



# OAK COMMONS

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## STATION AREA PLAN

### FINAL DRAFT

May 7, 2013

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oakdale, Minnesota is uniquely situated to take advantage of the Gateway Corridor transitway that will cross through this second ring Twin Cities suburb. The Gateway Corridor Commission has determined that Oakdale will receive at least one transitway stop as the line stretches across the eastern portion of the Twin Cities metro area, and, in an auspicious turn, the area planned for Oakdale's station stop is adjacent to a high priority development area. How Oakdale chooses to develop this area will be a major decision that will have significant consequences for the future of this city.

This report aims to analyze the current state of the City of Oakdale and the community immediately surrounding the proposed transitway station locations. The analysis weighs the strengths and weaknesses of four different transitway stop locations by evaluating them based on their potential impacts on the local economy, land uses, transportation uses, transit efficiency and residents and visitors in the City of Oakdale. In the first section, special attention is paid to identifying stakeholders who will be affected by this transitway and the accompanying development. The four transitway sites are then compared to one another, and one location emerged as the best alternative. By planning for the transitway and station area now, the city will be well-positioned to take advantage of the economic and community development opportunities that will emerge along the Gateway Corridor as it comes on line.

Oakdale should pursue an ambitious vision. The vision in the plan—articulated in the second section—is centered on the idea of leveraging public investment to make desirable places for the benefit of residents, visitors, businesses and investors. This vision is intended to be imaginative, to differentiate Oakdale, and to articulate unique transit-oriented elements that will increase interest and pride in the city. Beautiful and exciting places will attract the new investment to lead Oakdale forward into the future and make it a “cool suburb.”

The final section is devoted to moving the vision from the imagined to reality. It contains feasible and detailed steps so that Oakdale's leadership and major stakeholders can enact policies to realize this vision and create the next generation of Oakdale development. This action plan includes advice on funding models, implementation partners, community outreach, and administrative analysis.

Oakdale has the potential to be a great place to live, work, and play. With the introduction of the Gateway Corridor and focused public and private investments, Oakdale will become a regional draw and a community on the move.





# PART 1: DIAGNOSIS

## GENERAL COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Oakdale is a fully developed second ring suburb of Saint Paul, located in the eastern portion of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area in Minnesota. Designated as a city in 1974, Oakdale’s long history reaches back to November of 1858, when farmers settled around the City’s many small lakes. Today, it is neighbored by six suburban communities: Lake Elmo, Woodbury, Maplewood, North Saint Paul, Mahtomedi and Pine Springs (See Figure 1). Many interstates, highways, and major streets border or travel through Oakdale, including Interstate 694, Highway 36, Highway 5, Stillwater Boulevard, Minnehaha Avenue, and Interstate 94 (See Figure 2). Oakdale’s population grew considerably in the 1990’s, with the growth rate approaching almost 45% during this time.<sup>1</sup> Since this time of rapid growth, Oakdale continues to thrive even as its population has stabilized. However, the city does face a host of issues such as a lack of a focal downtown, an aging housing stock, and lack of employment diversity – ultimately these issues threaten Oakdale’s municipal competitiveness in the region.

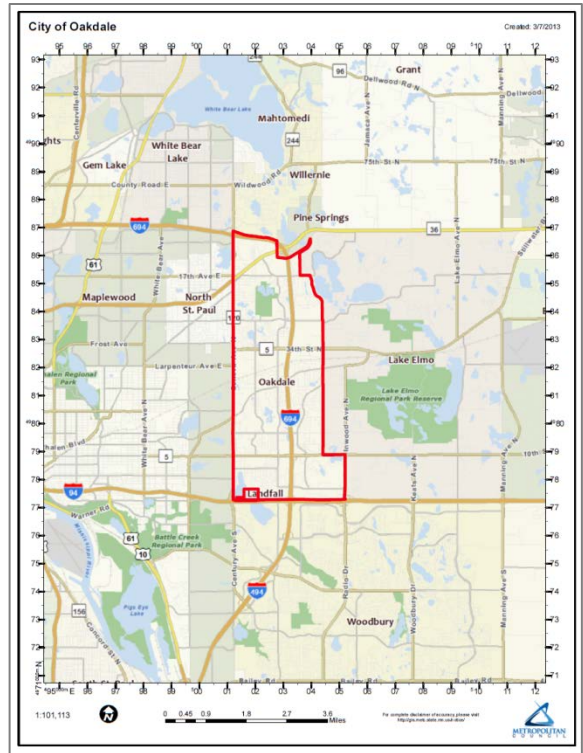


Figure 1: Map of the City of Oakdale and surrounding communities, courtesy of the Metropolitan Council, March 2013

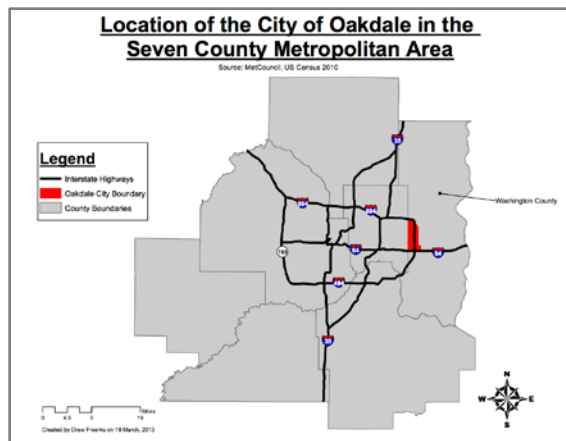


Figure 2: Location of the City of Oakdale in the Seven County Metropolitan Area with major transitways, March 2013 – larger version available in Appendix F.

## Oakdale Residents

### POPULATION GROWTH

In 2010, Oakdale was the 32nd largest city in the state, with a population of 27,378 - increasing nearly 3 percentage points since 2000.<sup>2</sup> This compares to an 18 percent population increase for Washington County as a whole, and an 8 percent increase statewide. In 2010, the population density of Oakdale was on average around 2,400 people per square mile, compared to a density of only 607 across Washington County.

## AGE AND HOUSEHOLDS

POPULATION AGE	NUMBER	%
Age 29 or younger	11,212	41%
Age 30 to 59	11,627	42%
Age 60 or older	4,539	17%

Figure 3: Age cohorts of Oakdale residents, Census 2010

The population of Oakdale is distributed fairly evenly by age, with a slightly higher proportion of the population between the ages of 30 and 60 years old (see Figure 3). The average household size is 2.5 persons, and 65 percent of all households are families, with an average household size of 3 among families. One third of Oakdale's population consists of families with children under 18 years old.<sup>3</sup>

## RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

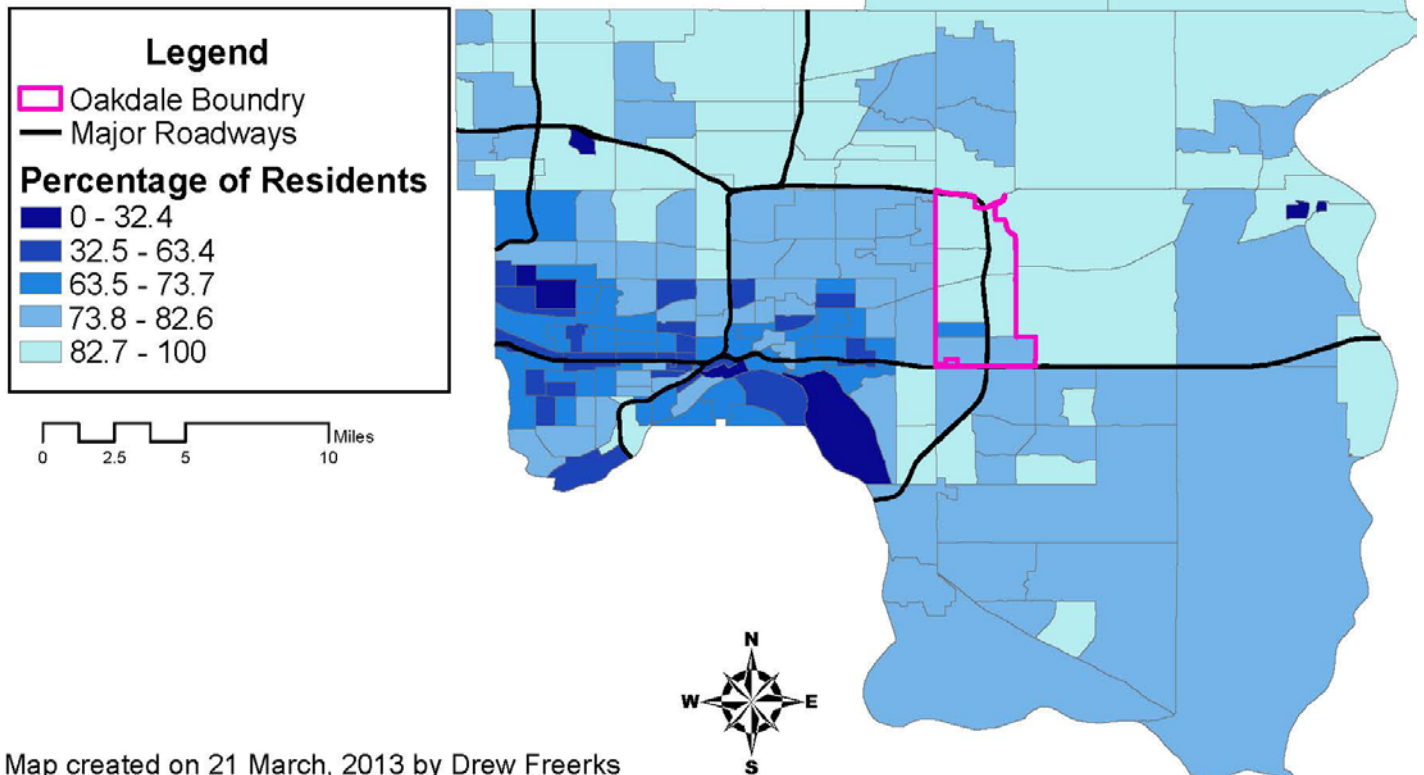
Oakdale has become more racially and ethnically diverse since the 2000 Census, with a 9 percent decrease in the white population between 2000 and 2010. The most significant increases among minority populations are among those identifying as Asian, whose population tripled from 2.5 percent of the Oakdale population in 2000 to just over 8 percent in 2010. Additionally, the Black or African American population has doubled and the Hispanic/Latino population grew by 60 percent.

## TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

The vast majority of Oakdale resident workers over the age of 16 drive an automobile alone to work (see Figure 4). In 2010, 9 percent of working residents carpooled and just over 2 percent used public transportation. Those who walk and use other means to get to work made up just under 2 percent of working residents. In an analysis of the preferred mode of transit to work among suburban residents, it was concluded that Oakdale workers choose to drive primarily because they already own a vehicle (indicating that they are not transit dependent), and secondly that transit takes just as long or longer than driving to work (i.e. no time benefit is derived).

# PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS THAT COMMUTE TO WORK IN AUTOMOBILES IN THE EAST METRO (Ages 16 and up)

Data Source: 2010 US Census



Map created on 21 March, 2013 by Drew Freerks

Figure 4: Percentage of Oakdale Residents that drive to work in an automobile

## INCOME

The average wage for Oakdale residents is \$46,144, which is higher than the Washington County average of \$38,813 (see Figure 5). However, since 2000, the growth of Oakdale's average wage has trailed behind both Washington County and the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area.

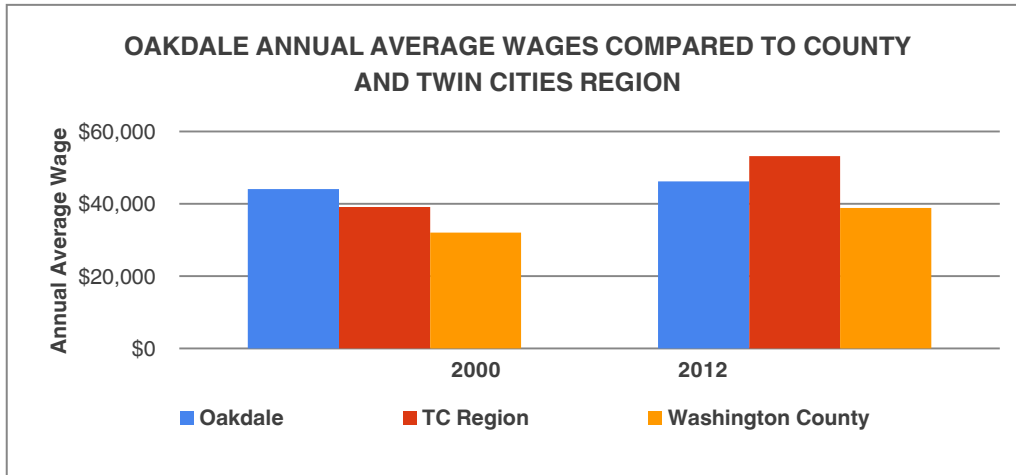


Figure 5: Annual average wages, DEED Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter (not adjusted for inflation)

## UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

As of December 2012, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Minnesota and Washington County were 5.5% and 4.8%, respectively. Oakdale's unemployment rate during this time was 5.7% (see Figure 6). This is a worrying indicator, as Oakdale's unemployment rate has consistently been higher than both Washington County and the state of Minnesota over the last 5 years. Still, regardless of its unemployment rate and wage rate, the majority of Oakdale residents live above the poverty level, with just 5.6% of families and 7.8% of all residents living in poverty.<sup>4</sup>

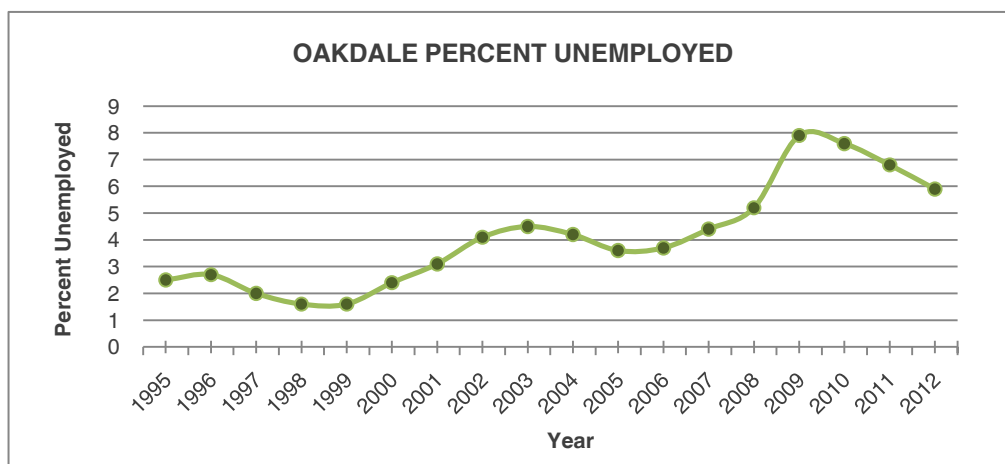


Figure 6: City of Oakdale Unemployment Rate, DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics

## The Oakdale Economy

Oakdale’s economy has remained fairly stable over the past 20 years, with steady growth even throughout the Great Recession. As of 2012, approximately 9,500 people are employed in Oakdale. Although employment growth has been solid, employees in the industries with the highest concentrations in Oakdale—accommodation and food services, and retail trade (see Figure 7)—tend to have lower incomes overall. Perhaps because of these specific employment concentrations, the majority of those who live in Oakdale commute to other communities for work, with only about 6.26% of all Oakdale residents working within the city limits (see the commuteshed table in Figure 9). St. Paul continues to be the most prevalent location for Oakdale residents’ employment (see the commuteshed map in Figure 8). Despite the apparent weakness of the local labor force, the majority of those employed by Oakdale businesses are Oakdale residents (12.09%), with St. Paul (10.18%) and Woodbury (9.08%) close behind (see the laborshed table in Figure 9).

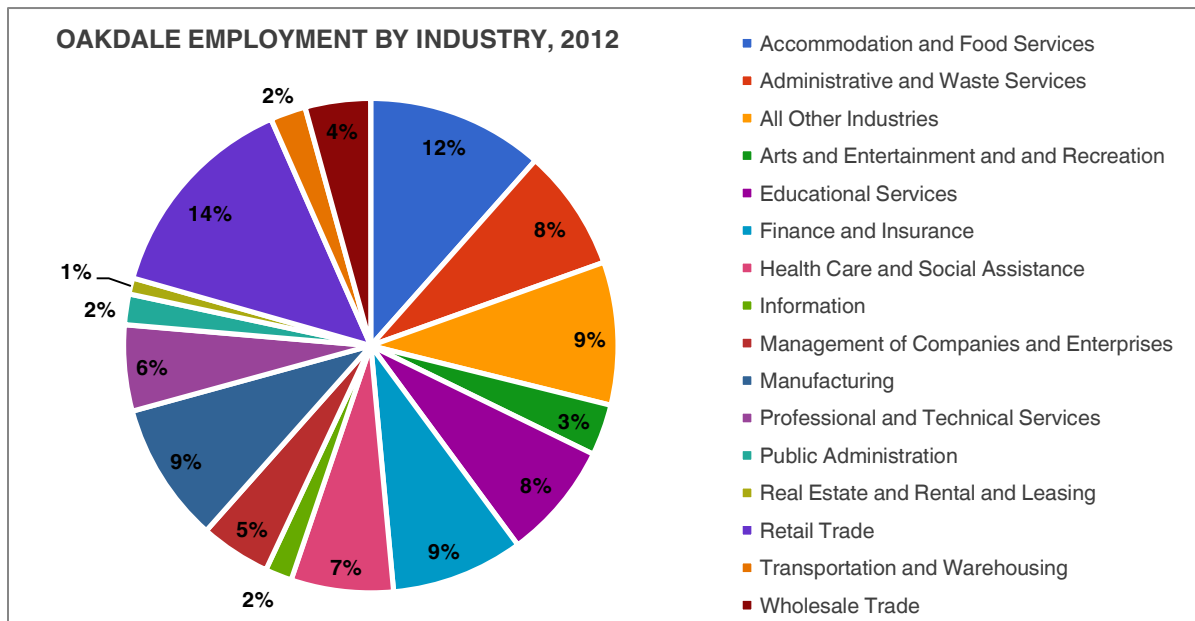


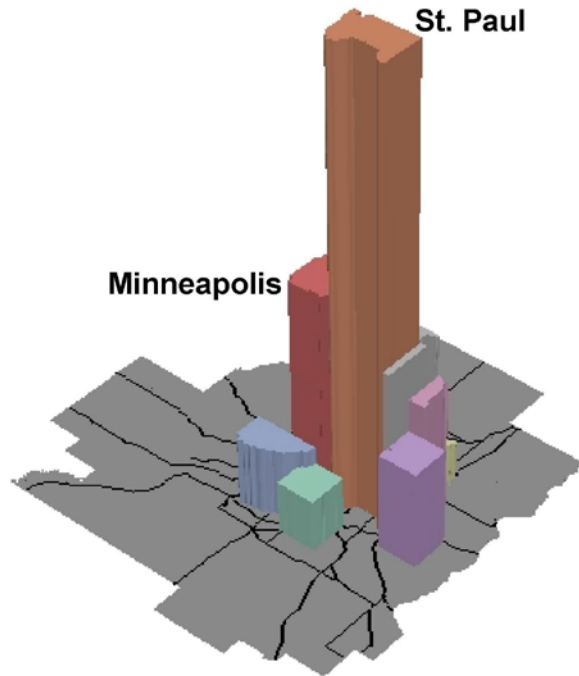
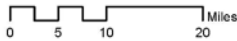
Figure 7: City of Oakdale, Employment by Industry in 2012, DEED Census of Employment and Wages, 2nd Quarter

# Top 10 Locations for Oakdale Residents to Commute To for Employment

Data Source: 2010 US Census

## Legend and Rankings

- Interstate Highway
- Twin Cities Metro Area
- St. Paul (1st)
- Minneapolis (2nd)
- Maplewood (3rd)
- Oakdale (4th)
- Woodbury (5th)
- Bloomington (6th)
- Roseville (7th)
- Eagan (8th)
- North St. Paul (9th)
- White Bear Lake (10th)



Map created on 21 April, 2013 by Drew Freerks

Figure 8: Commuted and Laborshed for Oakdale, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

City of Oakdale - Commuted (2010)				City of Oakdale - Laborshed (2010)			
WORKPLACE	WORKERS	% OF TOTAL	% CHANGE FROM 2004	WORKPLACE	WORKERS	% OF TOTAL	% CHANGE FROM 2004
Other	4,927	36.33%	-1.91%	Other	3,180	45.28%	2.06%
St. Paul	2,930	21.61%	-1.56%	Oakdale	849	12.09%	-1.18%
Minneapolis	1,378	10.16%	-1.25%	St. Paul	715	10.18%	0.01%
Maplewood	1,113	8.21%	-1.50%	Woodbury	638	9.08%	1.45%
Oakdale	849	6.26%	-0.61%	Maplewood	399	5.68%	0.40%
Woodbury	638	4.70%	1.00%	St. Croix County/WI	349	4.97%	0.41%
Bloomington	446	3.29%	-0.02%	Cottage Grove	225	3.20%	-0.26%
Roseville	396	2.92%	-0.13%	Minneapolis	203	2.89%	0.04%
Eagan	338	2.49%	-0.29%	North St. Paul	171	2.43%	-0.06%
North St. Paul	283	2.09%	-0.13%	White Bear Lake	149	2.12%	-0.24%
White Bear Lake	263	1.94%	0.18%	Inver Grove Heights	145	2.06%	0.00%

Figure 9: Commuted for Oakdale residents and Laborshed for workers coming into Oakdale, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

# OAK COMMONS STATION AREA LANDMARKS



## Station Area Overview

The Oak Commons Station of the Gateway Corridor is proposed to be built in the southeastern part of Oakdale, near Interstate 94 and the eastern edge of the city bordering Lake Elmo. There are four potential **Station** areas, each with their own set of challenges and opportunities. Regardless of which location is ultimately chosen, access to any of the sites will be easier for residents and businesses located in the southern part of the city compared to those in the northern areas of Oakdale, who will not have comparable proximity to the line.

Because of its proximity to major job centers such as 3M in nearby Maplewood and the major regional economic centers of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Oakdale stands to gain significantly from the development of the Gateway Corridor. Due to heavy usage from commuters in the East Metro and interstate commuters from Wisconsin, the development of this major transitway will be advantageous for the region. The Gateway Corridor will be an opportunity to efficiently connect Oakdale to the larger Twin Cities' metropolitan region, providing increased access to employment, housing, and recreation.

Currently, the proposed transitway is designed so that it runs along Interstate 94, which is the southernmost border of Oakdale. Those who currently use Oakdale's Park and Ride via I-94 from the east have relatively easy access to the proposed station areas via the County Road 13/Radio Drive exit. In

addition to serving as the eastern boundary that Oakdale shares with Lake Elmo, County Road 13 (also called Inwood Avenue North in Oakdale) could be a main arterial for Woodbury residents seeking to access the Oakdale Station.

