

BLUEPRINT REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Public Feedback JAN 14 - FEB 1, 2019

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HH2LG6N>

SurveyMonkey Q1		Goal #1 - Grow our Population & Economic Sustainability. What actions would support economic stability in Oak Ridge?
	2/1/2019 15:22	Encourage a "true" downtown. Mixed use with retail, food, entertainment and housing. Perhaps develop the center of the parking lot in the retail portion that would limit the distance people would have to walk across the various buildings. As it is now, that area is not productive. Allow parking at angles to the buildings. That would encourage older shoppers that might not want to walk distances, (also would work if buildings are constructed in the center of the lot). Encourage workers to live in the downtown area, while also encouraging older housing stock refurbishment. Encourage industrial development towards the "new" airport area.
	1/31/2019 21:33	Mid priced NEW housing and neighborhoods with sidewalks and community amenities such as pools, clubhouses and playgrounds. This is what young people want. If we want to lure young professionals to Oak Ridge we have to offer them what other communities have to offer. We are way behind others in attracting young families
	1/31/2019 16:47	Oak Ridge Government seems to be business unfriendly and codes enforcement hard to do business with. It seems like whenever developers want to put something in Oak Ridge there are always too many hurdles to overcome to make it worth their while. City Government puts too much emphasis on citizen advisory panels and their opinions and direction rather than professionals. Other communities seem to welcome business and developers and ask them what they need. We tell them what we want.
	1/31/2019 16:45	A Target store would be nice. Focus on some non-DOE related economic development.
	1/28/2019 12:46	Get rid of CROET, which has done essentially NOTHING to bring new business to the area. Stop making a big deal over nothing (what has Greg LeMond done?). Work with some of ORNL's Innovation Crossroads participants to help them build new businesses that stay local.
	1/27/2019 22:35	Bring more businesses with jobs to help more diverse workforce than plant employees. Provide more housing options for middle class. A condo subdivision where residents can enjoy amenities of an apartment complex with the pride of home ownership.
	1/25/2019 11:20	Can we not create an incentive package to attract people to live in oak Ridge by working with local banks and credit unions. not just come here and work and leave.
	1/25/2019 11:17	Enhance the climate for small business growth, through education, mentoring and advice on how to acquire funding.
	1/22/2019 14:38	Microbreweries and restaurants that are not chain restaurants. Diversified retail (not just big box stores). Mixed use. The Skidmore Owens presentation hit the nail on the head.

	1/22/2019 14:14	Encouraging new business that does not compete with existing business. Attract businesses that will add to the sales tax collection base not dilute the existing base.
	1/20/2019 21:36	We need better paying jobs other than those provided by the government. The majority of the jobs in the city are service jobs. The city would be better served if there were factories, such as car manufactures which would provide higher paying jobs. Many people who live here cannot afford to buy houses because they work low paying jobs, many of them are part time. At one time Boeing was located here but they left and the jobs left with them. The city would also do well to recruit a more diversified population.
	1/19/2019 17:18	- Continue to support industrial growth. - Invest more into the rowing sport by improving the waterfront area by adding other recreational opportunities and better maintaining what we already have. - Continue to promote new retail. - Formualte and execute a better road maintenance plan.
	1/18/2019 23:10	Fix our roads. There are cracked roads and pot holes everywhere.
	1/18/2019 21:57	We are future residents (house will be complete in February). What we are hoping for In order of priority. 1) Immediately address abandoned/blighted properties along Illinois Ave and Oakridge Turnpike and promote beautification of properties along those corridors through tax incentives or fines. Empty green space is better for city development than an abandoned building. The I Love Sushi shopping center needs serious attention. 2) A vibrant walkable downtown area - high quality shops and dining and green space. The current downtown is too much of a parking lot break up the parking lot with some more retail to form avenues and maybe a central area that could be used for gatherings in the summer and an ice rink in the winters. There are some good restaurants, but stop putting in hamburger joints and start looking for Bistros, Steakhouse's, Seafood markets, etc. 3) Ditch the recently approved apartments for Phase II. 4) Other options for Gigabit ethernet - such as Fios or AT&T Uverse GigaPower. 5) For Legacy housing - Promote home improvements of (driveways, painting, pressure washing, etc) through a 1 time tax credit.
	1/17/2019 10:24	I know we Steve Jones as our economic development consultant. It might be instructive to hear from him about our plusses and minuses and what he thinks we could do to attract business.
	1/16/2019 10:57	Separate itself from Knoxville. Ensure that all needs are available in Oak Ridge so there would be more willing to move into Oak Ridge rather than commute.
	1/15/2019 19:35	Better affordable housing for the people who are employed in low paying jobs in Oak Ridge to keep them from having to live in legacy houses owned by slumlords. If the demand for these rundown legacy houses decreased then maybe the slumlords would sell them to people who want to repair and modernize them.

