

I strongly oppose the change in land use which would allow a fueling station, convenience store, and restaurant to be constructed on the acreage depicted in this proposal at 1025 Concord Road. I ask that the planning commission reject this proposal in its entirety. It is totally incompatible with the overall lifestyle and character of this small section of Knox County. In my opinion, the proposal does not meet the fundamental requirement under the CN Zoning designation allowing “limited retail and service uses in a manner convenient to and *yet not disruptive to established residential neighborhoods*” [emphasis added] for a number of reasons as described below. Additionally, the proposal is for a 7,015 square-foot building and thus exceeds the size allowed under the zoning regulations Section 5.38.04, Building size regulations, Part B – No individual building or commercial establishment shall have a floor area exceeding five thousand (5,000) square feet. To claim these are 2 separate buildings even though they are adjoined under one roof with a fire wall in order to get around this requirement is disingenuous and, in my opinion, would be grounds for rejection.

After reviewing the site proposal, my concerns are as follows:

1. **Need to Respect the Historic Village Designation and Guidelines.** This proposal completely disregards the overwhelming desire of the Historic Village of Concord to remain a quaint and quiet neighborhood of historical significance for Knox County and east Tennessee. Residents of the village and nearby areas deeply appreciate the effort and work undertaken to acquire the designation as a historic village. Its status should be respected and in no way encroached upon by neighboring activities. This proposal would put a loud, unsightly, high-turnover in and out, 24-hour commercial operation at its doorstep and I do not believe that was the intent of the commercial neighborhood zoning given to this property. Furthermore, it is ignoring the fact that the historic district begins at corner of the lot and there are guidelines that need to be respected for the village such as keeping the roads as they are to sustain the character of the village. I am grateful for the “Use on Review” opportunity to demonstrate how remarkably ridiculous this proposal is for this parcel of land. It simply does not fit the character, pace of life, and old-fashioned way of life we know and enjoy in historic Concord Village!
2. **The parcel of land, as shown in historical topographic maps and in the EZ Stop proposal, has a sinkhole formation.** The area contained within the 50-ft perimeter from the rim of the sinkhole would be the location of the 7000+ sq ft building, the fuel pumps, the underground storage tanks, and partially the detention ponds. This should not be allowed, even with engineering attempts to remedy the sinkhole. In today’s environment, it would be grossly irresponsible of Knox County to place a new operation over a sinkhole. The USGS has labeled this area as dolomite formation and the parcel is very close to Fort Loudon Lake. The likelihood of leakage into the groundwater and perhaps the lake is too great to allow construction over the sinkhole.
3. **Severely detrimental traffic impacts to 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive and the acceleration zone leaving roundabout northbound on Concord Road even while using under-estimated growth rate**
  - a. The traffic impact study shows that there has been a 30% increase in the number of vehicles moving on Concord Road between 2022 and 2023. The average increase

over the period 2018 to 2023 is shown as 9.57%. Why would the traffic study ignore this actual data and choose instead a much smaller 3.5% growth rate? This results in under-estimates throughout the analysis of projected impacts in year 2026.

- b. The traffic study recorded their counts on March 20, 2024, which was an early release day for Knox County schools. Therefore, the peak hour traffic load does not reflect normal conditions during the school year.
- c. To claim that the impact to 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive is not significant appears to be false when you change the flow onto 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive from 4 or 5 cars to 219 to 178. Doesn't that calculate to be 5,375%? I would say that change is significant!
- d. 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive is a one-lane road and the historic district has guidelines in place to keep it that way. Widening the entrance to 2<sup>nd</sup> Dr is an invitation for vehicles to traverse this road. The proposal claims vehicles will not turn and travel eastbound on 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive through the village but there is really no way to say this will not happen. The road absolutely cannot handle this traffic! And no one wants this traffic! So please do not allow any modifications to 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive.
- e. The traffic study acknowledges that the level-of-service (LOS) at Concord Rd and 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive would change from a B & C rating to an E & F rating during peak hours – i.e., shift from very good/good to poor/very poor (extremely long intolerable delay). This clearly shows that an operation depending on such a high number of patrons does not need to be in this location and it absolutely overwhelms this road. Engineering options do not seem cost-effective based on the traffic study. Also, the study states that the storage warranted for the southbound left turn lane is 200 feet. I don't believe this currently exists.
- f. The Northshore-Concord Rd roundabout has been a welcome improvement even though it does become clogged at peak hours. Vehicles accelerate at the exit of the roundabout moving northbound on Concord Road and reach at least 40 mph pretty quickly using the 2 available lanes. Currently, the few vehicles that choose to turn right on 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive have a hard time doing so if they have exited from the eastbound Northshore roundabout lane. Increasing the number of cars trying to merge to the right so they can access the proposed fueling station-convenience store-restaurant conglomerate at the same time you have inconsistent speeds (some speeding up, some slowing down) on such a short stretch of roadway going northbound (not to mention needing to watch out for cars cutting across the northbound lanes trying to enter the EZ operation) is creating a huge safety hazard and should not be encouraged by building this operation.

#### **4. Need to Respect the Concord Masonic Cemetery.**

- a. According to the property deed and as noted on the site plan, the Masonic Cemetery has encroachment rights for the dirt road and treeline on the east side of the property. These need to be maintained regardless of the occupant of 1025 Concord Rd parcel.
- b. Based on the history of the cemetery, the likelihood of unmarked pauper and slave graves is great. An archeological study is needed to ensure these graves are left untouched.

- c. Every effort should be taken to minimize noise pollution since it will significantly affect services and families visiting the cemetery.
- d. Litter must be prevented from spreading into the proposed buffer area and onto the cemetery property.
- e. Vandalism is a concern due to more people becoming aware of the historic cemetery and if it occurred it would be tragic. Who would be responsible if it is shown to be patrons from the EZ Stop facility?

5. **Failure to address cumulative impacts from proposed activities on the whole parcel of land.** How can the planning commission make a decision on this proposal when it is presented with an incomplete statement of the scope of activities proposed for this land parcel and does not address the collective impacts from the whole parcel of land? The traffic study assumed 2 more buildings would be placed on the other side of the lot and that as worst case these businesses would be drive-thru restaurants. So now we need to know the cumulative impacts, beyond those related to traffic, of the whole operation. What are the overall noise pollution impacts, lighting impacts, and effects to the quality of life to neighboring homeowners? To break-up a proposed action into small pieces in order to minimize the impact analysis is not acceptable and such segmentation is not allowed under federal law. I believe it should not be allowed in this case.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request that the commissioners reject the EZ Stop proposal in its entirety.