

# Planning Committee Agenda Packet

April 15, 2014 |  
Room 280  
5:00 p.m. |



# Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

## Planning Committee Meeting Agenda

March 18, 2014 - 5:00 p.m.

CMGC - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 280

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### 1. Call to Order and Introductions

### 2. Approve March 18, 2014 Minutes. *Attachment 1*

### 3. M.R. #14-10: Proposal by City Real Estate to Sale 1.8 Acres of Surplus Land Located on Beaumont Avenue

The City of Charlotte proposes to sale 1.8 acres of land located on Beaumont Avenue (Tax Parcels 080-201-14, -15, -17) adjacent to Independence Boulevard, in the Elizabeth Neighborhood. The subject property is currently used for the Charlotte Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau; staff will move to the newly purchased facility at 1517 North Graham Street in August 2014. Therefore, the land is no longer needed for City use. ***Attachment 2***

*Staff Resources:* Alan Goodwin, Planning  
Timothy J. O'Brien, City Real Estate

*Action Requested:* Approve Planning staff's recommendation for M.R. #14-10.

### 4. M.R. #14-15: Proposal by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department to Acquire 13 Acres of Land Located off Neck Road for Expansion of Auten Nature Preserve

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department proposes to acquire approximately 13 acres of land located off Neck Road (Tax Parcel 013-032-23) in the Town of Huntersville's ETJ for the expansion of Auten Nature Preserve. The property is surrounded by the existing Auten Nature Preserve, adjoins the Rural Hill Nature Preserve (also County-owned) and is within close proximity to McDowell Creek Greenway. ***Attachment 3***

*Staff Resources:* Jonathan Wells, Planning  
Jacqueline McNeil, County Asset and Facility Management

*Action Requested:* Approve Planning staff's recommendation for M.R. #14-15.

**5. M.R. #14-16: Proposal by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department to Acquire 12 Acres of Land Located off Bailey Road Neck Road for Caldwell Station Greenway**

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department proposes to acquire 11.8 acres of land located off Bailey Road (Tax Parcels 005-032-09, 10 and 005-383-85) in the Town of Cornelius ETJ for inclusion into Caldwell Station Greenway. It is envisioned that the greenway will be constructed by the Town of Cornelius and maintained by the County. **Attachment 4**

*Staff Resources:* Jonathan Wells, Planning  
Jacqueline McNeil, County Asset and Facility Management

*Action Requested:* Approve Planning staff's recommendation for M.R. #14-16.

**6. M.R. #14-17: Proposal by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department to Acquire 8 Acres of Land Located off Hucks Road to Expand Clarks Creek Nature Preserve**

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department proposes to acquire 8 acres of land located at 5532 Hucks Road (Tax Parcel 027-161-02) for the expansion of Clarks Creek Nature Preserve. Clarks Creek Nature Preserve occupies the majority of the land to the east of the parcel. Hucks Road Community Park and Croft Community Elementary School is located across Hucks Road to the south of the property. **Attachment 5**

*Staff Resources:* Kent Main, Planning  
Timothy J. O'Brien, City Real Estate

*Action Requested:* Approve Planning staff's recommendation for M.R. #14-17.

**7. Area Plan Status and Meeting Report**

**Receive an Overview of the Land Use Plan Policy Assessment Process**

*Background:* The goal of the Land Use Policy Assessment process is to assess the effectiveness of our existing land use policy structure and to develop recommendations to strengthen our policy development processes, products and implementation tools. Staff will hold a community meeting April 10 with community stakeholders who have participated in previous planning initiatives to receive public input on ways to improve and enhance our planning processes.

*Staff Resource:* Alysia Osborne, Planning

*Action Requested:* For Committee Discussion

**8. Adjourn**

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission**  
**Planning Committee Meeting Minutes - DRAFT**  
**March 18, 2014 - 5:00 p.m.**  
**CMGC - 2nd Floor, Room 280**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**Attendance**

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Tony Lathrop, Vice-Chairperson Raymond Eschert, Randy Fink, Thomas Low, Cozzie Watkins and Andy Zoutewelle

**Planning Staff Present:** Kathy Cornett, Garet Johnson, Sonda Kennedy, Melony McCullough, Catherine Stutts, Bryman Suttle, Amanda Vari and Jonathan Wells

**Other Staff Present:** Katie Daughtry and Jacqueline O'Neil (County Asset and Facility Management), David Love (Storm Water Services) and Ben Miller (CDOT)

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Chairperson Lathrop called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. and everyone introduced themselves.

**Approve February 18, 2014 Minutes**

*A motion was made by Vice-Chairperson Eschert and seconded by Commissioner Watkins to approve the February 18, 2014 minutes. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes.*

**M.R. #14-07: Proposal by the City of Charlotte to Transfer 0.33 acres of Land to the Town of Matthews**

Jonathan Wells (Planning) presented the proposal from the City of Charlotte to transfer 0.33 acres of land located on the northeast corner of Matthews-Mint Hill Road and Independence Pointe Parkway (PID 193-294-04) to the Town of Matthews. Mr. Wells shared background information about this transaction and explained the Mandatory Referral for Central Piedmont Community College from several years ago. He noted that during that process, the transportation network was reviewed and the decision was made to shift the Independence Pointe intersection out of the right-of-way for the power lines. He further explained that the land was formerly used as a water tower site for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department (CMUD). Since the water tower was removed and the site is now vacant, the City of Charlotte no longer needs the property. The Town of Matthews originally deeded the land to the City of Charlotte and is now requesting that the land be returned. The Town of Matthews would like to create an open space use (possibly a mini-park or mini-playground) on the property.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Zoutewelle and seconded by Commissioner Eschert to approve Planning staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral #14-07. The vote was unanimous to approve staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral #14-07.*

**M.R. #14-08: Proposal by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation to Accept the Donation of 2.5 acres of Land Located off Carolyn Court Adjacent to David B. Waymer Community Park**

Commissioner Zoutewelle disclosed that his firm does work for the County and the Committee ruled that he did not have a conflict of interest. Jonathan Wells (Planning) presented the proposal from Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation to accept the donation of two parcels of land located on Carolyn Court (PIDs 019-091-11 and 12) in the Town of Huntersville to allow for the expansion of David B. Waymer Community Park. Acceptance of this donation allows for the expansion of the park, increases and preserves buffers in this location and potentially provides an additional/alternate access point to the park off Carolyn Court. This donation is consistent with the County's 2008 Parks Master Plan which encourages the expansion and construction of community parks. Chairperson Lathrop asked how the road will impact the park. Mr. Wells answered that the road issue will be worked out during the development process.

