

# OAK RIDGE 2045



A CENTURY OF HERITAGE  
A FUTURE OF PROMISE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

**Virtual Meeting**  
February 19, 2025



# Housekeeping

- *Cameras and microphones are turned off.*
- *Use the Q&A feature to ask questions throughout the presentation. Questions will be answered at the end of the presentation.*
- *A recording of the presentation and the slides will be available on the project website following the meeting.*

## Join the Menti!

- *We want to hear from you during the meeting.*
- *Use your phone to scan the QR code or computer browser to access [www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)*

Go to  
**www.menti.com**

Enter the code

**8504 0561**



Or use QR code

Question 1

# What are some things that you consider **uniquely** Oak Ridge?

The river, the labs, the topography, the people

Science, History, Schools, Rowing, Community Involvement, Historical Jackson Square

Natural resources that draw people here

History, natural recreational spaces, the arts community

The nuclear industries - allows a relatively small City to have a much larger impact.

Not enough outreach to visitirs

History

Manhattan Project background. International population. Lots of scientists. Good school system.

## Question 1

# What are some things that you consider **uniquely** Oak Ridge?

Our very unique history

our history emphasis on education multitude of cultural options

Rowing! Support for nuclear energy/research/etc

Celebration of greenways and green spaces

The unique origin and great small town feel

There are more community organizations, per capita, in Oak Ridge than any place I am aware of, with a rich history in their development.

Unique history, great school system, waterways and greenways

The City of Oak Ridge has a unique Arts culture and history heritage. Our community also has a vibrant parks and greenways.

## Question 1

# What are some things that you consider **uniquely** Oak Ridge?

There is a diversity of citizens

Supporting great schools

Open and welcoming environment

Pet friendly

Yes. Oak Ridge has had several comprehensive plans. We usually don't do much with them.

# Mayor Warren Gooch and Planning Commission Chair H. Stephen Whitson





# Wayne Blasius

Planning and Development Director

# Meet The Team

# Oak Ridge Representatives

## Planning & Development Department

Wayne Blasius, *Director*

Jennifer Williams, AICP, *Senior Planner*

## Information Services Department

Amy Fitzgerald, PhD, *Director*

Amy Davis, *GIS Coordinator*

## Public Works Department

Bryan Mills, PE, *City Engineer*

## Planning Commission

H. Stephen Whitson, *Chair*

Jim Dodson, *Vice Chair*

Phillip Yager, *Secretary/Parliamentarian*

Laura B. Carrington\*

*(Steering Committee Chair)*

Charles Hensley

David Kitzmiller\*

Greta Ownby

Roger Petrie

Jane Shelton\*

Benjamin J. Stephens

\*Plan Steering Committee member



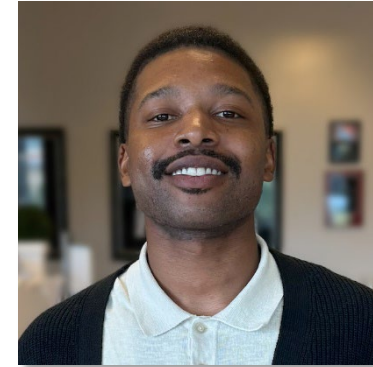
# Project Team



**Danny Wilson, AICP, ISA**  
*Project Manager*



**Alexis Garcia, AICP**  
*Assistant Project Manager*



**Kaleb Otems**  
*Project Planner*



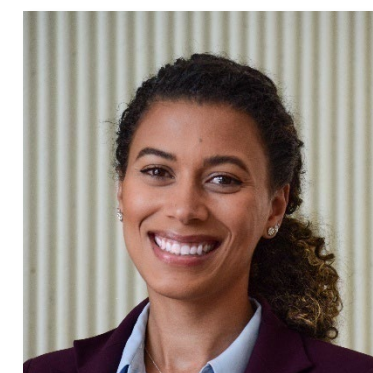
**Christopher Wesseln**  
*Project Planner & GIS*



**Edward Henley**  
*Public Engagement*



**Megan Bennett**  
*Public Engagement*



**Malina Springer**  
*Public Engagement*



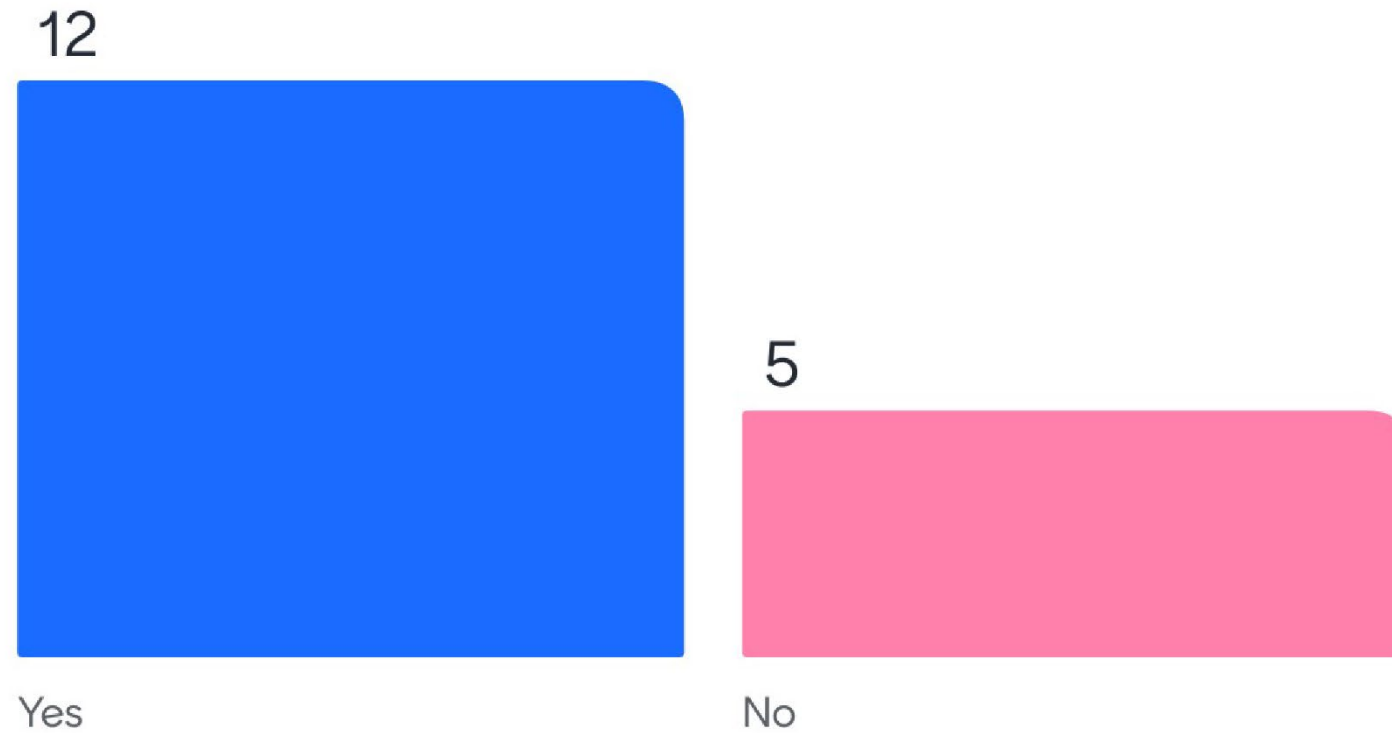
**Sam Milton**  
*Public Engagement*

# Comprehensive Plan Update

What is it? Why do we need it?

