

The proposed Proposed Purpose Statement for the 'NR-Neighborhood Residential Zoning District' states that "interconnectivity between developments is **encouraged**" (emphasis added)

The KCPA board strongly feels that this should be changed to interconnectivity between developments is **required**. Our reasoning is that optional 'encouragement', which has been the policy in Knox County for decades, has not led to actual interconnectivity. Only by clearly stating that connectivity is required will we begin to see neighborhoods connect.

As an example of how this policy doesn't work, yet if implemented actually *improves* our development patterns, let's look at Thompson Meadows Phase 1 - <https://knoxplanning.org/cases/5-SA-20-C>. The applicant originally did not propose connections to the Davis and the Butler properties to the west. The Subdivision Regulations stated that the proposed street system "**may be required**" to include street sub-outs for the logical extension of the street system. Knox County Engineering and Public Works did not require connectivity. Staff recommended approval. The proposal went in front of Planning Commission in May 2020.

Individuals and organizations that were precursors to KCPA provided substantial public comment requesting connectivity. Planning Commission postponed the item and the subdivision plan was revised to include connectivity, and then approved the next month.

This future connectivity wasn't going to be added without the public calling for it. The applicant, planning commission, and professional staff weren't going to require it, even though the subdivision regulations encourage it.

The result: Well, turns out later the applicant bought the adjacent parcel - a parcel which now had connectivity to Thompson Meadows thanks to our community advocacy. Phase 2 of Thompson Meadows was approved in November 2025 under [11-SB-25-C](#) and uses street connections that were created **because the public spoke up about connectivity**.

For other examples, look at parcels along 7300-7500 Millertown Pike. Four (4) parcels have been rezoned from Agriculture to residential in the last 3 years (7-Q-23-RZ, 9-O-24-RZ, 4-V-25-RZ, 12-A-25-RZ). Two concept plans were approved. The first one, [10-C-23-DP](#), had no public comments, and included no potential connectivity to adjacent parcels. The second concept plan, 2-SC-25-C, had public comments, but ultimately the Planning Commission declined to require connectivity to the west (to 10-C-23-DP) because that one never had a stub out, and did not require connectivity to the east. The eastern parcel was rezoned to RA residential just 10 months later (12-A-25-RZ). Now there isn't even the possibility of connectivity for those parcels. This is where 'encouraging' fails.

Our board acknowledges that cul-de-sacs without connectivity are popular. Families feel safe with young children playing in the cul-de-sac where there is very little traffic and you know all of your neighbors. Yet when those children get older, those same kids cannot safely ride a bike to their friends in an adjacent subdivision, because we don't have bike lanes on minor arterials like Millertown Pike or Emory Rd.

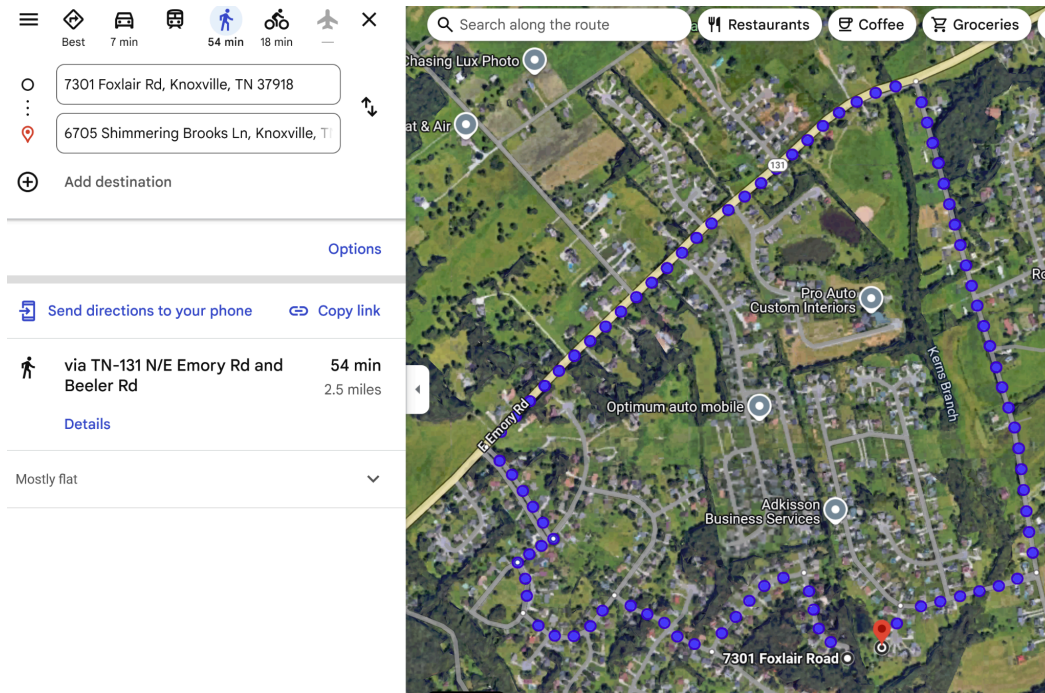
Further more, these roads are **public** roads, meant to confer public benefit. Benefits include a connected and resilient transportation network. Connected neighborhoods mean some traffic won't need to access the main road, i.e. the Amazon delivery truck can just go from neighborhood to neighborhood without getting on the large highway. More importantly, people can walk or bike to their neighbors, and Knox County doesn't have to retrofit sidewalks on the main roads at extreme cost.

