
Our Community and the Racetrack

**Oak Ridgers for Responsible
Development**
presented by
www.or4rd.org

Our Community and the Racetrack

Oak Ridgers for Responsible Development stands for:

- High-paying and quality jobs
- Protect our natural assets
- Align with our city Blueprint
- Positively impact the quality of life
- Core people: ~15, +50 within OR

We assume that the City has a duty to:

- Perform due diligence in evaluating proposals
- Honor a fiduciary responsibility to taxpaying residents
- Place resident concerns above developer interests

Four key community considerations:

- Natural Assets
- Economics of Land Use
- Zoning
- Politics with Citizens

Natural Assets

The city Blueprint says:

“Pursue the protection of natural and recreational areas through conservation easements, zoning, public awareness, and other means, so that natural assets do not become vulnerable to expansions in development or utility infrastructure over time.”

Natural assets have economic value:

“https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizens_to_Preserve_Overton_Park_v._Volpe citizens convinced the Supreme court that parks have value.”

Peace and quiet of nature:

- Adds value to our lives
- Improves our physical health
- Boosts our emotional well-being

GREENWAYS & GREENBELTS



Old growth forest in the federal reservation.

Areas were set-aside as greenbelts.
They provide sanctuaries for wildlife and native plants.
They offer city residents opportunities to enjoy nature
in an unspoiled setting.

