



CITY BLUEPRINT

CITY OF OAK RIDGE





CITY BLUEPRINT

CITY OF OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE

Planning document as approved by the Oak Ridge City Council on May 13, 2019

WEBSITE: OAKRIDGETN.GOV/ONLINE/BLUEPRINT

OAK RIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Wayne Blasius, Director

Nathalie Schmidt, Senior Planner

Jennifer Williams, Planner

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE CITY BLUEPRINT AS A "LIVING" PLAN TO GUIDE CITY COUNCIL AND THE OAK RIDGE MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE AND MAINTAIN QUALITY COMMUNITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN OAK RIDGE.

WHEREAS, the Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission began a planning process in January 2017, referred to as the City Blueprint, to address the need for a new long-range plan to guide quality citywide growth and development in Oak Ridge; and

WHEREAS, this process has emphasized public participation and feedback; and

WHEREAS, at their March 21, 2019 meeting, the Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission unanimously voted to approve the City Blueprint; and

WHEREAS, the City Blueprint identifies the City's most valued community attributes as well as the challenges faced by the community; and

WHEREAS, the City Blueprint suggests that growing Oak Ridge by attracting workers and residents to live here is critical for the City's future; and

WHEREAS, the City Blueprint presents a planning vision and framework with big picture ideas and action steps, with an intent to continually evolve as growth and/or change occurs; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager recommends City Council approval of the City Blueprint as a "living" plan to support City Council and the Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission in their efforts to encourage and maintain enduring community growth and development in Oak Ridge.

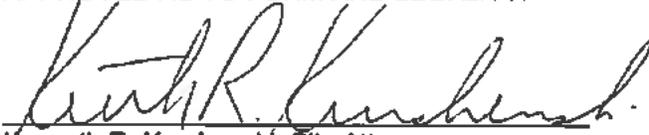
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE:

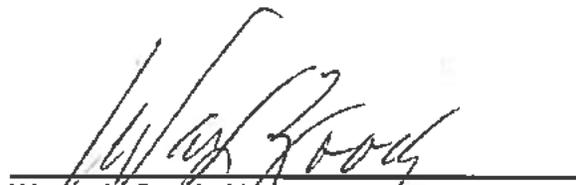
That the recommendation of the City Manager is approved and the City Blueprint is hereby approved as a "living" plan to provide ongoing guidance to City Council and the Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission in their efforts to encourage and maintain sustainable community growth and development in Oak Ridge.

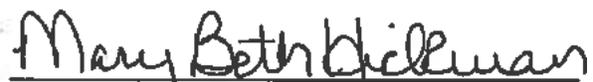
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission shall regularly review progress related to the City Blueprint, collect ongoing public feedback to gauge its effectiveness, and propose updates and modifications for inclusion in the City Blueprint so as to ensure an inclusive and consistent method of planning for development and redevelopment.

This the 13th day of May 2019.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:


Kenneth R. Krushenski, City Attorney


Warren L. Gooch, Mayor


Mary Beth Hickman, City Clerk

CITY OF OAK RIDGE



OAK RIDGE MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION

POST OFFICE BOX 1, OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831-0001

March 22, 2019

Honorable Mayor and
Members of City Council
City of Oak Ridge
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Re: Transmittal of City Blueprint

Dear Members of City Council:

At its regular meeting on March 21, 2019, the Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the City Blueprint Plan and voted unanimously to approve the Plan and transmit it to City Council for recognition.

City Blueprint presents a citizen-supported, visionary plan for future growth and development in Oak Ridge. The Plan identifies community values, goals and objectives, and a strategy for action. An important, related next step will be to update the City's Comprehensive Plan, adopted by City Council in 1988. The Comprehensive Plan guides quality community growth and development through strong policy statements and proposed actions supported by data and analysis.

The two-year Blueprint effort has emphasized public participation and feedback. After the initial kickoff meeting, attended by approximately 500 people, the Planning Commission and Staff prepared subarea reports and hosted eleven community open houses for 26 defined subareas. Common themes and proposed ideas from those meetings helped to form the citywide Blueprint Plan, and over the last three months additional public comments were generated through display stations, surveys, two open houses, and updates shared on the City website.

In short, the Plan promotes ideas to push Oak Ridge to an even better tomorrow. I have highlighted a glimpse of this vision below.

Oak Ridge Values

During the Blueprint process, we routinely heard several themes, which provide a picture of what Oak Ridgers hold dear. We've dubbed these as the "VALUES" upon which the Blueprint plan is built. These include:

- Natural Assets
- Technology, Innovation, and Science
- Education
- Being 'Uniquely Oak Ridge'

The Plan suggests that growing Oak Ridge by attracting workers and others to live in the city is critical for our future. Not headlong sprawl, careless or haphazard growth; but directed, high quality and catalytic growth. Growth broadens and deepens our tax base, allowing community improvement without increasing taxes. New minds, new personalities, and new energy mean more neighbors working together to improve quality of life, find solutions to community challenges, and bring new creative energy to Oak Ridge.

City Blueprint is part of an on-going, multi-faceted process to guide public projects and private development to complement the spirit and values that are important to the community. The Planning Commission will regularly review progress and effectiveness, and continue to engage citizens when preparing updates. Blueprint and supporting information will be accessible online, to communicate progress and promote interest. **WEBSITE: oakridgetn.gov/online/blueprint**

Planning Commission members would be pleased to review the content and related next steps presented in this document with the City Council at a work session as soon as possible. After this review, the Planning Commission requests that it be adopted by City Council as a resolution. Please do not hesitate to call on me, or other commissioners, if you have questions prior to the work session.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Stephen Whitson".

H. Stephen Whitson, Chair
Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission

C: Mark Watson, City Manager

CITY BLUEPRINT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Former Planning Commission members Hans Vogel and Patrick McMillan are recognized for their dedication throughout the project. Additionally, former Community Development Staff are valued for their involvement leading to the project kickoff in January 2017: Kathryn Baldwin, Community Development Director; Andrea Kupfer, Community Development Specialist; Sherith Colverson, Senior Planner; Jordan Clark, Senior Planner; Kelly Duggan, Senior Planner; and Amanda Dials, Administrative Specialist.

Special thanks to James Spencer, FAICP, Professor Emeritus of Planning, University of Tennessee Knoxville, for a full year of staffing support and particularly for his significant contributions to this project.

The project greatly benefitted from the assistance and support of the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce, especially Economic Development Coordinator Elisabeth Johnson. High-quality photographs and local information were generously provided by D. Ray Smith, City of Oak Ridge Historian. Additionally, general credit must be given to many contributors and sources of information that are identified within the Plan, and to individuals and organizations that are not specifically named, though they also provided special knowledge and assistance to this effort.

Document template and design theme created by mb graffics.

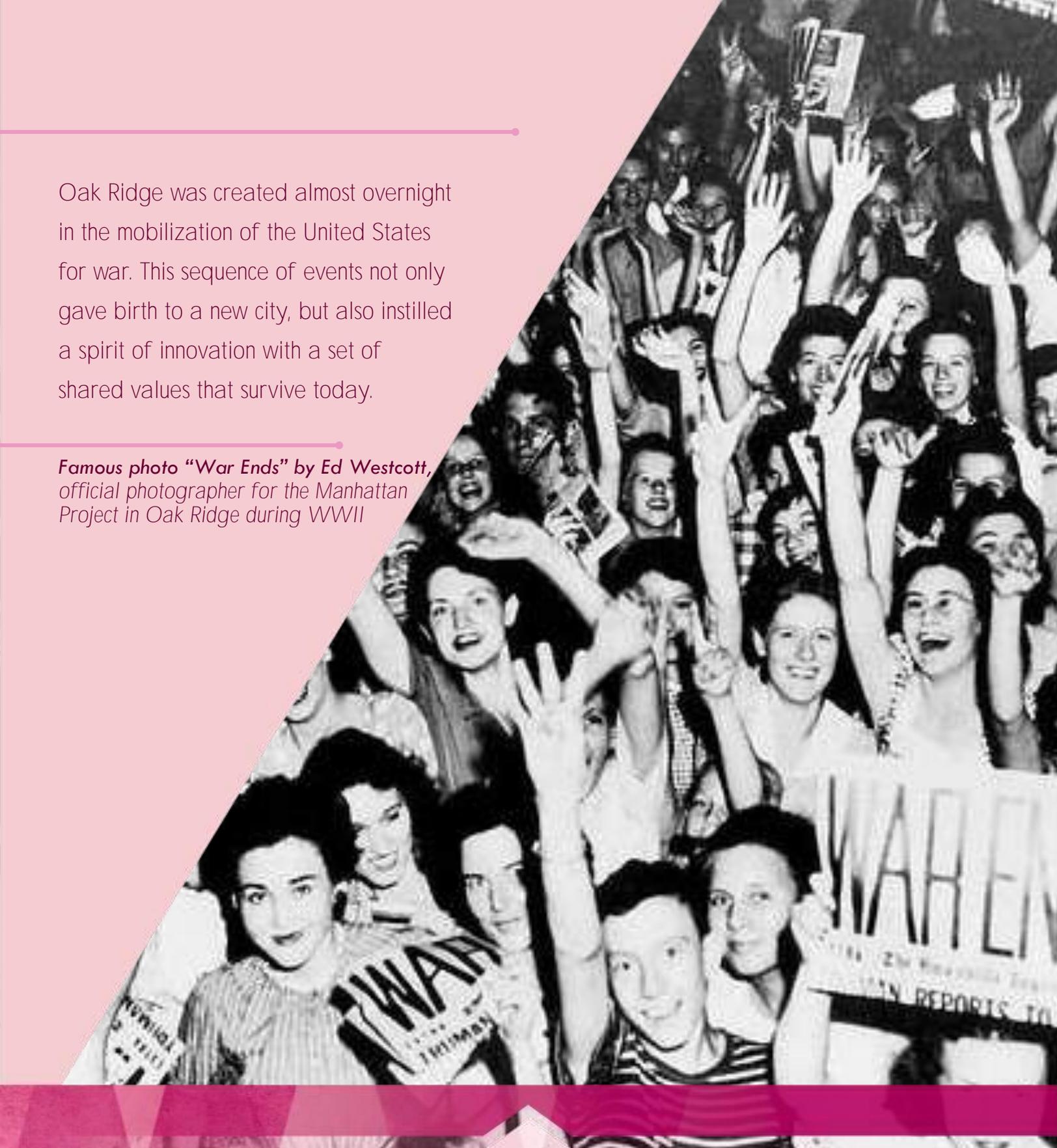


Alexander Guest House

Now a senior living center, the original "Guest House" was the only hotel in Oak Ridge. Scientists visiting here would use assumed names to avoid calling attention to themselves. It has been restored and has photographic exhibits in the main lobby. The original mantle is still in use where Ed Westcott made Robert Oppenheimer's photograph. A framed version of that photo is located on that original mantle.

Oak Ridge was created almost overnight in the mobilization of the United States for war. This sequence of events not only gave birth to a new city, but also instilled a spirit of innovation with a set of shared values that survive today.

Famous photo "War Ends" by Ed Westcott, official photographer for the Manhattan Project in Oak Ridge during WWII



OUR COMMUNITY PATH FORWARD

OUR COMMUNITY PATH FORWARD

Oak Ridge, as part of the top-secret Manhattan Project, was created almost overnight, immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

A cross-section of the world's brightest scientists and scores of creative young men and women were recruited and brought to an isolated valley in East Tennessee as part of a mission to win an escalating global war. Land was quickly acquired and fenced off, nuclear facilities built, housing and services provided to tens of thousands of workers, and so the rapid formation of what is now the City of Oak Ridge took shape.

After four years of intense working and living in truly incredible conditions, the mission was accomplished. This sequence of events not only gave birth to a new city, it instilled that city with a spirit of innovation and a strong set of shared values that survive today.

City Blueprint is a plan for this singular city and its path forward. The Plan will be used to guide future growth and improvement in Oak Ridge, so that both expected and unexpected changes to the city's demographics, market conditions, or other influencing factors, progress can be held complementary to the spirit and values that are important to the community.



Annual Secret City Festival.

Much of the Plan's content comes from collected feedback from citizens throughout the Blueprint planning process. As the Plan adjusts to progress over time, it will be important to regularly engage public interest and participation to energize and authenticate its vision.

Grow Oak Ridge

It could be argued that population growth is our greatest need and desire. Not headlong sprawl, disjointed or haphazard development; but growth that is directed, high quality, and catalytic. Planned population growth can stimulate investment and improvement in the city, and effectively attract more residents.

More residents means an increased tax base, supporting needed public services and desired amenities at a lower cost per person. Infrastructure built to serve 75,000 people in the 1940s has been maintained for several decades for just 30,000 users. As infill occurs among existing built areas, the roads, water and sewer system, and electric grid will be utilized more efficiently. New residents will include local workforce. This will increase demand for a broader housing market, including new homes, urban apartments or condominiums, and renovation of structures in legacy neighborhoods. Additional population will support the

kinds of entertainment and businesses that persuade people to choose Oak Ridge over surrounding locations. New minds, new personalities, and new energy mean more neighbors working together to improve quality of life, find solutions to community challenges, and bring new creative energy to the community.

Where will these new neighbors live?

Recently, several long-stagnant housing developments have been reignited. The Preserve at Clinch River (formerly Rarity Ridge), Groves Park Commons, and Forest Creek Village (formerly Rarity Oaks) have all changed hands and are actively planning for and building homes. New homes are being built upon existing vacant lots in various neighborhoods, and large areas have been rezoned on Edgemoor Road (Harbor Pointe) and close to the city center (the old Enclave property). The capacity for new single-family homes in all of these areas is in the thousands, and other land is available.

A 2017 [local housing report](#) by the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce identified a glaring lack of available new starter and move-up housing. These rejuvenated developments with existing infrastructure represent a timely opportunity to address this need today.

The legacy neighborhoods of the City are filled with an affordable, readily-restorable, and conveniently-located housing stock. As new residents search for housing options, a segment of that population will be intrigued by the history and attracted by the affordability of these unique, original homes. The City has an opportunity to incentivize ownership, rehabilitation, and help reinvigorate these neighborhoods.

As demonstrated in a 2018 study by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM), the same architecture and planning firm that designed the original city in

1941, the central area of Oak Ridge provides great potential. The area generally around South Illinois, Rutgers, and the Turnpike provides opportunities for infill and redevelopment that include urban and alternative housing options to help create and sustain an active city center.

Choices between apartments, townhomes, lofts, condominiums and other residential units will appeal to a variety of people who want to live near restaurants, shops and other activities, creating a real 'downtown' for Oak Ridge.



Event at the amphitheater at A.K. Bissell Park.



The Oak Ridge Playhouse has continuously operated since 1943, and is one of the most thriving community theatres in Tennessee.

So, what would this more populous Oak Ridge be like? Like Oak Ridge, only better!

Our city is fortunate to have an abundance of natural open space, in part due to a federal reservation within the incorporated city limits. This mostly pristine and untouched forested area, contains approximately 25,000 acres of wilderness and 30 miles of shoreline. Currently, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) permits public access and recreational use of certain areas of federal land, and has expressed willingness to transfer certain areas for public or private development or nature conservation.

The future of Oak Ridge will certainly continue to be embedded in a federal forest, but will benefit from greater access to natural open spaces due to consistent coordination between federal and city governments and the citizens.

The City of Oak Ridge will also grow in a way that does not compromise the quality and value of these natural resources for future generations. Promoting concentrated or compact development, energy efficient and green building and site design, smart grid expansion, and greater use of renewable energy will lead to a more resilient, cost-effective, and attractive city.

“When I think of Oak Ridge, I also think of the play “Pinocchio,” about a puppet without a heart. Like Pinocchio, Oak Ridge began as a manmade construct – a production for a play with but one act, for which an elaborate set was assembled, along with distinguished stars and a large supporting cast. When the performance was over, the cast would depart, the set be dismantled. Nobody expected either Pinocchio or Oak Ridge to outlast its production. Yet, to everyone’s surprise, they both came alive: they developed hearts.”

Gailar, Joanne Stern. *Oak Ridge and Me: From Youth to Maturity*. Oak Ridge, TN Children’s Museum of Oak Ridge, 1991.

Oak Ridge was designed without a clear downtown or central gathering spot for security reasons. Throughout the Blueprint planning process, the community’s strongest message has been to create a vibrant city center – a place to gather, shop, eat, celebrate, and be in community.

The future heart of the community should not only be a magnet for commerce, but also the place where our City’s identity emerges. In a central gathering place, events, creativity, and the essence of the community’s character will spill out and become a signpost. Rather than mimicking a traditional town center or allowing mainstream America to take over, Oak Ridge will do better to cultivate a destination that is uniquely Oak Ridge.

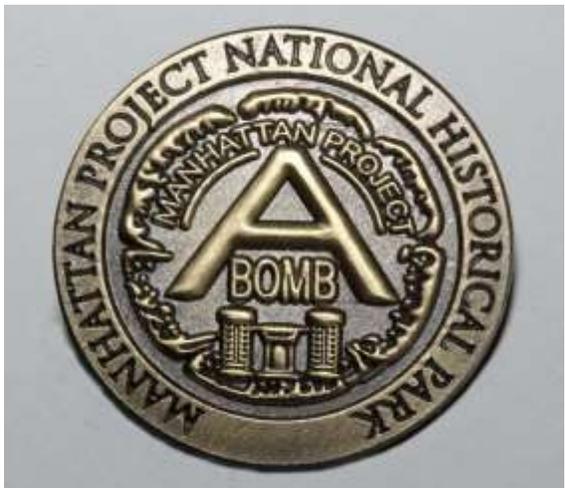
Oak Ridge at its core is a place of science and innovation. Likewise, from its early days, the public school system has been exemplary - driven by the highly-educated recruits for the Manhattan Project with expectations and demands for their children’s education. A corollary to this

pursuit of innovation was the development of the arts in Oak Ridge. Cosmopolitan, worldly, interesting people who settled here demanded that their community be interesting and cultured, and this will continue.

Today, innovation and creativity shine through the newly reopened American Museum of Science and Energy, Secret City Festival, Storytelling Festival, Lavender Festival, and the new Secret City Radio Show presented monthly in front of a live audience by local radio station WDVX .

During the Blueprint process, citizens said that they want a future city that is true to our unique past, but ratchets up on these things that are held dear.

The bottom line is that Oak Ridge will become a better city through planning for strategic growth and by knowing and preserving its values.





Checking Stations

Three concrete guard house structures were built when the city was opened to the public on March 19, 1949, to isolate the three main government sites. They were only utilized until 1953 when the fences were moved back to the physical sites of each of the government facilities. Two of them have been refurbished and are used for small meetings today.

At 75 years since construction of the Manhattan Project, Oak Ridge needs a plan to protect its natural assets, innovative projects, education excellence, and community vibrancy.

BASIS FOR A CITYWIDE PLAN



PLAN CONTEXT

For 60 years, Oak Ridge has operated as a municipality providing a full range of services to its citizens. Services include water distribution and treatment, street system maintenance, electricity distribution, police and fire services, a wide range of recreational facilities and community centers, and a reputable school district.

The City's [Comprehensive Plan](#), which serves as an official general plan as required by the Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 13-4-201, is the City's long-range strategic plan for continued physical development and services. However, the last complete update occurred in 1988. While many of the policies in the 1988 document are adequate for guiding development today, the update of supporting data and analysis is long overdue, and a consequence is that our city has not been preparing for the future in a systematic way.

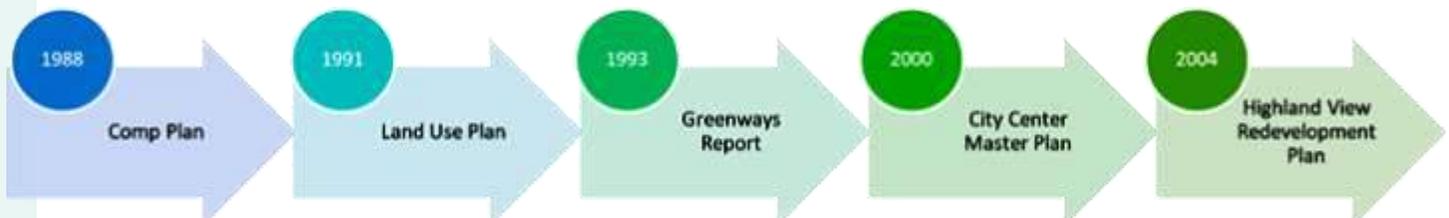
Planning for Tomorrow

In 2016, the Municipal Planning Commission began to address the need for a citywide plan. First reforming their mission and vision statement and then studying each subarea of the city, the Commission commenced the City Blueprint effort to gain as much public involvement as possible to help create a plan for the future.

Citizen input is key throughout the planning process, as a source for determining the wants and needs of the City, as well as opportunities and challenges. Often the best ideas originate in the community.

Since January 2017, the Municipal Planning Commission, with assistance from Community Development staff, gathered feedback from the community in order to:

- identify Oak Ridge's needs and desires,
- establish a community vision and goals for growth and change, and



- synthesize old and new ideas into a planning framework to help prioritize short- and long-term actions.

City Blueprint has formed into a dynamic, “living” plan for Oak Ridge. It presents the community’s planning vision and framework, with big picture ideas. Any proceeding actions will be held accountable to these expectations. However, change begets change. Therefore, Blueprint will continue to seek input, data reassessment, and revalidation to guide the community forward.

At this time, Blueprint does not replace the 1988 Comprehensive Plan, but it does prompt a thorough update for the Comprehensive Plan and its policies, as well as revisiting many other long-range studies completed for the City over the years (some are depicted in the timeline below). Valuable supporting information generated during the two-year Blueprint process, including public feedback and subarea reports, will continue to guide these planning efforts.

The Need for a Plan

A long-range plan serves the purpose of helping to protect the City’s most valued attributes. In Oak Ridge, these include natural beauty and resources, quality pre-K-12th grade public education, a fascinating history with worldwide influence, and the continued international research, federal security operations, and related industry and jobs. Most remarkable are the people that call Oak Ridge home, for their exceptional community spirit, broadmindedness, and sense of responsibility.

A plan also identifies the challenges faced by the community. At 75 years since construction of the Manhattan Project, Oak Ridge is challenged by aging infrastructure and public facilities, a stagnant tax base that cannot support the City’s needs, and inadequate housing stock with lack of appeal to attract new residents, even as thousands of workers commute into the city. Oak Ridge also lacks a downtown, or central destination, and is missing a strong physical identity and sense of place.



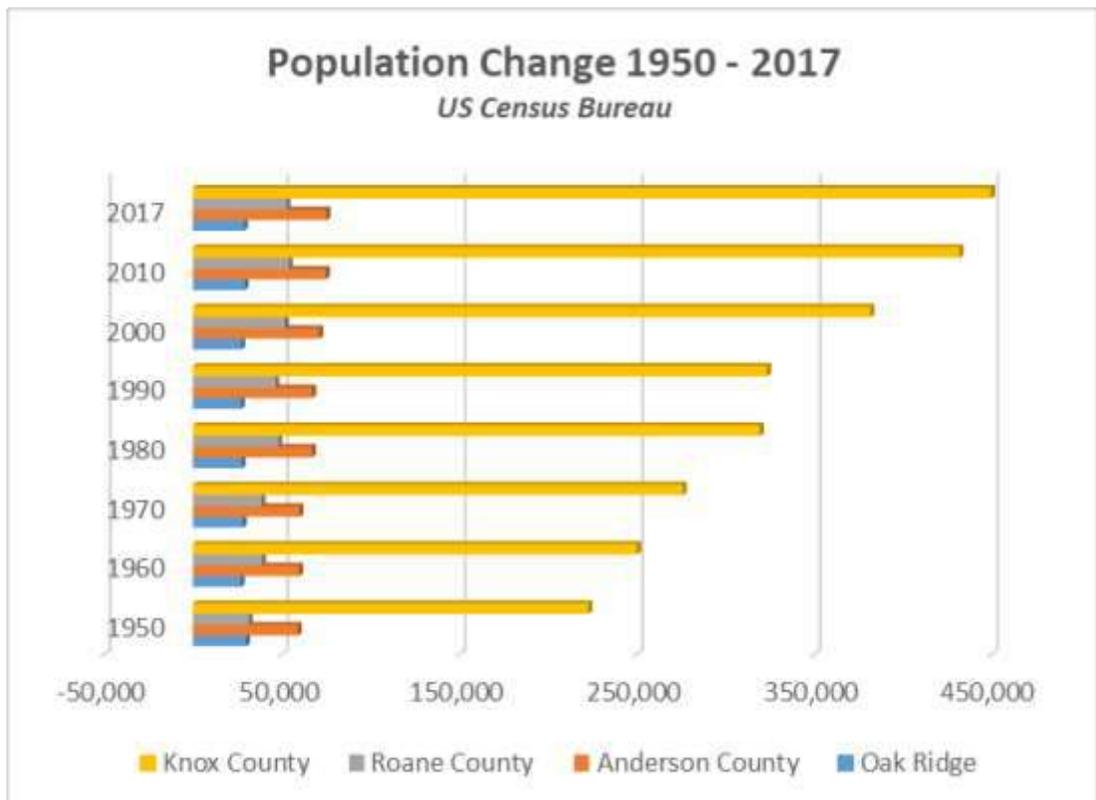
MAKING THE CASE

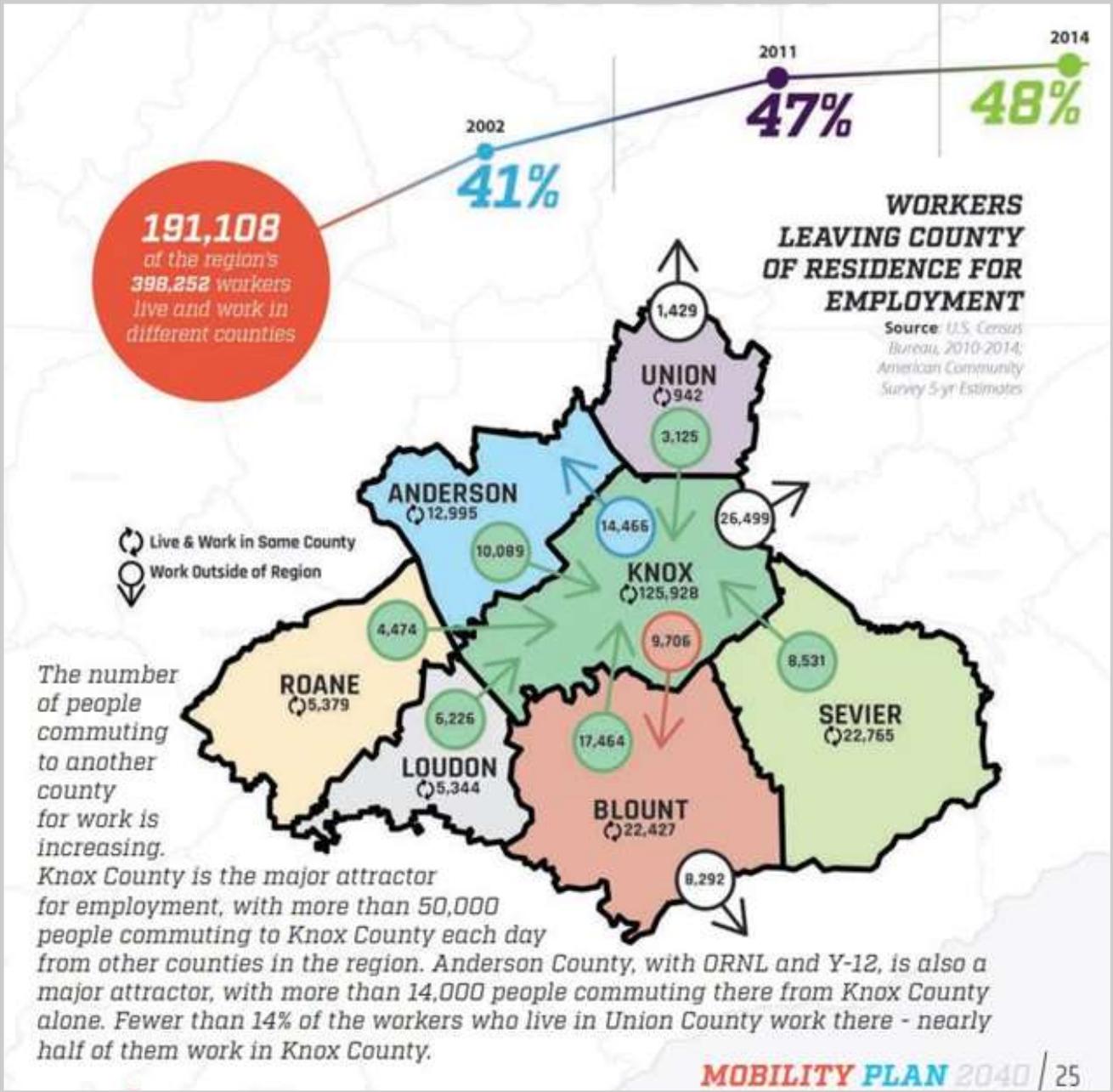
The 2017 Population Estimates published by the US Census Bureau calculate the population of Oak Ridge as 29,009. The population of Oak Ridge peaked in 1945 at about 75,000. In the five years after WWII it shrank to just over 30,000, and in the decades since 1950 the population has been relatively flat.

However, since 1950, Anderson and Roane Counties have increased 27% and 67%, and both Knox County and the state of Tennessee have doubled in population and are projecting more growth.

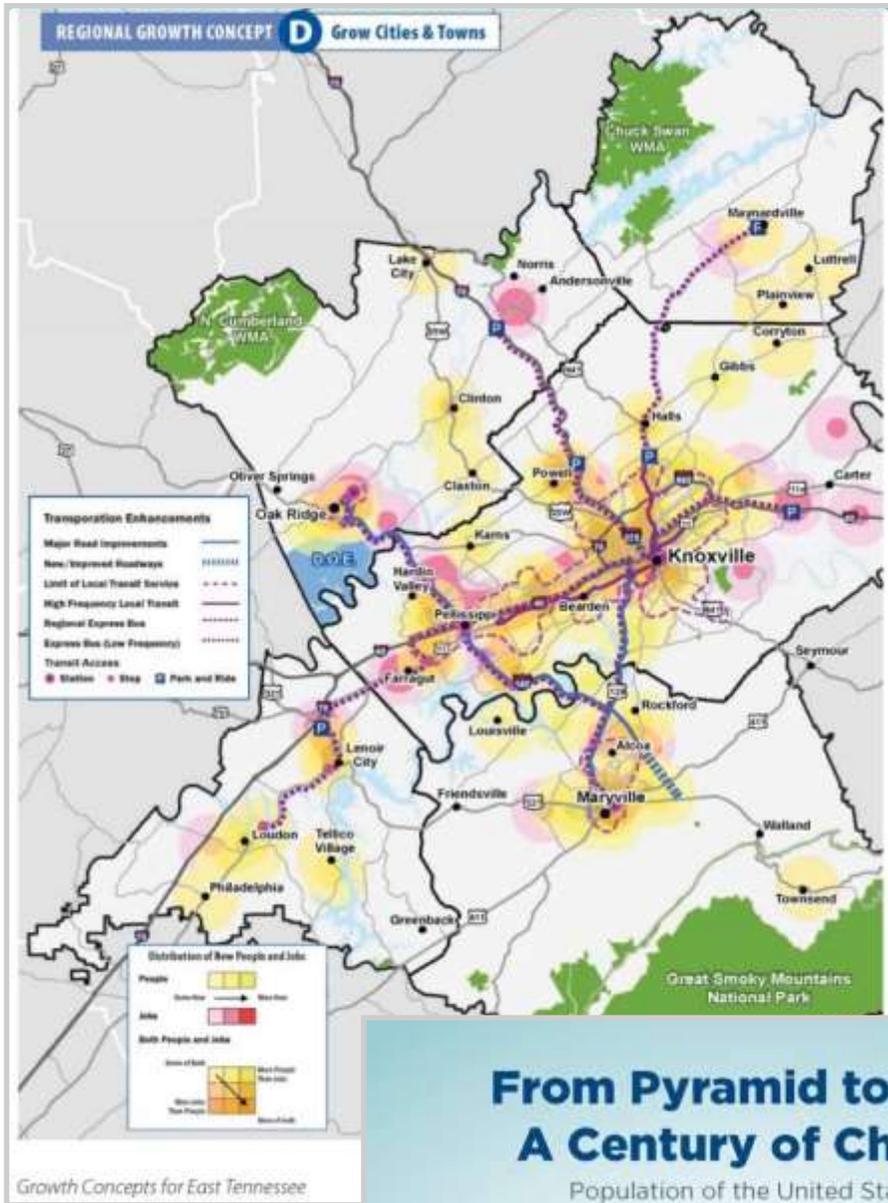
According to the 2017 Housing Report produced by the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce, only twenty-two percent of a sample of Oak Ridge workers live in Oak Ridge. In contrast, forty-four percent live in Knox County, ten percent live in Roane County and six percent live in Clinton.

A diagram on the next page from *Mobility Plan 2040*, the regional transportation plan, illustrates regional commute patterns that indicate the rate of leaving the county of residence for employment has been increasing.



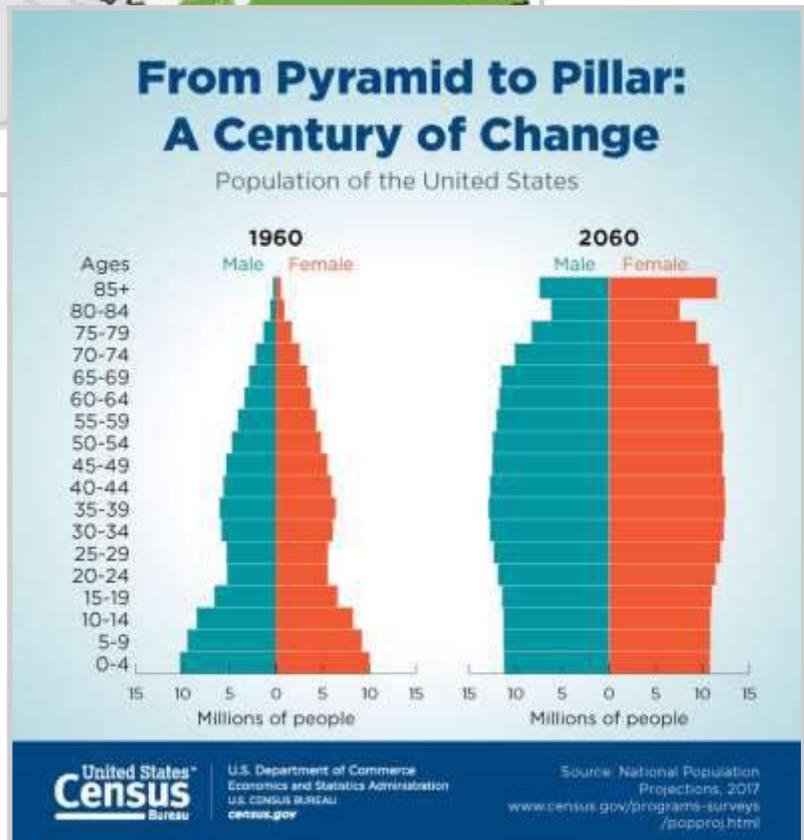


Regional daily commuter patterns based on data from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey by the US Census Bureau.



Top : Illustrated concept of concentrating growth in or near cities and towns (Plan East Tennessee)

Right: Projected age distribution of the U.S. population in 2060, compared to 1960 (US. Census Bureau)



A regional planning effort named Plan East Tennessee (PlanET), made possible by a partnership-agency grant program to promote sustainable communities, included a significant report in 2014, analyzing existing development trends and potential growth scenarios. It was determined that the best overall scenario, based on costs, health, quality of life, and other indicators, is to concentrate future growth within existing cities and towns, as illustrated on the opposite page.

Interestingly, the portion of total growth in Knox County in the last decade that has occurred within the city limits of Knoxville has almost tripled from the previous decade. The change is attributed to Millennials preferring to rent apartments in urban areas. Generally representing today's young professionals, Millennials are drawn to urban housing options, transportation options (transit, ridesharing, bicycling), walkability, downtown energy, cultural diversity, and social amenities of urban living.

Another national trend shows that population growth is slowing and age distribution is evening out. By 2020, there will be about three-and-a-half working-age adults for every retirement-age person. By 2060, that ratio will fall to just two-and-a-half working-age adults for every retirement-age person. A graphic illustrating this change, provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, can be seen on the opposite page.

Of the 29,009 estimated Oak Ridge residents in 2017, 19.2% are over the age of 65. Federal, state, or local government employs 17.6% of the total workforce. However, the local unemployment rate, 7.7%, far exceeds the Tennessee and national unemployment rate of 3.7%.

Taking into consideration recent data and brief observations, it is evident that plans should be updated periodically to reassess the issues and challenges facing the community and to determine whether progress has been made.

PLANNING PROCESS & PUBLIC OUTREACH



The Blueprint planning process began with a kickoff meeting attended by more than 500 people in January 2017.

Following the kickoff, 26 subareas were identified, thirteen residential and twelve nonresidential areas, covering the entire city. Eleven community open house meetings were held between May 2017 and August 2018 to collect feedback.

Staff prepared Subarea Reports to identify issues, opportunities, and recommendations for each area.

The study of the City Center Subarea involved special collaboration with Phil Enquist of Skidmore Owings and Merrill, courtesy of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The result was a report, [*Oak Ridge City Center, A 2030 Strategy*](#), which is referenced throughout the City Blueprint Plan and essentially serves as the Subarea Report for this area.

Interviews were conducted with stakeholder representatives, such as the U.S. Department of Energy and Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce, and property owner-stakeholders were engaged in focus groups to produce ideas for a city center and recreation / natural assets. Additional information was collected from meetings with City

Staff, from various City Boards and Commissions, and by reviewing existing Oak Ridge plans and studies.

Beginning in November 2018, content of the Blueprint Plan became available for public input through the City website, online surveys, display boards in public locations, and an informational room in the Community Development Department. Communication to the public has benefitted from news media, social media, local organization meetings and presentations, and a growing e-mail contact list of Blueprint participants.

Meetings were held at schools, churches, the Historic Grove Theater, and public buildings located within subareas. Written comments were collected from cards or surveys completed during community meetings, from social media and online surveys, and from comment boxes located at the Library, Chamber of Commerce, and Municipal Building.

Community feedback, Subarea Reports, and survey results are archived and accessible on the Blueprint website. As the website is developed further, it will also include referenced information and links, such as those listed on the next page.



oakridgetn.gov/online/blueprint

REFERENCED INFORMATION

This list identifies many of the sources that provided important information for City Blueprint, including previous plans and studies and the websites for agencies and organizations.

- ⇒ Housing Report presented by the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce to the Oak Ridge City Council (2017)
- ⇒ Oak Ridge City Center, A 2030 Strategy by Skidmore Owings & Merrill (2018)
- ⇒ 2019-2024 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- ⇒ Heritage Center Revitalization Plan for UCOR, by AECOM (2017)
- ⇒ Economic Impact in Tennessee, annual report by ETEC
- ⇒ Oak Ridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, by Knoxville Regional TPO (2011)
- ⇒ Urban Forest Management Plan, by Dept. of Forestry, UT (2015)
- ⇒ Climate Action Plan (2010)
- ⇒ Jackson Square Revitalization Final Report, by UT MBA Program (2011)
- ⇒ Oak Ridge Waterfront Development Plan (2009)
- ⇒ Major Road Plan, 2008. Includes a listing of all OR streets with the classification of each.
- ⇒ South Illinois Avenue Corridor Study (2007)
- ⇒ Heritage Tourism Plan, 2007
- ⇒ The Highland View Redevelopment Plan, by Knoxville Community Development Corporation (2004)
- ⇒ Oak Ridge City Center Master Plan, by Lose and Associates (2000)
- ⇒ Oak Ridge City Center Strategy: Market and Economic Assessment, by Zuchelli Consultancy (2000)
- ⇒ Visioning Plan, by Lose and Associates (1998)
- ⇒ Greenways Task Force Report (1993)
- ⇒ Land Use Plan, adopted in 1991, with subsequent amendments.
- ⇒ Comprehensive Plan for the City of Oak Ridge, including 1988 Update
- ⇒ Report to the Atomic Energy Commission on the Master Plan for Oak Ridge, Tennessee, by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (1948)

ONLINE SOURCES (incomplete list):

census.gov
ortn.edu
orpsef.org
ornl.gov
energy.gov
exploreoakridge.com
utarboretum.tennessee.edu
orrecrecreation.oakridgetn.gov/
tnlandforms.us
Greenwaysoakridge.org
planeasttn.org
tn.gov/tdot
knoxtrans.org

Kickoff Meeting

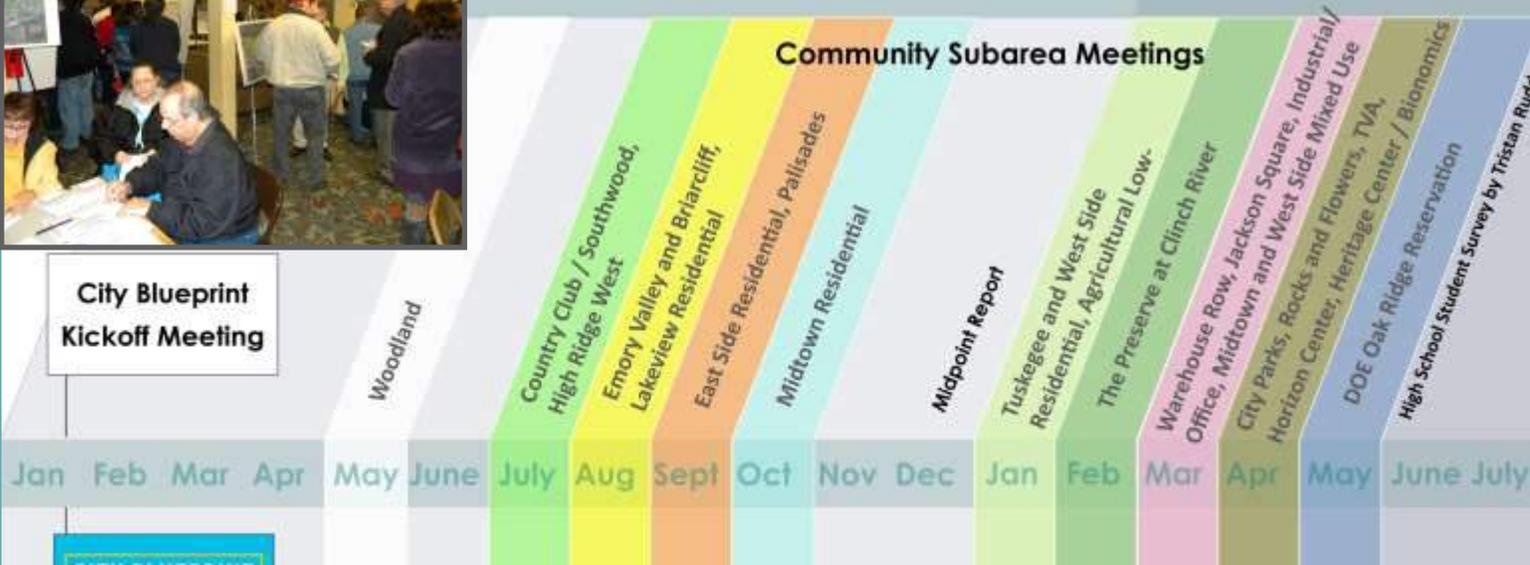


City Blueprint Kickoff Meeting

2017

OAK RIDGE CITY BLUEPRINT

Community Subarea Meetings



CITY BLUEPRINT
OAK RIDGE

500 65% attendance of Jan. 26 Kick-off meeting

670 Number of suggestion cards turned in

13 Projects & recommendations necessary

775 Comments from staff

100 Comments from residents

Your ideas are helping shape **OAK RIDGE** and our collective future together.

#CityOfOakRidge



1825 Written Comments

- 875—Kickoff Meeting
- 600—Community Subarea Meetings
- 79—Youth Outreach
- 112—Online Surveys
- 9—Comment Boxes
- 150—Open House Voting and Comments



Subarea Meeting July 2017

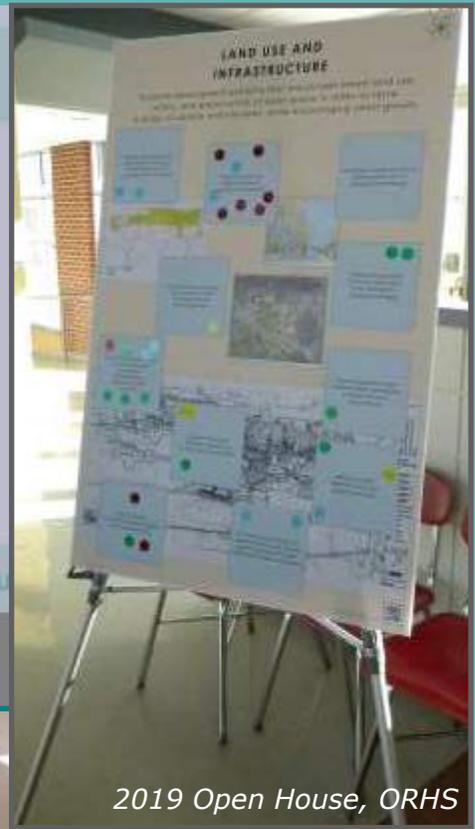
2018

2019

City Center
Focus Group Meetings
Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May June July Au

Website Updates, Online Surveys
Community Open Houses (February)
Public Review of Draft Plan

Public Hearing
March 21
Planning Commission



2019 Open House, ORHS



City Center Subarea, August 2018

930 Meeting Attendees

- 500—Kickoff Meeting
- 280—Subarea Meetings
- 20—Focus Groups
- 130—Open Houses in 2019

550 Recipients of E-mail Updates
(not including City Boards and Commissions)

BLUEPRINT TIMELINE
AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



Oak Ridge International Friendship Bell

An iconic symbol of peace and friendship, the Oak Ridge International Friendship Bell was selected as a symbol of friendship between Japan and Oak Ridge during the City's 50th Anniversary celebration. Since then the bell has become a major attraction for visitors and has become one of the most recognized symbols of Oak Ridge.

There is pride in our history, our landscape, our arts, and our continued contribution to the world of science. Oak Ridge has always been an extraordinary place — as a core element of the Manhattan Project, to its existence today.



OUR VALUES AND GOALS

OAK RIDGE VALUES

During the Blueprint process, there were several recurring themes, which provide a picture of what Oak Ridgers hold dear. These themes have been dubbed the “VALUES” upon which the Blueprint Plan is built.

Natural Assets

There is widespread appreciation for the greenbelts, trails, the river, creeks, and scenic vistas that are part of the everyday experience of living in Oak Ridge. Their protection, enhancement and expansion are important to our community, and are an emphasis of this plan.

Technology, Innovation, and Science

Oak Ridge grew out of science and innovation, and that is still the underpinning of our economy and our very identity. We were “Born to Innovate.”

The interesting thing is that Oak Ridge, at its inception, was a place where incredibly smart, creative young people came from around the globe to do amazing work that changed the world. That remains the case yet today.



International Friendship Bell



UT Arboretum (Photo by Ray Smith)



2018 Opening of new AMSE location

The interesting thing is that Oak Ridge, at its inception, was a place where incredibly smart, creative young people came from around the globe to do amazing work that changed the world. That remains the case yet today.

Education

Oak Ridge schools represent consistent success in the community despite the lack of population change. Residents of the city include an unusually large number of people who are highly educated or extraordinarily skilled, and there is widespread support for local Pre-K through 12th grade education.

News about science-related projects and superior academic performance of students gets top billing in the local Oak Ridge media and elsewhere. In 2017, the district earned the distinction of being the first to achieve district-wide AdvanceED STEM Certification, meaning each school and all grades K-12 are focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs.

Since 2000, the Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation (ORPSEF) has provided additional financial support, such as awarding teachers opportunities to develop innovative techniques and improve learning experiences. The community has put its money where its mouth is by supporting a world-class school system that has earned a reputation for high quality.



Oak Ridge High School

Being Uniquely Oak Ridge...

We heard from people throughout the process that Oak Ridge needs to be distinct from surrounding cities. It is not just pride in the physical city. It is pride in our history, our landscape, the arts, and the contribution we have made and continue to make to the world of science. Part of what continues to make Oak Ridge unique is population diversity among age, race, religion, culture, language, education, and income levels. The diversity that has been present since the Manhattan Project has shaped a culture of tolerance and altruism. One does not have to be born here to be an Oak Ridger, a concept that redefines “community.”

Oak Ridge was an extraordinary place when it was the core element of the Manhattan Project – it is an extraordinary place today.

Panoramic photo of Oak Ridge

OVER-ARCHING GOALS

Shared values tend to support shared perceptions or ideas for what the City needs and wants. The goals described below are in alignment with several previous Oak Ridge planning documents and reinforced by citizen input during the Blueprint process.

Grow our Population & Economic Sustainability

In order to support the level of public services desired by citizens while keeping taxes from rising, the economic base and tax base must become deeper and wider. Part of this is population growth – particularly by keeping highly-educated, well-paid employees of the federal facilities interested in being residents rather than commuters to surrounding communities.

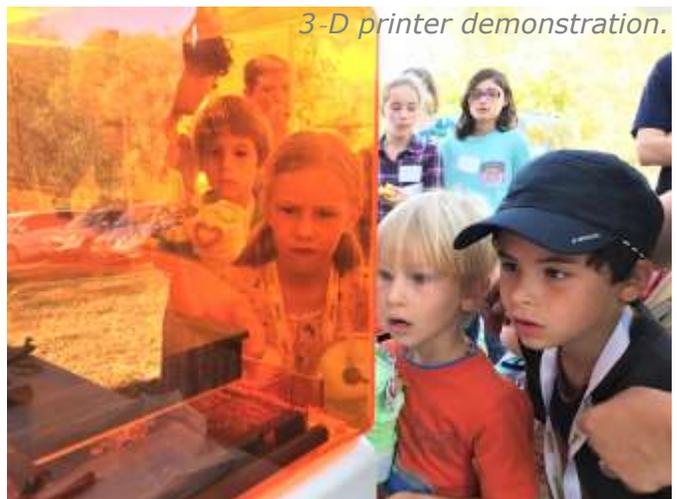
Oak Ridge has a strong economy, but it is dramatically impacted by federal policy and budget decisions. Diversification of business and industry that includes small and local enterprises is needed to provide more economic stability, choices of goods and services, and support a growing population.



The Preserve at Clinch River.



Melton Hill Lake Greenway.



3-D printer demonstration.



Enhance our Image & Quality of Place

Presenting an identifiable character of Oak Ridge, particularly in a vibrant city center, coupled with better overall physical definition of a city embedded in a huge federal forest, will help fuel growth of population and the economy.

We need to draw in high-quality amenities, entertainment, and cultural activities that residents and visitors can enjoy, as well as update public facilities and infrastructure to make Oak Ridge a more attractive place to live. Creating a place in the city center that is clearly “Downtown” Oak Ridge will help attract businesses, residents, and activities together and generate community vibrancy. Improving the outward image of our city, its entrances, districts, and landmarks, will solidify a unique Oak Ridge identity.

Improve Connectivity and Mobility

It was stated, loud and clear, at almost every public meeting that Oak Ridgers want more and better sidewalks, additional trails, and safer roads for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Additionally, the size of many of the blocks in our city center require that redevelopment be at a massive scale. This makes it difficult for small, local businesses to attempt startups or expansions. Better connections between neighborhoods, schools, and businesses, and easier / safer access for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists will improve quality of life and increase development potential.



These visionary goals are connected to each other. What happens in the local economy affects the potential growth of the city. Population growth directly affects the local business community. Growth is affected by the quality and variety of housing on the market for potential buyers. Historic preservation could bolster tourism and motivate investment in older neighborhoods. The notion of comprehensiveness in urban planning is to maintain a set of policies and decisions over time that reinforce each other and work together toward the achievement of the goals of the city.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These basic principles of urban design and planning have been distilled from the successes of great American communities. Guiding principles are incorporated into the ideas and action strategies in City Blueprint, and should serve to inform future policy-making and development practices in the community.

Strong Physical Identity

Placemaking is a term used to name the process of creating vital public destinations—the kind of places where people feel a strong stake in their communities and a commitment to making things better. The idea is widely used today; however, an effective approach has been developed and implemented by a nonprofit organization, Projects for Public Spaces. In their words, placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential to influence the creation of places that promote people's health, happiness, and economic well-being.



Urban neighborhoods

Mix of Land Uses

A mix of land uses puts residential, commercial, and recreational uses in close proximity to one another, which makes streets and other integrated public spaces become places where people meet. It allows people to walk or bike as an alternative to driving, and attracts the kinds of businesses that need foot traffic. Particularly in downtown areas, mixed uses contribute to raised property values and increased tax base.



Range of Housing Opportunities

A range of housing choices can use infrastructure more efficiently, provide balance of affordability, serve a diverse population, and stimulate new commercial retail and services that stay open during evenings and weekends.

Transportation Choices

Maximize street connectivity within the road network, including smaller block sizes in commercial and mixed-use areas. Design multi-modal streets that can accommodate vehicles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians together safely. Ensure that the transportation network can be supported by appropriate development (and vice versa).

Walkable Community

Foster walkability by allowing a mix of land uses within close proximity and ensuring safe and inviting pedestrian corridors. Streetscapes should incorporate ADA accessibility, shade trees where possible, street furniture, lighting, pedestrian-oriented signage, and building entrances facing the sidewalk.

Infill Development

There is a growing awareness of the fiscal, environmental, and social costs of urban fringe development or sprawl. Encourage new development to occur closer or within existing developed areas to use infrastructure more efficiently, strengthen property values and tax base, provide closer proximity to a range of jobs and services, and support a walkable community and other choices in transportation.

Community Resiliency

In urban planning, resiliency broadly refers to the capacity of individuals, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow – or recover quickly – no matter what economic, social, and physical challenges face them. The concept is frequently applied in terms of emergency preparedness for natural disasters, or financial stability such as diversified revenue streams. It can also pertain to the protection of vulnerable assets such as natural or historic resources, reducing the city's carbon footprint and increasing energy efficiencies, or balancing the affordability of living and doing business in the city.



Creekside terrace example; Photo and conceptual renderings on opposite page are courtesy of Skidmore Owings and Merrill

Preservation of Open Space, Natural Beauty, & Critical Environmental Areas

Protection of open space increases local property value and provides significant environmental quality and health benefits such as animal and plant habitat, places of natural beauty, and removing development pressure by redirecting new growth closer to existing developed areas. Open space counteracts air pollution, erosion, and filters trash, debris, and other pollutants before they enter a water system.

Resources

Smart Growth Network
smartgrowth.org

Projects for Public Spaces,
www.pps.org/about

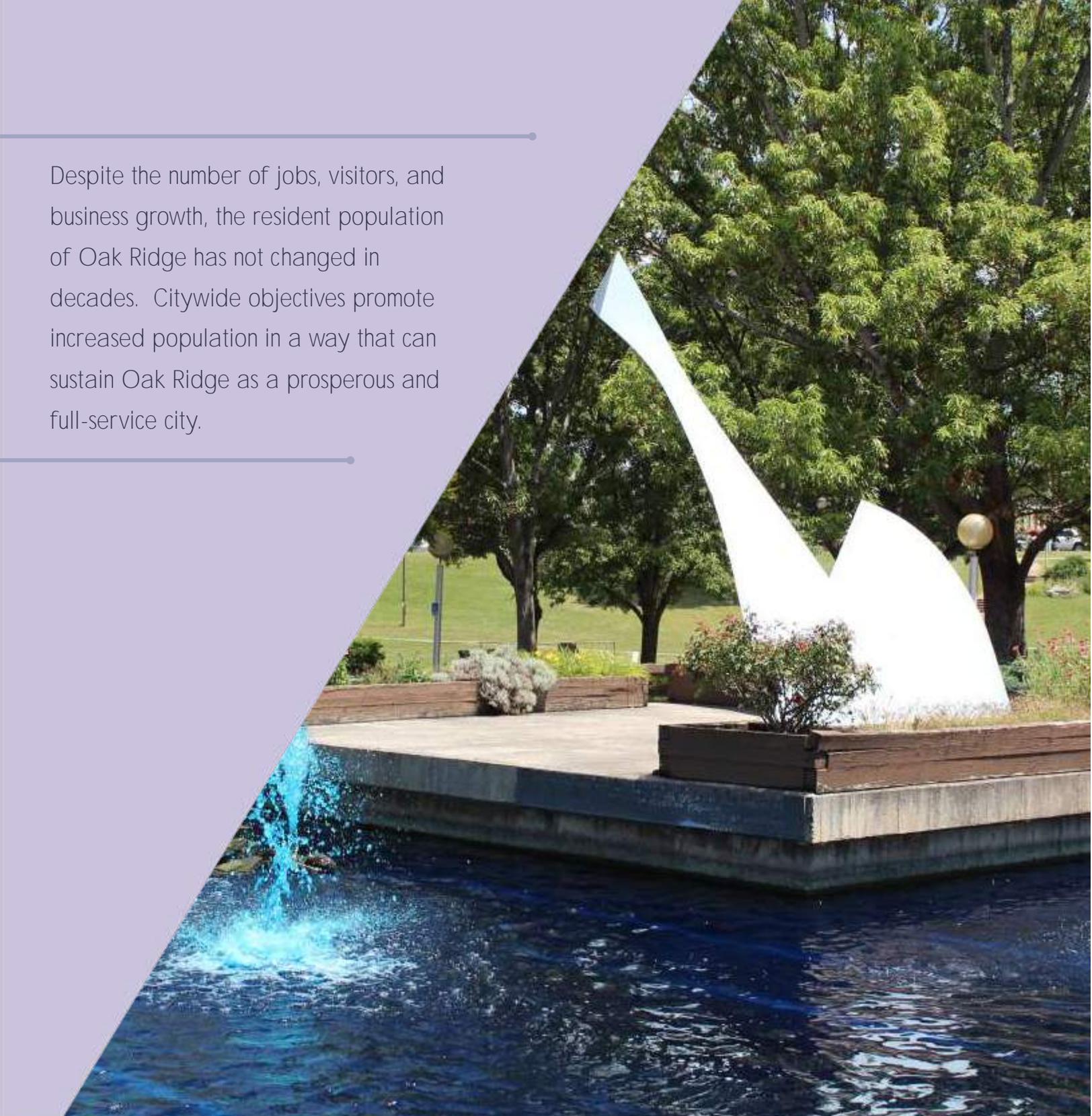
American Planning Association
www.planning.org



Jackson Square

Originally known as "Townsite" this shopping center was the retail center for the early years of Oak Ridge. It was the location for the famous Ed Westcott photograph, "War Ends" and remains a favorite location for citizens to gather today.

Despite the number of jobs, visitors, and business growth, the resident population of Oak Ridge has not changed in decades. Citywide objectives promote increased population in a way that can sustain Oak Ridge as a prosperous and full-service city.

A photograph of a modern water fountain in a park. The fountain features a large, white, abstract sculpture that resembles a stylized bird or a sailboat. Water is cascading down from the base of the sculpture into a pool of water. The background shows lush green trees and a grassy area. The image is partially obscured by a large, light purple triangular graphic on the left side.

CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES

CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section contains six elements that categorize the breadth of information that informs the plan. Within each element is a collection of ideas and recommended actions that serve to guide decision-makers as they frequently weigh future impacts and outcomes.

The information and ideas come from public meetings, stakeholder interviews, previous studies and planning documents, and other research. Many ideas require

further study and exploration, feasibility analysis, or coordination with additional agencies.

The collection of ideas is intended to be comprehensive and inclusive in nature. As such, the purpose of including all, even far-reaching, ideas in this visionary-level plan is to present community desires and needs in a way that helps leaders prioritize and advance in a strategic manner.

City Blueprint Plan Elements

- Economic Vitality & Sustainable Growth
- Housing & Healthy Neighborhoods
- Recreation & Natural Assets
- Land Use & Infrastructure
- Transportation & Mobility
- Livability & Community Vibrancy



ECONOMIC VITALITY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Create fertile ground for sustainable, healthy population growth by diversifying our economic and employment base and expanding quality housing choices.

In the 60 years since Oak Ridge became an incorporated municipality, its juxtaposed position and relationship with the facilities and operations of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has remained. Today, the DOE's Oak Ridge Reservation still covers a little more than half the land area within the city limits, and activity is thriving. As one example, the Y-12 Nuclear Security Complex is recapitalizing factories with new technology, safety equipment, and enhanced security, and adding a new Uranium Processing Facility, which on its own (\$6.5 billion and 2,000 new jobs) is one of the largest projects in Tennessee since the Manhattan Project.

An economic impact report prepared by the East Tennessee Economic Council states that all DOE facilities located in Oak Ridge attracted more than 50,000 visitors in fiscal year 2017, for business, educational, and science-related programs. However, despite the

number of jobs, visitors, and growth in both federally managed facilities and spin-off businesses, the resident population in Oak Ridge has not changed in decades.

Much of the job growth in Oak Ridge has come from two types of spin-offs from work done on the DOE Reservation. Some of it is the growth of new business firms that operate as contractors to carry out research or associated work in support of an ongoing project within the DOE. The second type consists of new business firms whose leaders build on previous experience working for DOE to develop a new product or service. Innovation has been a factor underpinning the creation of both kinds of new firms.

A healthy economic future for Oak Ridge will require the continuation of these kinds of spin off activities. However, there continues to be a need for more diversification. So long as the jobs in Oak Ridge depend directly or indirectly on government-funded activity, the City will be vulnerable to "boom or bust" cycles depending on the annual funding of the Department of Energy. The City's economy will be healthier if more new jobs are not tied to the DOE. This will require the application of innovation in a broader

BIG IDEA: DIVERSITY OF HOUSING/MIXED USE CITY CENTER

In their 2018 study, *Oak Ridge City Center, A 2030 Strategy*, Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) notes the incredible acreage of parking and other unused space in the City's core. In their estimation, higher density housing in this core area could add 3000-8000 residents and create new markets to support indigenous restaurants and shops. SOM effectively presents the need for population and economic growth and provides guiding principles for creating a unique downtown in Oak Ridge. Multiple surveys of workers for the major federal employers have identified that a lack of newer, urban style housing in town is one reason that most workers choose to live in Knoxville or other nearby communities. However, SOM notes that the proximity of city government facilities, A.K. Bissell Park, Oak Ridge High School, and Oak Ridge Associated Universities, along with Main Street and nearby shopping concentrations, offers an amazing foundation for a thriving, mixed-use district.



SOM estimates 3,000 to 8,000 residents could live within the City Center

range of activities, including entrepreneurs, artists, writers, and creative business types. Making Oak Ridge a more interesting and pleasant place for young people to live and work will facilitate the attraction of such people.

Heritage tourism is growing in Oak Ridge, and the industry is poised to expand. The City has been pulled back into the national limelight by the creation of the Manhattan Project National Historic Park (including the Oak Ridge, Los Alamos, and Hanford sites); the recent National Building Museum exhibition in Washington D.C. of the design and construction of the Manhattan Project; and the popular publication by Denise Kiernan, *The Girls of Atomic City*. New museums are opening, and the boards and foundations of existing museums are interested in working together.

It is an opportunity to revisit the Heritage Tourism Plan that was prepared for the City and the Convention and Visitors Bureau in 2007, by AkinsCrisp Public Strategies to address the potential impact of tourism on the City's identity, economic and financial success, and continued viability.

The following list of ideas and recommended actions are intended to capture and maintain future population and economic growth that will sustain Oak Ridge as a prosperous full-service city.

Stimulate Diverse Population Growth

- Establish a distinct, active city center that includes shopping and entertainment, offices and services, urban housing, and public gathering spaces. Engage owner and developer communities by initiating a market study and design feasibility analysis of the area surrounding Wilson Street, between Tulane and Rutgers Avenues, to spur new development projects and create 'Downtown Oak Ridge.'
- Attract families and young adults to live in Oak Ridge by increasing housing options and the types of businesses and services they need.
- Increase interesting places and activities to make Oak Ridge more desirable for young people, including entertainment, events, arcades, craft beer and coffee houses.
- Capture Oak Ridge residents from the estimated 2,000 new jobs created by the modernization program of the Y-12 Nuclear Security Complex, and additional jobs through both Y-12 and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.
- Enable a skilled, local workforce by promoting connections to technical education and certification at local institutions and apprenticeship or training programs with employers.

- Recruit the talents and resources within the senior, non-working population, of which almost half have a college degree, to advocate for the needs of the community and prepare a legacy of enlightened citizens.
- Promote niche-marketing to attract individuals and families interested in renovating a legacy home.

Business Development

- Build upon heritage tourism that has been renewed by the relocated American Museum of Science and Energy, the new history museum at Heritage Center (site of the K-25 Gaseous Diffusion Plant), and the recently created Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Collaborate with Explore Oak Ridge and local organizations, businesses, and special events to facilitate activities and develop a program for signage, wayfinding, and beautification.
- Enhance the climate for small business growth in Oak Ridge by identifying challenges faced by small business owners, such as zoning or permitting, and enacting appropriate amendments or procedural changes. Encourage incubator programs and facilities that provide start-up support and shared office space, equipment, and meeting rooms.
- Promote a diversity of local businesses and jobs. Collaborate with local leaders of economic development, including educational institutions, the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce, Industrial

Development Board, East Tennessee Economic Council, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, ORNL’s Innovation Crossroads, major employers and small businesses to ensure that the various strategies and programs ultimately support a balanced and thriving business environment.

- Support new jobs and capital investment through industrial development and expansion.
- Promote development of a flexible conference center and exhibition space that can accommodate a range of events and activities for up to 500 people.
- Support more creative “Maker” events where artists, crafters, engineers, students, and others can



Entrance to Horizon Center Industrial Park.

show, share skills, and collaborate on hobbies, experiments, projects.

- Encourage recreation-based businesses, amenities, and services that are located near local biking and walking trails and other recreation facilities.

Attract Investment in Community

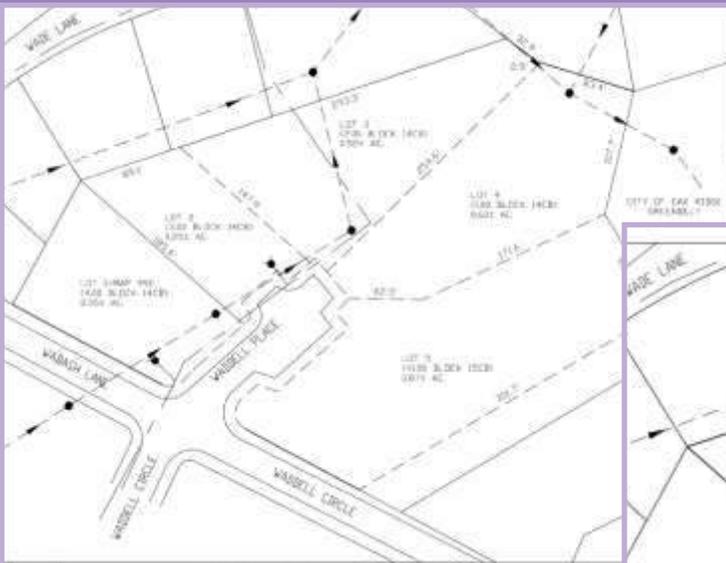
- Promote planned revitalization of specific urban areas and neighborhoods by leveraging the financial tools available through the Industrial Development Board (IDB) and Housing Authority, such as tax increment financing, bonds, and grants.
- Leverage private investment in property located in the federally designated Opportunity Zone (disadvantaged census tract in Oak Ridge) through Area Master Plans that identify specific community needs / desired outcomes in those areas. Consider a program that includes some tax relief or abatements passed on to the businesses and tenants that utilize these properties.
- Strengthen property values and desirability of development location through City investment in infrastructure and regulatory decisions that offer fair, predictable, and cost-effective growth for developers.
- Introduce a façade improvement program that awards a small grant or tax incentive or provides design assistance for renovating or updating the exterior of aging commercial buildings and storefronts. These programs are known to increase sales and attract new businesses and shoppers to the area, to motivate additional improvements in the area, and increase property values.
- Prepare for the impacts of potential economic growth described in the Revitalization Plan for the Heritage Center (East Tennessee Technology Park), a 300-acre private sector industrial park that seeks to attract advanced material manufacturing, research and development, freight and logistics, and eco-industry supported by access to interstate highways, rail lines, a proposed airport, and potential water transport. Growth may increase worker and resident population, the demand for public services and infrastructure, and introduce conditions that adversely affect surrounding development or conserved open space.
- Similarly, prepare for the impacts of new development on approximately 320 acres in the Horizon Center industrial park, managed by the City's Industrial Development Board.
- Along with new and continued economic development success, encourage support for community services for the underserved population of Oak Ridge, such as shelter and medical or rehabilitation services.

BIG IDEA: WADDELL PLACE INFILL HOUSING

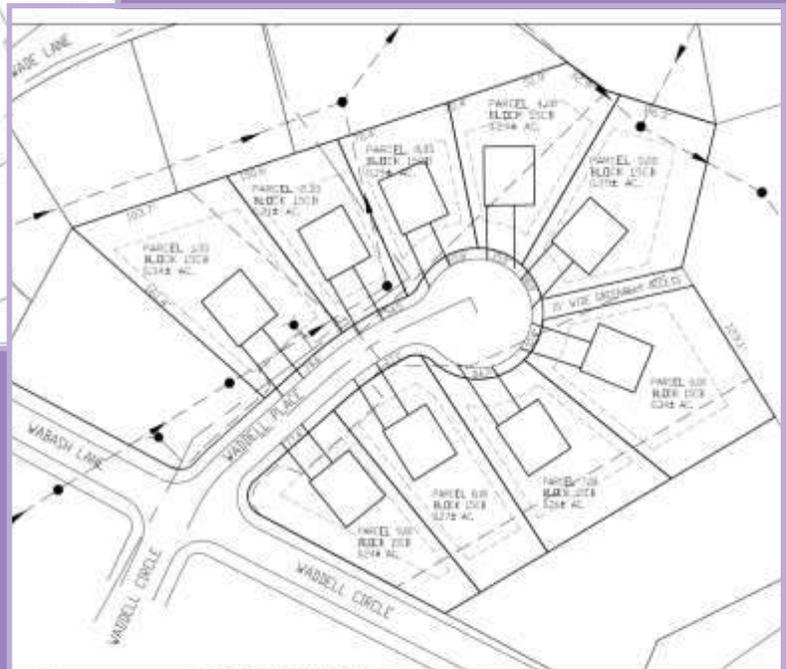
In 2017, the Oak Ridge Housing Authority (ORHA) created a Local Development Corporation (ORHADC) to be able to conduct redevelopment projects that increase affordable housing, home ownership opportunities, revitalize neighborhoods, and produce mixed-income communities. The first project chosen by the Development Corporation is a partnership with the City of Oak Ridge and the Oak Ridge Land Bank to build three single-family homes at Waddell Place in the Highland View neighborhood.

The City had purchased properties on the cul-de-sac with dilapidated homes that needed to be demolished or were in foreclosure. After clearing the blighted homes, the City transferred the properties to the Land Bank, and they became available for redevelopment. In the summer of 2018, the ORHADC approached the Land Bank and proposed to re-subdivide the lots to build three homes for local low-income families who are transitioning out of Public Housing into home ownership. Remaining lots will be available to other homebuilders for additional options for affordable home ownership.

ORHADC is preparing model house plans that complement the historic character of the area, which may be used by other builders at Waddell Place. The redevelopment project is the first step in renewing the efforts started by the City of Oak Ridge fifteen years ago to revitalize Highland View. The project is also intended to serve as a demonstration for appropriate infill and redevelopment in legacy neighborhoods throughout the city.



Top: Existing conditions on Waddell Place.



Right: Draft proposal for redevelopment.



HOUSING AND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

Improve our housing stock to broaden choices, increase ownership opportunities, and enhance our regional market position, which will increase housing values and tax base.

Oak Ridge enjoys strong job growth and security but that has not translated into accompanying population growth. In fact, while employment growth outstrips most of the communities in the region, population has been virtually flat and little or no population growth is projected for Oak Ridge by the regional planning organization.

Many of the housing issues of today are the same as the housing issues that existed when the Comprehensive Plan was updated in 1988. With over 50 percent of the housing stock built before 1959, and very few new housing starts, potential buyers have limited choices. The City is already working to improve the quality of older neighborhoods, and has implemented programs to expand Neighborhood Watch efforts and offering cleanup containers where homeowners are doing renovations. A rental registration program is underway to identify and track properties, and an Environmental Court was established with an Administrative Hearing Officer to provide judicial authority in reducing blight and crime.

Community Development Block Grant funds are being used, along with nuisance abatement general funds, to remove blighted buildings from neighborhoods. In addition, the Oak Ridge Land Bank – one of only three in the state – is receiving and reselling blighted properties to improve neighborhoods and increase home ownership. While helpful, these steps have not yet caused a paradigm shift in our neighborhoods.

The 2017 Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce Housing report, feedback from the Blueprint process, and a study of the major federal employers' new hires, point to several challenges, as well as hopeful solutions regarding housing and neighborhood improvement. Among the negatives cited, are:

- Lack of new housing options in the starter/move-up (\$150-300K) price range;
- Older neighborhoods are not seen as high quality or having positive curb appeal;
- There is a lack of non-chain retail and restaurant choices;
- There is no central gathering place (i.e. downtown or town center) in Oak Ridge.

Although at different phases of implementation, significant activity has begun at three formerly stalled developments: The Preserve at Clinch River (formerly Rarity Ridge), Forest Creek Village (formerly Rarity Oaks), and Groves Park Commons. These developments collectively represent the potential for more than 3,000 new, high quality homes in Oak Ridge, generally in the target price range.

As such, the objective of encouraging new housing in this price range is less of a focus in Blueprint. Instead, this plan emphasizes the persistent problems of housing choice, neighborhood improvement and community vitality, as levers for housing improvement.

A housing committee was formed by the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce in January 2018, to clarify issues and identify the best housing solutions. The committee represents both public and private or non-profit sector entities involved in Oak Ridge housing issues. The housing objectives and actions shown in the purple box on the right have come through that process and are included as the framework for housing initiative in the Blueprint Plan.

Through generous support from Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), the Blueprint process has also been augmented through the expertise of Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and their 2018 report, *Oak Ridge City Center, A 2030 Strategy*. Along with the Chamber Housing Committee work, ideas generated by SOM make up key concepts in the housing section, and throughout Blueprint.

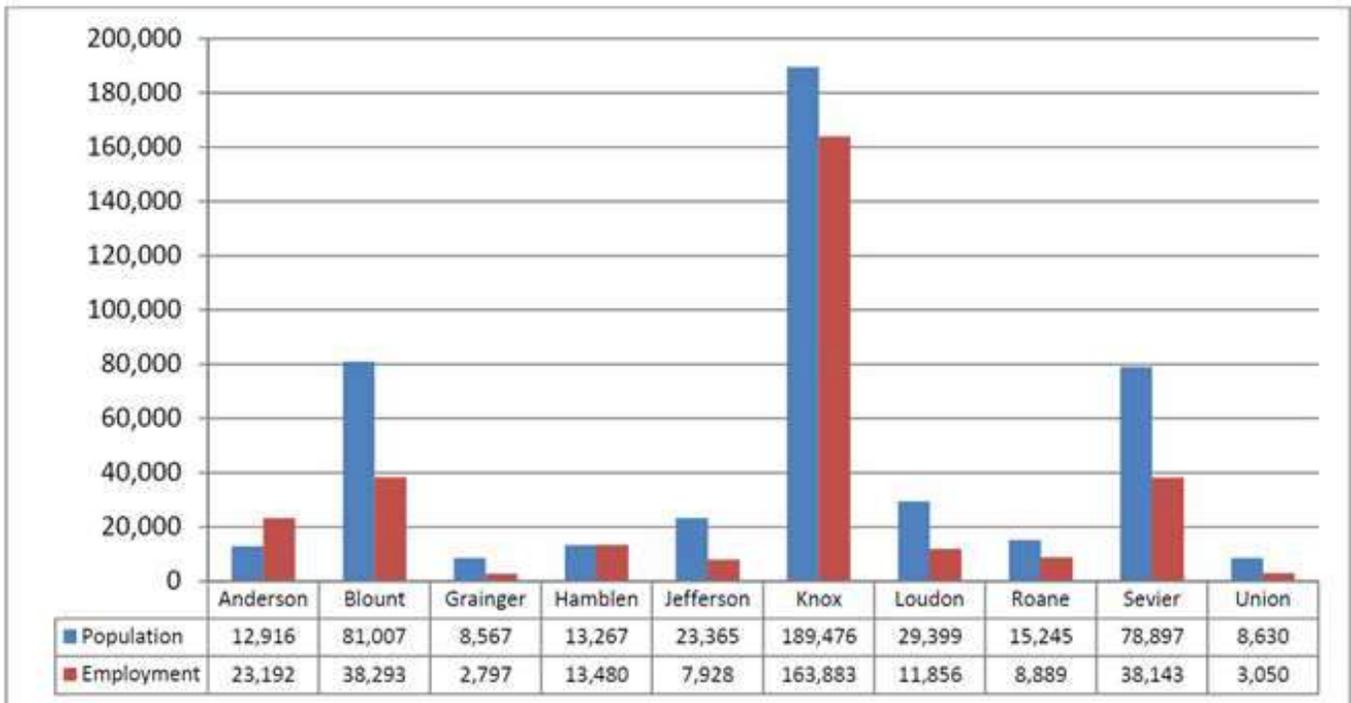
Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce Housing Committee Objectives and Actions:

- ⇒ Expand housing options to increase market position relative to competing areas, by adding high-quality purchase and rental units that are attractive to young families and new hires;
- ⇒ Add mixed-use development to improve the desirability of housing options for younger residents and newly employed, and encourage spin-off development;
- ⇒ Develop strategies to restore the heritage of Legacy neighborhoods;
- ⇒ Continually evaluate city codes and regulations to ensure that housing is modern, safe, attractive and affordable, but does not unreasonably restrict builder interest;
- ⇒ Promote new, higher-density housing options in the city core;
- ⇒ Develop and/or support ‘placemaking’ activities that attract new residents by improving the quality of life;
- ⇒ Complete beautification projects in public spaces, streetscapes and neighborhoods, to make Oak Ridge more appealing.

The following list of objectives and recommended actions are intended to broaden housing choices that meet the various economic and mobility needs of the community, and to ensure that neighborhoods are walkable with safe access to amenities and greenways.

- Encourage mixed-use development with a range of housing options in the city center, supported by increased street connectivity to create smaller blocks with greater accessibility to a range of development.
- Work directly with major employers and real estate vendors that assist new hires with finding housing, to promote the benefits of living in Oak Ridge.
- Expand housing choices in Oak Ridge such as condominiums, modern apartments, housing units above ground floor retail, tiny houses, and accessory dwelling units (also known as mother-in-law units).
- Develop incentive programs for home and property maintenance.
- Continue working with existing groups, such as the local Housing Development Corporation, Oak Ridge Land Bank, and Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce Housing Committee, to plan revitalization of existing neighborhoods. In particular, implement a renewed strategy for the Highland View neighborhood, which is also located within an Opportunity Zone that

Knoxville Regional Travel Model Update 2012



A chart produced by the Knoxville area Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) showing the projected rate of population and employment growth by 2040. Anderson County is the only county in the region where employment growth is projected to exceed population growth.



Legacy housing in the Woodland neighborhood.

currently benefits from certain tax credit incentives. The Waddell Place project, one of the Big Ideas described in this document, will be one of the first partnered accomplishments in Highland View that can also serve as a demonstration project for other legacy neighborhoods.

- Ensure that residents in neighborhoods have easy access to services and nearby commercial uses while protecting the character and safety of neighborhoods and minimizing conflicts between business and residential activities.
- Develop a pilot neighborhood revitalization strategy to involve active neighborhood groups in cleaning and beautifying neighborhoods.
- Encourage restoration of historic homes or designate neighborhoods with historic character to help revitalize legacy neighborhoods and build value through historic resources. At the same time, update the 1991 Historic Housing Survey with current assessment of structures that may have deteriorated and become candidates for blight removal.
- Create a financial incentives working group to identify and market loans, grants, streamlined procedures, etc, to encourage new homebuyers – especially aimed at meeting identified challenges.
- Annually confer with builders, developers, and codes professionals to review codes for effectiveness and adopt updates on a regular basis.

- Engage Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) staff assistance in utilizing existing programs to help support our housing strategy.
- Work with Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) to design and implement a plan for medium density housing development around their main campus in the city center.
- Coordinate with the school district's facility plans regarding future areas to be zoned for medium density housing, or increased population capacity.



Homes in the Palisades subarea.



Attached housing in the Briarcliff subarea.



Groves Park.



Bristol Park Apartments.

RECREATION AND NATURAL ASSETS



Maintain and expand a beautiful and healthy natural environment and recreational assets that are accessible to everyone.

Oak Ridge offers abundant natural open space and opportunities for outdoor, human-powered recreation and sports. Residents and visitors enjoy miles of greenways and trails for both walking and mountain biking, and several amenities that cannot be found in most cities. These include an outdoor public pool fed by a natural spring, accessible waterfront with one of the country's best competitive rowing venues, a skate park, public golf course, disc golf courses, and an outdoor amphitheater. Overall, this small city boasts 150 miles of shoreline, 85 miles of greenways and trails, and a wealth of scenic beauty.

On the east side of State Route 62, the University of Tennessee owns and manages an area of 2,204 acres known as the Oak Ridge Forest. This site is the headquarters for the UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center. The land is mainly used for forestry and wildlife research, except for the 250-acre Arboretum, which is accessible to the public and includes 5 miles of interpretive nature trails, educational events, and an auditorium facility. Explore Oak Ridge, the

convention and visitors bureau, estimates that more than 30,000 visitors visit the UT Arboretum every year.

In addition, portions of the Oak Ridge Reservation managed by the Department of Energy include recreation areas that allow full or limited access to the public. Clark Center Park includes a swimming area, boat ramp, playground, and ball fields.

Clark Center Park lies within the 3,000-acre Three Bend Scenic and Wildlife Management Refuge, which is managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and is generally not open to the public. The refuge protects important habitat for threatened, endangered, and rare animal species, including bald eagles, ospreys, and migrant songbirds. The area also contains the historic Freels Cabin (1820s) which was part of the first settlements in the area.

At the northwest end of the Oak Ridge Turnpike, TWRA manages another 3,000 acres in the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement (BORCE), which is open to hikers and mountain bikers from dawn to dusk, and contains interesting plant and tree species, including some that are unusual for the Ridge and Valley region.

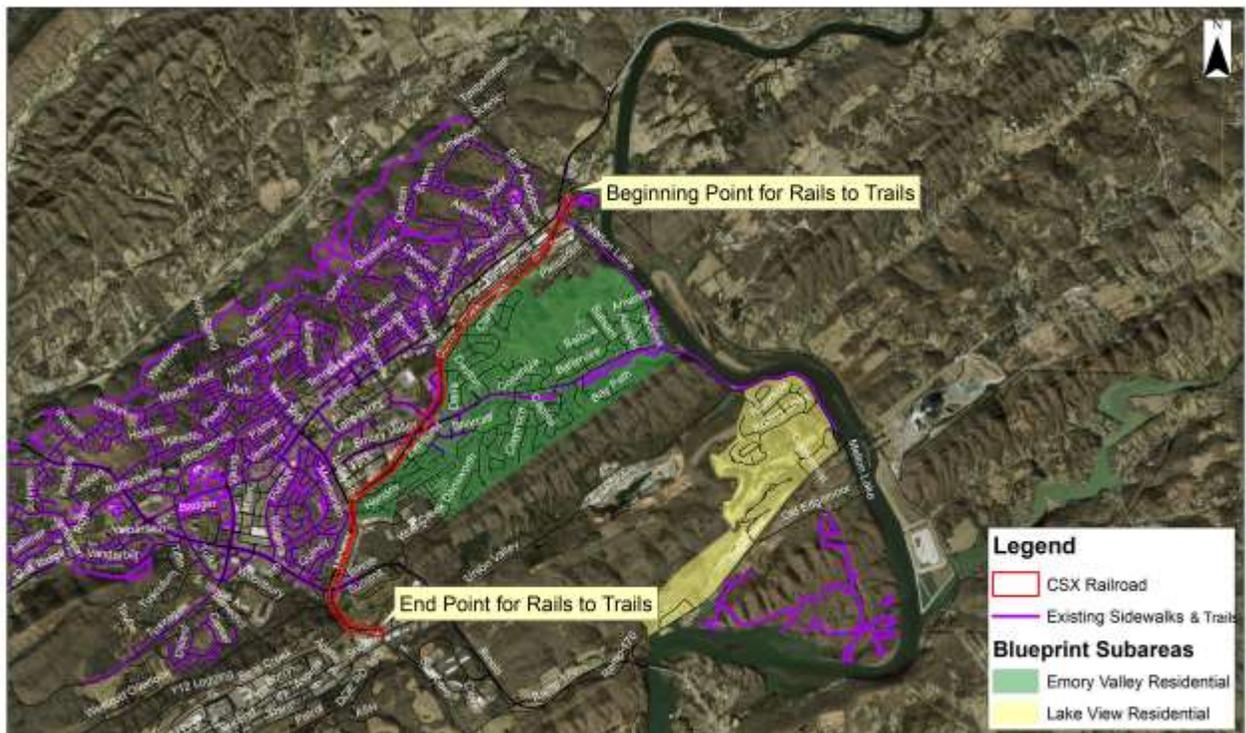
BIG IDEA: RAILS TO TRAILS

In 2017, the City of Oak Ridge initiated the Rails to Trails project, the adaptive reuse of 4.85 miles of abandoned CSX railroad within the city to create a greenway for pedestrians and bicycles. The project has been awarded, after previous attempts, a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant administered by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) that assists with preliminary studies, design, and acquisition of the right-of-way. Design and acquisition should be completed by mid-year 2020, however, the funding of construction is not yet secured. It is likely that segments of the greenway will need to be completed in phases.



The full greenway will extend from Elza Gate at the Oak Ridge Turnpike, along Belgrade Road, Warehouse Road, Fairbanks Road, and Lafayette Drive across S Illinois Avenue to the Y-12 National Security Complex entrance on Scarboro Road. Aside from creating a safe and secure corridor for cyclists and pedestrians that is accessible from surrounding neighborhoods, the greenway should influence an extended network of connections to other trails and sidewalks in the city, as well as increase nearby commercial business activity.

Rails to Trails Project



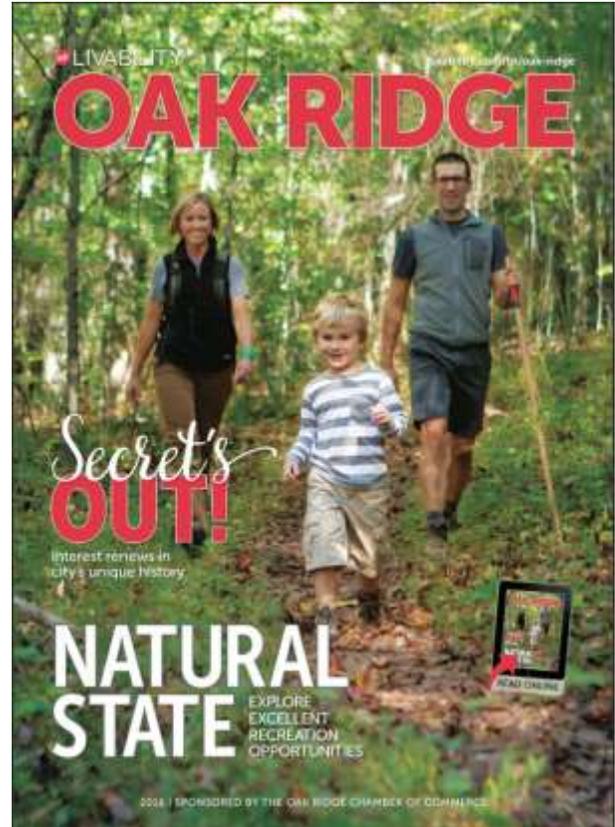
To the east of the BORCE, the North Boundary Greenway surrounds the City's Horizon Center Industrial Park, with main public access from the west guard house on the Turnpike. This and other DOE lands periodically allow deer and turkey hunting.

Another protected area, Grassy Creek Habitat Protection Area, is part of the 1,200-acre peninsula owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority along the Clinch River, also known as the Clinch River Nuclear Site for potential power generation (no current operation).

The generous system of public open spaces, trails, and parks is a legacy of the City's original plan, and continues to improve. It enriches the quality of place, but also requires significant maintenance that stretches the resources of the Recreation and Parks Department.

Many dedicated individuals and organizations assist by serving on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, recruiting volunteers to maintain and improve facilities, promoting recreational events, other supportive measures. These partners include various sports associations, youth support organizations, convention and visitors bureau, and advocacy groups such as:

Greenways Oak Ridge – formed in the early 1990's, this group primarily advocates for a network of foot trails in the city, and was instrumental in creating paved, off-street pathways (Melton Lake & Emory Valley) and DOE patrol road greenways (Gallaher Bend & North Boundary).



From the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce

Clinch Valley Trail Alliance (CVTA) – a newly-formed chapter of IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association). The group rose out of the ashes of the recently disbanded Friends of Haw Ridge, which was limited to trail work in Haw Ridge by charter. The scope of CVTA encompasses multi-use trails in all of Roane and Anderson counties.

Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP) – originally formed to create and maintain the North Ridge Trail to provide a buffer on the north edge of the City. TCWP also manages the Oak Ridge Barrens State Natural Area adjacent to Jefferson Middle School, which offers a small trail system among rare and sensitive plant species.

Key objectives for enhancing and improving our natural assets include:

Connectivity – The existing system of natural open spaces, trails, and waterways is somewhat disconnected, making it difficult to move from one area to another in many instances. This plan aims to create strategic connections among our natural assets to improve ease of access and use. One great opportunity is the chance to use our stream- & creek-ways as paths to connect open spaces and various natural assets to the property around them.

Accessibility – it is imperative to design all improvements to natural and recreational assets with accessibility in mind, so that the widest array of citizens can enjoy these resources.

Safety – parks, trails and open space allow us to get outside and relax, but recreational sites should utilize

principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in parking areas, trailheads and other facilities to help users stay safe.

Environmental Quality – plant materials, proper drainage and erosion control, and flood control measures all improve air and water quality across the city.

Aesthetics/Beauty – our natural assets provide an amazing backdrop for Oak Ridge, making our community context one of the most beautiful in the region. Proper maintenance of our parks, streams and open spaces will help keep the area beautiful.

Preservation – the City is fortunate to be immersed in a federal reservation with over 25,000 acres of mostly untouched land. Oak Ridgers have great respect and love for their greenbelts and other natural areas, and are committed to conserving these assets for generations to come.



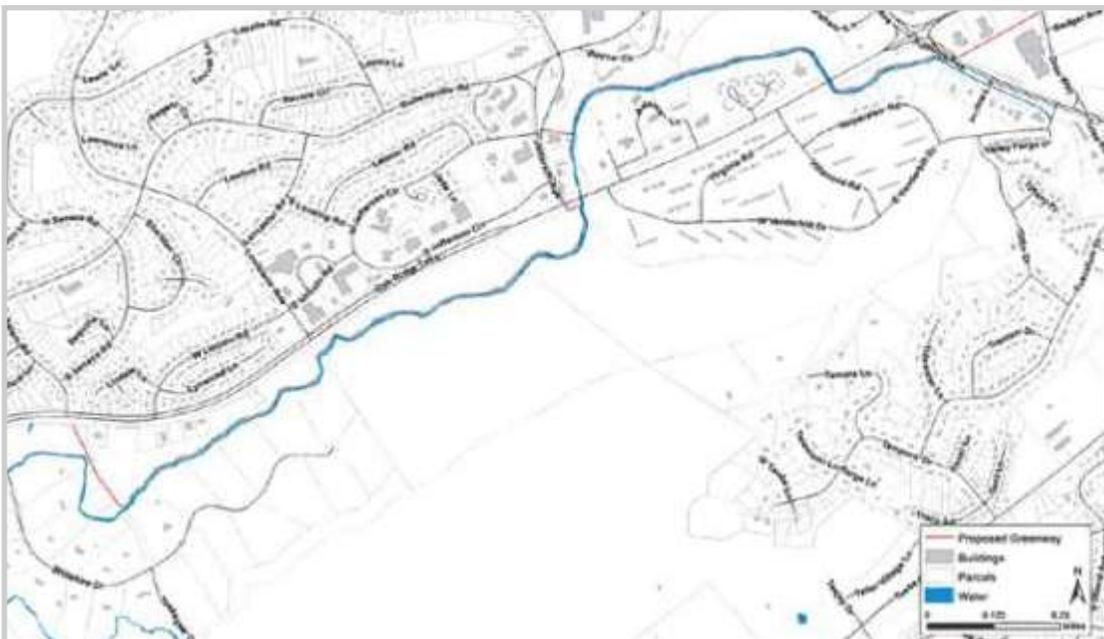
In August 2018, a small focus group representing various interests helped to identify needs and opportunities for the City's recreation and natural assets.

The following list of ideas and actions are recommended to enhance and expand the network of natural and recreational assets in Oak Ridge.

- Continue to find funding to complete the Rails to Trails Greenway Project along 4.85 miles of abandoned CSX railroad through the heart of the city. Build on the momentum by planning for pedestrian walkability and new connections to the greenway from surrounding neighborhoods and trails. Add an urban trail to connect the greenway from the outer edge of the Woodland neighborhood to the city center and A.K. Bissell Park.
- Market Oak Ridge as a recreation destination.
 - ⇒ Leverage the City’s public facilities, location, and community support to attract revenue-generating events and programs that can support the maintenance and updating of facilities.
 - ⇒ Consider hiring a Recreation and Parks business or special events manager to pursue bids for national events and help sports organizations coordinate a range of participatory and spectator events in Oak Ridge.
 - ⇒ For example, The Mounds at Groves Park on Tuskegee Drive is one of the more popular disc golf courses in the Knoxville region. It currently hosts two tournaments every year, sanctioned by the Professional Disc Golf Association, and has local club and community support for generating more frequent and larger events.
- Consider cost-benefits of investing in larger rehabilitation projects instead of basic maintenance. For example, the high school’s Ben Martin Track could be improved to competition standards for regional track and field meets and attract a range of events.
- Enhance A.K. Bissell Park by restoring the natural stream (tributary) and ecosystem as an effective stormwater conveyance facility. Invigorate activity in the park by adding seating and some hard-surfaced areas for events.
- Develop priorities for Melton Lake Park improvements and schedule implementation timeframes, including (based on the 2009 Waterfront Master Plan):
 - ⇒ Develop major boat house/multi-purpose event facility, with rowing team locker rooms, showers, etc., to enhance desirability for major rowing events and serve other events and functions year-round;
 - ⇒ Add facilities including: concessions, restrooms, rowing-business offices, boat rentals;
 - ⇒ Evaluate potential for outdoor amphitheater in marina area;
 - ⇒ Build a pedestrian/bike bridge over the neck of the lagoon to connect the trails around the park and to give rowing coaches ability to track their teams more effectively during races.

- Prepare a Natural Assets Plan or Map with an inventory of open space and recreation in Oak Ridge, to identify opportunities for enhanced connectivity, access, and utilization. The plan should also address opportunities to better connect, protect, and capitalize on these assets. The information will help guide City project priorities and public-private partnerships.
- Coordinate strategic land and resource planning efforts between the City of Oak Ridge and the U.S. Department of Energy to establish an ongoing process to synchronize planning efforts, including the future use of the approximately 25,000 acres of forested federal reservation.
- Pursue the protection of natural and recreational areas through conservation easements, zoning, public awareness, and other means, so that natural assets do not become vulnerable to expansions in development or utility infrastructure over time.
- Encourage and support, where possible, local organization and citizen-led efforts to improve public recreation opportunities. Recent examples include:
 - ⇒ A new bike trail and greenway, approximately 2.5 miles long, following East Fork Poplar Creek along the Oak Ridge Turnpike, from Illinois Avenue to a point just short of Wiltshire Drive. See image below.
 - ⇒ Evaluate feasibility and implementation of a citizen-led effort to create a new greenway trail in the existing greenbelt east of the Outer Drive/East Drive/California Avenue intersection, with access via the Oak Ridge Land Bank property on California Avenue.

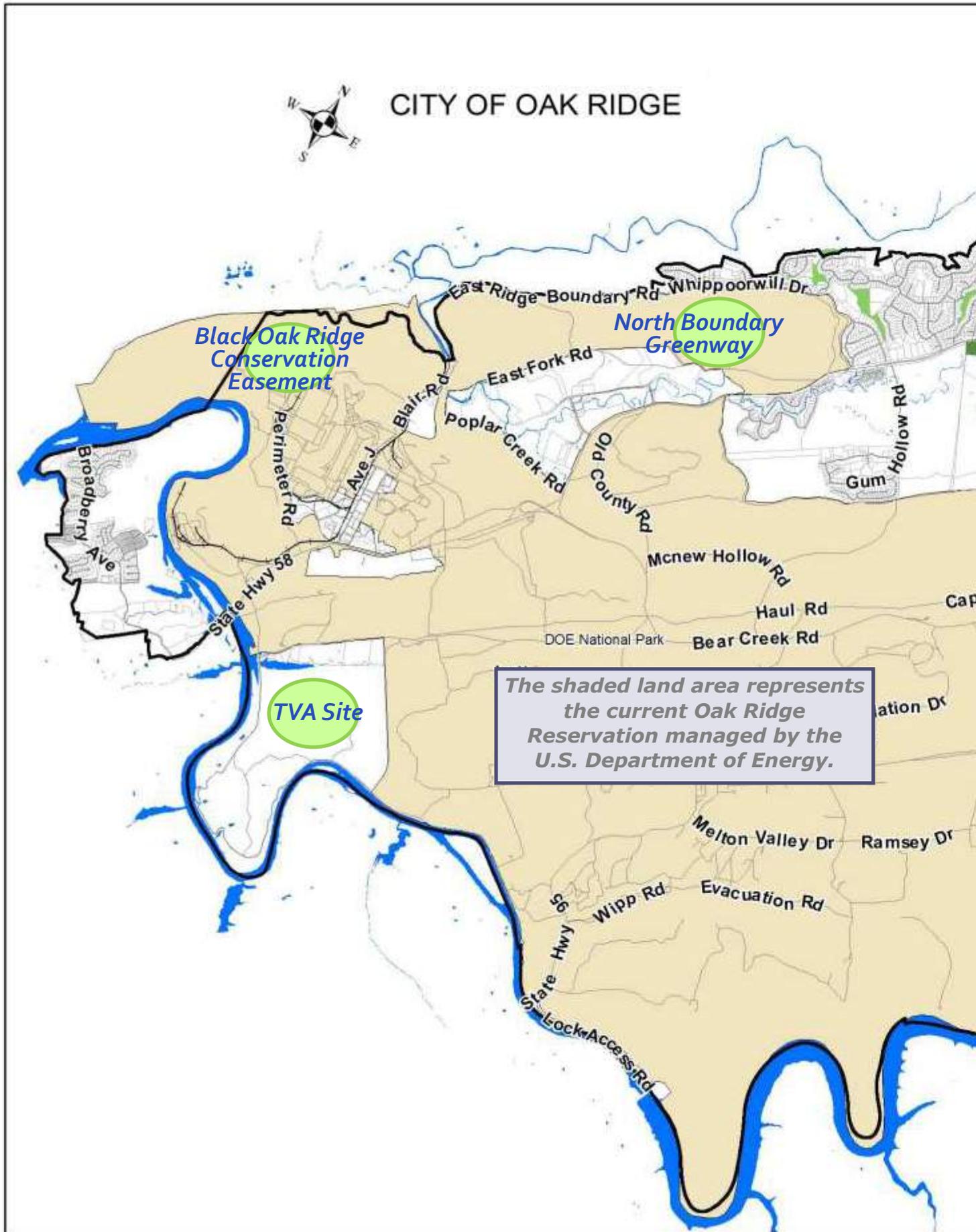
Proposed 2.5-mile bike trail and greenway.

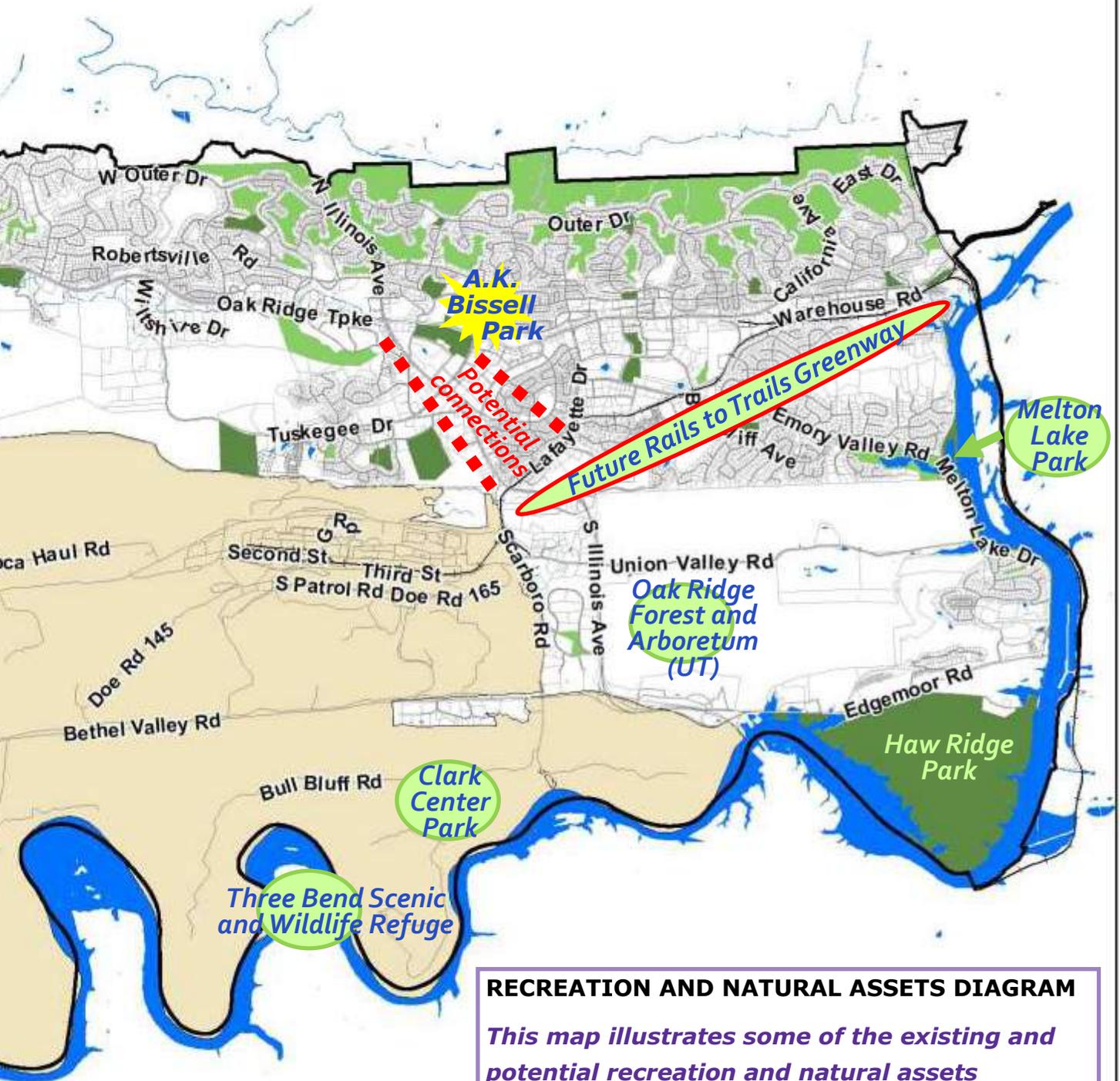


- Engage property owners in pursuing a redevelopment plan to transform under-utilized properties along East Fork Poplar Creek parallel to S. Illinois Avenue, generally between Lafayette Drive and the Turnpike, into a mixed-use neighborhood focused around an enhanced natural waterway. Waterfront development that includes well-connected public space has proven highly successful. A trail along this section of the creek would connect the Rails to Trails Greenway to the Oak Ridge Turnpike and beyond, significantly extending the local network of greenways
- Continue to monitor and update the City's existing plans and goals for energy use and efficiency (Climate Action Plan) and maintaining healthy urban trees (Urban Forest Management Plan). An update to the Climate Action Plan has previously reported surpassing the 2015 milestone emissions reduction goal, and the City has achieved awards from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a Green Power Community. Both of these City plans include specific recommendations for action.
- Coordinate with the plans and policies of state and federal agencies that manage land within Oak Ridge regarding wildlife habitat and migration paths, natural resources, and land management.
- Ensure new construction uses Low-Impact Design (LID) techniques, which manage stormwater runoff using on-site natural features so that the rate and volume of predevelopment stormwater reaching receiving waters is unchanged. Development in Oak Ridge benefits from conserved natural areas throughout the city that allow natural infiltration; however, paved surfaces on each development site impact the water system and can contribute to flood-related costs in the community. "Green infrastructure" and better site design can simultaneously reduce pollutant loads, conserve natural areas to support native and low-maintenance landscaping, provide energy savings, and increase property values.
- Recommend strategic greenway easements to be included within new residential subdivisions and large nonresidential development as site plans are reviewed by the City.
- Support advancement of the Knox to Oak Ridge Greenway Master Plan, developed in 2015 to link greenway networks in Knox County and Oak Ridge and create a regional asset.
- Develop a program to curb illegal dumping and raise stewardship of natural areas.



Old growth forest in the federal reservation.





RECREATION AND NATURAL ASSETS DIAGRAM

This map illustrates some of the existing and potential recreation and natural assets described in the City Blueprint Plan.

Key objectives for enhancing and improving these assets include accessibility and safety, environmental quality, and preservation.

BIG IDEA: EAST FORK POPLAR CREEK REDEVELOPMENT

A recent study by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), identified a major opportunity to collectively address economic development and tax base, recreation and mobility, and environmental health issues in the city center, by bringing about significant redevelopment of land adjacent to East Fork Poplar Creek. The area south of S. Illinois Avenue between Lafayette and the Turnpike, and generally behind the high-vacancy big box retail properties, holds great potential to become a new urban district.

Remediation and beautification of the waterway would create an attractive area for residential units of medium density (8-12 units per acre). Potentially hundreds of new residents in the vicinity would inspire new retail development along South Illinois, which should incorporate urban design so that buildings are placed closer to streets and sidewalks and within walking distance of other destinations rather than behind acres of underutilized parking lots. Making the creek visually appealing will offer opportunities for waterfront views, businesses, and public spaces.

An important part of the concept would be to add a greenway along the creek that links the Rails to Trails Greenway to existing bike lanes on the Oak Ridge Turnpike, to strengthen the overall network of connections throughout the city.



Existing conditions at South Illinois and Tuskegee Drive



Conceptual greenway and mixed-use development



Promote development patterns that encourage a mix of land uses, efficient infrastructure, and preservation of open space in order to support a range of housing, employment, and transportation options.

One way to think about a city is to consider its “urban spatial structure.” Spatial structure has to do with the shape of a city, or how it is organized on the landscape. Is it spread out or tightly knit? How are its major land use groups organized? Are industries concentrated in one general area, dispersed, or clumped in a few concentrations? Convenient access to services, cost of public services and quality of life are all examples of things that can be affected by the spatial structure of a city.

After the Manhattan Project, Oak Ridge maintained its characteristic greenbelts and compact neighborhoods, each with schools and commercial services. A key fact is that the water and sewer system was built at one time to serve 75,000 people and is in need of being replaced and upgraded. Since then, the population has declined to less than 30,000, and many of the schools and businesses embedded in neighborhoods are gone. Yet the water, sewer and electrical systems need continual improvement within annual city budget allocations.

LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

More than half of the area within the incorporated municipal limits of Oak Ridge is owned and managed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The reservation, once about 70,000 acres is now about 33,000 acres. In that the DOE has four key sites: Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Y-12 / Consolidated Nuclear Security, Heritage Center at K-25 (East Tennessee Technology Park), and the DOE Administration Building on Administration Road in Oak Ridge. In the 33,000 acres there are areas that the Department may want to hold on to for the foreseeable future, some land that could become available for transfer into private ownership at some time, and land that might ultimately go in either direction.

Future jobs and population growth need not occur in the typical costly, sprawling pattern that has characterized growth in other parts of the region. New housing, services, and work places should be concentrated within already urbanized areas that can accommodate higher density development. Aging commercial strips, underutilized warehousing and massive, largely unused parking lots are among redevelopment opportunities that would not require major infrastructure costs, and would experience increases in property value.

The following list of ideas and recommended actions are intended to promote attractive and accessible development patterns that support economic vitality and sustainable growth. It is imperative to align the built environment with adequate infrastructure and services, such as water and sewer, police and fire, emergency preparedness, and community facilities. To do this, coordination of planning and implementation is critical between all City Departments and the School District administration.

- Identify specific areas, in addition to the city center, with high potential for redevelopment and infill, and partner with the Housing Authority and Industrial Development Board to create revitalization programs that attract private or partnered investment in those areas. Potential opportunities for new housing options or mixed-use development include:
 - ⇒ Highland View neighborhood
 - ⇒ East Fork Poplar Creek parallel to S. Illinois Ave
 - ⇒ Jackson Square
 - ⇒ Grove Center
- Adopt land use policies that can promote a sustainable and resilient physical environment, such as energy efficiency, water conservation, Low-Impact Development techniques to manage stormwater runoff and reduce damage and costs related to hazardous flood events, adaptive reuse of buildings, and more. Better building and site design can provide long-term cost savings and increase property values.
- Build a new water treatment facility to replace the 1940's era structure located near Y-12, to update the system, improve water quality and efficiency, and allow better access for City workers.
- Create a new zoning approach for the city center, to ensure compact and mixed-use development with urban design guidelines that are specific to the kind of place desired by the community, essentially based on the Oak Ridge City Center 2030 Strategy report by Skidmore Owings & Merrill (November 2018).
- Invest in the renovation, expansion, and planning for new public school facilities to better reflect the quality of education that is recognized by the community. Value in education is related to value in the health and safety of the school-age population.
- Coordinate strategic land and resource planning efforts between the City of Oak Ridge and the US Department of Energy to establish an ongoing process to synchronize planning efforts, including the future use of the approximately 25,000 acres of forested federal reservation.
- Coordinate an updated Land Use Plan and other City plans and studies with the annual Capital Improvement Program and Municipal Budget process.
- Relocate or expand fire station facilities to resolve current service needs on the east side. Continue study of a potential 5th station location.

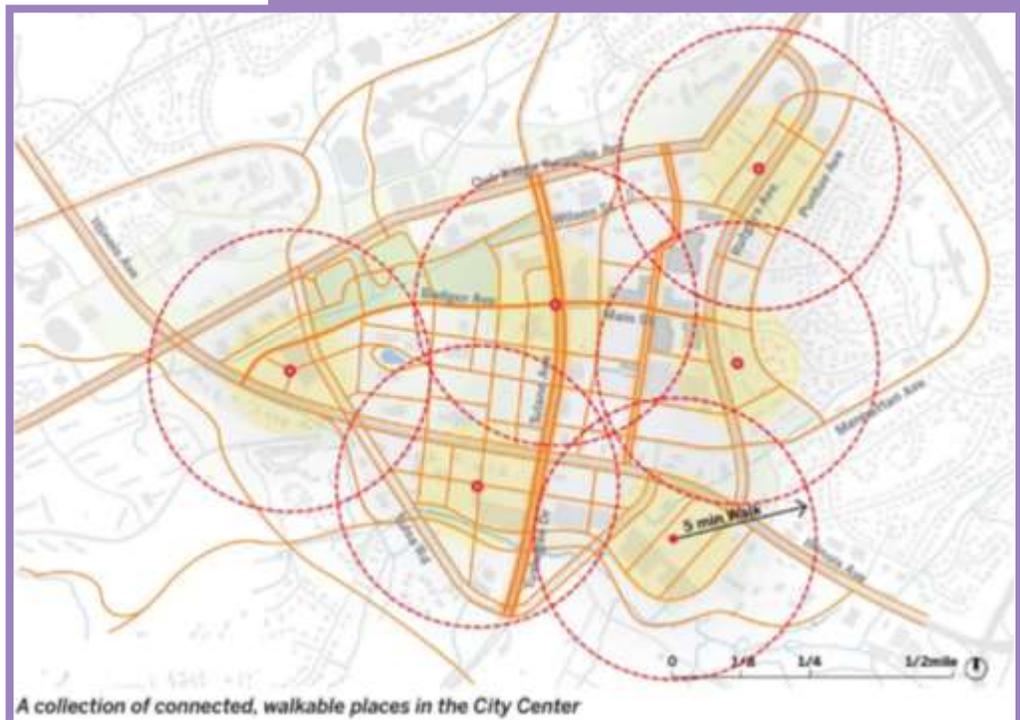
- Explore alternative, innovative tools for analyzing local budget policies and funding mechanisms that facilitate growth and maintain the fiscal health of a full-service city.
- Prepare an analysis of land use and zoning, economic and development trends, and growth expectations and create a new Land Use Plan or more strategic “Growth and Change” Map, that projects the City’s desired parameters for physical development. This Plan should be part of a thorough update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map following the adoption of a Growth and Change Map, to synchronize these regulations with the desired outcomes. Include clear performance measures and incentives that attract development.
- Explore renovation of the Animal Shelter and improve educational efforts and humane methods to control overpopulation or neglect of animals.

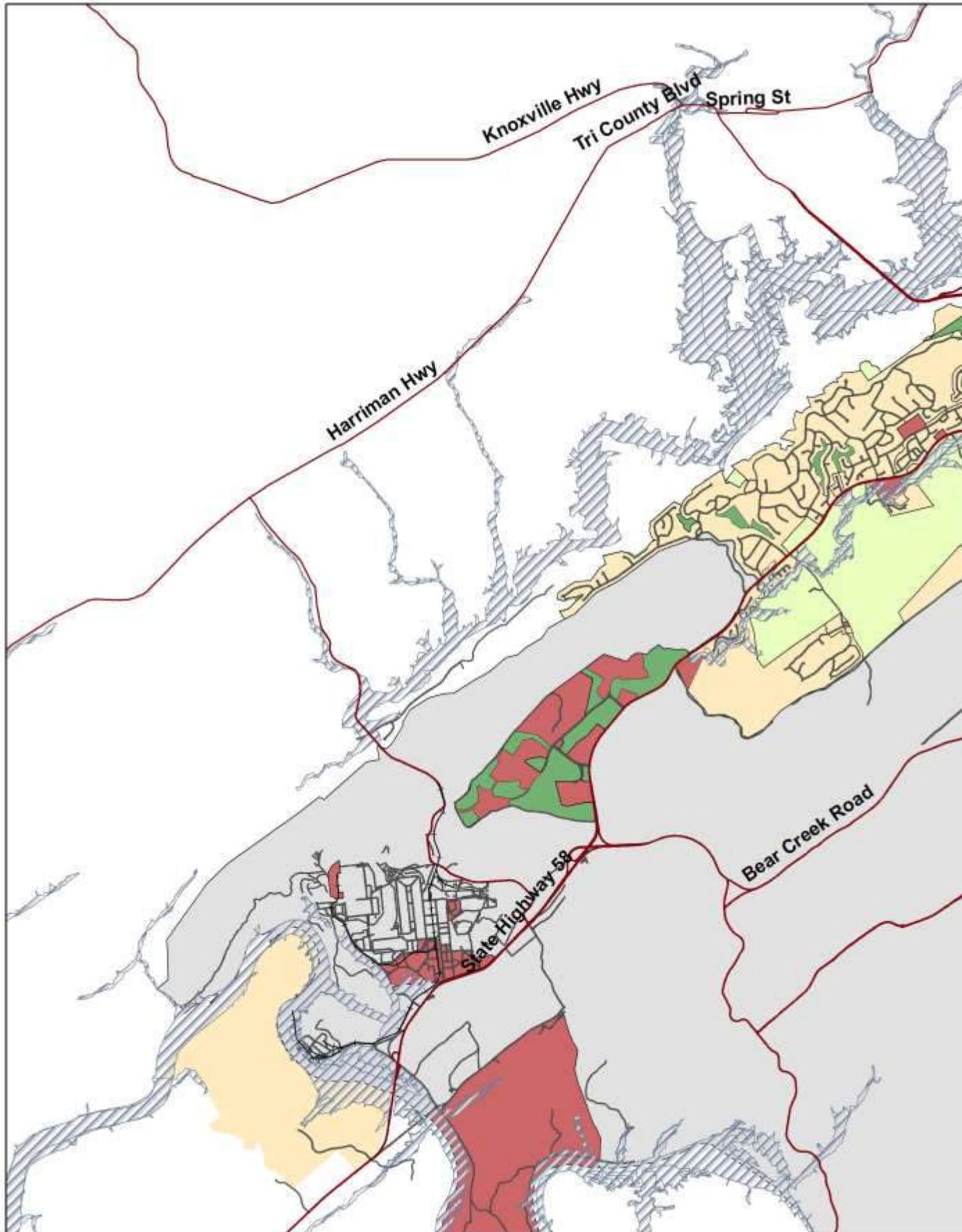
Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM)

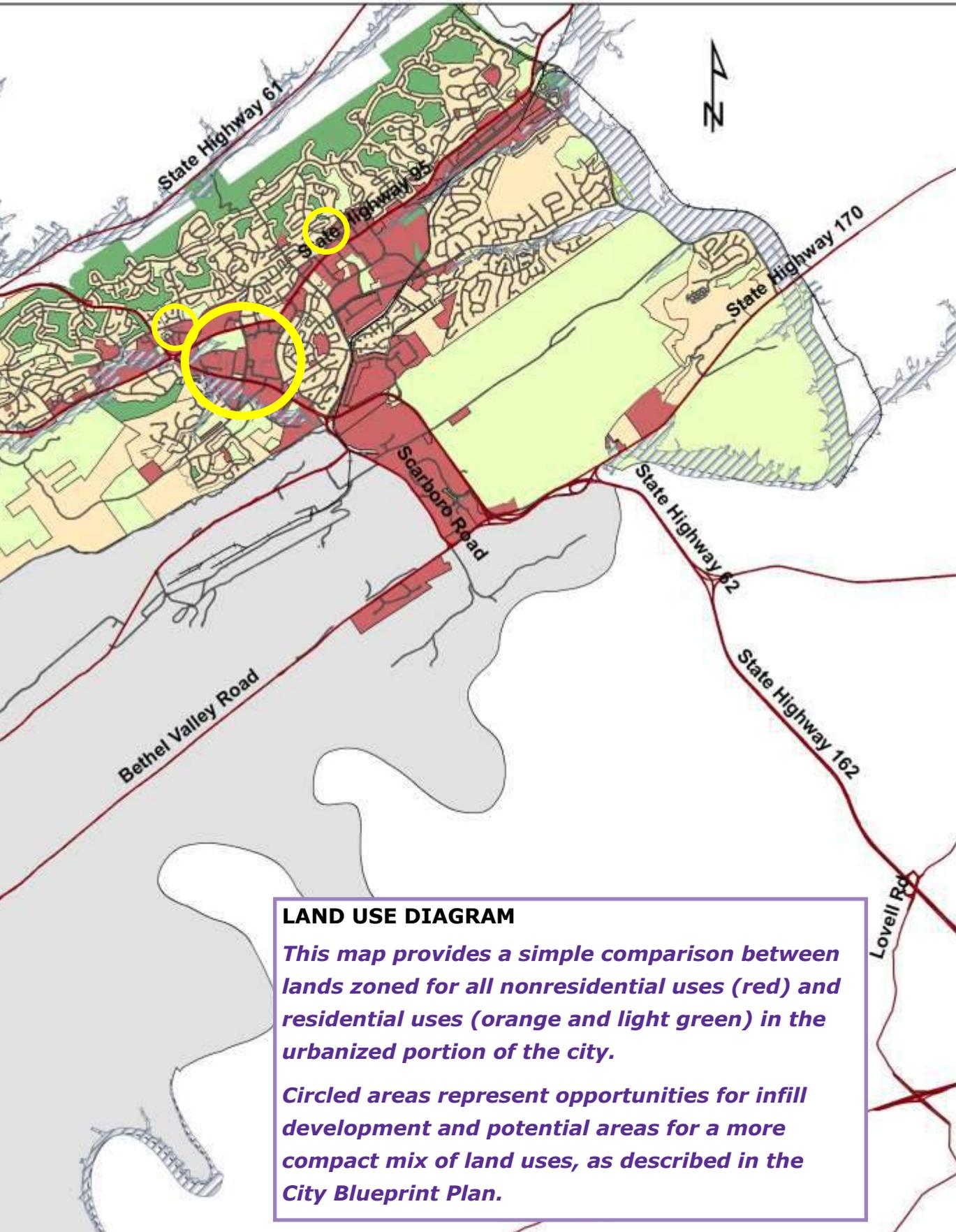
has been involved in the planning and design of buildings, individual sites and the layout of the city since the early days of the Manhattan Project. After the end of World War II, the firm produced the City’s first Master Plan for future development.

In 2018, a new connection was made between city and design firm. Philip Enquist, a retired principal in the firm, served a 5-year appointment as the Governor’s Chair for Energy and Urbanism on the campus of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Through sponsorship by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Mr. Enquist studied cities and the health of regions, which resulted in a focus on Oak Ridge and a report that was shared with the City, called *Oak Ridge City Center, A 2030 Strategy*.

The report identifies issues, opportunities, and objectives for a thriving city center. The visualizations and design concepts in the report present the kind of exploratory planning that will aid in the evolution of the emerging downtown of Oak Ridge, and contributed significantly to this plan.







TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

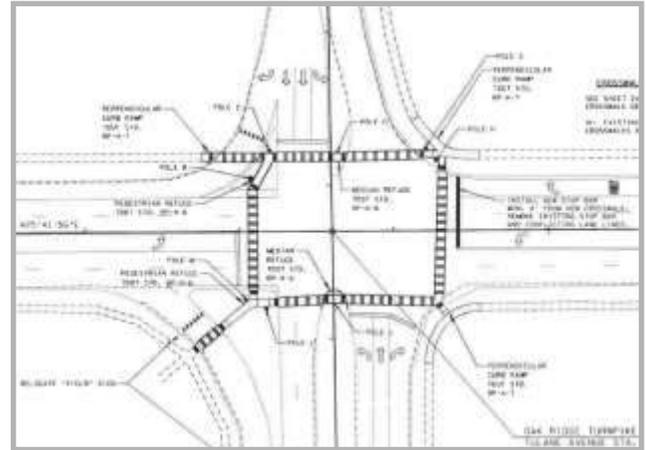
Provide a safe, attractive, and accessible network of mobility by improving vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The system of transportation within Oak Ridge involves the operation and maintenance of infrastructure that supports the movement of cars, bicycles, and pedestrians, as well as a portion of the regional system of mass transit, freight trucking, trains, aviation, and water transport. Safety and quality of traffic flow are important factors for each transportation project in the city. Mobility takes into consideration the users of transportation, such as their activities and lifestyle characteristics, which can help to reveal inefficiencies and inequities so that the system can be improved.