*A motion was made by Vice-Chairperson Eschert and seconded by Commissioner Fink to approve Planning staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral #14-08. The vote was unanimous to approve staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral #14-08.*

**M.R. #14-09: Proposal by Mecklenburg County Storm Water Services Program to Acquire 12 Properties along Stewart Creek**

Catherine Stutts (Planning) presented a proposal by Mecklenburg County's Storm Water Services Program to acquire 12 parcels located on Barlowe Road, Dewolfe Street and Gallagher Street along Stewart Creek. These parcels are improved with single family homes and are located in flood prone areas. The proposed acquisitions are intended to eliminate potential future losses by removing the improvements. Additionally, acquisition of these parcels will add to greenway connectivity and assemblage along each of the creeks. The owners will need to express a willingness to participate in the program (participation in the program is voluntary).

Commissioner Low asked if a master plan design has been created for this site. Ms. Stutts said there has to be an agreement from the owners to participate. Once this is done, the structures are removed and the site can be identified as future greenway. Vice-Chairperson Eschert asked about the potential impact on the greenway if owners do not participate. Ms. Stutts replied that the primary focus is flood prevention. Mr. David Love (Storm Water Services – County Flood Mitigation Program) stated that the project is funded by storm water and the land will be preserved for greenway. Vice-Chairperson Eschert asked about the mitigation plan and the problems with the water. Mr. Love stated that demolishing the houses will help solve the problem. Commissioner Fink asked if there is a time limit for the owners to accept the offer. Mr. Love said that there is a time limit. Chairperson Lathrop asked if the 12 owners have accepted. Mr. Love replied no and added that they are in the early stages of the process.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Watkins and seconded by Vice-Chairperson Eschert to approve Planning staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral #14-09. The vote was unanimous to approve staff's recommendation for Mandatory Referral #14-09.*

## **Area Plan Status and Meeting Report - Update on the Planning Process for the University City Area Plan - Blue Line Extension Transit Station Area Plans**

Amanda Vari (Planning) gave an overview and update on the Planning Process for the *University City Area Plan - Blue Line Extension Transit Station Area Plans*. She stated that the *Blue Line Extension (BLE) Transit Station Area Plans* for the first six stations (Parkwood to Tom Hunter) were adopted last year. Transit station area plans were completed for four BLE stations as part of the *University City Area Plan (UCAP)* in 2007. However, as a part of the preliminary engineering work, some of the stations were renamed and combined.

The planning process to update the *UCAP* and incorporate these changes began last fall. Three public workshops were held in the community. A public workshop to receive public comment on the draft plan recommendations was March 11. This was previously scheduled to be the final workshop; however, staff has decided to extend the process to allow additional time to address public concerns. The final public meeting will likely be this summer.

Commissioner Zoutewelle asked how ridership is defined. Ms. Kathy Cornett (Planning) stated that it is a single trip from one station to another. Chairperson Lathrop thanked staff for the informative tour of the area. He asked Ms. Vari where the park and ride lots will be located. She said there will be park and ride lots at two (2) stations, University City Boulevard and J. W. Clay Boulevard.

Commissioner Low stated that the plan was very well thought out and noted some of the key design elements that it addresses such as walkability, compact, human scale, design guidelines and building types. He wanted to know how the development community is responding and if there is a lot of pressure. Ms. Vari stated that the current zoning pattern allows a development pattern that is inconsistent with transit. She added that there has not been a lot of development pressure to date.

Commissioner Fink asked about the retaining walls along North Tryon Street and how they will affect development fronting on North Tryon Street. He also mentioned that the sidewalks to the library along W.T. Harris Boulevard are very difficult to access. Ms. Vari informed the Committee that a couple of interdepartmental teams have met to discuss what development could be like adjacent to these properties. There is no intent to ignore this section of North Tryon because it is possible for buildings to front on secondary streets. Mr. Ben Miller (CDOT) stated that there is no recommendation for sidewalks along W. T. Harris Boulevard. There are recommendations for a path further outside of the right-of-way via Hospital Drive and J. W. Clay Boulevard. Commissioner Fink asked if anyone has engaged the hospital for their input and Mr. Miller responded not at this time.

Chairperson Lathrop stated that there may be a need to more formally assign a committee member to this area and he will wait until a new commissioner is appointed. Commissioner Zoutewelle stated that in the meantime, Commissioner Fink and Commissioner Deborah Ryan as well as himself, are representing the Committee by attending the area plan meetings.

**Adjourn 6:00 p.m.**





**Submitted by:** Timothy J. O'Brien, E&PM

**Initiated by:** Timothy J. O'Brien, E&PM

**MANDATORY REFERRAL-REPORT NO. 14-10**  
**Proposed Sale of City-Owned Property on Beaumont Avenue in the Elizabeth Neighborhood**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION**

The City of Charlotte is proposing to market three parcels totaling approximately 1.83 acres of City-owned land (PID #080-201-14, -15, -17) located on Beaumont Avenue, adjacent to Independence Boulevard, in Charlotte's Elizabeth neighborhood. The property includes four structures and is zoned B-1 (Business) according to the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance. The subject property is currently used for the Charlotte Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau; staff will move to the newly purchased facility at 1517 North Graham Street in August 2014.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The land is no longer needed for City use. Therefore, the City's Real Estate Division is tasked with selling off any surplus land not needed for current or future programmed use. Selling the land will not only generate revenue for the City, it will reduce maintenance costs and liability.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

City Council established the Private and Competition Advisory Commission (PCAC), who created the Asset Management Task Force to help the City oversee the prudent use of City-owned parcels and to seek ways that the City can generate revenue from the sale of any parcels not needed for the operation of the City's core services.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The *Elizabeth Area Plan*, approved by City Council on November 14, 2011, recommends low impact institutional use consistent with the Fire Prevention Bureau's current use or, alternatively, multi-family residential with a density of not more than 12 DUA (Dwelling Units per Acre). A higher residential density may be appropriate if a secondary access to East Seventh Street can be established (in addition to retaining access to Beaumont Avenue).

