

**MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 14-44**  
**Proposed Land Acquisition in Back Creek Area of Charlotte for Greenway and Neighborhood Park**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

This project is a proposed acquisition of Tax Parcel 051-122-98 ( $\pm$  33.38 acres) in the City of Charlotte located in the Back Creek Area of Charlotte. The property is vacant and is zoned MX-2 (INNOV) according to the City of Charlotte's Zoning Ordinance. Highway 49 is north of this parcel and Interstate 485 is east of this parcel. This property is bordered to the northeast and west by subdivisions with single family homes. The property is within close proximity to County owned greenway property along Back Creek. Park and Recreation would like to acquire the property to use for greenway trails and a neighborhood park.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

Park and Recreation is excited about adding this property to its portfolio as it will allow the department to use the site for the greenway system as well as a neighborhood park. Back Creek runs along the southeastern portion of the property and the department envisions using this area of the property for greenway and biking trails. The upper portion of the property will likely be used for a neighborhood park and other amenities associated with the greenway such as parking. Acquisition of this property would help fulfill Park and Recreation goals of increasing park amenities and greenways throughout the County.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

This acquisition is consistent with the County's 2008 *Parks Master Plan* which encourages the expansion and construction of greenway trails and neighborhood parks. This project is also consistent with the County's goals of increasing water quality and minimizing hazards by reducing development in the floodplain, increasing greenway trails and open space, and providing greater recreational opportunities for County residents. Additionally, citizens within the County ranked providing more greenway trails and connections as their top recreation need.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The proposed transaction is consistent with the *Rocky River Area Plan* (2006) which recommends residential up to 8 dwelling units to the acre and greenway/park/open space for the subject parcels. Greenway/park/open space land uses are considered compatible with residential land uses. The intent of the greenway/park/open space recommendation is to support the long term plans for a greenway along Reedy Creek.

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

The project will allow Park & Recreation to meet its goals of increasing the amount of open space and add additional amenities available to County residents for parks, greenway and open space. The project will enhance park options for nearby residents and greenway access as well as provide on-site parking for Back Creek Greenway. Acquisition of this property will also allow the County to continue assembling parcels for future construction of this stretch of Back Creek Greenway.

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

The southern boundary of the property runs along the planned Eastern Circumferential which is proposed to be funded for planning, design, real estate acquisition, and construction in the November, 2014 City capital bond referendum. Project limits will extend from Hanberry Blvd. southeast to approximately Back Creek Church Road. The street is envisioned to be a 4-lane median divided roadway with bike lanes, 8-foot planting strips, and 6-foot sidewalks. Construction is contingent on a companion NCDOT project to do work on NC 49, and construct the segment of the Eastern Circumferential between NC 49 and Hanberry Blvd. While not finalized, the proposed street is expected to have minimal impact on the integrity of the future park.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

The acquisition is scheduled to be completed by the end of fiscal year of 2015.

**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their September 3 meeting and Charlotte DOT staff expressed concern that the Eastern Circumferential road that appears in the City's Community Investment Plan as part of the 2014 bond referendum will significantly impact this parcel. County staff reported their awareness of the project and willingness to collaboratively work with engineering for the proposed roadway.

**PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposed transaction is consistent with adopted City and County policy as described in the *Rock River Area Plan* and the 2008 Mecklenburg County Parks Master Plan. Therefore, staff recommends approval.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At their September 16, 2014 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 4-1 vote.