### EXISTING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Within Oakdale, the primary roads serving the proposed Oak Commons Station areas are County Road 13 and Hadley Road (which both run north-south), as well as 4th Street North (which runs east-west). Because of its parallel route with I-94, 4th Street North will be vital to anyone seeking to access the station area from Oakdale. Helmo Avenue North provides access to southern Oakdale and could be an important connector for a station area located nearby.

According to 2010 data from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the portion of Inwood Avenue North closest to I-94 averages 16,100 cars per day, while Hadley Road (which does not have access to I-94) averages only 3,100 cars per day. Complete traffic counts for 4th Street North are not available, but the portion of 4th Street near the Helmo Avenue intersection was 3,900 in 2010.

### EXISTING TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently, two major express buses serve Oakdale. The 375 route runs directly to downtown Minneapolis from Guardian Angels Church in Oakdale. This is one of the highest volume express buses serving Minneapolis from the East Metro area. As of today, Guardian Angels Catholic Church and Metro Transit are five years into a 30-year contract for the Guardian Angels' parking lot to be used as a Park and Ride site (see Figure 14).<sup>1</sup> This lot has a capacity of over 400 stalls. In addition to serving residents of Oakdale and Washington County, the Guardian Angels Park and Ride is also a destination for commuters coming from Wisconsin. Commuters from Wisconsin drive their cars in and park to use the 375. The 375 bus trip to Minneapolis is scheduled to last 25 minutes during light traffic, and 40 minutes during the heavier parts of rush hour. Being an express bus, the 375 only operates on weekdays, and only during rush hours. In the morning, all of the trips are westbound (i.e., from Oakdale to Minneapolis) and during the evening all of the trips are eastbound.



Figure 10: View of the Guardian Angels Catholic Church Park and Ride

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<sup>1</sup> Pictures of existing conditions were taken in the winter of 2013. The winter of 2013 was unusually long and snowless photos were not possible before April 24, 2013.



The other express bus is the 294 route, which makes a limited number of stops between St. Paul and Stillwater, including one in Oakdale. In Oakdale, the major stops on the 294 are at Hadley Avenue and 15th Street and at the Imation headquarters further north. From Imation, the trip to St. Paul is scheduled to take 21 minutes. As an express bus, the 294 only operates on weekdays and only during rush hour. During both the morning and evening rush hour periods, the 294 runs both eastbound and westbound trips.

Oakdale is also served by the 219 bus, which runs between the Maplewood Mall and the Sun Ray Transit Center. The 219 runs along Century Avenue before turning east to provide access to Hadley Avenue in Oakdale, traveling south to 7th Street going west, and then turning south on Greenway to access Hudson Street and then turning into the town of Landfall before continuing on to Sun Ray. The 219 runs at 30-minute intervals throughout most of the day on weekdays, and runs hourly on Saturdays. It does not provide Sunday service. Although three bus lines serve Oakdale residents, use for commuting is low (see Figures 11 and 12) and does not exceed 150 riders per day, on average.

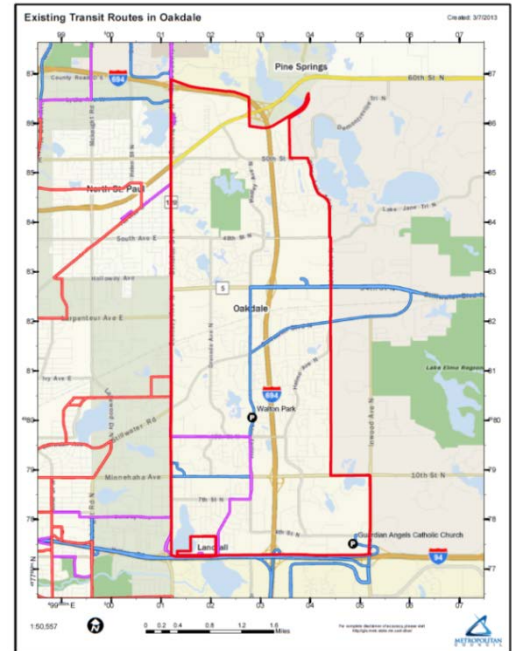


Figure 11: Map of existing bus transit routes in Oakdale, courtesy of the Metropolitan Council, March 2013

# AMOUNT OF RESIDENTS THAT COMMUTE TO WORK IN THE EAST METRO (Ages 16 and up)

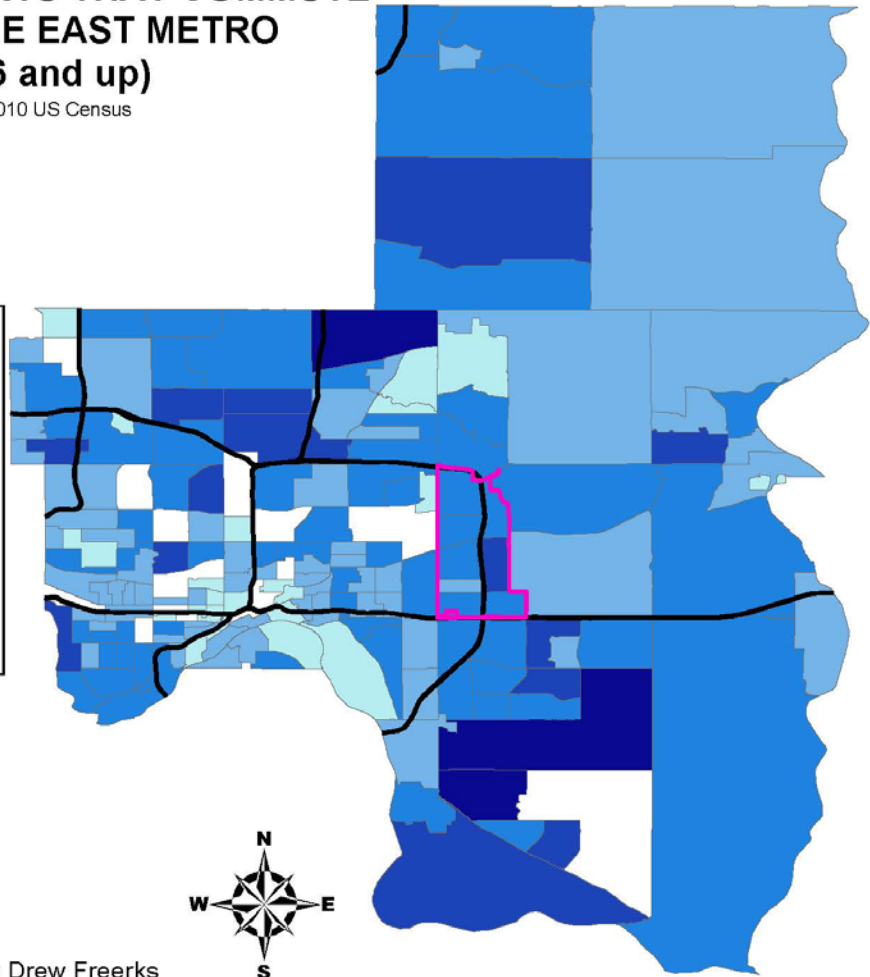
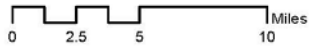
Data Source: 2010 US Census

**Legend**

- Oakdale Boundry
- Major Roadways

**Residents That Commute**

- 0 - 999
- 1000 - 1999
- 2000 - 2999
- 3000 - 3999
- 4000 - 6490



Map created on 21 March, 2013 by Drew Freerks

Figure 12: Oakdale residents that commute to work using transit

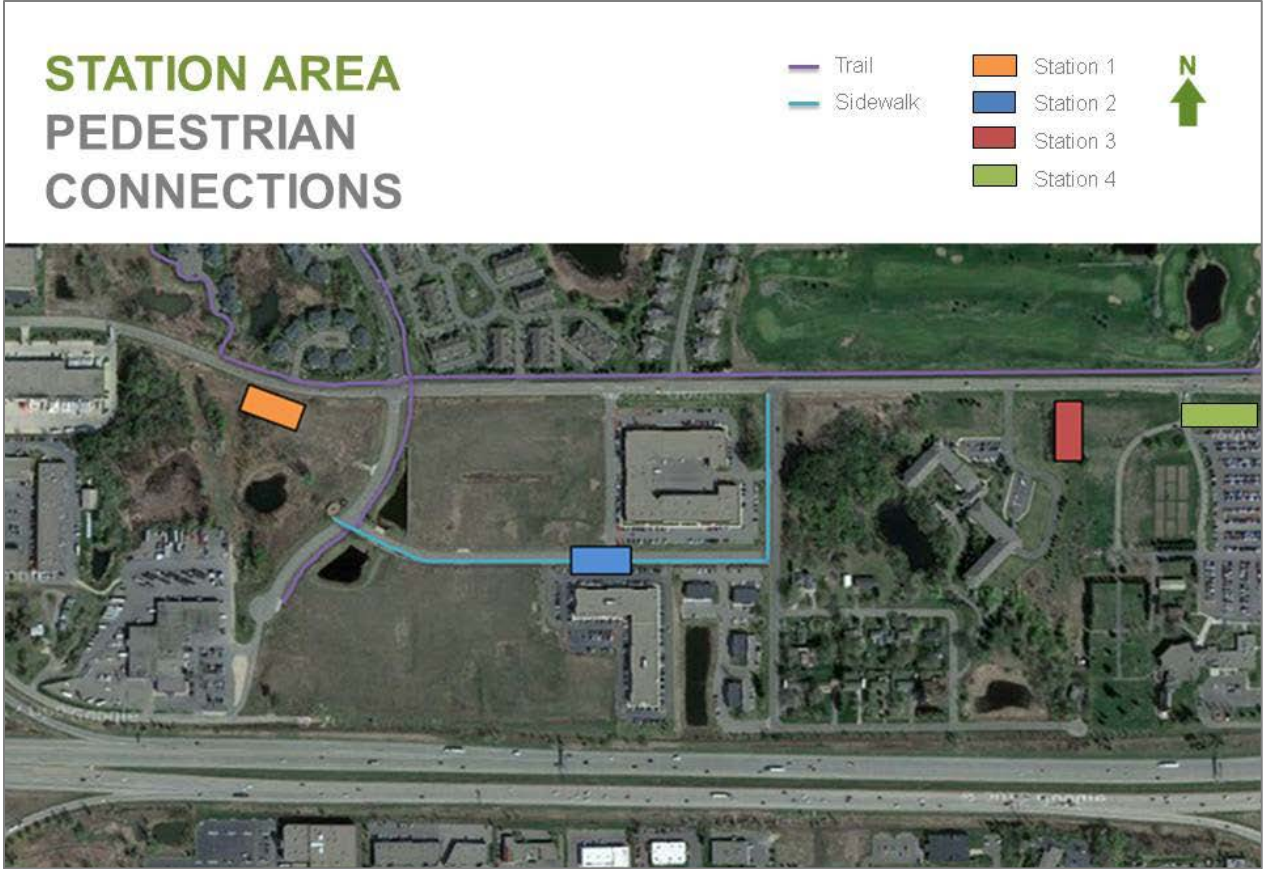


Figure 13: Oakdale Proposed Station Area: Pedestrian Access

**EXISTING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Oakdale has a system of paved trails and sidewalks that connect all areas of the city to each other and link with local amenities such as parks, schools, commercial and residential areas. Bicycling is a popular pastime in Oakdale, and residents use bicycles for recreational purposes as well as to meet more urgent transportation needs. Looking at the proposed station area, the sidewalk on 4th Street North is on the north side of the street, which would mean that a station located south of the street would require street crossings to access the site. The many surface parking lots in the area multiply the distance one needs to travel to get from one building to the other, which makes pedestrian and bicycle access more challenging. In addition to the lower densities that make walking a less efficient mode of transportation, pedestrian and bicycle access is also complicated by Oakdale’s hilly topography.

# OAK COMMONS STATION AREA LANDMARKS



Figure 14: Proposed Land Use of the Oakdale Study Area with 1/2 Mile Buffer around proposed station area 4.

## CURRENT LAND USE

Today, there are multiple types of land uses around the planned transitway and station area. Land uses include residential (multi-family and single-family), commercial, mixed-use, industrial and office properties:

- Guardian Angels Catholic Church is a large religious congregation located in the station area. In addition to their church facility and large parking lot that is used for the park-and-ride, Guardian Angels' property also contains a large cemetery, and they anticipate the need to expand it in the next decade. Guardian Angels Catholic Church is located south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street North and west of Inwood Avenue North.
- To the west of Guardian Angels is the Oak Meadows Senior Living facility. The facility houses aging adults at many different levels of care. In addition to their large building, the campus of Oak Meadows contains a lake in the rear of the property.
- North of 4th Street North is the Oak Marsh Golf Course, the largest single land use in the half-mile area surrounding the proposed station sites. The golf course site also contains residential properties that are a mix of single-family and multi-family homes.

- South of 4th Street North and east of Hudson Avenue and west of Helmo Avenue are a few commercial properties and the Oakdale campus of St. Mary's University. Each of these properties are accessed by driveways off of Hudson Avenue and contain commercial buildings surrounded by parking lots.
- East of Helmo Avenue is a large partially-developed site owned and developed by Carlson Companies. This site is roughly 80 acres and today contains a large amount of open (undeveloped) space as well as two completed and occupied single story commercial buildings (with parking) on the eastern part of the site. They are connected to Helmo Avenue by 3rd Street North, which bisects the site. It is Carlson Companies' intent to build out facilities—most likely commercial office space—on this site in the future.
- There are 12 single-family homes located in between Ideal Avenue and Immanuel Avenue. For the purposes of this plan, this area is called the Residential Sub-Area. The Residential Sub-Area is located to the southwest of the Oak Meadows Senior Living facility.
- There is a large mall located to the east of Guardian Angels Church that contains a Best Buy as an anchor tenant in addition to other retailers and restaurants. The facility is served by a large parking lot, and is easily accessible by Inwood Avenue North.

## Current Land Use of the Oakdale Study Area

Source: MetCouncil, US Census 2010

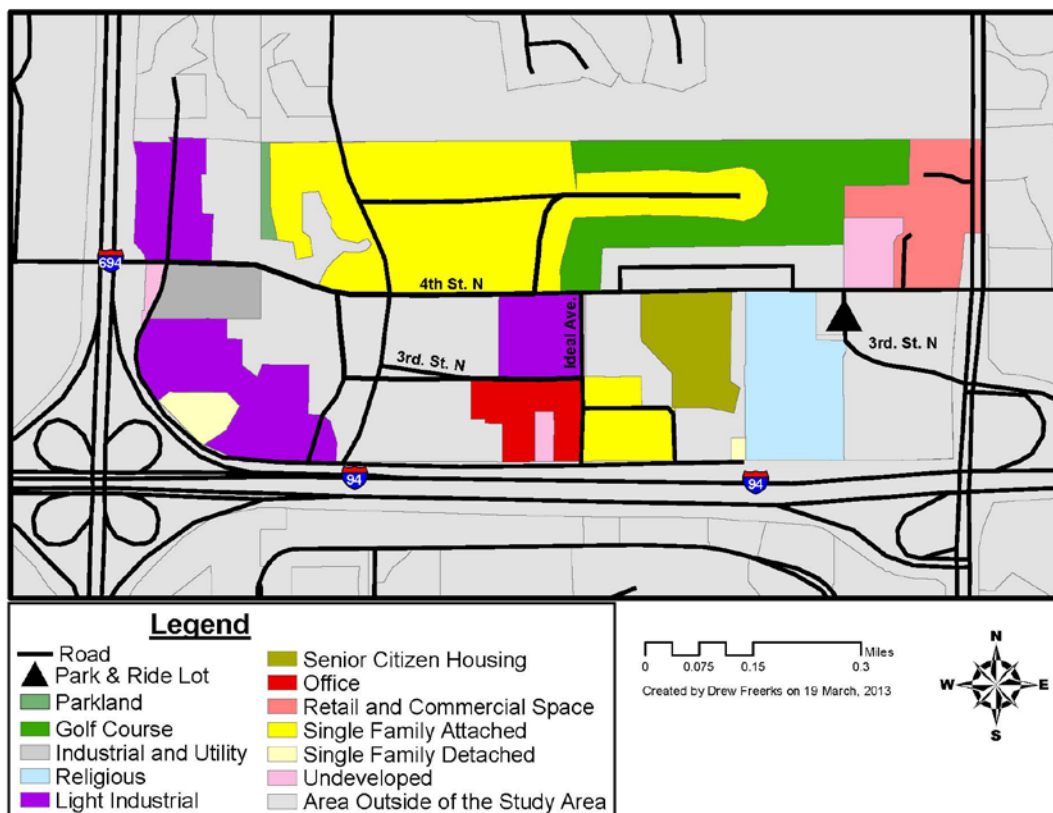


Figure 9: Current Land Use of the Oakdale Study Area.

## WHAT IS MISSING?

While, Oakdale is over 90% developed, it lacks a central downtown, its housing stock is aging, and there is a lack of employment diversity. Considering these factors, the goals for new land uses and development to overcome these obstacles is clear: Oakdale needs more multi-family, multi-use developments, as well as civic spaces and locations where smaller businesses may thrive (see current land use map in Figure 15 and proposed land use map in Figure 16). With new investments, Oakdale will be able to develop a town center which will mirror a historic downtown as well as build newer housing and induce additional business development and recruitment. The Gateway Corridor transitway is an ideal opportunity to leverage momentum for this development.

### Proposed Land Use of the Oakdale Study Area with 1/2 Mile Buffer

Source: MetCouncil, US Census 2010

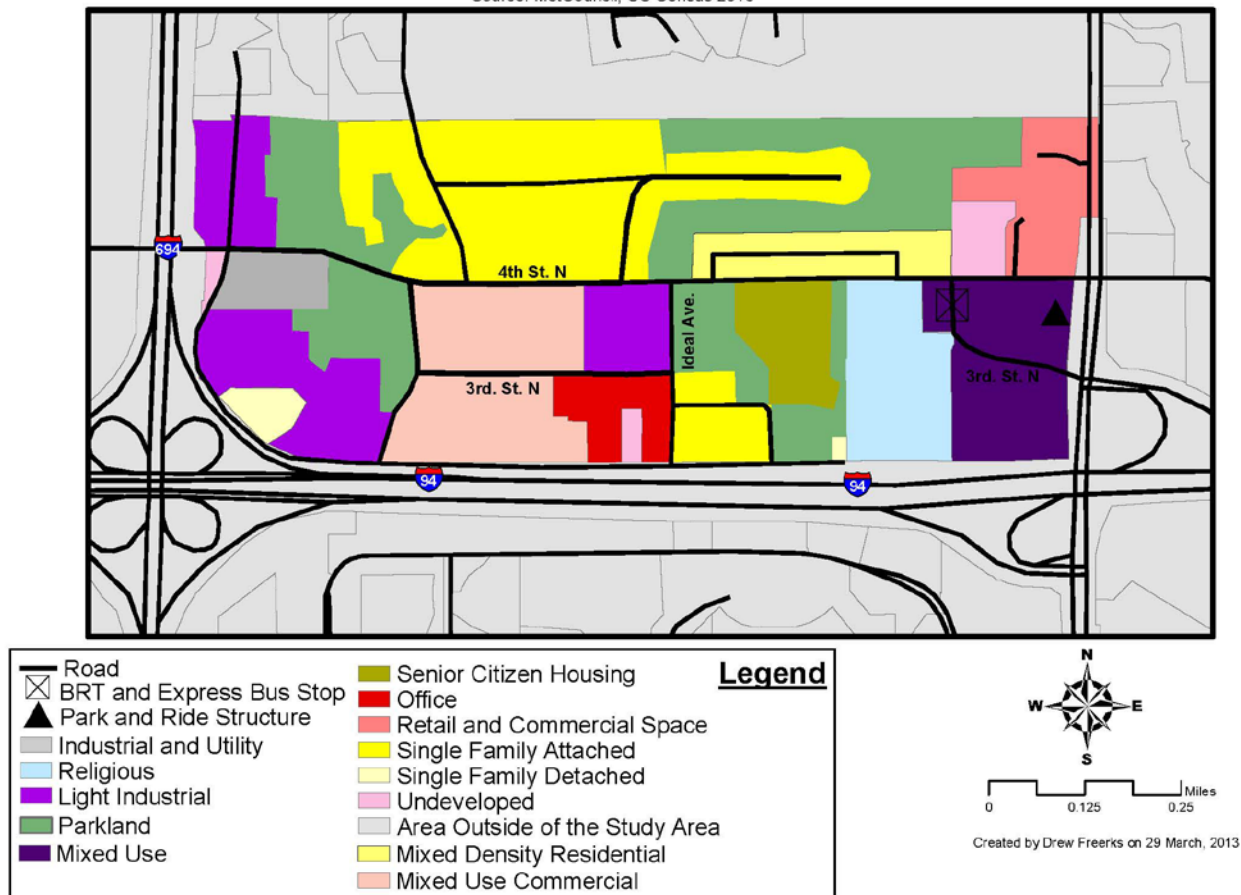


Figure 106: Proposed Land Use of the Oakdale Study Area.

# SITE ANALYSIS

After consulting with representatives of both the City of Oakdale and the Gateway Corridor Commission, four possible alignments were presented. The following diagnosis focuses on these four routes and the different stations and uses that each alignment would offer. It compares the benefits and drawbacks of each of these alternatives and discusses the potential consequences of each alignment.

## Topography

### STATION 1

Favored by the Gateway Corridor Commission, this site is located on the eastern edge of the redevelopment parcel in between Helmo Avenue and Hudson Boulevard, just south of 4th Street North. This station is planned to be located on the northern face of a hill that overlooks 4th Street North and the surrounding townhome developments. On the backside of the proposed station site is a marsh with moderate forest vegetation and open water. Overall, the elevation of this station location varies drastically and could lead to increased construction costs, as well as higher costs for stormwater management, as runoff from the site will impact the adjacent open water body.



Figure 118: View of topography at Proposed Station 1

# LINE 1: 4<sup>th</sup> and Helmo

- Educational
- Residential
- Commercial
- BRT Stop
- BRT Line
- ½ Mile Buffer
- ↑ N



Figure 127: Proposed Station 1 near Helmo Avenue and east of the Carlson Business Park



## STATION 2

Supported by the Carlson Companies—which owns the property surrounding this proposed station—Station 2 is located along 3rd Street North—in between Helmo and Ideal Avenue. The topography of this proposed site is level and mostly unvegetated. There are several open lots that will be prime for real estate development within the ½ mile buffer around this proposed station, most of which Carlson Companies owns and controls, and for which they have already planned. On the eastern edge of this station area is a steep hill that rises about 60 feet above the terrain below, which limits walkability to the station area from the Residential Sub-Area.

