



PLAN AMENDMENT/ REZONING REPORT

▶ FILE #:

2-H-25-RZ

2-A-25-PA

AGENDA DATE: 4/10/2025

AGENDA ITEM #:

33

POSTPONEMENT(S):

2/13/25, 3/13/25

▶ APPLICANT:

BENJAMIN C. MULLINS

OWNER(S):

Grant Denton

TAX ID NUMBER:

91 019, 018, 02103

View map on KGIS

JURISDICTION:

Commission District 6

STREET ADDRESS:

3110 GRAY HENDRIX RD (0 GRAY HENDRIX RD, 7551 OAK RIDGE HWY (PARTIAL))

▶ LOCATION:

South side of Oak Ridge Hwy, east of Gray Hendrix Rd

▶ TRACT INFORMATION:

18.42 acres

GROWTH POLICY PLAN:

Planned Growth Area

ACCESSIBILITY:

Access is via an unnamed road off Gray Hendrix Road, a local street with a 15 to 17.5-ft pavement width within a right-of-way width that varies from 52 to 62 ft. The unnamed road has a 10-ft pavement width within a 50-ft right-of-way. Access is also via Oak Ridge Highway, a major arterial street with a 46-ft pavement width within an 85-ft right-of-way.

UTILITIES:

Water Source: West Knox Utility District
Sewer Source: West Knox Utility District

FIRE DISTRICT:

Karns Fire Department

WATERSHED:

Beaver Creek

▶ PRESENT PLAN DESIGNATION/ZONING:

TN (Traditional Neighborhood), CMU (Corridor Mixed Use), RC (Rural Conservation) / CA (General Business), A (Agricultural)

▶ PROPOSED PLAN DESIGNATION/ZONING:

TN (Traditional Neighborhood) for the RC portion only / PR (Planned Residential)

▶ EXISTING LAND USE:

Agriculture/Forestry/Vacant Land, Rural Residential

▶ DENSITY PROPOSED:

12 du/ac

EXTENSION OF PLAN DESIGNATION/ZONING:

Yes, it is an extension of the plan designation but not of the zoning.

HISTORY OF ZONING REQUESTS:

None noted.

SURROUNDING LAND USE, PLAN DESIGNATION, ZONING

North: Commercial - CMU (Commercial Mixed Use) - CA (General Business)
South: Rural residential - TN (Traditional Neighborhood), RC (Rural Conservation), HP (Hillside Protection) - A (Agricultural)
East: Rural residential, agriculture/forestry/vacant land, office - TN

(Traditional Neighborhood), CMU (Commercial Mixed Use), HP (Hillside Protection), RC (Rural Conservation) - CA (General Business), A (Agricultural)

West: Rural residential, agriculture/forestry/vacant land, transportation/communications/utilities - TN (Traditional Neighborhood), HP (Hillside Protection) - A (Agricultural), CA (General Business)

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT: This part of Karns primarily features single family residential uses in subdivisions and on large 1+ acre lots, with some commercial and office uses along Oak Ridge Highway to the north. Karns Community Park and Karns Library lie approximately 0.25 miles to the east, and Karns Middle and Elementary Schools lie approximately 0.5 miles to the west.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- **Deny the TN (Traditional Neighborhood) place type because there are no changes in the landscape or policy considerations to support a plan amendment.**
- **Approve the PR (Planned Residential) zone with a density of up to 12 du/ac for the TN (Traditional Neighborhood) and CMU (Corridor Mixed Use) place types because it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and supported by residential amenities, subject to 1 condition.**

1. Access to Gray Hendrix Road shall be reserved as a secondary access point for emergency vehicles only.

COMMENTS:

PURSUANT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, CHAPTER 3 IMPLEMENTATION, A PLAN AMENDMENT MAY BE APPROPRIATE IF THERE IS AN OBVIOUS OR SIGNIFICANT ERROR OR OMISSION IN THE PLAN, OR IF TWO OR MORE OF THE OTHER CRITERIA APPLY.

