

December 6, 2010

Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission □  
Suite 403, City/County Building □  
400 Main Street □  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902

re: Hillside and Ridgetop Protection Plan Draft (revised September, 2010)

I understand that the Hillside and Ridgetop Conservation Plan will once again be on the agenda for the Dec 9 Knoxville/Knox County MPC public meeting, at 1:30 pm in the Main Assembly Room of the City County Building. Unfortunately, I have a schedule conflict that precludes my attendance. However, I would like to make some personal observations on the recommendations of the Joint City-County Task Force on Ridge, Slope and Hillside Development and Protection.

The beauty of East Tennessee is what drew my wife and I to Knox County from Los Angeles some 38 years ago. Naturally, I would like to see that quality of life and natural beauty conserved for future generations, though I also want the region to benefit from economic growth. I am very much in favor of accepting the Task Force recommendations as a base point for policy relating to Hillside and Ridgetop development in Knox County. Their deliberations were long and intense, involving both public input and the expertise of professionals necessary to sound policy formulation. Indeed, I would favor stronger "regulation" than that proposed by the Task Force, but I do think their recommendations are a giant step in the right direction.

As a former resident of, and recent visitor to Los Angeles, I have seen first hand the damage that inadequate hillside development restrictions can bring. It has contributed to hillside erosion, landslides, poor water quality, higher cost of storm water control and treatment, fire hazard including loss of life, ruined viewscapes, and degradation of the enjoyment that residents derive from many of LA's neighborhoods. We are currently witness to similar problems evolving in Sevier County. (Just hike up to Cliff Top at Mt. Le Conte and look back down on Sevier County.) Indeed, Knox County has already experienced some problems, but we still have time to act to preserve much of the environmental quality and natural beauty of our neighborhoods, not to mention the tax dollars that would have to be spent correcting problems that result from inadequate controls over such development.

I firmly believe that the same logic that supports zoning regulation generally also supports the more stringent hillside and ridgetop policies proposed by the Task Force. Of course this will affect property values, as any zoning or development policy does. Most property values will be enhanced by the proposed policy, a relatively few may be reduced. That's what makes the MPCs job a tough one, but it's also precisely why we need MPC.

Ron Shrieves  
7812 Ember Crest Trail  
Knoxville, TN 37938



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**Harvey Broome Group, TN Chapter  
Robin Hill, Chair  
11504 Mountain View Road  
Knoxville, TN 37922**

**Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission  
Suite 403, City/County Building  
400 Main Street  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902**

Re: Hillside and Ridgetop Protection Plan Draft (revised September, 2010)

Dear Commissioners:

I write on behalf of the Harvey Broome Group, Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club and our 1,100 members residing in the Knox County area.

It is my understanding that there has been considerable push back by the developer community regarding the plan, even as watered down in the October 14, 2010 revision being presented to you this Thursday, December 9.

You have already before you the comments submitted by the Harvey Broome Group in September. My intent here is to emphasize to you that the plan does no more injury to private property rights than any other zoning ordinance. The Metropolitan Planning Commission, and ultimately the Knox County Commission, have the authority and responsibility to plan for the optimal use of the lands with Knox County and Knoxville. That means protecting the land from bleeding into our streams, storm sewers, and rivers. That means taking into consideration the rights and needs of all the residents of the county and city, not just a particular special interest group that has amply demonstrated in the past their disregard for the rights of the people of Knox County and Knoxville to live in an area that lifts up their spirits, that has clean flowing streams, that has a forested canopy cleaning the air and moderating temperatures, and that provides opportunities to recreate and enjoy the nature that creation gave them. It also means protecting, and even enhancing, the property values of residents of the area, particularly those living adjacent to protected areas.

It has been pointed out that there has been little public participation in the hearings that have been held. I would point out that most people have day jobs requiring their presence in the workplace at the times these public hearings have been held, including the one scheduled for this

coming Thursday. Most people who do not have a personal financial interest in this issue cannot afford to take time off from their employment in the middle of the day to attend these hearings.

One comment on the plan itself and the recommendation before you. It would be extremely helpful to have had illustrations of what the various slopes actually look like. How many people, including yourselves, have a mental image of, for example, a 25% slope? A 40% slope? It is difficult to make an informed judgement about the wisdom of developing such slopes when looking at just numbers on a page. Perhaps in the next iteration this lapse could be rectified.

Finally, I reiterate the Harvey Broome Group's call in our previous comments that the plan provide more emphasis and more specifics on "Implementing Public and Quasi-Public Corridor Efforts." That would be really the only effective way to preserve and protect our forested ridges for the needs of our children's children.

Sincerely,

Axel C. Ringe, Conservation Chair  
Harvey Broome Group  
Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club  
865-397-1840

cc: County Mayor Tim Burchett  
Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam