

# City of Oak Ridge City Blueprint Tuskegee Residential Subarea Draft Plan

Prepared by the City of Oak Ridge

Municipal Planning Commission

Assistance provided by City of Oak Ridge

Community Development Department

January 25, 2018



**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**  
CONTENT WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON

# Tuskegee Residential Area

1.12 square miles

## Population Information



2016 Total  
Population: 1,036

### 2016 Population by Gender

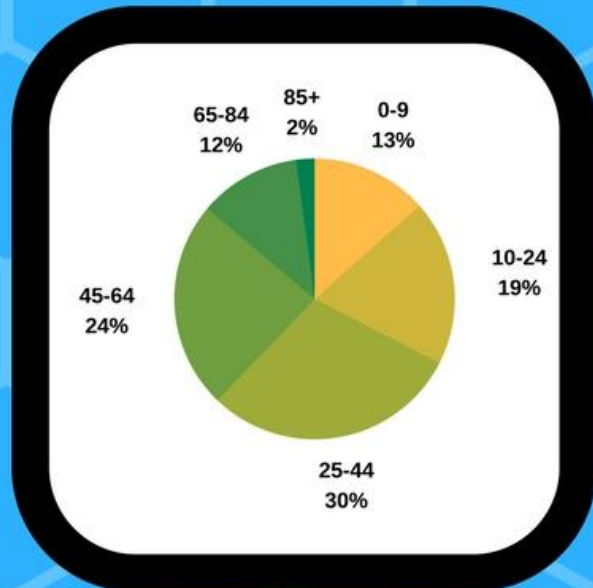


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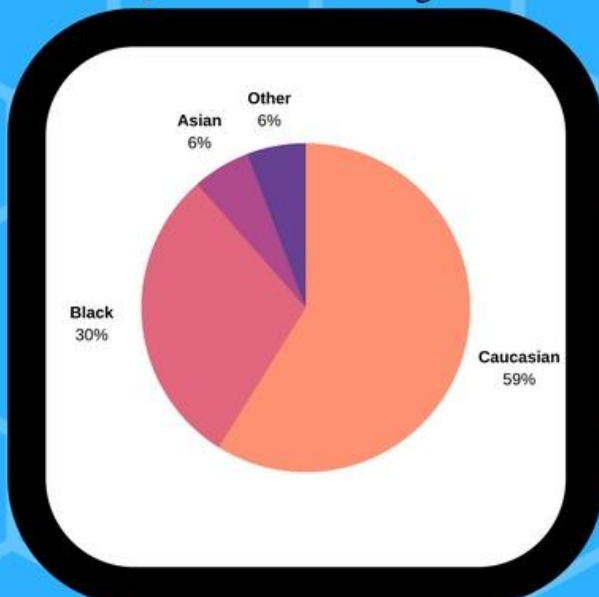


