



# ***Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Agenda***

***Friday, March 6, 2015 at 9:00 AM  
Oakdale Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau  
590 North Yosemite Avenue***

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mary Guardiola, Erich Haidlen, John McCormick, Pat Paul, Donald Petersen, Justin Ribeiro and Bob Taylor
2. **SELECTION OF CHAIR PERSON**
3. **REVIEW AND APPROVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 23, 2015**
4. **REVIEW AND DISCUSS DRAFT CITY OF OAKDALE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**
5. **DISCUSS MARKETING AND BRANDING EFFORTS FOR OAKDALE**
6. **DISCUSS VISITS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES**
7. **OTHER MEMBER IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION**
8. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact City Hall, 209-845-3571. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II).

## **DECLARATION OF POSTING**

I, Rouzé Roberts, Executive Secretary of the City of Oakdale, certify that I caused to be posted a copy of the City of Oakdale Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee Agenda for the Meeting of Friday, March 6, 2015, at the City Council Chambers, 277 North Second Avenue and at the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau 590 North Yosemite Avenue Oakdale, CA, 95361, on Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

Dated: March 3, 2015

/s/Rouzé Roberts  
Rouzé Roberts, Executive Secretary



# *Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee Minutes*

*Friday, January 23, 2015 at 9:00 AM  
Oakdale Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau  
590 North Yosemite Avenue*

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** 9:00 am

Members Present: Mary Guardiola, Pat Paul, Donald Peterson, Justin Ribeiro, Bob Taylor

Members Absent: Erich Haidlen, John McCormick

2. **REVIEW AND APPROVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 7, 2014**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes for November 7, 2014.

Moved: Justin Ribeiro Second: Mary Guardiola

Abstained: Donald Peterson

**Approved: (4-0)**

3. **REVIEW AND DISCUSS DRAFT CITY OF OAKDALE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

a. Cheryl Straight, Stanislaus Business Alliance Research Manager, presented a revised draft Economic Development Strategic Plan (attached).

1. Data will be refreshed once Strategic Plan is finalized or as requested

b. At Committee request, Ms. Straight agreed to the following:

1. Add footnote of California's average income and cost of living comparison

2. Add footnote/include national, state and "tech centers" in median age report

3. If available, research and provide data on life stages

4. Update unemployment numbers once 2014 is posted

5. Research basis for Crime Rate data (i.e., are these reporting numbers or arrests)

6. Once report parameters are finalized, confirm color consistency on graphs

Ms. Straight reminded the committee that the Strategic Plan narrative does not contain this information yet. The committee expressed their appreciation to Ms. Straight.

c. Don Peterson asked for suggested "next steps" in the process.

1. Steven Ames, Stanislaus Business Alliance Chief Business Development Officer, provided a recommended task timeline (attached), indicating that the Committee is currently at step three on the timeline.

2. Discussion regarding changes/additions in committee members.

**CONSENSUS:** Bryan Whitemyer will take Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee membership process/selection to Council for approval. Mr. Whitemyer asked committee members to provide any comments as soon as possible.

**4. DISCUSS MARKETING AND BRANDING EFFORTS FOR OAKDALE**

Bryan Whitemyer presented an overview of the modified Marketing Plan (attached).

Keith Boggs, OTVB, presented a revised concept, "Pioneer Spirit", including the phrases "Find your Inner Pioneer" and "Oakdale – Pioneer Perfect".

Don Peterson summarized the Committee discussion: that this concept is an improvement and a starting place from which to go forward. Appreciation was expressed to Mr. Boggs.

**MOTION:** That the OTVB present the "Pioneer Spirit" marketing concept to the City Council with the support of the Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee

Moved: Justin Ribeiro    Second: Bob Taylor

**Approved: (5-0)**

**5. DISCUSS VISITS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES**

Steven Ames stated the need to encourage business interaction and partnerships. To date, the Alliance has received only 10 of the surveys sent to businesses in Oakdale.

Mr. Ames also stated that the latest Alliance report was sent previously to City Council Members and City Managers in Stanislaus County; he will send it again to Oakdale representatives.

**6. CITY SIGN ORDINANCE**

Per Bryan Whitemyer, the sign ordinance was amended, allowing businesses with larger frontage additional signage. Review of this ordinance will continue when needed.

**7. OTHER MEMBER IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION**

Steven Ames announced that effective permitting and permit fees are the topics of discussion at the next Economic Development Practitioners Meeting in March, as these directly impact business development.

Don Peterson asked the committee to consider possible impacts of traffic patterns and way finding on downtown businesses once the bypass is complete. Bryan Whitemyer noted that working with Caltrans before the bypass begins is essential for successful sign placement, etc.

**8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Election of new chairperson.

**CONSENSUS:** To cancel the February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. The next meeting is March 6<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:        10:46 a.m.**

Economic Development Strategic Plan

DRAFT DOCUMENT

1. OVERVIEW

The Economic Development Strategic Plan ("EDSP") provides a baseline assessment of the existing conditions that drive our economy in Oakdale, California and is intended to help local stakeholders and city staff implement strategies that contribute to the city's economic progress. This document is also a reference document for the General Plan's land use and development policies. The EDSP includes strategic recommendations to enhance Oakdale's business climate, ensure the fiscal health of the city, and support economic growth in the city in a manner consistent with the city's character.

The EDSP focuses on a shorter time frame than the General Plan given the more constant fluctuations in economic conditions. The goals and objectives included in the EDSP contemplate a five-year time horizon and were derived from an evaluation of issues and opportunities associated with Oakdale's primary economic drivers. As a result, four primary goals emerged.

Primary Goals:

- Support investment in our community that creates new jobs
- Enhance commercial districts to create quality shopping and dining experiences
- Cultivate an entrepreneurial and academic environment that fosters innovation
- Encourage activities that attract visitors and conventioners

II. APPROACH

In preparing the EDSP, the Oakdale Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee analyzed several key findings from a City Council Strategic Planning Session held in 2011 and again in 2013. In addition, this Strategic Plan was informed by input from various economic data sources, local business representative interviews, and discussions with various city advisory committees, such as the Airport Ad Hoc Committee, Streets and Traffic, The Stanislaus Alliance and others. A review of primary economic, infrastructure, workforce and community assets has helped to shape several guiding values that continued to provide a framework during the preparation of this document.

Guiding Values:

- Ensure broad community benefit from economic growth and prosperity.
- Fully explore training, collaboration with employers, and new innovative programs that increase job opportunities for Oakdale residents. (Contact Columbia College and MJC for ideas)
- Retain successful businesses within the community and allow for expansion and employment growth.

