

MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 16-37
Proposed Latta Plantation Nature Preserve Expansion

PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:

Mecklenburg County proposes to purchase 31.71 acres of property (see tax parcels below) on the south side of Sample Road in the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the Town of Huntersville for inclusion into Latta Plantation Nature Preserve. Acquisition of these parcels will continue the County's effort to protect the environmentally sensitive areas surrounding the nature preserve. With the exception of a single-family home on parcel 023-042-14, the parcels are vacant and all are zoned R (Rural) and in the Mountain Island Lake Watershed Overlay district (MIL-O) – Lower Gar Creek sub-area, under the Town of Huntersville's Zoning Ordinance. The parcels the County would like to purchase consist of:

<u>Parcel Number</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
023-211-13	1.35
023-211-14	2
023-211-15	4.15
023-211-16	6.14
023-211-17	11.1
023-211-18	2.42
023-211-19	1.9747
023-211-20	0.58
023-211-25	2
	<hr/> <hr/> 31.7147

These properties are located in a rural part of Huntersville's ETJ, with the Nature Preserve located to the south and rural-density residential properties on the west, north, and east.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Latta Plantation Nature Preserve is home to a diversity of natural communities including upland and bottomland hardwood forests, open fields, streams, and a Piedmont Prairie restoration site. The property is also home to the Schweinitz's sunflower that is on the federally endangered list, and to a diversity of wintering waterfowl, breeding and migratory songbirds, and a threatened natural community in North Carolina. Acquisition of this property will continue the County's long standing goal of protecting the natural environment of this area.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:

The County's adopted *Park and Recreation Master Plan* advocates for the preservation of environmentally sensitive property such as these parcels. The *Master Plan* has the protection of Critical Habitat Areas as one of its highest priorities. This parcel was identified as a Tier 1 priority level for acquisition in the Natural Area Protection category. Acquisition of these parcels will protect rare and unique habitat on the property as well as remove the threat of future development next to the existing nature preserve.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:

These properties are located within the Town of Huntersville's planning jurisdiction. The Town's *Beatties Ford Corridor Small Area Plan* recommends maintenance of the rural character of the area and encourages preservation of open space (by adding more land to open space inventory when possible). The proposed acquisition of these properties to expand the Latta Plantation Nature preserve therefore aligns with the intent of the *Small Area Plan*.

PROJECT IMPACT:

Acquisition of these parcels will preserve environmentally sensitive property in the northern Mecklenburg County area.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROJECTS:

The project has no known relationship to other projects.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:

Acquisition of the parcel is anticipated to happen by Fall 2016.

JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:

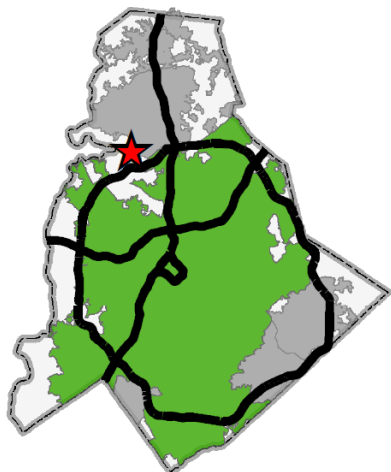
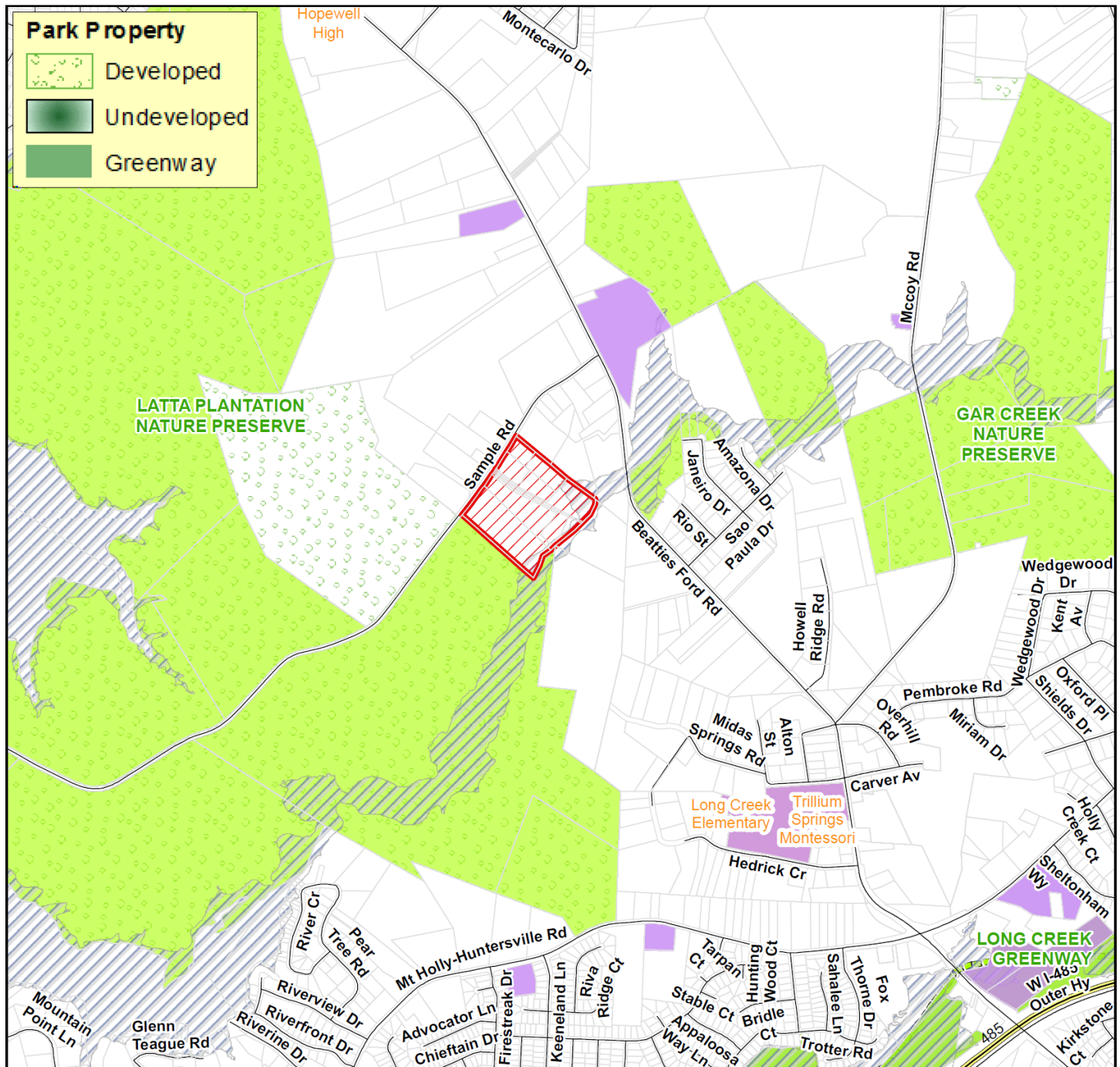
The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their July 6, 2016 meeting and no comments were offered.

TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Huntersville town staff report that they "do not see any issues or conflicts with town policies and are in favor of the proposed acquisition".

CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:





At their July 19, 2016 meeting the Planning Committee recommended approval by a 6-0 vote.



Mandatory Referral 16-37

Initiated by: County Park & Recreation

Submitted by: Asset & Facility Management

-  Mandatory Referral
-  County Property
-  FEMA 100 Year Floodplain
-  Local Historic Landmark

