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PUBLIC COMMENT / WRITTEN STATEMENT OPPOSING REZONING REQUEST FOR DENSITY INCREASE TO 7 DU/ACRE

Application for Rezoning 7-M-25-RZ

To the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the rezoning request submitted by Reliance Development, seeking an increase in density to 7 dwelling units per acre for the 11.16-acre parcel on Wooddale Road. This is the same property for which a previous rezoning application was filed just months ago and ultimately resulted in a County Commission decision allowing only 2 units per acre, consistent with the area's rural character.

1. Violation of 1-Year Reapplication Rule (Planning Commission Bylaws, Section 10 - Denial)

According to the Planning Commission bylaws, a rezoning application that has been **denied** may not be resubmitted for one year from the date of denial. While the applicant might argue that the original application was not denied in full, only the higher density was denied, that argument seems disingenuous.

- The **density** was the central request in the application, and it was **explicitly rejected** by the County Commission.
- The **property owner remains the same (Reliance Development)**; this is simply a repackaged request using a different agent.
- The **conditions in the neighborhood have not changed**, and therefore the rationale for the prior denial still applies.

To proceed with a new application only months after the County Commission rendered a decision undermines both the **intent of the bylaw** and the **community's trust** in a fair planning process that honors its own timelines and provides a reasonable "cooling off" period for residents.

2. Incompatibility with the PR Zone Intent and Zoning Ordinance Criteria

The property is now zoned **Planned Residential (PR)**, which requires that new developments be:

- **"Compatible with the character of the neighborhood"** (Zoning Ordinance § 4.10.16)
- **"In harmony with the general purpose and intent of zoning regulations"** (§ 4.10.15)
- **"Not likely to draw substantial additional traffic through residential streets"** (§ 4.10.18)
- **"Consistent with adopted sector and comprehensive plans"** (§ 4.10.14)

This proposed development fails to meet these standards:

- Our neighborhood is **predominantly composed of homes on half-acre to multi-acre lots**, with significant surrounding agricultural and forestry land. A jump to 7 units per acre would **dramatically alter the character** of this low-density, rural setting.
- The property is **not along a corridor targeted for intensive development**, (See Advance Knox topic below) lacks sidewalks or safe pedestrian infrastructure, and **dumping up to 803 daily vehicle trips** onto narrow rural roads would pose significant safety risks and degrade our quality of life.

- The **PR zoning ordinance** encourages “**imaginative solutions to environmental design problems**”, not simple high-density infill that disrespects the surrounding landscape and community.

3. Failure to Align with Advance Knox’s Vision for Smart Growth

The **Advance Knox Comprehensive Plan**, adopted earlier this year, calls for **growth aligned with transportation corridors, infrastructure availability, and community character**.

According to Advance Knox:

“Growth should occur where infrastructure exists and be designed in a way that enhances—rather than burdens—existing neighborhoods.”

While the parcel is technically near Asheville Highway, it is **not situated within a targeted growth corridor as envisioned by Advance Knox**. The development would access Asheville Highway via **Wooddale Road—a narrow, rural street without sidewalks or shoulders—which creates significant safety concerns**. In contrast, nearby developments like Neal's Landing connect directly to Asheville Highway through **well-designed, signalized intersections**. The Wooddale Road proposed development sits **away from major intersections and existing infrastructure**, and is instead bordered by farms and large residential lots. Its location makes it **ill-suited for high-density growth** and fails to meet the connectivity and infrastructure goals laid out in Advance Knox.

Moreover, Advance Knox emphasizes the importance of:

- **Community participation** and **trust** in planning decisions,
- Managing development to **lessen road congestion** and avoid “excessive concentrations of population,” and
- Preserving **natural features and rural identity** in unincorporated areas.

This proposed development does not meet any of these standards. It instead represents the very kind of speculative, short-term, profit-driven development that the community overwhelmingly opposed during the Advance Knox planning process.

Conclusion

This rezoning request should be denied on the basis that:

1. It **violates the 1-year reapplication restriction** in your own bylaws.
2. It **does not meet the PR zone development standards** regarding compatibility, infrastructure, and transportation impacts.
3. It **contradicts the Advance Knox vision** for where and how growth should occur in our county.

We ask the Planning Commission to stand with residents and uphold the long-term vision for Knox County—not short-term developer gains—by **recommending denial** of this rezoning application.

Sincerely,

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