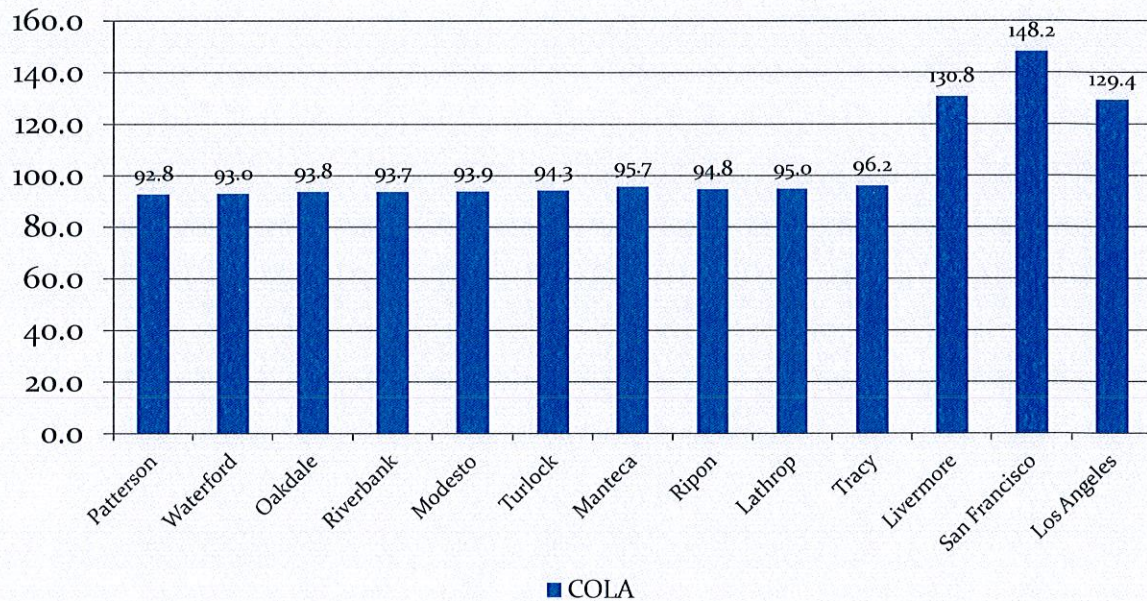
- Build on existing strengths in areas such as a small town feeling, two state highways coming through the core of the city, a recently updated general plan which dedicates 450 acres of additional commercial and industrial development opportunities, a high quality school system, a strong median household income, and its proximity as a Gateway to the Sierra Foothills, low crime rate, a modern, state of the art Senior Center, a fully accredited hospital and a five star skilled nursing facility, access to agricultural enterprises, a strong representation of auto dealers and gas stations. **Could we not benefit more than other communities from an increase in the gas tax?**
- Support neighborhood commercial districts that provide residents with goods and services.
- Recognize the limits of government and establish partnerships to implement economic opportunities.
- Work to balance efficient and effective regulatory requirements while maintaining high quality community standards. (Sign Enforcement!!!!)
- Work to support long term jobs for Oakdale residents and reinforce Oakdale's key role in the regional economy. (What does the Alliance think this role is?)
- Market Oakdale to attract businesses, customers and visitors.
- Reinforce the message that businesses are a vital part of the Oakdale community.
- Support growth of local businesses, both small and large, in technology and non-tech fields.
- Create a Oakdale for the next generation.
- Leverage the assets of higher education to build economic opportunities.

**Considerations:** - What Makes a City Competitive? (Global city competitiveness indicators utilized by The Economist, Intelligence Unit Limited 2012)

## Economic strength

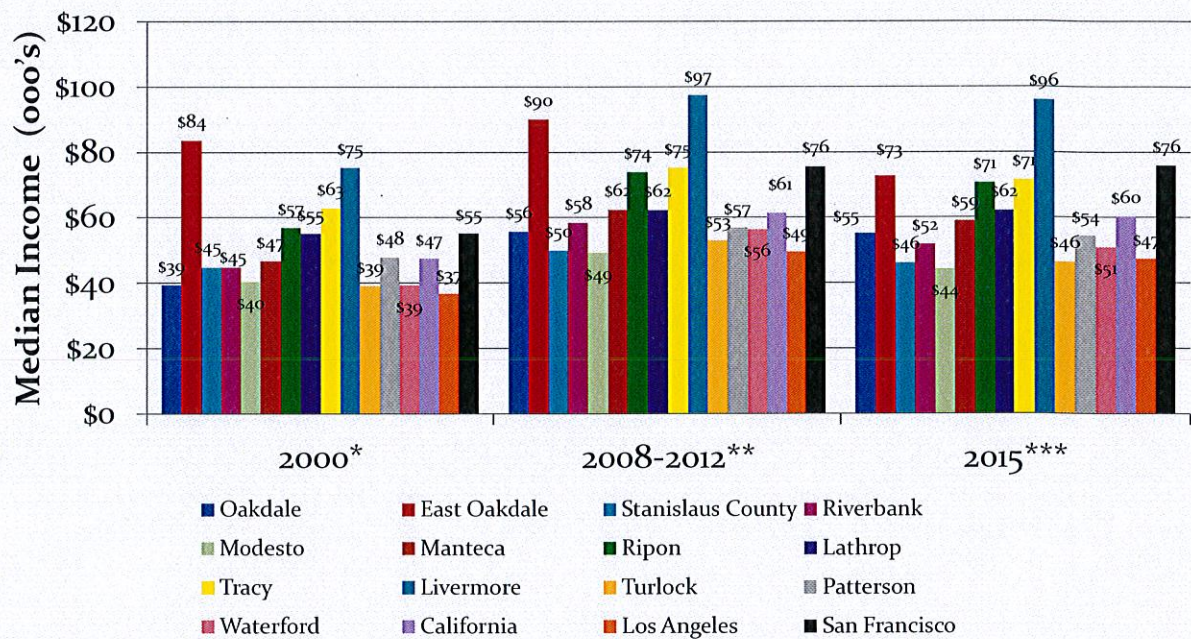
### Cost of Living

## Oakdale cost of living is less than national average



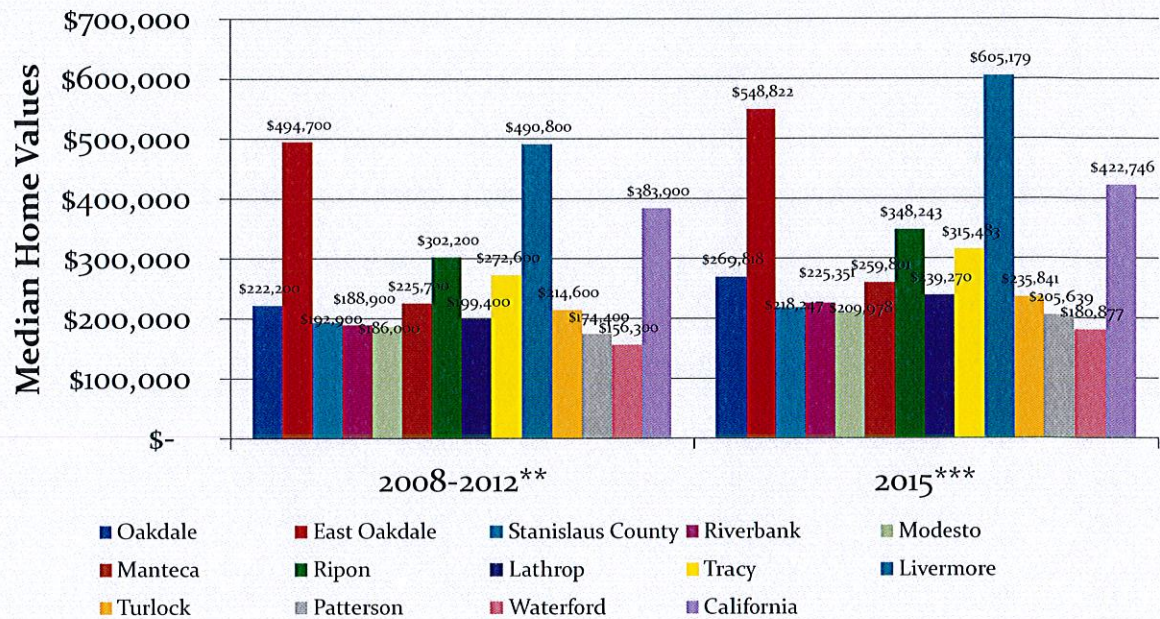
Source: 2012, [www.City-Data.com](http://www.City-Data.com)