**PROJECT IMPACT:**

No impacts are anticipated.

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

There are no known public or private projects in the vicinity of the subject parcel.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

Market conditions will dictate the schedule of the sale.

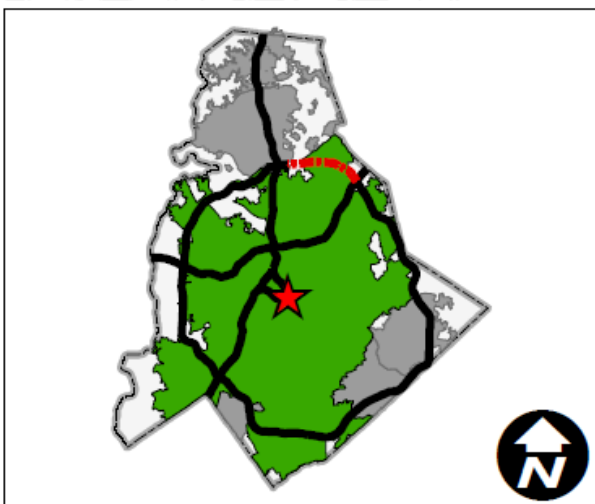
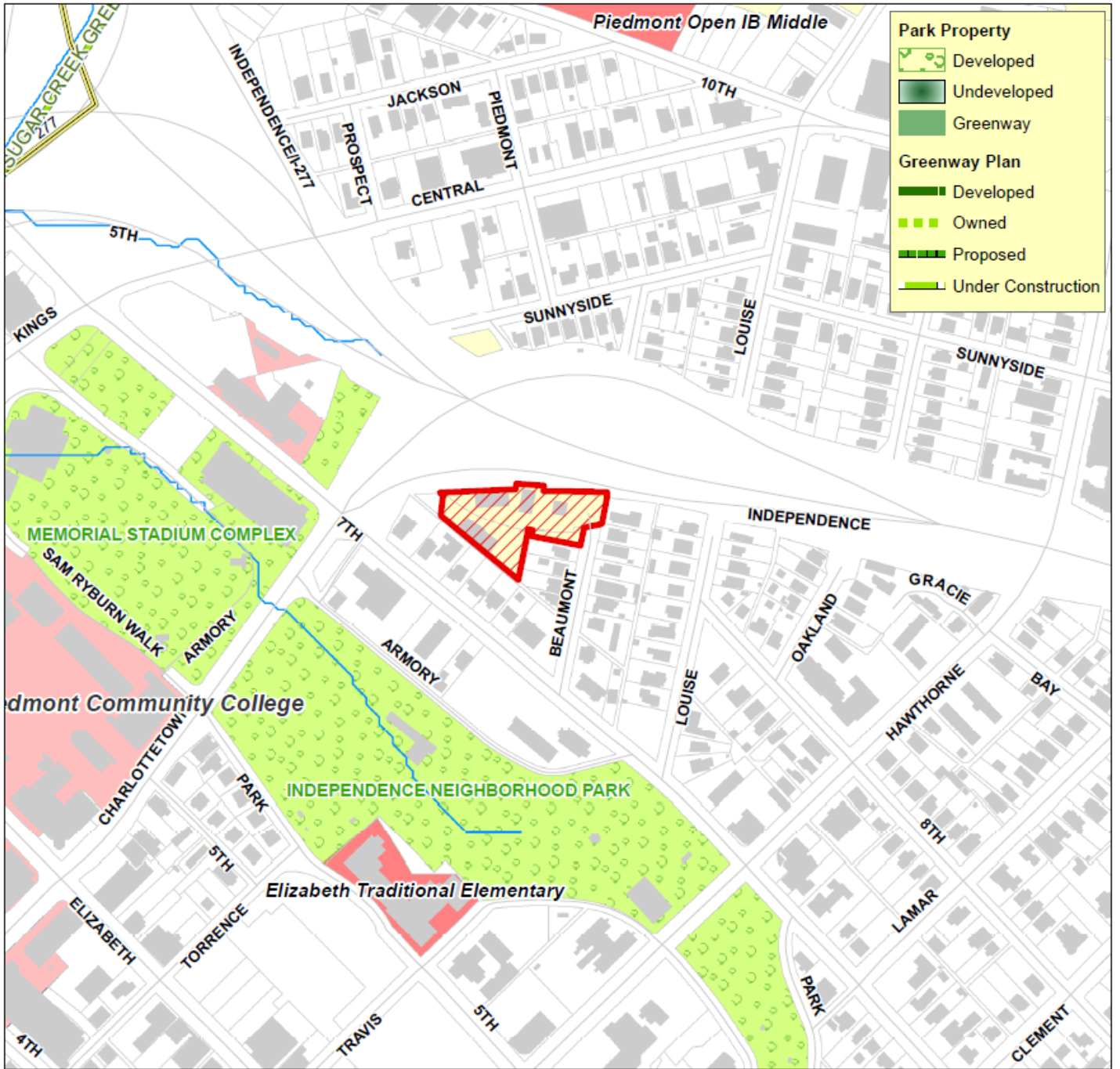
**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their April 2 meeting. No joint use comments were offered. However, it was suggested that the property be marketed for development in accordance with recommended land uses contained within the *Elizabeth Area Plan*, and that prospective developers be apprised of the potential benefits associated with residential development in accordance with the City's incentive-based residential density program.

**PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Planning Staff recommends approval of the proposed sale of the subject property conditioned upon the policy recommendations of the *Elizabeth Area Plan* – specifically that the property be redeveloped either with an institutional use consistent with the Fire Prevention Bureau's current use or, alternatively, multi-family residential with a density of not more than 12 DUA (Dwelling Units per Acre). A higher residential density may be appropriate if a secondary access to East Seventh Street can be established (in addition to retaining access to Beaumont Avenue).

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**



# Mandatory Referral 14-10

Initiated by: City Real Estate  
Submitted by: City Real Estate

- Mandatory Referral
- City Property
- County Property



**Submitted by:** Jacqueline McNeil, BSSA-Asset and Facility Management

**Initiated by:** Jim Garges, Director, Park & Recreation Dept.

### **MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 14-15**

Proposed Expansion of Auten Nature Preserve in Huntersville ETJ

#### **PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

This transaction is the proposed acquisition of ±13.19 acres (Tax Parcel 013-032-23) located off Neck Road in the Town of Huntersville's ETJ for the expansion of Auten Nature Preserve. The property which is currently for sale contains a mobile home unit and several outbuildings that are in poor condition and will likely be removed by the County following acquisition. It is zoned R (Rural District) under the Town of Huntersville's Zoning Ordinance. The property is surrounded by the existing Auten Nature Preserve, adjoins the Rural Hill Nature Preserve (also County-owned), and is also within close proximity to McDowell Creek Greenway with the creek lying north of the property.

#### **PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

As Mecklenburg County continues to develop, the opportunity to preserve the area's natural habitat and vegetation will become increasingly rare. Acquisition of this property takes steps toward achieving continuous uninterrupted property ownership for the nature preserve. The Park and Recreation Department has found that nature preserves function better with large uninterrupted stretches of property so that plant and animal life can be maintained and protected. Park and Recreation's investigation of the property determined that the majority of the property consists of mature woods. The property is also home to Carolina Buckthorn, a shrub layer, which is on the state's watch list species and classified as rare. The property is considered Basic Oak-Hickory and is a natural community type that is uncommon in this region.

In addition to expanding the nature preserve, acquisition of this property contributes to the County's water quality, as the property is located within the McDowell Creek Watershed, Critical Area Three and feeds into Mountain Island Lake which is the County's primary source of drinking water. Acquisition of the property removes the risk of future development of the site that could contribute to downgrading the quality of 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.

The Town of Huntersville *2030 Community Plan* contains the following applicable policy: "Support the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment, along with its scenic and cultural assets" (Policy E-1).

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The proposed land to be acquired is located within the boundaries of the *Beatties Ford Road Corridor Small Area Plan* (adopted in 2007) that highlights the value of and need for open space preservation to balance the increase in growth and development within the study area. Specifically, the plan identifies the subject property as "Vulnerable Land" and encourages that the Town of Huntersville "pursue options for obtaining conservation easements" to protect this land. Therefore, acquisition of the subject property for the intended purpose is consistent with the adopted plan.

#### **PROJECT IMPACT:**

Acquisition of this property takes this tract out of play for future 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 is for land acquisition only and is expected to be completed by summer 2014.

#### **JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

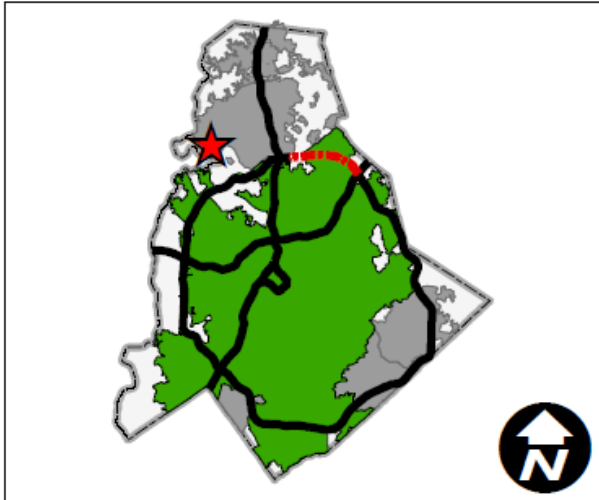
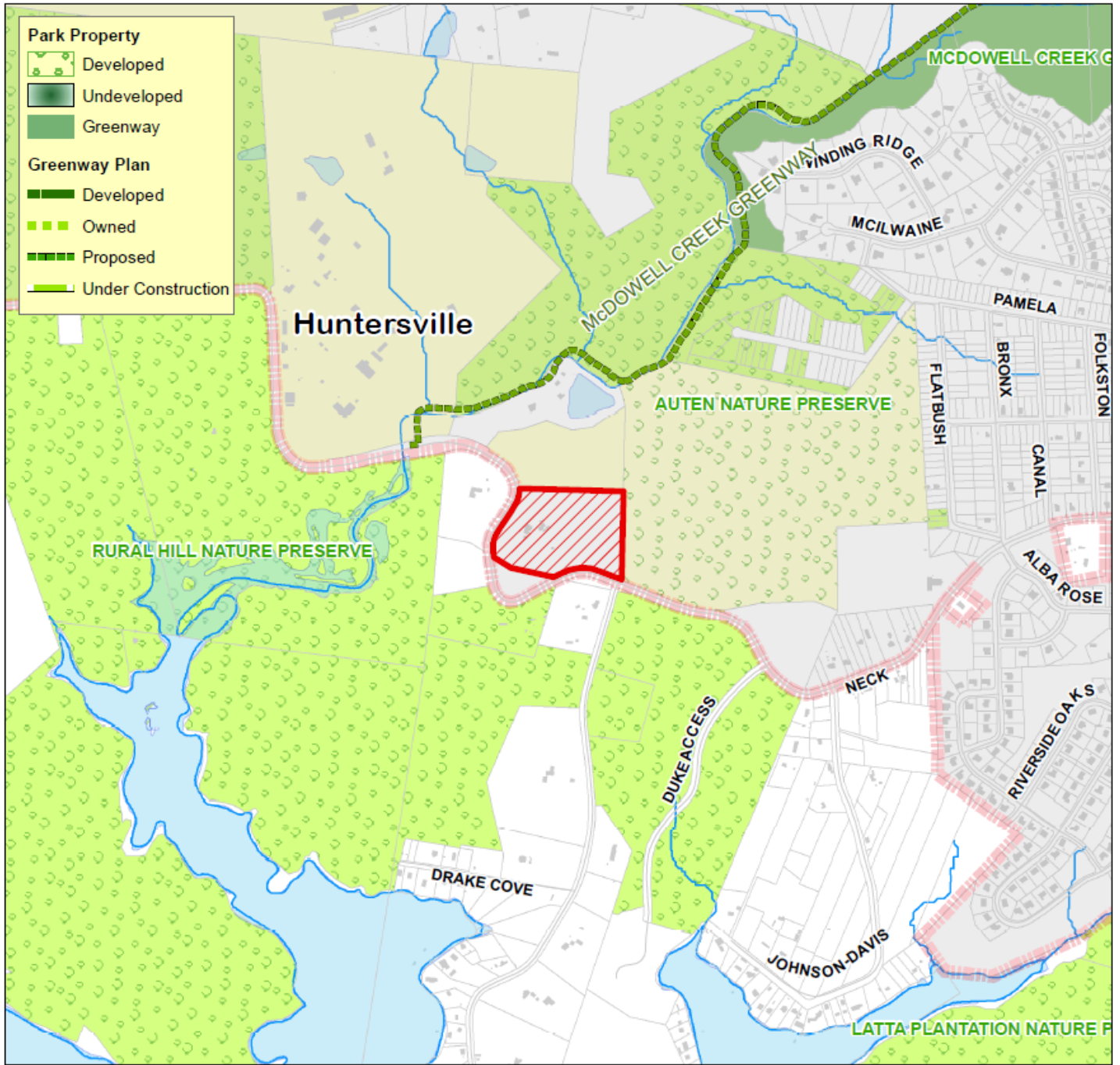
The Joint Use Task Force reviewed this matter at their April 2, 2014 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