SurveyMonkey Q2	Goal #2 - Enhance our Image/Quality of Place actions would enhance the quality and image of Oak Ridge?	What
	2/1/2019 15:22	Encourage the development of the "empty" spaces in town. Too many have been sitting vacant. Perhaps, some of the Chamber can work with economic specialists to fill these spaces similar to the bigger cities that use modern methods, e.g. PILOTS etc.
	1/31/2019 21:33	Get rid of old housing, maintain waterfront - the banks are always overgrown, finish the city center, landscape the main city roads, etc. Basically we need to tidy things up! Our town looks old and tired. Appearances matter to people and we don't make a good first impression. "Uniquely Oak Ridge" makes outsiders feel unwelcome. It's arrogant - ditch that saying! Try "Oak Ridge - Beautiful, Peaceful, Resourceful" It's much more welcoming and actually describes Oak Ridge!
	1/31/2019 16:47	It seems like Oak Ridge pays lip service to having many amenities. Yes, we have some bike paths, but we aren't really a bike friendly city throughout. Yes we have parks, but most are little more than open grassy areas with little true amenities. The parks and greenways in Knoxville, Maryville and surrounding areas are actually nice places. We just throw up a bike lane sign on Tennessee Avenue and call it done, or put up a sign at a grassy field and call it a park and feel good about ourselves. People notice these things and choose to live elsewhere.
	1/31/2019 16:45	Our image is just fine as it is.
	1/28/2019 12:46	Stop letting developers build new strip malls when we have far too many partially occupied (or abandoned) facilities already.
	1/27/2019 22:35	Improving the quality of roads would be a good start. Fixing potholes in roads that only continue to get worse. Again, more housing options for middle class besides more apartment complexes. A condo subdivision could attract young professionals who don't want to maintain yards and retired individuals who also don't want to maintain yards.