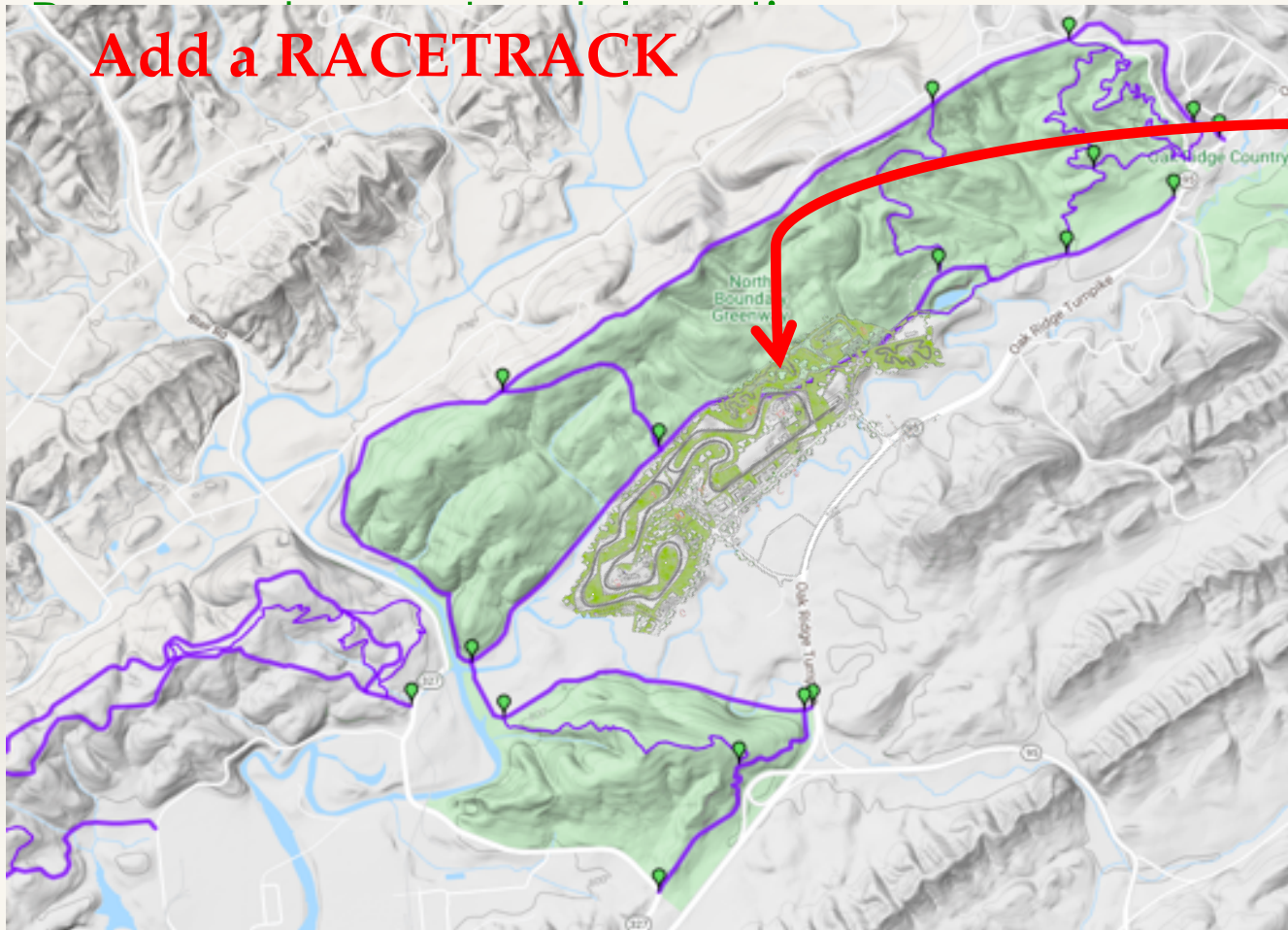
Natural Assets

What spoils a natural setting?



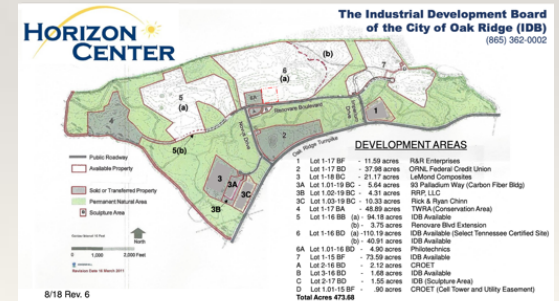
- Light pollution
- Litter
- Excessive use
- Invasive plants & animals
- Erosion
- Chemical pollution
- Noise
 - Lawn equipment
 - Planes
 - Cars and trucks
 - P.A. systems
 - Crowds

Natural Assets



The racetrack will be only a few yards from the greenway:

- Goes over current gravel road at Horizon Center lot #7
- McKinney Trail, up on the hill, already clearly hears turnpike traffic



Natural Assets and the Racetrack

Measured Noise Levels:

- Poplar Rd. Section NBT – 42 dB
- Turnpike Section NBT – 52 dB
- Champcar Series Race @ 50 ft. – 90 dB

42 dB



52 dB



77 dB



90 dB



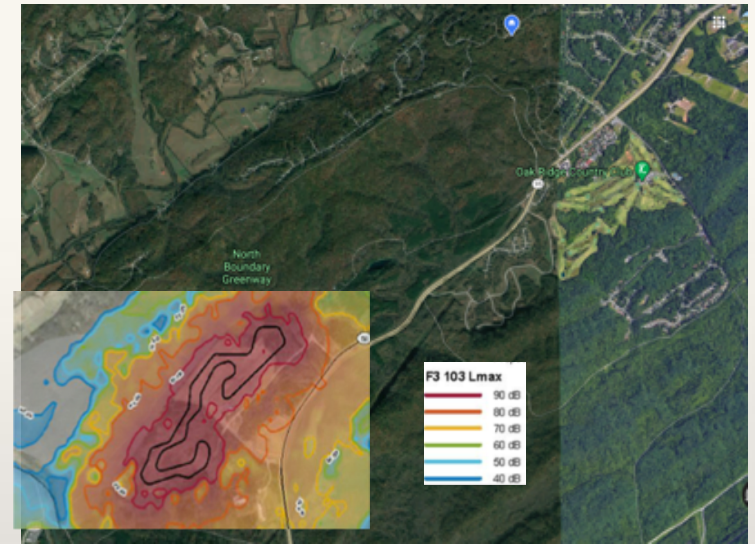
Decibel Scale
eps10



Natural Assets and the Racetrack

An adequate noise study has NOT been done:

