

Dear Members of the Knox County Planning Commission,

Re: Case #10-G-26-RZ, 637 S. Gallaher View Road

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed rezoning of the wooded hillside property at 637 S. Gallaher View Road for multi-dwelling residential development.

Traffic

The location of this property along a steep, winding, and potentially dangerous road is one of the most immediate concerns associated with the proposed development.

Construction would introduce additional hazards before residents even move into the development. Heavy trucks, construction equipment, material deliveries, and temporary lane restrictions could further compromise road safety.

A multi-dwelling housing complex would introduce additional vehicles, including daily commuters, delivery vehicles, service providers, visitors, and emergency responders.

Impact on surrounding neighborhoods

The effects of this development would extend beyond the property boundaries. Rezoning it for higher-density residential construction would fundamentally change the character of the neighborhood.

Residents who have invested in their homes should have confidence that zoning decisions will protect the long-term stability and character of their neighborhood. Once a wooded area is cleared and densely developed, the change is essentially irreversible and the impact on the house values of surrounding residents is a genuine concern.

An increase in traffic could mean longer travel times, more congestion, greater difficulty entering and exiting nearby driveways, and additional exposure to road hazards. Construction may also bring prolonged noise, dust, vibration, heavy equipment, and temporary traffic disruptions. After construction, increased vehicle activity, exterior lighting, and the loss of trees could permanently change the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Steep, Wooded Terrain

The property is not an ordinary level building site. It is a wooded, steep hillside, and those characteristics are central to evaluating its suitability for multi-dwelling housing. Developing steep land often requires substantial grading, excavation, retaining walls, road construction, and changes to the natural drainage patterns. Depending on the site's geology, soils, slope angles, and proposed engineering, these activities may increase the potential for erosion, unstable slopes, sediment runoff, and drainage problems. Removing trees can further alter how water moves across the property. During heavy rainfall,

disturbed soil and changed drainage routes may affect neighboring properties, nearby roads, and downstream areas.

Valuable Wildlife Habitat

The wooded hillside provides habitat for a variety of animals, including deer, foxes, rehabilitated owls, and other wildlife. Its trees, understory vegetation, and relatively undisturbed areas provide food, shelter, nesting opportunities, and routes through which animals safely move across the landscape. Clearing this land would permanently alter that habitat.

Infrastructure

The area's history of power outages during severe storms raises another important concern: whether the existing electrical infrastructure can reliably support the additional demand associated with the proposed development. Existing residents should not be left to bear the consequences of inadequate infrastructure planning.

Each concern described above is significant on its own. Together, they raise broader questions about the suitability of the property for intensive residential development.

Therefore, at a minimum, before any approval is considered, we respectfully request that the planning authority require:

1. An independent traffic impact study addressing existing road hazards, sight distances, accident history, projected traffic, and entrance safety.
2. A geotechnical and slope-stability assessment addressing grading, erosion, soil conditions, and potential impacts on neighboring properties.
3. A comprehensive stormwater study addressing runoff, drainage changes, and heavy-rainfall conditions.
4. A wildlife and habitat assessment, including evaluation of the property's use by owls, deer, foxes, and other wildlife.
5. Documentation from the electrical utility concerning available capacity, required upgrades, and the area's storm-related reliability concerns.
6. An emergency-access and evacuation assessment addressing fire, medical response, severe weather, and possible road obstructions.
7. A review of cumulative environmental and neighborhood impacts, including noise, lighting, tree removal, construction traffic, and long-term compatibility.
8. A comparison of the proposed development with less intensive alternatives and the existing zoning.

These studies should be completed and made available for public review before a final decision is reached.

In the meantime, we respectfully urge the Planning Commission to deny the proposed rezoning.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns and for your responsibility to protect the long-term interests of the community.

Respectfully,
Ron and Kirsty Kalafsky