



KC Nate

Hi everyone! My name is KC Nate and I am running for Oakdale City Council. I chose to move to Oakdale in 2019 with my wonderful wife and two young children. Although my time here has been short, it has been tremendously fulfilling. The residents of Oakdale have a pride and commitment to each other I haven't experienced elsewhere. Whether it's local business, athletics, or those in need, this community steps up and shows up. I am grateful to call Oakdale home and am confident I have the values, background, and abilities to help it continue prospering. If elected, I will focus my efforts supporting our city leadership and staff, strengthening local business and the economy, backing our police and fire departments, reinforcing well-planned infrastructure, and instilling educational performance and youth development. I will ensure we develop intentionally, balancing our need to preserve small-town life while providing ample opportunities for the next generation.

I have years of experience in strategic planning, financial accountability, and operational execution. I am currently a senior administrator with one of the largest health systems in Stanislaus County and I hold a Master's Degree in Healthcare Administration. Lastly, I am fortunate to be endorsed by outgoing councilman Richard Murdoch, whose successes I intend to further if elected. I look forward to serving you!

1. In your own words, describe the role & responsibility of the position you seek?

The role of a city council member is based on trust and representation. As an elected official, I would be ultimately accountable to the citizens of Oakdale, to represent them in all elements of my responsibilities. As such, I will continue actively developing relationships with members of the community and listening to them and their needs. Based on these needs, and my own values, experiences, and skills, I will evaluate policies, ordinances, and activities set before the council to approve, revise, or reject them. From my perspective, a city council operates like a board of directors for the city. In the private sector, the most important decision a board makes is who it hires as CEO to run the business day-to-day. In our case, that is our city manager. One of *the* most important decisions a city council can make is who it recruits and retains as city manager. I firmly believe our current city manager, Bryan Whitmeyer, is the right person for the role, and if elected I will continue to support him and his staff in ensuring Oakdale prospers.

2. What is the biggest challenge you see in Oakdale? What is your plan to address this challenge?

The biggest challenge Oakdale faces is balancing greater economic development with the desire to retain small-town charm and history. Many members of our community would like to see broader residential and commercial development, while a significant number of others want to keep Oakdale exactly as it is. We cannot have both, but I do believe we can balance them. My plan is to support intentional growth; I do not support exponential expansion in our city. We can accomplish this through several interconnected elements. First, as a city council member I would ensure thoughtful zoning and planning. This would make sure areas for growth are well thought out and poised for positive impact. Zoning and planning would be tied to well-designed infrastructure—our roads, water, and sewage—to support the growth. The growth would result in a greater market, attracting businesses that could diversify and strengthen our community. Over time, these elements *would* lead to development, but not in a way I believe would overwhelm our small-town character.

3. If elected what will you do to retain the existing businesses?

First, I would listen. Although I have a variety of ideas on how to help, the most important one is to listen to our current businesses to best understand their challenges and how I can jump in. We can waste a lot of time telling ourselves we know the answer when those facing the challenges are best equipped to do so. I also want to note that I believe in a competitive environment and it is not the role of government to guarantee a business succeeds. However, COVID-19 has dramatically changed the competitive environment and I do support the city assisting local businesses through this time. Specifically, I support the [business grants](#) recently approved by the city council. Another element of retaining businesses ties to networking and resources. Through strong promotion of [Opportunity Stanislaus](#) and the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce, business owners and leaders can identify the resources and skills necessary to help them succeed. For example, one local business was able to save hundreds of thousands of dollars after learning of resources through [Opportunity Stanislaus](#).

4. What do you feel is a barrier for Economic Development in Oakdale? What will you do to address this barrier?

The city of Oakdale is doing well. I do not believe we are in a position of significant challenges, but rather one of incremental improvement (COVID-19 aside). As such, I do not see one major barrier, but rather a variety of circumstances that prevent economic development. Many of my thoughts relative to economic development are outlined in question 2 above. In addition to those statements, I would also like to point out some additional tools at the city's disposal that I support. As a city, we need to regularly evaluate our fees and taxes for development relative to the broader Central Valley market. Doing so will ensure we remain competitive in attracting development. Additionally, we can and should employ the use of deferred fees and taxes to attract other businesses as there are still many jurisdictions requiring payment at permitting rather than occupancy. Lastly, it is essential we build efficiency into all development processes overseen by the city. Although permits are necessary, they should not take inordinate amounts of time.

5. If elected what would be your highest priority? Describe the measure you will take to address this priority?

As stated on the live forum and touched on in question 1 above, my top priority is partnership. Specifically, partnership with other elected members of the council, city management and staff, and with the local business community (including entities like the Chamber of Commerce and Opportunity Stanislaus). I have already met with several of these individuals, and if elected, I would continue to do so, ensuring the formations of strong relationships of trust. As a healthcare leader, where I have almost 300 employees reporting to me, I have learned the importance of partnership and relationships in getting things done. A leader simply cannot and should not manage every detail of day-to-day operations. Rather, a leader, such as a city council member, should listen to the voice of his or her customers (our citizens), design and support a plan to best serve them, empower them, and then get out of their way. Having strong and diverse relationships with a variety of public and private sector partners is the best way to implement these plans and ensure success.

6. What direction would you like the city to take to attract new businesses?

In my above responses I have shared a variety of perspectives on ways to attract new business. To conclude, I would like to share a few more. One area of interest for me is our downtown area. As many of you know, we have approximately 9 million cars traveling through our city each year, most on the way to the Sierras. As the city continues to invest in greater development of the downtown sector, we can create an ambiance and culture attractive to these pass-through travelers. The initial impetus of the city to do so will further attract new businesses interested in capturing this expanding market. On a different note, we all know the majority of our businesses are agriculturally based. This our bread and butter. We can and should leverage our significant assets in this sector for continued business growth. A key aspect to support this is transit. Although several years out, I support the North County Corridor as a mechanism for providing easier transit access and attracting these types of businesses to the agricultural stronghold that is Oakdale.