## Oakdale Median Income projected to contract however at a lower rate than East Oakdale and Stanislaus County



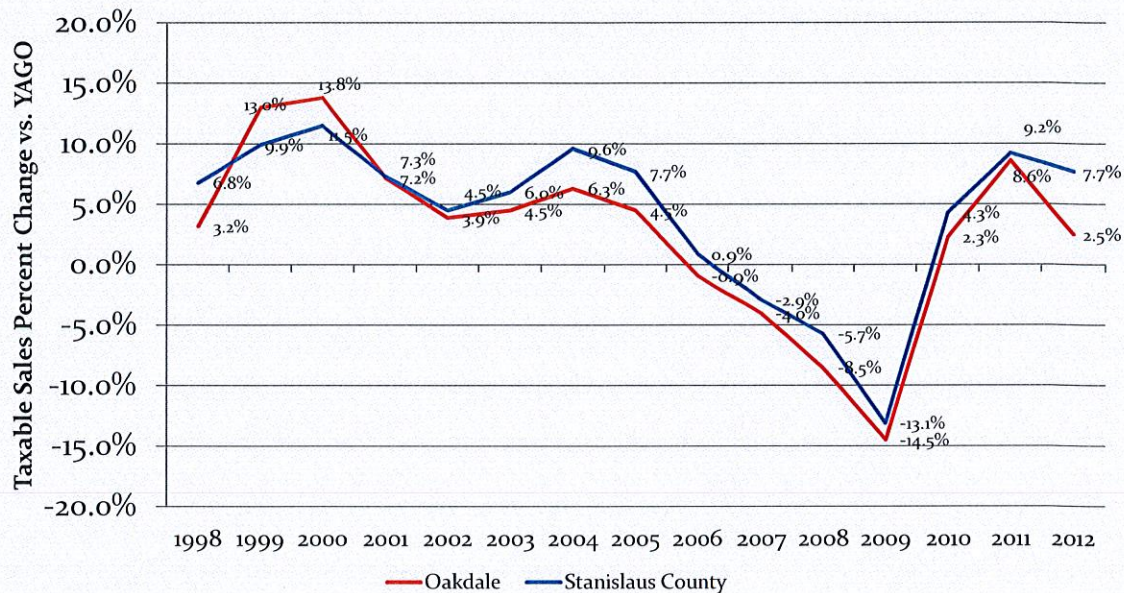
Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

## All Median Home prices expected to increase versus the 2008-2012 average



Source: \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

Overall Oakdale Taxable Sales trends follow those of Stanislaus County however the trend diverges in 2012



Source: CA Board of Equalization

#### Financial maturity

Breadth and depth of the financial cluster (What is a financial cluster)

#### Institutional effectiveness

Fair electoral process and pluralism

Local government fiscal autonomy

Taxation

Rule of law

Government effectiveness and transparency

#### Environmental and natural hazards

Risk of natural disaster

Environmental governance

#### Social and cultural character

Freedom of expression and human rights

Openness and diversity

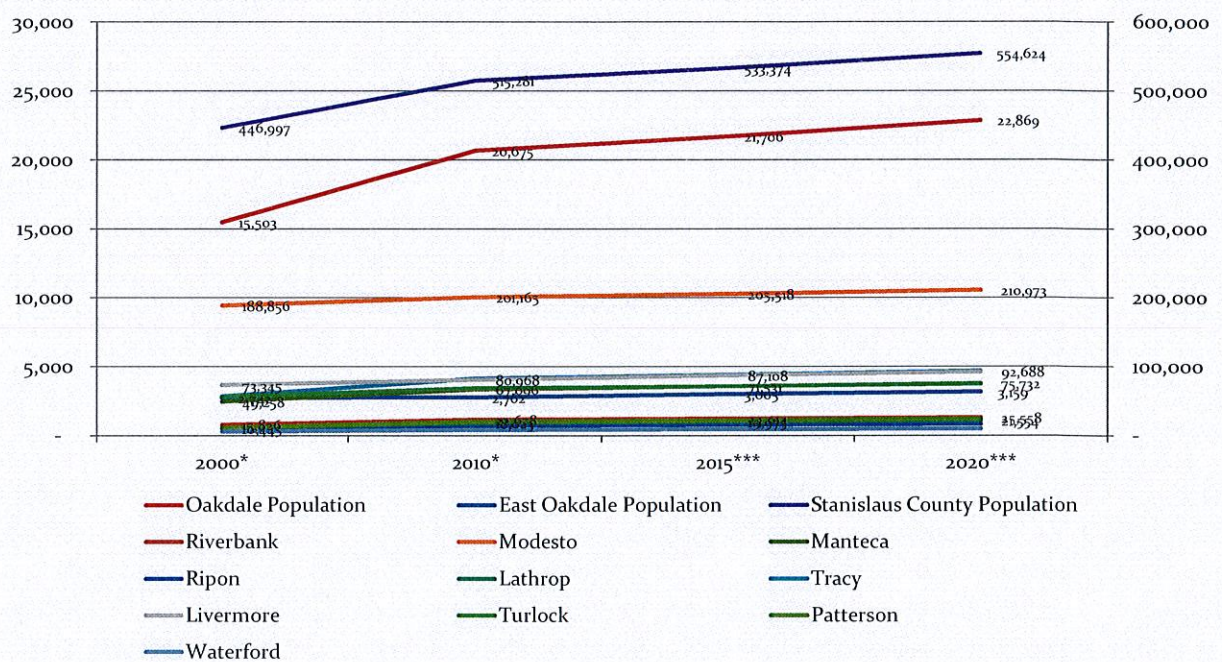
Public safety (lack of crime)

Cultural vibrancy

Human capital

Population growth

Oakdale Population grew at a faster rate from 2000 to 2008/2012 than Stanislaus County.



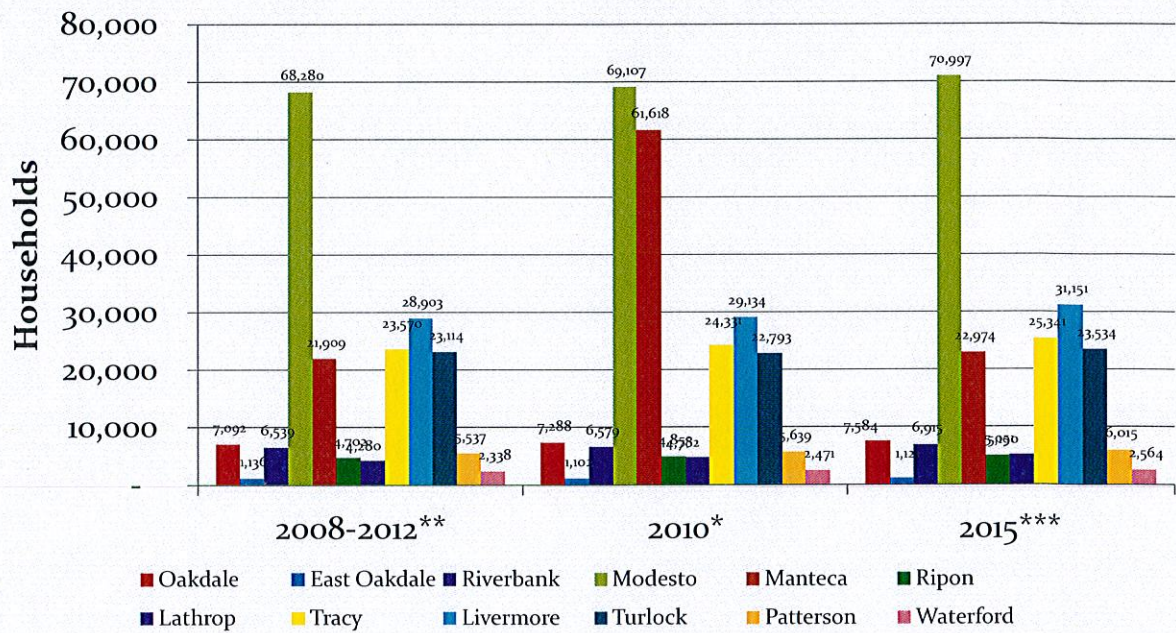
Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

