



— **Deadline Extended** —

Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

TOWN MANAGER | Apply by April 14, 2023

Welcome to Oakland, both a hidden gem and a true treasure! On one hand, a day spent here will remind you of the Florida of yesteryear—dirt roads in some areas and huge live oak trees lining many streets. On the other, are small new subdivisions with homes costing from \$600,000 to \$1,500,000. The commonality in both areas is neighbors know their neighbors, help each other, and love their community. The result is Oakland is a diverse, thriving and growing small community noted for its laid-back lifestyle.

Located in Central Florida 20 minutes west of Orlando, Oakland is a haven of serenity in a sea of commotion. It lies on the shores of Lake Apopka and Johns Lake, and although both the Florida Turnpike and State Road 50 run through the Town, they have surprisingly little impact, except to make it very easy for residents to get to anywhere in the Orlando area very quickly.

Oakland residents need not travel to get a taste of the great outdoors. The Town is bisected by the Green Mountain Scenic Byway which is one of the most popular cycling trails in Florida and offers historic buildings and wonderful



natural views. Note: In spite of its name, do not expect any mountains—the highest point in Central Florida is nearby Sugarloaf at 312 feet above sea level.

Oakland Nature Preserve is a hidden gem that preserves 128 acres of wetlands and uplands adjacent to Lake Apopka. Hikers can explore 13 miles of trails through five distinct ecosystems. At the Jim Thomas Environmental Education Center and Museum, visitors learn about these ecosystems and how to be better stewards of the environment. The Preserve offers guided and self-guided tours, field trips, and ecotourism activities. Owned by the Town of Oakland, the Preserve is a prime example of the Town's commitment to restore and protect the environment.

The West Orange Trail is another area highlight. 22-miles long, it is a multi-purpose recreational greenway stretching from Oakland to Apopka. Its 14-foot-wide paved surface is suitable for a variety of uses, including walking, jogging, cycling, and skating. Horseback riders will soon have a 10-mile equestrian path that will run parallel to the trail. Along the way are the aforementioned Oakland Nature Preserve, the butterfly garden in Tildenville, and Clarcona Park in Apopka. The trail's varied terrains and beautiful vistas make it a favorite destination. Indeed, over 25,000 people use the trail every month.

Oakland's three parks provide additional outdoor spaces for families. While children enjoy the playground, parents can play a game of basketball at Pollard Park or a round of tennis at Speer Park. All three parks provide pavilions, grills, and picnic areas.

Every year, Oakland's residents look forward to the Town's signature events. In January, residents celebrate the Town's history on Oakland Heritage Day with live music, food, arts and crafts, and activities for children. In April, families gather at the Celebration Among the Oaks for an egg hunt, a petting zoo, and a visit with the Easter Bunny. At Christmastime, the Historic Town Center at Tubb Street transforms into "Santa's Lane." Children visit Santa and his elves and stay for snow flurries and family fun.

While Heritage Day only comes once a year, any day is a good day to visit Oakland's historic sites. The historic Town Hall is a

one-story masonry brick building in a Colonial Revival Style, and was originally the Bank of Oakland from 1911 to 1928. Its vault came from the Mosier Safe Company, the same organization that built the vaults for Fort Knox. Or stop by the African American Cemetery. The resting place of freed slaves and their families who migrated here following Emancipation, it contains beautiful African American seashell and folk grave markers.

Oakland Manor House, a locally owned boutique inn, gives visitors a taste of luxury at the turn of the century. Originally built in the early 1900s, this gracious manor has been carefully renovated, preserving its historic craftsman style. Residents and visitors can enjoy a relaxing getaway in one of its five overnight bedrooms with private baths. Each room was decorated by local artists with its own theme recreating an area attraction and its history.

More about Oakland's fascinating history and culture can be found at the Healthy West Orange Arts and Heritage Center. Owned by the Town and committed to preserving Oakland's past, present and future, the Center provides space for art and heritage displays, along with a central location for health and wellness programs. "Est. 1887" explores Oakland's history as the industrial and social hub of Orange County more than 130 years ago. This exhibit features framed historic photographs with descriptive text outlining Oakland's early history. Additionally, outdoor spaces are provided for rest and enjoyment.