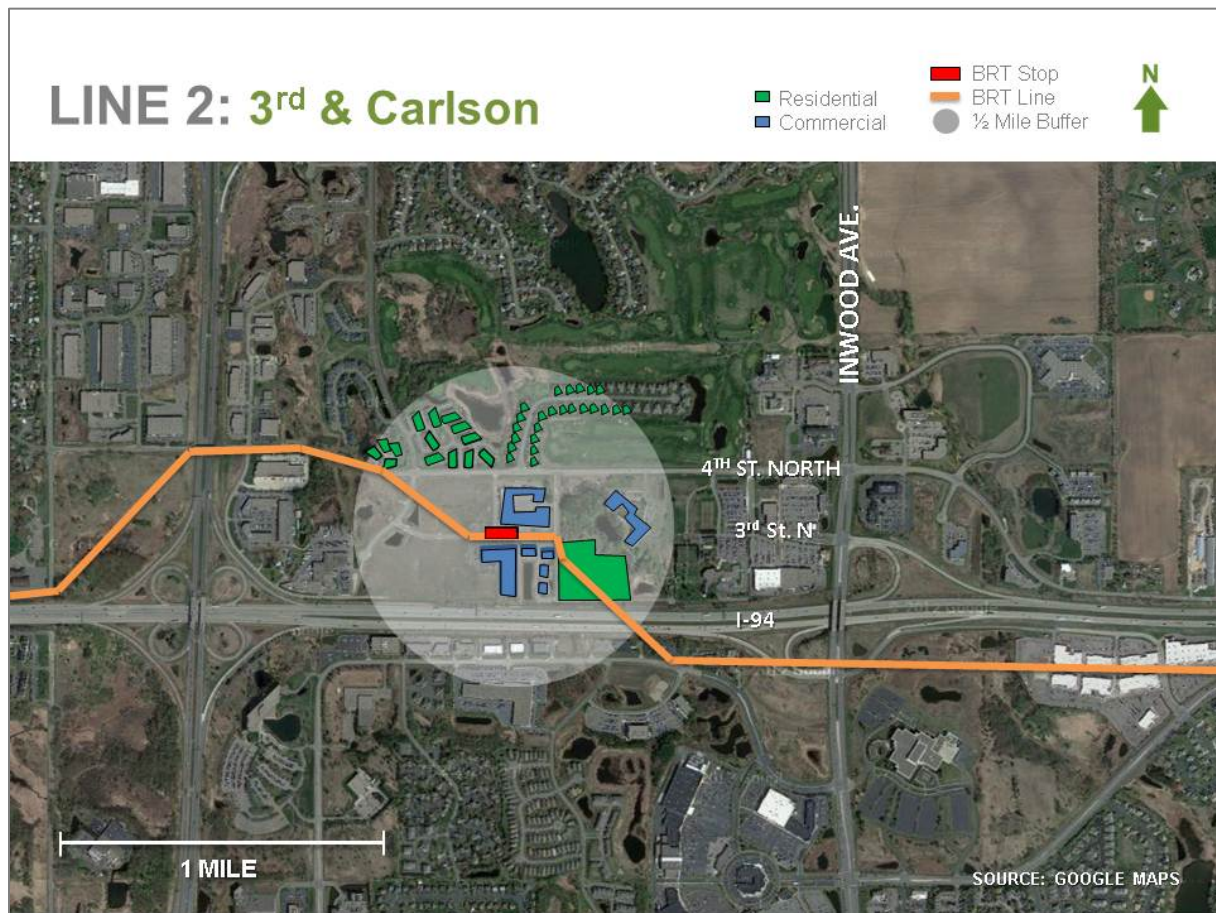


Figure 19: Proposed Station 2 in Carlson Business Park on 3rd Street



Figure 20: Proposed Station 3 near Guardian Angels Catholic Church Park-n-Ride

### STATION 3



Figure 21: View of topography at proposed Station 3  
 be costly to construct and pass by the Guardian Angels cemetery, would allow the station to service the

Located on the eastern edge of the redevelopment area, Station 3 is the closest station to the commercial core that is located on Inwood Avenue. Oak Commons Station itself would sit on flat, underutilized land that is south of 4th Street North, in between the driveway for the Guardian Angels Catholic Church and a local retirement community. A new road would have to be constructed along the level patch of earth that connects 4th Street North with Hudson Boulevard. This new road, which would

commercial core along Inwood Avenue and the residential neighborhood located behind the Oak Meadows Senior Living facility. Furthermore, the terrain allows for ease of access for pedestrians, bikers and motorists.

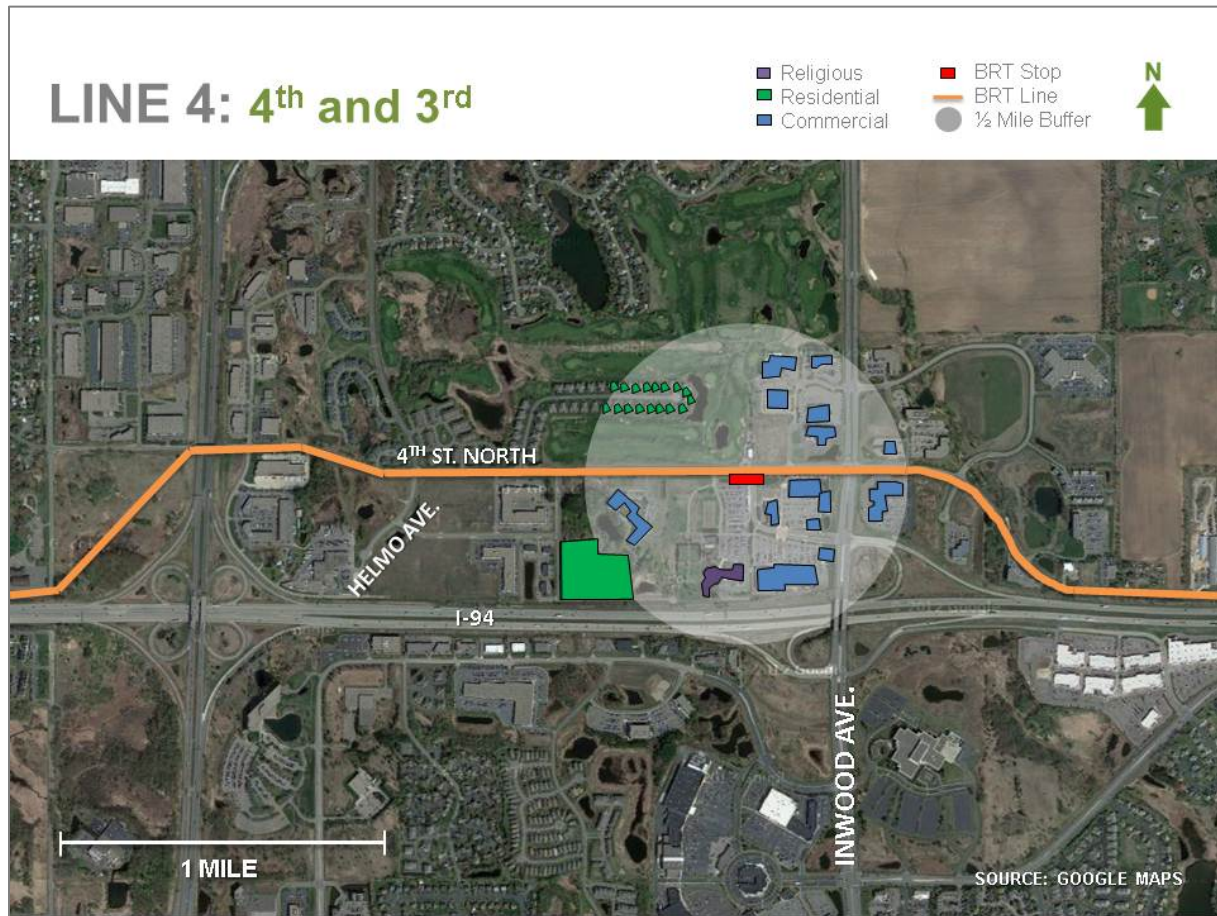


Figure 22: Proposed Station 4 on 4th Street North, west of 3rd Street

## STATION 4

Located at 4th Street North and 3rd Street to the west of Inwood Avenue, this station location has been discussed as a potential alternative if the transitway continues on the north side of I-94 into Lake Elmo and not south into Woodbury at this point in the line. At this time, the Gateway Corridor Commission has not publicly considered this alignment, but it may do so as the route continues to be debated.

Station 4 would be placed at the junction of 3rd Street North and 4th Street North, near. This land is currently paved and underutilized. Similar to proposed Station 3, Station 4 will sit on flat land, which allows for easier redevelopment and easier pedestrian and bicycle access. This station would also allow for the continued use of the Guardian Angels Park and Ride and require little change to the streetscape, as both 4th Street North and 3rd Street North have both pedestrian and vehicular access. This site is close to many existing commercial areas that are accessed by Inwood Avenue and 4th Street and has an abundance of underutilized land around the station area, leaving good potential for future development.

# STATION AREA SWOT (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS) ANALYSIS

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is useful in determining the key components involved in evaluating competing alternatives. The following matrices represent four different SWOT analyses based on each proposed station area.

STATION 1	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains highest speeds by staying off existing roads</li> <li>• Pre-endorsed by Metropolitan Council and Washington County</li> <li>• Does not require extensive land acquisition</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cost of construction (cantilever roads and diagonal bridge)</li> <li>• Increases risk of storm water contamination because of topography</li> <li>• Possible disruption of Guardian Angels cemetery</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetic opportunity within raised transit platform</li> <li>• Could inspire development around existing wetland area</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost ineffective/infeasible</li> <li>• Accessibility issues due to steep land gradient</li> <li>• Wetland health and other environmental concerns</li> </ul>

Figure 23: SWOT Analysis for Station 1

Station 1 has strengths that lie in its relatively palatable political position; because Station 1 is currently favored by the Gateway Corridor Commission—largely because it avoids any complicated land acquisition schemes—station development within this area would be least controversial. However, as seen in the geographic analysis above, the land gradient in this area is highly variable, potentially implying higher construction costs. In addition, its proximity to the Guardian Angels cemetery could create conflict with this important stakeholder. Still, the steep hills could create an opportunity to create visually impressive station platforms that could help catalyze development in the adjacent areas. But while Station 1 has the support of the Commission, it appears that its difficult location would create greater expenses for its construction, and it will likely be very costly and difficult to access (especially for non-motorized traffic) without major infrastructure improvements. Part of the reason why the parcel might be easily assembled is because the land is less desirable for development. Due to tricky topography, the Commission should consider costs beyond those associated with assembling the land as it considers station alternatives.

## STATION 2

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases access for Carlson business park</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only serves office park community</li> <li>Requires the acquisition of single family homes in the Residential Sub-Area</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates the redevelopment of the Residential Sub-Area</li> <li>Could incentivize more diverse land use within the Carlson site</li> <li>Would require partnership with Carlson Companies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission preference for Station 1</li> <li>Terrain and location has pedestrian and park-and-ride accessibility issues</li> <li>At this time, Carlson Companies controls the proposed site and station area</li> </ul>

Figure 24: SWOT Analysis for Station 2

Station 2 would be located in the center of the land that Carlson Companies is proposing to develop into its business park, which would create a terrific transit opportunity for workers in these facilities. However, this population would only be one small segment of Oakdale’s labor force, and may not serve transit-dependent riders (riders who can only use transit to travel). This route would also likely disrupt the Guardian Angels cemetery due to its proximity. Station 2 could also facilitate redevelopment in the Residential Sub-Area, but costs of land acquisition in this area could complicate the process. And while this location could incentivize more diverse land uses within the Carlson site, this site may be too Carlson-centric, especially since it is unclear whether Carlson Companies would change their site plans to accommodate the station and other related activities.

## STATION 3

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park-and-ride potential</li> <li>Potential to enhance surrounding businesses</li> <li>Pre-existing pedestrian infrastructure</li> <li>Proximate to many employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90 degree turns could impede efficiency of entire corridor line</li> <li>Possible disruption of the Guardian Angels cemetery</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development</li> <li>Lower cost because of topography</li> <li>Increases job accessibility for lower income populations located near the transitway</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission preference for Station 1</li> </ul>

Figure 25: SWOT Analysis for Station 3

Station 3 has great potential to connect with existing businesses and the Guardian Angels park-and-ride station. Although this station would take advantage of the pre-existing pedestrian infrastructure, the required 90-degree turns along the route could impede efficiency and speed of the entire Gateway Corridor line. This station would have the potential to attract new residential redevelopment in the Residential Sub-Area, as well as increase the job accessibility of the many surrounding commercial areas, rather than only Carlson Companies' site.

STATION 4	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains speeds by avoiding a 90 degree turn</li> <li>• Uses current park-and-ride lot and amenable to expanding lot capacity</li> <li>• Increases accessibility to surrounding retail businesses</li> <li>• Pre-existing pedestrian infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible disruption of the Guardian Angels park-and-ride</li> <li>• Must pass over Inwood Drive which is a major road and location of increased traffic wait times</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infill development leverages existing uses nearby</li> <li>• Increased access for retailers and more foot traffic could make more opportunities for investment</li> <li>• Increases job access for low-income or reverse commuter workers</li> <li>• Leverages existing Minneapolis-Oakdale bus line and stop</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission preference for Station 1</li> <li>• Infill development could be difficult</li> <li>• Commercial retailers may not want transit and/or transit development so close to their stores</li> <li>• Guardian Angels Church refusing to sell or allow construction on their land</li> </ul>

Figure 26: SWOT Analysis for Station 4

Station 4, like Station 3, contains great potential to connect with existing businesses and the Guardian Angels park-and-ride. This site would also take advantage of the pre-existing pedestrian and wayfinding infrastructure already associated with the existing transit infrastructure. This station also has the potential to attract residential development in the Residential Sub-Area, as well as increase the job accessibility of the surrounding commercial area. Nevertheless, this station and the area surrounding it could require extensive development to arrive at its highest uses, and doing this could be complicated by the fact that there is considerable existing development in the station area today. Placing the station on this site may require infill development, or new development on vacant land that is bounded by other types of development<sup>5</sup>. While this sort of development can be costly in the short term, it is also a more efficient use of existing infrastructure and promotes more cost-effective and sustainable growth into the future.

## Comparison Analysis: The Four Station Areas<sup>2</sup>

Station	Increased Uses	Community Support	Diversified Tax Base	Increased Tax Base	Efficiency (Transit Time and Commuter Access)	Total
Station 1	2	4	2	2	3	13
Station 2	1	1	1	3	2	8
Station 3	3	3	3	1	1	11
Station 4	4	2	4	4	4	18

Figure 27: Comparison analysis of the four station areas.

After reviewing the SWOT analysis for each station, the stations were compared to one another and were ranked in a variety of areas of suitability for the station.

The station that received the highest score for increased uses was Station 4. The Station 4 site will be surrounded by religious, recreational, commercial land uses, and would be most amenable to the development of multi-family housing. This would amount in the highest number of uses around any given station, and it has the best existing infrastructure, including the 375 bus. Station 3 comes just after Station 4 because many of the uses are already confirmed, i.e. the elderly housing facility and Guardian Angels Catholic Church and its park-and-ride are essentially “cemented” in their current locations.

The station that received the highest score for community support was Station 1. Station 1 not only deserves this score because the Gateway Corridor Commission prefer it, but also because there are few other uses around this stop. Therefore community members are more likely to support this stop, as there is little danger that it will impact their properties and bother them “in their back yard.”

Station 4 received the highest scores for the greatest likelihood of leading to increased diversity and size of the immediate tax base. Since this station will support the greatest variety of land uses, it will also support both land use diversity and increases in the current tax base. For instance, with the Station 4 location, there would be increased opportunities to create mixed-use (i.e. residential/commercial) where there was once only commercial.

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<sup>2</sup> All comparisons compare the current use to anticipated use/development first and then compare each station to one another. The Stations were given a score 1-4, 4 being the greatest use/development choice.

Finally, Station 4 will allow for the greatest line efficiencies, while also serving the greatest amount of both pedestrian and commuter riders. If developed as the proposed land use map displays (see Figure 16), Oakdale will be able to develop a 'Main Street' area of mixed uses that are pedestrian friendly and accessible. Moreover, its location in southern Oakdale and proximity to the well-attended Guardian Angels Church, major commercial and retail locations, and existing infrastructure will position it to receive maximum traffic and use over time. Additionally, as this line does not cross over I-94 until further down the line and does not make a 90 degree turn, transit times remain within reasonable and desired timeframes.

Overall, the Station 4 alignment received the highest scores, despite the fact that it has yet to be seriously considered by the Gateway Corridor Commission. It is close to existing nodes of activity, but also has currently underutilized land - land that could be redeveloped by the time that the transitway comes online. It could easily integrate with the 375 bus route to downtown Minneapolis and become a transit hub. As a hub, it would be an ideal location for transit-oriented development and the current land uses would compliment it. Moreover, a hub could help encourage increased development and revitalize the area around it.

If the Station 4 alignment is not adopted, the second-best option for the site is the Station 3 alignment. This alignment provides the second-best redevelopment opportunity, as it is still proximate to many important areas such as the Residential Sub-Area, the existing park and ride infrastructure, the Carlson Companies development, and the Best Buy shopping center. Given the proximity of Station 3 to Guardian Angels Church and Oak Meadows Senior Center, partnerships and involvement with these institutions should be explored to develop the station area in ways that would benefit them while minimizing impacts.

Still, because it has the best proximity to existing activities and highest potential for transformative future redevelopment, Station 4 is the best site location for the Oak Commons transit station and will be the focus of both the vision and action sections of this plan.



## Stakeholder Analysis

There are many stakeholders involved in the planning, implementation, execution, and evaluation of major capital projects such as Gateway Corridor (see Figure 28).

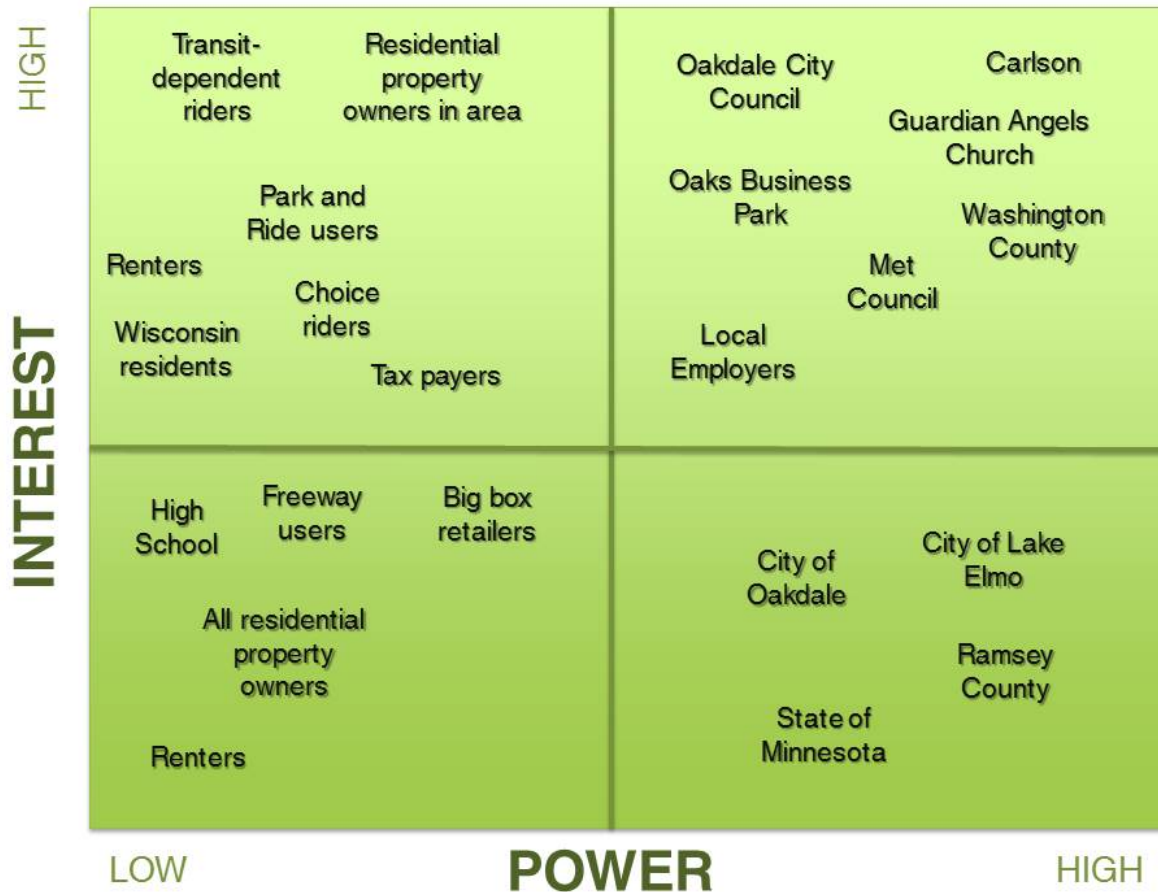


Figure 28: Power vs. Interest Grid

Because the Oak Commons Station will be localized within a geographically small area in southern Oakdale, smaller—but potentially very influential—individuals and institutions could hold great power over the siting and development processes. The Carlson Companies and Guardian Angels Church both possess high power and high interest, largely because the proposed station will have a high impact on their properties. Contrastingly, the City of Oakdale and the City of Lake Elmo (here, referring to the residents of the respective cities) have high power in that residents can raise opposition to major capital projects, but low interest because of NIMBYism (“if it’s not in my backyard, it is not my concern”). Although some residents may feel very passionately about the project, the majority of residents may be neutral. Users of the proposed transitway typically possess high interest but low power, while residents who are renters may have less interest and less power due to their generally temporary nature in their communities.

## COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

A major player in this development, and particularly if alignment 2, 3, or 4 is chosen, is the Guardian Angels Catholic Church (and its cemetery) which will likely be affected by the proposed transit corridor. The church and the cemetery have existed on their land since 1867 and impacts to this property or adjacent plots will likely be unacceptable to them. In an interview with the parish administrator, several issues were highlighted including the potential refusal of forced displacement (among residents of the Residential Sub-Area), and maintaining the privacy of the cemetery.<sup>6</sup>

*With regard to alignment 3:  
“You just can’t disrupt the  
privacy that families want in a  
cemetery - almost  
sacrilegious.”  
- Denny Farrell, Parish  
Administrator*

*With regard to alignment 2:  
“My only objection to this  
route would be the  
displacement - if you’ve got  
something that works, why  
displace people?”  
- Denny Farrell, Parish  
Administrator*

In addition to the church, homeowners in the Residential Sub-Area—the high priority development area that sits in between the Carlson Companies development and Guardian Angels Church—are a major stakeholder group as well. This group has yet to be evaluated; however their involvement will be necessary for the success of any alignment that impacts this community. Although many local residents agree that the area is ‘run-down,’ many of the homes in the Residential Sub-Area have been passed down through families and enticing people to move may be particularly difficult and could require paying homeowners above market value.