Question 2

# Have you heard of a comprehensive plan before?



# What is a Comprehensive Plan?

## *A Comprehensive Plan is:*

- Community's vision of the future
- Long-term statement that guides policy
- Basis for subsequent ordinances
- Tool for decision making

Tennessee State Law – TCA 13-4-201-203:

***“It is the function and duty of the (planning) commission to make and adopt an official general plan (or comprehensive plan) for the physical development of the municipality....”***  
(provides the legal basis for zoning)



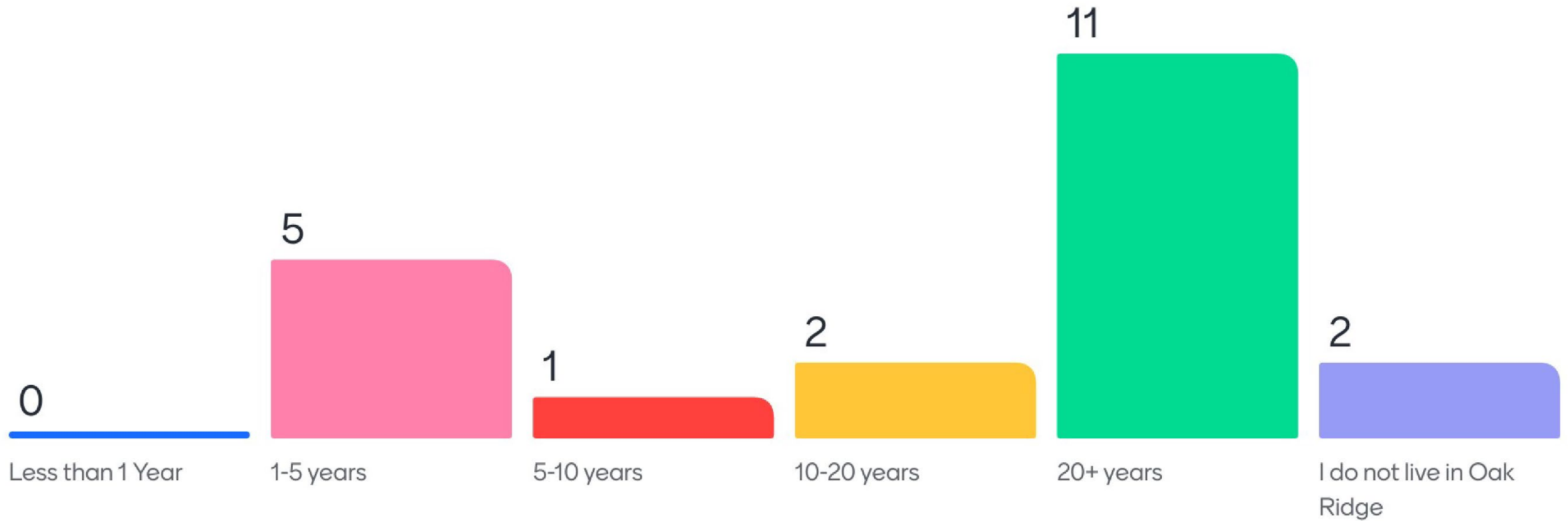


# Oak Ridge

## Is Growing and Changing

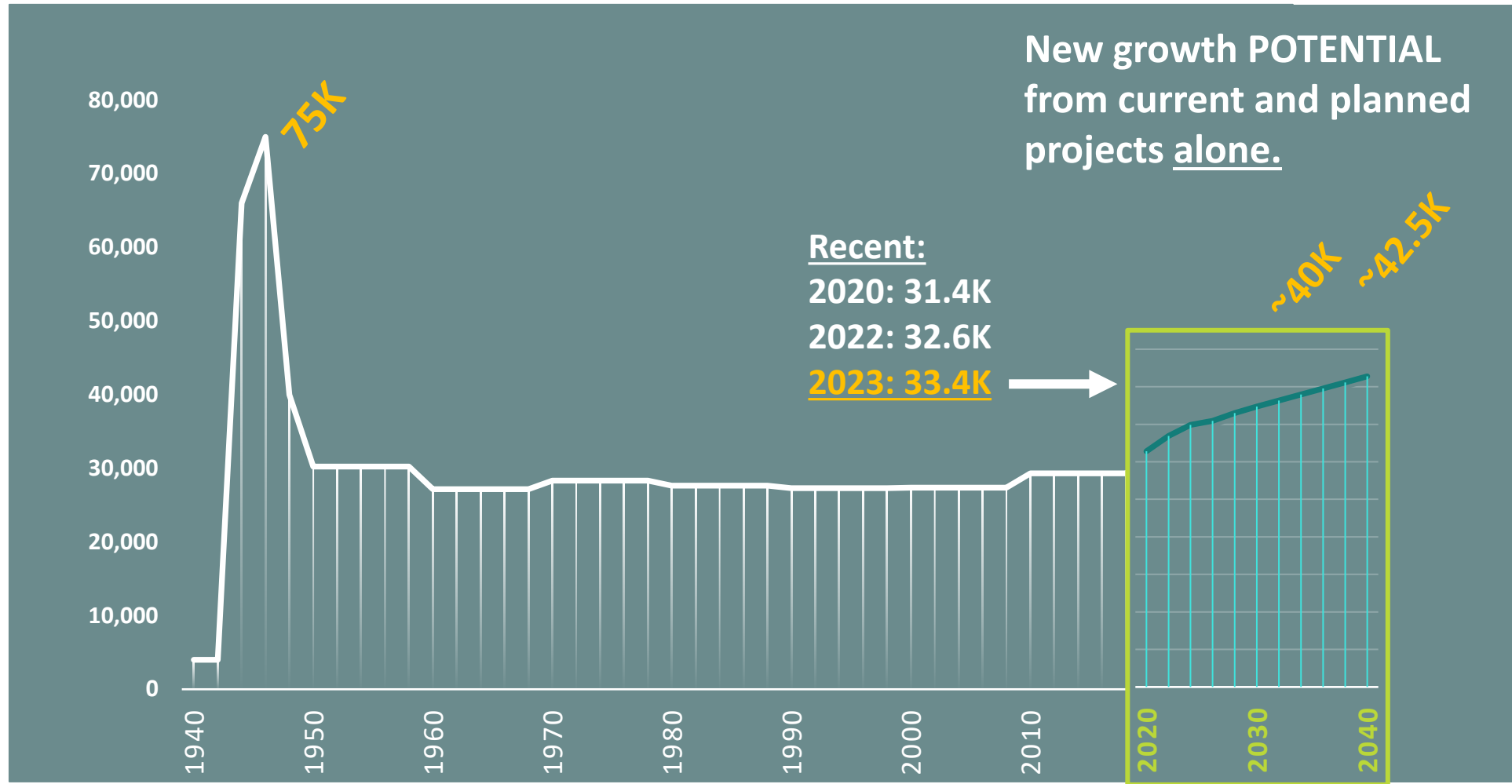
