

Ordinance Amendment
8-A-22-OA

Build-to zones and build-to percentages are useful tools “intended to help create a more pedestrian friendly environment along Knoxville’s main corridors.” As an organization that works to make the Knoxville region a better place to bike and walk for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, Bike Walk Knoxville is supportive of any effort to make our community safer and more accessible for those getting around outside a vehicle.

However, in an attempt to avoid inhibiting redevelopment along major arterials, this Ordinance Amendment runs the risk of preventing these spaces from ever truly becoming pedestrian friendly. With this amendment exempting sections of Chapman Highway, Asheville Highway, North Broadway St and Kingston Pike from build-to-zones and build-to-percentages, many communities and individuals would be negatively impacted. Areas that do indeed have the potential to become centers for pedestrian-oriented activities would be losing the opportunity to utilize build-to-zones and build-to-percentages to help encourage development forms that would create a safer, more comfortable environment for pedestrians.

Bike Walk Knoxville recognizes that build-to-zones and build-to-percentages alone are not enough to create a place that is and generates the sense of walkability. Yet, by removing this tool from the toolbox for these locations, the potential for creating a pedestrian friendly environment there is being repressed. Furthermore, making an area safe and comfortable for people outside of cars, whether they are walking, biking, or using public transportation, involves a partnership between public and private entities. By investing in these locations, the City can encourage private developers to help build places that feel comfortable for those traveling outside a personal vehicle, which has benefits for public health and the local economy.