

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 15-06
Proposed Acquisition by Mecklenburg County of Property on Wilkinson Blvd.
to Serve as Future Site of Medic Facility

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County proposes to purchase three former warehouse facilities and their associated parcels for the relocation of Medic, the Mecklenburg County Emergency Medical Services Agency, currently housed in leased space located at 4525 Statesville Road. The parcels proposed for acquisition are located on Wilkinson Blvd. in west Charlotte. Tax Parcel 11509101 consists of 9.635 acres located at 4301 Wilkinson Boulevard and the corner of Morris Field Drive in west Charlotte and contains improvements consisting of 119,476 square feet of net usable space, with 107,163 of that currently warehouse (balance is office). Tax Parcel 11509102 consists of 3.4 AC at 4403 Wilkinson Boulevard, adjacent to the above parcel and opposite Alleghany Street. It contains a 47,850 square foot facility; 41,044 square feet is currently warehouse. Tax Parcel 11509104 consists of .9 AC and is directly behind parcel -102 and adjacent to parcel -101 and has a driveway easement across parcel -102. This parcel is improved with a 16,254 square foot warehouse facility.

The zoning for all three parcels is I-2 (Industrial) according to the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The property should not require a re-zoning in order to serve the intended purpose. Directly adjacent to parcels -102 and -104 is a cold storage warehouse; other nearby uses are industrial in nature and have industrial zoning. Across Morris Field from parcel -101 is the Capri Motel.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Mecklenburg County's approved Capital Investment Plan included the relocation of Medic from leased space on Statesville Road. The intent of this relocation is to create operating efficiencies and eliminate a lease expenditure while providing a facility that would support Medic's service to the community for the next 50 years. With the development of the County's new Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan and pending expiration of the current lease on the Statesville Road, it was determined that the relocation of Medic could be accelerated. The original plan for relocation of Medic identified vacant property as the site for a newly constructed facility, but given the widespread availability of existing "large box" structures, the focus shifted to acquiring and renovating instead. As Medic has strategic size and location needs, assets were considered through those lenses. Other existing alternatives included warehouse facilities on Rotary Drive and the former Hercules missile plant on Statesville Avenue, each of which presented challenges related to upfit; other new construction options included the parcels adjacent to the former Charlotte School of Law.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Proposed transaction is consistent with the Mecklenburg County Capital Investment Plan and the Mecklenburg County Comprehensive Government Facility Master Plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The *Southwest District Plan* (1991) recommends the subject for Office/Industrial use so the intended use is considered consistent with the Plan.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Two of these warehouses have been unoccupied; the third contains a business scheduled to relocate in April 2015. This area of Wilkinson has not yet benefitted from activity around Charlotte/Douglas Airport nor redevelopment in FreeMoreWest. Absorption of unutilized assets and the creation of an employment center may have positive impacts on surrounding real estate uses. Ambulances are forward-deployed (i.e., they circulate and station remotely like police cars and are not stationed at the site like fire trucks), thereby minimizing impacts on surrounding businesses due to call response. Shift changes will see traffic as ambulances arrive and depart, with personally owned vehicles conveying EMTs and office staff to and from the site.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The renovation of these buildings and the modification of the grounds will significantly improve the streetscape along this portion of Wilkinson Boulevard. It is anticipated that bringing this facility on-line could allow Medic to close Post 64, which is currently on the grounds of the CMPD Freedom Division diagonally across Wilkinson Boulevard in the West Service Center. This will be a secure facility; however, joint use opportunities may arise through scheduled use of facility amenities.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

The project is funded from the currently adopted Mecklenburg County CIP; work will begin after closing and is anticipated to last six months.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

The Joint Use Task Force met on February 4, 2015. It was noted that the proposed overland connector to the greenway system runs along Morris Field and Wilkinson frontages; site development should take this into account by installing between 6 and 10 foot wide sidewalks (width determined by whether these roadways have bike lanes, with narrower sidewalks permitted if bike lanes are present). Also it was noted that locating MEDIC at this facility would allow the MEDIC post at the West Service Center diagonally across the street to be relocated to the new site.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The proposal is consistent with the *Southwest District Plan*. It will serve a critical county facility need in a location suitable for the use. As such, staff recommends approval of the proposal.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their meeting on March 2, 2015 the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.