Question 3

# How long have you lived in Oak Ridge?



# Growth Trends

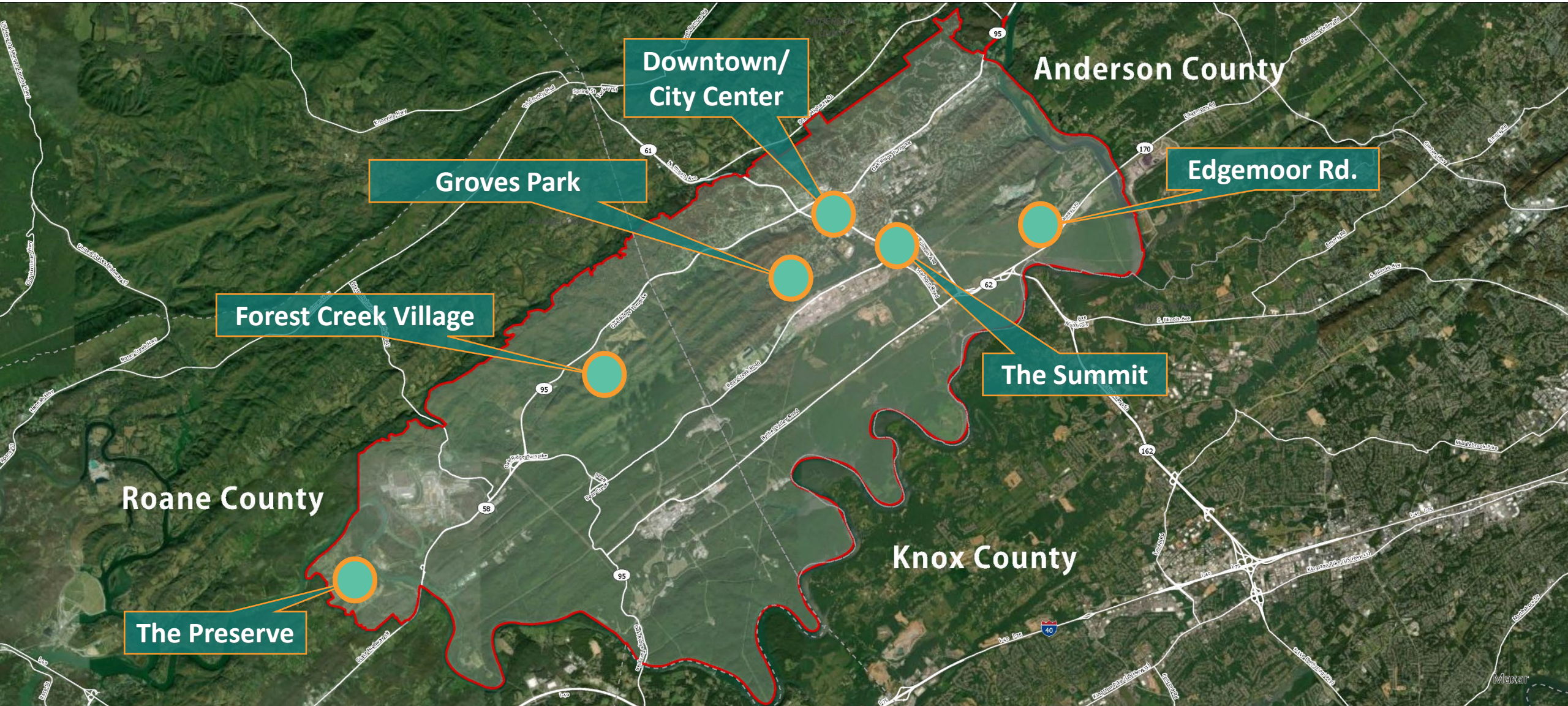
## Historic and Potential Population (1940-2040)



USCensus Figures from US Bureau of Census via secondary sources  
Pre 1960 figures from <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/oak-ridge/>

TNSDC Boyd Ctr. TN incorporated places 2022 estimated and change

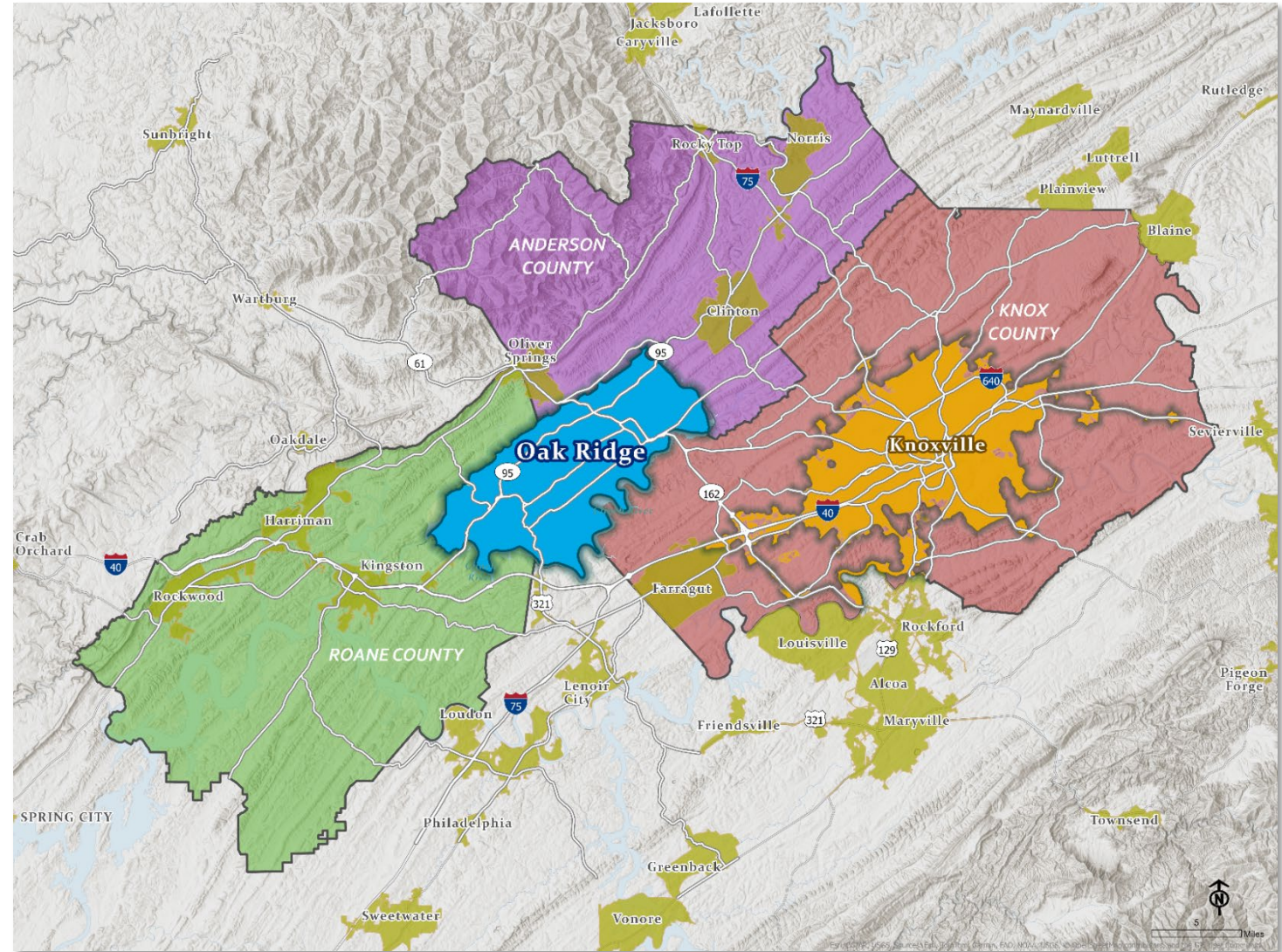
# Current and Planned Developments



# Regional Relationship

Oak Ridge is surprisingly similar in land mass to Knoxville— a city six times our population.