When it is time to eat out, residents have limited options in Oakland, but many more in neighboring Winter Garden, and its thriving restaurant and shopping district. Downtown, visitors explore unique shops and dine at one the city's fine restaurants, many of which feature live music. Winter Garden's Farmers Market tempts shoppers with locally grown produce, baked goods, and specialty foods. Patrons of the arts can explore SoBo Art Gallery or enjoy a live performance at Garden Theater. History lovers will lose themselves at Central Florida Railroad Museum, which depicts railroading history with a focus on Central Florida.

If that were not enough, Oakland is just a 30-minute drive from Orlando and all it has to offer. Known as the "Theme Park Capital



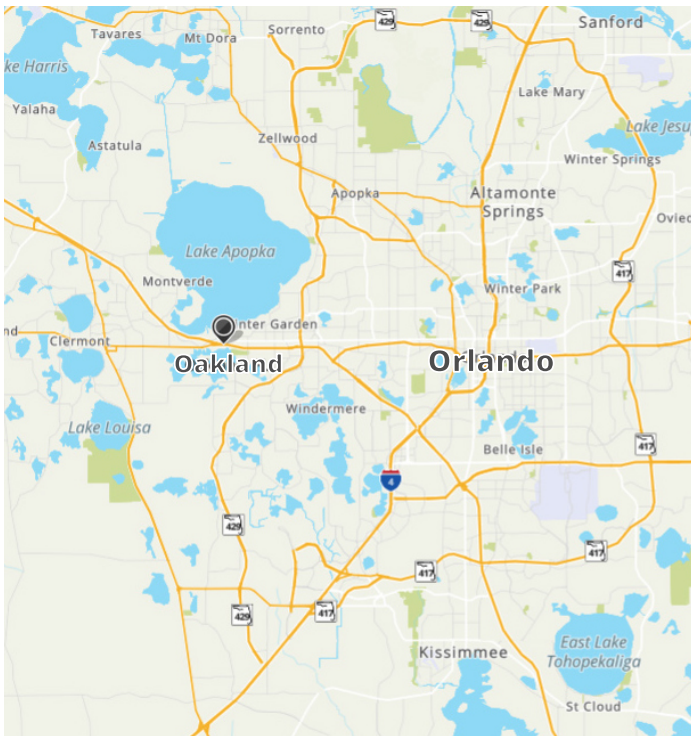
of the World,” Orlando is home to Disney World, Universal Orlando, and SeaWorld Orlando. After a day in the sun, visitors can cool off at the resorts’ built-in water parks, Discovery Cove or Island H2O. Sports fans will enjoy watching the Orlando Magic shoot hoops or cheering for Orlando City SC, a Major League Soccer team. Nature lovers can stare down alligators at Gatorland or venture a bit out of the city for a visit to Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens. A little over an hour’s drive is an out-of-this-world experience at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

Less than 100 miles away, Tampa is also within reach for the residents of Oakland. A day trip here satisfies every taste. Animal lovers adore the Florida Aquarium and ZooTampa, while Busch Gardens and Adventure Island water park satisfy thrill seekers. Sports fans can watch the Tampa Bay Rays (MLB), the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL), and the Tampa Bay Lightning (NHL).

Further, the world is at your doorstep in Oakland. In fact, the Town is less than 100 miles from five international airports, including the Orlando International Airport and Tampa International Airport. Orlando Sanford International Airport is a great low-cost option. Alternatively, you can step aboard a cruise liner at Port Canaveral, voted the Best US Cruise Homeport in the United States for the third consecutive year in 2022, and the second busiest cruise port in the world, behind Miami. The Port of Tampa also offers cruises, although the options are more limited.

