City of Marine on St Croix

2026 Summer Public Safety Plan & Recommendations

I. Overview and Objectives

The purpose of this Summer Public Safety Plan is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both residents and visitors during the peak summer tourist season. With the increasing amount of tourists, we are addressing key concerns related to parking, speeding, event congestion, and overall public safety. This plan aims to mitigate risks, improve community cooperation, and maintain the town's charm and functionality – especially the Village Center – during the busiest months.[1]

Current Situation: The demographics of Washington County and surrounding communities have experienced explosive residential growth in places like Lake Elmo, Stillwater, Hugo, Lino Lakes, Columbus, and Forest Lake. Western Wisconsin is also experiencing significant growth. The Twin Cities metropolitan area is expected to grow by a half million in the next 25 years, with much of that growth in the outer ring.[2] [3]

Marine's residents have experienced a steady and incremental increase of traffic along its main transportation corridors (both state and county highways), increased river traffic and impact, increased amplified and road noise, and increased tourist impact to the Village Center.

The current and future impacts to parking, transportation, and tourism put external pressure on City infrastructure. The current and projected demographics of Marine on St Croix create a disparity between these problem sets and a limited city budget for a population of just over 660 people.

Summer in Marine on St Croix (MoSC) creates an environment where visitors are attracted to our historic town and river setting. We are a pass-through and a destination for travelers of all sorts. Thus, summers in Marine result in challenges due to increasing numbers of people and vehicles that stretch our ability to manage public safety and the quality-of-life of our residents. This 2025 summer public safety plan seeks to address the areas within the

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[1] 2040 Comprehensive Plan 2026
[2] Metropolitan Council Imagine 2023 local forecast tool
[3] Axios Twin Cities interactive map

City's control that can help mitigate risk and make Marine a safer place to live, work, and recreate.

Key Objectives:

- Manage and alleviate parking challenges
- Reduce speeding and traffic violations
- Address congestion during local events
- Facilitate ingress and egress for emergency response vehicles
- Enhance safety measures for tourists and residents alike

Objectives are informed by applicable laws and ordinances, full-time City staff, Fire & Rescue personnel, City Council, City Planning Commission, local businesses, and the people of the City of Marine on St Croix.

II. Parking Management

Problem: Difficulty parking and pedestrian safety concerns in Village Center due to increased tourist traffic. Street constriction affecting ingress and egress of emergency response vehicles.

Strategies:

1. Enhanced Signage:

- Install permanent or semi-permanent no parking signs on streets where lane constriction affects emergency response vehicle trafficability.[4]
    - "NO PARKING THIS SIDE OF STREET ~~[MEMORIAL DAY TO LABOR DAY]~~"[5]
        - North side of Oak between 2nd and 3rd Streets
        - West side of 3rd Street between Oak and Maple Street
        - East side of Judd Street between Mill (platted south of 180 Judd) and Berkey Streets
    - The City will maintain stock of non-permanent no parking signage to allow for temporary placement if needed, to include the Village Center and area around MVS/MMFS (fall festival; school events).

[4] Appendix 1, Proposed zone map view
[5] Appendix 2: Street sign example

- Upon application, the City shall consider allowing a business to place appropriate signage "reserving" parking spots in support of that business, however the City cannot enforce reserved parking as a legal violation.

2. Overflow parking:

- The parking lot owned by Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) was approved with an understanding that it was for congregation use only. Any use of this parking lot for other than congregational purposes (e.g. overflow, valet, non-church events, etc.) will require approval by the City and may require that CLC apply for a conditional use permit.
- Parking spaces along 5th and Oak Streets associated with CLC could be considered for other than congregational purposes with agreement with CLC.
- Marine Village School (MVS). The village school parking lot provides limited parking options in the upper village when school is not in session and/or the Marine Mills Folk School (MMFS) is not conducting classes.

3. Striping:

- Striping of the Village Center provides for delineated parking spots, indication of pedestrian crossing, and areas that are off-limits to parking (i.e. fire lane). Striping last occurred in 2024, and the cyclic application of striping as a method of traffic calming and maximizing Village Center space requires reapplication every 3 years at a current cost of $3000 per application (conducted by Public Works).

III. Speeding and Traffic Control

Problem: Increased speeding and traffic violations during tourist season

Strategies:

1. Speed Limits and Traffic Calming Measures:

[6] Appendix 3: CLC parking lot map view
[7] Appendix 4: MVS/MMFS parking lot map view

- Begin the process of evaluating the opportunity and benefit of reduced speed limit of 25 mph on municipal roads by City Council resolution. This would likely require additional signage at ingress to these areas for legality since unsigned municipal roads are statutorily set at 30mph. [8]
- Maintain the structural function of paint existing speed bumps on current road infrastructure (Judd, upper village near MVS along 5th and 6th Streets).
- City engineering contractor continue to advocate with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for traffic study of MN HWY 95, with intent to establish lower speed limit through city limits. City engineer would advise on prudential nature of this request since unforeseen negative results could result..[9] While a roundabout at 95 and Broadway would be ideal for traffic calming, topography and available space at that intersection may not allow for it.
- In recent years, the City has prevailed in having MnDOT install additional speed transition, speed limit, speed radar, and enhanced pedestrian crossing signage and infrastructure along HWY 95 near Elm Street, the intersection with Broadway, and near Berkey Street, however it is widely recognized that correlation to driving behavior has not substantially attained an acceptable level of speed or safer conditions.