	1/27/2019 10:24	<p>It is interesting that the most iconic photo to symbolize Oak Ridge is rowing crew boat. The marina and the activities associated with the marina and the greenway represent the reasons why people might want to live in Oak Ridge. I suggest that the city do two things to embellish that people friendly image. The rowing venues that happen in at the marina contribute substantially to the local economy. And yet, it is impossible to know what is actually happening during a race weekend unless you park your car and ask someone. I propose that the city invest in a signage mechanism that would advertise each event such that the locals know the significance of the race and so that the participants have a sense that the city actually appreciates their presence. This would be low cost advertising that would promote one of the few events that actually brings people into Oak Ridge en mass other than the Secret City Festival, an even that gets much publicity. Second, I propose a footbridge to be built over the entrance to the marina harbor. I suggest that this be a bridge with architectural appeal, an iconic structure. Done right, it would become the centerpiece of advertising for the next half century. It would be an artistic embellishment to the existing walkway and it would more directly connect the activities on the marina peninsula to the rowing finish line downstream. But most importantly, a properly designed structure would be a permanent positive statement about Oak Ridge.</p>
	1/25/2019 11:20	<p>fixing our youth sports' programs in our city. work with the school system and the city of Oak Ridge to relook at the fees we charge on gyms so that we could attract rocky top football games and AAU tournaments to our city which would bring in revenue to our hotels and restaurants and stores, etc...</p>
	1/25/2019 11:17	<p>Leverage the love of sports by upgrading sports facilities for youth football, baseball, softball, track and field tournaments. Please remember that many people have mobility issues, so millions spent on paths and trails are of no use to us. Where do we go?</p>
	1/24/2019 12:47	<p>Do not let a few real estate holders lock up so much potentially available retail space. Capiello and Chen charge prices that are so high for their rent that a business can't start. Instead of getting small businesses in Oak Ridge, we get empty buildings owned by a few people. These ugly, non-rented buildings are holding Oak Ridge hostage.</p>
	1/22/2019 14:38	<p>More walking/biking trails. More events run through Rec & Parks (cornhole leagues, softball leagues, lego leagues, other hobbyist type leagues and groups). Then advertise - Oak Ridge does a terrible job of promoting itself.</p>
	1/22/2019 14:14	<p>Requiring developers to follow through on plans which are pedestrian and bike friendly. Connecting areas of the city to increase traffic flow to all areas and coordinating annual events that do not compete with each other.</p>
	1/20/2019 21:36	<p>I moved here from Jackson, Tn and we had the same problem. They have a Jackson Downtown Development Corp. which is working to make downtown more attractive so people will want to come downtown more, not just to work. Oak Ridge does not have a downtown but maybe you can get ideas from other small cities on what they do to "provide high-quality amenities, entertainment, arts and cultural opportunities, and other 'place-making' activities to attract visitors." I encourage to check out the JDDC.</p>

	1/20/2019 6:43	Enforce the landlord ordinance.
	1/19/2019 17:18	Develop a plan that would reduce the number of less than adequate housing left over from WW II.
	1/18/2019 23:10	Fix our roads. There are cracked roads and pot holes everywhere.
	1/18/2019 21:57	In order of priority: 1) As mentioned above - beautification along major corridors, green space to break up concrete - we are building a house off Emory Valley - please do something about the water tank (paint it, put trees in front of it, etc). 2) Promote incredible amenities - Haw Ridge, fishing, kayaking, hiking, walking, etc. 3) Promote the amazing school system 4) Spotlight a local business each week.
	1/17/2019 10:24	The Friendship Bell/Peace Pavilion already draws a surprising number of visitors from out of town. Not to say they come here for that specifically, but if they come here they go to the Bell. Everything we can do to enhance that site (including signage and gardens), support the recognition and role of it in the National Park, creates a unique quality of place for Oak Ridge. In addition, I would suggest we consider the creation of a contemplation labyrinth in Bissell Park. They can be done simply and inexpensively. We then have two "Circles of Peace." Another distinctive addition to Quality of Place.
	1/16/2019 10:57	Disc golf is a rising sport in the area and in the country. Oak ridge has the mounds which is considered one of best courses in the area but needs the city support to continue that and also grow the sport with additional courses. Morristown is a prime example of how in one weekend more than 300 visitors came for a tournament. Imagine 5 of these a year, or more. Also, Oak Ridge should focus on improving the image of oak ridge. Currently, most view it as where ORNL and Y12 is and slum like housing. The viewpoint is very poor.
	1/15/2019 19:35	Oak Ridge needs destinations for people to meet with each other. Crafter's Brew is great for a certain crowd. We have no real coffee shops. Starbucks is too small and uncomfortable and Panera is really a restaurant.
SurveyMonkey Q3		Goal #3 - Improve Connectivity and Mobility What actions would improve how people get around in Oak Ridge?
	2/1/2019 15:22	With all of the grumbling about the various entrances in the downtown retail site, perhaps the city officials want to look at the bigger picture. Maybe they need to rename Tulane Ave. to Main Street. This action would allow visitors to have a true Main St. and connect the two halves of the downtown core, i.e. ORAU, the apts, the governmental area, and retail, food areas. It would provide an orientation to "downtown" Oak Ridge for visitors and locals.
	1/31/2019 21:33	I absolutely don't think we need to spend more city dollars on trails. We have plenty of green space for our citizens. We have bike lanes on the turnpike and walking trails along Melton Lake, Haw Ridge, Bissel Park and Emory Valley Rd. The only thing I would even consider putting money into is rails to trails - nothing more. We have MANY needs above these and need to work on maintaining what we already have.

