

## CITY BLUEPRINT - Planning for the future of Oak Ridge, TN

### We want your feedback to ensure that Blueprint is founded on values important to Oak Ridge

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.

**OUR NATURAL ASSETS.** There is widespread appreciation – maybe reverence – 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 / SCIENCE.** This place 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. The challenge now is to bring the same spirit of creativity and innovation to a broader range of activities, including business and the arts. Spinoff industries have been a natural extension of the collection of highly skilled people in one location.

**EDUCATION IS A HIGH PRIORITY.** The population of the city includes an unusually large number of people who are highly educated or are extraordinarily skilled at what they do. News about the superior academic performance of public school students gets top billing in the local Oak Ridge media, and is part of the Oak Ridge reputation. The community has put its money where its mouth is supporting a world-class school system.

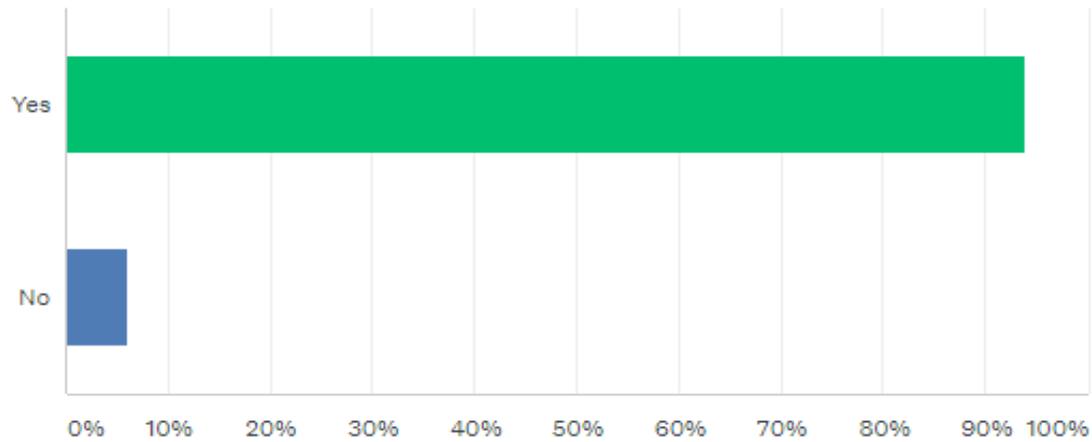
**BEING UNIQUELY OAK RIDGE...** We heard from people throughout the process that Oak Ridge doesn't want to be Farragut, or Knoxville, or Hardin Valley, or Maryville. We want to be Oak Ridge. While this is somewhat abstract, it is not just pride in the physical city. It is pride in our history, our landscape, the arts, and the contribution we have and continues to make to the world of science. Oak Ridge was an extraordinary place when it was the core element of the Manhattan project – and remains so today.

Q1

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Do you agree that these statements represent long-term values for Oak Ridge?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	93.88% 46
No	6.12% 3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>

<b>SurveyMonkey</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Please share your comments on Oak Ridge community values.</b>
	1/20/2019 15:29	It is a true community within and among the different neighborhoods. The schools, especially the high school, help to bring the city together. The community is diverse. We need to build on the available outdoor/active activities available.
	1/18/2019 16:09	I like them, especially the last oen
	12/16/2018 21:58	I want to add to the remarks I sent in an earlier response, please. Oak Ridge is blessed with its natural terrain...our natural terrain. We need to protect and enhance that so that OR becomes a beautiful little city. To that end, I beg you to protect Bissell Park. It is a wonderful little city park. It is also a natural target for development, e.g., Senior Center, Friendship Bell. Please work to protect it. I also suggest that we make the entrances to our city attractive, so much so that people entering the city notice. For example, we could convert the west Turnpike to a nice drive with a few trees in the median.. We do that along other entries to OR.. As it is, the west Turnpike looks like an Interstate...and people drive like it. Thanks for listening. Dub Shults
	12/15/2018 23:43	Natural assets include a wonderful city park system, young and old. Bissell Park is a wonderful asset. Tech, Innovation, Science. OR must be attractive to a broad range of citizens, not just bright young people. Many if not most of those live elsewhere. We need to be a great place to live, for a diversity of people, yet maintain the connection with nationally important science and programs. Education. It is true that the city supports good public schools...effectively. It also provides good educational opportunities for the rest of the citizenry. Think Roane State, Pellissippi State, ORICL, UTK. OR Uniqueness. The overriding uniqueness about OR is that it has a large collection of WWII houses and neighborhoods. They cast a poor image of the town. They negate the many attractive neighborhoods. Perhaps we should bite the bullet and make the center of town an "Old Town" as other cities have done. Brag about it rather than apologize for it . Help it get better, even prideful. Thanks for doing this for the city. Dub Shults

