



# THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SYSTEM

## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

RANDY BOYD  
*President*

Randy Boyd, President  
University of Tennessee  
400 W Summit Hill Dr SW,  
Knoxville, TN 37902

July 29, 2024

Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission  
City County Building  
400 Main Street, Suite 403  
Knoxville, TN 37902

RE: Development Request File NOS:7-K-24-RZ, 7-E-24-PA, 7-E-24-SP

Dear Members of the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission,

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed rezoning of the property located at 824 Melrose Place. As President of the University of Tennessee System and Chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, we are uniquely situated to assess the university's need for such an unsolicited project within the campus and recognize the immediate negative impacts this rezoning would have on the campus, especially in the fulfillment of our academic mission and student safety.

The University of Tennessee Knoxville's Master Plan, published in June 2023 after 16 months of development and engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the Tennessee community at large provides the vision for future University development related to academic growth. The Master Plan, approved by the UT Board of Trustees and the State of Tennessee, contemplates the redevelopment and transformation of the campus area surrounding 824 Melrose Place from a residential area to an interdisciplinary hub for academic buildings supporting business, policy, international studies, and student success to support the workforce and economic development needs of our region and the state. As such, this property is critical for the long-term growth and expansion of two key academic units – the growing Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs and the 9,000-student Haslam College of Business. Approving this rezoning would conflict with the City's and the University's strategic planning efforts and significantly hinder our ability to meet the evolving needs of both our students and faculty, as well as the state and region's workforce. We understand that, consistent with UT's Master Plan, the applicable City of Knoxville plans designate 824 Melrose Place for Civic/Institutional uses.



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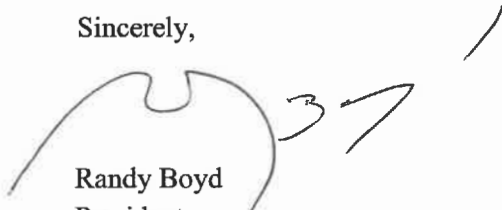
The proposed rezoning of 824 Melrose Place to the Lake Avenue (CU-1) Zone, which allows for the development of a ten-story high-rise, would also not be appropriate for this location. It is unnecessary and would disrupt both the City's and the University's efforts to carefully manage growth in the area. The Lake Avenue (CU-1) Zone is intended to serve as a transitional area between Cumberland Avenue and the University and rezoning this property would defeat the purpose of the intended buffer. Development of this scale should remain within the historical boundaries of Cumberland Avenue Zoning District as specified in the zoning ordinance, where there is sufficient space to meet the housing and commercial needs of our community.

The construction of a private high-rise would not only be inconsistent with the City's and the University's plans for this area, but it would also be unnecessary. UT and the City have worked diligently in recent years to expand the supply of on and off-campus housing available to our student community, with great success. A significant amount of off-campus housing has recently been completed, and more is under development. In addition, UT is developing three new on-campus housing sites. We anticipate these new housing developments will be sufficient to meet current student demand. Allowing the construction of a privately developed high-rise within the campus boundary, thereby reducing the space available for academic uses within the campus footprint, would force the University to consider academic development in areas it has previously avoided.

We respectfully request the Planning Commission reject the rezoning of 824 Melrose Place. It is essential to protect the integrity of the community's zoning plans, the University's Master Plan, ensure the safety of our community, and maintain the established zoning transitions to support the sustained growth and development of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the City of Knoxville.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Randy Boyd  
President  
University of Tennessee



Donde Plowman  
Chancellor  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville