

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 13-29
Proposed Expansion of Auten Nature Preserve in Town of Huntersville

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

This transaction is the proposed acquisition of ±1.63 acres (Tax Parcels 013-024-27, 013-024-28, 013-024,29, 013-024-30, and 013-024-31) located off Pamela Street Extension (unopened and un-dedicated right-of-way) in a paper subdivision located in the Town of Huntersville for the expansion of Auten Nature Preserve. The property is vacant and zoned GR (General Residential) under the Town's Zoning Ordinance. The property is surrounded by the existing Auten Nature Preserve and is also within close proximity to McDowell Creek Greenway with a tributary of the creek lying just north of the property. The northern boundaries of the lots are located within the floodplain.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

This property provides additional buffer for the existing Auten Nature Preserve. There are several lots along the unopened Pamela Street Extension right-of-way that are surrounded on three sides by the nature preserve and McDowell Creek. Acquisition of this property seeks to close as many of those gaps as possible and takes steps toward achieving continuous uninterrupted property ownership for the nature preserve. Park and Recreation has found that nature preserves function better with large uninterrupted stretches of property so that plant and animal life can be maintained and protected. In addition to expanding the nature preserve, acquisition of this property contributes to the County's water quality. The property is located within the McDowell Creek Watershed, Critical Area Three and feeds into Mountain Island Lake, the County's source of drinking water. Acquisition of the property removes the risk of future development that could contribute to downgrading the area's drinking water.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

This acquisition is consistent with several Mecklenburg County adopted policies and plans such as the *2008 Park and Recreation Master Plan*, the *Mountain Island Lake Memorandum*, the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Water Quality Buffer Implementation Guidelines* as well as several other water improvement ordinance and floodplain development ordinances.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Town of Huntersville 2030 Community Plan* identifies the property to be acquired as being located within a "low intensity" development zone. Within this zone, land use is currently characterized primarily by low density residential, along with open space and recreation uses. Based on the Town's long-range land use designation of this property, the proposed land acquisition can be classified as consistent with the Town's long range land use policy, as well as with the land use character of the area located in proximity to this parcel.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition of this property takes this tract out of play for future residential development and expands the area protected by Auten Nature Preserve.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This property is to be utilized as nature preserve land. It does not affect any other known public projects in this area.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

This project for is land acquisition only and is expected to be completed by early 2014.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

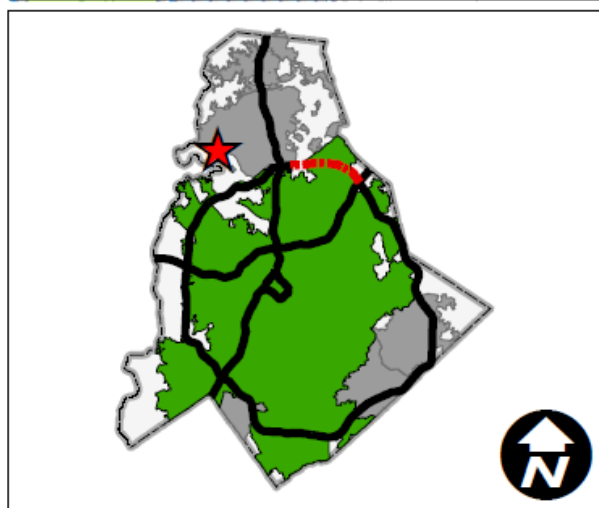
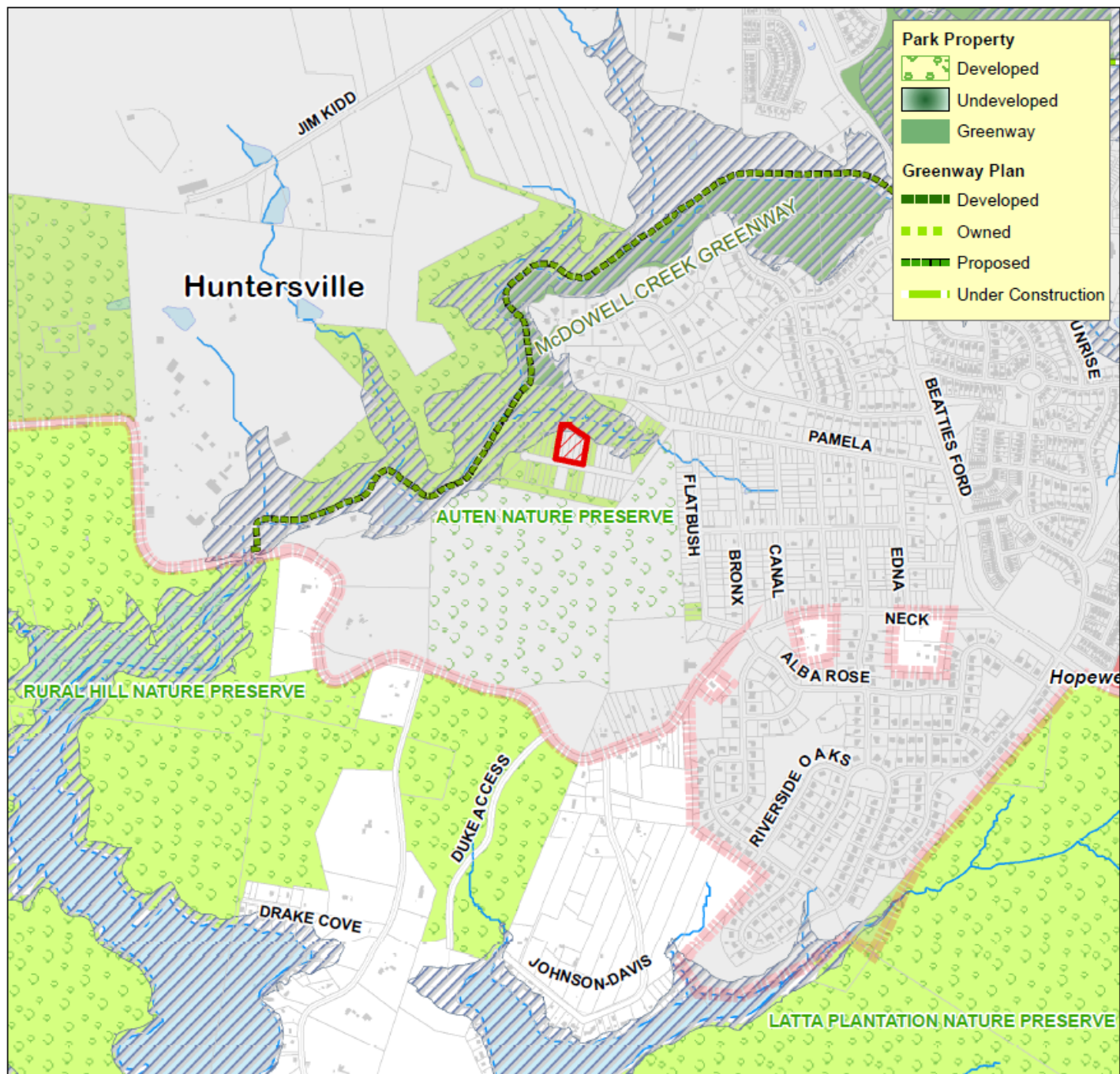
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their December 4, 2013 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff has worked with Town of Huntersville staff in the evaluation of this proposed transaction and Town staff is in favor of it. Planning staff recommends approval.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their December 17, 2013 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 13-29

Initiated by: Park & Recreation
Submitted by: County Real Estate

- Mandatory Referral
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain
- County Property

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department