With so many reasons to love Oakland, you will want to move here right away. Crime is very low. In fact, it is not the kind of place where you need to lock your doors (although that is always wise). A typical home sells for between \$600,000 and

Figure I: Location of the Town of Oakland, FL



\$800,000, with a median sold home price of \$728,100. That said, homes currently on the market range from \$350,000 to \$1.5 million, although you won't find many of the former.

Oakland's children have access to many fine schools. The Orange County Public School system is an above average school district and the eighth largest in the nation. Students in preschool up to fifth grade have their choice of two elementary schools, Tildenville Elementary and Oakland Avenue Charter School. The latter is a free public charter elementary school owned and operated by the Town.

For older children, Lakeview Middle School and West Orange High School are both highly rated. Alternatively, Foundation Academy is available in nearby Winter Garden. It was voted "Readers' Choice for Orlando's Best Private Christian School" in 2018 & 2019 by Orlando Style Magazine and ranks consistently among the top private Christian schools in Central Florida.

Options for higher education are also plentiful. The Orlando region offers more than 35 colleges, including the University of Central Florida (ranked by U.S. News & World Report as one the nation's 20 most innovative institutions), Florida Institute of

Technology, Rollins College, Stetson University, and Seminole State College. Additionally, the highly regarded University of Florida is 90 minutes northwest by car.

Even considering all its other advantages, the best part about living in Oakland is its residents. It is they who give Oakland its small-town charm and character. The people of this Town share a strong feeling of camaraderie and a spirit of volunteerism. This is a place where you will make lifelong friends.

In short, the Town of Oakland is a truly unique community. Our next Town Manager will enjoy a quiet, small-town lifestyle within arm's reach of big city excitement. We invite you to apply today!

HISTORY

Oakland began as a small settlement on the shore of Lake Apopka in the 1850s. After the Civil War, orange groves replaced the area's cotton fields. The Orange Belt Railroad arrived in 1886 and established its headquarters in Oakland. This, and two other railroads, offered orange growers faster shipping to the profitable northern markets. The settlement soon experienced rapid economic and population growth. The Town of Oakland was chartered in 1887. During this "Golden Age," Oakland was a booming commercial center with a hotel, an opera house, a hospital, a telegraph office, and its own newspaper.

The era of prosperity came to an end when a series of freezes killed the citrus trees. Then, in the late 1890s, a fire destroyed the Town's business district. Nearby Orlando soon replaced Oakland as the area's economic hub, and Oakland's residents settled back into a quiet agricultural lifestyle.

While Oakland never recaptured the bustle of its Golden Age, its residents are not complaining. They love its quiet, laid-back atmosphere, its small-town feel, and its strong sense of community.

GEOGRAPHY

The Town of Oakland is located in central peninsular Florida, in the western part of Orange County. Nestled between Lake Apopka to the north and John’s Lake to the south, it covers an area of 2.10 square miles. Oakland’s topography is fairly level, with an average elevation of 121 feet above sea level. Before settlement, the area consisted of wetlands and sandhill habitats, some of which can be seen at Oakland Nature Preserve.

CLIMATE

Oakland has two main seasons: the hot, rainy summer season, which lasts from May to September, and the moderate, dry season, which runs from October to April. During the summer months, the high temperatures average around 90°F while the lows are in the low to mid-70s. The afternoons often bring short bursts of rain and thunder. During the cooler season, the high temperatures are in the low to mid-70s with the lows in the low 50s. The average annual rainfall is 52 inches, the Town sees around 235 sunny days per year.

Hurricanes do strike Florida from time to time, especially during hurricane season (June 1 to November 30), though their impact tends to be relatively minor in Oakland due to its inland location.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the Florida Bureau of Economic Research, Oakland’s current population is 5,396. An examination of Table 1 shows it is a diverse community. It should be noted that its relatively high median household income hides the fact that not everyone here is well-to-do. The Town is a haven for families. 42% of Oakland’s households are home to children under 18 years of age, compared to just 27% of households in the State of Florida.

COMMERCE

Oakland is primarily residential, and its residents tend to be employed in neighboring communities, Orlando, or at Disney.

