

Most of my understanding of the UDO comes from last week's meetings and the materials that have been shared thus far. I've also tried to fill in a few gaps based on areas I'm more familiar with in the comprehensive plan, so please forgive me if any of these suggestions or questions miss context or are already addressed elsewhere in the process.

1. Utility capacity as a planning constraint

1.1 One area where Advance Knox and the UDO may have a blind spot is utility capacity. The ability to develop or increase density on a site is entirely dependent on the utility provider serving that area, and available capacity varies widely across the county. I've seen several properties where Advance Knox encourages growth through certain placetypes (such as TN or SMR), yet the serving utility district is already at or near capacity with its existing infrastructure.

It's possible this was considered but was too complex to fully address at the placetype level. However, it appears many other factors were evaluated when identifying growth areas—such as road classification, proximity to schools, and surrounding context—while utility capacity was largely left out.

While it may be too late to adjust placetypes, the County could consider a countywide utility capacity study and overlay that information with the adopted placetypes. In areas where infrastructure capacity and growth intent do not align, this could help guide capital planning and resource allocation so investments are focused where the County is actively encouraging growth. Without this alignment, there is a risk that growth policies supported by zoning and placetypes cannot be implemented due to utility limitations. Is there currently any open communication/data flow between the advance Knox plan and the different utility providers that serve Knox county?

2. Question regarding existing zoning

2.1 Based on the discussion that was held last week, it sounds like current zoning will be converted to the new zoning categories that most closely match the existing zoning, rather than being changed based only on placetype. Will there be a transition period where existing zoning rights are effectively grandfathered in? For example, if a property is currently zoned PR and is mapped to a new zoning like Neighborhood Residential or Traditional Neighborhood, would that property still be allowed to operate under the current PR zoning for some period of time?

3. RB to Mixed Residential:

3.1 It looks like RB is going to Mixed Residential with two subdistricts. RB currently allows up to 12 units an acre by right. I don't see any density per acre verbiage but under the new mixed residential description that "housing types range from detached residential units to attached units and small scale multi-family." With respect to multi-family development, RB is probably best suited currently as zoning for that sort of high density development. My concern is that the new MR zoning may reduce viability for traditional multifamily (not small scale) in that new zoning whereas in the current RB it is viable. The solution to this may be in the new Traditional Neighborhood placetype – thoughts on that to follow.

4. New Traditional Neighborhood Zoning:

4.1 I really like the idea behind the Traditional Neighborhood zoning and would recommend the book *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* as a great resource on these concepts. In Knox County, more compact, walkable, and town-focused development patterns would be great. That said, the current TN zoning description feels somewhat vague, and the intent appears more aspirational than practical. While zoning that promotes walkable, well-interconnected spaces is a great goal, there is concern that, in practice, this zoning may be difficult to implement as intended. Truly interconnected, walkable neighborhoods typically require very large contiguous parcels or significant assemblages, which are uncommon in much of the county. The closest recent example of this type of development is the Belltown master-planned development. The TN zoning should remain, but there is a risk that it could be used primarily to achieve higher density approvals without fully delivering the intended "walkable neighborhood" character.

4.2 As a possible solution, if the new MR zoning is not intended to accommodate large-scale multifamily development and the TN zoning is meant to be reserved for truly walkable, mixed-use environments, there may be a gap in the UDO for a clear, purpose-built multifamily zoning district. This may be worth considering to ensure density is directed appropriately rather than relying on TN zoning to fill that role.

5. Accessory Dwelling Units:

5.1 One other thing worth considering is allowing more flexibility around accessory dwelling units (ADUs). With the housing shortage we're facing, ADUs feel like a practical way to add housing incrementally without having to rely entirely on new neighborhoods or large developments to meet demand. They can provide additional options within existing neighborhoods while still maintaining their overall character.

As the County works through the UDO, encouraging ADUs in the right places could be a relatively low-impact way to add needed housing using existing infrastructure, rather than pushing all new housing to greenfield development.