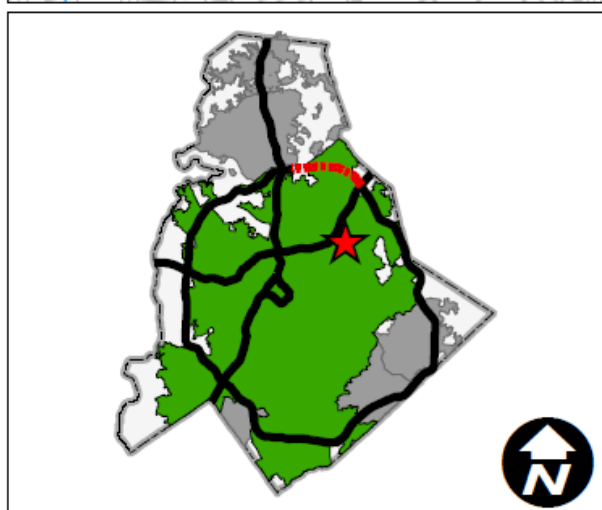
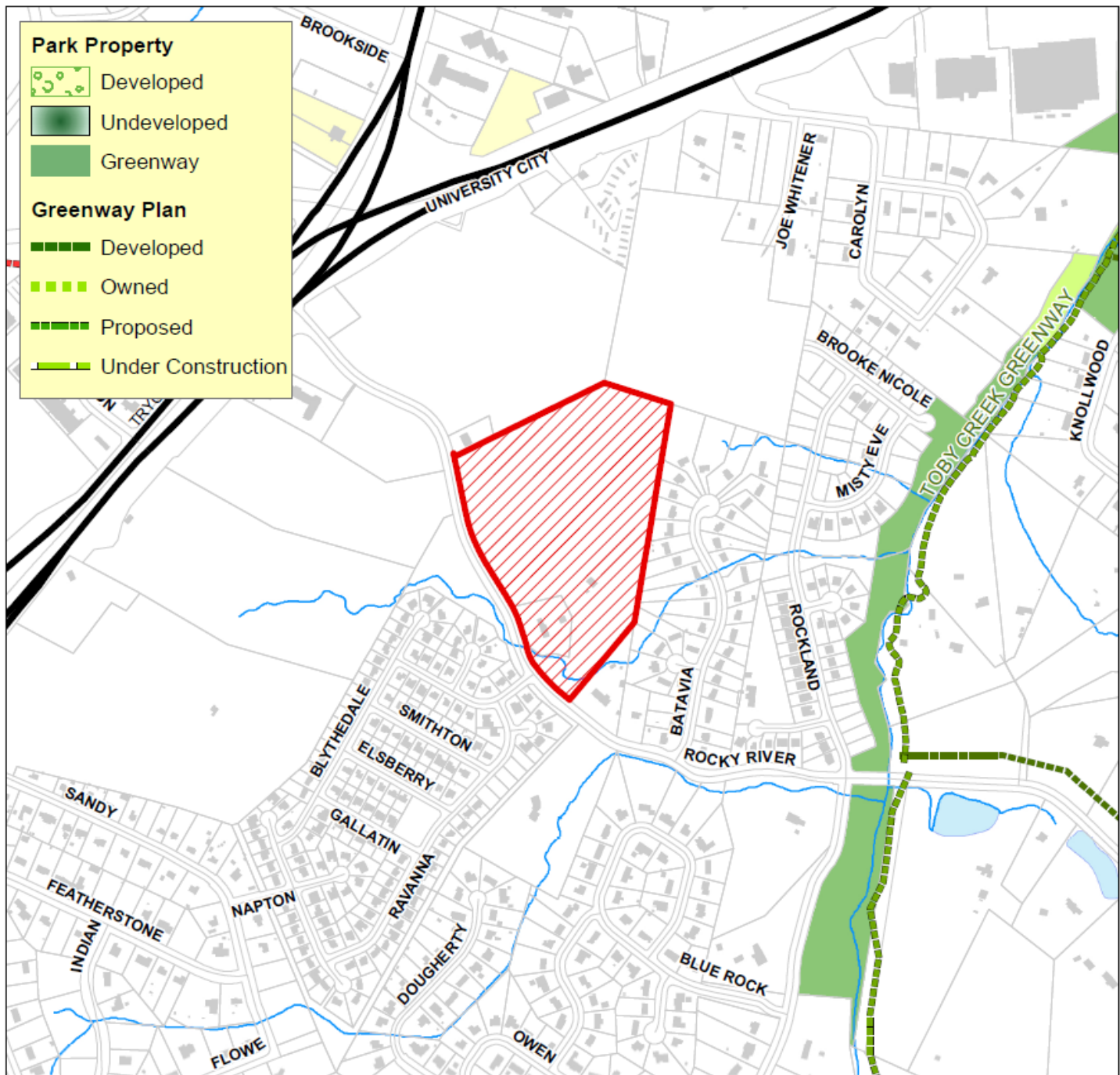
The Joint Use Task Force discussed the matter at its April 4, 2013 meeting and recommend CMS work with Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation to explore pedestrian and bicycle connections between the new site and Toby Creek Greenway. CMS and Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation should also explore recreational re-use opportunities for the old Newell School site. CMS should work with Charlotte Department of Transportation to ensure pedestrian and bicycle connections are established between the Blue Line Extension and the new school site.

**PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recognizes the need to reserve land for school sites as part of future development. Therefore, staff supports acquisition of the proposed property for use as a school.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At their April 16, 2013 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval of the proposed transaction for the prescribed land use.



## Mandatory Referral 13-03

Initiated & Submitted by: CMS

- Mandatory Referral
- City Property
- County Property



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department