## BUSINESS STAKEHOLDERS

A major stakeholder is Best Buy. Best Buy is the anchor store in the shopping center along Inwood Avenue North. Although Best Buy is considered to be a primary draw for this shopping center, recent events such as the closing of 50 stores in 2012 may cast doubt on the long-term sustainability of this chain and therefore its presence in the station area.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the current Best Buy store will benefit from transit accessibility due to an increased transit population in its area. In addition, many of Best Buy’s employees would benefit from commuting along the proposed transitway line. Going forward, it will be important to determine possible business growth opportunities and labor supply issues in the Oakdale area as it relates to the station location.

Carlson Companies favors alignments 1 and 2 which would involve placing the station very close or on their development site. In anecdotal accounts, it was found that Carlson is very excited about the prospect of having a dedicated transit stop for employees on this site, and the station’s importance in helping attract tenants for their properties. However, after profiling this potential workforce’s transit usage statistics, there

is a concern that those employed on this site would likely be “choice” riders (i.e. transit riders who own cars but choose to use transit because of convenience or cost) at best.

Moreover, there are businesses that will not receive any benefit from the proposed stop, mainly the businesses closest to 694 to the west. As stakeholders, they could be in a position to demand certain concessions, such as a circulator or connecting pedestrian way, that could provide increased access to their properties.

## **LAND DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS**

Dave Johnson is a major landowner and developer in Oakdale and operates a strip mall that will be affected by all proposed alignments. Johnson has a particular interest in the Gateway project because many of his tenants are in light industry and attract lower skilled and transit dependent employees from East Saint Paul, Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Karen Underwood of Metro Transit describes the labor supply from this area as working flexible hours, which translates to desiring more mid-service and late evening rides as well as more park and ride spaces.<sup>8</sup> This population could benefit greatly from the regular transit service provided by the Gateway Corridor transitway.

Depending on the alignment, development of the transitway may consume a portion of Johnson’s 25-acre site. Because of this, he is in communication with Carlson on the possibility of funding transit service between the station, his site and Carlson. This circulator will shuttle both Carlson and his own tenant’s employees to and from their respective sites. He also expressed concern about the look of the station and its ability to match the aesthetics of neighboring developments.<sup>9</sup>

Among developers, the need for amenities near or at the stop, parking capacity, and the accessibility of the park and ride were the most important concerns.<sup>10</sup>

## **POLITICAL STAKEHOLDERS**

In general, Oakdale can be described as pro-business and pro-development. According to developer Dave Johnson, “Oakdale is *very* [Johnson’s emphasis] pro-business; always willing to listen to us/endorse things for us.” According to the client, the primary concern of the city council and mayor is the cost and aesthetics of the future stop. Councilman Paul Reinke indicates that Oakdale city government is responsive to business and development needs and is very amenable to collaborating on solutions that help bring investment to the city. Councilman Reinke believes that for this transportation investment to work, recreation and retail are a top priority for the area, and that increasing the connectivity between these types of activity and the transit corridor would be important for creating attractive development opportunities. Mayor Carmen Sarrack indicated that job accessibility would be a main priority for the site, and that the types of developments that should be promoted in the station area should those that are focused on employment opportunities. Mayor Sarrack also indicated that accessibility, aesthetics and functionality would be important priorities for station area design.

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# PART 2: VISION

## Envisioning New Suburban Living – Oakdale, Minnesota

The arrival of the Gateway Corridor presents a rare opportunity for the City of Oakdale. An active transit station surrounded by other destinations and great places will give the area a vibrancy and excitement that not only challenges the existing spatial and social configuration of typical suburban development, but also serves as a prototypical example for outstanding, *new suburban* development. The Oak Commons Station will be a catalyst that propels Oakdale into the realm of ‘cool’ suburbs - those that attract a variety of residents of diverse ages, backgrounds, and interests.

### Oak Commons Station Rendering



Figure 139: Rendering of Oak Commons Station – find more renderings in Appendix B.

A ‘cool suburb’ has unique public spaces with many different types of activities that serves as a public town center and gives residents a sense of pride in their community. Facing a future in which the centers of large cities are becoming popular places to live, cool suburbs will continue to attract residents and visitors by being a bit less dense while still being connected to the amenities in major cities. These new residents will seek to be in areas that provide the same kind of ‘urban alchemy’—that is, mixing of people and activities—as cities are known for having, while also having a unique identity of which people can be proud. As travelers on the transitway and I-94 pass Oakdale and see vibrant spaces with beautiful buildings visible day and night, they will understand Oakdale as a place that has *vibrant life beyond the commute*. Residents will be proud of spaces that identify Oakdale as more than a bedroom community, but as a place with active and busy civic spaces and life.

In the future, Oakdale will have many public assets that will attract visitors and residents to a ‘main street’ type of area that will have many different kinds of activities taking place. There will be a vibrant street life—even in the winter—due to the diversity of uses and the proximity of the transit stop. The bus station will be aesthetically beautiful, uniquely designed and visible from I-94 during the day and night. Furthermore, it will signify that something exciting is happening in Oakdale.

Commuters will come to the area to use both the new Gateway Corridor transitway as well as the existing 375 bus route to downtown Minneapolis. In the morning, they will have time to stop and buy a cup of coffee and a newspaper in the station area to enjoy during their ride. In the evening, they will stop and pick up dry-cleaning, or their children from the daycare or meet the family for a dinner at one of the restaurants located around the station. Or they may only have a few moments to spend in the station area today, but they can't wait to come by over the weekend to bike around the popular park and experience some of the fun filled, family-oriented programming that will be happening.



Figure 30: Sketch of Oak Commons Station Area Vision

Every Sunday after Mass, parishioners, from Guardian Angels church will come explore the pedestrian friendly confines of the Oaks of Oakdale, stopping at a café for Sunday best brunch or grabbing an accessory to match their Sunday best attire. After they eat, they will stroll along Oakdale's pedestrian friendly sidewalks and admire the natural water feature, while the sounds of the Tartan High School band

performing at the Amphitheater fill the air. Visitors from St. Paul will take the Gateway Corridor transitway to visit, shop and eat at the Oaks of Oakdale and explore the interactive bridge - the Love Bridge. Young professionals who work at the nearby 3M and Imation will head in to downtown St. Paul for the day to take pictures of Lowertown, but will be back in time to make dinner at their residences located near the Oak Commons Station. For all of these populations, Oakdale is a place with a lot going on, and there are exciting advantages to living and visiting there.

## Developing a Catalytic Station

The Gateway Corridor transitway will be a game-changer for Oakdale. This vision for the Oak Commons Station Area encompasses strategic public investments, partnerships with community members and stakeholders, and a commitment to creativity that seeks to design for many types of users and multiple publics, all combining to make a future in which the Oakdale community has a bustling 'Main Street' area with different types of activities and is integrated into the surrounding community. The Oak Commons Station Area will be a place that will bring the community closer together by being a thoughtfully designed place that many different people will want to enjoy with their friends, loved ones, and if it is done right, even strangers. The compounding effect of many different types of activities and places will make the Oak Commons Station Area attractive to diverse groups of people at many different times of day and the year. Oakdale should aim for nothing less.

### Oak Commons Neighborhood Rendering



Figure 31: Rendering of neighborhood surrounding Oak Commons Station – find more renderings in Appendix B

The Oak Commons Station will not be just a park-and-ride transit station. It will be the centerpiece of a comprehensive development plan that will move Oakdale forward into a new era of suburban revitalization. The station-area incorporates the ideals of place-making, connectivity, and wayfinding into a built environment that will enhance the experience for residents and guests, and give a unique and positive brand to the community. Redevelopment of existing parcels in the surrounding area will make a more

pedestrian-friendly environment that will encourage people to linger and explore. They will benefit from proximity to diverse activities. Complementary and augmentative land uses will enhance the identity of Oakdale as a place of community assets and vibrant civic life.

The vision aims to maximize benefits to a diversity of stakeholders: residents, commuters, and businesses among them. This project incorporates concepts such as a mix of land uses; compact, higher density residential developments; a transit stop that is the focal point of activity; multi-modal transportation; pedestrian and bicycle friendliness; and the enhancement of public amenities.<sup>11</sup>

The Gateway Corridor is a massive opportunity for Oakdale to transmit the power of vibrant public spaces to the world. With imagination and a commitment to many different types of activities, Oakdale's transit-oriented development will be a leading model for others across the region and nation.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Oak Commons Station area plan is based on the following underlying principles that will help create the most livable and sustainable site design for the City of Oakdale:

### **1 COST EFFECTIVENESS**

The Oak Commons Station must ensure that it meets community needs and desires without being fiscally irresponsible. In light of recent government retrenchment trends, Oak Commons Station must maximize the benefits to Oakdale and create value. Studies suggest that investments in public transit result in a return on investment of around 4:1,<sup>12</sup> and it is important that Oakdale achieve and potentially surpass this figure with a commitment to diversity of land uses, densities, and financing strategies.

### **2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

The Oak Commons Station must stimulate development in the surrounding area. It can do this by embracing a role as an outstanding suburban attraction and an important community asset. Prevailing trends indicate that there is a growing interest in living near transit, and businesses will be interested in the carry-over effects of transit on their location strategy, employee accessibility, proximity to consumers, and land values.<sup>13</sup> Oak Commons Station's overall impact will be measured not only by its own aesthetics and utility, but also by the value that it adds to the community, both monetarily and as a civic space.



### **3 EQUITY**

As a community that strives to welcome individuals from all walks of life, it is important that Oak Commons Station be accessible and inviting to all of Oakdale’s residents and guests. Further, equity extends beyond traditional notions of race and class – the Oak Commons Station belongs to the entire community. The site should be accessible to both traditional and reverse commuters, and be inviting to both Oakdale residents and residents from other communities. In addition, the site should attract diverse households and incorporate the rich cultural tapestry that is Minnesota.<sup>14</sup> Accessibility will be an important factor in ensuring that equity goals are met.

### **4 SUSTAINABILITY**

Oak Commons Station’s development should be conducted in a way that is mindful of environmental impact and long-term sustainability. Creative approaches to sustainability have not only ensured that public projects are in harmony with the natural environment, but are also more fiscally advantageous as well. With this in mind, the vision for Oak Commons Station incorporates sustainable design to creatively capture and treat stormwater, and be easily maintainable. As with equity, sustainability is defined in a very broad sense - capturing the ideals of equity, environmental stewardship, as well as economic development.<sup>15</sup>

### **5 AESTHETICS**

While Oak Commons Station is intended to be a functional development in a high traffic environment, notions of artistic value and aesthetics are vital to the success of this project. While efficiency is first and foremost, the vision for Oak Commons Station incorporates bold aesthetics that will make the site strikingly attractive and inviting at peak and non-peak hours. Oak Commons Station will serve as an architectural example to inspire the surrounding region to the possibilities of revitalization.

### **6 FEASIBILITY**

This vision for Oak Commons Station only makes sense if the development plan itself is economically and politically feasible. It is critical that the station is first and foremost an asset to the community that benefits all major parties involved. This vision pays substantial attention to impacted land owners and renters such as the major commercial landowners in the station area, Guardian Angels Catholic Church, the Oak Marsh Golf Course and its homes, and Oak Meadows Independent and Assisted Senior Living center. With wide community engagement and participation in the process, Oak Commons Station can bind the interests of the community together and leverage community buy-in and develop quickly and successfully.

## 7 RESPONSIVE TO NEEDS

Oakdale is a fully-developed suburb with over 95% of developable land occupied. In addition, Oakdale lacks a true downtown hub. While there are major commercial areas, there is no connectivity between them (this is especially the case between the light industry park to the east of Ideal Ave N and the Carlson development). Moreover, the current park-and-ride in the designated area is a simple surface lot that is not the best and highest use for the parcel. This vision for Oak Commons Station incorporates these major community needs and seeks to address as many community desires as possible. Together, this plan will help Oakdale realize its aspirations and become a ‘cool suburb,’ and a leader both regionally and nationally.

Further, it is important the Oak Commons Station exhibit its own distinct identity and mission statement. The following mission drives the vision for the Oak Commons Station:

**MISSION AND VISION**

**OUR VISION**  
Creating Community Assets  
and Expanding Access

That Oak Commons Station becomes a model of suburban development that initiates new development and anchors the City of Oakdale.

**OUR MISSION**  
Helmo Station enhances Oakdale's quality of life by:

- Delivering reliable, responsive and accessible public transit services
- Acting as a catalyst to enhance land uses and values in surrounding areas
- Bringing together the rich diversity of Oakdale residents

**OUR VALUES**

- Cost Effectiveness
- Economic Development Potential
- Equity
- Sustainability
- Aesthetics
- Feasibility
- Responsive to Needs

Figure 32: Oak Commons Mission and Vision

# VISION INSPIRATIONS AND REFERENCES

## Downtown Silver Spring



Figure 33: Downtown Silver Spring, MD

Downtown Silver Spring in Silver Spring, Maryland is an important inspiration for the main strip that will be a feature in the Oak Commons development plan. Downtown Silver Spring is a vibrant “downtown” epicenter for suburban Silver Spring, centered around Ellsworth Street, a closed street that is only for pedestrians. The Oak Commons Station Area Plan for Oakdale replicates some of the main elements of Downtown Silver Spring: the length of one city block, the anchoring of one end with a 4-story parking structure the other end with several higher density housing structures.

Retail and commercial uses—both indoors and outdoors—line the streets, making a vibrant place at all times of day or night. Public art, tables and chairs, and fountain elements geared towards children make the place not only a place to come for shopping and dinner, but also a place where a good time can be had without spending much money.

Year-round programming events such as farmer’s markets, children’s concerts and events, lunchtime concerts, block parties, high school band performances, and many more animate the space throughout the year, and give the place a cool, urban feel in an aging first-ring American suburb.

## Pedestrian Malls



Figure 34: Pedestrian Malls

The pedestrian mall element of the plan is informed by concepts such as the one in Silver Spring as well as plazas in European and American cities. The structures that will line these malls should be two stories, creating a ceiling of sky and ample lighting and brightness for pedestrians. The ideal uses are retail on the bottom floor with rental units on the top floor for either office or residential use. Art, landscaping, public seating, and lighting are all important tools to help create a safe, vibrant, and attractive urban space.

Other suburbs have attempted to develop using these principles, but these are often auto-oriented and are designed only for retail and shopping. What will make the Oak Commons Station area different is the increased density of housing and commercial in the immediate—that is, walkable—vicinity of this development, and an urban design that incorporates public and civic spaces. The station area will accommodate not only the two-hour shopping trip and after-work quick stop at the gym or dry cleaners, but also an all-afternoon chess game in the plaza under the trees, and major events like a winter carnival.

## Loring Greenway



Figure 35: Loring Greenway in Minneapolis

For a water element, the Oak Commons Station area has an inspiration that resides closer to home: the Loring Greenway in Minneapolis. This element should help to guide the vision for the Oakdale walk, a civic and restaurant space that will be attractive to both residents and visitors. While the Loring Greenway has density in surrounding areas that do not currently exist in Oakdale, it has design features that can guide a similar plan for Oakdale: buildings on either side, a meandering path that invites exploration and contains new possibilities around every turn, areas to rest and sit, places for children to play, wide promenades that allow pedestrians and cyclists to share the same path, and of course, a moving water element down the middle. The Oak Commons Station Area should take this a step further, and offer restaurant spaces on the sidewalk level of this area which would make it an ideal dining destination, especially in the summer. Creating a water element that is also an interesting piece of public art will be important to make the area attractive during the winter months, just as is the Loring Greenway.

## San Antonio Riverwalk



Figure 36: The San Antonio, TX Riverwalk

While the water feature in Oakdale will be very different, the pedestrian environment for the Oakdale walk can reference design elements from the walk in San Antonio, a tourist destination in central San Antonio that attracts pedestrian activity and contains a built dynamic and interesting landscape for people to enjoy. With the word ‘walk’ included in the name of this famous area, it is no surprise that the built environment of this feature is intentionally geared to activities people tend to do during a leisurely walk: stopping for a bite to eat, sitting on a bench or at a table and watching other people go by, meeting others, etc. While the Oakdale walk will have a water element that more closely resembles the Loring Greenway and Tartan Crossing shopping center in central Oakdale, the pedestrian landscape of the San Antonio Riverwalk is a shining example of a pedestrian and retail-oriented space around a water element.

## The Swarthmore College Amphitheater



Figure 37: Swarthmore College Amphitheater in the suburbs of Philadelphia, PA

The Swarthmore College Amphitheater is the inspiration for the amphitheater that will anchor the new park located in the area just east of the Carlson development. This amphitheater will take advantage of Oakdale’s current natural resources, topography, and treescapes and be an ideal destination for performances, weddings, graduation ceremonies, and other events, public and private.

The Swarthmore Amphitheater is most notable because it looks enchanting when it is both empty and full. A public space like an amphitheater doesn’t always work when events are not going on, but the bucolic

beauty of the Swarthmore amphitheater invites visitors even when it is empty. A 'cool' space has that quality: even when no other people are in it, a visitor can have a magical experience.

## Townhomes



Figure 38: Examples of townhome-style housing development.

Townhouse-style residences and others like them will be the most prominent housing east of the Carlson development. In this area, townhomes are preferable to apartment and/or high rise development. With townhomes, the area will cultivate a neighborhood feel, preserve walkability, provide versatile housing options for small and large families, and provide attractive housing options for those who may be displaced through the redevelopment of this area. They will help achieve higher residential density in a TOD area while still providing single-family housing stock, a staple of Oakdale's residential built environment.

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# PART 3: ACTION PLAN

## A COMMUNITY ROADMAP

The Oak Commons Station Action Plan lays the foundation for a successful build-out - with “success” being measured in social, economic, and political terms. The Action Plan prescribes a series of concrete steps that various stakeholders must take in order to ensure a successful development. In addition, the Action Plan provides a road map for bringing the Diagnosis, a backward looking document, and the Vision, a forward looking document, together.



This Action Plan is designed to articulate the values of citizens, as well as Oakdale’s future-oriented planning philosophy. It is also a playbook to guide the overall comprehensive plan for the Oakdale community that outlines specific goals, objectives, and policies and juxtaposes them with the current conditions outlined in the diagnosis. First, it is important to emphasize the nuances between goals, objectives, and policies. The definitions are as follows:<sup>16</sup>

<b>GOALS</b>	The broadest term, goals are ideal future conditions to which the community aspires.
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	Objectives are empirical measures of goals. They indicate progress towards fulfilling the goal.
<b>POLICIES</b>	Policies are concrete courses of action which fulfill objectives that lead to achieving goals.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a long-range vision for development in Oakdale. As such, this Plan is influenced by the following planning principles:<sup>17</sup>

- **Consensus-based:** All major components of Oakdale’s Action Plan were developed with multiple stakeholders in mind.
- **Action-oriented:** The Action Plan translates vague, idealistic thinking into sustainable and livable development opportunities. Through the use of goals, objectives, and policies, steps for action are illustrated.
- **Continuous:** This is not a short-term plan; it infuses long-range (sustainable) considerations in its community growth model.
- **Coordinated:** The success of the Action Plan hinges upon the purposeful coordination of city departments, community development corporations, as well as state and regional authorities. Simply put, plans go nowhere unless there is broad support and there is sufficient buy-in from stakeholders and many different levels.

This Action Plan will employ short, mid, and long term timelines for various aspects of its implementation. The timelines, including the build out of the future Gateway Transitway, are at this time unknown. However, in the years immediately following Gateway’s Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) with the Federal Transit Administration, the various timelines will need to begin. Because the implementation efforts for each part of this Action Plan will need to be continuous and coordinated, the terms will likely overlap.

- **Short Term:** 0 - 20 years; immediate actions taken by responsible actors
- **Mid Term:** 10 - 30 years; actions developed through partnerships
- **Long Term:** 15 - 40 years; coordination of massive build-outs involving continued investment and responsible actors and partners

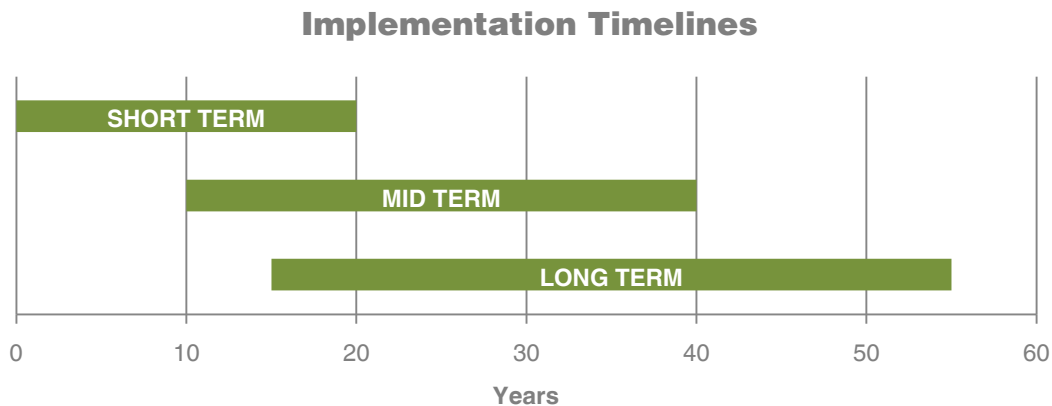


Figure 39: Implementation Plan Timeline

# CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This action plan hinges on the following assumptions:

**1 If the Radio Drive BRT Station is approved and incorporated into the Gateway Corridor line, it will shift further east than what is currently defined.**

The proposed site for the Woodbury BRT Stop is currently being considered for another type of development. If this development occurs (which is likely given the surrounding community's high amount of existing big-box retail) the Commission will elect to move the stop further east and nearer to higher density/mixed-use developments – a preference of the federal Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administrations.<sup>18</sup>

**2 In mid-2014, the Guardian Angels Park and Ride will lose 50% of its users due to the opening of the Manning Street Park and Ride lot.**

This development will free up 200 park and ride stalls in Oakdale and thus create the opportunity for more daily rides to be scheduled to and from Minneapolis. It should be noted that the current schedule is reduced due to capacity restraints at the Guardian Angels Park and Ride lot. This development illustrates that there is a high demand for transit and Park and Ride options.

**3 Big box retailers desire more residential uses closer to their operations (within approximately 5 - 10 miles).<sup>19</sup>**

Big box retailers desire residential uses in close proximity because this maximizes their customer base and increases their potential sales volume.

**4 Carlson tenants and those in the industrial/office park to the southwest may want to walk from the proposed BRT Station and will desire greater pedestrian access and connectivity defined as how often Streets or roadways intersect, or how closely intersections are placed.<sup>20</sup>**

The proposed site is over 500 feet from both of these locations therefore pedestrian accessibility and amenities are essential.

