Major regional economic assets: ORNL, UT, and medical centers
- DOE facilities with large employment that draws from surrounding area
- Stable economy based on government employment
- Robust scientific community (federal and universities)

Strategic location for economic development: excellent transportation accessibility
- Situation of region at major interstates provides economic opportunities
- Economy . . . enhanced by central access to multiple eastern markets
- Can get services here easier than in large, congested cities

Mild climate is an asset
- Mild climate and four seasons
- Weather--attractive to corporations and retirees

Low cost of living relative to other parts of the country is attractive
- No income tax
- Low housing cost
- Minimal regulations and fees

More quality jobs are needed throughout the region, not just in Knoxville
- Limited access to jobs (further away from Knoxville, more difficult to get jobs)
- Limited professional job opportunities
- Need . . . not just any jobs, but good, diverse jobs

Tourism is important: economic and recreational value of mountains, rivers, and lakes
- Good area for tourism based on environmental assets
- Balance between economic development and preservation of natural resources (lakes, ridges, streams, air)

Natural beauty of mountains, rivers, and lakes
- Scenic beauty of East Tennessee
- Natural beauty, mountains, rivers, tourism, and access to it all
- Natural beauty of rivers and mountains provide[s] a regional identity

Need to improve air and water quality
- Protect our watershed; running out of reliable clean water
- Lack of attainment of air quality standards
- Pollution in lakes and dumping on public lands . . . lack of appreciation of natural resources

ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMY & WORKFORCE
**TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

Good highway access within region and to other metro areas
- Very accessible--great roadway network, interstate crossroads, proximity to other major hubs/population centers
- From Knoxville you can be in very rural places outside in an hour or less
- Connectivity of the transportation system (highway system)

Need for more transportation options (transit, air, pedestrian facilities, rail)
- Public transportation between Knoxville, Oak Ridge, and the airport and within major cities
- Limited transportation options poses a problem for low-income residents to gain access to community services
- Aging in place, eldercare problem: neighborhoods cut off from public transportation
- Lack of air transportation access and options
- Lack of walkability in not all, but many parts throughout the region

**HEALTH**

Significant community health issues exist: drug use, asthma, obesity, tobacco use
- Obesity and its health impacts; links with poverty and education
- Pockets of poverty, drugs, and dependency
- Pollution effects on health
- Asthma, obesity, diabetes, lack of facilities in rural areas

**HOUSING**

Distance between jobs and housing is a problem (lengthy commutes)
- Decent jobs are far away and it requires long travel times
- Transportation challenges resulting from reliance on automobiles and proximity to jobs
- Not enough housing close to jobs
- Combined housing and transportation costs in relation to work locations

**QUALITIES OF PEOPLE**

Qualities of people: friendly, hospitable, volunteer ethic
- Sense of community, friendly, southern hospitality
- People care about the area; strong sense of volunteerism, personal interest in the area

**OTHER THEMES**

Importance of Appalachian heritage
- Unique Appalachian culture[e] and celebration of heritage (independence, temperament, music, food)

Combination of urban/suburban/rural settings offers something for everyone
- Urban to rural to agricultural to wilderness; diverse landscapes and places

Good regional amenities: Downtown Knoxville, arts/music scene, museums, farmers markets, sports events, greenways
- All of your needs within the region
- Availability of resources--things people like to do, what people need (healthcare and jobs) and within an hour drive