	12/10/2018 7:52	More "Natural working /biking trails
	12/8/2018 9:35	OR was unique in the beginning, is now, and should stay that way
	12/5/2018 12:00	I love the statement about Oak Ridge being a city in a federal forest. I would just like to see more evidence of this (trees, parks, meadows) in the commercial areas, especially along the Turnpike. I would like to see Oak Ridge innovation put to the problems of substandard housing and homelessness. There should be more simple, decent, inexpensive housing for homeless people, and landlords must be taken to task about letting their properties become rundown and uninhabitable. A unique Oak Ridge needs a city center that is a gathering place for residents, not just a big parking lot ringed with chain stores. Hardin Valley and Farragut are not models for what Oak Ridge needs to be. Maryville does have a small downtown, but I think we could do it better. Knoxville has obvious advantages of scale and there's no comparison. Our downtown needs to be a destination for residents and visitors, with parks, eateries, coffee shops, stores, professional offices, and of course our museum. The best downtown would include locally owned businesses rather than more chain stores.
	12/4/2018 20:48	My family has lived in Oak Ridge for four years and we love it! Education is really important, and we not only have excellent schools, but also a wonderful public library that deserves a mention!
	12/4/2018 17:40	Oak Ridge is a unique place that is a great environment for families and a special small town
	12/4/2018 15:02	I would add the values of diversity and providing a helping hand and other things that make a Oak Ridge a good place to live and especially to raise a family. Diversity among the population includes ages, races, religions and cultures as well as possibly languages and other socioeconomic identifiers like education and income levels. These values have historically been part of what makes Oak Ridge unique so they might be added as descriptive language under the last value you provided here.
	12/1/2018 20:38	As expressed, they are in alignment with my beliefs in Oak Ridge. I would also like to see Oak Ridge to have more shopping options. I feel guilty heading to Knoxville for most shopping -- but I do! It seems to me that we used to be more self-contained. We've lost so much to West Knoxville.
	11/29/2018 16:13	Though we strive to be unique, we can also learn from the successes of other areas/communities. What keeps us from growing? Why are our home values not increasing as those in other areas are?
	11/29/2018 11:38	I think we should highly value becoming a leader in being a "green" community, I hope we already do value that.
	11/28/2018 14:06	We value our history, our present, and our future. We value our natural assets: lakes, rivers, woods, ridges, and parks that fit into those. One does not have to be born here to be an Oak Ridger: we evolved from people from all over the world, and we continue to welcome those.

	11/27/2018 12:00	The lack of a truly urban fabric in Oak Ridge continues to negatively affect our community. If we want to attract young innovative scientists we need to provide the community assets they desire. Until we establish that as a goal and make decision's toward implementation we will never be the city we envision.
	11/27/2018 10:30	Affordable New single family housing. Under \$235K Offer reduced taxes to businesses to renovate the outside of businesses, for a more modern Oak Ridge. Make the current building owners of retail business building keep the building looking nice. Instead of letting it fall apart.
	11/27/2018 9:11	Good work from the committee and community input
	11/26/2018 15:23	I am concerned about the word "reverence" in Value #1 - I agree with the emphasis on our gorgeous natural resources, but I do not worship them. The God who designed and made them is indeed worthy of reverence, but people matter even more than the beauty that surrounds us. ** I am disappointed to see nothing about addressing housing issues - they were brought up repeatedly in the comments I read and at the meeting I attended. This is not just about blighted or run-down areas but also about those in the middle who want to live in nice neighborhoods that are in the \$80-\$175K range. "Starter" homes are becoming unaffordable, and we risk having too high rents and lack of pride that home ownership brings.
	11/26/2018 11:39	I most agree with the protection of natural assets and the desire to be "uniquely Oak Ridge". The greenbelt and open space Oak Ridge has are a totally unique feature you can't find other places. Similarly, I think the city should do everything it can to promote it's wonderful local businesses and amplify it's heritage (both atomic and pre-WWII).
	11/26/2018 10:17	Overlooked in this summary of community values - the things that the community values - is the idea of "community" itself. Oak Ridge values its community, its history, its story, its identity as a "Secret City," hidden away in the hills of East Tennessee, that, fed by TVA power, helped end World War II, and usher in the nuclear age. A city that became a leading international research center, a bastion of diversity, a slightly quirky and eclectic enclave at the crossroads of Knox, Roane, and Anderson counties. This is a story that the community values deeply. I would lead with "Our Story."
	11/25/2018 19:49	It's time to expand our commitment to education beyond the k-12 school system to embrace continuous learning for all Oak Ridge residents. Look at the public library of Silver Spring Maryland to see a progressive, inclusive model: 100 state of the art Macs for public use to fill out job apps, take online courses. Library filled to capacity as adults use the building as a hub to learn and grow.
	11/25/2018 13:38	You have captured the essence of what our community has to offer.