#### **PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The Town of Huntersville is fully supportive of the proposed acquisition of this property, given its strategic location between the current Auten Nature Preserve and Latta Plantation Nature Preserve and the identification of this property by the area plan as a candidate for preservation. Therefore, Planning staff recommends approval.




#### **CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff resource: Jonathan Wells



# Mandatory Referral 14-15

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

-  Mandatory Referral
-  City Property
-  County Property



**Submitted by:** Jacqueline McNeil, BSSA-Asset and Facility Management

**Initiated by:** Jim Garges, Director, Park & Recreation Dept.

### **MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 14-16**

Proposed Acquisition of Land for Caldwell Station Greenway in Cornelius ETJ

#### **PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

This project is a joint acquisition effort to obtain Tax Parcels #005-032-09, #005-032-10, and #005-383-85 totaling 11.85 acres off Bailey Road in the Town of Cornelius ETJ for inclusion into Caldwell Station Greenway by the County and the Town of Cornelius. The property is currently zoned IC (Industrial Campus) under Cornelius' zoning ordinance and is home to a single-family residence and several supporting structures. The area is characterized by several properties currently in industrial use. The property is currently for sale and the owner-occupant has agreed to vacate the residence upon sale. Caldwell Station Creek Greenway is planned to run from Statesville Avenue (Hwy 21) to Old Statesville Road (Hwy 115) and terminate at the Bailey Road/Old Statesville Road intersection. It is envisioned that the greenway will be constructed by the Town of Cornelius and maintained by the County. The planned route currently has the trail going along the southern portion of the property near the creek and continuing along the eastern most boundary of the property and crossing Bailey Road (via. an underpass). The Town envisions using the western portion of the property for parking, associated greenway amenities, and a possible dog park.

#### **PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

Acquisition of this property will help fulfill the community's desire for additional greenway trails, park land, and amenities in this area of the County. The property is in the vicinity of several large subdivisions and offers the opportunity for varied active and passive recreational experiences. The acquisition also helps to fulfill the goal of preserving floodplain (the southern portion of the site lies within the 100-year floodplain) and open space within the County which has been identified as an important goal by citizens through the parks master planning process.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

This project is consistent with the *2008 Mecklenburg County Parks Master Plan* objectives 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. Overall, citizens within the County ranked providing more greenway trails and connections as their top recreation need.

The Caldwell Station Creek Greenway is also identified in the Town of Cornelius *Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan* (adopted in 2012) and Town of Cornelius *Greenway/Bikeway Master Plan* (adopted 2004).

The County is currently working with Cornelius staff in adopting a zoning text amendment that would permit greenways and related amenities in IC (Industrial Campus) zoning districts.

The Town is aware of the fact that there is a need for improved east-west connectivity in this area, and while no specific plan to do so is in place, the Town is committed to working with the County in greenway design (as well as with adjoining land owners) in connectivity enhancement. The town is studying the possibility of extending a roadway west (across the subject property) from the approximate location of the Bailey Road/Poole Place Drive intersection to US 21.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The *Cornelius Land Use Plan* (adopted 2014) calls for this area to be industrial. Although the land use plan does not specifically address the greenway, the Town has indicated it will support the greenway in this area.

#### **PROJECT IMPACT:**

Acquisition of this property takes this tract out of play for future residential development and expands the recreational and open space needs for a large section of northern Mecklenburg County.

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

This property is to be utilized as greenway and passive park land. It does not affect any other known public projects.

#### **ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

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

#### **JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their April 2, 2014 meeting and no joint use comments were offered.

