



# SPECIAL USE REPORT

▶ **FILE #:** 7-C-21-SU **AGENDA ITEM #:** 24  
 POSTPONEMENT(S): 7/8/2021 - 8/12/2021 **AGENDA DATE:** 9/9/2021  
 ▶ **APPLICANT:** JOHN T. RUDOLPH  
 OWNER(S): UT Research Foundation

**TAX ID NUMBER:** 108 00103-00116 [View map on KGIS](#)  
**JURISDICTION:** City Council District 1  
**STREET ADDRESS:** 0, 2606 & 2641 Osprey Vista Way and 0, 1548 & 1600 Accelerator Way and 0 & 2704 Cherokee Farm Way and (0 Eagle Flight Way)  
 ▶ **LOCATION:** **West side of Alcoa Highway, west of Cherokee Trail**  
 ▶ **APPX. SIZE OF TRACT:** **145 acres**  
**SECTOR PLAN:** South County  
**GROWTH POLICY PLAN:** N/A  
**ACCESSIBILITY:** Access is via Alcoa Hwy., an expressway facility with a six lane divided median section within a 175' right-of-way.  
**UTILITIES:** Water Source: Knoxville Utilities Board  
 Sewer Source: Knoxville Utilities Board  
**WATERSHED:** Tennessee River

▶ **ZONING:** **I-RD (Research and Development) (C) / HP (Hillside Protection Overlay) / F (Floodplain Overlay)**  
 ▶ **EXISTING LAND USE:** **P-QP (Public / Quasi Public Land)**  
 ▶ **PROPOSED USE:** **Master Plan and Development Guidelines Amendment**

**HISTORY OF ZONING:** Property was rezoned to BP-1 (Business and Technology Park) by Knoxville City Council on April 2, 2013. The property was rezoned to I-RD Research and Development on August 13, 2019.  
**SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING:** North: Tennessee River -- F (Floodplain Overlay)  
 South: UT Golf Facility -- OS (Parks and Open Space)  
 East: UT Medical Center -- INST (Institutional)  
 West: Tennessee River -- F (Floodplain Overlay)  
**NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT:** The subject property is a research business park that is bounded by the Tennessee River to the west and north, Alcoa Highway to the east, and the University of Tennessee golf facility to the south. The University of Tennessee Medical Center is on the east side of Alcoa Highway.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

▶ **Postpone the request until the October 14, 2021 Planning Commission meeting as requested by the applicant.**  
 The applicant has requested postponement to allow additional time for consultation with Planning staff on

revisions to the master plan.

## COMMENTS:

The applicant is requesting approval of amendments to the Cherokee Farm Master Plan and Development Guidelines that were originally approved by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2015, for the Cherokee Farm Innovation Campus. The proposed amendments would:

1. Rebrand the campus as the UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm.
2. Redesignate some of the existing quad open spaces for surface parking and provide more flexibility in the location of parking within each building lot. The original master plan assumed that structured parking would be feasible but this is no longer expected. Consequently, the total building floor area proposed in the plan would be reduced from 1.6 million sqft to 940,000 sqft, and the total number of parking spaces reduced from 4,000 to 2,350.
3. Establish the State of Tennessee's High Performance Building Requirements as the minimum design standard for sustainable development. The existing master plan refers to the State of Tennessee Sustainable Design Guidelines.
4. Delete an appendix that contains requirements for entrance plazas.
5. Revise the building height requirements to (1) use the City's zoning ordinance as the method to determine maximum allowable building height on each lot, and (2) acknowledge the height limits imposed by state scenic highway law, since the research park adjoins a section of Alcoa Highway that is designated as scenic.
6. Consolidate the signage standards into a master sign plan for the campus. When the master plan and development guidelines were revised in February 2020 (2-E-20-UR), the wall sign guidelines were revised to remove the 100 sqft maximum sign area and replace it with the maximum allowed in the BP-1 by Article 8 (Signs) in the Knoxville Zoning Ordinance as adopted on August 13, 2019 (10 percent of the primary building elevation). However, the guidelines still limited the maximum number of wall signs to one per building. The current proposal eliminates the limitation of one wall per building and allows Planning Commission staff to approve additional wall signs if they will not detract from the park-like character of the zone and additional signs are essential to inform the public (summarized). Planning staff is working with the applicant to develop standards for the maximum size and placement of individual wall signs, as well as the maximum allowed per building elevation.

The proposed standards for the master sign plan, as well as the final proposed language governing building heights, will be provided to the Planning Commission at the agenda review meeting and attached to the staff report online on Tuesday, September 7.

## STANDARDS FOR EVALUATING A SPECIAL USE (ARTICLE 16.2.F.2.)

### 1) THE USE IS CONSISTENT WITH ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES, INCLUDING THE GENERAL PLAN AND THE ONE-YEAR PLAN.

- A. The subject property is located in the CI (Civic / Institutional) land use classification on the One Year Plan and South County Sector Plan. This land use allows for major public and quasi-public institutions, including schools, colleges, the university, churches, correctional facilities, hospitals, utilities, and similar uses.
- B. The research park is associated with the University of Tennessee.

### 2) THE USE IS IN HARMONY WITH THE GENERAL PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THIS ZONING CODE.

- A. The former BP-1 (Business and Technology Park) zoning district is intended to provide for a wide range of uses including professional, business, governmental, and medical offices and uses that rely on advanced scientific and engineering capability. It is intended to provide sites for the location of such enterprises in an attractive, park-like setting.
- B. The focus of the development will continue to be as a research park.

### 3) THE USE IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE IT IS PROPOSED, AND WITH THE SIZE AND LOCATION OF BUILDINGS IN THE VICINITY.

- A. The proposed amendments to the master plan do not significantly change the size of buildings permitted but it does allow more flexibility with the placement of buildings on the lots.
- B. The changes to the sign standards would allow additional wall (attached) signs, including signs that face Alcoa Highway which is designated as a scenic highway by the state.

### 4) THE USE WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INJURE THE VALUE OF ADJACENT PROPERTY OR BY NOISE, LIGHTS, FUMES, ODORS, VIBRATION, TRAFFIC, CONGESTION, OR OTHER IMPACTS DETRACT FROM THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT.

- A. The development is isolated from other uses that are not associated with the University of Tennessee, however, it is visible from Alcoa Highway and residents on the opposite side of the Tennessee River.

B. By allowing additional signs, excessive use of internal illumination could impact the scenic quality of Alcoa Highway and be highly visible from residential properties. Larger signs should either be non-illuminated or use external illumination with shielded light fixtures or halo illumination.

5) THE USE IS NOT OF A NATURE OR SO LOCATED AS TO DRAW SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC THROUGH RESIDENTIAL STREETS.

A. Additional traffic will not be drawn through residential streets because the property has direct access to Alcoa Highway.

6) THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SURROUNDING AREA IS NOT SUCH AS TO POSE A POTENTIAL HAZARD TO THE PROPOSED USE OR TO CREATE AN UNDESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROPOSED USE.

A. There are no known uses in the area that could be a potential hazard or create an undesirable environment for the proposed uses within the development.

ESTIMATED TRAFFIC IMPACT: Not required.

ESTIMATED STUDENT YIELD: Not applicable.

The Planning Commission's approval or denial of this request is final, unless the action is appealed to the Knoxville City Council. The date of the Knoxville City Council hearing will depend on when the appeal application is filed. Appellants have 15 days to appeal a Planning Commission decision in the City.