**5 Big box retailers will continue to be viable contributors to the Oakdale economy and community once the line is constructed.**

The Gateway Corridor BRT line is slated to be possibly operational in 2022.<sup>21</sup> Although there will likely be few changes over the next 9 years, the plan assumes that the present big box retailers (i.e. generally located in suburban areas, big box stores are large retailers whose physical design

resembles a box and is characterized by a large amount of floor space) at the site will be viable and meaningful contributors to Oakdale's tax base in 2022.<sup>22</sup> This is a pertinent assumption given the current rate of depreciation on major retail developments being 39 years or less.<sup>23</sup>

**6 The proposed site will be constructed during the MetroTransit lease period with Guardian Angels Church.**

The parking lot lease agreement between Guardian Angels and Metro Transit has 25 years left before it concludes. If construction begins in the short-term, Metro Transit will have to give up some Stalls during construction or pursue other alternatives such as buying Guardian Angels out of their leasing contract.<sup>24</sup>

**7 In the event the Oak Marsh golf course is closed, the area on the north side of 4<sup>th</sup> Street will be zoned for mixed-density residential and park space.**

**8 People are willing to live in a transit-oriented development in a suburban location.**

Although not a perfect comparison, the intended development will be similar to that which is planned at the Bloomington Central Station.<sup>25</sup>

# PHASES

The Oak Commons Station Action Plan is organized into three sections corresponding to three proposed phases of development (see Figure 40). Major thematic elements of each phase are addressed in order to provide connections between the plan’s vision and the operational steps of development. Included in Appendix C of this plan are toolkit matrices that link policies to implementation details.

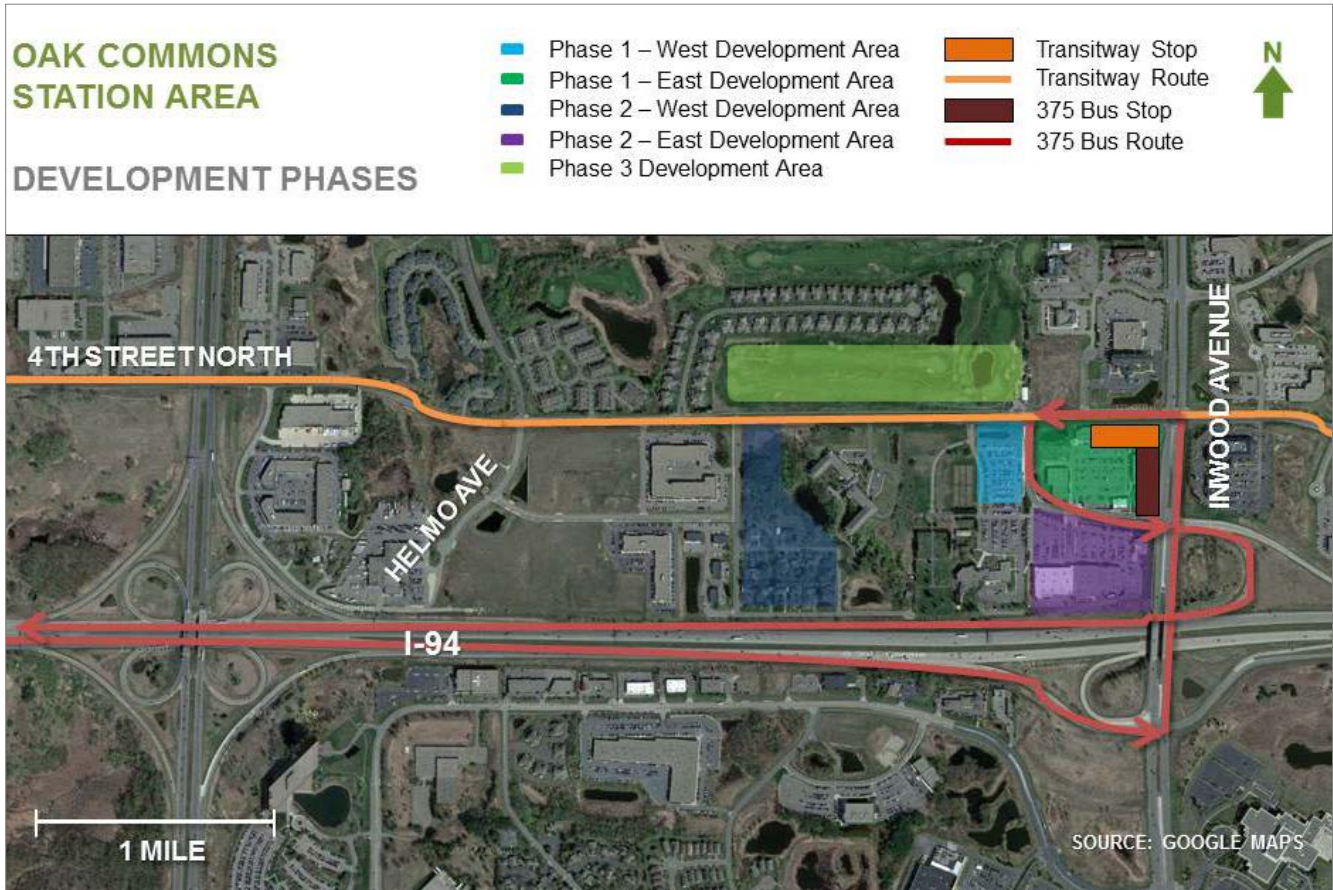


Figure 40: Map of the five development areas in Oak Commons

## PHASE 1 WEST: OAKDALE COMMONS STATION

Phase 1 - West of the development of Oak Commons Station addresses the core targets of this transit station, and will occur within the short-term timeframe over the next 5-20 years (pictured in light blue in Figure 40).

This plan is sensitive to community needs and desires. During Phase 1 - West, Guardian Angels will be encouraged to expand their parking lot and cemetery on land to the north. This will allow Guardian Angels to not only expand, but begin to build-out its land before adjacent development begins, which will help the church control some of their costs.

Stakeholders indicated that aesthetics would be an important part of the station design. This should be taken a step further so that the transitway station that is built should be a one-of-a-kind structure that becomes a centerpiece for the city, a beacon for the region, and a positive symbol for Oakdale. The station and its associated parking facilities should be built to accommodate both Gateway Corridor and 375 bus riders.

### GOAL 1.1 A transit stop that improves local and regional mobility, accessibility, and sustainability.

**Objective 1.1.1:** By 2035, build a functional transit Station that improves local and regional accessibility by 50%



Figure 41: An example of a bus rapid transit vehicle, which is designed to look and function similar to a light rail vehicle.

#### STATION AREA DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:

- **Policy 1.1.1.1:** Build a centerpiece station that serves the new stop on the Gateway Corridor transitway as well as the existing 375 express bus line that serves Minneapolis. As a centerpiece station, this stop should be visually appealing, convenient, accessible, and safe. The bus station should reflect existing architectural elements in Oakdale, while also developing a unique identity of its own. The station should be easily accessible, with sidewalks, bike paths and streets linking it to the broader Oakdale community and beyond. The station will use architectural design, open sight

lines, lighting and other security measures to ensure that the stop is safe at all times of the day and night and that riders and visitors feel secure.<sup>26</sup>

- **Policy 1.1.1.6:** Construct an additional parking structure in anticipation of increased demand for transit services. One possible location is at the intersection of North 4th Street and Inwood Avenue.

#### **ZONING AND ADMINISTRATION POLICIES:**

- **Policy 1.1.1.2:** Develop a transit-oriented development overlay district and form-based codes to facilitate aesthetically similar private investment within the station area.
- **Policy 1.1.1.3:** Streamline development and review processes to favor transit-oriented development.

#### **TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES:**

- **Policy 1.1.1.4:** Realign and reconstruct 3rd Street North as a private drive and bus route.
- **Policy 1.1.1.5:** Implement traffic-calming measures along 4th Street North in anticipation of the increased traffic load.

#### **FUNDING STRATEGY:**

The following funding strategies are defined in Appendix D; listed order does not reflect preference or sum of opportunities.

- Federal and State Transportation Grants
- Local sales tax option
- Revenue from parking fees for non-transit use
- Reconstruction bond
- Tax Increment Financing dollars (Pay-Go is preferred)
- Private business investment

#### **RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:**

- The City of Oakdale
- City Council
- Community Development Director
- Public Works Superintendent/City Engineer
- Finance Director
- Washington County
- Identified Developer Partner

**TARGET DATE:** Short term. Complete build-out by 2035.

**TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

- Establish Citizen Task Force with City Staff as liaisons.
- Hold charettes and town hall sessions to gather input as needed (especially when major projects are being considered).
- Utilize social media and other internet-based methods of communication to gather input.

**DISCUSSION:**

The primary objective for Phase 1 – West is the construction of Oak Commons Station as a functioning transit center that meets the needs of riders—including park-and-ride customers—of the Gateway Corridor route, the 375 bus to Minneapolis, and other potential bus routes, local and otherwise. Because the station will be built in a busy commercial area, the first construction priority would be to build a municipal parking ramp or build out the Guardian Angels Park and Ride. This additional parking would be fully operational throughout the station construction period and would mitigate potential parking disruptions. Furthermore, the design of the ramp should be visually pleasing and incorporate a design that allows the structure to complement the surrounding built environment and adhere to the form-based codes.

**Objective 1.1.2:** By 2035, increase active mode share to 25%.

**TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES:**

- **Policy 1.1.2.1:** Transition from parking minimums to parking maximums in order to reduce space requirements (allowing for denser developments), as well as to decrease the mode share of automobiles.
- **Policy 1.1.2.2:** Replace fixed-time traffic signals with actuated traffic signals on major corridors within the city.
- **Policy 1.1.2.3:** Rework traffic signals to give transit modes priority in order to decrease ride times.
- **Policy 1.1.2.4:** Implement a Complete Streets plan similar to St. Paul’s Complete Streets plan, in order to enhance attractiveness and feasibility of active modes.<sup>27</sup>
- **Policy 1.1.2.5:** Install bike parking, lockers, and air pumps.
- **Policy 1.1.2.6:** Install public infrastructure (benches, trash receptacles) and wayfinding signs that are visible to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists alike.



## An ideal Complete Streets Policy should:<sup>28</sup>

- Include a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
- Specify that ‘all users’ include pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles.
- Encourage street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.
- Be adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.
- Apply to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
- Make any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
- Direct the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Direct that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- Establish performance Standards with measurable outcomes.
- Include specific next steps for implementation of the policy.



Figure 42: Example of a complete street that is safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers alike.

**FUNDING STRATEGY:**

- Partnerships with local non-profits
- Local sales tax option
- Reconstruction bond
- TIF
- Private businesses

**RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:**

- The City of Oakdale
- City Council
- Community Development Director
- Public Works Superintendent/City Engineer
- Finance Director
- Washington County
- Private construction contractors
- Invested nonprofits

**TARGET DATE:** Medium term. Achieve desired mode share by 2040.

**TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Assign citizen input duties to a central coordinator by examining current employee duties and restructuring workflow. Possible job duties could include:

- Respond to community inquiries
- Develop media pieces and distribute information about the project to community members.
- Contract with third party consultants to lend professional credentialed.

**DISCUSSION:**

“Active” mode share refers to transportation options that put less strain on financial, environmental, and transportation resources - in other words, modes that do not utilize automobiles. Policy 1.1.2.1 addresses a key concern involved in the development of Oak Commons Station: current parking minimums are far too onerous and inappropriate for a transit-oriented development. The fairly modest size of the development site is further constrained by the imposition of these parking minimums. By switching to parking maximums, the City of Oakdale can ensure that while there is ample parking for vehicular traffic, space is not wasted on empty lots. In addition, policies 1.1.2.2 and 1.1.2.3 address environmental concerns that must be in place

in order for a transit-oriented development to thrive. The intelligence of traffic signals must be increased in order to decrease travel times, and give priority to transit modes over automobiles.

While increasing parking and light-timing options, attention should also be paid to the active modes of transportation. It will be important to make the station area pedestrian-friendly and to connect it to Oakdale’s existing bicycle infrastructure. Complete Streets-style street design will be an important model for Oakdale to consider for the station area. Transit, cars, car parking, bicycles, pedestrians, and streetscaping and their relationships to each other are at the center of Complete Streets designs, and a healthy mix of transportation modes will help maximize accessibility in the Oakdale station area.

## PHASE 1 EAST: MAIN STREET OAKDALE



Figure 43: Downtown Silver Spring, an example of a vibrant suburban city center

Phase 1 - East, nicknamed *Main Street Oakdale*, aims to create a walkable and dense urban-style core for the City. Aesthetic elements—such as wayfinding, placemaking, and a commitment to consistent architectural forms—are important to this phase. This stage will be the catalyst for all future development around the transit station. The diagnosis of Oakdale concluded that Oakdale is a prototypical suburban community with little density and no central ‘main street’ area. The immediate station area however, can

substantially revitalize the immediate area and benefit Oakdale as a whole. By vigorously transforming this area, the Oak Commons Station will begin to attract both individuals and development interest from outside of Oakdale.

This phase aims to address an existing gap in the Oakdale community, the absence of a dense “Main Street” or downtown area. The plan is to redevelop north of 3rd Street and south of 4th Street and west of Inwood Avenue. Phase 1 – East will consist of a mixed-use plaza anchored by a multi-story parking garage on the east side and a 6 story residential complex with a bus and transit station on the bottom floors on the west side. As a result of this phase, 3rd Street will be operational as the primary path for Metro Transit’s express buses to Downtown Minneapolis (currently Route 375), emergency vehicles, and as a private drive for those who live in the proposed multi-story residential tower/bus station. Vehicles accessing the adjacent shopping center (containing Best Buy, Michaels, etc.) will enter and exit from Inwood Avenue.

During this phase, a pedestrian path will be developed that will reach from Hudson Boulevard North to Radio Avenue. This pedestrian path will be wide, approximately 15-20 feet across, which will allow

pedestrians and bicyclists to use the path simultaneously. Moreover, this path will become integrated with Oakdale’s existing bicycle infrastructure.

The term for the Main Street Oakdale development phase will be long-term.

The new Main Street Oakdale development will also offer amenities to riders in the form of commuter-oriented businesses. A beautiful rider-oriented station should help stimulate development in the immediate station area. Interviewees expressed interest in the potential for Oakdale to be an employment center, and history suggests increasing residential demand in the areas close to the station may support this. Oakdale should allow the market to dictate the best use, but should regulate the design of the station area through a form-based code overlay district. This will ensure that designs maximize walkability, accessibility, and effective design principles are implemented. Furthermore, perhaps an Oakdale Visitors’ Center would be a good fit in this area.

Traffic-calming describes those measures which slow vehicular traffic in order to increase alertness and response times for pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic-calming measures are typically minimally invasive and easy to install - allowing not only for maximum cost effectiveness but also quick implementation and experimentation. However, traffic-calming measures have a wide range of benefits besides slowing down drivers: reducing cut-through traffic, increasing pedestrian safety, maximizing street life and pedestrian activity, preventing crime, and aiding urban development. Typical traffic-calming design elements that could be included in the design of Oak Commons Station include the following:<sup>29</sup>



Figure 44: Example of pedestrian welcoming and traffic calming used at an intersection

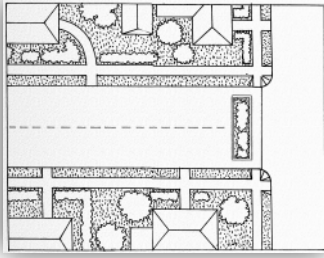


Figure 45: Example of full closure

**Full closures** are barriers that span the entire width of the street in order to prevent vehicular through traffic down that Street (see Figure 45). This measure improves Street conditions for pedestrian and bicycle use because the street is only used by individuals that live on the street.

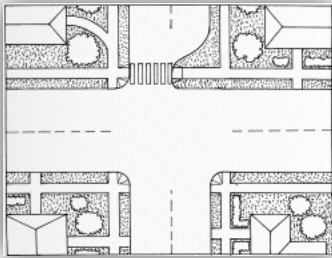


Figure 46: Example of half closure

**Half closures** are similar to full closures but only affect one direction of traffic (see Figure 46). These aid pedestrians and bicyclists in that they only have to manage one direction of vehicular traffic.

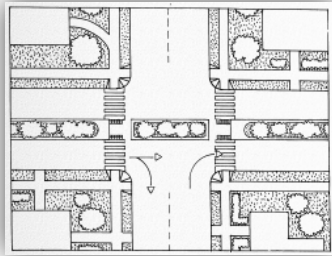


Figure 47: Example of median barrier – find more examples of traffic-calming streetscaping in Appendix E.

**Median barriers** are typically islands placed in the middle of intersections in order to restrict cut-through traffic and left turns (see Figure 47). These benefit pedestrians in the same way as half closures, where pedestrians only need to manage one direction of traffic. The median also decreases the distances required to cross a street and provides a midpoint “refuge” for pedestrians. (Additional examples in Appendix E)

## **GOAL 1.2**

### **A thriving mixed-use development that connects Oak Commons Station’s parking area to the station itself.**

**Objective 1.2.1:** By 2040, attract a “Main Street”-style mix of businesses with a low (<5%) vacancy rate in the Oak Commons station area that are lively and exciting to experience.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:**

- **Policy 1.2.1.2:** Form a Business Improvement District (BID) in order to maintain high aesthetic, community, and safety standards.
- **Policy 1.2.1.3:** Encourage businesses to provide employment to local residents through incentives provided by a local area chamber of commerce.
- **Policy 1.2.1.5:** Provide incentives to small businesses catering to reverse commuters (i.e. commuters that travel from the center-city to suburban areas) and low-income workers.<sup>30</sup>

#### **ZONING AND ADMINISTRATION POLICIES:**

- **Policy 1.2.1.1:** Encourage vertical and horizontal mixed use by implementing form-based codes.<sup>31</sup>
- **Policy 1.2.1.4:** Explore the feasibility and sustainability of targeted tax incentives that do not disrupt the City’s revenue stream.<sup>32</sup>

#### **FUNDING STRATEGY:**

- Business Improvement District funding
- Chamber of Commerce partnerships
- Sponsorships from local businesses

#### **RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:**

- City of Oakdale
- Community Development Department
- Oakdale Chamber of Commerce
- Oakdale Businesses

**TARGET DATE:** Long term. 2060

**TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

- Jointly establish public meetings with the Chamber of Commerce to gather input
- Advertise collaboration through local businesses

During this phase, the focus shifts from just improving the Oakdale area to growing Oakdale's workforce by focusing on attracting additional reverse commuters. Moreover, such reverse commuters may serve Oakdale's high-skilled and lower-skilled business needs.<sup>33</sup>

**DISCUSSION:**

Goal #2 necessarily relies less on public sector investment and more on private sector impetus. For example, BIDs operate by creating a shared commercial district that is funded primarily through membership fees.<sup>34</sup> These fees go toward public goods such as street maintenance, public safety, and even aesthetic improvements. By shifting the responsibility of upkeep to private businesses, BIDs create a sustainable and equitable method of creating vibrant commercial districts. In addition, the City of Oakdale can also partner with local area chambers of commerce in order to advertise the location as a viable node of growth.

**FORM BASED CODE**

Form-based codes will be an important tool to ensure that development in the station area meets design guidelines. Cities use form-based codes as regulations (rather than simple design guidelines) that govern the physical form and design of streets and buildings (and their relationships to pedestrians and to each other), while simultaneously allowing flexibility of the uses that take place in the buildings themselves.<sup>35</sup> Form-based codes in the station area will make it easier for Oakdale to enact urban designs that will create the feel of a downtown. At the same time, they will grant more flexibility in the real estate market by allowing different types of tenants in buildings, rather than single uses. Oakdale can set some rules for prohibited uses in the area, but flexibility is important. In exchange for allowing different types of land uses, Oakdale can create a look and feel that makes a vibrant and enticing Main Street environment for residents and visitors.

Developers can benefit from form based codes, as they can take uncertainty out of the processes for getting building designs approved. As long as a developer is following the stricter guidelines of the form-based codes, approvals from the city should be easy to obtain, as long as rules are followed. There will be less guesswork as they negotiate building design. They will also like the flexibility that have in pursuing

building tenants, since building uses will be less tightly regulated, and they will have more options in pursuing tenants for their developments.

Implementation of a form-based codes policy could be in the form of an overlay district in the Station area. A committee should be formed among developers, the City Council, and the planning department to discuss guidelines in new station area so that they contain design elements that create 'Main Street' character in the Oak Commons Station Area.

## PHASE 2 WEST: THE OAKS OF OAKDALE

Phase 2 - West of the development of Oak Commons Station addresses the surrounding redevelopment of the Station area. This phase, nicknamed *The Oaks of Oakdale*, serves to beautify the surrounding areas and create innovative and sustainable public investments that will attract visitors and attract increased private development activity. Phase 2 - West incorporates the project's many landscaping features, such as an in-ground amphitheater that fits the natural contour of the site, an artistic water element that incorporates



Figure 48: Example of a destination park feature

stormwater treatment, and a community park located near the Residential Sub-Area. This community park will help establish a natural corridor connecting the open spaces of Northern Oakdale with the wetlands that lie south of Interstate 94 in Woodbury.

This phase redevelops the high priority development area (which lies south of 4th Street and to the west of Guardian Angel's church).

During this phase, a park and townhome residential development will be constructed in the high priority development area. This park will include an amphitheater feature as well as walking trails, a larger pond, and trails. These features will be major assets for those living in the Oak Meadows senior community.



## **GOAL 2.1**

**To create visually pleasing and functional space and programming elements around Oak Commons Station.**

**Objective 2.1.1:** By 2055, build an in-ground amphitheater.

### **AMPHITHEATER DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:**

- **Policy 2.1.1.1:** Conduct grading and topography studies to determine implementation steps for amphitheater.
- **Policy 2.1.1.2:** Partner with local arts non-profits to ensure adequate programming.
- **Policy 2.1.1.3:** Explore options for sourcing local materials for construction.
- **Policy 2.1.1.4:** Implement and enforce construction best management practices (BMP's).

### **FUNDING STRATEGY:**

- Minnesota State Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund
- Partnerships with local non-profits
- Local sales tax option

### **RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:**

- City of Oakdale
- City Council
- Community Development Director
- Public Works Superintendent/City Engineer
- Finance Director

**TARGET DATE:** Medium term. Completion by 2055.

### **TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Partner with existing arts and community-oriented organizations to ensure participation for all residents of Oakdale.

### **DISCUSSION:**

An in-ground amphitheater will provide a cultural dimension to the area. With the right landscaping and design, we anticipate that the amphitheater would not only be for concerts and theater events, but also weddings, bar mitzvahs, graduations, and other ceremonies and special events. By locating on one of the

hills in the station area, the amphitheater can use this natural advantage to create a memorable setting. The amphitheater will not only respect local topography and existing natural environmental constraints, but also serve as an attraction to bring area residents as well as tourists to the Oak Commons station area.



Figure 49: The Swarthmore College Amphitheater

**Objective 2.1.2:** By 2060, build out a community park around the high priority development area.

**COMMUNITY PARK DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:**

- **Policy 2.1.2.1:** Develop community survey to determine needs and desires for a community park.
- **Policy 2.1.2.2:** Research innovative models of community Stewardship to control maintenance costs.
- **Policy 2.1.2.3:** Partner with design experts (including potentially, The University of Minnesota) in order to develop innovative site plans.
- **Policy 2.1.2.4:** Use native species for landscaping

**FUNDING STRATEGY:**

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Municipal bonds
- Local sales tax option

**RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:**

- City of Oakdale
- City Council
- Community Development Director
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Public Works Superintendent/City Engineer
- Finance Director

**TARGET DATE:** Long term. Completion by 2060.

**TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Conduct broad community outreach to ensure that needs are being met

**DISCUSSION:**

This pocket park will add to Oakdale’s existing inventory of green spaces and provide a natural amenity to enhance the developments.