- Simulation program was for aviation noise
- Noise was averaged to hide impact
 - We hear noise as it happens. We do not hear “**averaged**” noise: Blow a horn for 1 minute and wait 7h59m. We hear 90 dB for one minute, 40 dB otherwise. We **don't** hear 48 dB for 8 hours (OSHA).
- Every 10 dB increase doubles the perceived loudness of a noise.
 - 90 dB is 32 times louder than 40 dB. Sounds above 85 dB damage hearing.
- Every racecar will add 3-5 dB → 12 cars can add 36 dB to 60 dB
- The trails will be right next to the racetrack, nearest house less than 1 mile away!
Residents one mile from the Monticello racetrack cannot converse outside.



Noise Intensity around Racetrack (from EAA)

The information in the proposed EA Addendum about average noise is misleading. It also uses a program made for aircraft noise not for cars

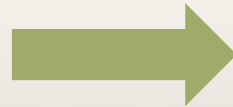
Natural Assets and the Racetrack




Noise	Average decibels (dB)
Leaves rustling, soft music, whisper	30
Average home noise	40
Normal conversation, background music	60
Office noise, inside car at 60 mph	70
Vacuum cleaner, average radio	75
Sounds above 85 dB are harmful	
Heavy traffic, window air conditioner, noisy restaurant, power lawn mower	80–89
Subway, shouted conversation	90–95
Boom box, ATV, motorcycle	96–100
School dance	101–105
Chainsaw, leaf blower, snowmobile	106–115
Sports crowd, rock concert	120–129
Stock car races	130
Gun shot, siren at 100 feet	140

Natural Assets and the Racetrack






National Park
Service
Information



Interior
Wild Skies Division



Acoustic Resources are Essential to Functioning Ecosystems and the Visitor Experience



Natural sounds are vital to the natural functioning of park ecosystems. Studies suggest that the acoustical environment is important in a number of ways including:

- Intra-species communication
- Territory establishment, finding desirable habitat
- Courtship and mating
- Nurturing and protecting young
- Predation and predator avoidance
- Effective use of habitat

Soundscapes are important to visitors and can provide an environment that:

- Is free from human made noise
- Is rich with opportunities to experience solitude, quietude, and the sounds of nature.
- Tells a unique cultural or historic story

Economics of Land Use

Economics of land use considerations:

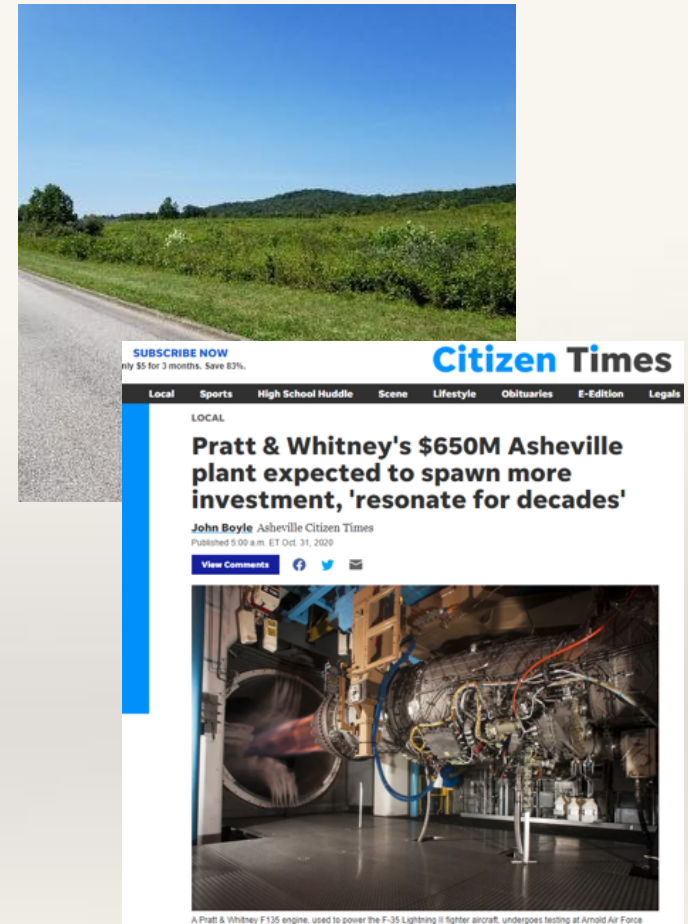
- A permanent decision for 50 years.
- Fiduciary duty to obtain highest and best use.
- Impact of use on future development.
- The “Opportunity Cost” of a mistake.



