



## OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

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April 18, 2024

**RE: Knox County Land Use and Transportation Plan**

Dear County Commission,

When I tasked my team with undertaking Knox County's first general plan update in over 20 years, creating our first comprehensive plan, we knew it would be a long and arduous process. There is a reason it hasn't been done in decades. Knowing that, we decided to move forward with an update because our county desperately needs a plan for its future. Rapid growth is putting critical pressure on our infrastructure, housing costs are soaring leading to an explosion in homelessness, and suburban sprawl is straining our coffers for paving and other services. Simply put, to not undertake this process would have been a dereliction of duty as the Mayor of Knox County.

Over the last two years, my team and I have met with stakeholders, community groups, committee members, engaged with over 4,000 residents and had many one-on-one briefings with every county commissioner. The Leadership Team has met with smaller groups when requested and made compromises that do not jeopardize the stated intentions of the plan. These were discussed during the vote on the Growth Policy Plan.

I have great respect for each of you and understand you are representing constituents who have shared criticism regarding our plan. However, the proposed plan is a result of two years of dialogue, compromise and consensus building with each of you and the community at large. The time for wholesale changes has passed. I ask you to pass the plan as presented.

If you feel you must alter it somehow, I will state plainly that the following proposed amendments are unacceptable to me, and I will not sign off on a plan that incorporates them:

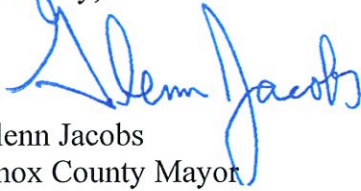
1. Any amendments creating criteria to not approve a development relating to environmentally sensitive areas, including soil types. The proposed standards are ambiguous and will engender arbitrary and capricious planning decisions. These changes were requested for Page 38, Page 59, Page 71.
2. Listing public services as a criteria to not approve a development. This change was requested for page 61.
3. Changing, adding to, or omitting any placetype, zoning or density in Appendix H except the removal of PR (2-5) in the Rural Living Placetype. I support the housing mix listed in the Placetypes and Appendix H how it is currently written. These changes were requested for Appendix H, Page 37 and 38.

4. Any changes to the Plan Amendment Criteria. These criteria were identified by our consultant as best practices in other counties. These changes were requested for Page 72.
5. Adding any development standard requirements for placetypes. Requiring developers to create recreational opportunities or amenities will needlessly inflate already soaring housing costs. This decision should be market driven. This was requested to be added on Page 63 and Page 66.

We, as the elected leaders of Knox County, have a tremendous duty before us. It is our burden and our privilege to weave together the divergent interests of 478,971 different people into one plan that works for all of them. It is not perfect, but I believe we've done just that. We cannot let the protests of any vocal minority cause us to balk on the precipice of a generational achievement for the people we are elected to serve.

Please pass the comprehensive plan as is, and without delay.

Sincerely,



Glenn Jacobs  
Knox County Mayor

cc: files