*Knoxville – 104 sq mi*  
*Oak Ridge – 92 sq mi*  
*Maryville – 16.8 sq mi*



# Development Activity

## DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY: 2022 – 2025

| Permit Type      | FY 22 Total |           | FY 23 Total |           | FY 24 Total |           | FY 25 (extrapolated) |           |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
|                  | Issued      | Fees      | Issued      | Fees      | Issued      | Fees      | Issued               | Fees      |
| Building         | 828         | \$377,748 | 799         | \$402,107 | 814         | \$489,140 | 1,084                | \$744,206 |
| Electrical       | 1,873       | \$40,635  | 1,980       | \$38,232  | 1,413       | \$32,400  | 1,588                | \$36,425  |
| Land Disturbance | 281         | \$12,855  | 174         | \$10,398  | 219         | \$9,660   | 262                  | \$24,710  |
| Mechanical       | 1,053       | \$23,7645 | 1,736       | \$27,411  | 1,275       | \$27,083  | 996                  | \$18,576  |
| Planning         | 148         | \$10,560  | 147         | \$8,316   | 136         | \$14,352  | 168                  | \$12,784  |
| Plumbing         | 1,089       | \$23,368  | 1,652       | \$31,411  | 1,315       | \$24,080  | 1,558                | \$38,178  |
| Total            | 5,272       | \$488,930 | 6,488       | \$517,875 | 5,172       | \$596,715 | 5,656                | \$874,871 |

Fees Collected: 2022 vs 2025: **+79%**

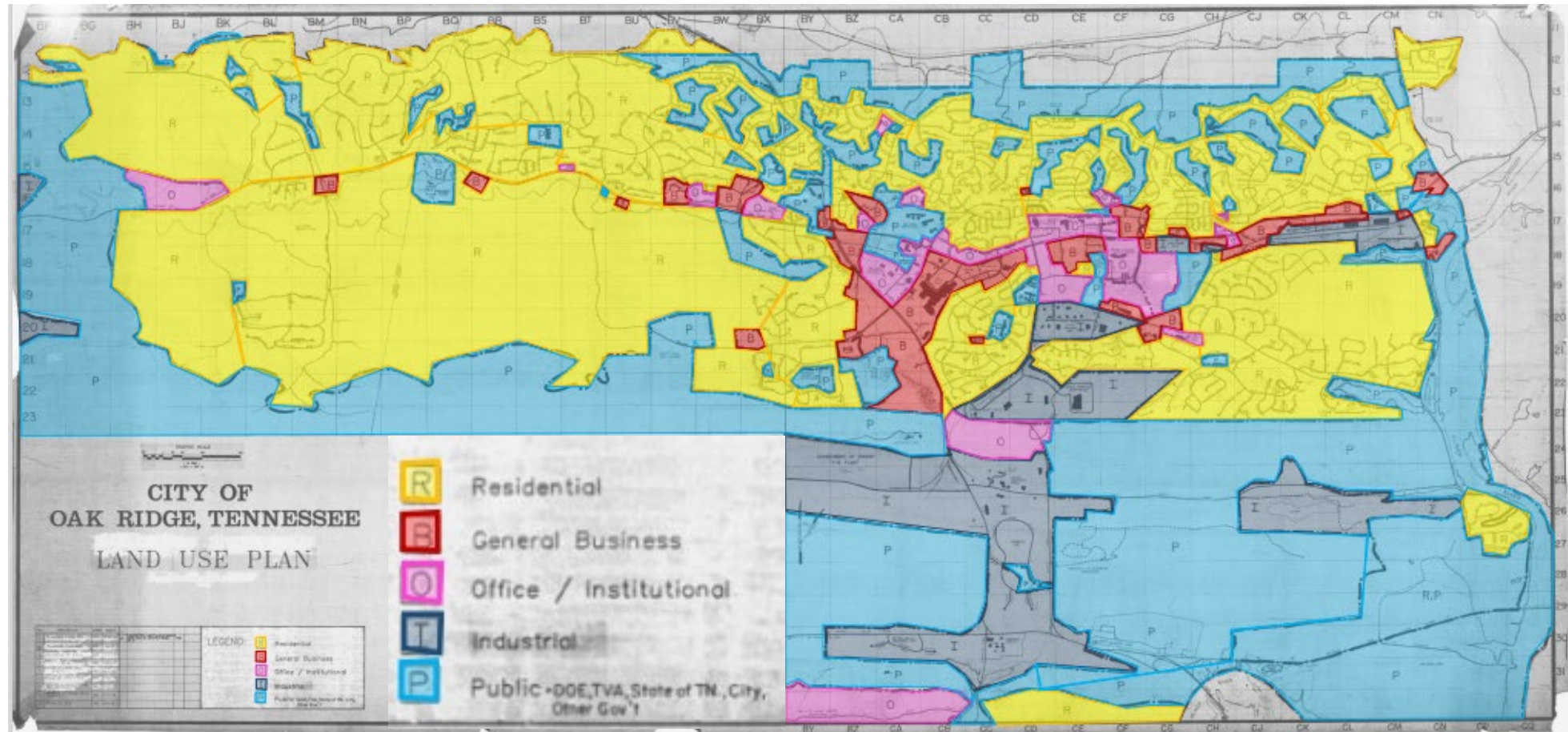
# Development Activity

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY: 2017 – 2025 (FY25, extrapolated)

| Value of Construction Permitted |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 2017                            | ~\$39 Million  |
| 2025                            | ~\$272 Million |
| Annual Difference               | ~\$233 Million |
| Percent Change                  | ~700% INCREASE |

# 1988 Land Use Plan

- The plan was last updated in 1988
- DOE Property is over half of the City!

