

I have looked over the updated plan from the developer for the Kerbela site, and I am very disappointed in the so-called resolutions the developer has offered. They have really made it clear A) that they are not interested in working with the community on this and B) that they think they are above the form code and the intent for South Knoxville as laid out in the vision plan.

The developer claimed they could not dig into the bedrock because it would be a hardship, but now their solution to prevent pedestrians from mingling with people in their condo system is to ... building a tunnel into the bedrock? So much for a hardship. Their "solution" also completely disregards the intent of allowing pedestrians access through the site. And having a timed gate entry? No. There are plenty of buildings downtown and in South Knox with retail on the bottom and apartments above. These buildings are not gated, and they allow for a dense urban environment to flourish. The Kerbela site needs to be similar. It is not in a suburban area. The streetscape needs to be activated, and there can't be a gated, private community, especially under the guise of "safety" when there are so many examples of buildings nearby that incorporate effective safety measures in other ways. As is, this design does not fit the area and does not allow pedestrian access. And the exterior is still shockingly dull/ugly. Not a good aesthetic for such a prominent location.

The Kerbela site will set a precedent for all new development like this, and the city can not allow such a flagrant violation of the form code and vision plan to be approved.