

Dear Planning Commission,

My name is Austin Conte and I live at 4725 Rohar Rd. Below, I lay out my concerns for the proposed development at 4722 Rohar Rd. I urge the committee to DENY or POSTPONE this development.

First, I'd like to mention some defects in the Special Use Report:

1. "Staff Recommendation" leads by incorrectly identifying the district as RN-2.
2. The dwelling at 4726 Rohar Rd (constructed in 2020 by Mr. Bordei) overlaps onto 4722 Rohar Rd. See KGIS Topography map (Image 1), as well as maps in the submitted Report. If accurate, then the proposed construction would leave less than 8 feet between new dwelling and existing dwelling at 4726 Rohar Rd. I ask that a current boundary survey precede any action.
3. Per Pol 11.2, density is based on usable acreage, excluding steep slopes, and Pol 7.6 sets 2 du/ac on 15–25% slopes and 0.5 du/ac above 25%. Applying those to staff's own slope analysis: 9,211.5 sf at 6 du/ac, 2,696.9 sf at 2 du/ac, 5,471.5 sf at 0.5 du/ac. **This would allow 1.4 units at most.** That still credits the non-HP land as buildable, which it is not – it sits in a natural drainage basin. See Images 2–3.

Now, I would like to go point-by-point in response to the *Standards for Evaluating Special Use*:

See additional info
for full policies

1. Below are Development Policies and Action Proposals that contradict this development, as-is:

- Natural Heritage Action Proposal (page 46)
- Policies 6.1 – 6.3, 9.4: Developments should avoid disruption to land and habitat where possible.
- Policies 7.2 – 7.8, 11.2: Developments should occur where water-related impacts (stormwater, sewer, **sinkholes**, etc.) are minimal, in addition to restricting developments on slopes >15%.
- Policies 8.1, 8.3, 9.3, 10.9, 10.11, 11.4, 11.5: Developments must be compatible with neighborhoods in scale, design/appearance, and site layout. The general plan states that, generally, higher density housing should be located between commercial areas and low-density single-family homes. This lot sits in the interior of a single-family neighborhood.

While the General Plan does encourage growth in existing urban areas, it also provides guidelines for when this is desirable. Per the above policies, this lot is not a good candidate for further growth. The lot sits above a natural sinkhole (Image 4, USGS/Harris 1973) which currently collects a large percent of the neighborhood's stormwater runoff (Image 1).

2. Staff states RN-1 is intended for relatively large lots with generous setbacks. Eight feet between dwellings is not generous. Additionally, there is not 15,000 square feet of usable land (Pol 11.2) on this lot.

3. Rohar Rd is a dead-end road with 9 one-level, single-family homes. **A two-story duplex would not match the character of the immediate vicinity.** The two-story homes elsewhere in Cumberland Estates sit on a quarter acre or more of flat land, outside Hillside Protection. Cumberland Estates was first developed in the 1950s and remains 100% single-family. The duplex would directly face single-family homes across a 25-ft street – the condition Pol 10.9 and Exhibit 6 (page 68) advise against.

4. Staff's finding here is purely a "definition." A duplex (or any development) adds impervious surface and driveway area, which would increase runoff onto adjacent properties and into the sinkhole below. Aging KUB infrastructure is also failing in our neighborhood (5+ water main failures in last 12 months), and additional units would strain it further.

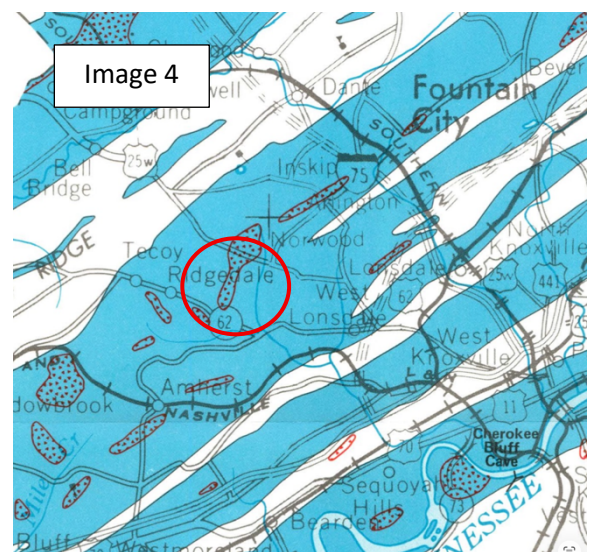
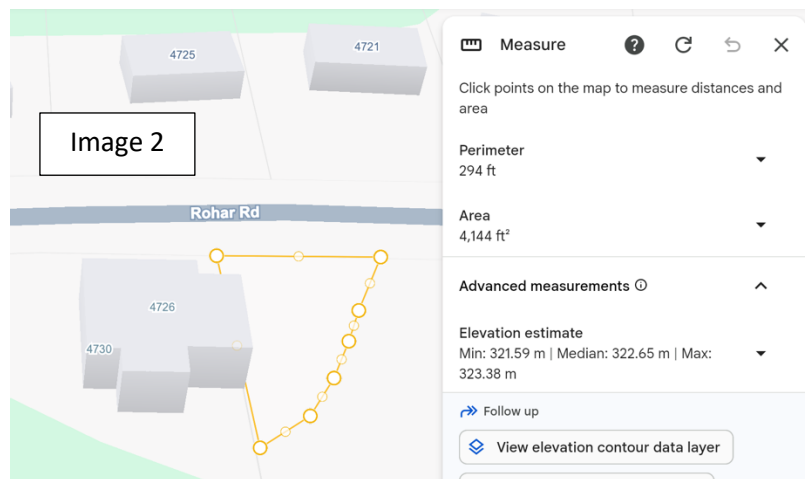
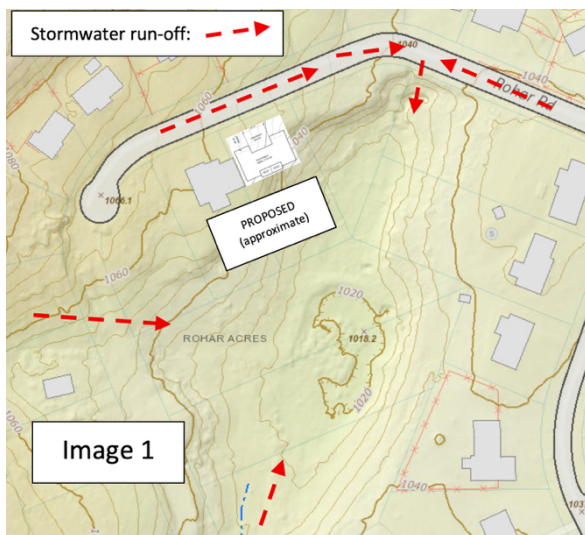
5. Rohar Rd is a 25–27 ft wide dead-end serving 9 homes, so every added trip passes every house and there is no alternate route. Two additional units increase street traffic by ~22% (on basis of dwellings).