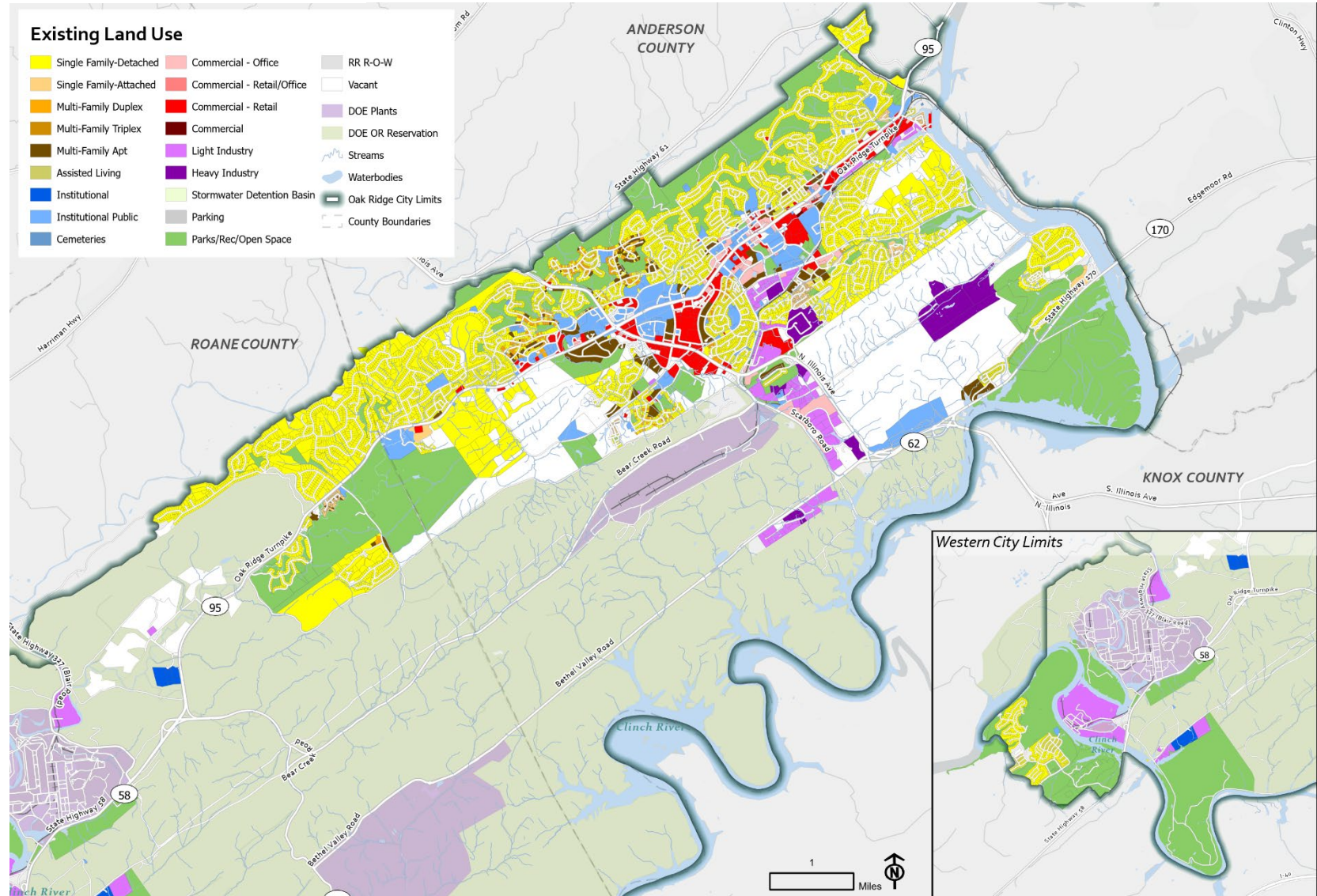


# Oak Ridge Today

# Existing Land Use

## Considerations

- Limitations related to DOE land
- Preservation of Legacy Housing
- Economic Announcements
  - New Orano Facility
  - Downtown Development
  - Residential Developments
- How does the City account for where people live, shop, and play?



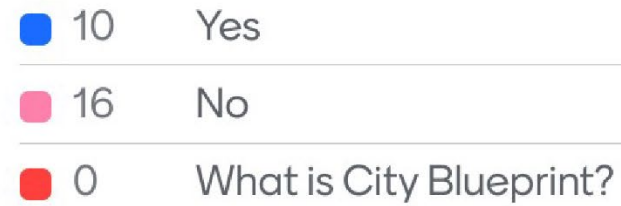
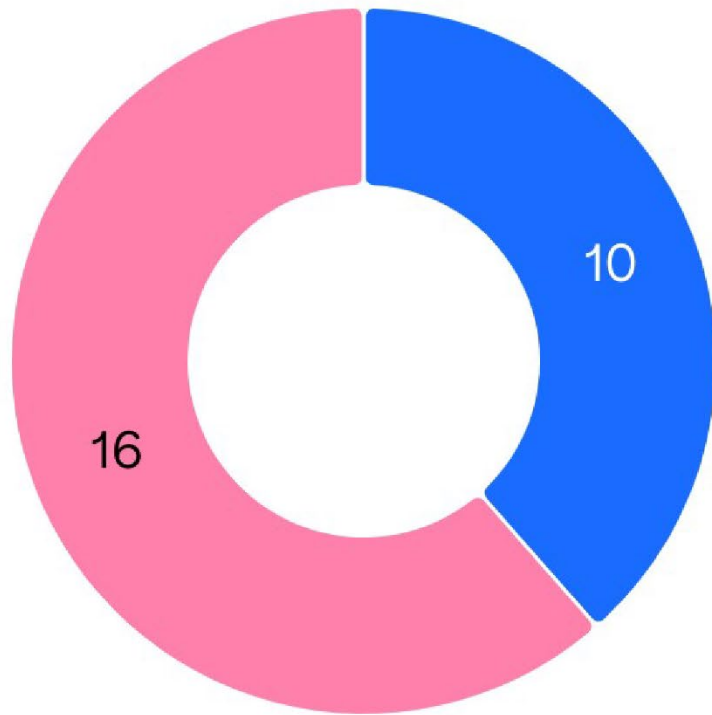
# City Blueprint

2019 Visioning Process

Jumping off point for the future.

Question 4

# Did you participate in the 2019 City Blueprint process?



# City Blueprint Guidance

- The Planning Commission determined that the community vision set by the *City Blueprint* completed in **2019** is still a **valid starting point** for the Comprehensive Plan.

- The clear message from the City Blueprint was to:

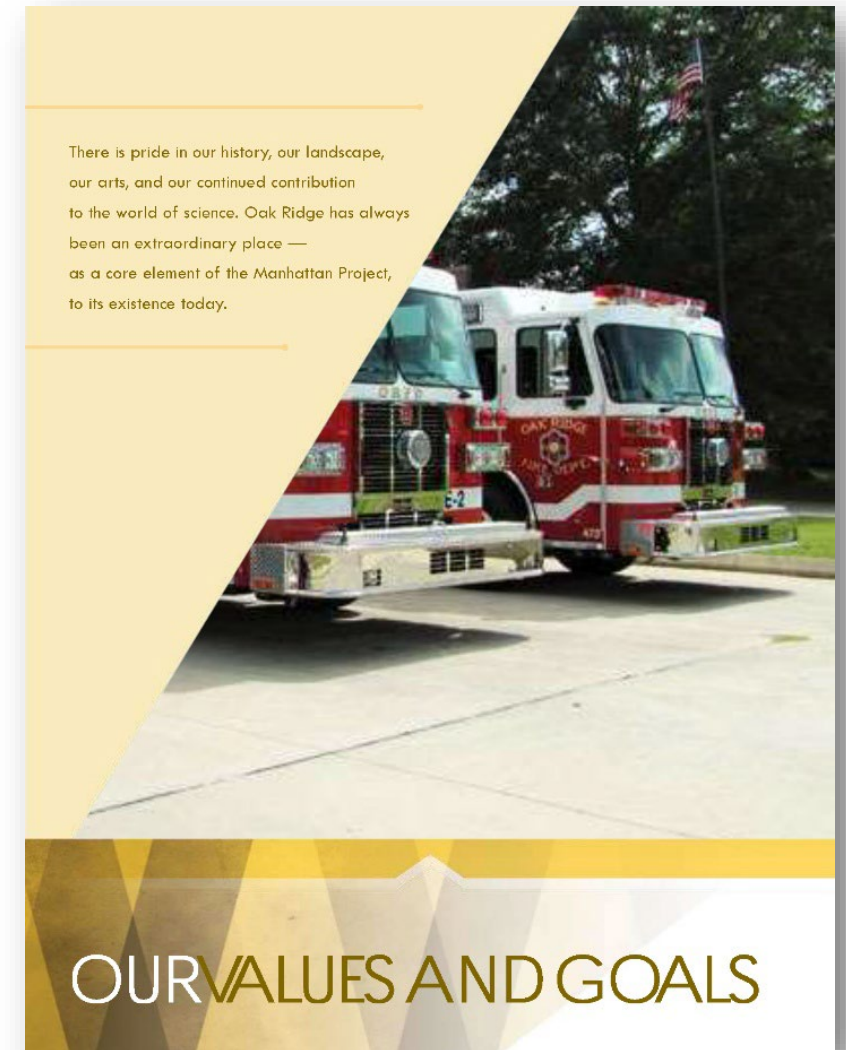
## GROW OAK RIDGE

- 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.**



# Blueprint Vision

- **Uniquely Oak Ridge:** The things that make us ‘us’ and our path to a more sustainable and higher quality future.
- Vision: *Grow Oak Ridge*
  - Smart Growth
  - Optimize Existing Infrastructure
- Values: **Guidance for the new plan**
  - Science/Technology Heritage
  - Public Education Commitment
  - Natural Asset Importance



# Blueprint Objectives

Six plan elements or objectives organize the Goals and Values to help leadership form policies and implement strategies.