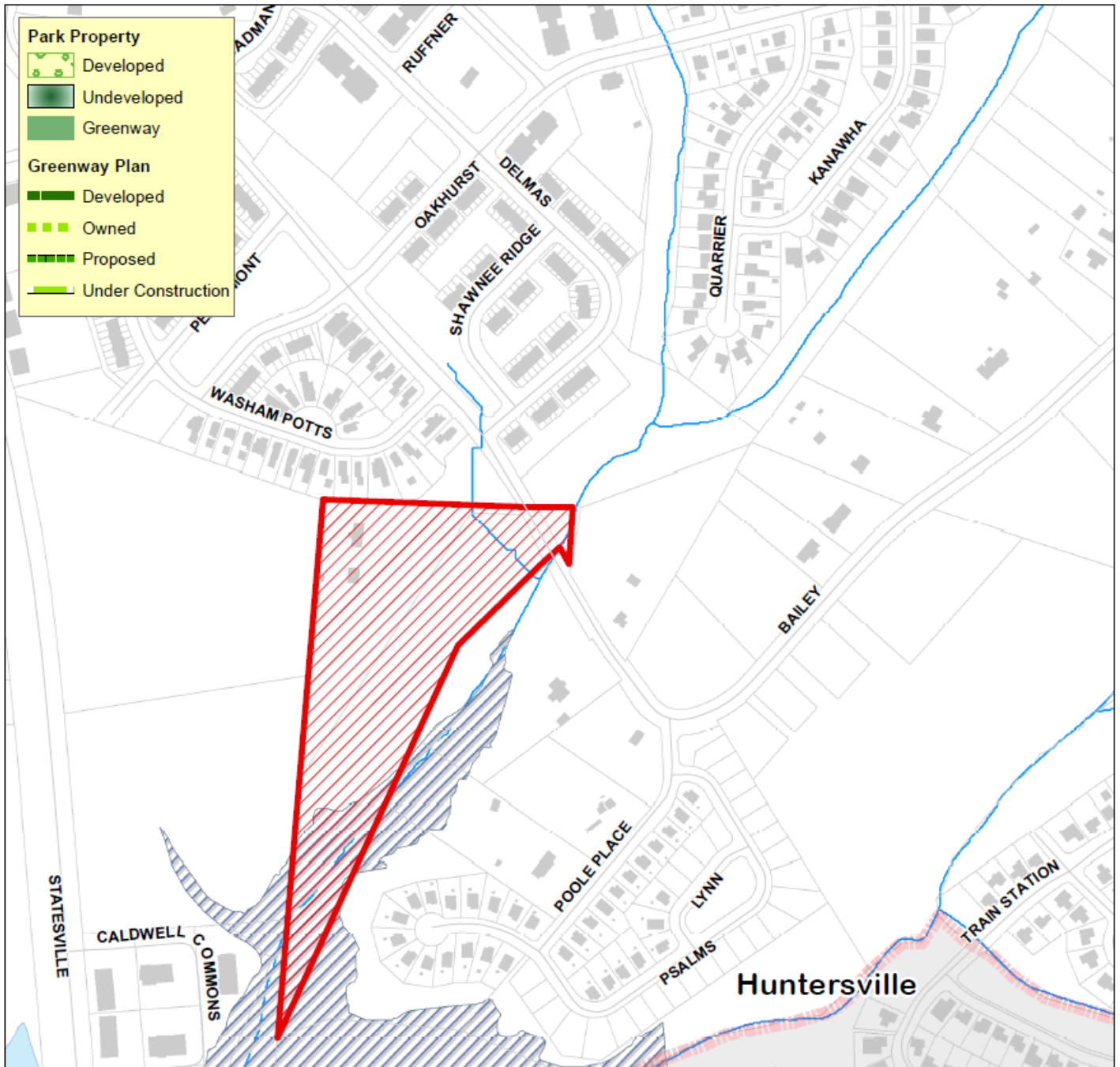
#### **PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Based upon Cornelius's support of this proposed transaction and their effort toward amending their ordinance to better align industrial and greenway uses with one another, Planning staff recommends approval.

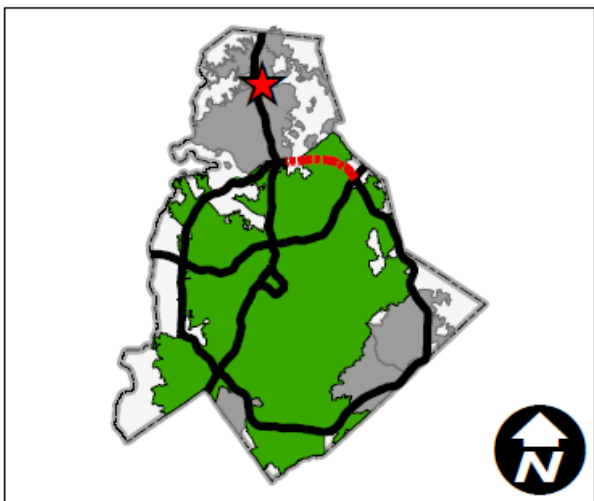
#### **CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff resource: Jonathan Wells





- Park Property**
- Developed
  - Undeveloped
  - Greenway
- Greenway Plan**
- Developed
  - Owned
  - Proposed
  - Under Construction



