



November 28, 2018

ReCode Knoxville – Comments

The primary focus of the Knoxville-Knox County Food Policy Council (FPC) is creating innovative solutions to problems that will promote sustainability, economic development, and social justice within the local food system. In pursuit of those ideals, the council offers the following comments regarding the zoning changes proposed by ReCode Knoxville:

Urban Agriculture

The FPC was a strong advocate of the 2015 Urban Agriculture Zoning Ordinance, and we are pleased to see much of the language and spirit of those changes maintained in this new proposal. According to the latest data from the USDA, nearly 18,000 acres of Knox County's farmland was lost to development between 2007 and 2012. Between increasing large-scale food safety recalls, extreme weather events, and changing demographics, our swelling **urban centers need creative local food production options** like market gardening and "backyard" livestock. Zoning and planning that support the production and distribution of local food make Knoxville's food system more resilient, while providing a boost to the local economy. With concern for the entire lifecycle of the food in our community, the FPC is **supportive of zoning that facilitates the reduction of food waste** through donation, recycling, or composting.

Food Access

Because of the high rates of food insecurity (13.3% in Knox County), residents with low income & low access to food stores (11.4% in Knox County), and households without access to a vehicle (6.75%), the FPC is **supportive of the recommendations made by Knoxville Area Transit** to implement higher 'transitional' residential density up to ½ mile from all major transit corridors, and to make use of opportunities where "[commercial] nodes can be enhanced to encourage higher densities, mixed use, and walkable communities." This increased residential density near transit lines and food stores is also likely to generate more affordable housing options for the populations most in need of improved access to healthy food. We are also very supportive of the neighborhood non-residential reuse as a potential tool for incorporating creative food access solutions within residential areas.

Farmland Preservation

As previously stated, **the rapid loss of viable farmland to development in Knox County is an issue of great concern.** That is why the FPC is supportive of zoning measures that would increase urban and

residential density, thereby drawing development pressure away from vulnerable rural and agricultural areas. **We support the expansion of ADU's, higher density 'transitional' zones, of duplexes and 4-plexes.**

We welcome your questions about our position on any of these issues, and greatly appreciate the work being done on many fronts to bring Knoxville's zoning code into the 21st century, hoping it will be an effective tool to make Knoxville's food system more equitable, resilient, and healthy.

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