## Plan Elements

1. **Economic Vitality & Sustainable Growth**
2. **Housing & Healthy Neighborhoods**
3. **Recreation & Natural Assets**
4. **Land Use & Infrastructure**
5. **Transportation & Mobility**
6. **Livability & Community Vibrancy**

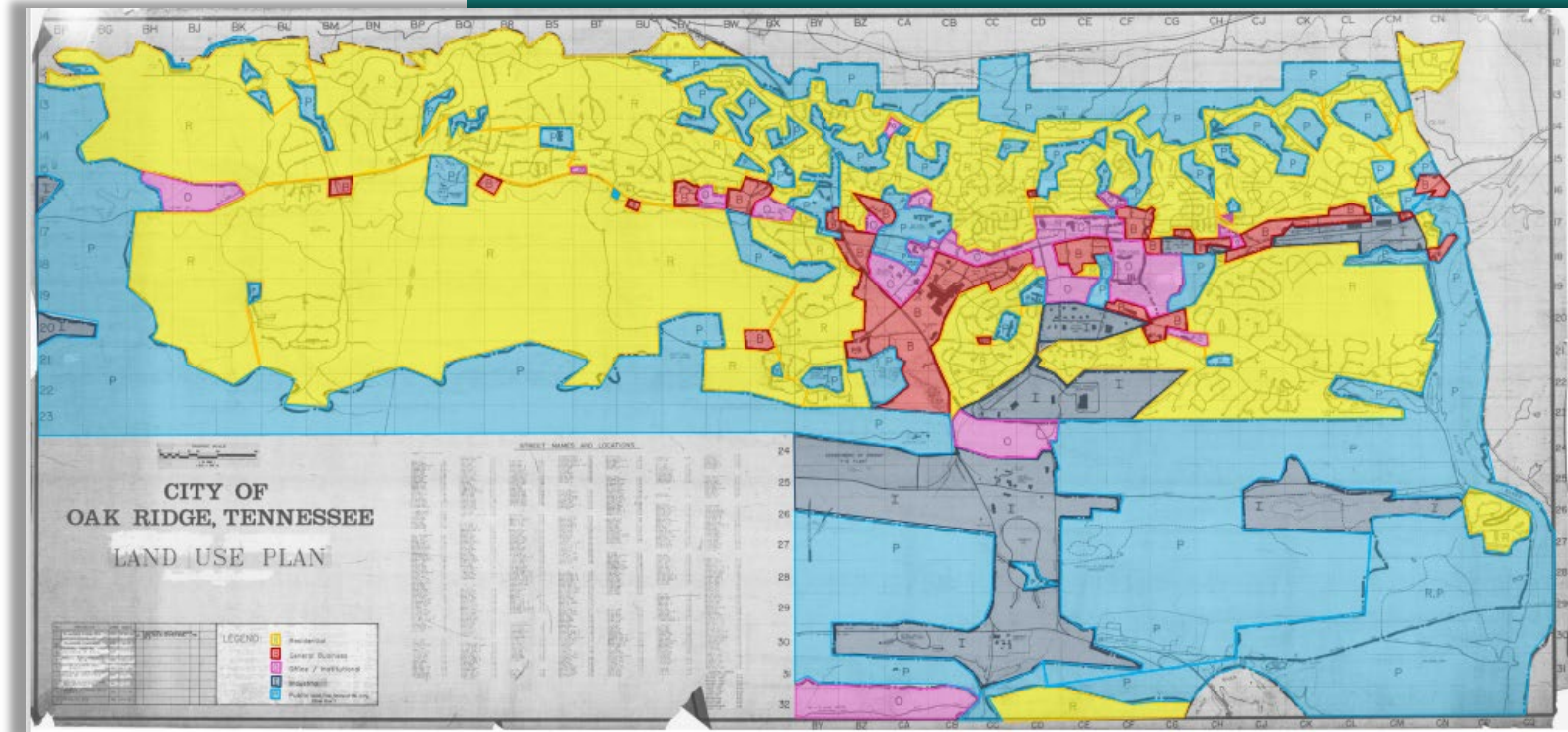


# Updating the Land Use Map

*The Future Land Use Map is used to influence zoning map decisions.*

One of the largest elements of the Comprehensive Plan is the Future Land Use Map.

This map helps determine how the City will grow by establishing where certain land uses should be located and how areas should develop.



# Small Area Studies

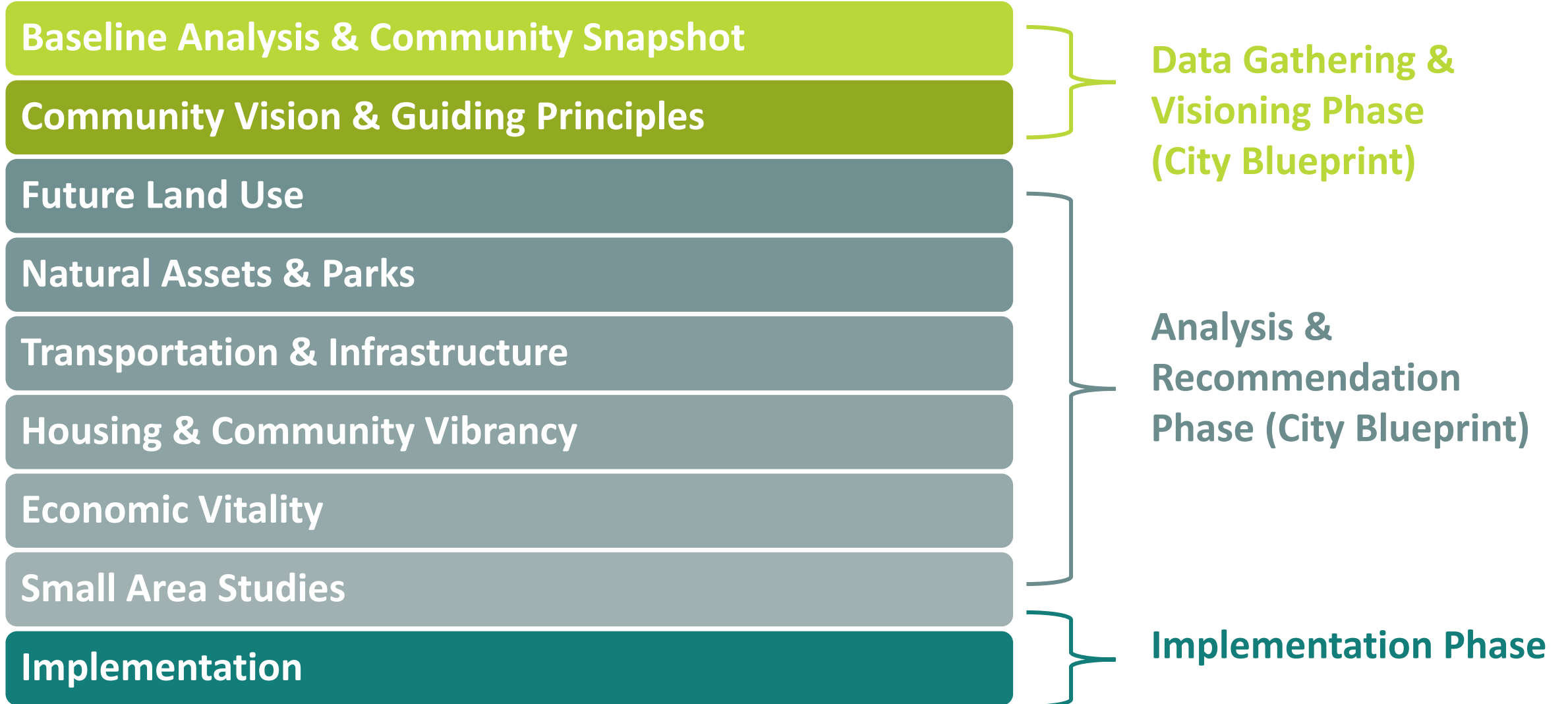
The Plan will include five small area studies:

1. Wilson St. Corridor (Downtown)
2. S Illinois Ave. Commercial Corridor
3. Grove Center Area
4. Jackson Square Area
5. Melton Lake Waterfront

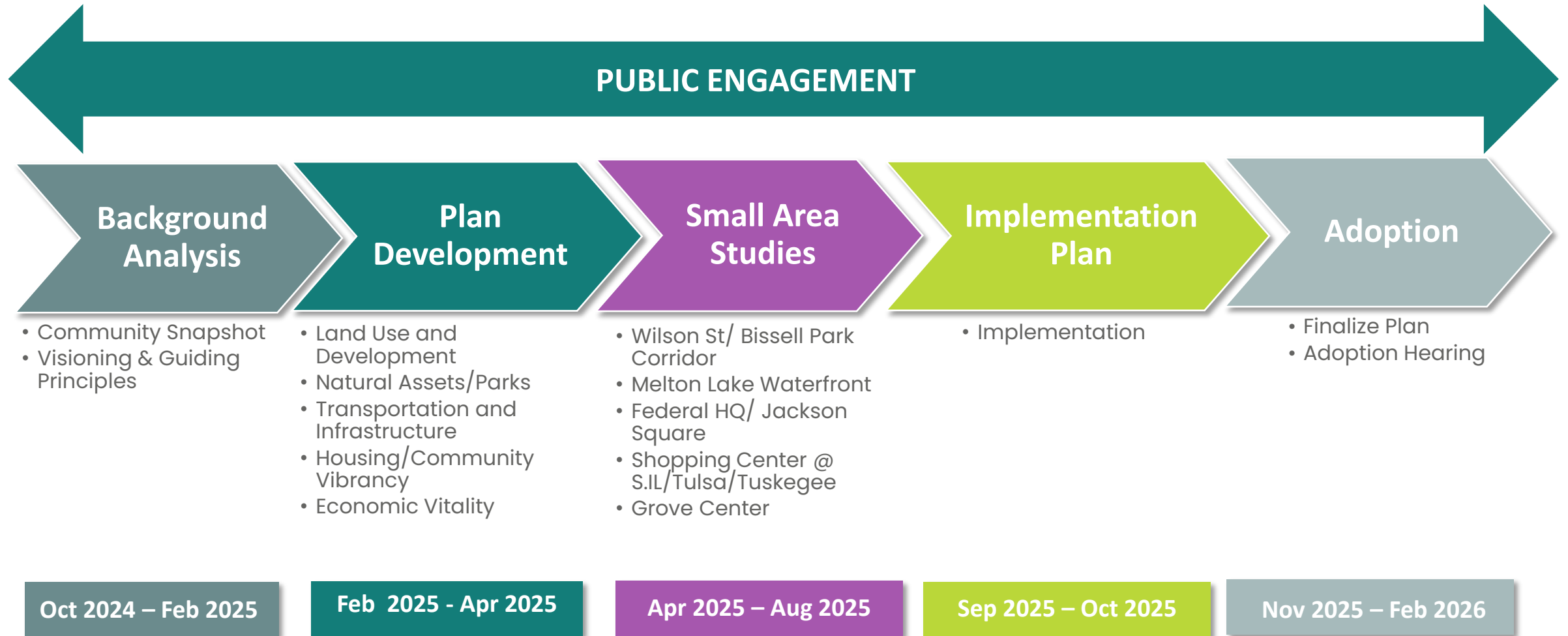
*The studies will go into more detail for the five areas to develop visions and strategies for the future.*



# Plan Elements



# Schedule

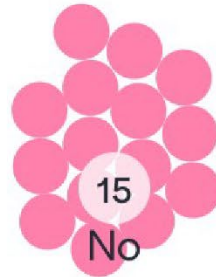


# Engagement

## How to Be Involved

Question 5

# Have you taken the Oak Ridge 2045 online survey?



I'm going to take it right now!

# Get Involved!

## Variety of ways to participate and give input:

- Public meetings (virtual & in-person)
- Community events and popups
- Traditional media
- Social media
- Project Website
- Online Survey
- Community Ambassadors



# Meet the Ambassadors

## Ambassadors

- Venessa Spratling
- Sharon Crane
- Bethany Lemons
- Jr Hernandez

## Role of the Ambassadors

- Be an advocate for the Plan
- Enhance Outreach to the Community
- Engage with their local neighborhoods and organizations



# Engagement to Date

- Stakeholder Interviews November 14, 2024
- Presentations to the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and other Community Groups
- Community Ambassadors at Various Events
- Online Survey Launched December 19, 2024
- Community Events
  - Pop-up at Calamity Coffee
  - Pop-up at The Greens
  - Christmas Parade



# Visit the Project Website!

- Visit our interactive project website!
- Take the Online Survey!
- Tell us your vision!
- Sign up to stay updated!



Scan the QR Code to go to our Project Website  
**OakRidgeTN.Gov/ComprehensivePlan**

A screenshot of the Oak Ridge 2045 project website. The website has a teal header with the title 'OAK RIDGE 2045' and the tagline 'A CENTURY OF HERITAGE A FUTURE OF PROMISE'. The main content area is white with various sections. A green arrow labeled 'Click!' points to the 'Take the Online Survey!' button. A green arrow labeled 'Tell us!' points to the 'Tell us your vision for Oak Ridge' button. A green arrow labeled 'Connect!' points to the 'Sign Up for Updates!' button. The website sections include: 'Take the Online Survey!', 'Project Overview', 'Get Involved', 'Key Dates', 'Background Analysis', 'Oak Ridge Website', 'Project Documents', and 'Stay Connected!'.

**Take the Online Survey!**  
Share your input to help shape the future of Oak Ridge!  
[Take the online survey!](#)

**Project Overview**  
The City of Oak Ridge is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will help the City maintain its character, enhance the quality of life for its residents, and support economic development. The Comprehensive Plan will serve as the City's roadmap for the next 20 years. The City Council, Planning Commission, and City Staff will use the Plan to make important land use, budgeting, and development decisions. This Comprehensive Plan update will include specific implementation steps and expand the existing City Blueprint to help guide decisions related to:

- Future Land Use
- Neighborhood Planning
- 5 Small Focus Areas
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Redevelopment and Infill Opportunities

Throughout the planning process, the City will host a variety of community meetings, surveys, and engagement opportunities to allow the Oak Ridge community to help shape the vision for Oak Ridge. Visit this site regularly for updates and new engagement opportunities!