The Oak Ridge Traffic Safety Advisory Board (TSAB) assists the Public Works Department and City Council on local transportation decisions. System management requires coordination with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) on major roadways owned and maintained by the state, and the Knoxville Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) for regional planning, support, and funding of major projects.

One of the benefits of being a planned city is that the overall street system works reasonably well. The arterials, Oak Ridge Turnpike and Illinois Avenue (State Route 62), carry large volumes of traffic safely

OAKRIDGETN.GOV/ONLINE/BLUEPRINT



and with little congestion, except at peak hours in some locations. Congestion occurs during the evening rush hour at key points exiting the city. Additionally, the SOM 2030 report notes that better circulation and redevelopment are hindered by super-blocks in the City Center. New cross streets are recommended to increase connectivity.

The most dangerous and congested area is the Solway segment of the Pellissippi Parkway, outside the City of Oak Ridge. The Oak Ridgers who experience the most consistent congestion are people who work in Oak Ridge but commute from outside the city. The long term solution to this problem is for more Oak Ridge workers to live in Oak Ridge or for the development of a regional transit service that reduces the number of vehicles on roadways.

Citywide and regional transportation will be impacted by a general aviation airport that is proposed to be constructed at Heritage Center (East Tennessee Technology Park). Plans call for a 5,000-foot runway, a partial parallel taxiway and about 40 hangars on 171 acres. The total cost of the project is estimated to run from \$47-55 million and will be managed by the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority. Pending approvals from the Federal Aviation Administration and Congress, the project could break ground sometime in 2021.

BIG IDEA: GATEWAYS

Visitors to Oak Ridge, traveling inbound on State Route 62 (South Illinois Avenue), are left wondering, 'Where is Oak Ridge?' as they drive in from the southeast. Motorists travel several miles after crossing the Clinch River before seeing indication of anything except the major federal facilities. A 2017 design study commissioned by the Oak Ridge Lunch Rotary Club and conducted by the East Tennessee Community Design Center, illustrates a series of powerful ideas for how gateway installations could be built to mark and celebrate arrival to the City of Oak Ridge. Three separate projects spotlight major benchmarks along the visitor's path to the city center. These include the median of the Hwy 62/Bethel Valley Road split, the entrance to the UT Arboretum, and the grand portal – a creative overhead feature celebrating arrival, attached to the Centrifuge Way overpass.





CSX rail, future Rails to Trails Greenway.

The focus of the transportation element in this plan is on safety and connectivity, the linkages between different modes of travel and the linking of different pieces of the system with each other.

A good example of this is the proposed Rails to Trails project, converting the old CSX railway track into a paved pedestrian and bike trail that will run a significant distance through the heart of the city. The Plan not only recommends the completion of that project but also the creation of links to other trails, such as the North Ridge Trail from Melton Hill Lake Park, a link to Main Street with a street route through the Woodland

neighborhood, and a link at the south providing potential for use of the DOEN Patrol Road. Trail use of that road would open up the potential for Scarborough, Grove Park Commons and Burnham Woods to be tied in to the trail system.

The network of connectivity should include walkable districts, such as a city center and neighborhood centers, which require a framework of local streets and sidewalks. Smaller block size and increased street frontage can provide better pedestrian access to shopping, parks and trails, and neighborhoods.

The following list of ideas and recommended actions are intended to improve the transportation network, including vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle modes, to provide safe and efficient access for people in Oak Ridge.

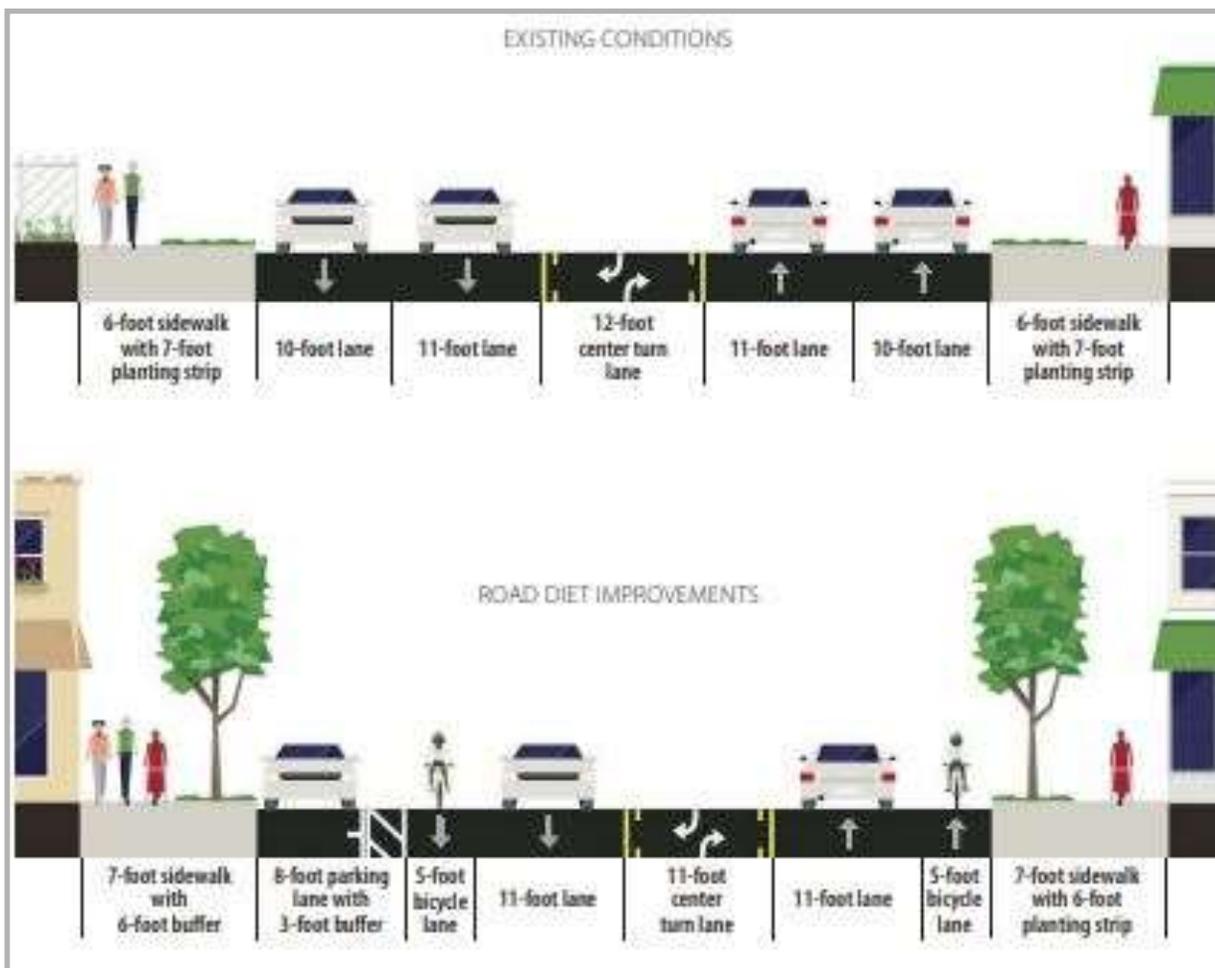
Street Connectivity

- Evaluate and amend, as needed, the Standard Construction Requirements and Details Manual with regard to Complete Street design, or a safe combination of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian use.
- Improve the network of street connectivity to provide better access and traffic circulation, and to promote efficient land development. Prepare a Major Road and Street Plan, to include:
 - ⇒ New roads and intersections in the city center to create walkable blocks
 - ⇒ Connector streets between existing neighborhoods on Edgemoor Rd and Melton Lake Rd to alleviate single access issues

- ⇒ Potential conversion of the perimeter road by Y-12 into a public east-west connector from Scarboro Rd to Gum Hollow Rd
- ⇒ Identification of freight transport routes, which may increase due to a new airport or industrial rail activity
- Actively participate in the regional TPO and provide oversight on TDOT projects that impact Oak Ridge, such as the proposed widening of Edgemoor Road and safety/congestion issues on State Route 62 in Solway, based on local land use and transportation plans and studies.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility

- Enhance Wilson Street between Tulane and Rutgers Avenues with an emphasis on bike lanes and sidewalks with space for pedestrian amenities such as outdoor dining and public art. Walkability and interesting spaces will support a more compact mix of uses and lead to a distinct city center for Oak Ridge.
- Work with other agencies and major employers to expand regional public transit, add local circulator routes and park and rides, and support commuter carpool and rideshare programs such as Smart Trips.



"Road Diet" diagram courtesy of PlanET. A road diet reduces the width of a roadway to allow for additional amenities like parking, bike lanes, and sidewalks. These amenities increase safety and promote use of roadways by pedestrians and cyclists.

Circulator routes could connect major employment locations and the city center, for example, and along the same route provide more transportation options for seniors and others choosing not to drive.

- Ensure that new development contributes towards a walkable environment through the permit review process. Incentivize voluntary improvement to existing development in order to maximize connectivity throughout the city.
- Update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan with a new implementation plan to steadily improve the network and to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is added or improved with new street connections. Consider a local network of shared bike rental stations.

- Develop a prioritization program for improving and adding public sidewalks and crosswalks with pedestrian safety features throughout the City.
- Evaluate and amend, as needed, the Zoning Ordinance regarding off-street parking requirements.

Safety

- Improve the process to address immediate transportation safety concerns, which include roadway pavement repair, monitoring speeds in residential areas, repainting or marking existing crosswalks, and fixing sidewalks in disrepair. Communicate to citizens a maintenance
- Schedule or provide updates that list known outstanding issues and estimated completion or delays.

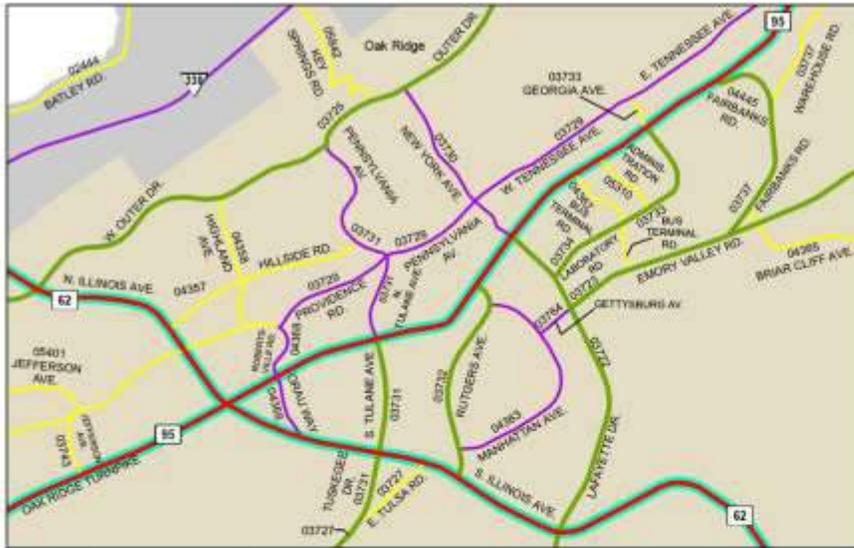


Example of a separate bike lane from another community

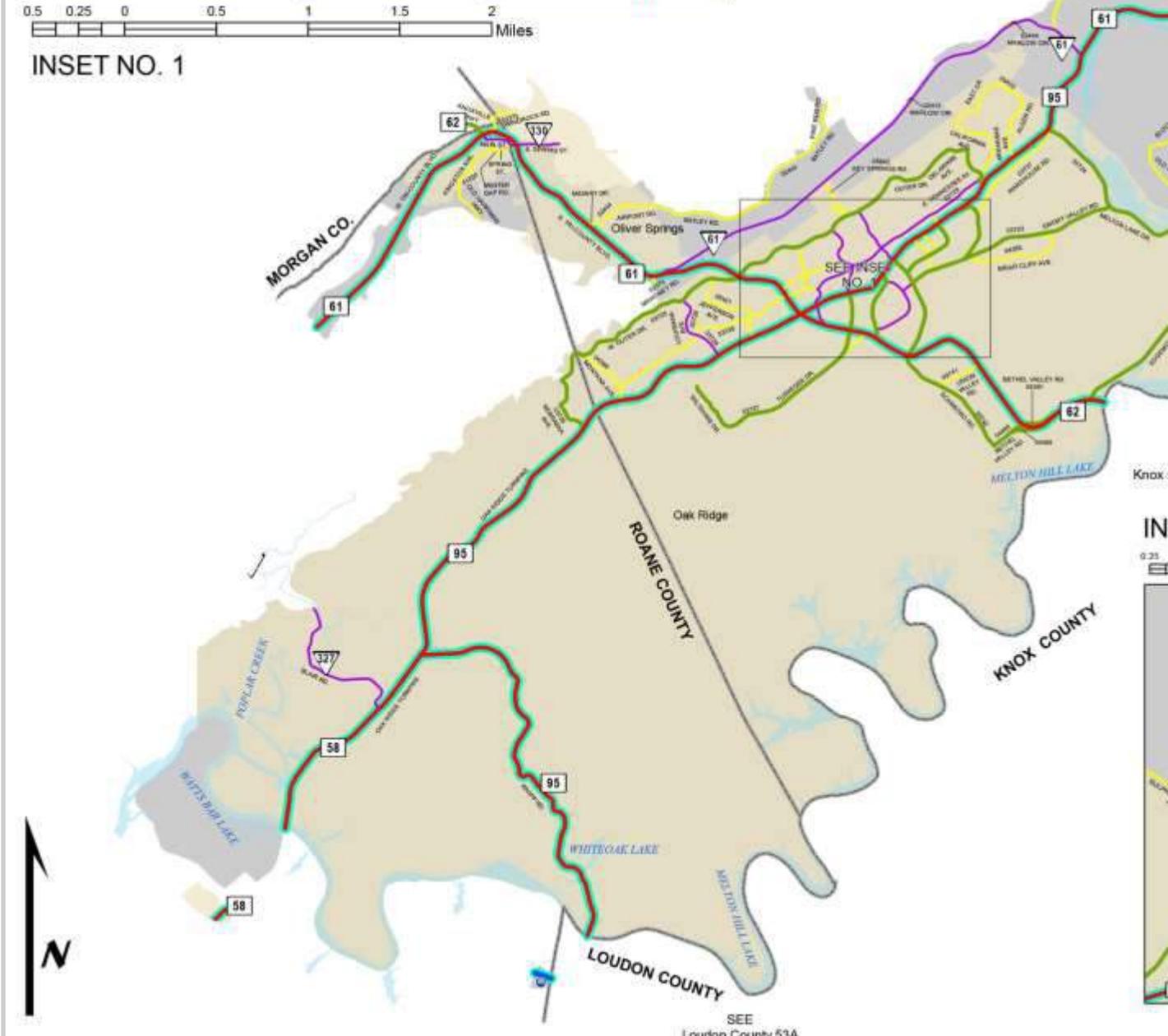
- Assess citywide roadway operations to identify areas to improve safety for cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Evaluate traffic volume and characteristics for opportunities to implement Complete Street design, a design approach that enables safe street access to all users, by all means of transport (foot, bicycle, car, bus). Current and proposed studies include:
 - ⇒ Reconstruct the multiple street intersection at Pennsylvania Ave, Providence Rd, and N Tulane Ave, with consideration of a roundabout
 - ⇒ Explore reducing various streets to two vehicle lanes with added bicycle lanes
 - ⇒ Redesign S Tulane Avenue to slow traffic and improve pedestrian opportunities
 - ⇒ Ensure the design of Edgemoor Rd includes safe pedestrian and bicycle connections
- Partner with UT Engineering students to put together a low-cost Tactical Urbanism project that demonstrates creative transportation safety.
- Begin to plan for autonomous vehicles. The US DOT advises local governments to partner with suppliers to test AVs on local streets and enable safe deployment, to plan for more curb space for pick-up and drop-off activities as well as less parking requirements, and to plan for the potential of increased congestion.



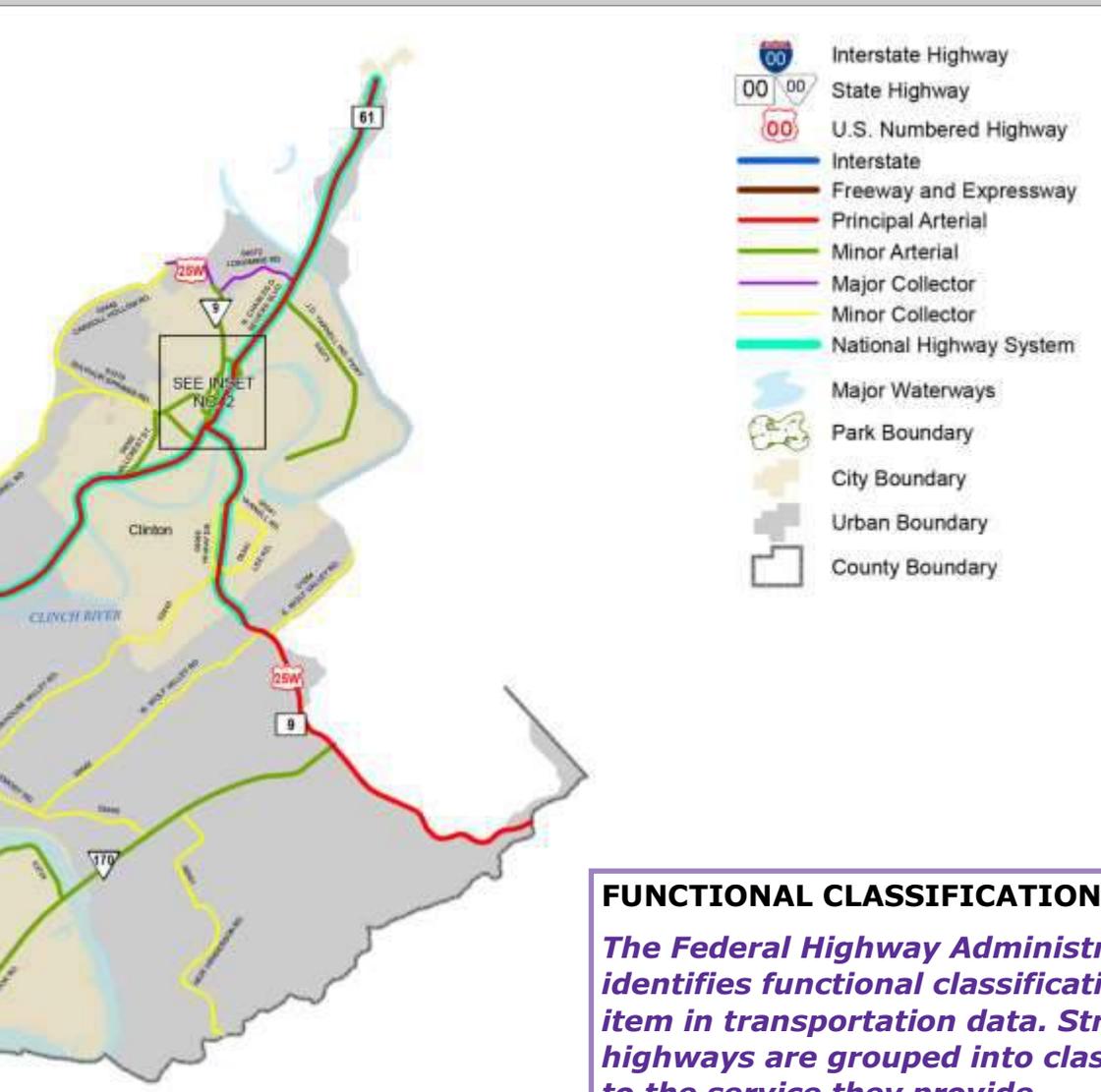
Existing conditions at Pennsylvania Ave, Providence Rd, and N Tulane Ave



INSET NO. 1



SEE Loudon County 53A



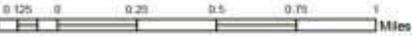
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] identifies functional classification as a key item in transportation data. Streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the service they provide.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) Systems Planning Office maintains the state's official Functional Classification Map (s), such as the one displayed here, which is used to determine federal and state funding for transportation projects.

SEE County 47A.