Economics of Land Use

Why hasn't the HC been developed?

- What an analysis of years of IDB meetings reveals:
 - NOT because it is divided into parcels
 - BECAUSE it has no spec building (city economic consultant recommendation)
 - Lack of experience with R&D???
- There is no need to remove the natural areas
 - That requirement is unique to the Racetrack's needs
 - What Industry needs a 2-mile-long parcel?
- **Changing market conditions will make this land increasingly attractive**



- 800 jobs: avg. salary \$68k / year
- 1M sq ft buildings / ca. 30 acres
- **Strive for this kind of success!**

Economics of Land Use

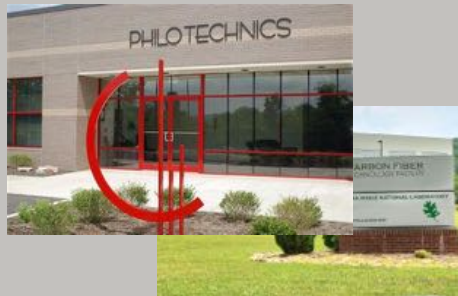
Race-track

- Sale of the 320 acres = **\$4,800,000** to IDB?
- 50 Year Sources
 - Estimated Property taxes on \$50,000,000:
 - $\times 0.4 \times 2.31 / 100 =$
\$462,000
 - $\$462,000 \times 50 \text{ yrs} =$
\$23,100,000
- Sales taxes resulting from business activity on 320 acres: hotel ?? maybe 100K\$

Value per acre

Land Value Based on Existing Uses of the 3 parcels with buildings

- Total Assessment = \$13,381,100
- Total Acreage = 31.71
- Average Assessed Value = 421,984/acre



Industry potential

- 320 acres @ \$421,984/acre = **\$135,034,752**
- Lost assessment:
 - $\$135,034,752 - \$50,000,000 =$
\$85,034,752
- Lost Property Tax Revenue
 - $\$85,034,753 \times 0.4 \times 2.31 / 100 =$
\$785,721/year or
\$39,286,055/50 years