	11/24/2018 16:36	Where is animal welfare included in this vision? There seems to be a disconnect where the goals, visions and quality of life in the city intersects with the animal overpopulation crisis and how this growing city approaches solutions. Progressive and successful cities address the issue head on and from a humane standpoint that includes the no kill strategy in a multipronged and proactive way. Please consider studying this concept and perhaps allowing for effective and humane policies and programs that reflect the beliefs and values of the citizens of Oak Ridge.
	11/23/2018 21:24	Schools should make better use of natural assets.
	11/23/2018 21:14	It would be great to see green belts be more useful for community production: gardens, chickens, livestock, perennial Berry and nut orchards
	11/23/2018 18:53	I believe education is the highest value.
	11/23/2018 10:07	As a long time resident—I believe these values do represent our history and our future.
	11/22/2018 16:58	Our uniqueness in part is due to the original permanent housing or alphabet homes which are now a treasure trove for the first time homebuyer.
	11/22/2018 14:26	A very concise description of the values distilled from the inputs of hundreds of participants.
	11/21/2018 21:53	Other values might include culture and diversity.
	11/21/2018 20:08	"Our Past is a Gateway to Our Future". Families and singles came to OR in abundance in 1943-44, many of them leaving all they had to work for the War Effort. OR has lost it's respect for them. We are what we are developed from the War and Saved the World plus became a Developer in Science, Nuclear & Medicine. The Randall report the citizen's paid for when Kahida was Mayor told it all. Our towns salvation is Tourism but "NO" city keeps taring down 1940 sites and adding a negative interest in org. housing. TINY housing is all the rage for some, if I was to go that way I'd be all over remodeling an org. than a trailer size. And find out WHY??? the Plants send welcome letters to newcomers to seek housing in the Turkey Ck, Hardin Valley area, etc. OR companies provides many jobs and then they don't support the TOWN's livelihood. Our current City Manger is totally disrespectful of our elder generation and has conducted that attitude esp when we had meetings at the past AMSE auditorium meetings, what a shame, sadly most of them are now deceased feeling forgotten. I'm NOT and work to see they are respected, acknowledged and remembered by helping to build on our PAST to support our FUTURE. The Oak Ridge story is vital to our Nation. ALWAYS! If City focused 1/2 as much on our History and they do on the Rowing we would start getting somewhere!

	11/21/2018 20:05	<p>We need to get city council members and especially a REAL city manager who care more about the city as a whole rather than their own personal property values. Tired of having a substandard Animal Shelter and watching them throw more and more funding at a golf course. Also tired of them selling out our green space to crappy developers that never keep up their end of an already crappy bargain. No mixed use space and no park like they promised, more urban sprawl. There are plenty of vacant buildings but they let developers take over green space with mature trees to put in more development, which will probably remain vacant. Terrible deals, terrible planning, and terrible that no one actually listens to the people of this city. WE NEED A NEW ANIMAL SHELTER!!!! The current facility is dated and too small for potential adopters to visit with and pick out animals.</p>
	11/21/2018 18:52	<p>We want to be "unique" but not uniquely "old" compared to surrounding communities or uniquely "lower income."</p>
	11/21/2018 18:16	<p>The statements do not include the value senior citizens provide for the city. There is a great untapped resource in these citizens. There is also a need to look at their needs and how our city is addressing those needs.</p>
	11/21/2018 18:09	<p>Oak Ridge is still the place where the traditional values reflected in the Blueprint introduction are held in high regard. However our ability to continue with such ideals are under threat mostly from economic pressures. We have a lot of debt as a city and we have a lot of expensive problems left to solve. I hope that the Blueprint will mark the turning point of having faced our future and be the guide for near term solutions. The need for development and redevelopment to modernize our public and private infrastructure in both businesses and neighborhood housing is paramount in our future success. We need to balance our tax base and provide a place where people want to be and can find housing they want and other features for their lives. If we want to look at one of our values that has maintained its prominence throughout the history of Oak Ridge through to today, I would point to education where the city schools have succeeded when demographic changes seemed bleak. The schools have adapted and delivered for our students and our workforce. The schools are my Oak Ridge lighthouse, both marking dangerous waters and preventing disasters. The schools are showing us that we can do this.</p>

