2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Oakdale-Focused Priorities

40th Street Pedestrian Bridge
Construction of a bridge (or an upgrade of the existing bridge) over Interstate 694 along 40th Street would fill a gap in the local/regional bike and pedestrian network connecting Oakdale residents and new housing units to parks, open space, regional trails and jobs (particularly at the 4Front Office + Technology Campus). It is proposed that we seek state bonding money for this significant project.

Interstate 694 Noise Wall
Interstate 694 generates significant noise that reduces the quality of life for some property owners and residents. In Oakdale, there remains a need for noise mitigation to meet current environmental standards, best achieved through noise wall construction. Generally, locations include areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods along I-694

Unobligated TIF Revenue Extension
The State Legislature amended the TIF law (the "Law") in 2021 to provide flexibility to cities to utilize unobligated tax increment revenues in their districts to promote construction and job creation in their communities. The City had approximately $2.125 million in unobligated increment from TIF Districts No 1-4 and 1-6. On December 11, 2022, the City Council approved a TIF Spending Plan for Districts No. 1-4 and District 1-6 to be used on eligible costs for future projects. According to the TIF law these funds must be expended on eligible costs by December 31, 2025 or they will revert back to the district. The City has been working diligently with a private developer on a redevelopment project and anticipate expending funds by December 31, 2025 on eligible costs. However, in case there are unforeseen delays in the construction process the City is seeking special legislative approval to extend the term of the special TIF Law to December 31, 2027.

East Metro-Focused Priorities

State Highway 36 and Highway 120 (Geneva/Century Avenue) Interchange
Most of the at-grade intersections for Highway 36 have been removed using bridges. This has improved regional mobility. The last at-grade intersection in this area is at Highway 120 (also known as Century Ave and Geneva Ave). Construction of an interchange at this location will have significant regional benefits to users of these highways.

Water Quality and Sustainability
It is imperative to Oakdale's future that negative impacts of Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permitting practices related to the White Bear Lake lawsuit be addressed. Left unaddressed, the restrictions, ambiguity and uncertainty related to judicial decisions on permitting may lead to negative impacts to Oakdale with negligible impacts to the water quantity of White Bear Lake.

Statewide Priorities Supported by Oakdale

Law Enforcement Recruiting and Retention
Oakdale supports the creation of legislative solutions to assist local police departments in recruiting new officers and retaining existing personnel in this time of unprecedented difficulties in public safety staffing.

Mental Health Services
Oakdale advocates for the provision of permanent and sustainable mental health services by public health departments (especially Washington County).

Statewide Priorities Supported by Oakdale *(continued)*

Sales Tax on Local Government Purchases

Oakdale was successful in the 2023 legislative session in securing legislation allowing the City of Oakdale an exemption on materials for the new Public Works facility. However, Oakdale believes it is in local government's best interest to secure sales tax exemption for purchases of goods and services made by cities in general.

Municipal State Aid (MSA) Funding

Oakdale, like many municipal communities, struggles to fund major roadway projects, creating costly delays and decreased motorist safety. The MSA formula and funding levels should be reviewed as the current system is not sufficient to keep up with growing demands for maintenance, coupled with expanding MSA roadway systems in growing communities.

Restrictions on Local Government Budgets

For local management and control, it is important that cities maintain autonomy in deciding the appropriate level of local taxation and services. Oakdale should strongly oppose levy limits, reverse referenda, super majority requirements for levy, and valuation freezes, or other restrictions on local government budgeting and taxing processes.

Local Government Aid (LGA)

Although Oakdale's LGA is estimated at $464,461 in 2025 and was $459,563 in 2024, it varies widely from year to year (just $2,133 in 2023 but $262,721 in 2022). The City supports the initiative led by the League of MN Cities and advocates strongly for restoration, enhancement and stabilization of LGA for cities generally and Oakdale specifically.

Minnesota Cities Initiatives

Oakdale supports legislative activity of the League of Minnesota Cities and Metro Cities consistent with local plans and studies. Membership in the Metro Cities and the League of Minnesota Cities provides Oakdale the ability to benefit from advocacy on broad issues affecting cities (like Local Government Aid), while also pursuing a strategic legislative agenda specific to Oakdale's unique needs and goals. Other opportunities may arise during the session that align with the City's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans and priorities.

Ambulance Service Costs and Liability

Oakdale supports legislation that would:

- Require Medicare to set ambulance payment rates to cover the cost of providing service for transport and non-transport care of patients;
- Provide adequate reimbursement for ambulance providers;
- Reimburse 911 ambulance transports regardless of medical necessity, and;
- Make it easier for providers to file claims by eliminating Medicare's processing system.

Currently, 62 percent of all ambulance service costs to Medicare recipients fail to recoup their true expenses, resulting in financial losses ranging from $34.47 to $463.44 per service call. It should be noted that this relates to Federal legislation and may require different efforts such as a federal lobbyist.