

Approving this expansion is in direct conflict with The Northwest County Sector Plan (which encompasses Hardin Valley). Under Tennessee law and Knox County zoning ordinances, the Planning Commission is legally bound to ensure that any zoning change or "Use on Review" is consistent with the adopted Sector Plan. Vulcan's expansion is in direct, glaring conflict with it.

1. Direct Violation of Land Use Designations The Northwest County Sector Plan explicitly maps out future land uses for Hardin Valley. The land surrounding the Dixie Lee Quarry—specifically along Buttermilk Road and Graybeal Road—is designated for Agricultural (AG), Rural Residential (RR), and Low-Density Residential (LDR).

The Conflict: Extending "Heavy Industrial (HI)" or "Extractive Mining (EX)" zoning into an area mapped for residential growth is fundamentally incompatible with the Sector Plan. The Knoxville-Knox County General Plan strictly states that Heavy Industrial and Mining uses are "viewed as clearly not compatible with areas designated for residential or agricultural uses." We argue that granting this expansion legally overrides the published Sector Plan that residents relied upon when they bought their homes.

2. Destruction of the "Hardin Valley Mobility Plan" Goals In 2019, Knox County attached the Hardin Valley Mobility Plan to the Sector Plan to address explosive population growth. The Mobility Plan has strict goals regarding road safety, walkable communities, and traffic alleviation.

The Conflict: Vulcan's expansion plan includes permanently closing a portion of Graybeal Road, a public right-of-way maintained by taxpayer dollars. Allowing a private corporation to permanently sever a community road directly violates the Mobility Plan's core mandate to "increase connectivity" and reduce neighborhood traffic bottlenecks. Furthermore, adding decades of heavy dump-truck traffic directly contradicts the Sector Plan's goals for safe, pedestrian-friendly residential corridors.

3. Encroachment on "Planned Residential" (PR) Zoning Since the last major Sector Plan update in 2016, Hardin Valley has experienced a tidal wave of residential development. The Knox County Planning Commission has routinely approved "Planned Residential (PR)" zoning right up to the edges of the quarry's current buffer, including the new 95-home development nearby.

The Conflict: The fundamental purpose of city planning is to separate incompatible uses. By approving dozens of residential subdivisions in this specific pocket of Hardin Valley over the last decade, Knox County effectively committed this land to families. Approving a 58-acre industrial mining expansion that pushes 80-foot-deep blasting pits to within 300 feet of these newly approved neighborhoods makes a mockery of the Commission's own recent zoning decisions.

4. Violation of "Hillside and Environmental Protection" Overlays The Northwest County Sector Plan places a heavy emphasis on environmental conservation, explicitly mapping areas for Hillside Protection (HP). The topography of Hardin Valley features forested steep slopes, natural drainage into Connor and Hickory Creeks, and sensitive karst (limestone) geology.

The Conflict: Extractive mining is the most environmentally destructive land use possible. It requires clear-cutting all vegetation, removing the topsoil, and blasting away the natural topography. You must point out that expanding the quarry completely obliterates the Sector Plan's mandate to preserve the rural, forested character of Hardin Valley and protect the local watersheds.