SET NO. 2



KNOXVILLE
(OAK RIDGE, OLIVER SPRINGS, CLINTON)
TENNESSEE
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM



Date: 7/27/2018

BIG IDEA: UNIQUE 'SENSE OF PLACE'

Surveys of federal employees, young professionals who grew up in Oak Ridge, and students at Oak Ridge High School sound a common theme: If you want me to live here, stay here, or come back here, bring in more high quality, fun things to do. Interviews and surveys yield requests for indoor entertainment, special events, more bike/hike/paddle opportunities, more sidewalks, unique coffee houses, craft beer, sidewalk cafes at local non-chain restaurants, and interesting locally-owned shops. These uses can be encouraged in several pocket areas of the city.



Within the city center, the Wilson Street corridor between Tulane and Rutgers currently provides an excellent opportunity for new compact, mixed-use development that should include urban housing located above or next to small shops, restaurants, and other businesses, all accessible to each other by foot and connected to public open space by sidewalks or trails. Nearby, the new Secret City Radio Show is produced live, once a month at the American Museum of Science and Energy by Knoxville radio station WDVX 89.9 FM, and is an example of unique community vibrancy that will help define our sense of place.



Public places for Oak Ridgers



LIVABILITY AND COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

Foster characteristics and outcomes that create an attractive, safe, creative, welcoming community with a strong sense of being uniquely Oak Ridge!

The remarkable identity of Oak Ridge is expressed in its history as a “Secret City” hidden away in the hills of East Tennessee that, fed by TVA power, helped to end World War II and usher in the Nuclear Age, and then became a leading international research center, bastion for diversity, and a pleasantly quirky and eclectic community. Aspects of this identity are not apparent in our physical city, however.

Focusing on the characteristics of livability and community vibrancy is important for creating a distinctive, attractive community. Besides improving housing choices, a key to achieving new residential growth is to provide more amenities in the fabric of the city, such as better shopping, dining, gathering spaces and interests for all ages. This growth will enable improvements to public amenities and community facilities that residents and newcomers find attractive, such as the new Senior Center and Pre-School currently under construction.

Community involvement in Oak Ridge is noteworthy, and is foundational to a sense of community vibrancy. It is

apparent in local news, and in the amount of charitable efforts to support local people, schools, and organizations. Partnerships between community organizations has often resulted in strengthened community goals with diverse perspectives.

In addition, many citizen volunteers serve on the seventeen City Boards and Commissions that have been formed by City Council, including several advisory boards that are not always found in other jurisdictions: Environmental Quality, Recreation and Parks, Traffic Safety, Senior Advisory, and Youth Advisory Boards.

Even though Oak Ridge is in many ways unique, its livability also relates to the health and character of Anderson and Roane counties, and the greater region. Institutions and organizations located within our community have regional effects as well, such as the Methodist Medical Center and health system, Roane State Community College, East Tennessee Economic Council, and many others.

The following list of ideas and recommended actions are intended to help improve the quality of appearance, quality of experience, and quality of life in Oak Ridge.

Quality Appearance

- Work towards creating a vibrant city center, beginning with a transformation of Wilson Street into an urban streetscape with safe walking paths, sidewalk furniture, pedestrian lighting, and landscaping. In this way, investment in public infrastructure with clear expectations can be a strong catalyst for private investment and development nearby.
- Guide private development as well as community-driven area plans towards effective placemaking and urban design. Develop flexible but clear design guidelines to supplement the regulatory standards.
- Develop a program that promotes continued beautification and litter control efforts.
- Create a public art program.
- Preserve local culture and history. Protect historic structures and places, including sites on DOE property: Freels Bend Cabin, New Bethel Baptist Church, George Jones Memorial Baptist Church, Checking Stations. Re-examine the 1991 survey of legacy housing, which found many houses able to be classified as contributing to the historic resource.
- Improve the city's physical definition – gateways, edges, vistas.
- Communicate periodically back to the community the results and status of code enforcement issues related to property maintenance and blight elimination. This may take the form of updating or rebranding the Not in Our City program (2011).

Quality Experience

- Support unique and local businesses to provide more choices in restaurants, entertainment, and shopping. Concentrating these businesses together, especially connected by sidewalks or greenways to surrounding neighborhoods, will create destinations for people to gather and meet with each other.
- Encourage local tourism initiatives to be creative in the ways they support the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Coordinate these efforts with the marketing and missions of the MPNHP, Explore Oak Ridge, and the various participating organizations.
- Enhance local festivals and invite opportunities for other special events that increase the region's awareness of Oak Ridge and enrich the enjoyment of our cultural resources.
- Build an educated and engaged citizenry that will interact or participate in City Boards and Commissions. Offer Civic Engagement 101 classes, speaker or video documentary series, quarterly public forums, or similar programs. Provide citizens with better communication of results and decision-making by City Council and Board or Commission meetings. Encourage learning and sharing successes with other communities.
- Support the goals of the Oak Ridge Public Library to become a vibrant, community-centered library by offering cultural and innovative programming, community gathering spaces, activities for all ages, preservation of Oak Ridge history, and access to resources needed to live, learn, govern, work, and play in Oak Ridge.

Quality of Life

- Support the goals of the Oak Ridge School District, to provide safety for all students and teachers, improve school facilities and infrastructure, be prepared for population growth, and continue to provide viable paths to careers for our students based on regional needs.
- Become known as a green community by encouraging development to be energy and resource efficient, therefore reducing adverse impacts to the environment and public health
- Preserve, protect, and plant new or replacement trees as development occurs. Cultivate the urban forest and a balanced ecosystem that can continue to support our natural resources.
- Work towards making Oak Ridge a more inclusive and age-friendly community. Particular attention is needed to address the safety of individuals that are challenged by mobility (cannot drive, require a wheelchair, blind, etc.), by incorporating design accommodations in streets and private development that provide access to necessary services, civic functions, and allow shared enjoyment of public spaces.
- Support community organizations working together to meet basic health and housing needs of vulnerable populations.
- Identify appropriate greenbelts, floodplain, or other unbuildable areas for community-based food production – gardens, small poultry or livestock foraging, and perennial berry and nut orchards, for example – that can provide healthy food and education to schools and neighbors while helping to maintain these valuable natural areas.

For example, it was not that many years ago that the city was still not sure if rowing was a good thing. The rowing association had to work really hard to raise money and keep things going and gain community support. There were fund-raising regattas amongst the various employers- getting up their crews and practicing with the rowing club people. There were associated events to go with the regattas, like strawberries and champagne for people who would pay a premium to sit at tables under the big tent. People were either on a crew, worked for a company that sponsored a crew, came down to watch their friends row, or were somehow engaged.

As members of the community we have to understand that we can also take action - we have to roll up our sleeves and sometimes put in some sweat equity, generate some ideas and potential implementation strategy to meet a goal.

— Jane Shelton, Oak Ridge Planning Commissioner



Now in it's 39th year of service, the Oak Ridge Rowing Association is home to the Atomic Juniors and Masters Rowing Teams, offers a wide array of Learn-To-Row classes, and is host to several Championship Rowing Regattas and Spring Training Camps.

— From www.orra.org



The American Museum of Science and Energy

On March 19, 1949, the public was allowed to enter Oak Ridge for the first time. The area had been closed to the public for seven years. It was the fifth largest city in the state and not on any map.

The American Museum of Atomic Energy, now the American Museum of Science and Energy was opened to visitors on the same day. The museum is now a central science and heritage tourism destination for this region and is the location from which the Department of Energy's public bus tour originates.

Upon adoption by the City Council in May 2019, City Blueprint has benefitted from more than two years of public input to become a visionary, long-range plan for growth and development. As the community moves forward, the Plan should promote transparency, accuracy, and cooperation.

*Manhattan Project National Historic Park
"Park Opens" photo, including official
MP photographer Ed Westcott
in the lower right corner*



ACTION STRATEGY

ACTION STRATEGY

City Blueprint – a visionary, long-range plan for citywide growth and development – is also part of an ongoing planning process. The Plan is based on goals and ideas that span across several City Departments and governing functions, and therefore the recommended actions may be approached by a variety of these groups working together or independently, and may also involve non-government organizations.

As City leaders decide which projects to tackle, and when, Blueprint will be continually updated as plans and actions occur to show progress and to help identify the next steps. In order to communicate and track this progress, and keep it close to the community, the initial Blueprint document will be transformed into an online website containing a collection of supporting information.

Actionable next steps are described on the following pages. Many of these recommendations are considered highly important, to be started as soon as possible. Several have multiple components that can be completed in parts over a longer time. It is important to be aware that essential decisions about staffing and budgeting will influence the immediacy and progress of these actions, and that these factors are not fully considered here.

EFFECTIVE PLANNING METHODS TO SUPPORT ACTION

Strong civic engagement developed through clear communication, education and empowerment, and broad outreach. Long-term goals require consistent policy-making and sustained citizen support.

Informed decision-making supported by good tracking, monitoring, and reporting of data, as well as good coordination of projects across departments and agencies.

Revisit the Plan annually and update as needed. Over time, new data will be considered and projects or objectives may need to be altered. An online, public portal should be maintained to continuously track progress and link to project information. As time passes, each new generation of leaders should be involved in the rediscovery of a vision, to see the issues with fresh eyes and current values.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and municipal budget process. Each year the Oak Ridge Planning Commission adopts and sends to the City Council a Capital Improvements Program, as required by the City Charter. The CIP provides a list of needed capital improvement and maintenance projects for each City Department and the Board of Education. This prioritization process must correlate with the Comprehensive Plan and other plans adopted or recognized by the City.

Develop and maintain relationship with the US Department of Energy and major employers as they plan for growth and change in their facilities and operations, so that City projects and services can be efficiently coordinated and open to partnership opportunities.

Engage the developer community, including property owners, real estate brokers, land planners, architects, engineers, finance lenders, and others to include their perspective and knowledge during the planning process and to keep them informed of new plans and opportunities.

“We don’t want a plan based on land uses. We want a plan based on experiences. Who visits downtown to see land uses?”

Mitchell Silver

Former president of the American Planning Association
Commissioner for New York City Parks Department

This collective action strategy is to be used as a guide and is not intended to represent a formal strategic action plan. City leaders and other community organizations are encouraged to formalize strategies in alignment with the information and ideas generated through the Blueprint planning process. As the City moves forward, Blueprint will promote greater transparency, accuracy and cooperation through consistent and effective planning methods..

IMMEDIATE AND SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

The following projects are recommended to be the next steps to carry forward the City Blueprint. Short-term projects are considered to be individually achievable within about five years; however, other projects listed here require immediate initiation though they may not require a certain point of completion.

City Center

A vibrant city center, envisioned in Oak Ridge for decades, has been given new spirit through a creative analysis entitled *Oak Ridge City Center, A 2030 Strategy*. Prepared in 2018 by architect Phil Enquist and his team at Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, the study was commissioned by UT-Battelle, CNS, UCOR, and ORAU for the benefit of Oak Ridge leaders and the advancement of public and private investment in the community.

- Following the suggestions in the 2030 Strategy, the City should initially lead workshops with landowners, real estate brokers, developers, and other stakeholders to refine the issues and opportunities, and target a long-range vision for a city center.
- A market analysis should be commissioned for potential demand and absorption for residential, office, and retail space.
- Evaluate locations near the city center for their potential as a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development. Wilson Street may serve as a good starting point for analysis.

- The public should be engaged in design exercises to explore mixed land uses, appropriate densities, pedestrian and bicycle access, and changes in zoning and development regulation.
- The City, along with the federal employers that sponsored the 2030 Strategy, should collaborate and host a conference to attract regional developers and projects.

Strengthening the vision and setting standards for development will prepare the field. Then, a public-private partnership in a catalyst development project, such as on Wilson Street, or enhancement of A.K. Bissell Park would demonstrate the City's commitment and expectation, and will help attract quality private development in the city center.

Oak Ridge Growth Strategy, Growth and Change Map (or Land Use Plan)

A "growth" strategy in Oak Ridge is not intended to encourage physical expansion of developable land (sprawl); instead, it would encourage new population and development to be concentrated within or near currently developed areas with existing infrastructure. Additionally, the strategy will identify land that should be protected as open space.

Major Road and Street Plan (or Municipal Thoroughfare Plan)

Identify future streets in conjunction with the Growth Strategy and update citywide roadway classifications and design standards.

Natural Assets Plan

Support the efforts of several local organizations, including the City's Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, and create a combined plan to protect and enhance the city's natural assets. The effort should enhance and expand outdoor recreation and public access areas by identifying an interconnected network of natural resources and proposed projects, including opportunities to improve access and enjoyment.

Housing Strategy

Support the efforts of the Housing Committee formed by the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce to develop and implement a coordinated Housing Strategy for Oak Ridge. In particular, collaborate with the Oak Ridge Housing Authority and Development Corporation to update the Highland View Redevelopment Plan and complete the Waddell Place Infill Project.

Economic Development

There are several strong economic development organizations focusing on business and industry in Oak Ridge, that provide varying levels of



Google Earth view of Oak Ridge, TN

recruitment, data, and reporting for the City. Continued collaboration and communication between these groups will further the goals of the City, as expressed in Blueprint.

Organizations include the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce, Oak Ridge Industrial Development Board, East Tennessee Economic Council, East Tennessee Economic Development Agency, Knoxville - Oak Ridge Innovation Valley, Anderson County Economic Development Association, Roane Alliance, Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee, Oak Ridge Utility District, educational institutions, and others, as well as various community assistance groups.

Comprehensive Plan

The Land Use Plan, Natural Assets Plan, Major Road and Street Plan, Housing Strategy, and economic development planning fall under the umbrella of updating the City Comprehensive Plan, thereby integrating and synchronizing policies.

Inclusive of all City Departments, build upon the momentum of the Blueprint process by analyzing and updating citywide policies that guide day-to-day decision-making, budgeting, and long-term capital projects. At the same time, develop new policies and coordinated efforts with the Department of Energy that promote environmental resiliency, historic preservation, and other Oak Ridge values.

Update the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations

Immediate amendments to land use regulations may be needed as certain plans are developed and implemented. However, these regulations require major revisions to more effectively administer the adopted Growth Strategy and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. These major revisions should be accomplished within one cumulative project that may also generate a new Zoning Map for the City, rather than a series of amendments over time.

In this process, zoning regulations should reflect the recommendations to promote sustainability and resiliency (energy and resource efficiency, reducing stormwater runoff, etc), mixed-use development, and walkability.

Outreach and communication with private developers, design professionals, realtors, and property owners will be important to promote desired development and mutual benefits, educate about regulatory and permit processes, and gain feedback.

Rails to Trails Greenway

Secure funding to proceed with trail construction upon completion of final design documents and acquisition of the railway. Construction may take place in phases; however, these associated costs are not covered in the current project. Rails to Trails is currently funded with 80% federal transportation funds with a 20% local match.

Update the Oak Ridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2011)

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan should be updated in conjunction with information generated through the Natural Asset Opportunities Guidebook and an American Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan that will be completed in late 2019 by a consultant for the City, as a requirement of the Tennessee Department of Transportation to address accessibility at streets and intersections.

Historic Survey Update

Work with the Tennessee State Historic and Preservation Office under the requirements of Section 106, to update historic surveys of residential properties located within the National Register's Oak Ridge Historic District, and to account for the status of deteriorated properties that may no longer contribute to the historic resource.

Revamp the “Not in My City” Campaign

Develop an easy to use information hub for fielding citizen complaints and reporting back to the community the results and status of code enforcement issues related to property maintenance and blight elimination. Promote citywide beautification through education, empowerment, and incentives such as sponsorship for tree plantings.



Jackson Square. Photo by Ray Smith

LONG-TERM AND CONTINUING ACTIONS

The following projects are considered to either have long horizons for accomplishment (beyond five years) or may subsequently follow the completion of one or more short-term projects. As an exception, projects identified as Public Infrastructure and Facilities include both short- and long-term timelines that are all related to ongoing maintenance and needs assessment. Knowing that priorities are often subject to unforeseeable factors or events, it is also possible that a so-called long-term action may suddenly be moved forward.

Redevelopment Area Master Plans

Conduct land use studies and redevelopment plans for specific areas of the city, such as Highland View, Jackson Square, Grove Center, Warehouse Row, and more. These plans can leverage the particular interests of each area's residents, businesses, and organizations, and provide focus for future private investment as well as public projects.

Historic Preservation

Study updated surveys of historic resources and identify impacts to local permitting and procedures. Historic designation is intended to help revitalize neighborhoods, but not to impede blight-removal in those instances where structures are too dilapidated for economically feasible renovation. Consider a method of designating local historic structures or districts and enacting historic preservation standards that protect their significance and/or guide redevelopment to be historically sensitive. Identify historic assets through signage and otherwise incorporate with local heritage tourism.

Business Plan for Recreation and Parks Facilities

Organizing major sports events for youth, adults, or professionals may require a business manager or marketing professional, as well as expanded partnership between the Recreation and Parks Department and Explore Oak Ridge. The first step is to examine the costs and benefits of bringing income-producing events and other regional programs to Oak Ridge.

Public Art and Innovation Program

Develop a program for bringing art and innovative demonstrations to public places in the city. Similarly, promote the programs and exhibits of the Oak Ridge Art Center as a cultural asset in the city center.

Façade Improvement Program

Develop a program that incentivizes the exterior renovation of older buildings, or update front parking lots and landscaping, as a low-cost strategy to improve the appearance of commercial areas and promote the adaptive reuse of historic structures.

New Airport

Coordinate with the efforts of the Department of Energy and the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority (MKAA) in the development of a general aviation airport within the city limits, to ensure that local infrastructure, facilities, and land policy supports expected outcomes and economic development opportunities.

Public Infrastructure and Facilities

The City's infrastructure requires maintenance, replacement, and new construction over time or due to growth and development. The 6-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) reviews and prioritizes these projects annually, which span the water system, sewer system, stormwater system, streets, electric utility, Fire, Police, library, parks, and schools. Significant capital improvements are not all represented here, but include the following:

Significant improvements to the City's **water distribution system** are needed, including the replacement of water mains that are at or near the end of their useful lives.

Continued major repair of the **wastewater collection and treatment systems** are necessary to improve system performance, remain compliant with our permit with the state, and prevent overflows that threaten the environment and public health. The aging, deteriorating system is experiencing infiltration and inflow (I & I), which is the infiltration of groundwater into leaky sewer pipes and inflow of excess water directly in pipes that can cause flooding and overloaded treatment plants.

A **new water treatment facility** is currently being designed to replace the 1940's era structure located near Y-12, to update the system, improve water quality and efficiency, and allow better access for City workers.

Implementation of local programs to **manage and improve the quality of stormwater** runoff is required as part of the City's stormwater discharge permit, regulated by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). Oak Ridge is designated a small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which is a system of collecting and conveying stormwater runoff through streets, ditches, catch basins, and storm drains to the nearest water bodies.

Major traffic and road safety projects, such as signalization along the Turnpike and redesign of the Tulane/ Providence/Pennsylvania intersection, are underway with federal/state funding assistance. This year a state-mandated ADA Transition Plan is due to be completed to identify local barriers to access, and may lead to plans for sidewalk and crosswalk projects.

To maintain national standards for occupational safety and emergency response, the **Fire Department** must either rebuild or relocate the existing Station #2, and strategically plan for the location and operation of a new 5th station.



Many existing **Recreation and Parks** facilities, such as the outdoor pool and amphitheater in A.K. Bissell Park, have high-cost renovations that may have to compete for prioritization as several new projects take off.

Several existing **school buildings** require major renovations, beginning with both middle schools, and the central administration is looking for a new location. Facility maintenance, accessibility, and safety issues must be continually addressed based on updated building codes. In addition, new development and population distribution in the city must be coordinated with the district's planning for school assignment and transportation.

BLUEPRINT IS A CONTINUING PROCESS OF MOVING FORWARD

City Blueprint establishes the spirit and philosophy of planning in Oak Ridge. It is a synthesis of feedback from the community and various city plans and studies into a guide for future growth and development. Through effective use of the Plan, change in demographics, market conditions, or other influencing factors of development can be held complementary to the spirit and values that are important to the community.

The Municipal Planning Commission will review progress related to the Plan, assess effectiveness, and determine goals and tasks every year. It is the Planning Commission's duty to prepare the official general plan (Comprehensive Plan) and a regulatory zoning ordinance and map, and to make advisory reports to City Council regarding development decisions. These volunteers are citizens with enormous dedication to Oak Ridge



Planning in Oak Ridge involves everyone. Communication and continued public participation will be important for validating ideas and gauging success. City Blueprint will serve as an information resource accessible in the Community Development office in the Oak Ridge Municipal Building and on the City's website, www.oakridgetn.gov.

CITY BLUEPRINT

FIND MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATES AT [OAKRIDGETN.GOV/ONLINE/BLUEPRINT](https://oakridgetn.gov/online/blueprint)

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