

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 16-08
Proposed Catawba River Park/Nature Preserve Acquisition

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

The County would like to acquire Tax Parcels 031-471-09 and 031-163-03 (cumulatively +/-84.756 acres) which is located on Riverside and Lake Drives near the Catawba River in Charlotte's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction to provide park and nature preserve type amenities to this area of the County. The property is zoned R-3, R-4 and R-5 (Residential) under the City's Zoning Ordinance. The property is vacant and is surrounded by single family residential uses.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

The properties along Riverside Drive and Lake Drive provide the County with a unique opportunity to plan for a neighborhood park/nature preserve along a true riverine stretch of the Catawba River. While detailed biological investigations are yet to be performed, these parcels provide several important opportunities for recreation and natural resource protection. The mature canopy on Tax Parcel 031-471-09 covers a wetland system that provides habitat for wildlife and helps improve water quality of overland flow. The powerline habitat on this parcel also is important habitat for early successional (open field) plants, birds and insects.

The open field that primarily exists on parcel 031-163-03 is great habitat for wild turkey and other bird species. Open fields of this size are in decline in Mecklenburg County due to development. The southeast corner of this parcel has a large beaver-formed wetland complex that is outstanding in its size and quality. Additionally, neighbors with gardens in this area have found Native American artifacts, including pottery sherds and arrow heads. It is likely that the flat topography near the river will be a rich opportunity for archaeological investigations.

The future use of these properties is undetermined but will likely be similar to Reedy Creek Park/Nature Preserve with a park component and a nature preserve component. It is the County's goal to provide river access, walking and hiking trails, nature observation and other passive recreational opportunities along the Catawba River.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

Acquisition of this property is consistent with *the Park and Recreation Master Plan*. The Plan identifies a need to protect and preserve sensitive natural animal and plant habitats. Acquisition of this property accomplishes that goal.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

The adopted land use for these parcels is Single Family up to 4 DUA, as per the *Northwest District Plan* (adopted 1990). The parcels are also under the Lake Wylie Critical Area watershed zoning overlay district. The proposed use for a park and nature preserve, while not specified for these parcels as part of the adopted land use plan, is considered a compatible use for a residential area, and especially one within a critical watershed overlay zoning district.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition of this property takes this property out of play for future development and contributes to the water quality of the Catawba River watershed.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

This acquisition has no known relationship to other public or private projects.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Acquisition of the property is anticipated to be completed Spring 2016.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

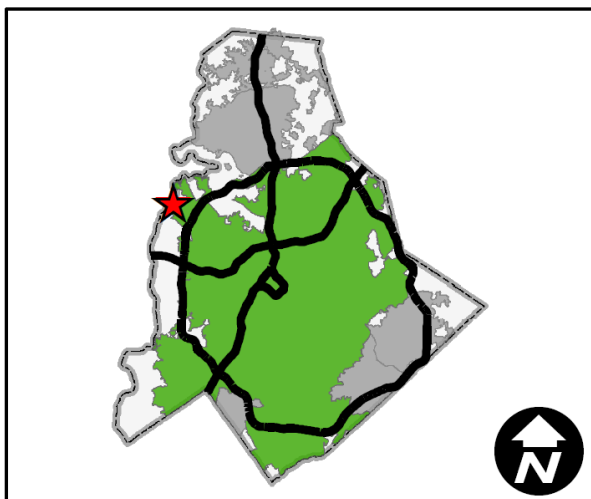
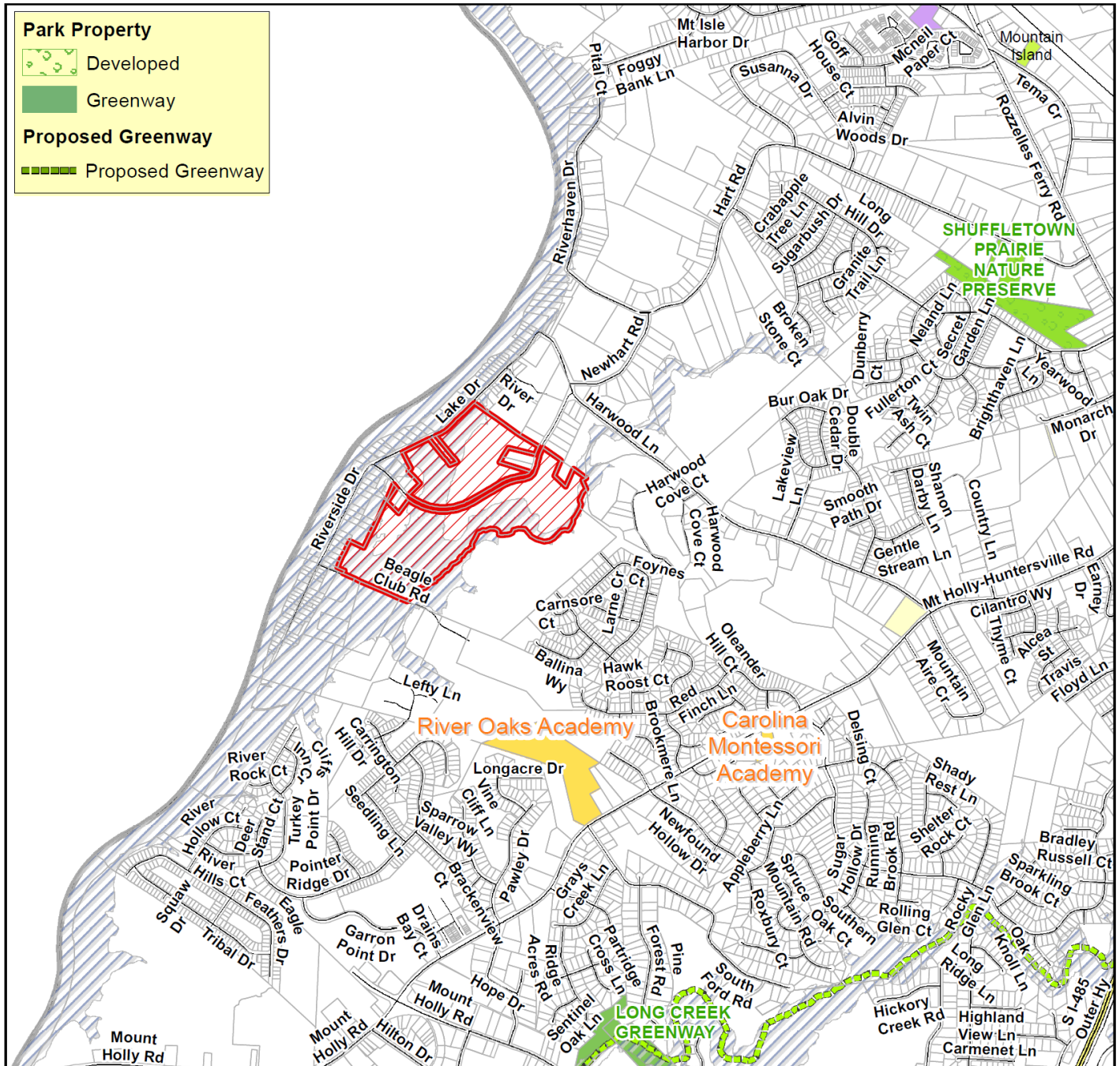
The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this matter at their February 3, 2016 meeting and no comments were provided.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning Department staff recommends approval of the proposed land acquisition.

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At their February 16, 2016 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 7-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 16-08

Initiated by: County Park and Recreation

Submitted by: Asset & Facility Management

- Mandatory Referral
- City Property
- County Property
- Schools
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department