2. Increased Enforcement:

- The City does not contract with Washington County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) for dedicated patrol or service, unlike Scandia which budgets for a full-time deputy. Police presence is often transitory, at the request of city staff or council due to a specific situation, and subject to calls-for-service. Future budget consideration should be given to salary and fringe for any of the following options:
    - Part-time year-round dedicated deputy accomplished by negotiating a cost sharing agreement with with Scandia that reflects the two cities jurisdictional areas.
    - Part-time seasonal contracted overtime deputy during peak tourist season
- Any future police contract should consider parking, speed, noise, and other driver behavior enforcement in the Village Center, near MVS, MN HWY 95, CTY HWY 7, CTY HWY 4, and the national and scenic river as a primary deliverable.
- Patrol and enforcement on the St Croix River is the responsibility of the National Park Service (NPS), Washington County Sheriff's Water Patrol and Minnesota and Wisconsin DNR Conservation Officers.
  Effective communication and active engagement with all three agencies should be maintained.

IV. Event Congestion Management

Problem: Congestion and safety concerns during local events

Strategies:

1. Event Planning and Coordination (subject to Ch. 26, City Code[10]):

- Work with event organizers to create comprehensive traffic management plans for each event.
- Ensure that pedestrian and vehicle routes are clearly defined, and emergency access is maintained.

2. Pre-Event Coordination:

- Publish event schedule on the town's website with detailed information about event schedules, road closures, and parking options.

V. Community Engagement and Public Safety Awareness

Problem: Ensuring residents and tourists are informed about safety protocols

Strategies:

1. Community Meetings and Town Hall:

- Host pre-summer town hall meeting(s) to discuss the safety plan and solicit feedback from residents and business owners.
    - Input session for residents to ask questions, provide input, and attempt consensus. This session can also help the Public Safety Committee and City Council understand the appetite of the citizenry for volume and impact of events that may affect the application of Ch. 26.

2. Increased Communication:

- Create public repository of permit data to be displayed on town website.

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[10] MoSC City Code, Ch. 26 (Special Events)

3. Volunteers and Local Support:

- Maintain a citizen event committee that reports to the City Council and coordinates City-sponsored events. Committee members should retain members of civic groups (e.g. Restoration Society).

- Encourage local businesses to promote safety awareness and be proactive in helping direct tourists to appropriate parking areas and public infrastructure.
- As appropriate, members of the Fire & Rescue department can assist with City-sponsored events. Other events may contract with Marine Fire & Rescue through city staff and WCSO, and may be required to do so pursuant to Ch. 26..[11]
- Shared responsibility to promote public safety:

  It should be noted that it is the intent of the City to work with ownership of all businesses in Marine on St Croix to balance residential impact with commercial interests and viability and applicable laws and ordinances.

- **VIII.**

VI. Emergency Response Planning

Problem: Ensuring readiness for emergencies during high-traffic summer months

Strategies:

1. Strengthened Emergency Communication:

- Ensure emergency responders (fire, medical, police) are prepared for increased demand during peak tourist times.
- Establish direct lines of communication between local authorities and event organizers for quick response in case of emergencies.
- Follow Primary, Alternate, Plan for communicating about emergencies or incidents requiring crisis management:
    - Full-time Staff
    - Public Works
    - Fire Chief
    - Mayor & Public Safety Committee Council Liaisons
    - City Attorney
    - Partner Agencies
        - WCSO
        - Washington County Emergency Management
        - Minnesota State Patrol
        - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
        - National Park Service (river)
        - Lakeview Hospital

2. First Aid Stations:

- Set up temporary first aid stations in high-traffic areas during major events and

festivals.[12]

3. Fire and Evacuation Procedures:

- Develop and publicize clear fire evacuation plans for large gatherings or events.
- Regularly inspect public spaces for fire hazards and ensure fire extinguishers are readily available.
- During abnormal dry periods, the City may restrict events in the urban-wildland interface based on drought conditions and informed by the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center..[13]

VII. Implementation Timeline and Review

Timeline:

- Pre-Summer (May): Develop and distribute public safety materials, recruit volunteers, set up parking systems, and implement speed enforcement measures. Conduct residential input session.
- During Summer (June-September): Monitoring of parking and traffic patterns, parking signage, noise levels (music, traffic), permitting compliance, adjusting speed enforcement, adjusting permit issuance and conditions, and managing event congestion. Monitors include full-time staff, city officials, and resident input.
- Post-Summer (October): Review the success of the plan, gather feedback from residents, tourists, businesses, and event organizers, and make necessary adjustments for future years.

