Chapter 1: Executive Summary
What type of community does Oakdale want to be in 20 years? Where should City government focus its priorities? What strategies need to be in place to preserve a high quality of life in the community?

The Comprehensive Planning process asks these important questions and engages the community in answering them. Through public input and city-wide assessment of resources, a framework is created to guide the future of the City.

The Comprehensive Plan does the following:
• Provides the community with the means to participate in establishing the vision and direction of the City.
• Guides future land use and redevelopment
• Reviews adequacy of City services and utilities
• Establishes the foundation for budgeting appropriate resources for specific outcomes.

“The City of Oakdale is committed to serving the continuing community-wide needs of our citizens by enhancing the vitality and quality of life for all.” –Current Mission Statement

2008 Update
The Metropolitan Council requires cities within the seven county metro area to prepare and adopt a 2008 Comprehensive Plan through the year 2030. This plan provides a framework for regional and local communication among governmental agencies in order to produce well functioning regional systems.

The Met Council establishes certain requirements to be met for each metro city in the following areas: land use, housing, community facilities, wastewater, parks and trails, transportation, natural and water resources, and aviation.

Each city is given a System Statement by the Met Council that shows how changes in the Council’s regional system plans in transportation, water resources management and regional parks specifically affect a community. They are intended to help a community prepare or update their comprehensive plan. The statement also provides density projections to assist in planning for adequate infrastructure locally and regionally. Oakdale’s System Statement can be found in Appendix A.

Specific Requirements affecting Oakdale:
• Transportation plans for expansion of I-694 north of TH 36
• Identification of future transit service options
• Include express commuter bus corridors and dedicated right-of-way corridors
• Promote higher density initiatives along dedicated transit corridors
• Future improvements to and expansion of these transit facilities, especially future park-and-ride spaces in the area of Hwy 36 and I-694
• Proposed trunk sewer system through 2030 and ultimate sewer service area
• A table showing the projected population,
The comprehensive plan becomes the centerpiece for all future planning projects for each City. Development regulations (zoning, subdivision, and other controls) must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Cities typically undergo a year-long process to ensure their Comprehensive Plans and regulations are up to date and reflect the vision of the community.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan provides an update to the 1999 Comprehensive Plan. How far has the City come in implementing its last Comprehensive Plan? The previous plan listed out 7 priorities that made up the mission of the City at the time.

- Maintain and improve City services in the face of declining State and Federal Resources
- Enhance staff capability without adding a lot of full-time staff
- Develop new resources without significant impact on local property taxes
- Expand City’s commercial and industrial tax base to lessen the burden on individual home owners
- Provide local, high-quality jobs for our residents
- Invest in our community’s infrastructure—parks, streets, etc.
- Continue to move away from a traditional governmental structure to a City committed to customer service

The City has worked hard to implement these priorities by monitoring spending, providing services that make a visible difference in the City, maintaining low taxes, developing new commercial and industrial areas, and investing in new infrastructure for the public’s benefit.

The City created and has begun implementing the City Vision Plan for multiple facets of City services and systems in 2006 further defining ways to meet the City’s mission.

These mission statements continue to stand as the City plans through the year 2030 as each item remains important despite ever-changing development and social make-up. The update integrates this mission into the heart of the Comprehensive Plan in the new Goals & Strategies located in each chapter which offer insight into the direction and aspirations of the community. The goals and strategies will address standards for future community improvements and redevelopment.

This is an integral piece to developing a sustainable and well-planned community. These statements are a reflection of the community, and clearly identify the type of living environment that its citizens strive to achieve. Although a community’s vision and goals may evolve over time, they serve as an important...
policy base on which short term decisions can be evaluated for their longer term impacts. Therefore while external factors influencing land use change, the vision statements, goals and strategies will continue to provide the best perspective from which to view proposed land use changes.

Process

Phase 1
The City began the 2008 Comprehensive Plan update process in August of 2007. The first phase included the initiation of the process with the Advisory Committee, City Staff, and the public to introduce participants to the process, the role of the comprehensive plan in city governance process, and help the public to have an effective voice in the plan and encourage broad community involvement. This phase also included the collection and analysis of background data, base mapping and the preparation of a background report. Phase 1 prepared an understanding of Oakdale and the factors that will influence and guide its future.

Phase 2
A critical review of all of the goals and policies from the 1999 Comprehensive Plan was conducted to determine the relevancy of the statements. Community input and participation played a key role in the development of the new goals and strategies. Public workshops were held to identify issues, strengths, and weaknesses within the City and translate those into goal and strategy statements. For results of these public meetings refer to Appendix D.

Phase 3
The City is mostly developed, leaving redevelopment as a focus of this Comprehensive Plan. City staff worked with the Advisory Committee to develop a list of potential redevelopment sites, prioritizing 5 of those. Multiple alternative land use concepts were created for these identified locations that best achieved the goals and strategies established. The alternatives illustrate generalized land use, natural resources, transportation, parks, open space, development and redevelopment, sustainability and other pertinent site features.

The public commented on the alternatives at several meetings to formulate a preferred concept for each location. Narrative text that describes the intent of the different redevelopment concepts can be found in the Economy and Redevelopment Chapter that communicates the intent of the five different alternatives.
Phase 4
Finally, the draft plan was prepared pulling together all the background information and documents prepared through the Comprehensive Planning process. The requirements and system statements produced by the Metropolitan Council were reviewed and integrated into each chapter of the plan. Once reviewed and approved by the Advisory Committee, City Commissions, and the City Council, it was distributed to neighboring jurisdictions to review.

Key Findings and Outcomes of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan

- Redevelopment opportunities including commercial, retail, and housing are a major focus of this Comprehensive Plan. Oakdale employment opportunities will increase from 7,800 currently to 11,900 jobs by the year 2030. Oakdale can strategically plan now by guiding the type and location of redevelopment that will house these jobs and new families.

- Oakdale is projected to grow from roughly 27,000 to 30,000 people by the year 2030. This means Oakdale must work to sustain its quality of life keeping its current citizens happy and providing housing options for future residents. Currently 19.5% of units are renter occupied compared to 14.5% for Washington County.

- Roughly 20% of the city’s housing stock was built prior to 1970 and is 30+ years old. In addition, predominately middle-income single-family homes make up 60% of the total housing stock leaving little variety in housing options. Oakdale must look ahead to assist home owners in upgrading their aging homes through rehabilitation loans and redeveloping areas to encourage the upgrade of housing stock of all values and varieties.

- Oakdale will continue to become more culturally diverse over the next 30 years. Planning will need to focus on cultural, social, and economic opportunity for all residents.

- Oakdale residents highly value the protection of natural resources, parks, and trails throughout the community. Adding a modest amount of capacity to these systems will maximize recreational and habitat protection opportunities. The City would benefit by actively pursuing the acquisition of properties identified for open space preservation and off-road recreational trail development.

- Operational concerns for major transportation corridors have been identified in this plan and should be addressed in the Oakdale Capital Improvements Program.