

4-M-22-RZ

Commissioners,

When making your decisions about this application and plot of land, please consider the importance of farmland preservation and the reasons of why it is extremely important.

This land is still being used to produce hay to feed animals, it floods significantly when rainfall is present, it used to be an airstrip registered with the FAA, the airplane hangar is still present, as well as two barns. Wildlife still reside here and depend on this land.

Preserving farmland is so important. It protects air quality, provides shelter for wildlife, protects watersheds and provides a place for flood water to go. In a time where it is so easy to just say, "yeah that works, we can approve that," please consider the long term impact applications like these can have on our rural heritage. We need to conserve certain areas before we have nothing left and regret it later.

If you approve this request, please limit it to as little density as possible. Our current sector plan does not allow for anything more than 2 units per acre in the rural area. Please uphold this plan.

Also, portions of our farmland NEED to be protected. This is also stated in our Northeast County sector plan.

Page 16 in the Northeast County Sector Plan discussing the rural nature of our area and suggest placing conservation easements on parts of farmland.



The Northeast County Sector is rural in nature with over 65 percent of the existing land use designated Agricultural/Forestry/Vacant Land. One of the ways to sustain and develop the local agricultural economy is by preserving prime soils for farms and farming. Currently, around 50 percent of land (28,191 acres) in the Northeast County is considered prime farmland or locally important soils (Agricultural Soils and Greenbelt Program Parcel map).

Another option for landowners is to use agricultural conservation easements and/or conservation subdivision development to preserve local farmland. The State of Tennessee's Greenbelt Program applies to parcels where the property owner has elected to limit the use of land to agriculture or forest production practices. By doing so, a land owner's property tax is based on the value as farm or forest land and not on market value for residential or commercial purposes. The Greenbelt program does not guarantee permanent farmland protection; owners can opt out and redevelop after paying rollback taxes. In the Northeast County sector, 40 percent of land is protected under the Greenbelt program.

Page 25 discusses the concerns about losing farmland to residential development.

Section 2: Land Use, Community Facilities, Green Infrastructure, Historic Resources, and Transportation Plans

LAND USE PLAN

The 15-Year Land Use Plan is a basis for growth and conservation in the Northeast County Sector. The land use recommendations and policies put forth in this plan are used by the Metropolitan Planning Commission, City Council and County Commission for decision making with regards to development and land use.

LAND USE PLANNING METHODOLOGY

Six steps were used to develop the proposed land use and are described below:

1. Standard Land Use Classifications Conversion:

In 2007, MPC developed a standard land use classification table to use in all 12 sectors. The table includes descriptions, location criteria, and recommended zoning for each proposed land use classification (See Appendix B). In developing the proposed land use map, the older land use classification used in 2003 was converted to the new standardized land use classification being used in all sector plans.

2. Slope Protection and Stream Protection Areas:

Slope Protection Areas and Stream Protection Areas were previously designated as land use categories with no underlying land use beneath them. In the past, this often created difficulty and confusion in the rezoning and review process. As a result, MPC now identifies slope protection and stream protection areas as new environmental overlays atop underlying land use designations.

3. Knoxville/Knox County 2033 General Plan:

Adopted in 2003, the plan serves as the official 30-year comprehensive plan for Knoxville and Knox County, providing a vision and framework for sector

plan development. Several policies set forth in the General Plan are used to guide Northeast County Sector Plan recommendations. An example is General Plan Development Policy #6: Respect and Nurture Our Heritage Areas. The sector plan recommendations emphasize the concept of heritage areas by focusing on natural resources in the Northeast County such as the protection of agriculture farmland, preservation, and the conservation of rural landscapes and character.

4. Citizen Input:

Through the community input process, citizens voiced concern about the loss of farmland to residential development, increased traffic volume on rural roads, and the desire for a new middle school in the Gibbs community. Residents shared about how density allowed in the Agricultural zone works against preserving and maintaining the rural character. Sidewalks, greenway, and bicycle lanes were also desired where connectivity is feasible and makes sense (See Appendix A).

5. 2003 Northeast County Sector Plan:

The 2003 plan recommendations were evaluated for relevancy, with those determined to be still valid incorporated into this sector plan.

6. Growth Policy Plan:

Adopted in 2001, this plan required city and county governments in Knox County to prepare a 20-year Growth Plan in accordance with the Tennessee growth management law Public Chapter 1101. Growth is guided by three classifications of land designated in the plan which are Rural, Urban Growth, and Planned Growth areas. Each classification is defined by policies that determine the extent development may occur.

