

Comprehensive Plan Update

Slide 3:

- What is a comprehensive plan and why do we need it?

Slide 4:

- A comprehensive plan is the 10-20, long-term vision for how a city should grow and develop in the future.
- It is created from community input and sets the community's vision for the future.
- It helps guide policies and ordinances.
- The comprehensive plan also is an important tool for decision making, as well as grant applications.
- Comprehensive Plans are regulated by Tennessee State Law. The adopted comprehensive plan provides the legal basis for zoning.

Oak Ridge

Slide 5:

- Oak Ridge is growing and changing, especially with recent developments coming to the City. Do we want to let growth happen to us, or take an active role in guiding it? This comprehensive plan will work to direct the growth for the benefit of the entire community. The next few slides will give an overview of the growth and change in Oak Ridge.

Slide 6:

- Oak Ridge's population peaked in the 1940s when the City was first built from the ground up for the Manhattan Project. At that time, the population was about 75,000.
- The population of Oak Ridge, almost unexplainably, hovered just below 30,000 for nearly 7 decades!
- In light of new housing developments, job growth and regional housing demand, the City has grown about 10% since the late 20-teens.
- Based on existing developed or planned developments, the population has the **POTENTIAL** (not a city projection) of reaching around 40K by 2030.

Slide 7:

- On the map, you can see primarily residential areas where this growth has occurred or is likely to continue occurring.

Slide 8:

- Oak Ridge is located in 2 counties.
- It is in a strategic location with close proximity to the mountains and to nearby cities.
- In a fun bit of geography trivia, Oak Ridge has a similar land mass to Knoxville, which has 6 times the population.

Slide 9:

- Data from building permit activity shows a dramatic increase in both building activity, but also the size and scale of new development, in the last 8 years (size of developments is manifested in much higher permit fees based on much greater value of construction)
- You can see a 79% increase in the fees collected between 2022 and 2025.
- It is anticipated that this will continue to increase going into 2025.

Slide 10:

- Additionally, the value of the construction since 2017 has also increased from about \$39 million in 2017 to about \$272 million in 2025.
- This further shows the level of investment in the community and the change that has occurred over time.

Slide 11:

- With all of this knowledge of growth and change in mind. A lot has changed in the last 30, almost 40, years and further change is anticipated to come.
- The current land use plan was last updated in 1988, and another update is long overdue.
- On the map, you can see the residential uses in yellow, commercial uses in red, office and institutional uses in pink, industrial uses in dark blue, and public uses in light blue.
- Although Public, or the Light Blue areas, include City, DOE, and other government uses, DOE property is over half of the City.
- As we move forward with this update, the Project Team will consider what the community wants to see developed in the future, what changes have occurred in the city over time, and what are the physical limitations to growth. They will use this to develop an updated plan to guide Oak Ridge over the next 20 years.

City Blueprint

Slide 12:

- This next section is about the 2019 City Blueprint and this Comprehensive Update Process.

Slide 13:

- Oak Ridge worked on the City Blueprint visioning project between 2017-2019 and had a tremendous amount of community input.
- Before starting the Oak Ridge 2045 Comprehensive Plan project, the Planning Commission confirmed that the vision contained in the Blueprint is still valid.
- The clear message was to “Grow Oak Ridge.”
 - That does not mean aimless, headlong growth at all costs, but rather smart, efficient, fortifying growth that improves quality of life, while it broadens and deepens our tax base.

Slide 14:

- An over-arching theme was the desire to be “uniquely Oak Ridge,” or to build up a local identity that expresses the strengths and intentions of the community.
 - The things that make us ‘us’ and our path to a more sustainable and higher quality future.
- This vision that resulted from that effort was to “Grow Oak Ridge.”
 - In order to reduce negative impacts on the existing community, this growth would be approached as Smart Growth and to optimize existing infrastructure.
- The values of the Blueprint serve as guidance for the new plan. These are:
 - Science/Technology Heritage.
 - Public Education Commitment.
 - Natural Asset Importance.

Slides 15:

- The Blueprint is organized into six plan elements or objectives, which assist City Leadership with policy decisions and implementing strategies.
- The six objectives include the following:
 - 1. Economic Vitality and Sustainable Growth.
 - 2. Housing and Healthy Neighborhoods.
 - 3. Recreation and Natural Assets.
 - 4. Land Use and Infrastructure.
 - 5. Transportation and Mobility.

- The City has also hired a consultant team that consists of Freese and Nichols and Pillars Development to work on the project.
- Freese and Nichols staff are leading the consultant team and focusing on plan drafting, mapping, and small area planning.
- Pillars Development staff are mainly focused on public engagement.
- You can expect to see staff members from the City and the firms during public meetings and engagement events.