## Oakdale Population is projected to increase 5% from 2010 to 2015, and 10.6% from 2010 to 2015

Population					% Change		
	2000*	2010*	2015***	2020***	% Chg 2010/2000	% Chg 2015/2010	% Chg 2020/2010
Oakdale	15,503	20,675	21,706	22,869	33.4%	5.0%	10.6%
East Oakdale	2,742	2,762	3,005	3,159	0.7%	8.8%	14.4%
Stanislaus County	446,997	515,281	533,374	554,624	15.3%	3.5%	7.6%
Riverbank	15,826	22,678	24,014	25,558	43.3%	5.9%	12.7%
Modesto	188,856	201,165	205,518	210,973	6.5%	2.2%	4.9%
Manteca	49,258	67,096	71,531	75,732	36.2%	6.6%	12.9%
Ripon	10,146	14,297	15,315	16,268	40.9%	7.1%	13.8%
Lathrop	10,445	18,023	19,973	21,554	72.6%	10.8%	19.6%
Tracy	56,929	82,922	88,019	93,373	45.7%	6.1%	12.6%
Livermore	73,345	80,968	87,108	92,688	10.4%	7.6%	14.5%
Turlock	56,348	68,549	71,464	75,018	21.7%	4.3%	9.4%
Patterson	11,836	20,413	22,546	24,514	72.5%	10.4%	20.1%
Waterford	5,955	8,456	8,969	9,486	42.0%	6.1%	12.2%

Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\*\* Claritas

## Number of Households continue to grow in Oakdale



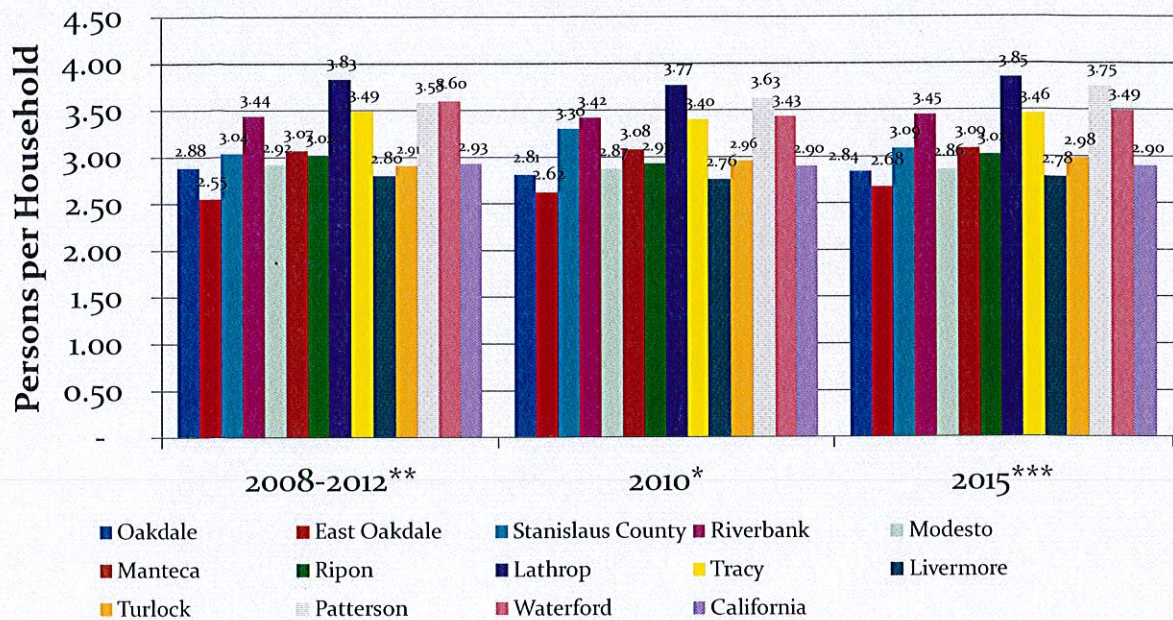
Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

## Oakdale Households projected to increase 4.1% from 2010 to 2015

Households				
	2008-2012**	2010*	2015***	% Chg 2015/2010
Oakdale	7,092	7,288	7,584	4.1%
East Oakdale	1,136	1,102	1,121	1.7%
Stanislaus County	179,176	179,503	170,446	-5.0%
Riverbank	6,539	6,579	6,915	5.1%
Modesto	68,280	69,107	70,997	2.7%
Manteca	21,909	21,618	22,974	6.3%
Ripon	4,702	4,855	5,051	4.0%
Lathrop	4,280	4,782	5,190	8.5%
Tracy	23,570	24,331	25,341	4.2%
Livermore	28,903	29,134	31,151	6.9%
Turlock	23,114	22,793	23,534	3.3%
Patterson	5,537	5,639	6,015	6.7%
Waterford	2,338	2,471	2,564	3.8%
Los Angeles	1,275,412	1,318,168	1,368,247	3.8%
San Francisco	345,344	345,811	367,734	6.3%

Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

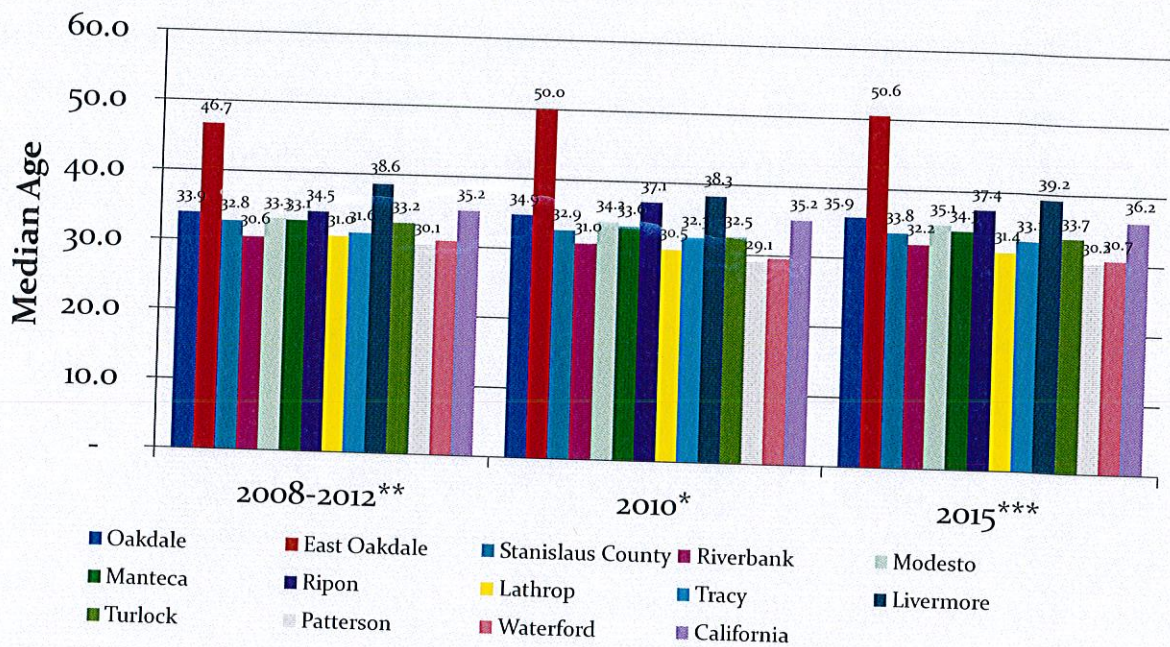
## Oakdale Number of Persons per Household projected to be slightly higher in 2015 than 2010



Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

## Median Age Population

Median Ages in Oakdale and East Oakdale are higher than Stanislaus County and continue to increase



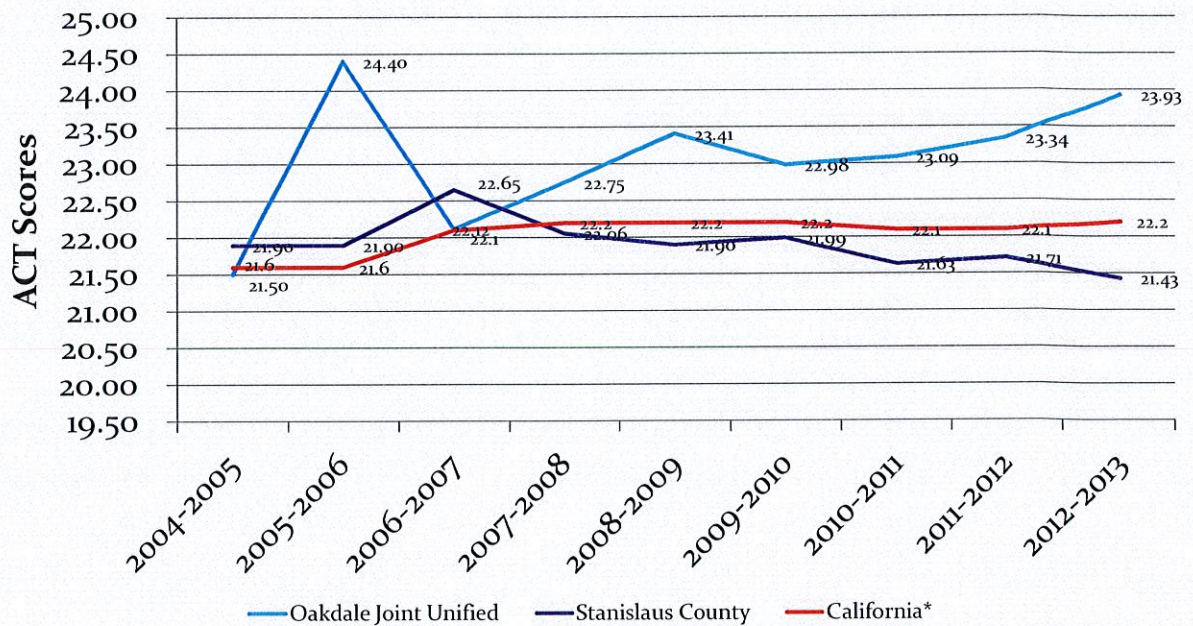
Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

## Median Age in Oakdale projected to increase by nearly 3% from 2010 to 2015

Median Age differences				
	2008-2012**	2010*	2015***	% Chg 2015/2010
Oakdale	33.9	34.9	35.9	2.9%
East Oakdale	46.7	50.0	50.6	1.2%
Stanislaus County	32.8	32.9	33.8	2.7%
Riverbank	30.6	31.0	32.2	3.9%
Modesto	33.3	34.2	35.1	2.6%
Manteca	33.1	33.6	34.3	2.1%
Ripon	34.5	37.1	37.4	0.8%
Lathrop	31.0	30.5	31.4	3.0%
Tracy	31.6	32.3	33.1	2.5%
Livermore	38.6	38.3	39.2	2.3%
Turlock	33.2	32.5	33.7	3.7%
Patterson	30.1	29.1	30.2	3.8%
Waterford	30.8	29.6	30.7	3.7%
California	35.2	35.2	36.2	2.8%

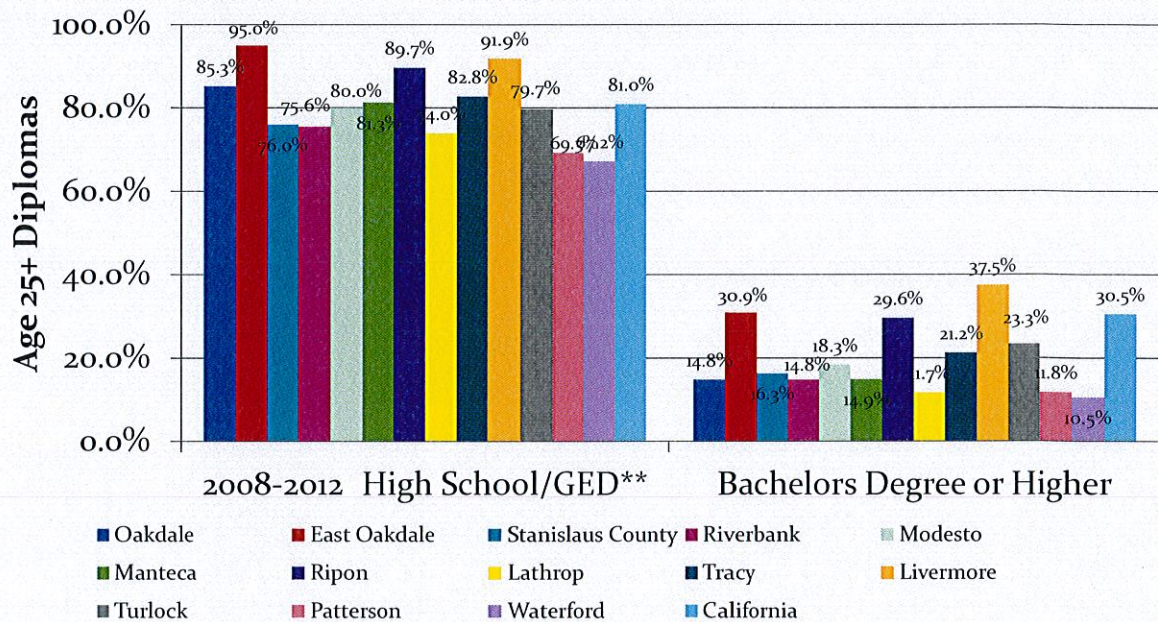
Source: \* U.S. Census, \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