PROPOSED LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Table 16 compares the standardized land use classifications by acreage from 2003, to the proposed land use acreage in 2015. The largest conversion resulted from reassigning almost 11,000 acres of Slope Protection Area and Stream Protection Area in 2003, to another land use classification in 2015.

Land Use Classification	2003 Sector Plan	2015 Sector Plan
Slope Protection Area*	8,850	0
Stream Protection Area*	2,137	0
Agricultural	27,459	37,057
Low Density Residential	10,804	13,116
Medium Density Residential	52	52
Office	96	83
General Commercial	523	488
Neighborhood Commercial	67	32
Rural Commercial	2	48
Light Industrial	4,034	2,613
Heavy Industrial Mining	0	1,028
Civic Institutional	258	678
Public Parks and Refuges	869	876
Mixed Use	1,043	0
Mixed Use Special District	73	170

*Slope Protection Areas and Stream Protection Areas are now environmental overlay areas with underlying land uses.

Page 54 under Land Uses says, “maintaining the rural character within the Northeast County, particularly in the Corryton area.”

Land Use

- Concerns surrounding Knoxville Center Mall (located just outside the Northeast County) and the amount of vacant space (How will this space be reused or redeveloped)
- The commercial area surrounding Harbison Crossroads and how it will grow
- The loss of farmland to residential development
- Density allowed in the Agricultural zoning works against preservation
- Maintaining the rural character within the Northeast County, particularly in the Corryton area
- An update of the historic resources inventory in the Northeast County
- The desire for a new Gibbs Middle School in the Gibbs community and the concern it will bring more development
- Further expansion of wastewater and residential into the Rural Area of the Growth Policy Plan

Transportation

- How growing residential development will increase traffic volume and capacity on narrow roads
- Many of the roads in the Northeast County are narrow and should incorporate shoulders where possible
- Bridges along Emory Road and Washington Pike are narrow and should be widened
- Sidewalks and greenways were routinely mentioned with connectivity to Gibbs Elementary and High Schools, to the surrounding Ruritan Park and Harbison Crossroad
- Bicycle lanes and how to accommodate cyclists on Washington Pike, Millertown Pike, and Tazewell Pike

Community Facilities

- Corryton Community Center, Park and Library could be better utilized from extended library hours, to summer programs and events at the park.
- Corryton Elementary School should remain open and potentially return to a K-8.
- The road (Hogskin Road) leading to House Mountain and parking lot are inadequate.
- Greenway extension should be made connecting the existing Loves Creek greenway to Walmart and other retail in the vicinity
- Requiring right of way along edge of future development for connectivity with greenways and sidewalks
- Equestrian trails on farms
- Access to the Holston River for non-motorized and park activity

Round Two: The Knoxville Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission held a second round of public meetings for the Northeast County Sector Plan update on September 17, 2015 (Corryton Senior Center), September 21, 2015 (Gibbs Ruritan Club), and September 22, 2015 (East Knox Elementary). At each meeting, a presentation was given providing a brief overview of sector planning, results from the online survey and first round of public meetings, as well as highlights of the proposed land use recommendations for the Northeast County. Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft land use recommendations through public discussion. Below is a summary of comments received during the three meetings.

- The lack of parks and greenway usage in the online survey result more from the limited number of opportunities in the Northeast County
- All references to PlanET need to be removed from the background report and draft plan.
- With the tentative construction of a new Gibbs middle school, greenways and/or sidewalks need to be added in front of school and along adjacent properties for connectivity to the south (Harbison Crossroads) and to the north (Gibbs Ruritan Club)
- Corryton Park has no activities, leagues, etc.
- Concerns about updating the Growth Policy Plan regarding how the current land classifications will change, who are the people needed to initiate this update process, and if it will really happen (Political reality of update to this plan is bleak)
- Concern over proposed land use of Low Density Residential (LDR) for Strong Stock farm. This is not the Agriculture land use property owners originally asked for. The LDR will only encourage adjacent properties to develop.
- Concern over language in draft plan regarding how land west of Roberts Road should be evaluated for Planned Growth designation
- Participants were interested in having a third public meeting.

Round Three: Public Meeting Summary: The Knoxville Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission held a third public meeting for the Northeast County Sector Plan update on October 20, 2015 (East Knox Elementary) at the request of participants. A brief presentation was given providing changes to the draft recommendations based on the second round of public meetings.

Please uphold our sector plan. If possible, place a condition on this property/agenda item to leave a portion of it untouched, conserved, and preserved.

You have a responsibility to those who helped create this sector plan, a responsibility to the citizens of this area that came before you and will come long after, and a responsibility to our heritage.