

Dear County Planners

I'm writing today to voice my strong objection to Thunder Mountain Properties' request for rezoning and amending the Sector Plan. First and foremost, the citizens would like to know the big picture for all the TMP development planned for in our tiny community. TMP bought 400-some acres from the Ben Bower family. Much of that land is not in the Planned Growth Area and is zoned for Agriculture houses and rural uses but time and time again they propose and request much higher uses and density. Our community is strongly against this urban sprawl. TMP – against overwhelming opposition from the community – won a 4 d.u./acre rezone smack dab in the middle of our farming community on 65 acres of land that has been a hay field for 95 years. Our current density is about one house per two acres (0.46 d.u./acre). Many ill-informed reasons were given for this rezoning – right next to an industrial park. The community wants to know when the commissioners are going to start to listen to the local long-time property owners who are just asking for a commonsense approach to be taken. We want the commissioners to follow the current zoning unless there is a significant and overwhelming benefit to current residents. We want density to be consistent with current density or adhere to the existing zoning on recently purchased land.

Our current residents are very concerned with our tiny country roads being inundated with thousands of new trips a day. We are always told our roads can handle more – we say boloney. At what cost? How many accidents, how many injuries, how many deaths are too many?

We are concerned about our already crowded schools becoming more crowded. We are told the schools can handle it – they have not yet reached capacity. Again – we say boloney. We have teachers and kids in those schools. We know many campuses are at capacity or over (those with temporary classrooms), yet we are unable to get an actual number on 1) existing capacity and 2) existing enrollment from anyone. Why are these numbers held in secret?

We are concerned with emergency services not getting to us in our desperate time of need – cops taking 40 minutes to arrive when we have a drug-addled intruder in our home or an ambulance taking an hour or more when our family member is critically ill or dying. Our hospital emergency rooms are completely overwhelmed. Some people are waiting 12 hours to be seen by someone – often not even a doctor.

Our roads are overcrowded and becoming more unsafe, yet we are told over and over again it's fine. As concerned citizens we say this is boloney. The stats for schools and emergency wait times are shameful. We must do better than this – the current residents don't want to add more population or housing to an already over-burdened system. We're told that the new property taxes gained from newly built homes pay for new services and infrastructure. This is a big lie – and the citizens know it. These big housing developments DO NOT offset the costs of services and infrastructure needed to support the people who live in them. It takes a minimum of 20 years of property taxes from these new subdivisions to break even; in the meantime, the rest of the community carries the cost. We are watching our region being swallowed up by devastating urban sprawl and growth we don't want – and changes to our community that don't benefit us. Until our roads, schools and emergency services are sufficiently expanded, STOP adding more to this problem.

Lives are being lost. Communities are being harmed. People are pissed off and hate their government. We feel neglected and beat up. It's high time the people we elected to represent us actually LISTEN to us. Stop ruining Knox county with reckless and all-consuming destructive growth.