## Beginning with 2007-2008 school year, Oakdale Unified ACT scores outperforms Stanislaus County



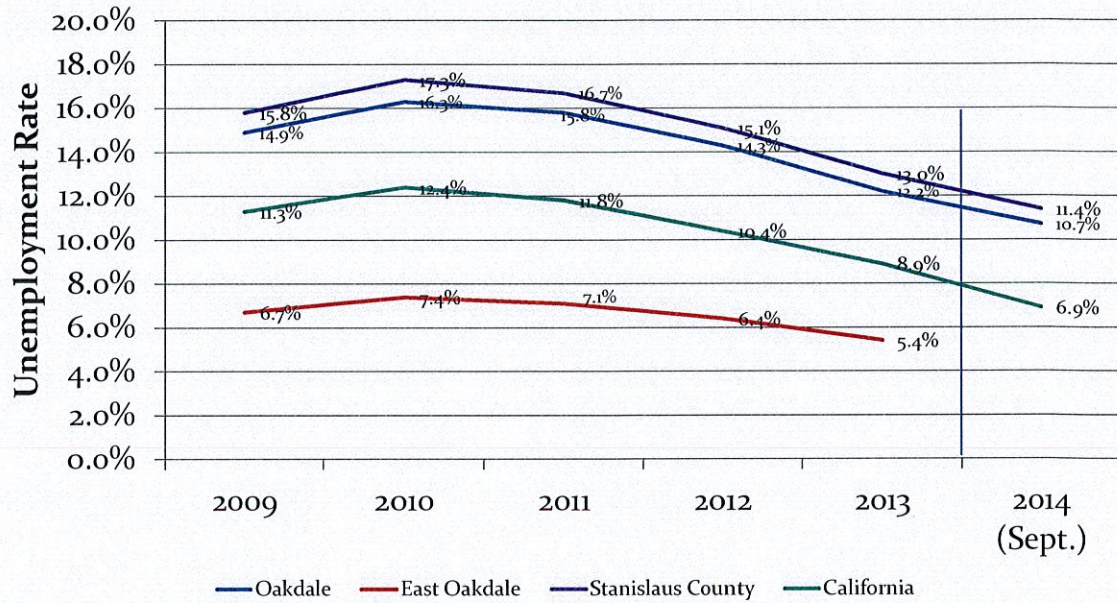
Source: CA Dept. of Education, \* ACT.org

## More Oakdale residents 25+ have high school diplomas than Stanislaus County while advanced degrees lag



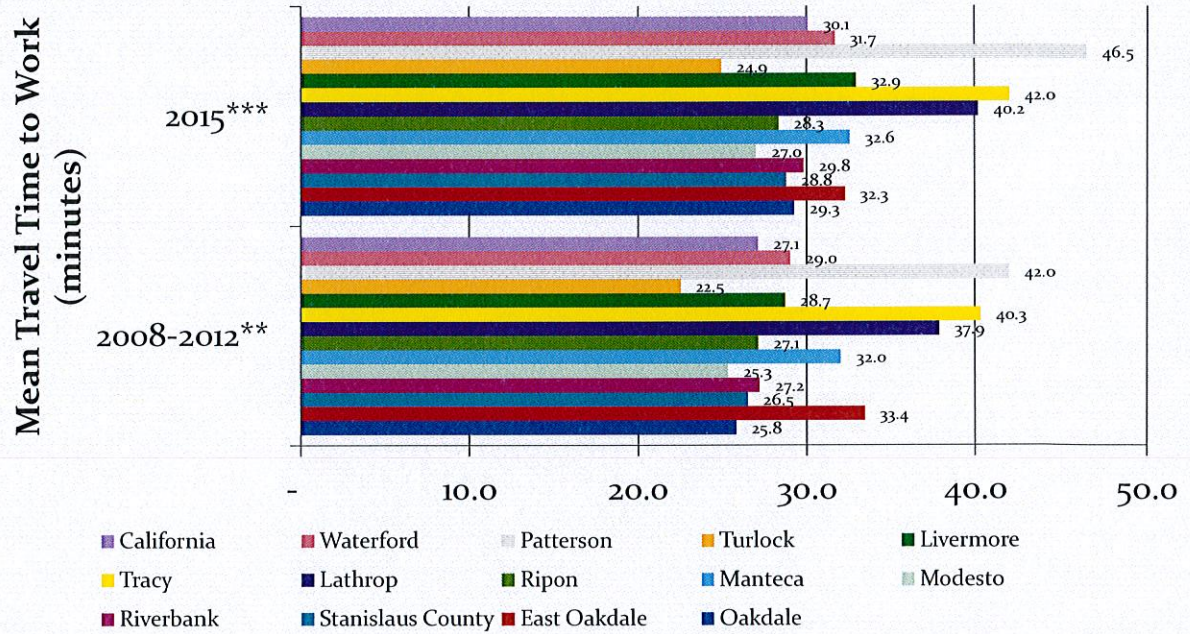
Source: \*\* ACS

## While lower overall, Oakdale Unemployment Rate follows the trend of Stanislaus County



Source: CA EDD

## Oakdale and Stanislaus County commute times have increased while East Oakdale commute time has shortened



Source: \*\* ACS, \*\*\* Claritas

## Largest percentage (20.4%) of Oakdale residents work in Educational services, and health care, and social assistance

Industry	%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	20.40%
Retail Trade	13.10%
Manufacturing	12.70%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10.60%
Construction	8.50%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	7.80%
Other services, except public administration	5.60%
Public administration	4.90%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4.30%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	4.20%
Wholesale trade	3.50%
Finance and insurance, and real estate rental and leasing	2.80%
Information	1.60%

Source: \*\* ACS

## Crime rates...

Location	Crime Index (100 is safest)	Violent crime/1,000	Property crime/1,000	Total crime/1,000
National	n/a	3.9	28.6	n/a
California	n/a	4.23	27.59	31.82
Oakdale	10	2.76	44.41	47.17
Modesto	4	7.77	55.10	62.87
Riverbank	19	2.47	32.99	35.46
Turlock	13	6.38	35.65	42.03
Patterson	16	2.55	35.34	37.89
Ripon	43	0.41	20.26	20.67
Livermore	32	3.64	21.80	25.44

Source: [www.neighborhoodscour.com](http://www.neighborhoodscour.com)

### Global Appeal

Agricultural exporting services and ag support business development.

### III. ECONOMIC PAST

### IV. TODAY'S ECONOMY

2000 Through 2013

## V. LOCAL ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Office Users  
Issues and Opportunities

Retail Businesses  
Issues and Opportunities

Neighborhood Oriented Retail  
Issues and Opportunities

Destination Retail  
Issues and Opportunities

Auto Sales  
Issues and Opportunities

Current Auto Dealers  
Chevrolet and Ford

Dealers lost  
Dodge

Healthcare  
According to the Bureau of Labor, the Healthcare industry will generate 3.2 million new jobs nationwide over the next ten years, due in part to the rapid growth in the elderly population. Oakdale is fortunate to have a fully accredited hospital and a five star skilled nursing facility.

### Issues:

- Uncertainties in healthcare policies have hindered certain building investments?
- Growing percentage of patients not covered under a healthcare plan increases strain on emergency facilities treating non-urgent conditions
- Growing shift from inpatient care to outpatient settings, such as medical office buildings, freestanding clinics and home healthcare.

### Opportunities:

- Attract secondary industries that support the larger medical facilities and hospitals.
- Continue collaboration between public and private healthcare partners to effectively combine assets and leverage resources
- Encourage collaborations with local education institutions that can link medical research and training in the medical profession
- Maximize the physical assets of the local hospital

Manufacturing:  
Issues and Opportunities

Technology:  
Issues and Opportunities

Visitors:  
Issues and Opportunities

Conventions & Tourism:  
Issues & Opportunities

Educational Institutions  
Recruit and Assist relocation or branch development

Community Based Organizations  
Issues & Opportunities

## VI. WORKFORCE

## VII. HOUSING

## VIII. INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES

## IX. SWOT

### Strengths:

Two state highways pass through the core of the city  
New General Plan with 450 additional acres of industrial/commercial development opportunities  
Small Town Charm  
Strong relationship with Stanislaus Alliance  
Auto dealerships and gasoline service stations  
Access to agriculture  
Median household income is above average for area  
Excellent school system for area – However, can we gain distinguished school status  
Geography and location of Oakdale – proximity to Sierras, Yosemite, Bay area, rivers and reservoirs  
Low crime rate  
Higher home values (Strength of Weakness)  
Fully accredited Hospital and SNF  
Strong current base of industrial employers – Sconza, ConAgra, Ball, and others.  
Airport  
Dollars are available for economic development efforts.  
The Stanislaus River runs right through our city.