**Get Involved**  
**Community Participation**  
The Comprehensive Plan will be an action-oriented document that helps guide decisions in Oak Ridge and its neighborhoods. Over the next 18 months, the City will host various public meetings, events, and engagement opportunities.  
We want to hear from you! Tell us about your vision for the City of Oak Ridge! Click the button below.

[Tell us your vision for Oak Ridge](#)

**Key Dates**  
View the following events below to join us for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

**TBA**  
Virtual Open House #1  
Visit the homepage for access to the meeting; stay tuned for meeting updates!

**OAK RIDGE 2045**  
A CENTURY OF HERITAGE  
A FUTURE OF PROMISE

**Where are we in the Process?**  
★ **Background Analysis**  
Review the physical and regulatory context of the Oak Ridge area to develop a snapshot of existing conditions and identify potential redevelopment locations.  
[See more](#)

**Oak Ridge Website**  
Click here to be directed to the City of Oak Ridge's website!  
[City of Oak Ridge Website](#)

**Project Documents**  
Click the button below to view documents related to the Plan, such as previous meeting presentations, engagement summaries, and other documents.  
[Click here to view draft documents](#)

**Stay Connected!**  
Click the button below to sign up to receive updates!  
[Sign Up for Updates!](#)

# What We've Heard

Input received to date:

266

Survey Respondents

843

Comments

## Community's Vision For Oak Ridge

- **Vibrant neighborhoods** and commercial areas should be **safely connected** through vehicular transportation options, walking, and biking.
- Establish a **distinct visual identity** that celebrates Oak Ridge's **history, culture, and arts**, as well as current innovation in **education, STEM, and nuclear energy**.
- Be a **welcoming, diverse, and inclusive** community.

# What We've Heard

## Retaining Residents and Smart Growth

- Provide **recreation** and activities for all ages and abilities. Many families and young adults default to **traveling outside Oak Ridge for entertainment**.
- Ensure **quality, affordable housing** and options beyond aging stock.
- Create a **connected downtown** where residents and visitors can **gather for shopping and events**.

## Future City Improvements

- **Improve road and sidewalk conditions.** Current road conditions are not safe or accessible to its users.
- **Revitalize housing** and address vacant or unmaintained properties.
- Encourage **development and retail opportunities** along the **waterfront and Jackson Square**.
- Take advantage of the **parks, trails, and natural assets** by **connecting them** to each other and points of interest.
- Invest in city-wide beautification and **visual placemaking**.

**We want to  
hear from you!**

Question 6

# What is your **top** reason for living in Oak Ridge?

Proximity to work

Job

Homebase for the rest  
of my life

Work

Schools,

Close to our work

Great schools

Schools



30



## Question 6

# What is your **top** reason for living in Oak Ridge?

Near to work (doe support)

Exemplary schools!

Family

I've grown up in oak ridge and it is a vibrant community, aside from the copious amounts of chains

Near school and work

Close to Knoxville, but not Knoxville

Work, ability to access mountain biking and trails close to my house

Small community feel with larger community amenities. ie. arts, great schools

## Question 6

# What is your **top** reason for living in Oak Ridge?

It's centrally located and isn't gridlocked with traffic like Knoxville

Great Arts Community

convenience - my church, doctors, dentist, shopping are within five minutes of home

Cost of living and left a city the size of Knoxville in SW Florida, and the particular history of the City.

Close to work

Close to work family great dvhools

Accessible housing availability (aging in place)

Schools

## Question 6

# What is your **top** reason for living in Oak Ridge?

Safe place to live.

It's in East TN. We moved here from CO. We wanted a good school system and a neighborhood on the water. A place to put down roots and stay long-term.

Greenways

It's centrally located and hasn't suffered the traffic gridlock like West Knoxville

Diverse population of the community and Community Engagement

Family

Was born here and retired here.

Greenways, BORCE, rails to trails



Question 6

# What is your **top** reason for living in Oak Ridge?

Arts community

Access to a variety of  
jobs in the energy  
profession

Schools

Safer than knoxville

Schools - Arts and  
Science opportunities

medical practice. MMC  
used to be a splendid  
hospital

Small community feel

Welcoming small town



30



Question 6

# What is your **top** reason for living in Oak Ridge?

Semi-rural

outdoor activities and  
great schools

You have a voice

Diversity!

Diversity

Unique places  
Calamity's coffee, hops  
and hounds.

Natural amenities

Potential

## Question 6

# What is your **top** reason for living in Oak Ridge?

Convenience to DOE facilities and quality of schools.

Schools

community

Greenways

Mountain biking trail access

Safe place to live

unique shopping venues

Eliminate poorly zoned industrial areas. Clean up and improve warehouse rd area. Potential for great mixed area. Light industrial, entertainment, rails to trails

## Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

More restaurants

Affordable homes

More diverse (non-chain) restaurants.

More things for teens

More shopping

South Illinois visual impact is terrible

Decrease the parking lot sizes.

Slow growth as there is nothing wrong with being a small town.

Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

More roads in and out of Oak Ridge

More destinations within walking distance of west Oak Ridge

A centralized 'hub' or downtown

More things for young adults

1. More investment in our outdoor resources

Better choice of restaurants and more recreational facilities.

Not just fast food

More younger residents (under 50!); tighter governance of commercial developments; better traffic enforcement

Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

renew sidewalks, slow traffic in all residential areas

Public transport, clean it up!  
And take economic advantage of events like rowing

Stop all ridge top clearing

More interesting local businesses and Housing

better restaurants

Improved accessibility (sidewalks, etc)

Parks instead of a large amount of concrete

Encourage Covenant to invest more in Methodist Medical Center as a full service hospital

## Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

improving roadways,  
manage traffic better on  
busier roads community  
space- ie Jackson square  
conserving the greenways

Public transportation

better internet options

Sidewalks everywhere in  
town

Connect points of  
interest

Great open spaces, and  
almost unlimited  
involvements in  
community

More walkable/bikeable.  
Food truck park. Affordable  
housing/denser housing

Municipal  
internet/broadband,  
more bikeable, conserve  
greenspaces

Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

Bike access east to west

Downtown  
improvements

Street & sidewalk  
maintenance, park  
maintenance, zoning  
enforcement, how will future  
infrastructure be paid for?

Revamp of Warehouse  
road area

smaller parking lots

better public transportation,  
especially for handicapped  
citizens better sidewalks - wider  
and not blocked by poles,  
brush, trash cans find a way to  
make use of empty businesses

Shopping that offers walkability  
and restaurants. A performing  
arts center outside of the  
school. Larger than the grove to  
attract larger artists

Not car access to points  
of interest

## Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

More bicycle friendly

Awareness of the 20000  
acres we could have.

making our roads more  
beautiful

Bike access

. An ongoing dynamic  
visioneering process with  
input from grassroots to top  
level stakeholders.

Centralized hub!

bike trails

A freeway that goes  
over oak ridge to reduce  
traffic

## Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

Clean up the trash !

Entry ways to  
greenways

covered parking in  
commercial areas

Mountain bike trails

GOV LAND IS NOT  
INAVAILABLE

Clean up blight

Commitment

Collaboration

Question 7

If you could improve **three things** about Oak Ridge, what would you change?

listen

Question 8

In **ONE** word, what would make this plan successful?

35 responses





# Questions?

Use the Q&A feature to submit questions.

# Next Steps

# Next Steps

- Continuing **Baseline Analysis**
- Collecting Feedback in the **Online Survey**
- Continued **Public Engagement**
- Visit the Project Website for **upcoming In-Person and Virtual Meetings**



Scan the QR Code to go to our Project Website  
**OakRidgeTN.Gov/ComprehensivePlan**