Resistance to change is strong in the region
- Don’t want to be made to do things--culture holds a deep-seated distrust of government
- Individualism, suspicion of outsiders, resistance to change, stubbornness, distrust
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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| ANDERSON COUNTY  | - ORNL is a major economic asset; helps create a stable economy  
                   - Good local school systems, but educational disparities exist between different parts of the county (quality, accessibility)  
                   - Low cost of living is attractive  
                   - Need to attract diverse retail offerings  
                   - Need to provide amenities that will appeal to a younger demographic |
| BLOUNT COUNTY    | - Tourism is very important; promoting Blount County as “The Quiet Side of the Smokies”  
                   - Availability of high-quality health care is attractive  
                   - Good public schools and Maryville College help economic development  
                   - Need for more jobs/economic development in Blount County, especially professional jobs (Blount County should be more than a bedroom community for Knox County)  
                   - More workforce/vocational training is needed, especially for those not going to college |
| KNOX COUNTY      | - Downtown Knoxville is a local and regional asset: unique businesses, arts/cultural scene, community gathering place, welcoming scale  
                   - Diverse economy; UT is a major asset and helps stabilize the economy  
                   - Good medical facilities  
                   - Educational opportunities are not distributed equitably throughout the county  
                   - Should redevelop abandoned/underutilized properties within Knoxville  
                   - Need to balance economic development with development standards to improve community appearance |
| LOUDON COUNTY    | - Diverse economy with excellent transportation access  
                   - TVA adds stability to the local economy and attracts new industry  
                   - Good health care facilities and services  
                   - Quality school system, despite need for more funding  
                   - Need more local retail and services—too much money goes out of the county to Knox County  
                   - Need more jobs in the county  
                   - Competition between local governments for resources can hinder economic development |
| UNION COUNTY     | - Tourism is important to the local economy  
                   - Need more job opportunities in the county; residents now have long commutes to Knox County  
                   - Need more services, retail, and restaurants in the county  
                   - Need to improve education and attitudes toward value of education |
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<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>TRANSPORTATION &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANDERSON COUNTY</strong></td>
<td>• Beauty of mountains, valleys, and lakes is a major asset for the county</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **BLOUNT COUNTY** | • Natural beauty helps define the county and support tourism: mountains, river, open space  
• Good water supply  
• Need to improve air and water quality |
| **KNOX COUNTY** | • Natural beauty is a major asset for the county: aesthetic, environmental, and recreational  
• Need to improve air and water quality |
| **LOUDON COUNTY** | • County is full of natural beauty: mountains, lakes, farms, hills, open space |
| **UNION COUNTY** | • Natural beauty/rural character is a major part of the county’s identity |
| **ANDERSON COUNTY** | • Need transportation options other than cars  
• Should better maintain existing infrastructure  
• Lack of adequate infrastructure in certain parts of the county |
| **BLOUNT COUNTY** | • Traffic congestion on major roadways (Alcoa Highway, U.S. 321, and U.S. 411) is a problem  
• Limited transportation options; this makes commuting more difficult  
• Greenways are major assets, but more greenways and sidewalks are needed to improve walkability |
| **KNOX COUNTY** | • Transit access is good in older parts of the city  
• Lack of transportation choices in many parts of the county  
• Poor connectivity between neighborhoods and different parts of the city  
• Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure  
• Need more transportation accessibility throughout the county for seniors and persons with disabilities |
| **LOUDON COUNTY** | • Easy access to Knoxville and Chattanooga for urban amenities  
• Need transportation options, especially transit and pedestrian trails  
• Need to improve infrastructure maintenance |
| **UNION COUNTY** | • More transportation options are needed; limited options make it difficult for lower-income residents and seniors to access services (especially if services are outside the county)  
• Insufficient infrastructure leads to isolation in some parts of the county: roads, water, sewer, Internet |
| ANDERSON COUNTY | • County has a lot of older and not well-maintained housing stock  
• Need to attract diverse and high-quality residential growth  
• Need to provide housing that will appeal to a younger demographic |
| BLOUNT COUNTY | No local housing themes emerged |
| KNOX COUNTY | • Homelessness is a growing issue |
| LOUDON COUNTY | No local housing themes emerged |
| UNION COUNTY | No local housing themes emerged |

| ANDERSON COUNTY | • Drug abuse is a major health issue in the county |
| BLOUNT COUNTY | • Drug abuse is a major health issue in the county |
| KNOX COUNTY | • The county has a number of public health issues: asthma, obesity, poor nutrition, drug use |
| LOUDON COUNTY | • Drug abuse and obesity are health issues in the county |
| UNION COUNTY | • Alcohol and drug abuse are major health issues in the county |
ANDERSON COUNTY
• Diverse population is an asset; people are more open to new ideas
• Pride in unique history of Anderson County communities
• Communities have small-town feel with urban amenities close by
• Strong sense of community and volunteer spirit
• Conveniently located for outdoor recreation
• Arts and cultural amenities in the county are assets

BLOUNT COUNTY
• Communities have strong characters: rural/agricultural or small-town feel
• Strong respect for community heritage
• Friendly, welcoming people
• Close to mountains and recreational opportunities
• Interjurisdictional cooperation has been successful
• Preserve autonomy of local governments
• Need to balance protecting community character with protecting property rights

KNOX COUNTY
• County contains diverse neighborhoods and communities with strong individual identities
• Knoxville has a small-town feel with urban amenities
• Proximity to recreational opportunities
• Parks and greenways are assets
• Need for improved communication/coordination between the County and the City

LOUDON COUNTY
• Strong community character: rural and small-town feel; need to protect this character
• Diverse population: mix of natives and transplants, different ages and ethnicities
• People respect local culture and heritage
• Proximity to recreational opportunities
• Good place to retire
• Need more civic engagement

UNION COUNTY
• Strong sense of heritage; many residents have deep, multi-generational roots in the county
• Pride in agricultural heritage and desire to preserve this heritage
• Rural feel and friendly people
• Residents enjoy the quiet of Union County and its proximity to Knox County amenities