### Weaknesses

Lack of Retail/Shopping options  
Unstable City Financial Condition  
North County Corridor Final Route not chosen yet, which delays investment  
Vagrancy Problem

Advancing age of infrastructure, repairs and upgrades needed  
Tightly stretched Police Department  
Lack of retail and grocery shopping on the west side of town  
Lack of jobs for local residents  
Far removed from Hwy 99  
Deferred maintenance on equipment and facilities  
Lack of adequate airport facilities & no FBO  
Update needed to Capita Facility Fees schedule  
Lack of high speed internet in industrial areas  
Lack of funding for parks and trail maintenance  
Only one bridge over the Stanislaus River.  
Very little business activity taking advantage of river recreational opportunities.  
Entryways to our city represent us very poorly  
Threatened ground water supply

#### Opportunities

Improve official web site to make it easier for new businesses to determine they should choose Oakdale first.

Lengthen the Airport runway and recruit a FBO operator  
Make a decision on the North County Corridor route  
River access and trail opportunities  
Recruit businesses to cater to river and hiking activities  
Pursue recycling of waste water for irrigation purposes  
Crane Crossing and Sierra Pointe Specific Plans completed. Get the word out  
Kerr Park – RV Park opportunity  
Further develop TL Davis with lights and bleachers  
Relatively inexpensive land  
Further develop and market our proximity to Yosemite and the Foothills  
Streamline the Permitting Process  
Reinstitute the East F Street Corridor  
Make the area between the Rodeo Grounds and 108/120 more pleasing to the eye.  
Landscape the four entryways to the city.

#### Threats:

Retail competition in Riverbank  
State Government  
Sharing agreements with County  
Water supply  
Elimination of Enterprise Zones  
Increased possibility of wildfires due to drought  
Competition among Stanislaus County cities for jobs  
Loss of Ag Diversity – mostly tree based now  
Not being a self help County

[illegible]

# **DOWNTOWN MARKETING PLAN - January 23, 2015**

## **INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. MARKETING TEMPLATES FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES**

A low cost way to gain interest from local businesses is to provide them with tools that will help them market their own businesses. The OTVB will develop themed marketing templates that businesses can easily modify and use for their own marketing purposes.

### **2. WAYFINDING**

Create a wayfinding system so that visitors will know how to find our downtown core shopping and dining district, cultural and historical attractions, AND our market events, plazas, and parks. The easier it is for people to find what we have to offer, the greater the revenues we will see as local businesses and a community.

There are more signs in Oakdale telling people how to get out of town than into town. Our strategy will include vehicular wayfinding, pedestrian downtown wayfinding, pole banners showcasing the final brand direction, and visitor information kiosks, with brochure distribution.

**ACTION ITEM:** Wayfinding Development – Route and Signage Initiative

**Description:** The primary objective of the Oakdale Wayfinding initiative is to “pull” traffic off of the primary throughway (Highway 120 from the west) and to attract these travelers to “turn right” to experience the historic downtown Oakdale district. Over 9 million vehicles (StanCOG 2014) pass through Oakdale each year in route to the National Park, mountain recreation (summer and winter) and all points wilderness.

**Process steps:** The Wayfinding Initiative should include the following process steps in this recommended chronology:

**Route and Location Strategy session:** with City Planning/Public Works to discuss traffic flow, historical patterns, and to develop a primary wayfinding “off ramp” into the downtown district. This will require several large plot aerial maps and a 3-hour block for preliminary planning. The planning session(s) should include vehicle route selection, pedestrian route identification and wayfinding, pole banner locations – including pole banner design (consistent with brand strategy), parking direction and visitor kiosk placement.

**Wayfinding Design and Sign Conceptual Preparation:** With a cooperative Wayfinding route and understanding of sign placement parameters and sign ordinance limitations – a series of mock sign and route direction elements will be developed for review by City Planning/Public Works, the OTVB sub-committee and ultimately the City Council.

**Development costs:** Project development costs will be prepared to reflect the investment cost in this proposal along with any possible phased approaches for west, north, eastern, and southern Wayfinding additions.

**Presentation to City Council:** With Wayfinding routes and signage locations, design options within existing City standards and a cost estimate with contingency in place – the OTVB (along with City Planning/Public Works) will approach the City Council for direction and ultimate authority to begin the project. It is at this point that considerable outreach to the downtown business owners should take place. Having positive buy-in

from the downtown business district will be a critical element in initiative success.

Funding Strategy: Depending upon the hard cost of sign design and placement, the funding for this important first effort would be placed upon the budget of the OTVB. This may require that the project be phased in over several performance cycles.

Responsible Parties (Project Champions): Implementation will require a collective effort. The cost to implement would be borne by the OTVB budget (phased) while the regular maintenance and upkeep of the new sign and route strategy would be the responsibility of the City's Public Works Department.

Project Rationale: This is a very straightforward economic development strategy - draw more visitors who currently simply pass through town to stop, experience, and spend in our community and our targeted downtown district.

NOTE: If visitors stop and spend four (4) hours or more in a location the propensity to stay overnight doubles. When visitors spend one night visitor spending doubles.

### **3. PLAZA REORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Oakdale is home to a beautiful plaza that can be further developed to become more than just a pretty place but a people place. Plazas must be programmed – and monetized.

Consider Italy, one of the most visited leisure destinations in the world. Every city is built around a central plaza or piazza. Each is ringed with commerce: artisans in action, music, restaurants and retail shops. These activities attract people to the piazzas, and the piazzas provide space for people to gather together and enjoy each other's company. People want out of their cars and into a pedestrian experience, and plazas are the heart and soul of that experience.

In the existing community plaza adjacent to the Bianchi Community Center we should have a central stage and lots of natural seating areas where we can host year-round vendors, speakers, performers, and activities. The goal is to ultimately have a "programmed" plaza 250 days a year.

Question: What needs to come first for our downtown to be successful?

Answer: People.

When we have successfully drawn people downtown 250 days a year, merchants will be far more successful, new businesses will be attracted downtown, and Oakdale will become THE quaint, people watching, pedestrian friendly destination of choice.

Plaza development should include the following initiatives – each of these can be achieved in the collective action strategy at the end of this section:

3a. Move the trees so there is open space for stage production seating, like movies on the square and other events.

Currently, the Downtown Plaza is a beautiful visual, but it is far from practical or useful. The OTVB and

community members who participated in the development of this strategy strongly suggest relocating multiple trees and “clearing” the plaza for people and group based activities. The number of tree relocations and timing will self-identify as the plaza redevelopment concept is refined.

**3b. Develop a covered stage with built-in sound system and plaza-wide LED lighting.**

Live music, poetry readings, live theater and demonstrations await the new Oakdale downtown plaza. Live entertainment is one of the most effective ways to inject people, foot traffic, commerce and vitality into our downtown district.

A permanent covered stage area with natural seating areas and plaza-wide lighting will be a powerful addition to the downtown and will help to extend downtown activity into the evening hours.

**3c. Encourage bordering property owners to open up the sides of their buildings and creating outdoor patio dining on the plaza.**

There are several opportunities to open up existing structures to play into the plaza experience. Discussions with property and business owners should be encouraged during the design and development of the plaza redevelopment effort.

**3d. Work with merchants to adjust operational hours – encouraging them to stay open into the evening hours.**

Downtown Oakdale, like so many smallish towns, seems to roll up the streets after 7:00 pm. Creating a monetized plaza, expanding the public market (footprint and schedule) will encourage the downtown district to expand hours of operation and to take advantage of our long summer nights and pleasant Mediterranean climate.

