

Knoxville Knox County Planning Commission
Via email
April 12, 2022

Re: 4-L-22-SP; 4-L-22-RZ

South Doyle Neighborhood Association, Inc. has the following comments on the subject application for a sector plan amendment and rezoning for a tract along Governor John Sevier Highway (GJSH). We appreciate the developers having come to the monthly public meeting of our association last week to discuss their proposed project.

We question whether there is any basis for the proposed amendment of the 2012 South County Sector Plan. The development of the shopping area just to the east of the tract was well underway when the Plan was adopted, so we do not see how it serves as a change of conditions or how the related roads and utilities were unanticipated in the Plan. In fact, page 17 of the Plan specifically mentions the shopping center. And while the recent extension of bus service to the shopping center could hopefully be helpful as a transit matter, it is not necessarily permanent and it is not a fixed change of land use such as would seem to justify a Plan change.

If the Commission is nonetheless inclined to approve the Plan amendment and proceed to rezoning, we have the following four comments:

1. Density: The proposed 18 du/ac density of the project is out of character with the surrounding area, which is largely agricultural. While there is a RB tract on the north side of GJSH across from the proposed development, that tract is limited to less than 12 du/ac absent a use on review. We recognize that there have been discussions in Knox County about increasing density, but it is important that increased density not be approved in inappropriate areas.
2. Conditions: The four rezoning conditions recommended in the staff report are consistent with the scenic highway status of GJSH, and we strongly encourage the Commission to adopt them.
3. Concept plan: in our meeting last week, the developers shared an initial concept site plan drawing with us. We question whether the concept in that drawing meets the PR zoning goals of imaginative solutions and open space. The drawing showed ten buildings with 30 du each plus more than 500 surface parking spaces, which, except for a small (roughly 22 feet wide) dog park and a swimming pool area, would apparently take up the entire developable area. It appears the goal was simply to maximize the number of dwelling units and parking, not to significantly provide imaginative solutions or open space. A pedestrian connection to the transit and commercial area to the east, as recommended in the staff report, could, with slightly more imaginative design, be integrated with green space. Although the concept plan is not actually up for Commission approval at this point, we urge the Commission to take this opportunity to

ask the developers to revise their plan to better meet PR goals, outdoor activity, and less reliance on private vehicles.

4. Traffic: as drawn, the initial concept plan, and the initial estimate of 2400 vehicle trips daily, raise questions of significant traffic problems, especially any attempts to turn west from the proposed development onto GJSH. While a traffic study would be required before progressing with this project, members of our community are well aware from extensive personal experience of the problems along GJSH, especially at peak times.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Mark Mugford
President, South Doyle Neighborhood Association, Inc.