

Background

During the mid-80s, community members on the West Side saw the need for quality and affordable real estate development on the West Side of Saint Paul. Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA) officially formed in 1989 to make this vision happen. Since then, NeDA has developed about 200 units of housing including detached, duplex, and townhome units. NeDA has also assisted about 150 homeowners with home rehabilitation projects in the area.

As part of the vision above, NeDA in 2006 acquired 637 Oakdale Avenue to develop as a single family housing unit. It was later determined that the shallow depth of the property coupled with the unstable soil made it problematic for introducing a new home, without first acquiring adjacent lots. Unfortunately at that time, the housing market began to weaken and NeDA deferred the project.

The foreclosure crisis that hit the housing market later was an opportunity to acquire the vacant rental housing units adjacent to 637 Oakdale Avenue. Working with NeDA, PED used ISP funds to acquire 614 State Street, 623, 633, 645, 647, and 651 Oakdale Avenue; a total of six lots now owned by the City's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA).

NeDA is requesting a tentative developer status for the HRA-owned properties at 614 State Street, 623, 633, 645, 647, and 651 Oakdale Avenue. With this status, NeDA will be able to raise funds and proceed with the preliminary planning to redevelop this important section of Oakdale Avenue. Specifically, NeDA is planning to:

1. Survey the site in preparation for re-plating the contiguous parcels to insure efficiency in design and placement of house/townhome units.
2. Conduct soil tests for both quality and anticipated pollutants (asbestos/lead from previous homes).
3. Complete Phase 1 Environmental and subsequent Phase 2.
4. Work with local gardeners to develop a public space at the point of 614 State Street, along with shelter and/or benches for the school bus stop.
5. Work with the City on upgrading the blighted concrete median at the State and Oakdale conjunction.
6. Put together a budget and sources and uses statement for funding applications.

In the coming years, NeDA intends to build on these lots new detached housing or townhomes with at least three bedrooms priced for first-time homebuyers at 80% AMI or below. NeDA anticipates approaching both the City and the State for value gap financing and affordability gap to assist homeowners with down-payment requirements.