## PHASE 2 EAST: THE JUXTAPOSED OASIS

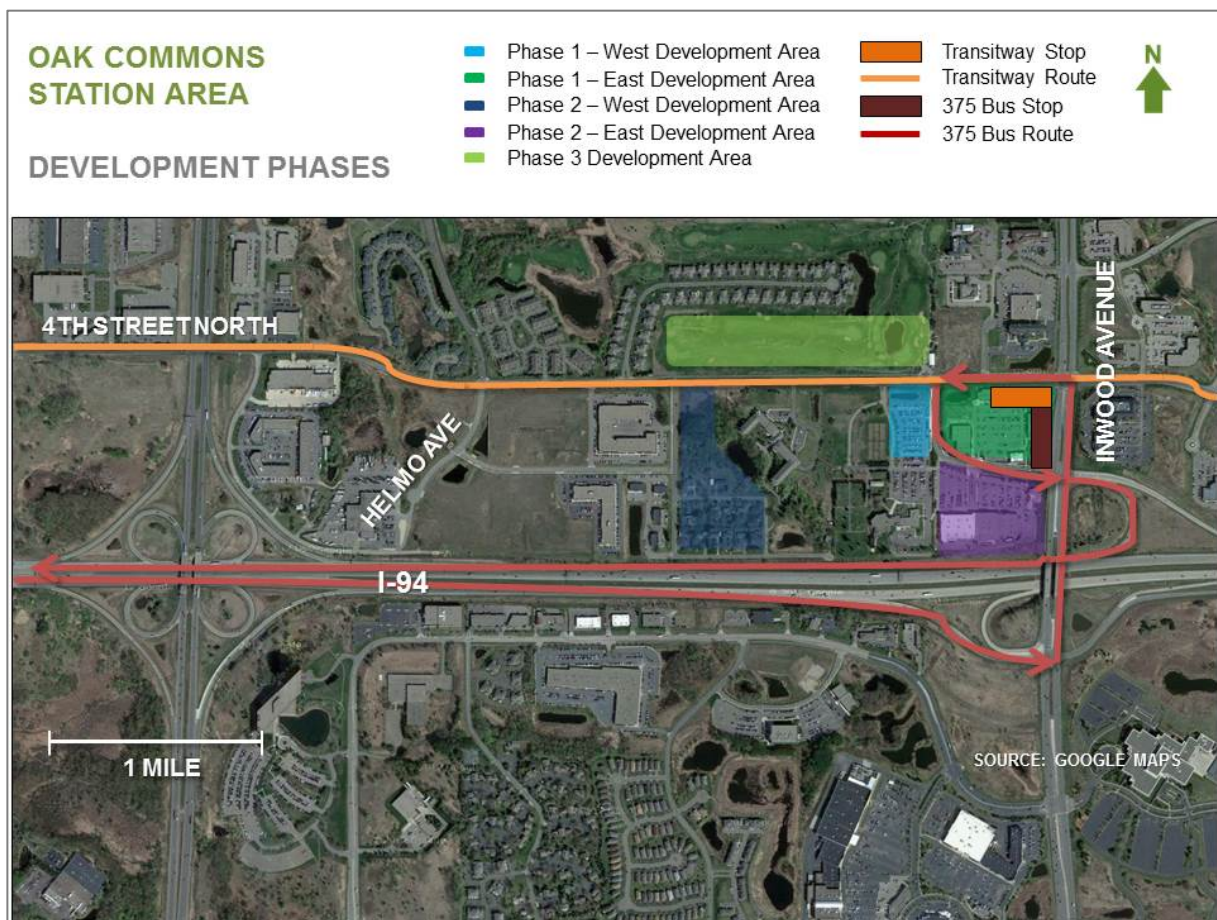


Figure 50: Map of the five development areas in Oak Commons

Phase 2 East adds additional commercial development that is designed to be juxtapose against the natural feature area which will anchor this area and complement the commuter-oriented retail of Phase 1 East. While Phase 1 initiated the targeted development that is this project’s namesake, Phase 2 - East addresses

the station area as one comprehensive development. By incorporating green space and green infrastructure, Phase 2 brings in more naturalistic elements to the project.

This phase redevelops the adjacent parking lots that are currently bordered by big box retailers. The plan is to develop a vibrant and attractive natural feature that also acts as a stormwater management system. This stormwater feature will be bordered by mixed-use development and anchored by parking to the east and Guardian Angels Church to the west.

## **GOAL 2.2**

### **To enhance the natural and built environment around the station area.**

**Objective 2.2.1:** By 2050, create a natural feature experience that acts as a stormwater treatment system while providing a natural amenity.

#### **STATION AREA DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

- **Policy 2.2.1.2:** Partner with existing organizations (perhaps students and faculty from The University of Minnesota, etc.) to develop innovative site plans.

#### **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

- **Policy 2.2.1.3:** Incorporate stormwater treatment plan within existing area.



Figure 51: Example of a smaller the feature found in an indoor shopping district (City Creek Shopping Center, Salt Lake City)



Figure 52: Example of placemaking wherein residents and tourists leave mementos in public space (The Love Bridge, Paris)



Figure 53: Example of a rain garden built into the sidewalk

- **Policy 2.2.1.1:** Conduct grading and topography studies to determine implementation steps for the natural, likely water, feature.
- **Policy 2.2.1.4:** Survey existing communities with riverwalks to determine process and action plans.
- **Policy 2.2.1.5:** Conduct drainage and stormwater treatment studies to analyze implementation feasibility of artful design.
- **Policy 2.2.1.6:** Utilize pervious pavements and vegetated roofs to minimize the amount of rainwater that needs to be controlled on site.
- **Policy 2.2.1.7:** Where applicable, collect rainwater in structured rain barrels for use in landscape irrigation and other municipally approved grey water uses.
- **Policy 2.2.1.8:** Plant, foster and protect native vegetation species to ensure the limited need to provide extra irrigation and chemical treatment.

**FUNDING STRATEGY:**

- TIF
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grants<sup>36</sup>
- Local sales tax option

**RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:**

- City of Oakdale
- City Council
- Community Development Director
- Public Works Superintendent/City Engineer
- Finance Director



Figure 54: Tartan Crossing's artful stormwater design

**TARGET DATE:** Medium term. Completion by 2050.

**TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

- Partner with local and statewide environmental groups to ensure the water feature is sustainable and functional.
- Hold public hearings to determine shape and form of the water feature.
- Develop citizen environmental committee to address externalities (positive and negative) of the water feature.

## DISCUSSION:

Phase 2 - West's main objective will be to develop a water feature that is bordered by a recreational or commercial area. It could be similar to the artful water element that exists at the Tartan Crossing site in Oakdale or the Loring Greenway in Minneapolis. This natural amenity will increase the aesthetics of the area, as well as provide the functional element of collecting and treating stormwater runoff. This stormwater element should be held to high aesthetic standards and be landscaped so that it is beautiful and attractive to pedestrians and visitors, who in turn will make the area attractive to nearby businesses, stores, and restaurants by providing access to consumers. Strategic public investments like this can help attract visitors, and water is something that people (especially Minnesotans) have a fondness for. Features such as artistic bridges could serve as attractions in their own right. While, there are many bridge designs to choose from, an element like Paris' Love Bridge (in which lovers place a lock on a fence on the bridge) could be a unique feature that would attract visitors of all ages and create the kind of "Wow!" effect for which people would make a special trip. A unique and interesting water feature can make Oakdale's station area a model for creative suburban retrofits and be an enduring example of functional, aesthetically-pleasing, sustainable design in American suburbs.

**Objective 2.2.2:** By 2060, attract leisurely retail to the natural feature area with low (<5%) vacancy rates.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:

- **Policy 2.2.2.1:** Partner with developers, real estate brokers, and consultants to develop branding and marketing campaign to attract businesses.
- **Policy 2.2.2.2:** Partner with local chambers of commerce in order to attract businesses to the area.
- **Policy 2.2.2.3:** Incentivize small local businesses and shops to locate in this development, thus helping to keep the unique and charming character of the development.

## FUNDING STRATEGY:

- TIF
- Grants
- Local sales tax option

## RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:

- City of Oakdale
- City Council
- Community Development Director

- Public Works Superintendent/City Engineer
- Finance Director
- Oakdale Chamber of Commerce
- Oakdale Businesses (Need flushing out as well)

**TARGET DATE:** Long term. Completion by 2060.

**TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

- Partner with local chamber of commerce.
- Have transparent process for providing tax incentives to interested businesses.

**DISCUSSION:**

Oakdale will need to make sure that the developments that are being created are able to differentiate themselves in the market and attract tenants that will make the station area a destination for shoppers and businesses in the East Metro. Branding will be an important part of this effort, and Oakdale should partner with developers to help decide what types of marketing, branding, and other activities will help make the area desirable in the marketplace for residential, office, and retail real estate. Emphasis on transit-oriented development could be important in this effort, as TOD is seen as creating traffic that will be attractive to retail businesses, and convenient for residents and employees of offices in proximity to the station.

The establishment of Phase 2 - East's retail would be different from—but complementary to—the retail in Phase 1 - East. While Phase 1's retail incorporates the appropriate activity for a busy transit stop, Phase 2's retail would attract more leisurely shopping trips. Here, individuals will be able to buy soft retail goods - or, consumables (clothing, apparel, etc.). This mix of retail would enhance the serenity of the Oakdale water feature experience and provide an alternative to the stop-and-go retail experience in Phase 1 - West.

## PHASE 3: NEW SUBURBAN LIVING



Figure 14: Example of a new urbanist neighborhood

Phase 3 of the development of Oak Commons Station focuses in on the adjacent golf course and imagines a scenario in which residential units populate those parcels. This residential area would further consolidate Oak Commons Station as a vibrant mixed-use hub that incorporates both transit-oriented development ideals as well as typical suburban living arrangements.

### GOAL 3.1

**To create vibrant residential and transit-oriented clusters.**

**Objective 3.1.1:** By 2070, increase residential densities by 20% around the Oak Commons Station area.

#### ZONING AND ADMINISTRATION POLICIES:

- **Policy 3.1.1.1:** Rezone existing golf course to single-family attached.
- **Policy 3.1.1.2:** Develop architectural studies to incorporate more compact development while still maintaining suburban character.
- **Policy 3.1.1.3:** Develop form-based codes—rather than permitted use codes—to create distinct neighborhood character.

#### FUNDING STRATEGY:

- TIF
- Municipal bonds
- Local sales tax option

#### RESPONSIBLE ACTORS:

- City of Oakdale



- City Council
- Community Development Director
- Public Works Superintendent/City Engineer
- Finance Director
- Residential developers

**TARGET DATE:** Long term. Completion by 2070.

**TRANSPARENCY/ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Hold numerous charettes to determine desired character of residential neighborhoods

**DISCUSSION:**

Phase 3 addresses the long term transformation of the areas adjacent to Oak Commons Station, as well as the City of Oakdale itself. As the final, most long-term phase, these policies are intended to be more vague and general in order to accommodate changes to the station area that could take place over time. By that time, Oak Commons Station (as well as the accompanying commercial redevelopment) will be built and operational. The intent of this phase's policies is to facilitate more comprehensive changes in land use and density in Oakdale. By transitioning from recreational to residential uses, the City can add more value into its station and, in turn, benefit the Gateway Corridor. Ultimately, the success of the station area will depend upon a sizeable population base to support it. By transitioning the golf course to more vibrant uses, the Oak Commons Station area can reap the benefits of constant human activity.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES**

The phases and timelines attempt to address any issues that may arise during the planning and construction phases. Given Minnesota's weather, it is difficult to predict with absolute accuracy how long construction will take for any one element of this plan, including the transitway itself.

# CONCLUSION

## Anticipated Conflicts

As with any other large-scale redevelopment plan, the consulting team anticipates a number of conflicts that could potentially threaten the success and viability of the Oak Commons Station. Stakeholders such as Guardian Angels Church, Carlson Companies, Oak Meadows Senior Center and existing business owners and landowners will have strong opinions about development and will likely be fearful of the impacts that multi-year construction projects will have on accessibility in the area. It will be important for city officials to listen to concerns and make concessions if there are significant obstacles. It is also important for city officials to remind stakeholders of how this project fits in with the entire corridor's development, and to help understand that a successful station area development can be very beneficial to Oakdale in the long term.

## Engaging the Community

Despite the thoroughness and analytic detail of this Action Plan, the success of the plan hinges upon an active and involved citizenry. Public buy-in and engagement allows all of the Station area's diverse stakeholders—business owners, residents, worshippers, etc.—to weigh in on a project that will surely touch their lives. Without public buy-in, plans—no matter how great they appear on paper—can be stopped dead. The following are best practices to engage citizens in the planning of Oak Commons Station:

**Partnerships:** Oak Commons Station will be most effective if done in collaboration with many community partners. Furthermore, these partnerships can extend to actors outside of the usual suspects.

**PUBLIC/PRIVATE:** The City should participate in a public-private partnership with local area businesses in order to minimize risk, provide for more innovative and participatory planning, and to reduce costs. A public-private partnership can also assuage citizens' concerns of too little/too much government involvement. In addition, businesses can feel like a partner—rather than an adversary—to public sector involvement.<sup>37</sup>

**PUBLIC/CITIZENRY:** The city should partner with its citizen base in order to determine the priorities of the residents who will be most affected by Oak Commons Station. This type of partnership can calm citizens concerned about their tax increases, as well as forge powerful citizen-advocate relationships that can aid in future development plans. Additionally, public/citizenry partnerships can have powerful multiplicative effects on public opinion; just a few supportive citizens can have a large positive effect on overall project support.<sup>38</sup>

## PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Oak Commons Station can move beyond perfunctory public hearings toward more insightful and meaningful participation by its stakeholders by implementing the following steps:

- ➔ **COMMUNITY CHARETTES** - Charettes are collaborative design sessions that are designed in order to gather creative thinking and imagining from broad representations of communities. These sessions usually involve groups of stakeholders creating design plans themselves (“What would you like to see?”), rather than voting on a set of predetermined plans. Community charettes are an emerging form of participatory design - rather than having a consultant design plans to be vetted by the community, the community designs plans to be vetted by consultants.<sup>39</sup>
- ➔ **PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE WORKSHOPS** - These workshops are designed to educate the citizenry and other interested stakeholders about why streets and transportation infrastructure take the form that they do. However, what really sets this type of participation apart is their methodology - rather than enduring a presentation in the Council Chambers, members of pedestrian experience workshops literally walk the street and engage in a facilitated conversation with architects, planners, and civil engineers. This type of engagement serves a more educational focus so that citizens can make more meaningful decisions within their participation.<sup>40</sup>
- ➔ **PHOTO JOURNALS** - This simple exercise is designed to collectively determine the vision for an area. Disposable cameras are distributed to participants, who are then tasked with photographing elements that they like about their community (as well as elements that they dislike). These photographs are then collaged into a design plan that is responsive to the desires of the community, rather than one that comes straight from a textbook.
- ➔ **COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS** - These programs, better known as “Adopt A…” programs, encourage community members to take ownership of particular areas. “Adopters” not only aid in maintenance, but also upgrading of specific areas. While many communities utilize community stewardship programs as cost-saving measures, the return-on-investment (ROI) of community stewardship programs lies not with dollars saved, but advocates earned. Participants of these stewardship programs encourage greater civic involvement and become champions of the community.

## Failure to Act

This action plan lays out a series of concrete steps that the City of Oakdale should take in order to facilitate the development of Oak Commons Station. It also provides external resources that can aid the City in making important decisions regarding the station area. Although this Action Plan addressed various

economic and political concerns, obstacles and challenges should be expected. If opposition is successful, these hindrances will have the following detrimental effects to the City of Oakdale:

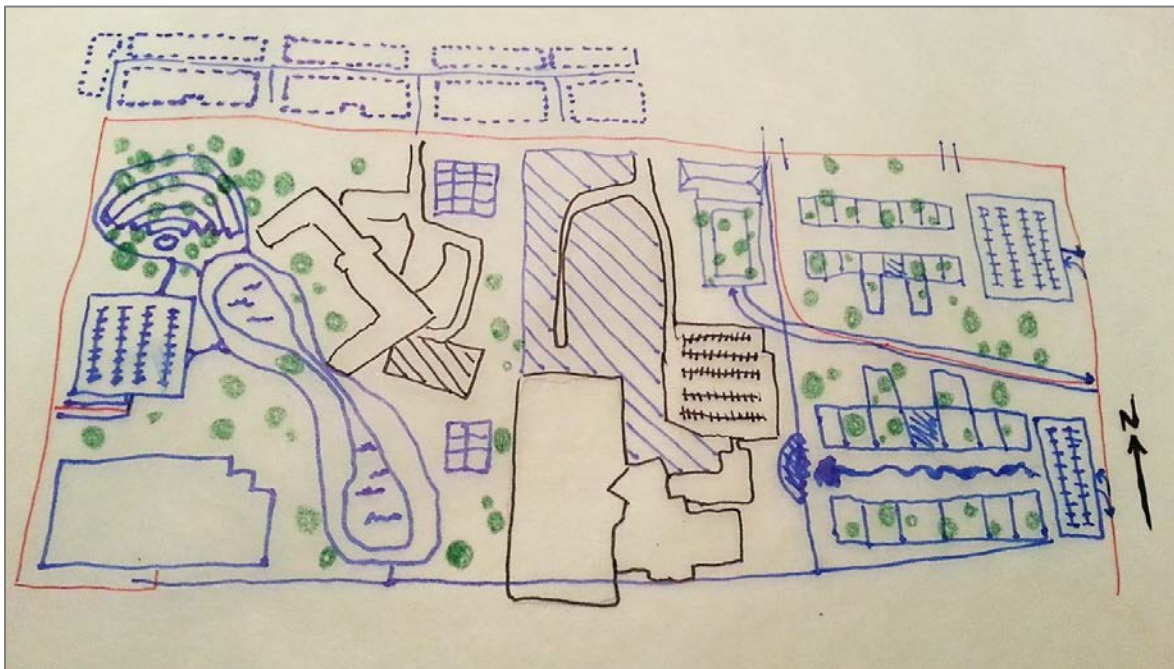
- Oakdale will be an ordinary second-ring suburb that fights to compete with surrounding cities.
- Residents of Oakdale will continue to lack effective transit connectivity.
- Oakdale's traffic congestion will continue to increase, causing environmental degradation, poorer air quality, longer trip times, and make Oakdale less desirable compared to other places in the metro area.
- Oakdale will lack novel development projects that cause it to stand out from its competitor cities.
- Other cities that are proactive in embracing transit-oriented development will become increasingly competitive.
- Oakdale will not reap the benefits of potential reverse-commuters from the City of St. Paul.
- Oakdale's businesses will struggle to attract the next generation of talented employees.

Although these consequences are dire, they can be avoided by following the Action Plan for Oak Commons Station, and by continuing to have strong, creative, and outcome-oriented city planning.

# APPENDIX

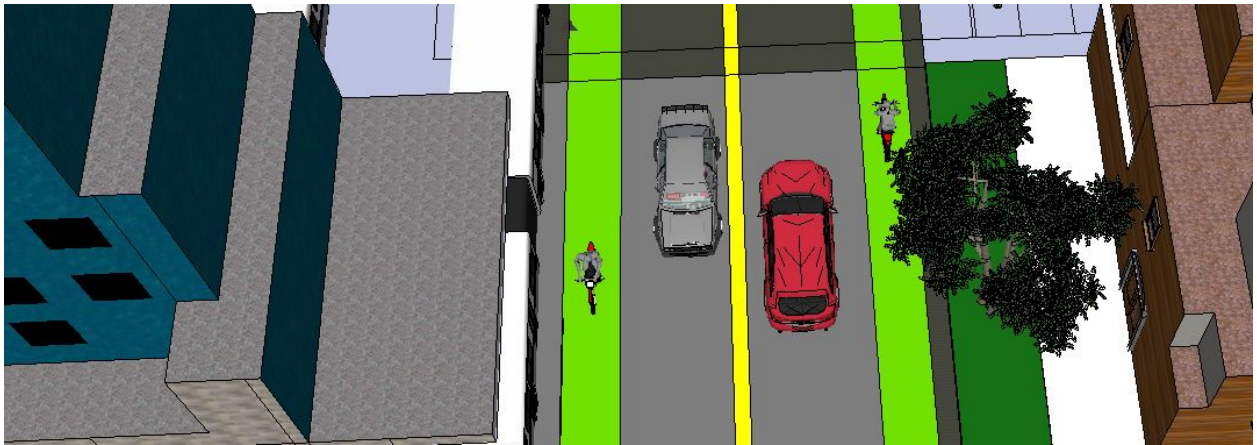
## A: Station Area Design Process

Drawings of the Oak Commons Station Area Vision, overlaid with and without map of station area.