## Mandatory Referral 14-16

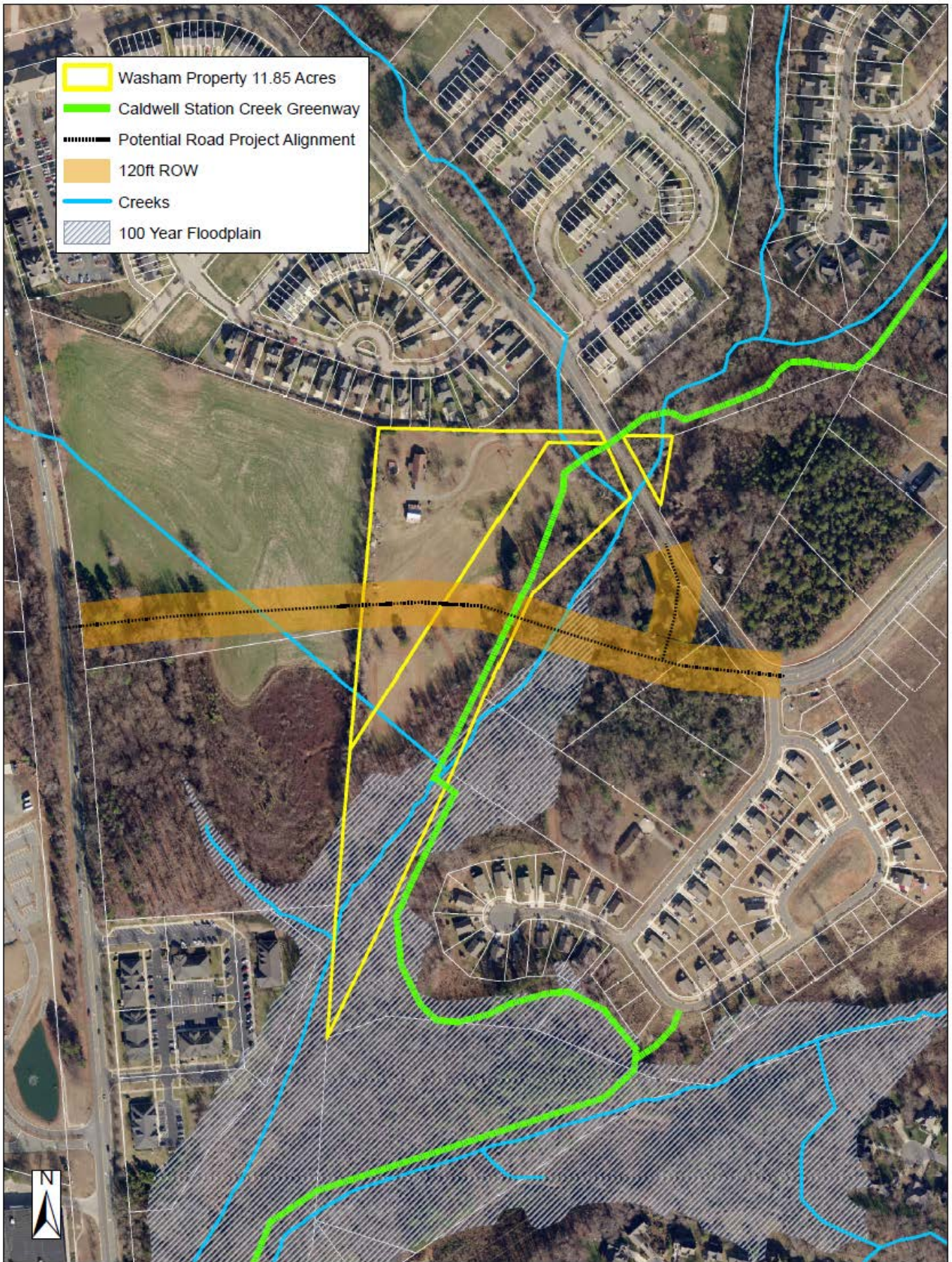
Initiated by: Park & Recreation  
 Submitted by: County Real Estate

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





# Washam Property Greenway Alignment









**Submitted by:** Jennifer Morell, BSSA-Asset and Facility Management

**Initiated by:** Jim Garges, Director, Park & Recreation Dept.

### **MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 14-17**

Proposed Expansion of Clarks Creek Nature Preserve off Hucks Road in Charlotte

#### **PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION:**

This project is the proposed acquisition of ±8.17 acres (Tax Parcel 027-161-02) located at 5532 Hucks Road in the City of Charlotte for the expansion of Clarks Creek Nature Preserve. The property is improved with a single family dwelling, several outbuildings and a barn. It is zoned R-4 (single family residential) according to the City of Charlotte's Zoning Ordinance.

A number of years ago the Davis Family donated the property for Clarks Creek Nature Preserve to Mecklenburg County. The patriarch of the Davis Family has recently passed away and the family now wishes to sell this piece of the property to "complete" the nature preserve.

There are several subdivisions of single family homes to the south and west of the property. Clarks Creek Nature Preserve occupies the majority of the land to the east of the parcel. South of the property across Hucks Road is Hucks Road Community Park. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Croft Community School (kindergarten through grade 5) is also located across Hucks Road to the southeast of the property.

#### **PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

This parcel is adjacent to the existing Clarks Creek Nature Preserve and would allow for the expansion and installation of a parking lot, picnic shelter, playground, and restrooms for nature preserve patrons. The acquisition of this property is supported by the surrounding residents, Croft Community School, and Park & Recreation. Croft Community School currently uses the property for outdoor education and the school Parent Teachers Association and the Homeowners Association surrounding the Nature Preserve have raised money to support the installation of the amenities in this Nature Preserve. Additionally, Park & Recreation has been offered a donation of a nature themed playground for placement in the Nature Preserve. The new playground would be best suited to the parcel for this proposed land acquisition.

Constructing the picnic shelter, restrooms and playground on this parcel would require Park & Recreation to install a buffer on the only western edge of the property. Also, this parcel has electricity, a water source, and a partial tree buffer on the western edge of the property.

The Clarks Creek Nature Preserve is comprised of woody vegetation as well as small trees and open fields. Clarks Creek is home to several imperiled bird species and several other plant species native to North Carolina. Acquiring this land would assist in protecting these species and providing cover for bird species of field and edge habitats.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PUBLIC POLICIES:**

This acquisition is consistent with the County's *2008 Nature Preserves Master Plan* which encourages the expansion of existing nature preserves and the preservation of natural habitats.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS:**

The *Northeast District Plan* (1996) predates the creation of the Nature Preserve, and shows the subject, as well as the Nature Preserve, as residential. The *Prosperity Hucks Area Plan* is now in development, but not yet adopted. The plan reflects the Clarks Creek Nature Preserve as an open space element, but still shows the subject for residential use. Area plans generally do not designate privately owned property for public or open space use. The plan did not anticipate that this particular site might be available for expansion of the Nature Preserve. However, the plan articulates support for continued extension of parks, greenways, and open spaces as valuable assets to the community. The plan's public input process elicited strong support for the Nature Preserve, and for expansion of open space.

