

# **City of Oak Ridge Housing Design Program**

Historic homes in the City of Oak Ridge are one step closer to being preserved and modernized for the needs of families today, thanks to an initiative by the City of Oak Ridge and the Housing Development Corporation of the Clinch Valley (HDC). The Housing Design Program is an initiative which includes the development of three different remodeling plans for ten historical housing types to encourage homeowners and new homebuyers to improve the aging housing stock and to help make the renovation of the older homes affordable. These permit-ready construction drawings are provided by the City of Oak Ridge to families who wish to buy and/or remodel the original housing free of charge stock built by the U.S. Government when Oak Ridge was a restricted federal enclave during the 1940's and 1950's. The initiative also includes several local banks that are offering special mortgage products and Home Depot which will provide the list of materials needed for the designs.

HDC assisted the city in identifying addresses representing the 10 housing types and was instrumental in promoting participation in the program. Approximately 6,000 homes in Oak Ridge could be eligible for the program.

The City of Oak Ridge, HDC, and Barge, Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, the firm selected by the City to develop the design plans, presented and described the house plans at a public forum in July of 2002. The forum included various speakers who explained how the program worked and several exhibitors who presented a variety of mortgage products that will be offered to homebuyers in connection with the design program. The forum was well received and over 200 homeowners and potential homebuyers attended.

To date, city staff has had a follow up "brainstorming" meeting at the Chamber of Commerce on September 5, 2002; attended the Realtors' monthly meeting to promote the program and provide notebooks with the floor plans for each of the ten houses to each Realtor's office; and participated in the Housing Summit on November 14, 2002. A total of 407 housing plans have been given out to the general public to date.

The Housing Design Program has drawn praise from many housing advocates. The program encourages homeowners and homebuyers to improve the aging housing stock and helps make the renovation of the older homes more affordable.

For more information on this program contact the Community Development Department at (865) 425-3531.