## B: Renderings

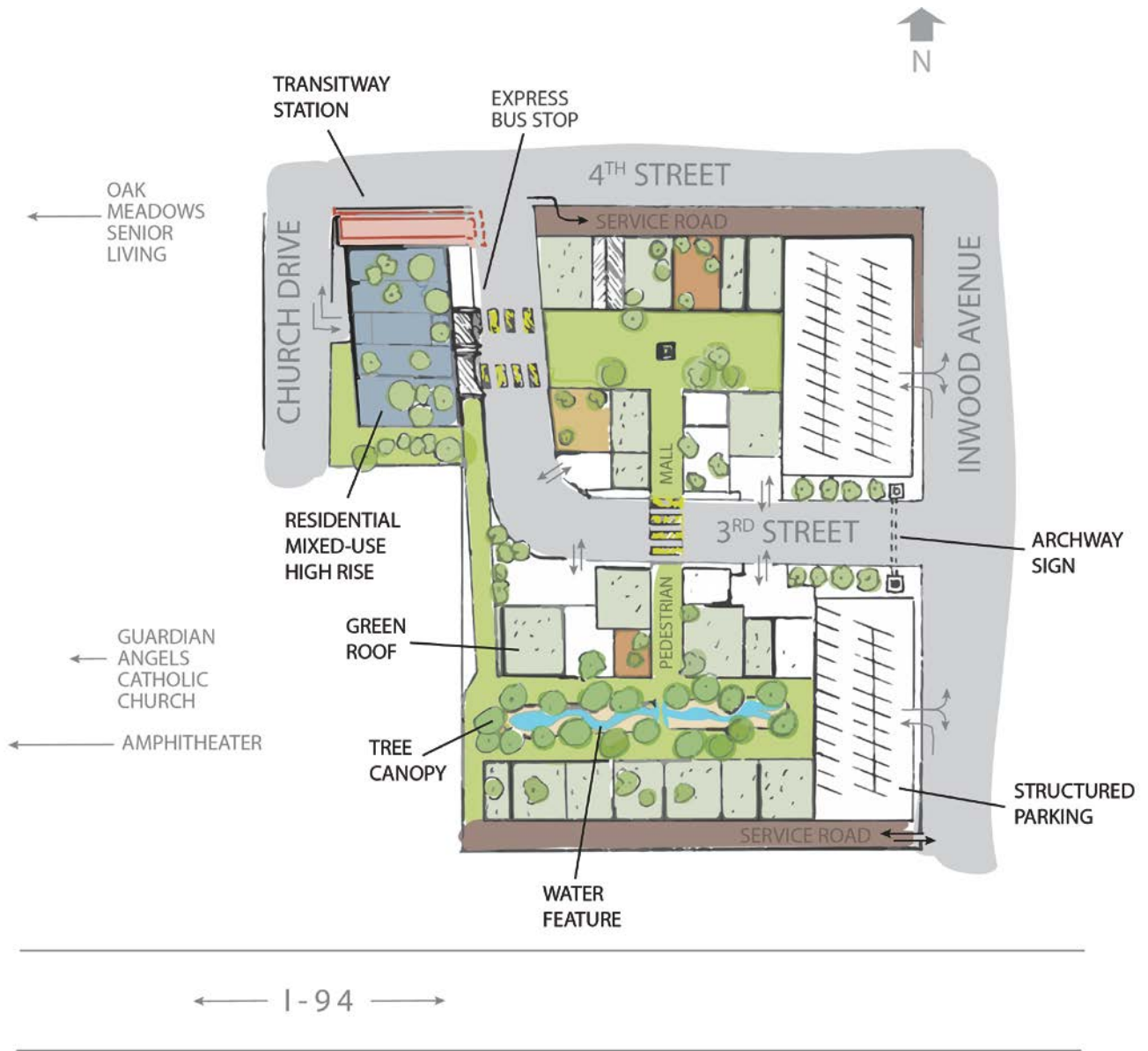
Oak Common Station area renderings:



Main Street renderings:



Drawing of Oak Commons Station Area:





## C: Implementation Matrices

<b>Implementation Toolkit Matrix</b> <b>Phase 1: Downtown Oakdale</b> <b>Goal #1.1: A transit stop that improves local and regional mobility, accessibility, and sustainability.</b> <b>Objective 1.1.1: By 2035, build a functional transit station that improves local and regional accessibility by 50%.</b>				
Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
1.1.1.1	Build a centerpiece Station that serves the new Stop on the Gateway Corridor transitway as well as the existing express bus line that serves Minneapolis.	City of Oakdale	5 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF
1.1.1.2	Develop a transit-oriented development overlay district in order to facilitate private investment and form-based code within the station area.	City of Oakdale	5 years	Staff Time
1.1.1.3	Streamline development and review processes for transit-oriented development.	City of Oakdale	5 years	Staff Time
1.1.1.4	Realign and reconstruct 3rd St N as a private drive.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	5 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF
1.1.1.5	Implement traffic-calming measures along 4th St N in anticipation of increased traffic load.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	10 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF
1.1.1.6	Construct a parking structure in anticipation of increased demand.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	10 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF

<b>Implementation Toolkit Matrix Phase 1: Downtown Oakdale</b>				
<b>Goal #1.1: A transit stop that improves local and regional mobility, accessibility, and sustainability.</b>				
<b>Objective 1.1.2: By 2035, increase active mode share to 25%.</b>				
Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
1.1.2.1	Transition from parking minimums to parking maximums in order to reduce space requirements (allowing for denser developments), as well as to discourage the mode share of automobiles.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 years	Staff Time
1.1.2.2	Replace fixed-time traffic signals with actuated traffic signals on major corridors within the city.	City of Oakdale Engineering	5 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF
1.1.2.3	Rework traffic signals to give transit modes priority in order to decrease ride times.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	10 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF
1.1.2.4	Implement a Complete Streets plan in order to enhance attractiveness and feasibility of active modes.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	20 years	Staff Time
1.1.2.5	Install bike parking and lockers.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	10 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF
1.1.2.6	Implement public infrastructure (benches, trash receptacles) and wayfinding signs that are visible to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists alike.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	10 years	City Levy, Sales Tax, TIF

**Implementation Toolkit Matrix  
Phase 1: Downtown Oakdale**

**Goal #1.2: A thriving mixed-use development that connects Helmo Station’s parking area to the station itself.**

**Objective 1.2.1: By 2040, attract a “Downtown”-style mix of businesses with a low (<5%) vacancy rate in Helmo Station that is lively, livable, and exciting to experience.**

Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
1.2.1.1	Encourage vertical and horizontal mixed use by providing incentives to businesses with varying activity levels and times.	City of Oakdale Planning	Length of Project	Staff Time
1.2.1.2	Form a Business Improvement District (BID) in order to maintain high aesthetic and safety standards.	City of Oakdale Planning	Length of Project	Staff Time
1.2.1.3	Encourage businesses to provide employment to local residents through incentives provided by a local area chamber of commerce.	City of Oakdale Planning	Length of Project	Staff Time
1.2.1.4	Explore the feasibility and sustainability of targeted tax incentives that do not disrupt the City’s revenue stream.	City of Oakdale Planning	Length of Project	Staff Time
1.2.1.5	Provide incentives to small businesses catering to reverse commuters (i.e. commuters that travel from the center-city to suburban areas) and low-income workers.	City of Oakdale Planning	Length of Project	Staff Time

<b>Implementation Toolkit Matrix</b> <b>Phase 2: The Oaks of Oakdale</b>				
<b>Goal #2.1: To enhance the natural and built environment around the station area.</b>				
<b>Objective 2.1.1: By 2050, create a riverwalk experience that acts as a stormwater treatment system while providing a natural amenity.</b>				
Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
2.1.1.1	Conduct grading and topography studies to determine implementation steps for riverwalk.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	5 years	Staff Time
2.1.1.2	Partner with existing expertise (The University of Minnesota, etc) in order to develop innovative site plans.	City of Oakdale	Length of Project	Staff Time
2.1.1.3	Incorporate stormwater treatment plan within existing area.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	Length of Project	Staff Time
2.1.1.4	Survey existing communities with riverwalks to determine process and action plans.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 years	Staff Time
2.1.1.5	Conduct drainage and stormwater treatment studies to analyze implementation feasibility of artful design.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	5 years	Staff Time

<b>Implementation Toolkit Matrix</b> <b>Phase 2: The Oaks of Oakdale</b>				
<b>Goal #2.1: To enhance the natural and built environment around the station area.</b>				
<b>Objective 2.1.2: By 2050, attract leisurely retail to riverwalk area with low (&lt;5%) vacancy rates.</b>				
Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
2.1.2.1	Contract with consultants to develop branding and marketing campaign to attract businesses to the riverwalk.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 years	Staff Time
2.1.2.2	Partner with local chamber of commerce in order to attract businesses to the area.	City of Oakdale Planning	Length of Project	Staff Time

<b>Implementation Toolkit Matrix Phase 2: The Oaks of Oakdale</b>				
<b>Goal #2.2: To create visually-stunning (but functional) programming elements around Helmo Station.</b>				
<b>Objective 2.2.1: By 2055, build out an in-ground amphitheatre.</b>				
Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
2.2.1.1	Conduct grading and topography studies to determine implementation steps for amphitheatre.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 years	Staff Time
2.2.1.2	Partner with local arts non-profits to ensure adequate programming.	City of Oakdale Planning	Length of Project	Staff Time
2.2.1.3	Explore options for sourcing local materials for construction.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	5 years	Staff Time

<b>Implementation Toolkit Matrix Phase 2: The Oaks of Oakdale</b>				
<b>Goal #2.2: To create visually-stunning (but functional) programming elements around Helmo Station.</b>				
<b>Objective 2.2.2: By 2060, build out a pocket park around sub-area A.</b>				
Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
2.2.2.1	Develop community survey to determine needs and desires for pocket park.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 years	Staff Time
2.2.2.2	Research innovative models of community stewardship to control maintenance costs.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	Length of Project	Staff Time
2.2.2.3	Partner with existing expertise (The University of Minnesota, etc) in order to develop innovative site plans.	City of Oakdale Planning/Engineering	Length of Project	Staff Time

**Implementation Toolkit Matrix  
Phase 3: New Suburban Living**

**Goal #3.1: To create vibrant residential clusters that are oriented toward transit.**

**Objective 2.1.1: By 2070, increase residential densities by 20% around the Helmo Station area.**

Policy	Description	Implementation Authority	Time Frame	Funding
3.1.1.1	Rezone existing golf course to single-family attached.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 years	Staff Time
3.1.1.2	Develop architectural studies to incorporate more compact development while still maintaining suburban character.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 y ears	Staff Time
3.1.1.3	Develop form-based code - rather than permitted use codes to create distinct character.	City of Oakdale Planning	5 years	Staff Time

## **D: Funding Strategy Definitions**

### **FEDERAL AND STATE TRANSPORTATION GRANTS**

Large sums of money are allocated through Federal and State Transportation Grants, however successful applications often originate at larger jurisdictions. Moreover, there are high levels of competition for such grants and additional project requirements, some of which Oakdale may not be able to satisfy. A possible solution would be to pursue such grants in partnership with the Gateway Corridor Commission or neighboring localities. Still, pursuing this funding strategy, even if successful, may delay the project, as such grants are often a result of a successful application, review and etc.

### **LOCAL SALES TAX OPTION**

Oakdale has a sizable tax-base, however in community conversations it was discovered that the majority of Oakdale residents would not quickly support a measure that would increase local taxes, including sales taxes. This option, however, is preferred over other tax increases as it assures that everyone pays their fair share of the costs meaning everyone is taxed based on their buying behaviors and that the tax is exportable (non-Oakdale residents will also contribute). This option is also preferred because it can be term-limited, i.e. an additional tax that sunsets once a certain amount of money is raised or a certain number of years pass. On the other hand, sales tax increases are regressive and impose additional costs on lower-income residents of Oakdale.

### **REVENUE FROM PARKING FEES FOR NON-TRANSIT USE**

This option would not likely lead to enough revenue being generated to fund this project, but by instituting parking fees for non-transit use Oakdale may be able to develop a fund for Station and Station area beautification and upkeep, which the Station will require even after the city has made the initial infrastructure investments.

### **RECONSTRUCTION BOND**

Reconstruction bonds can be issued without a vote, but only after a public hearing. Such bonds can be used to replace utilities and other activities for Streets and etc.<sup>41</sup> Such bonding proposals require the use of political power, lobbying and etc.

### **TAX INCREMENT FINANCING**

Tax Increment Financing or TIF is a commonly used taxing technique to defray some of the costs associated with developing an area. Oakdale should pursue a pay-go TIF policy so that it can ensure complete payment will be made back to the city and avoid possible overestimations of increased property values.

### **PRIVATE BUSINESS INVESTMENT**

This is the most preferred funding strategy for the City of Oakdale. However, a wholly private-sector funded station and redevelopment scheme is assumed to be unlikely; this station will likely require governmental investment to come to fruition.

### **PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL NON-PROFITS**

Through partnerships with local non-profits Oakdale will be able to defray some of the costs associated with lobbying, convening community members and possibly even install bike Stalls and provide bikes for Oakdale residents, e.g. Nice Ride Program in the Twin Cities Metro area.

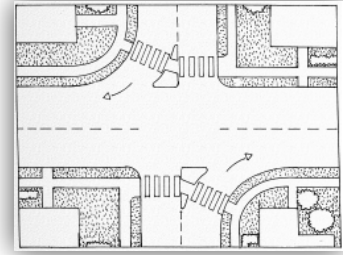
### **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FUNDING**

In this funding strategy, benefitted businesses pay fees that are then used to improve the immediate areas serving their businesses or to provide additional services, such as street cleaning or beautification funds.<sup>42</sup>

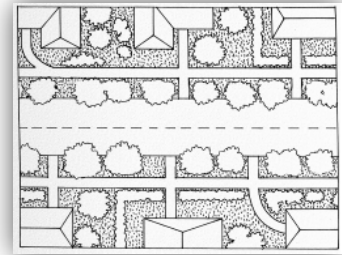


## E: Traffic Calming Streetscape Examples

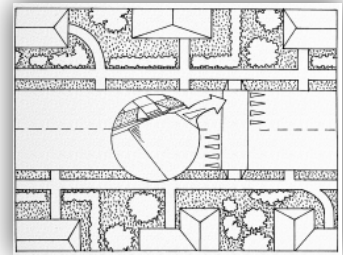
**Forced turn islands** guide traffic into specific directions to limit vehicular movement and increase pedestrian access. While useful from a volume-control Standpoint, forced turn islands pose problems for individuals with mobility and disability concerns and are generally only recommended in very specific situations.



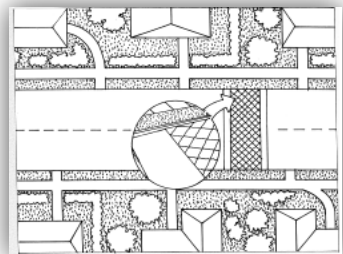
**Uninterrupted tree canopies** can slow vehicular traffic because they create a psychological narrowing effect that discourages speeding. In addition, this traffic-calming measure can also perform double-duty and act as a beautification measure as well.



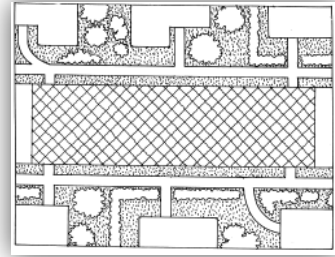
**Speed humps** are a more common type of traffic-calming that incorporates not only a psychological sense of slowdown but also a physical impediment to speeding. While these are effective at slowing traffic, sensitive drivers with back or neck problems may feel discomfort from the jolting effect.



**Raised crosswalks** are similar to speed humps, but incorporate flat-surface crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian crossovers. These can also perform double-duty and further beautify streetscapes while also being functional. They do, however, pose the same problem to individuals with back or neck problems. These can also be implemented at four way crossings.

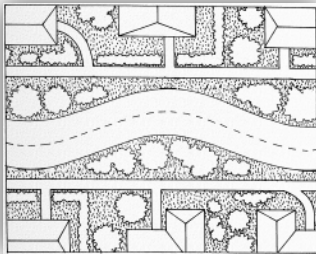


**Textured pavement** is the usage of materials to provide both texture and aesthetic detail to a section of pavement. The textured feel slows cars down while provides a more enjoyable experience for pedestrians. However, individuals with disabilities may feel discomfort from the texture in the same way as automobiles. In addition, decorative elements are hard to maintain and may deteriorate over time.

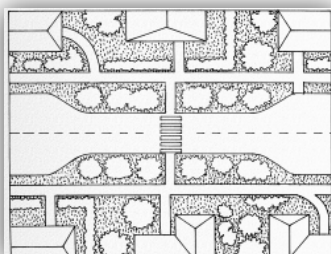


**Chicanes, lateral shifts, and chokers** all narrow roadways and create variances that slow traffic. These design elements have positive impacts on pedestrians and bicyclists by encouraging drivers to slow down and be on alert for other modes.

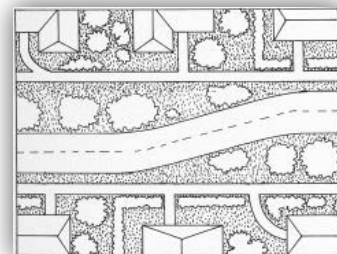
**Chicane**



**Choker**



**Lateral Shift**

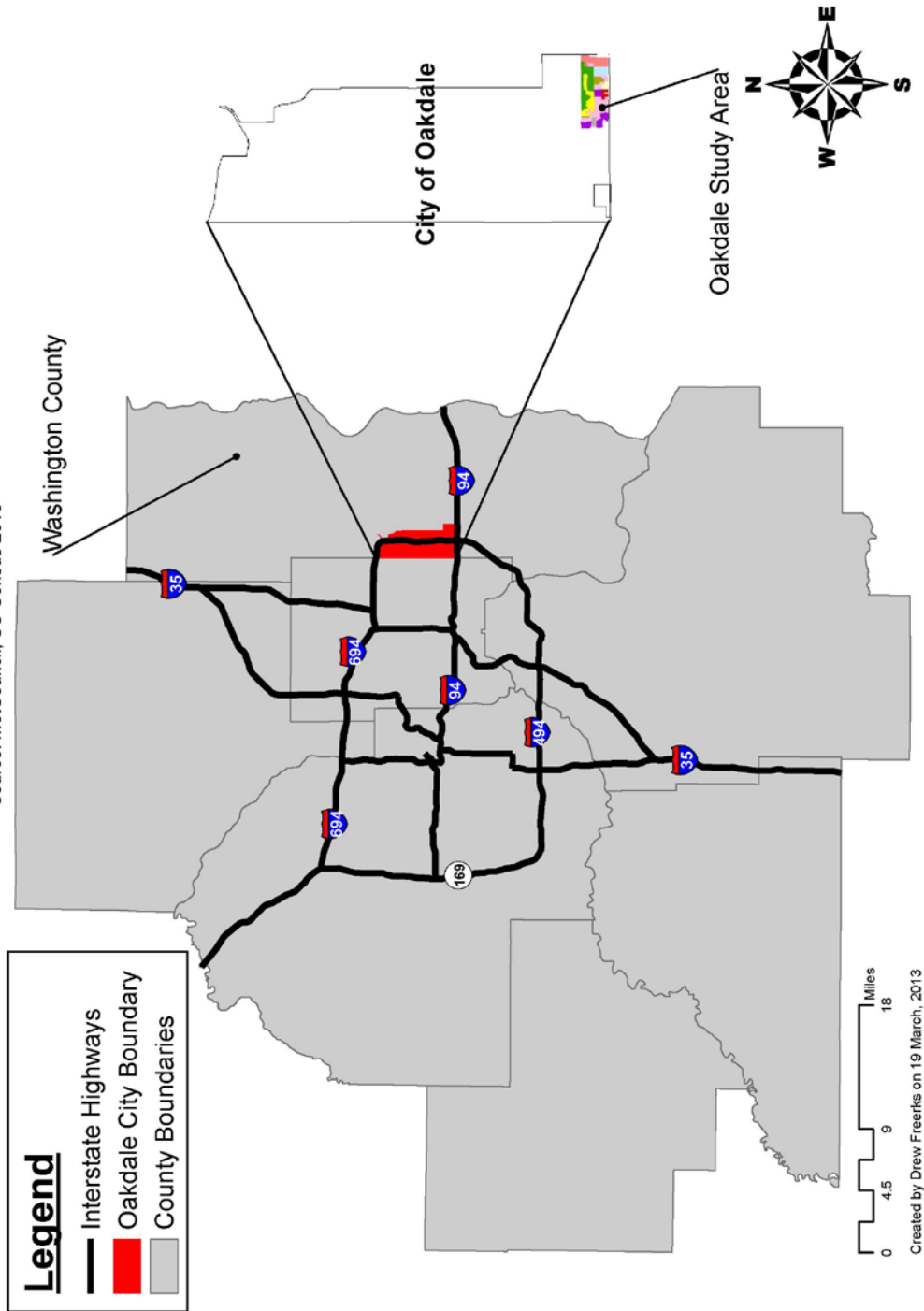


## E: Maps

City of Oakdale context map:

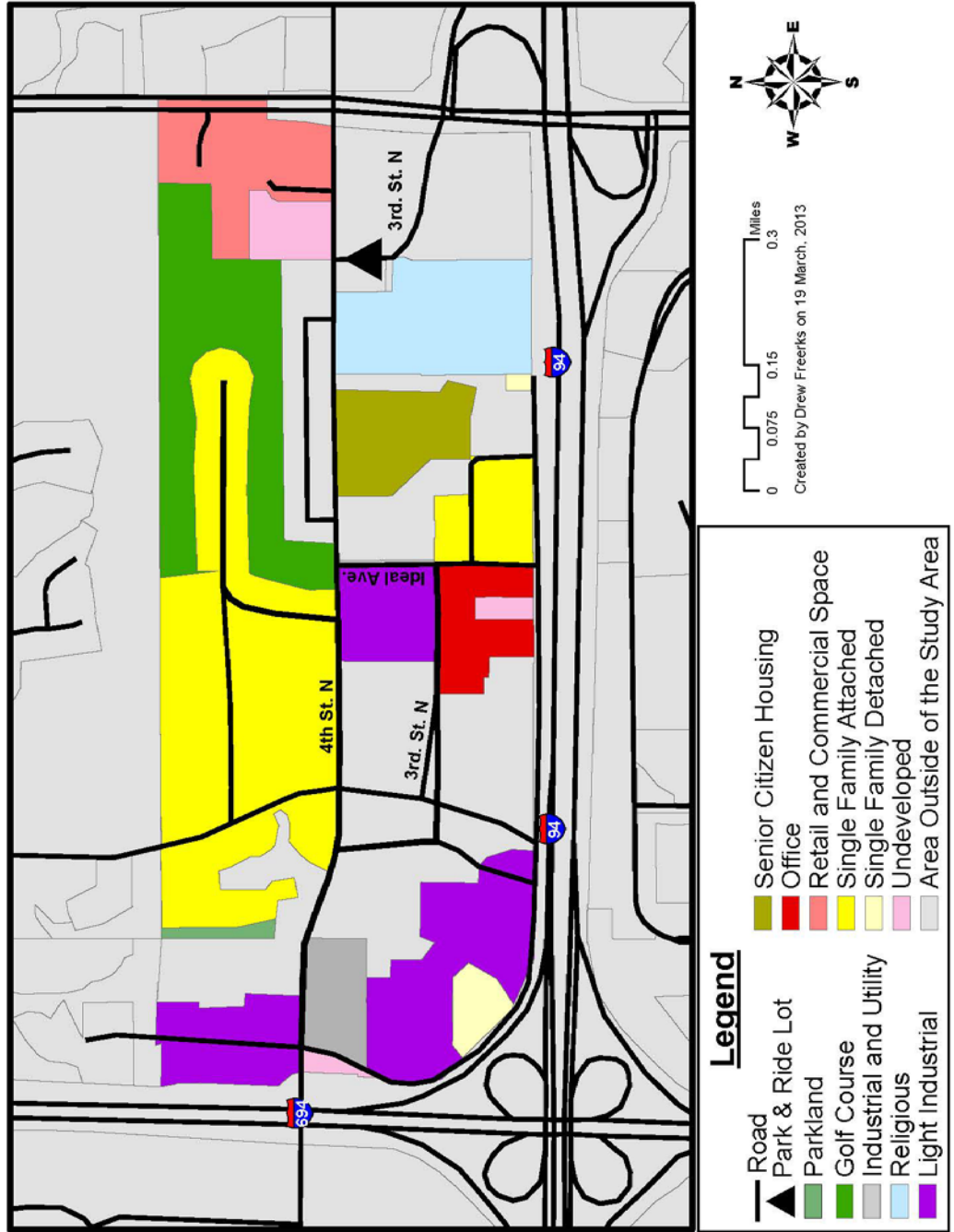
# Location of the City of Oakdale in the Seven County Metropolitan Area