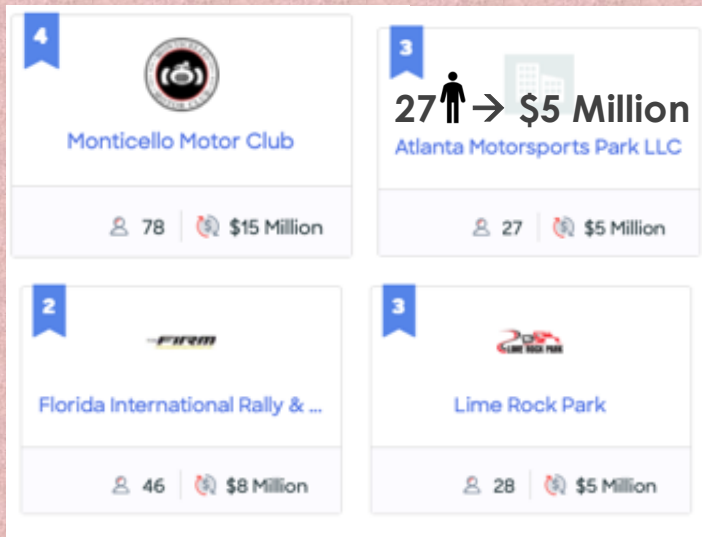


Economics of Land Use

Revenue examples: better revenue per acre with industry jobs

Race-tracks

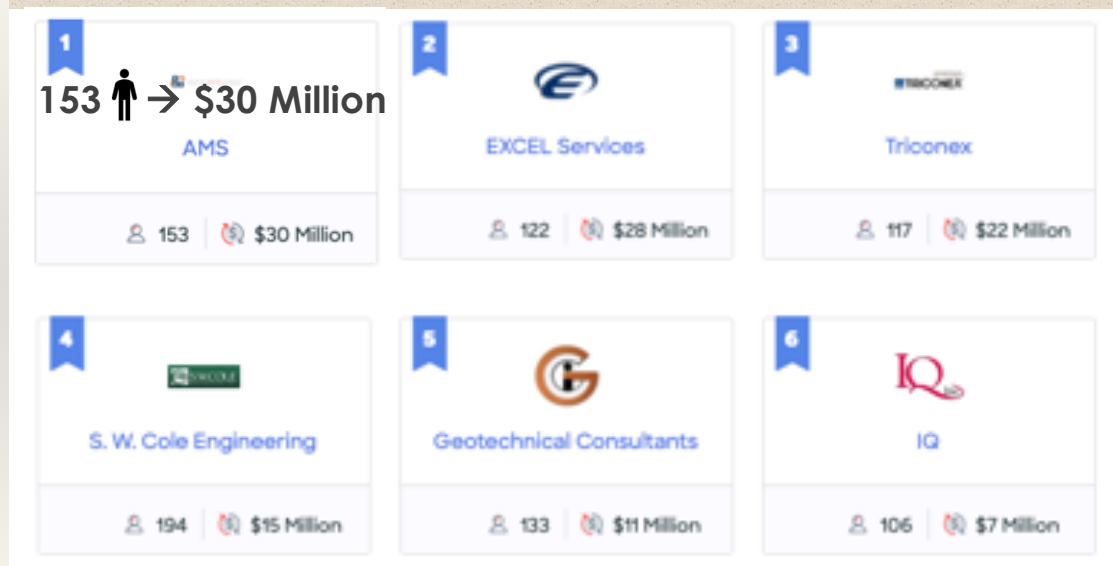
Monticello:
78 people, \$15M revenue



Industry

AMS-Corp (Knoxville) 150 employees in **100,000 sqft** → \$30 Million revenue

<https://www.zoominfo.com/c/ams-corporation/345367150>



From: www.zoominfo.com

Economics of Land Use

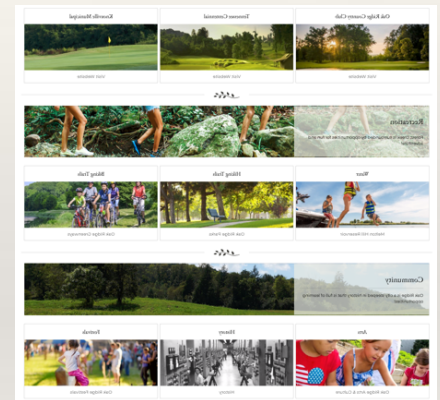
- Additional Economic Impacts

- "Noise pollution ... sound generated by ... road traffic. Effects should be considered similar to other locational and neighborhood desirability influences and may be incurable economic obsolescence*." *depreciation caused by factors that are not on the property (Intl. Assoc. Of Assessing Officers)

- Lowered assessed value on existing residential property

- Suppose a 5 percent drop in home values of 1,500 homes at \$3000 taxes/year per house"
 - $1500 \times \$3000 \times 0.05 = \mathbf{\$225,000}$ of lost property taxes per year
 - Forest Creek Village has changed zoning to smaller lots and still doesn't mention the "great" race-track development on its website that its developer enthusiastically endorsed