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### 2016 Population by Age



### 2016 Population by Race/Ethnicity

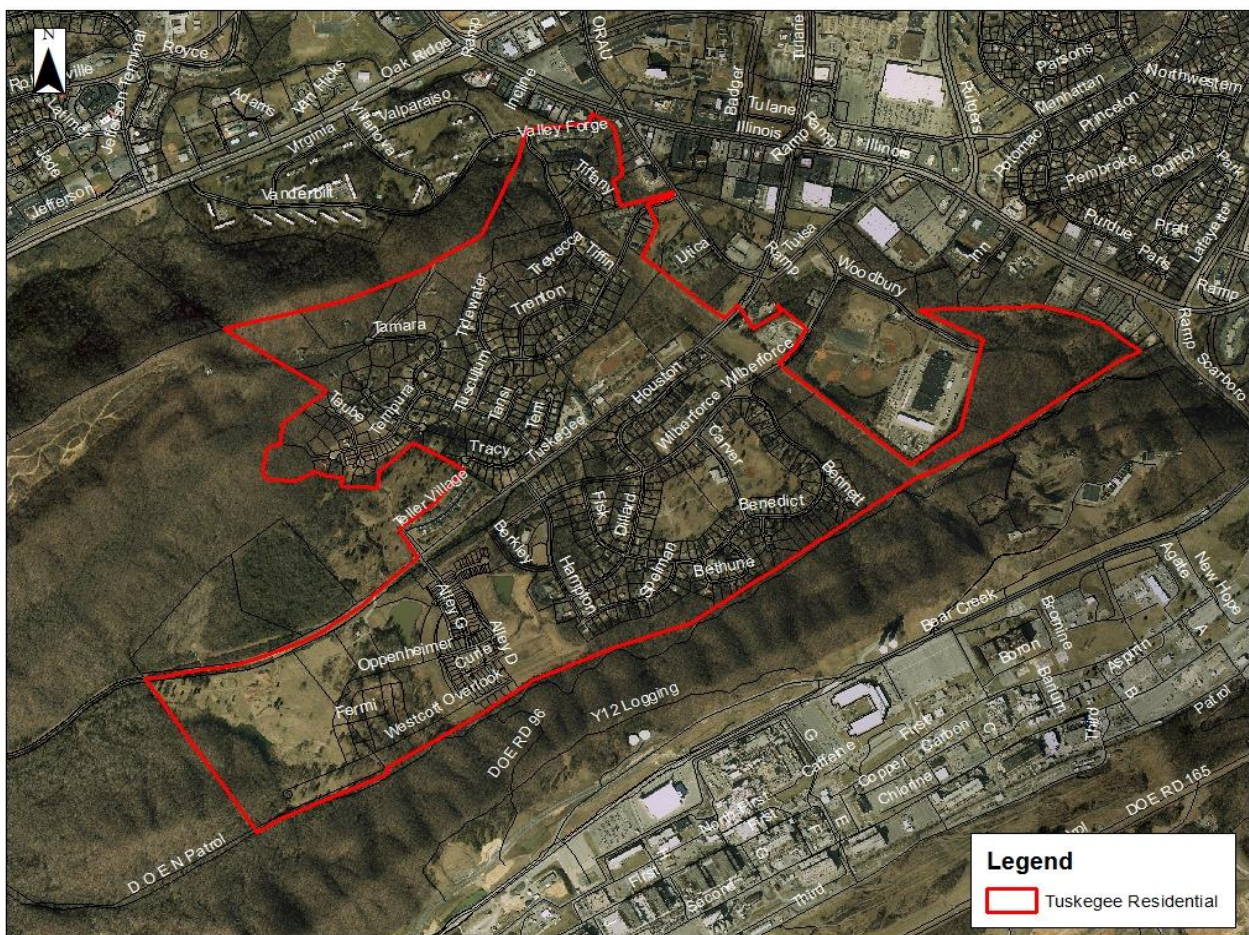


Median Household Age:  
35.40 years old

Source: Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce

# TUSKEGEE RESIDENTIAL SUB-AREA

The Tuskegee sub-area is very near the center of the developed area of Oak Ridge. It is the major residential enclave that lies south of the Turnpike and west of Illinois Avenue. It is bisected by Tuskegee Drive with the Scarboro Community, the oldest part of the sub-area, just west of Illinois Avenue and south of Tuskegee. The Scarboro area was developed first during the Manhattan project as a housing area for African-Americans. It is still occupied predominately by African-Americans. Just north of Scarboro is a more recent single family home neighborhood, Burnham Woods. Just west of Scarboro and south of Tuskegee is the Groves Park Commons development, a recent small lot subdivision for single family homes that was hit soon after opening with the housing recession of 2008. Approximately 90 lots out of a larger master plan have been developed and platted.



# Livability and Beautification

## Assets

This sub-area occupies a scenic landscape. Tuskegee Drive runs along the floor of a valley with the land sloping upward on both sides. The western slopes are steeper and provide a more varied topography. On both sides of Tuskegee the residential streets are well adapted to the topography and provide attractive views to the greenbelt and other vacant lands on the upland slopes.

The housing inventory of the sub-area includes a variety of housing types and price ranges. The area is mostly single family detached housing, but there are attractive condominium and apartment units as well. There are also a significant number of Section 8 units providing affordable housing opportunities to lower income households.



There are four churches in the sub-area, well maintained and well landscaped properties. They are located in the Scarboro neighborhood.



## Challenges

The primary challenges that are visible in this sub-area are the product of the age of housing units and limited incomes of some households. There are many legacy housing units in the Scarboro area. Originally built as short-term economy housing as part of the Manhattan Project, they are now more than seventy years old and require continuing maintenance. Some of the older housing units just north of Tuskegee have the same characteristics of age plus occupancy by moderate income households. Neither area is seriously blighted, but there are individual units that are visibly deteriorating and probably discouraging reinvestment among neighboring properties.

# Economic Vitality and Housing

## Assets

The Tuskegee area has one of the widest varieties of housing types and price ranges among the residential sub-areas. There are rental and owner occupied single family units that are within reach of many moderate income households. There are also apartment and condominium units with a substantial range in prices. Lower income populations will find opportunities in McKenzie Acres Apartments on Utica or Karadey Terrace on Wilberforce. Both these developments are Project Based Section 8 housing. Auburn Hills on Tusculum is a Section 8 development serving the elderly poor. The Hallmark Apartments and Teller Village on Tuskegee Drive are places that get low income housing tax credits for allocating a minimum percentage of units for low income populations.



The Scarboro Community Center is centrally located on Carver in that neighborhood. It is a modern facility equipped with a basketball court, game room, computer lab, and meeting rooms. It is an asset to the city at large and a special recreation asset for the sub-area.

## Challenges

The accessibility of the sub-area to employment opportunities is reasonable. Tuskegee Drive provides short and direct access to Illinois Avenue and the Main Street area. It is a short trip from Illinois to the Turnpike and access to the businesses that line that street. Access to major employers in the city are about as good from this sub-area as from any other. Access to better jobs and upward mobility is probably more sensitive to lack of training and experience than physical access issues.