Seventy percent of all consumer bricks and mortar spending now takes place after 6:00 pm. In fact, the future of downtowns is fast becoming the place local residents go after work and on weekends. We need to bring our downtown district to life. Downtown Oakdale should come alive with plaza events and activities, sidewalk cafes, street vendors, artisans and a shopping presence after 6:00 pm.

**3e. Create an ordinance that restricts the use of plastic banners and temporary signs.**

This is a growing concern in Oakdale regardless of whether or not we embrace the strategy as recommended. Plastic banners are noise. Banners take away from the natural esthetic and western, historical charm of our Farm Fresh California brand. We need to educate our business community to the many other, more productive and inclusive ways to promote sidewalk traffic and street appeal. Several recommendations to consider include:

- Banners should be allowed ONLY for special promotions and sales;
- Not to exceed eight (8) weeks a year;
- Not to exceed two (2) weeks at a time;
- A small permit fee should be developed to regulate the process;

- A stiff fine should be enforced for violators who exceed the ordinance time limits.

3f. Put retail in the front of the Bianchi Community Center, which is now dead space most of the time: think ice cream shop or coffee shop.

The corner space of the Community Center is currently dead, useless space consisting of a circular bench and tower environment – a glorified coatroom of sorts. This space could be easily reconditioned and leased to a vendor of the right type and caliber.

Imagine an ice cream parlor with outside seating, or perhaps a local winery – wine tasting facilities, or small café/coffee shop? Each of these uses would extend the plaza environment, foster additional foot traffic and retail commerce and would “extend” the Downtown district – the “walking district” philosophy.

3g. The splash pad should be about 2,500 square feet instead of about 100 square feet.

Currently, a splash pad (of sorts) exists. It consists of a single splash nozzle and is hardly an attraction.. We suggest that the splash fountain be expanded upon to include at minimum 2,500 square feet. The splash fountain space could easily be used for formal seating for concert and entertainment activities during evening time activities and celebrated as a true water feature amenity during the daytime – taking full advantage of our warm summers. In addition, if appropriately designed (with tier infrastructure and retention walls) the splash pad area could double as a skating rink during the winter holiday season – complementing the winter public market/downtown district holiday crafts and novelties themes. Imagine the holiday traffic, the buzz of the Oakdale Farm Fresh market experience, the foot traffic, specialty banners and lighting amidst the backdrop of ice-skating to Bing Crosby?

3h. Put a calendar of events in the existing plaza kiosk.

The existing plaza kiosk is empty. This says a lot about the current state of affairs.

The OTVB is currently designing materials that will fill the kiosk in the interim – but this kiosk should be re-established, lit for night time viewing and be placed in a strategic plaza location that serves all visitors to the new, improved, much talked about Oakdale Community Plaza!

**ACTION ITEM:** Provide for more people and activity in the existing community plaza adjacent to the Gene Bianchi Community Center. Currently the plaza is a beautiful yet non-functional space. By strategically moving (or removing) several trees, adding a covered public stage, expanding the fountain experience, encouraging adjacent businesses to “open out” and onto the plaza, monetizing a small portion of the actual Gene Bianchi Community Center, curbing the use of plastic banner signage, and encouraging extended business hours in the downtown district – the plaza will be transformed into a viable community living space – one that will promote business growth and will easily and seamlessly align with the Farm Fresh Oakdale brand.

**PROCESS STEPS:** The following are a recommended course of development to achieve these action items. The process steps may vary and modify depending upon multiple variables – time, weather, funding and City support.

**Developing a plaza footprint:** Working with a professional landscape architect, City Manager, City Council and

City Public Works – develop a tree removal or relocation strategy that provides for additional people space within the community plaza. With a conceptual idea, contract with a landscape designer/architect to design and render the potential plaza reformation to include:

- Tree location/relocation design
- Covered Stage/PA/Plaza lighting
- Expanded splash fountain component
- Remodel and monetize corner space of existing Bianchi Center
- Approach adjacent property owner re: building remodel/plaza expansion

Identify Development Costs: Develop accurate design and construction costs including phasing.

Present Design Proposal to Collective City Council: Seek City Council approval to develop the plaza into an attraction that can be monetized and promoted hundreds of days per year.

Funding Strategy: Leverage OTVB funding and other grant opportunities (CDBG, TOT, State and Federal Community Development grants, etc.) to secure funding for this important transformation.

Responsible Parties: City of Oakdale, OTVB and eventually an Oakdale Market Foundation (see below for more detail)

Project Rationale: Drawing people into the downtown district is essential to growing the Oakdale tourism experience. By working on several key plaza upgrades as defined in this strategy – we can monetize our plaza and turn it into the hub of activity that drives a vibrant, changed, downtown Oakdale experience.

Wouldn't it be great if locals spent more time in downtown Oakdale rather than heading to Modesto for most of their shopping needs?

Wouldn't it be great if downtown Oakdale became the place Modesto residents, other County residents (and other regional neighboring communities) came, rather than the opposite?

#### **4. PLAZA PROGRAMMING**

While the market and plaza are being developed (see action section #4 below), an "Oakdale Market Foundation" should be created to manage and program both the plaza and future public market settings. The market should be juried, meaning that care will be taken to make sure it doesn't turn into a flea market or second-rate market. Quality goods would be important. While our initial Public Market (formerly known as the Farmers Market) efforts are commendable, we can do better. We will do better. By establishing a Market Foundation we will be best able to articulate the professionalism of our Oakdale Public Market experience. In the near term, the OTVB would act as the interim administration to the Plaza redevelopment effort and Public Market development project.

##### 4a. Foundation Formation & Development

In the long term, the Foundation could potentially lease the facilities (city owned plaza/properties) and

manage the market and plaza events. It would recruit outside events into Oakdale, making downtown a festive atmosphere with live entertainment, street musicians, vendors, food and vendor trucks year round.

Within a few months, people throughout Central California will be thinking, "I wonder what's happening this weekend out in Oakdale." This will attract visitors, and attracting visitors is the front door to our non-tourism economic development efforts. Even site selectors come first as visitors. There is simply no better way to showcase Oakdale as a quality place to live and raise a family.

Not all events have to be public market events.

Our Farm Fresh USA brand can easily dovetail with the saddle shop downtown, western wear shops, the rodeo and the overall "western" look and feel that embodies Oakdale. Western wear, horseback riding and rodeos are all uniquely "western" and that "look and feel" of the brand would be a prevalent feature throughout all of the marketing process.

Western and Farm Fresh are like glove and hand – a perfect fit that can easily blend into a strong sustainable brand, one that leaves no one out, is inclusive, yet focused.

## **5. PUBLIC MARKET**

Over the last several years a downtown farmers market has been held during the summer months. This idea should be further developed and marketed.

### 5a. Develop a Public Market Plan and Strategy

#### PROCESS STEPS:

- Discuss the location and upgrades needed for a Public Market;
- Reach out to a Public Market consultant for guidance;
- Share with community, businesses, and development entrepreneurs (public workshops);
- Develop a project design/graphic representation(s);
- Identify funding/fund raise;
- Choose location and determine needed capital improvements

## **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

These five primary recommendation categories just scratch the surface of how great a destination Oakdale can become. This conceptual idea taken to execution could happen in just three years, with initial events and markets taking place in 2015.

This is an amazing opportunity that Oakdale can seize, own and cherish for generations.

This effort will REQUIRE strong support from the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the downtown business community.