

This application for rezone must be denied. Rezoning from Town Center Mixed Use, to Industrial zoning is the exact opposite intention of what the comprehensive plan is trying to achieve with long term planning. Small businesses such as the Bearded Barber have already begun to take shape and invest in this regional, historic intersection, which is functionally moving things closer to the Town Center Mixed Use plan. However, approving an Industrial/mining use at the core of this intersection would derail any positive momentum, and would serve as a nail in the coffin for any chance this community has at positive mixed use development occurring along 11E. The county has clearly spent time and resources to craft a sensible comprehensive plan, which will serve to benefit the residents of the surrounding area, and the county must proceed with the zoning as planned. Rezones and comprehensive plan amendments should be reserved for circumstances where the proposed zoning would at least make compatible mixed use zoning districts with one another. In no way shape or form is a mining and heavy industrial use compatible with a Town Center. This region of Knoxville is currently underserved by some of the more basic amenities, such as access to organic produce, restaurants, shops, etc., and the intersection of two scenic highways, Asheville highway and Andrew Johnson Highways (11E), should serve as a reflection of the deep cultural ties to the region and emphasize the local community.

An approved rezone of the proposed site would serve as a slap in the face to the residents of East Knoxville, and will impact generations to come in the families/residents that call East Knoxville home. Rather than appeal the site to a detrimental zoning classification which will act as a cancerous tumor to the surrounding community, the planning commission should be open to considering zoning changes which closely aligns with the comprehensive zoning plan. If development on the site is not feasible due to economic hardship to the owner, the county should consider additional density, or development bonuses/incentives to achieve the desired result, rather than abandon ship and leave the passengers to fend for themselves. As the saying goes, failing to plan is a plan to fail, and abandoning the current plan will certainly fail the citizens of East Knoxville.