KCPA has a stock article about connectivity which further explains this point and is published at <https://www.kcpa.us/2025/02/what-happens-when-we-dont-connect-new-subdivisions/>. We include it below.

## What Happens when we don't connect new subdivisions?



Two houses in northeast Knox were built 200 feet apart in two different subdivisions. 7301 Foxlair Rd and 6705 Shimmering Brooks Lane share a property line – they have a shared fence between them. Neighborhood connectivity was not a priority, and the neighborhoods weren't connected when built. The result: to **walk, bike, or drive is 2.5 miles on the shortest path via public roads and walkways**. Seven (7) minutes by car, and **54 minutes walking**, including 0.7 miles on Emory Rd which has no sidewalks and over 10,000 cars per day.



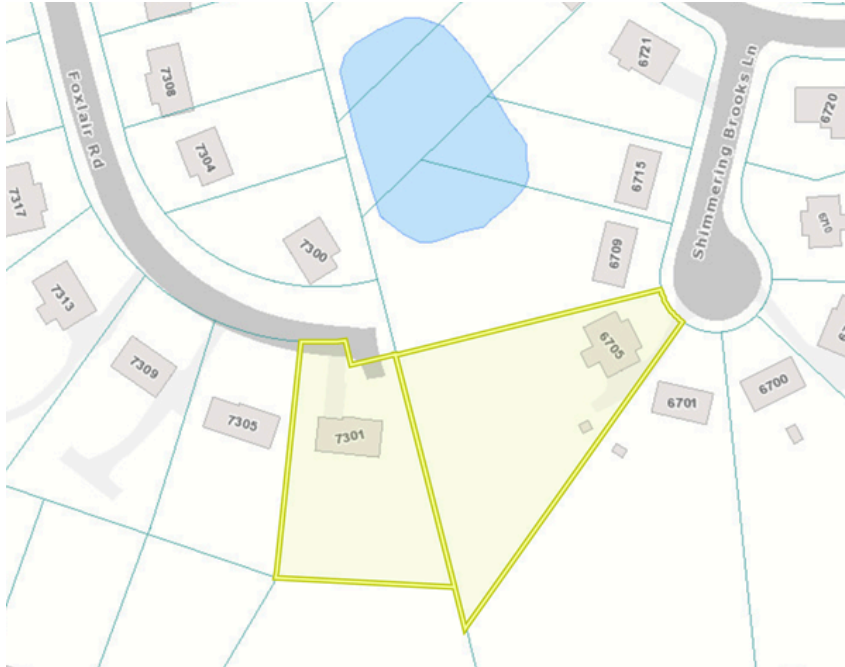
The result is a lost opportunity to build connected neighborhoods and communities, which bring residents together. Should the county choose to build a school, park, or another amenity on Beeler Rd where there is some vacant land, residents on Foxlair Rd and in the Huntington Place subdivision must exit their subdivision, travel along Emory Rd, and then down Beeler Rd to access that amenity. If we planned for connectivity, residents could walk or bike to the park or school. Legacy Parks often cites a [statistic](#) that children who live within two-thirds of a mile from a park with a playground are five times more likely to be a healthy weight. If we don't connect neighborhoods, there's no opportunity to connect children to parks.

Omitting connectivity puts more traffic, such as postal and delivery drivers and school buses, onto Emory Rd instead of allowing it to follow the streets of the neighborhood. Then we complain more about the traffic on our major streets.

This shouldn't have happened in Knox County, but it did.

The importance of Neighborhood Connectivity is recognized in the [Knoxville-Knox County Subdivision Regulations](#) in section 3.04.C. The regulations encourage developing interconnected street systems, with a general standard to provide for future street connections to adjoining property, and a requirement for new subdivisions to continue existing streets in adjoining or nearby tracts when it is determined by the Planning Commission to be feasible.

The Huntington Place, Unit 4 subdivision for Foxlair Rd was platted in 1987 and Foxlair Rd included a stub-out to access developments to the east. When the next subdivision, Twin Brooks Unit 1, was platted in 1999, the developers did not take the opportunity to connect streets, even though the subdivision regulations at that time contained [a requirement to continue existing streets \(62-20\)](#). Below you can see how these were developed.



We need our planning officials and our developers to enforce the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations. The new Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan fully supports this with [Policy 11 – “Promote connectivity with new development.”](#) The first action of that policy is to 1) *Evaluate new residential subdivisions to provide vehicle and pedestrian connections to adjacent subdivisions.*

## 11. Promote connectivity with new development.

Goals addressed by this policy:



### TO SUPPORT THIS POLICY:

**11.1 Evaluate new residential subdivisions to provide vehicle and pedestrian connections to adjacent subdivisions.** The construction of short connections has the ability to greatly improve connectivity through cost-effective minor improvements rather than major investments. Increased vehicular and pedestrian connections can provide increased functional mobility as well as encourage active transportation and recreation.

**11.2 Limit the use of cul-de-sacs.** This can increase network connectivity, better disperse traffic, and shorten emergency response times. Fewer dead-end streets provide greater connectivity and redundancy in the travel network, which allows vehicular traffic to better disperse into the network rather than to a single point along an arterial. Increased connectivity also benefits emergency responders by reducing the response times needed to access residential developments.

**11.3 Create sidewalk standards according to place types.** These should best serve the character and needs of the surrounding development. Sidewalk standards may define the expected width, buffer, and lighting expectations based on the character of the surrounding development. When tailored to the place types, these standards can encourage pedestrian travel by increasing comfort.