- Reduced future development as area has become less desirable in terms of noise and natural assets



<https://www.forestcreektn.com/>

Impact of devalued housing

Example of lost tax revenue from Westwood neighborhood

- Estimated Property taxes for Westwood's 195 houses total based on a sample of 20 houses' actual property values according to taxes: **84,494,475**
- Keep in mind that this is Westwood only, many more houses (1,500) will be affected
- The effect is **more than just lowered value, it is also lowered livability**

Property tax losses in Westwood when housing values decrease

Value Decrease	Assessed Value	Lost Assessed Value	Lost O.R. City Tax Revenue @ \$2.31/100
2%	21,123,619	422,472	9,759
4%	21,123,619	844,945	19,518
6%	21,123,619	1,267,417	29,277
8%	21,123,619	1,689,890	39,036
10%	21,123,619	2,112,362	48,796
...	21,123,619

Impact of devalued housing

Example of lost wealth in Westwood neighborhood

Lowered property values due to racetrack will mean an **involuntary wealth transfer** from property owners to racetrack developer/operator.

Wealth transfer in Westwood

Value Decrease	Housing Value	Wealth transfer
2%	84,494,475	1,688,700
4%	84,494,475	3,379,779
6%	84,494,475	5,069,668
8%	84,494,475	6,759,558
10%	84,494,475	8,449,447
...	84,494,475	...

Zoning



Zoning from IND-1/2 to Recreational requires due diligence

1. *The racetrack and amphitheater will not create numbers of quality jobs appropriate for the Horizon Center's potential as a research and light industry complex*
2. *The proposed development will discourage quality job creating development in the other Horizon Center parcels*
3. *The proposed development is contrary to the covenants put in place – for reasons which still are valid – when the land was gifted to the city from the DOE*
4. *The noise will be a chronic disturbance to west end residents*
 - *Assurances by the developer lack credibility and independent evaluation*
 - *Ordinances based on average sound levels are inadequate for peak sound levels*
 - *Enforcement of sound ordinances at similar facilities have been problematic*
5. *The proposed development is not consistent with goals of the City Blueprint*
 - *Adjoining natural areas will suffer noise, adversely impacting its enjoyment for citizens*

Required considerations for zoning change



Based on Tennessee's planning commission manual: The Powers and Functions of the Local Planning Commission in Tennessee. A proposed amendment should be able to meet several tests before the planning commission approves it:

- ***Is the proposed change in agreement with the general plan?***
- ***Does the change violate the legal purposes of zoning?***
- ***Has it been determined that there will be no adverse impact upon adjoining property or that any adverse impact can be justified by the overwhelming public good or welfare?***
- ***Has it been determined that no one property owner or small group of property owners will benefit materially from the change to the detriment of the general public?***
- ***Has it been determined that public services and facilities will not be adversely affected?***

If most of these tests are met but the proposed change fails to agree with the general plan, then the commission should examine conditions and changes in the area since the original plan and zoning map were adopted. (p. 12-13)

Is the proposed change in agreement with the general plan?



- Changing the zoning of Horizon Center violates City Comprehensive Plan (1997 update) Policy L-2: The City will encourage more centralized growth while allowing development to occur elsewhere when services can be made available in a cost-effective, environmentally sensitive manner and when traffic can be properly managed.
 - Rezoning for a motorsports/entertainment venue at Horizon Center violates this policy because of noise and traffic impacts to existing and developing residential areas
 - Rezoning to allow an entertainment venue will have serious and long-term negative impacts to nearby ecologically sensitive areas, will remove existing environmentally protected areas, and will reduce the recreational value of the Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement.
 - Traffic volume during concerts will be higher than can be managed
 - Rezoning Horizon Center violates the philosophy and intent of the City Blueprint regarding the natural assets and wishes of the residents

Does the change violate the legal purposes of zoning?