	11/21/2018 17:15	Although I agree these are solid values, I do not see these values fitting with the stated goals. The reason is I believe these have always been valued here but have not translated to growth or economic sustainability. For example, technology and innovation. That exists through ORNL, Y12 and such but not to the community. Much of the city feels dated so to be so invested in technology. Much of what makes the city unattractive to younger families is there is little for them to do, low selection of good retail and unique places to eat. 12 Taco Bell's won't do it. That rolls up to younger adults. They want good apartments and affordable houses, Target, Whole Foods, Sushi, Italian food, coffee shops not called Starbucks & other like places. They also want youth sports options for their kids and accessible & usable technology. Not just a super computer locked up at ORNL. I do believe the blueprint is a good start. I'm just ready to see results.
	11/21/2018 16:06	Using nature trails and parks develop family values.
	11/21/2018 15:33	I grew up in Oak Ridge born in 1956. I got to see the community atmosphere that we had through the 70's, the things you listed above are good points, but what can be done to improve utilization of empty buildings from failed businesses, and what can be done to offer young families to move here instead of living in west Knoxville.
	11/21/2018 14:23	The values of Oak Ridge is why we moved here: green spaces to hike and breathe, education and STEM. Yes Oak Ridge is unique and that is great!

### Responses by EMAIL

		My feedback would be why the city is not leveraging the AMSE site and orau sites into the first new urban neighborhood. The current housing proposal on the AMSE site is pretty low bar. Could be much better. Between orau, AMSE and main street phase two there is s great opportunity here. Frankly the city is missing the opportunity and the urgent need to connect these efforts together. My official comment for the blueprint.
		Nathalie, the prime place you gave education in Oak Ridge values of the blueprint was well-expressed. I don't know if your background includes previous knowledge of Oak Ridge, but as I finished reading through the school's 75th Anniversary history this afternoon, it struck me that if someone wants to get a teacher's sense of what it means to be a part of this school system they can do no better than read the final section of that book which is comprised of narratives written by teachers who joined the system. Even as familiar as I am with all of that, I got a sense of being part of something special that I had not perceived before and it was very moving. You don't really need to read it, but if anyone wants to look it over I'll be happy to loan a copy.

		<p>Thank you, Ms. Schmidt and Mr. Blasius, for this follow-up on the Oak Ridge Blueprint. I have submitted input via the survey. I hope there will be future emails alerting we citizens (especially those of us "old fogies" who don't use social media very much) about opportunities to attend meetings and continue participating in this process. I am really concerned about the housing issues in the community, and I noted on my survey response that it was disappointing to see little mention of them in the four values and goals. If we don't make it possible for young people to buy homes, fix them up, and take pride in their neighborhoods, or for older citizens to afford their homes on limited retirement income and likewise maintain them, we will find ourselves revisiting the same problems with blight or neglect that have been a theme ever since we moved here in 2003. I'll keep an eye out for future emails (with at least links to viewing other materials as were provided in the email sent on the 21st. Please keep up the good work, and I hope I can participate actively in the future.</p>
		<p>Are there any plans to open discussions for the new Mall area? It looks nothing like the pictures we were promised. The drawings I saw looked park like, what we got is a giant sea of concrete. What happened?</p>
		<p>I'm not sure that I really have a continued interest in this process. I've seen no evidence that even one of my suggestions from my previous interactions has been considered. I generally find that Oak Ridge ignores Hendrix Creek with no parks or green space available to children without crossing busy multilane roads. Here are some reasons that I feel Oak Ridge is simply building statistics of citizen participation without listening. (1). When the Wolf Creek Subdivision was built, the Hendrix Creek citizens were concerned about traffic increases. We passed word around about a planning meeting to decide whether the project was to go forward. Approximately 20 residents of Hendrix Creek showed up for the meeting. When we arrived, we found that the meeting had been rescheduled without notifying us and occurred just prior to our arrival. Of course the developers all knew about the change in the meeting time and attended. (2). I attended a bike meeting to solicit input on ways to make Oak Ridge a more bike friendly city. Everyone commented about how reasonable the requests were, pledged to move forward and pledged to have further meetings. None of the suggestions moved forward. No new meetings occurred as far as I know. (3). I had several concerns that I expressed at the citizen input to the city plan. These include a lack of park access to children in Hendrix Creek, and the closing of the bypass between Briarcliff and Emery Valley Road. No one ever got back to me about my concerns and Hendrix Creek was not even mentioned in the plan- a fact pointed out by my wife when she read the draft.</p>