	1/31/2019 16:47	I recently moved from a neighborhood in the west end that was built in the mid 70's, to a cemesto off of New York. Even though I traveled through the area occasionally, after moving, I started walking and biking throughout the east end. The streets and side walks throughout the old cemesto area are atrocious. You can't walk a block without encountering broken pavement on the sidewalks. We put in all these ramps at the corners to make it ADA compliant, but it's a joke. A person in a wheelchair or scooter couldn't go a block without encountering broken asphalt, grass growing out over the sidewalk, or bushes overgrowing the side walk making it impossible to pass without going out into the street. I think our older neighborhoods could be an asset to attract young families or older people looking to down size. Many of the old cemestos have been well cared for, are weel built, and have character. However, the older sections of town are being allowed to become dilapidated. Each of the little community areas of the east end could be reinvigorated with new residents and small shops that are within walking or biking distance, if the city was smart and exploited this asset.
	1/31/2019 16:45	Sidewalks are the number one issue.
	1/28/2019 12:46	Improve existing sidewalks, add more bike lanes, and find some way to provide public transportation -- anyone unable to drive in this town is more or less sentenced to social isolation.
	1/25/2019 11:20	What about building Toll boths to charge people for only coming in an out of Oak Ridge to work.
	1/25/2019 11:17	Oak Ridge is a giant parking lot that has a few buildings spread around in it. No true bus or trolley system, where are the bike paths in the city's center? Where is it safe for my motorized wheelchair? Spend a day in a wheelchair and learn more.
	1/22/2019 14:38	Improve the connectivity. Oak Ridge was not developed to be very walkable. The blacktop residential walks are horrible and should be replaced at some point with concrete like every other town. City center blocks need to be east to use for pedestrians. At some point, I could see Lime or a pay-to-use bicycle service in Oak Ridge. There are so many opportunities for us. Promote - Promote - Promote.
	1/22/2019 14:14	An overall long term plan...not just bits and pieces. And someone/committee to follow through and hold developers accountable. We are struggling with issues that should have been addressed 10-20 years ago. Let's don't make that mistake again for our younger residents.
	1/20/2019 21:36	I assume the city is to small for actual public transportation. If the city had a public transit system it would help more people get around who do not have cars. However I don't know if this is possible because the city seems to be designed on a circular pattern instead of a grid system.
	1/19/2019 17:18	Offer a free or almost free bus service on a limited schedule during the summer months to get folks say from the civic center to the lake or to Jackson Square.
	1/18/2019 23:10	Fix our roads. There are cracked roads and pot holes everywhere.

