

## Midway Road Talking Points

- **Placing an employment center on the rural fringe is classic urban sprawl.** Extending infrastructure out into the county takes away from the existing investment in infrastructure in the city. The business park would be surrounded by rural farmland. The easternmost fringe of Knox County is not close to the airport or to needed business services like a post office or other support services. There is no place for employees to live close by. Paving a greenfield for a business park when closer in properties sit idle is not sustainable growth.
- **The domino effect of placing a business park in a rural area will cause the sewer to become inevitable.** Why are the homebuilders and realtors so interested in Midway? This is not really about a business park, it's about justifying a new sewer plant on the French Broad River, thereby opening up East and South Knox County for residential development and the associated commercial development, schools, roads and infrastructure that goes along with it.
- **The Development Corporation is saying “trust us, we’re the experts” but without any evidence of success at other parks.** The Development Corporation's track record shows a history of mistakes and miscalculations. The 155-acre Sterchi industrial park property was purchased in 2000 for \$3.6 million dollars and was donated to Parks and Recreation in 2006 after being unsuccessfully marketed as a business location for five years. The Development Corporation's management of the Coster Shop/I-275 Business Park project resulted in the contamination of the water supply for about 150 residents of the Burnett Creek community in South Knox County in 2001. TDC, the City of Knoxville, and TDC's subcontractors were sued in federal court for a half-billion dollars over the dumping of material from what became the I-275 Business Park into a sinkhole, which was settled for an undisclosed amount in 2006. The development of the former Farmers Market property, which was given to TDC by Knox County, was grossly mismanaged. TDC eventually sold 30.5 acres for \$7,639,285 to Target in 2004. They kept 12 acres for their own store and sold the rest to a partnership headed by Houston-based shopping center developer Levcor Inc. for \$8.95 million, effectively getting their land for free and making a tidy profit of a little over a million dollars. TDC left significant dollars on the table during this contentious, expensive RFP process, with allegations of insider deals and mismanagement running throughout the process. As soon as the new Target and adjacent shopping center was built, the City of Knoxville annexed the entire property.
- **What are we going to do with the old business parks?** Where will the money come from? The existing parks are losing jobs as companies close, leaving behind their empty buildings. Where's the plan to revitalize these parks, and shouldn't we address this issue before building even more parks?
  1. Transmission Technologies – lost 57 jobs, Forks of the River
  2. Panasonic – lost 600 jobs, Forks of the River
  3. Sea Ray – lost 575 jobs, Forks of the River
  4. Imagepoint – lost 450 jobs, downtown Knoxville
  5. Phillips – lost 520 jobs, Straw Plains
  6. Anderson News – lost 400 jobs, Westbridge
  7. Goody's – lost 800 jobs, West Knox
  8. PBR – losing 250 jobs by end of 2010, Westbridge
- **Government agencies should not be competing with the private sector.** What is the difference between a business park and an office park? While TDC claims that they don't do office parks because the private sector can handle that type of development, it appears that the only kinds of businesses that would be suitable for Midway Road given the constraints are those that would typically go into an office park. According to their design guidelines, the Hardin Park and the Midway Park is proposed to include restaurants, hotels and other types of retail, much like a town center concept. Government agencies should be doing things that the private sector can't easily do, like redevelopment of grayfields and brownfields.

- **According to the Commercial Information Exchange, there is 2.1 million sq. ft. of empty industrial/office space that is larger than 10,000 sq. ft. for sale and over 1.6 million sq. ft. that is larger than 10,000 sq. ft. for rent in Knox County.** There is over 500 acres of industrial or office zoned land for sale. This does not include TDC's properties, special use properties such as churches, retail properties that could be re-purposed, like empty big box retailers, or properties or land that is vacant but not actively listed with a realtor.
- **TDC is using the same numbers about job creation at Midway Road from 2006 – jobs numbers that Midway is going to generate even though all the conditions have changed.** No longer industrial where anything goes, originally based on having a sewer plant instead of constraints of onsite waste treatment, based on economic conditions of 2006 and now everything is different.
- **Is TDC really land poor as they claim?** If you travel to the very end of Pellissippi Parkway near the Alcoa Highway exit, you will find an empty 450 acre business park called Pellissippi Place. It is completely vacant, located on an interstate, with roads and all the infrastructure in place. We invested \$5 million into this park in 2006 in a joint venture with Blount County, but it's not even listed on the Development Corporation's web site – they aren't telling you about this. If they aren't telling you about this, what else are they not telling you about?
- **Who are the prospects for Midway given the constraints of MPC's recommendation of no distribution companies and our non-attainment air quality status?** What kind of companies can operate with only a domestic waste stream? The cocktail of chemicals in domestic wastewater presents a significant problem for on-site application to the soil and plant environment. Is there any evidence that these companies will be willing to comply with the necessary limitations of an on-site system? Who will be liable for any environmental problems caused by a failure of the onsite waste system?
- **The educated workforce is the primary draw for businesses seeking to relocate.** According to News-Sentinel articles with quotations by economic development experts including TDC and Knoxville Chamber personnel as well as UT's Dr. Matt Murray, location is not the primary factor in deciding to relocate a business. It's not location, it's not incentives, it's the educated workforce. There are many other types of economic development we could be doing that would be more effective than building a new business park at Midway Road.
- **The community is very concerned with the geological site problems and slope issues.** TDC has assured us that their onsite waste system will not cause any environmental problems and they will stay away from slopes and sinkholes on the site. How much usable land will be left after subtracting the wastewater drip fields, slopes, the "green" stormwater structures, the roads, and KUB and TVA substations? How large will the largest tract be? How many tracts and what size?
- **The Midway Road interchange should not be wasted on a business park.** The I-40 interchange at Midway Road is the last undeveloped interstate exit in Knox County. The I-40 interchange at Midway Road is only one exit away from the main interstate exit for visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Ochs report, prepared by a well-respected Chattanooga economic development study firm, suggests that TDC has overstated the need for new business parks and that the best economic development use of the property would be a tourism-related use.
- **All of the proposed preservation concepts in the proposed Sector Plan do not exist in any ordinance, and as such, are totally unenforceable.** MPC staff said that they have designated "conservation districts" and "scenic highway overlays" to protect the historic French Broad River area, but none of these concepts have the force of an ordinance.