Source: MetCouncil, US Census 2010



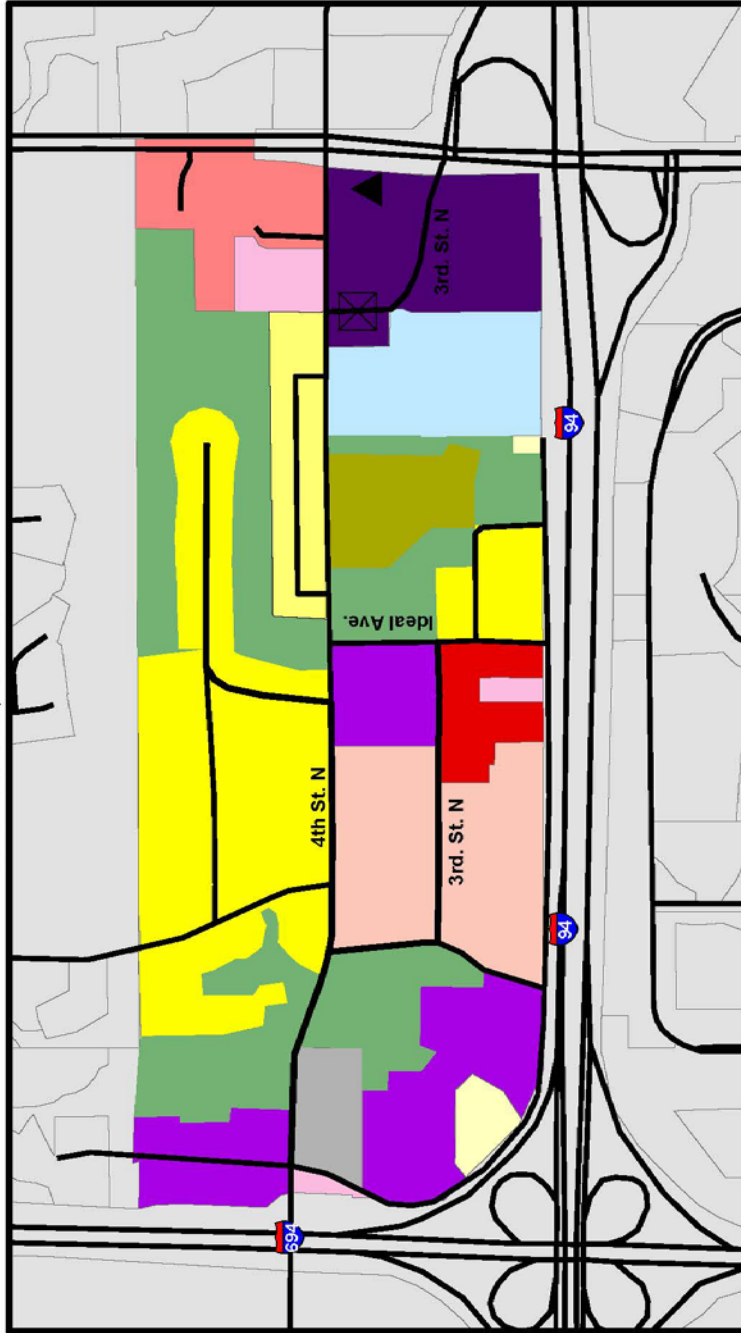
# Current Land Use of the Oakdale Study Area

Source: MetCouncil, US Census 2010



# Proposed Land Use of the Oakdale Study Area with 1/2 Mile Buffer

Source: MetCouncil, US Census 2010



Legend			
	Road		Senior Citizen Housing
	BRT and Express Bus Stop		Office
	Park and Ride Structure		Retail and Commercial Space
	Industrial and Utility		Single Family Attached
	Religious		Single Family Detached
	Light Industrial		Undeveloped
	Parkland		Area Outside of the Study Area
	Mixed Use		Mixed Density Residential
			Mixed Use Commercial

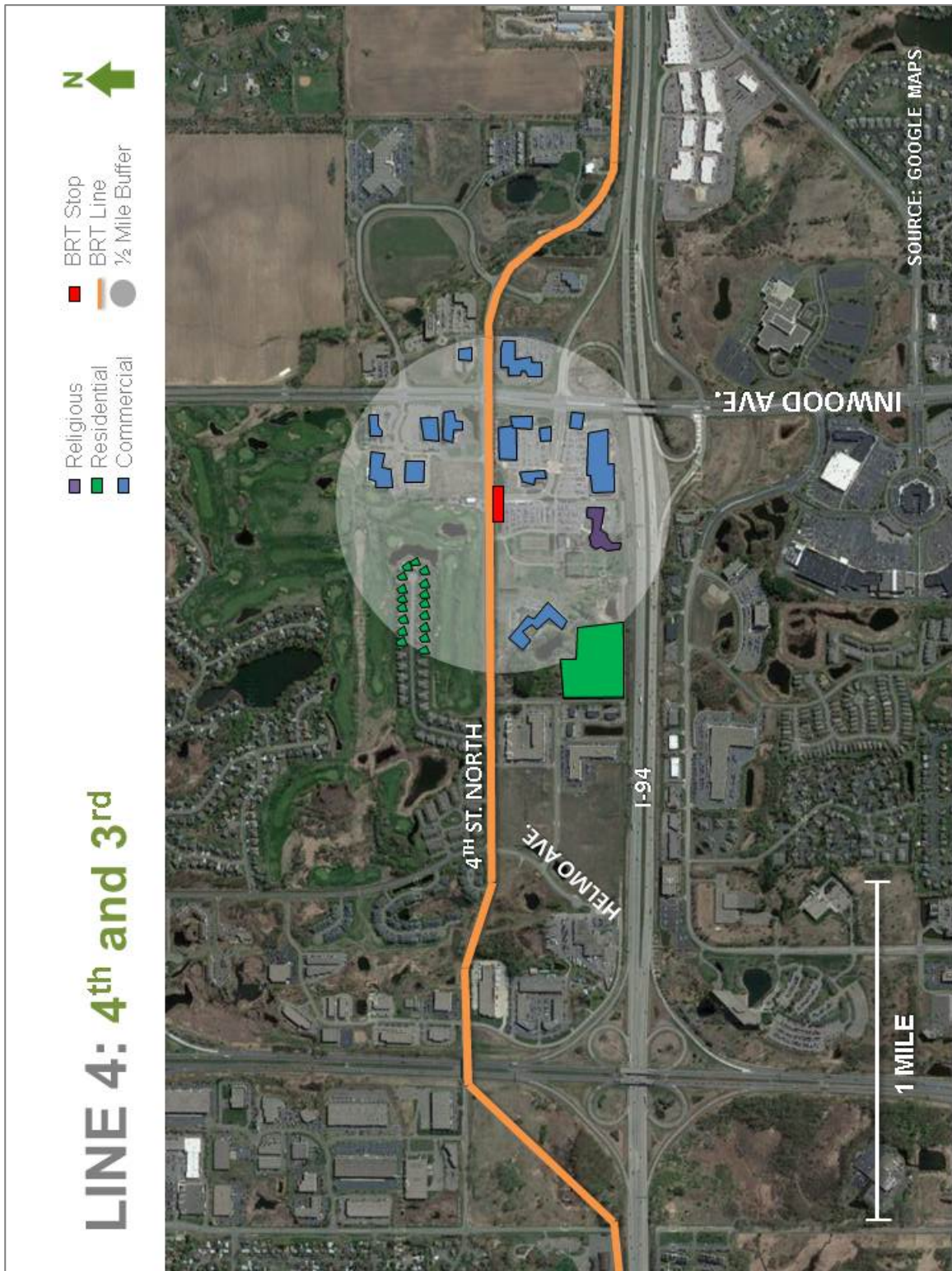


Created by Drew Freerks on 29 March, 2013

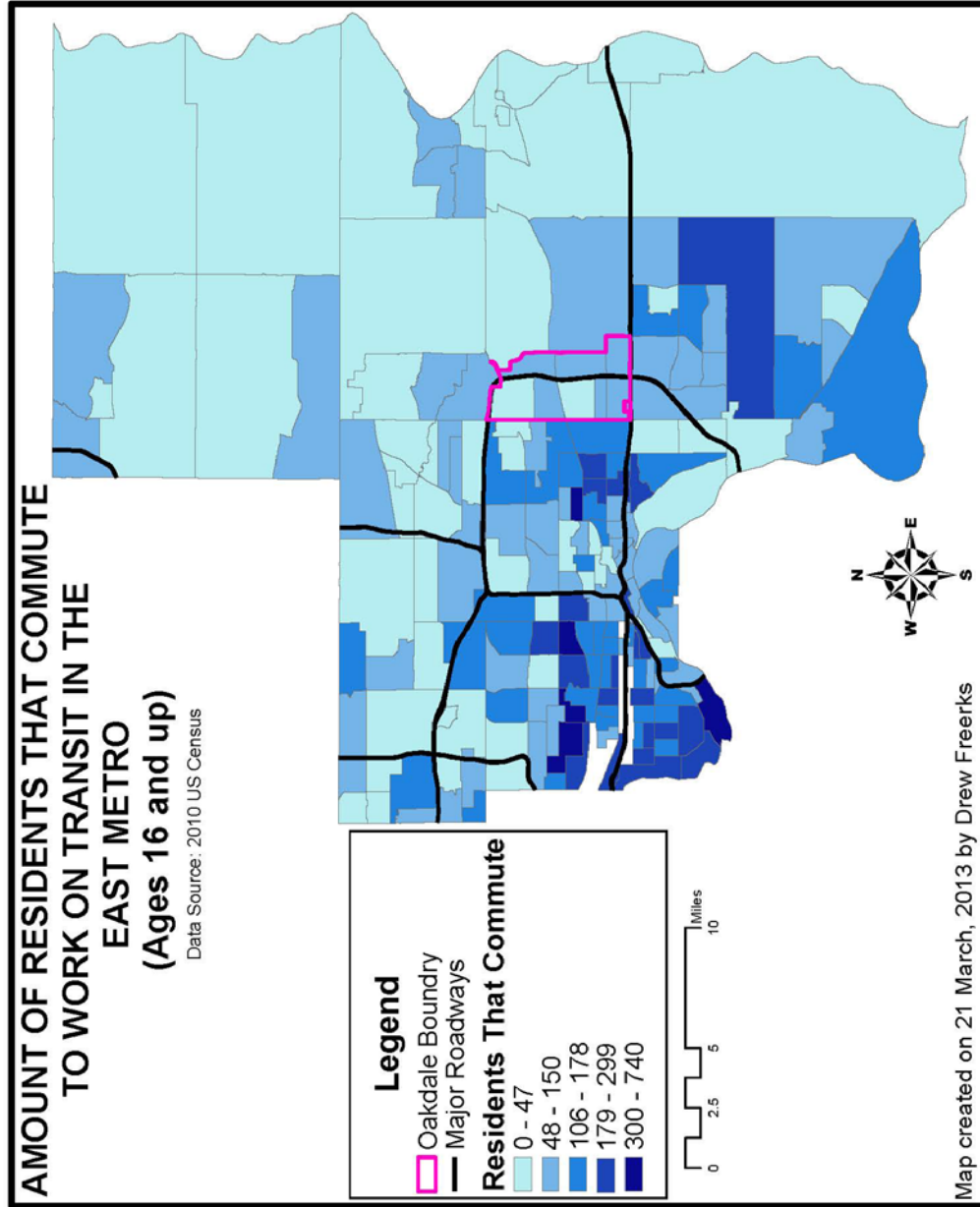
The 5 Development Areas:



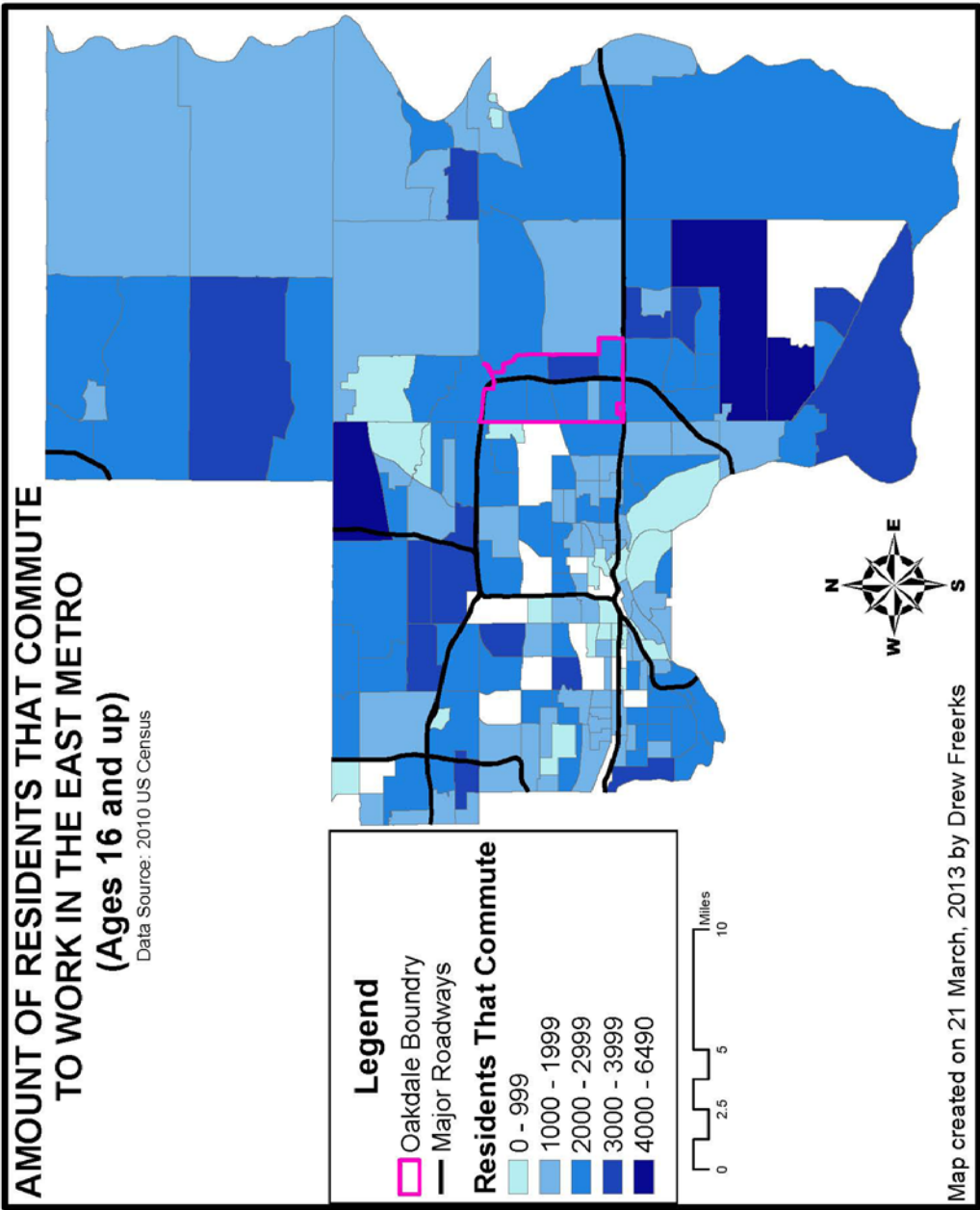
Transitway Alignment – Option 4:

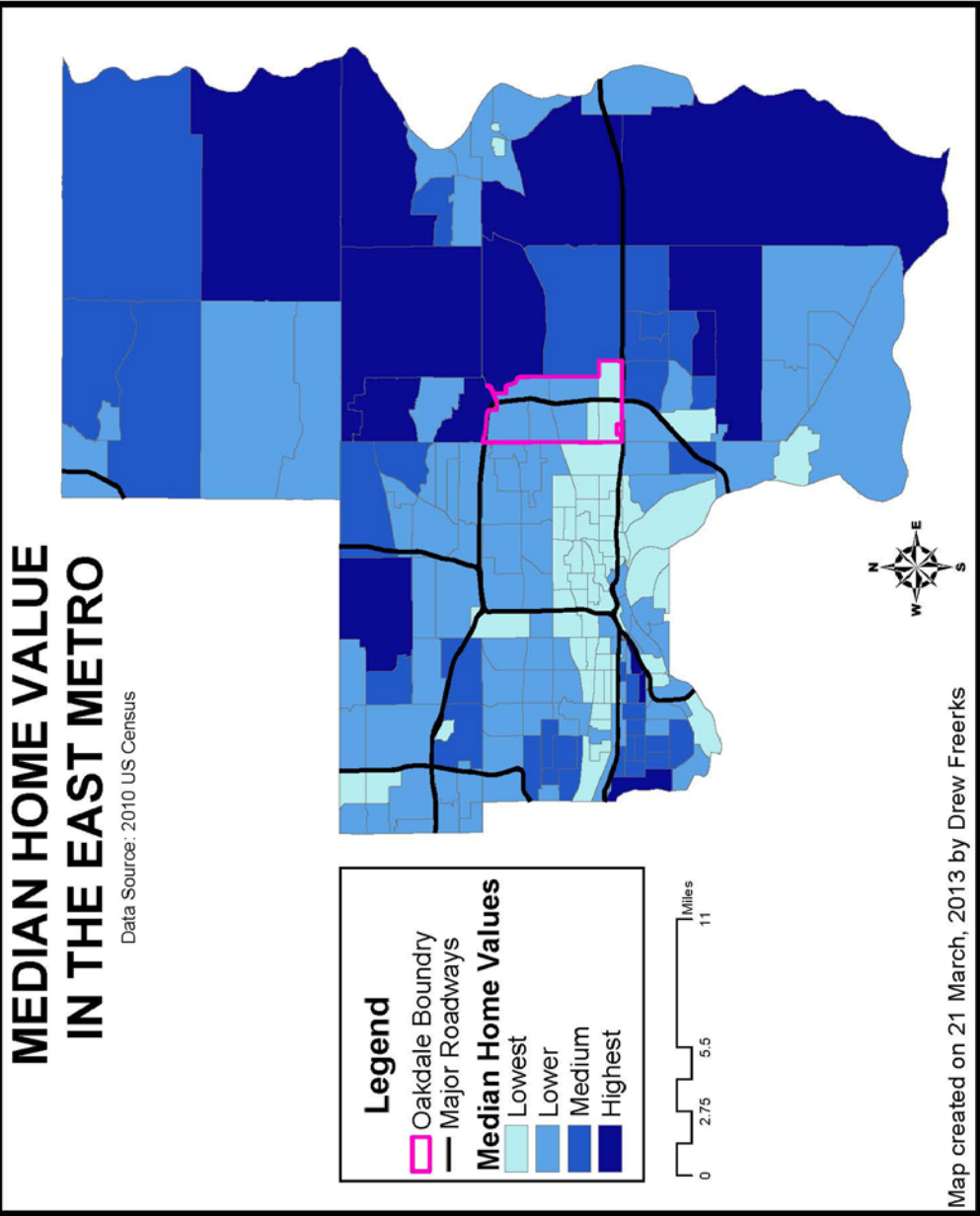


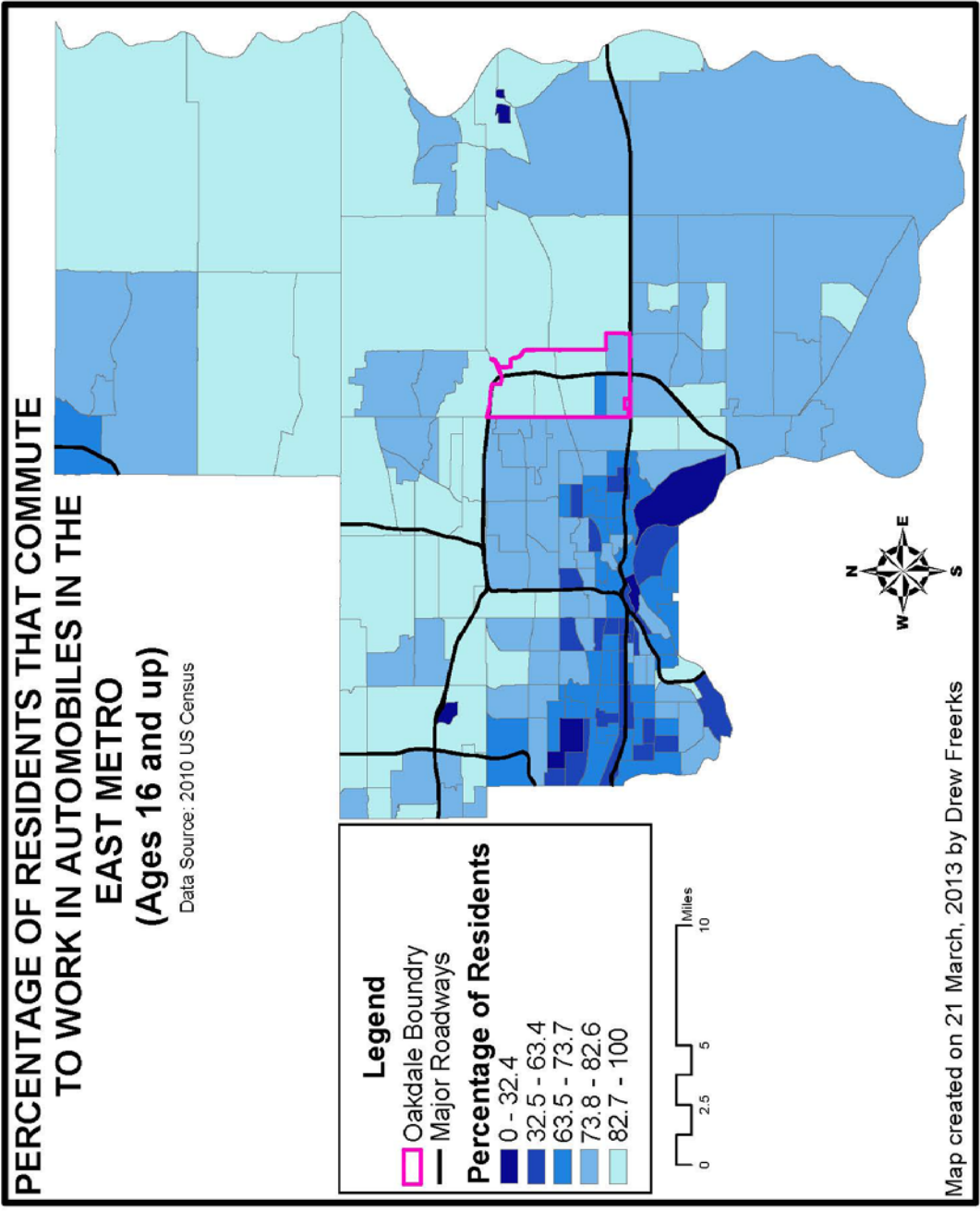
Demographic maps:













# WORKS CITED

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<sup>1</sup> Oakdale: Part of Washington County Communities - History. Washington County History Guide. Retrieved from <http://projects.wchsmn.org/communities/oakdale/>

<sup>2</sup> 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau, retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, US Census Bureau, retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

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