There are two places in the sub-area where there is a concentration of vacant lots. One is in the Tempura/Taube Lane area north of Tuskegee. These are ready for sale and construction of houses. Public infrastructure is in place, including underground wiring. A much larger inventory of vacant lots is in the Groves Park Commons development, approximately 80 parcels. Power, water and sewer are installed and streets are finished except for a final top coat in some areas. A commons area and recreation building are also in place. These lots may be viewed as an asset or challenge. They are an asset in the sense that they provide an opportunity to increase the number of new housing units without delay for public approvals. But they may be a challenge because some of the infrastructure is incomplete. The quality of what is there is positive, including the few existing housing units. But the visible image of what could be viewed as a “failed development” will be hard to overcome for potential new buyers.



There is a vacant commercial building on Carver next to the Scarboro Community Center and across the street from the Scarboro Park. It has off street parking. The building was used most recently as a restaurant. In the past it has been a neighborhood market and barber shop. The location should be a viable business opportunity and could be an asset to the neighborhood.

## Transportation

### Assets

Streets are generally in good condition. Local streets are well aligned with the topography and transitions from minor residential streets to collector and arterial streets is reasonably direct.

### Challenges

As is throughout the City, there is no public bus service in the area except of the busing of school children. This is more of a challenge for people of limited income than for the general population.

Sidewalks are provided along one side of the length of Tuskegee Drive. There are also sidewalks on several streets in Scarboro, but most of the sub-area is without sidewalks.

There is no direct access from the sub-area to the trail system in the city.

# Recreation

## Assets

The Scarboro Community Center is a resource for the sub-area and the city as a whole. The recreation needs of the area south of Tuskegee are well served by the Scarboro Center Park. It includes athletic fields, play apparatus and shelters for picnics, etc. Some of this will be displaced by the new preschool facility. A complex of three baseball diamonds, with lighting and off street parking, is located just outside the sub-area on Wilberforce Avenue adjacent to the city Central Services Complex. There is a “frisbee golf” course on land that was once a golf course on the south side of Tuskegee Drive west of the Grove Park development.



# Schools

## Assets

A new preschool building will soon be constructed in the Scarboro Park across from the Community Center. There are no public schools in the sub-area. For historic reasons, preschool and elementary school children are distributed to one of the four elementary schools in the city and one of the two middle schools. All the high school students attend Oak Ridge High School.

## Safety

There are no sidewalks in much of the sub-area. The streets where sidewalks are absent are narrow residential streets where there is also on-street parallel parking. This can create hazards where people walk in the street alongside parked cars. The chief mitigating factor is that there is little through traffic in these areas and most drivers are themselves residents of the neighborhood where they are traveling.

Based on Oak Ridge Police Department records, the McKenzie Acres Apartments on Utica are a source of higher than average crime rates.



## Findings and Recommendations

On a scale of sub-areas with challenges, the Tuskegee sub-area occupies a kind of middle ground. It has some challenges, but it is not in distress. The challenges are not so urgent that they require large scale public expenditures or disruption of the lives of the residents.

Most of the visible challenges in this sub-area are linked in one way or another to the low incomes in many households. Lack of building maintenance is a visible sign in some individual properties. The sub-area may be helped by application of lessons learned in other parts of the city, such as the proposed demonstration project for housing rehabilitation in the Highland View sub-area.

This area and other parts of the city would also be helped by higher incomes. Three elements are keys to higher incomes. The first is access to training that would prepare people for better jobs. The second is the willingness of potential students to take advantage of such opportunities. The third part of the equation is the presence of jobs that better prepared residents could fill. All easy to say, not so easy to execute. Roane State Community College has programs in place through the Oak Ridge campus to address such issues. They can be tailored to specific situations and needs.

It is also suggested that the housing agencies and committees that are active in the city consider the need to stimulate the build-out of vacant lots in this sub-area. It can be argued that the marketing of vacant lots is the responsibility of the developers and owners. This is not disputed. But there is also a public interest in the issue. It may be that some small encouragement from the public sector could start a movement that would assist the build-out of these areas.



# Tuskegee Residential Area

1.12 square miles

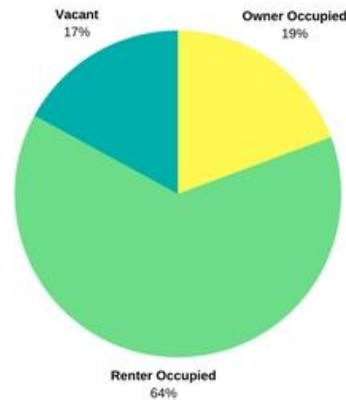
## Housing Information

2016 Average Family Size:

2.80



2016 Housing Unit Information



Median Home Value:  
**\$133,000**

2016 Households by  
Income



Median Household Income:  
**\$27,413**