#### **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. The project will meet community goals and support outdoor recreation for neighboring schools.

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

This property is to be utilized for recreational use ancillary to the nature preserve land. It does not affect any other known public projects in this area.

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:**

This project is for land acquisition only. The transaction is expected to be complete by late June 2014.

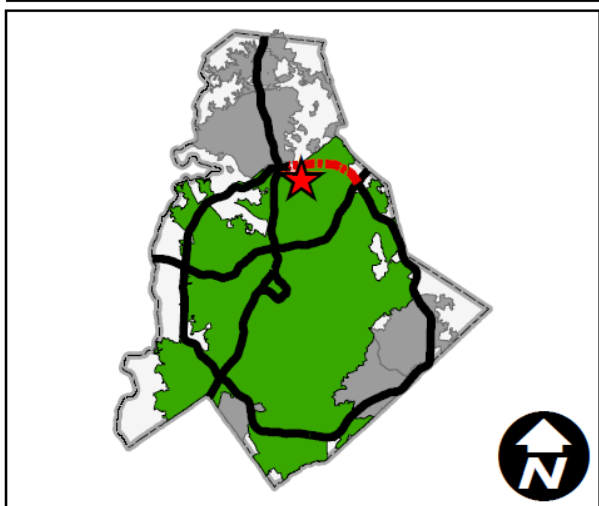
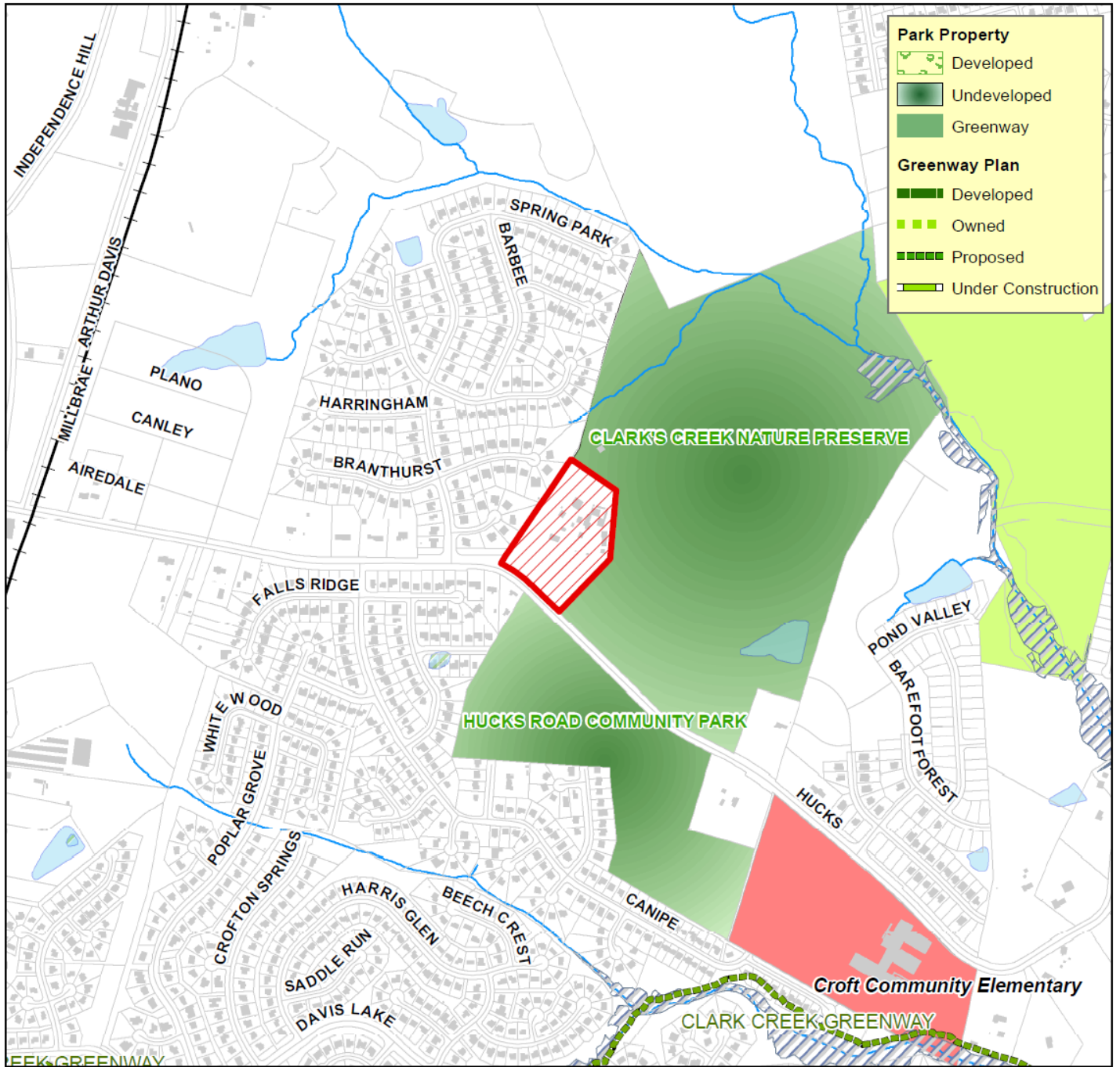
**JOINT USE TASK FORCE REVIEW COMMENTS:**

The Joint Use Task Force discussed this matter at their April 2, 2014 meeting and it was suggested that the playground equipment described as a possible improvement to the subject property might better serve the community if it was placed on the school property. County Real Estate and CMS staffs offered to mutually explore this possibility.

**PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposal is consistent with the *Prosperity Hucks Area Plan's* recommendation for continued extension of parks, greenways, and open spaces. While not yet adopted by council, the public input process elicited strong support for the Nature Preserve and for expansion of open space. As such, staff recommends approval of the proposal.

**CMPC PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**



# Mandatory Referral 14-17

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

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