- The primary purpose of zoning is to segregate uses that are thought to be incompatible. In practice, zoning is also used to prevent new development from interfering with existing uses and/or to preserve the "character" of a community.
- This zoning change:
 - interferes with the residents' quality of life
 - compromises the use and value of the natural assets
 - Is not compatible with the community's character
 - Will lead to absurd hearing protection required sign on nature trail



The future of our greenways and neighborhoods

Adverse Impact



Has it been determined that there will be **no adverse impact** upon adjoining property or that any adverse impact can be justified by the overwhelming public good or welfare?

- High decibel noise impacts to the BORCE
 - From 45 – 50 db(A) to 80 – 90 db(A) = 16X louder
- Excess noise in Westwood, Forest Creek, Country Club Estates and other subdivisions, as well as OR Country Club
 - Affects citizen's enjoyment of their homes
 - Reduces property values: loss of income to city can negate income generated by racetrack
 - Impacts OR public image as a residential & outdoor recreation destination
- The draft DOE EAA assumes that restrictions are followed, this must be reflected in the zoning



Adverse Impact continued

- Increased traffic impact during events requires road modifications
- These impacts are not offset by increased benefits to citizens of Oak Ridge
 - Motorsports members will mostly, perhaps entirely, be from places outside OR
 - Relatively small number of new or well-paid jobs for Oak Ridgers
 - Loss of economic opportunity in the rest of HC due to noise
- Sewage and water treatment costs for 7,000 people
- Pollution from fumes, tires, brakes, people



Adverse Impact continued

Other racetracks have a pattern:

- Residents initially oppose them
- City councils sometimes respond and sometimes do not
- Developer promises low noise & economic benefits
- Developer delivers unacceptable noise & complaints result
- Remedies are inadequate, impossible, or too costly
- Lawsuits follow: City besieged for years by continued complaints
- Tracks have mixed record of longevity

How can the City plan against these adverse impact?

- Will even a noise limit of 42 dBA (non-averaged) be feasible to enforce?



Appeal filed over proposed motorsports park in Eagle Lake

Adverse Impact continued

Examples -- Locales with racetrack problems:

- Fernandina Beach, FL – Proposed Golf Course Conversion – "Hell, No!"
- Dundas, MN – Proposed Wolfcreek Autobahn – Opposed & Abandoned
- Eagle Lake, MN – Proposed Mankato Motorsports Park -- Active Opposition
- Natl. Corvette Museum, Bowling Green, KY – Neighborhood noise lawsuit
- Lime Rock, CT – est. 1959; Lawsuit now at the CT Supreme Court
- Concert at Utah Motorsport Campus too noisy for some residents.
 - *Noise from a concert at Utah Motorsports Park Friday and Saturday nights was too loud for some residents in the area: **"We will do a better next time looking at these noise issues,"*** <http://tooeleonline.com/concert-at-utah-motorsport-campus-too-noisy-from-some-residents/>



Who will it benefit?

Has it been determined that no one property owner or small group of property owners will benefit materially from the change to the detriment of the general public?

- The main beneficiary is the racetrack developer as the zoning change is specific for his planned development

Public Services and Facilities

Has it been determined that public services and facilities will not be adversely affected?

- Recreational opportunities in the BORCE will be adversely affected due to high decibel noise impacts
 - Walking, running, biking, birding
 - Hunting
- Ecologic resources along East Fork Poplar Creek & Bear Creek adversely affected

Reject zoning change

Zoning recommendations:

- Maintain current zoning (IND-2/IND-3) for Horizon Center
 - Provides best opportunity for industrial development, jobs, tax revenues
 - Maintains essential character of Oak Ridge
 - Avoids negative impacts of noise and traffic
 - Avoid cost to the city for extra sewage treatment



Reject zoning change



Zoning recommendations:

Avoid a zoning change that will have to deal with:



- Hearing protection for trails, fauna and flora, and residents
 - Noise ordinance: see US Army, Army regulation 200-1 Environmental Protection and Enhancement, US Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 1997
- Pollution from race cars; tires, fumes, brake dust
 - Create ordinance for “recreational” pollution
- Run-off from track and sewage from visitors
 - Cost to rebuilt sewer plant on west side
- Enforcement of restrictions such as sounds and pollution
 - Add equipment and enforcement to ordinance
- Complex covenant and environmental restrictions
- Extremely unhappy residents

Politics with Citizens

Politics

- *Many taxpaying residents are opposed.*
- Non-tax paying outsiders & a few local enthusiasts are in favor.
- Residents will complain for years.
- Enthusiasts will go away



Politics with Citizens

Examples -- Locales with racetrack problems:

- Repeated noise complaints
- Operator pressure to reduce restrictions
- Increased traffic requires more traffic lights
- 7,000 concert goers = 3,500 cars arriving in 90 minutes
- 1 car each 1.5 seconds on the Turnpike
- Disinterest in nearby development
- Increased Police, Fire, Ambulance, & Utility services
- Lawsuits

Politics with Citizens

Zoning

- Protect the natural assets given by DOE for the specific purpose to preserve and to enjoy. How much can nature or people endure +90 dBA. **Hearing protection Required on trails!** Study this!
- Residents: promised in EAA: less than 42 dBA, do not apply averaging!!!

Future

- Oak Ridge can learn from other communities
- The IDB, City, & County have not yet done so
- OR4RD citizens are making the effort
- Please listen to us



Our Community and the Racetrack

After construction – what will we have in the Horizon Center?

Research & light industry

- Potential for *hundreds of jobs* on lots 5-7
- *Professional & high-skill* industrial jobs
- *Full-time* employment
- Compatibility & synergy with job-growth over *entire* Horizon Center
- **1000+ full-time jobs potential**

Motorsport park & amphitheater

- A few high paying jobs
- Mainly track workers, food vendors
- Intermittent events
- Part-time / intermittent employment
- Racetrack will ruin potential of HC as research park
- Spoiled natural assets

Our Community and the Racetrack

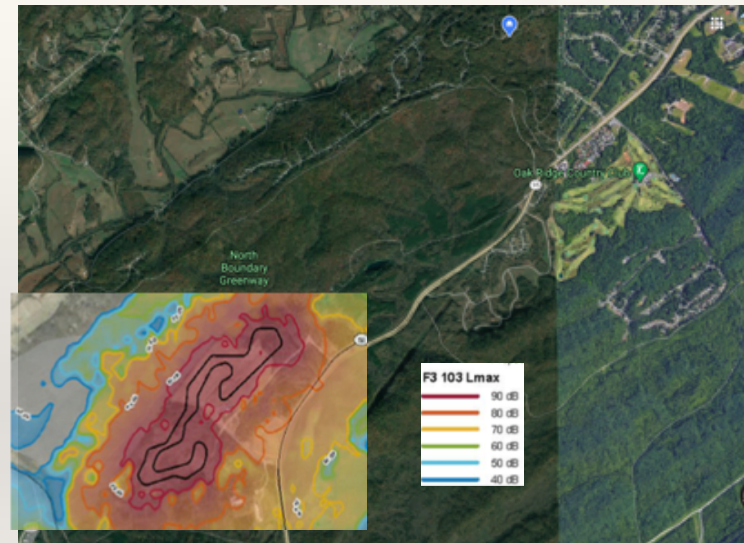
Focusing on **long-term job growth** will lead to sustained demand for secondary services and housing.

Cummings Research Park, Huntsville, AL



Research Park at Cherokee Farms, Knoxville, TN

Thriving industry and community coexisting



Barren development, spoiled nature, suffering residents, reduced home values

Oak Ridge, TN

Our **Community** and the **Racetrack**

DO NOT ADVANCE THE RACETRACK PROPOSAL

Few will benefit, many will suffer

DO NOT REZONE THE HORIZON CENTER

Do due diligence instead

LISTEN TO SCIENCE AND RESIDENTS

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush unless this
one poops all over you