	1/18/2019 21:57	I haven't had an opportunity to drive around a lot, but things that I have noticed. In order of priority: 1) Downtown Oakridge needs to connect up to Bissell Park some how - probably a pedestrian bridge or tunnel to get across South Tulane . 2) Briarcliff onto Emory Valley needs a turn signal and the left turn signal onto the turnpike from Laboratory Rd is too short. 3) Dedicated bike lanes on Oakridge Turnpike (east of the Illinois Ave intersection). 4) Connect up the sidewalks a bit more consistently.
	1/16/2019 10:57	Public Transportation to Knoxville which stops throughout oak ridge. This would reduce the number of vehicles on the road, improve traffic conditions and improve safety especially on Pellissippi.
	1/15/2019 19:35	I agree that the blocks in the current Oak Ridge city center are at a massive scale. I and everybody I've talked to, when visiting other cities, appreciate the classic downtown arrangement of grid streets lined with a mix of retail, residential, office, and retail. A shopping mall with large expanses of parking lot is not what we appreciate in a city center. Hopefully a compromise will be reached with the developer of our city center so that we won't end up with another shopping development lined with the national retail chains many of us have no interest in.
		Comment Cards from Display Boards (Library, Municipal Bldg, Chamber of Commerce)
		Please remove the invasive plants (Privet, etc) along the waterfront at Melton Lake Dr, and the city needs to reduce the goose population, it is a health concern with feces on sidewalks and public use areas
		Focus on area around new "Main Street" - provide thru street as this area not visible to visitors. Improve housing around Main Street - condos, new apartments, new housing. Get rid of old Manhattan Apts - eyesore and we have too much low income housing in OR!
		Promote more mid-income level housing options. Condos for purchase, not apartment complex for rent. More restaurants, Chili's, Olive Garden, Target. Help debunk the myth that Oak Ridge is hard to do business with.
		What considerations should we have for food security? Ideas: mini-farms, greenbelt cultivation
		Have a large building with a bowling section, a sports section, and a game section, and have a cafeteria for the kids and only open it once every Saturday.
		End gentrification. You're ruining community for a pro-developer agenda. We need affordable housing and jobs, not destroying homes for more retail. Oak Ridge developers are evil.
		Yes, I agree with the Values and Goals.
		Get it done!
		May we please get a Simply 10 clothing store in Oak Ridge

Responses by EMAIL

		Perhaps you could add a line under the "Land Use and Infrastructure" section to signal support for mixed use redevelopment in other parts of town as well as the city center.
		There has been some buzz up here about using "Opportunity Zones" - tax credits included in the 2017 tax bill to spur investments in low-income areas. There are two designated opportunity zones in Anderson County. Census tract 0500 above is located within Oak Ridge city limits. It includes the Grove Center area, the Hillside apartments, Hilltop Market, Jefferson over to Louisiana Ave. People can defer paying capital gains taxes on realized gains if they invest in opportunity zones, and they pay reduced rates after five years, and no capital gains tax at all after 10 years. This might be something worth looking into to spur investment in that area, or at least flagging in the Blueprint.
		Going to 4-hour Council meetings or contemplating how to find out what police policies are, for example, may be daunting to many people. What if there were a regularly scheduled time where people could interact with the city face to face. Say from 4 - 5PM on every third Thursday in the city courtroom or a room in the Civic Center. Let's call this "Blueprint Live" if you want continuing input or "Talk to the City" or something. People could ask questions and give input but there could be a primary topic such as Recreation and Parks or streets and sidewalks. Even once a quarter might get the job done.
		I have not been able to find a link to the draft blueprint, which I thought should be available this close to the final product. I am concerned about several issues that I tried to bring up in early submissions to the project, but which apparently were not even mentioned in a previous presentation my wife attended. When I went to the website I saw lots of euphemisms that no one could object to, but nothing about tradeoffs, priorities etc. On the website it provided several ways to connect with the process, but nothing was very clear. For example it mentioned coming to Thursday planning meetings like the one tonight. I looked at the agenda and it appears to only have a tiny section devoted to the blueprint and I'm not sure visitors would be allowed to speak at such a meeting. Please let me know the best way for me to understand where the blueprint is going and whether my earlier concerns have been addressed.
		I would like to suggest that Oak Ridge consider: 1) encouraging and/or establishing a faith-based long-term drug and alcohol rehab center/facility/home(s) for the people of Oak Ridge (and surrounding areas, if resources are available); and 2) adding dental, vision and hearing as services available at the Free Medical Clinic of Oak Ridge on a sliding fee scale (or pro bono); actually vision and hearing should be standard medical coverage for everyone, but the poor are especially needy of these services and cannot afford them. Thank you for forwarding these suggestions to the proper people.
		I turned in a two comments at a community meeting last year. I never heard anything regarding these comments. Makes wonder what happened to the cards turned in. Hope there is real meaning to these meetings besides PR.