6. Surrounding development directs much of the neighborhood's stormwater across this lot into the sinkhole, and the dwelling would sit above a 30-foot drop. That is an undesirable environment for residential use.

For these reasons I respectfully ask the Commission to deny this request, or postpone it pending several actions: (1) a current boundary survey and a density calculation based on usable acreage, (2) a geological survey to assess sinkhole risk, subsurface stability, and foundation requirements, (3) an ecological survey to assess habitat value and impact assessment, and (4) city-funded stormwater engineering (e.g., detention pond) to control runoff and properly manage flood risk.

Sincerely,

Austin J. Conte



Additional Information

Natural Heritage

- Tree-covered ridges, pristine streams, woodlands and prime farmland are assets that are valued by Knox County residents. Citizens spoke about the conservation of these features time and again when developing this plan, noting that they form a natural heritage that should be protected or rehabilitated for the benefit of future generations.
- Key proposals include:
 - Designate ridge, stream and river corridors as special areas with unique environmental and scenic values, identifying areas to conserve and the development opportunities that are consistent with the values.
 - Develop a Rural Heritage Strategy to preserve prime agricultural land, including agricultural protective zoning, conservation easements and transfer of development rights.
 - Create an Urban Forestry Plan for Knox County, to protect woodlands and plant trees, including the creation of a city-county tree board.
 - Develop standards to rehabilitate hillsides and streams and to avoid disturbances of those assets in the future.
- Pol 6.1 - Encourage flexible, planned development zones to protect hillsides, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and stream corridors.
- Pol 6.2 - Complement natural landforms when grading, and minimize grading on steep slopes and within floodways.
- Pol 6.3 - Encourage development in areas with the fewest environmental constraints.
- Pol 7.2 - Protect water resources by reducing pollution and retaining trees and ground cover on ridges and near streams, rivers, lakes and sinkholes.
- Pol 7.3 - Create wetlands and naturally landscaped retention basins to slow down rapid runoff and reduce pollutant discharges.
- Pol 7.4 - Strengthen stormwater and flood protection standards, particularly in flood-prone drainage basins.
- Pol 7.5 - Protect the natural drainage systems associated with floodways and floodplains.
- Pol 7.6 - Restrict development on slopes greater than 15% and along streams and rivers. Housing densities on 15 – 25 % slopes: 2 dwelling units per acre. Housing density on slopes greater than 25%: 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres. Non-residential uses on slopes over 15%: via a planned development zone. Floodplains: Limit uses to 50% of flood fringe area.
- Pol 7.7 - Provide trees and minimize impervious surfaces when developing parking lots.
- Pol 7.8 - Encourage development in areas with adequate sanitary sewer lines, and improve existing systems to eliminate sanitary sewer overflow.
- Pol 8.1 - Develop “infill” housing on vacant lots and redevelopment parcels. Infill housing should be compatible with neighboring residences in scale, design, and site layout.
- Pol 8.3 - Focus on design quality and neighborhood compatibility in reviewing development proposals.
- Pol 9.3 - Ensure that the context of new development, including scale and compatibility, does not impact existing neighborhoods and communities.
- Pol 9.4 - Provide incentives for conservation subdivisions, to set aside large portions of open space and protect natural resources.
- Pol 10.9 - Avoid creating zoning boundaries that result in unlike uses directly facing each other. (See Exhibit 6.)
- Pol 10.11 - Allow higher densities, smaller yards and narrower lots for portions of planned developments that do not abut or face conventional suburban developments. In exchange, deeper setbacks, wider lots or landscape buffers shall be provided where the new development abuts lower density housing.
- Pol 11.2 - The density for residential development will be based upon the amount of usable acreage, excluding areas which are under water, in floodways, have steep slopes, or are otherwise undevelopable...
- Pol 11.4 - Create gradual zoning transition patterns by placing medium intensity zones and uses such as offices, condominiums, and community buildings in between single-family residential areas and higher intensity uses. Require landscaping, screening, earth berms, walls and similar techniques to separate incompatible land uses when gradual zoning transition patterns are not possible.
- Pol 11.5 - Avoid abrupt, incompatible changes in density, scale, and building appearance from one development to another