OBVIOUS OR SIGNIFICANT ERROR OR OMISSION IN THE PLAN:

1. The small section of the RC (Rural Conservation) place type at the rear of the subject property is part of a large swath of the RC designation along the wooded Beaver Ridgeline running southwest to northeast in this area of the Karns community. Its placement aligns with the intent of the RC place type to conserve forested areas, ridges, wetlands and other significant natural features. The section of RC place type on this property is not the result of an error or omission in the Comprehensive Plan.

IF THERE ARE NO ERRORS OR OMISSIONS, TWO OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA MUST BE MET:

CHANGES OF CONDITIONS (SUCH AS SURROUNDING LAND USES, ZONING, UNCONTROLLED NATURAL FORCES/DISASTERS, ETC.):

1. Beaver Ridge remains a prominent natural feature of the area, and there have not been changes to this scenic asset that warrant a plan amendment to the TN (Traditional Neighborhood) place type, which is intended for intensive residential development.

INTRODUCTION OF SIGNIFICANT NEW UTILITIES OR LOCAL/STATE/FEDERAL ROAD PROJECTS THAT WERE NOT ANTICIPATED IN THE PLAN AND MAKE DEVELOPMENT MORE FEASIBLE:

1. There are no capital improvements or infrastructure changes in this area that were not considered in the Comprehensive Plan.

NEW DATA REGARDING TRENDS OR PROJECTIONS, POPULATION, HOUSING CONDITIONS, OR TRAFFIC GROWTH THAT WARRANT RECONSIDERATION OF THE ORIGINAL PLAN:

1. While Knox County continues to see population growth and increasing demand for housing, this does not warrant reconsideration of the RC place type to conserve a ridgeline unsuitable for residential development. The RC place type comprises approximately 3.8% of the subject property, and its exclusion from a TN approach to residential development on the rest of the site does not significantly impact housing availability.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES SUPPORT THE POLICIES AND ACTIONS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND CRITERIA OF THE PLAN:

1. Maintaining the RC place type is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Policy 2.3 to provide protections for ridges, views and open spaces. It is also aligned with Policy 7 to encourage

development practices that conserve and connect natural features and habitat.

PURSUANT TO THE KNOX COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE 6.30.01, THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS MUST BE MET FOR ALL REZONINGS (must meet all of these):

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL BE NECESSARY BECAUSE OF SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED OR CHANGING CONDITIONS IN THE AREA AND DISTRICTS AFFECTED, OR IN THE CITY/COUNTY GENERALLY:

1. This area of the Karns community continues to see a trend of more intensive residential and commercial development along the Oak Ridge Highway corridor. The Padget Hill subdivision was completed around 2024 nearby to the east, and the Karns Landing residential subdivision was approved in 2023 adjacent to Padget Hill. Recent commercial development includes an urgent care clinic and new retail businesses. Commercial infill development around 7630 Oak Ridge Highway resulted in the construction of a new road providing better connectivity between Beaver Ridge Road and Oak Ridge Highway.
2. In addition to changing conditions, existing amenities in the area support more residential intensity at the requested PR (Planned Residential) zone density of 12 du/ac. A short distance to the east of the subject property is the Karns Library and Karns Community Park, which has baseball fields, a playground and a public pool. The Karns Elementary and Middle School are nearby to the west. These community facilities support residential development on the TN (Traditional Neighborhood) and CMU (Corridor Mixed Use) place types of the subject property.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE APPLICABLE ZONING ORDINANCE:

1. The PR zone is designed to enable residential development that is responsive to environmental conditions on a site. Ecologically sensitive areas such as streams or steep slopes can be preserved by concentrating residential density in the optimal areas of a property.
2. The subject property has wooded, steep slopes in the rear of the lot that are part of the Beaver Ridgeline as seen on the third page of context maps in Exhibit A. The PR zone allows development that can preserve this forested, natural feature.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT ANY OTHER PART OF THE COUNTY, NOR SHALL ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT ADVERSE EFFECTS RESULT FROM SUCH AMENDMENT:

1. This rezoning case was postponed while the applicant pursued a land swap to enable direct access to Oak Ridge Highway, as shown in Exhibit B. The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has provided a letter indicating preliminary permission for an access point to Oak Ridge Highway where the property was expanded (see Exhibit C), subject to meeting all TDOT regulations. This new access point would replace an existing commercial driveway.
2. The new direct access to Oak Ridge Highway addresses staff's concerns about the potential traffic of 212 new units accessing Gray Hendrix Road, which is a relatively narrow, local street with limited sight distance around a sloped curve to the south. Access to this residential street is also through a 10-ft wide "rec-NB" (recorded-Not Built) road that was never accepted by the County and has been privately maintained by property owners abutting the subject property. The noted condition that access to Gray Hendrix Road be reserved for emergency purposes only addresses concern about traffic safety on Gray Hendrix Road resulting from this residential rezoning.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SHALL BE CONSISTENT WITH AND NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF KNOX COUNTY, INCLUDING ANY OF ITS ELEMENTS, MAJOR ROAD PLAN, LAND USE PLAN, COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN, AND OTHERS:

1. Staff recommend approval of the requested PR zone up to 12 du/ac for the portion of the subject property that is designated with the TN and CMU place type only. This would exclude a .7-acre area in the rear that staff recommend maintain its RC (Rural Conservation) place type, which does not permit consideration of PR zoning at that density.
2. The PR zone up to 12-du/ac is partially related to both the TN and CMU place types. It meets the criteria for a partially related zone because it is consistent with the primary and/or secondary uses of those place types. The TN place type is intended to provide a mix of housing forms ranging from single family dwellings to townhomes and small multifamily buildings with a walkable block pattern. The CMU place type describes attached and multifamily residential development as a secondary use and housing mix form. The PR zone up to 12 du/ac supports both of these descriptions.
3. Approving the recommended rezoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Policy 5,

to create neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and amenities in close proximity. This property is ideally located along a mixed-use corridor with easy access to a library, a public park and an elementary and middle school. The density of this rezoning, and its access to a major arterial street, is also supported by Policy 6.3 - to promote attainable housing that meets the needs of current and future residents - by identifying areas for multifamily development that have the appropriate supportive infrastructure.

4. The recommended condition that access to Gray Hendrix Road be reserved for emergency purposes only is consistent with Policy 9, to coordinate infrastructure improvements with development. The property's access point on this two-lane residential street with no shoulders and a steep curve is not suitable for the 212-dwelling unit potential of this rezoning.

5. This rezoning is consistent with the property's location in the Planned Growth Area of the Growth Policy Plan.

ESTIMATED TRAFFIC IMPACT: 1946 (average daily vehicle trips)

Average Daily Vehicle Trips are computed using national average trip rates reported in the latest edition of "Trip Generation," published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Average Daily Vehicle Trips represent the total number of trips that a particular land use can be expected to generate during a 24-hour day (Monday through Friday), with a "trip" counted each time a vehicle enters or exits a proposed development.

ESTIMATED STUDENT YIELD: 12 (public school children, grades K-12)

Schools affected by this proposal: Karns Elementary, Karns Middle, and Karns High.

- Potential new school population is estimated using locally-derived data on public school student yield generated by new housing.
- Students are assigned to schools based on current attendance zones as determined by Knox County Schools. Students may request transfers to different zones, and zone boundaries are subject to change.
- Estimates presume full build-out of the proposed development. Build-out is subject to market forces, and timing varies widely from proposal to proposal.
- Student yields from new development do not reflect a net addition of children in schools. Additions occur incrementally over the build-out period. New students may replace current population that ages through the system or moves from the attendance zone.

If approved, this item will be forwarded to Knox County Commission for action on 4/21/2025. If denied, Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission's action is final, unless the action to deny is appealed to Knox County Commission. The date of the appeal hearing will depend on when the appeal application is filed. Appellants have 30 days to appeal a Planning Commission decision in the County.