Table I: Oakland Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	64.1%	0 to 14	20.5%
Black	13.1%	15 to 24	8.8%
Asian	3.7%	25 to 44	30.7%
Other	0.3%	45 to 64	28.5%
Two or More Races	18.7%	65 to 84	10.3%
Total	100%	Over 85	1.2%
Hispanic Ethnicity		Estimated Population: 5,396	

Educational Achievement (Over Age 25)	
High School or Higher	95.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	37.0%

Other Statistics	
Median Age–Oakland, FL	37.1
Median Age–U.S.	38.4
Median Household Income–Oakland, FL	\$124,856
Median Household Income–U.S.	\$60,021
Poverty Rate	7.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

THE GOVERNMENT

The Town of Oakland follows a Commission-Manager form of government. The Commission establishes policies and creates ordinances which determine the Town’s laws, proceedings, budget, and services. It appoints the Town Manager (to oversee its day-to-day operations) and the Town Attorney (to oversee its legal matters) as well as members of the Town’s boards and committees.

Oakland’s five elected officials, the Mayor and four Commissioners, are elected at-large and serve four-year overlapping terms with no term limits. A model of stability, commission members have had lengthy tenures—the current



mayor has served on the Commission for 28 years, while the other four members have served for 25, 16, 10, and 7 years respectively. The next election is in March 2024 when the Mayor and Commissioners in Seats 2 and 3 will be voted upon. The Commission Members all get along well, are respectful of each other and the staff, and have the best interests of the community at heart.

The Town Manager works under the direction of the Commission. All Town employees and the employees of Oakland Charter School report directly to the Manager and his or her Assistant. The Town Manager may be removed by a majority vote of the Commission upon the recommendation of the Mayor or Commissioners.

Oakland operates ten departments: Administrative Services & Communications, Code Enforcement, Finance, Human Resources, Planning & Zoning (through contracts with Wilden Engineering for building services and Wade Trim for planning services), Police, Public Works (including roads, water, and wastewater internally as well as solid waste through a contract with Waste Management), Town Clerk, Town Manager, and Utility Billing. Notably some processes, such as planning applications and building permits, are sent online to remote contractor sites for processing. Finally, the Oakland Avenue Charter School also falls within the Town Manager's purview. Orange County provides Fire / EMS services.

Oakland's Proposed Budget for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year is \$28,079,668. The budget is comprised of the General Fund (\$10,537,098), the Utility Fund (\$5,526,782), the Special Revenue (\$5,415,651), and School Operations (\$6,600,137).

The Town has approximately 65 full-time and part time employees. The two largest departments in terms of staff are Police (22 employees) and Public Works (13 employees). The Charter School is treated as a separate entity and has 65 staff. None of the Town employees are represented by a union.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Although Oakland is a relatively small town, the next Town Manager can expect to be very busy with a number of challenges/opportunities.

First and foremost, is growth. According to Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research, the Town's population grew from 3,516 residents in 2020 to 5,396 residents in 2022. Since the Town is landlocked and approaching build-out, its opportunities for future growth are limited. Aside from scattered lots and already approved developments, three parcels of 20 acres remain along State Road 50. It is the Town's desire that these properties be developed as mixed use (commercial and multi-family) and bring opportunities for shopping and dining into the community. At the same time, it desires that the Town retain its folksy, small town feel. Hence, it is not looking for just any development. It is looking for the right development.

A second challenge is to eliminate septic systems in an ongoing effort to protect precious environmental resources. About 2,000 homes remain on septic and it is very expensive to convert them to sanitary sewer. To begin with, in many areas homes do not have sewer lines and would have to be installed. Only then could residents connect to them. The good news is a major sewer line has been installed about one block north of State Road 50 so any future development there will have access to sewer.

The third significant challenge is that its governmental infrastructure has not kept pace with its growth. In a sense, Oakland is a little town that suddenly got big, and its residents expect high quality services. Additionally, the next Town Manager will need to ensure that the right people are in the right jobs doing the right things in the most efficient way possible with

the right equipment. Further, are they being paid enough so they will stay? Turnover has been an issue.

Finally, much of the above costs money. The growth of the tax base will help fund improvements, but it is unclear if the Town can continue to lower its tax rates as it has in four of the last five years.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Oakland is seeking an exceptional leader and manager—someone with a track record of achievement in local government. He/she will quickly grasp Oakland's vision and partner with the Town Commission as a supporter and a trusted advisor. It does not want a "yes" person, but someone who is comfortable providing his/her opinion diplomatically and in the right place at the right time. The individual will understand politics but not be involved in them.

The next Town Manager will be open and approachable with excellent people skills. He/she will be a team player skilled at building consensus. The individual will be an outstanding communicator—both verbally and in writing—and both inside and outside the organization. He/she will be able to translate complex matters into understandable components and communicate with people from all walks of life. The individual will also recognize listening is often the most important aspect of communication—truly hearing what others have to say and letting people know their views are understood, appreciated, and respected.

Customer service will not be just a catch phrase but one of the Town Manager's core principles. He/she will lead by example and diligently work to resolve issues. Not every resident understands government processes, particularly when things like permit applications need to be done online. The ideal candidate will be sympathetic and help residents with their needs. While recognizing not every customer is right, he/she will do what he/she can to help them.

Oakland is a small town, and the Town Manager should expect to be out and about, at community events and meeting residents. Being completely honest, having the utmost integrity, and believing strongly in transparency will be critical to the Town Manager's success.

Oakland is a small town in a large county. Being able to build relationships with other cities and the County will allow it to accomplish more than it can alone. Working collaboratively with many actors to solve problems will be critical. He/she will realize giving credit to others is often the best way to get things done.

The ideal candidate will lead with confidence, be a team-builder, and delegate responsibly. He/she will inspire an environment where creativity and collaboration flourish. The best candidate will give assignments, set broad performance parameters, provide the necessary resources, and manage staff expecting accountability and positive results. While the Town Manager will be collaborative, he/she will not hesitate to make tough decisions. Strong skills in personnel management will be essential, and the individual will have a sixth sense for hiring the right person for a job. At the same time, when an employee is not performing and counseling is not working, the Manager will not hesitate to terminate the individual's employment.

Personally, the Town Manager will be intelligent, bold, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, organized, and positive—someone with a "can do" attitude. He/she will also be practical, strong, flexible, consistent, cheerfully persistent, high energy, values-driven, and a leader. A sense of humor will be a plus.

Remaining calm and low key in difficult situations will be very important. The ability to anticipate/resolve issues before they become problems is critical. Good judgment and common sense are essential. Other important qualifications include being financially savvy and the ability to work with all types of media.

A Bachelor's or master's degree in business or public administration or another area related to city management is required. The best candidates will have a minimum of ten years of progressively responsible management experience as a department director or five years as a city manager, assistant or

deputy city manager. Expertise is required in local government management, planning, finance, negotiation, and intergovernmental relations. Experience in Florida and with emergency management experience is a plus.

Ideally, the selected candidate will be expected to make a commitment to Oakland, and stay a long time.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$110,000 to \$145,000 and the actual salary will depend on the selected candidates' qualifications and experience. The current manager receives a 15% contribution to a 401(a) plan and can contribute to a 457 plan.

RESIDENCY

Residency within the city limits is not required.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit39@cb-asso.com by April 14, 2023. Applications will be screened as they are received so please do not wait. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or Lynelle Klein at (970) 433-7189.

THE PRIOR MANAGER

The current Town Manager has elected to move on and is doing so of his own volition.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

We do not anticipate any internal candidates.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, we would be very surprised if there was any media coverage of the process.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened as they arrive. Finalists will be selected on May 9th. A reception and interviews will be held on May 18th and 19th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Town of Oakland is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the town, visit:

www.oaklandfl.gov

wochamber.com

[OakTownUSA](#)

[Things-to-do-in-Oakland-Florida](#)