Review:

- The plan will be reviewed at the end of each summer season to evaluate its effectiveness, gather input from the community, and make any necessary changes for improvement.
- Regular reporting from public safety designates and all related agencies to be provided at regular intervals.

[16] MoSC City Code, Ch. 7; Ch. 8

- Data and input will be factored into future special event permit processes pursuant to Ch. 26..[17]

VIII. Budget Considerations

A budget under roads and/or public safety should be allocated for:

- New signage installation in Village Center
- Speed bump inclusion in future roads construction planning (no change)
- Three-year Village Center striping
- WCSO deputy (part-time, contracted overtime)

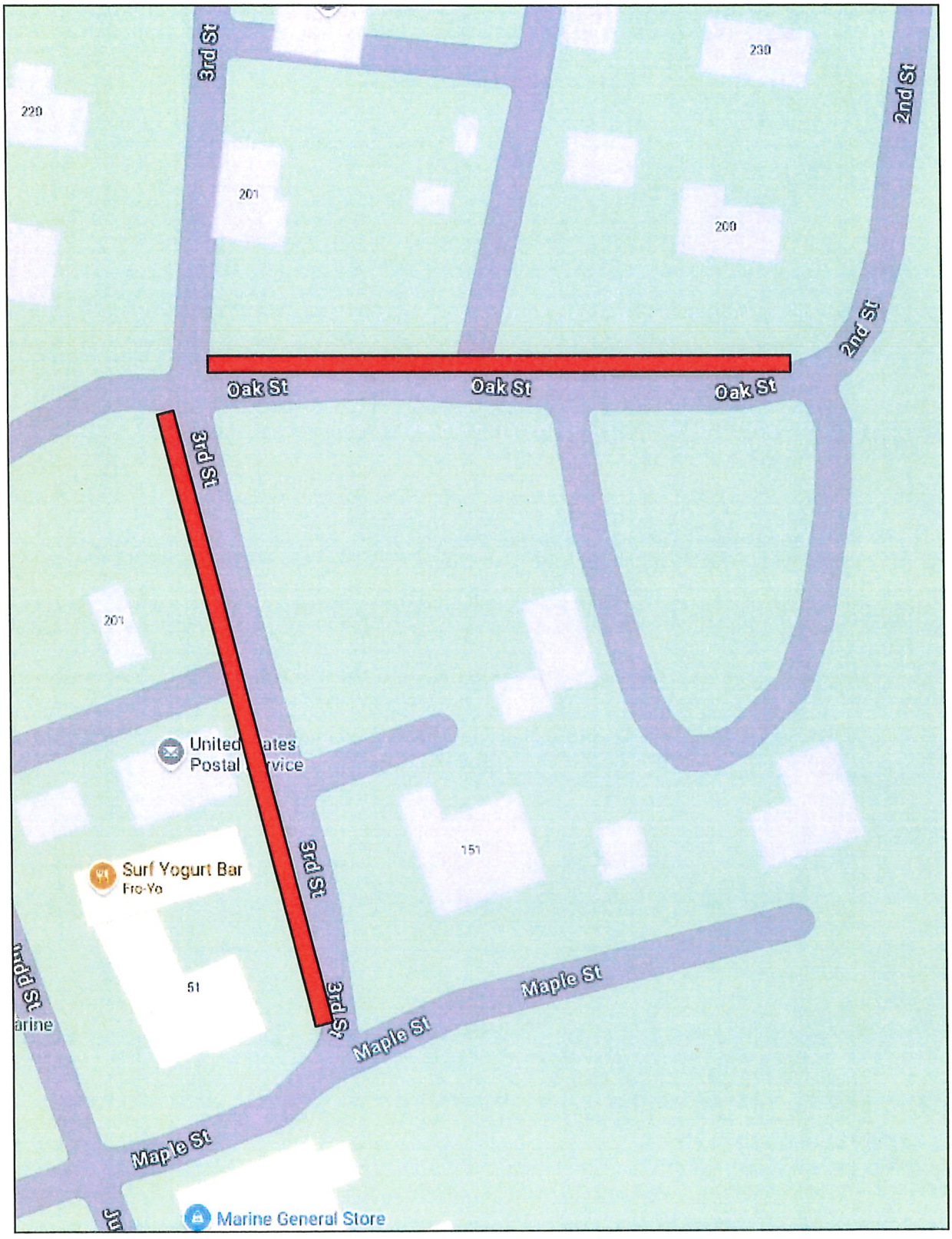
In addition to the annual budgeting and levy process, Marine on St Croix can apply for state and federal grants aimed at improving community safety and infrastructure.

Conclusion:

This Summer Public Safety Plan is designed to address key concerns related to increased tourist traffic, speeding, parking, and event congestion while ensuring that both residents and visitors enjoy a safe and pleasant experience. With proactive planning, effective communication, and community collaboration, Marine on St Croix can successfully manage the challenges of the summer season.

[17] Ch. 26 (Sections 5, 6, 8)

Appendix 1: Proposed "No Parking This Side of Street, Memorial Day through Labor Day" Zone Map



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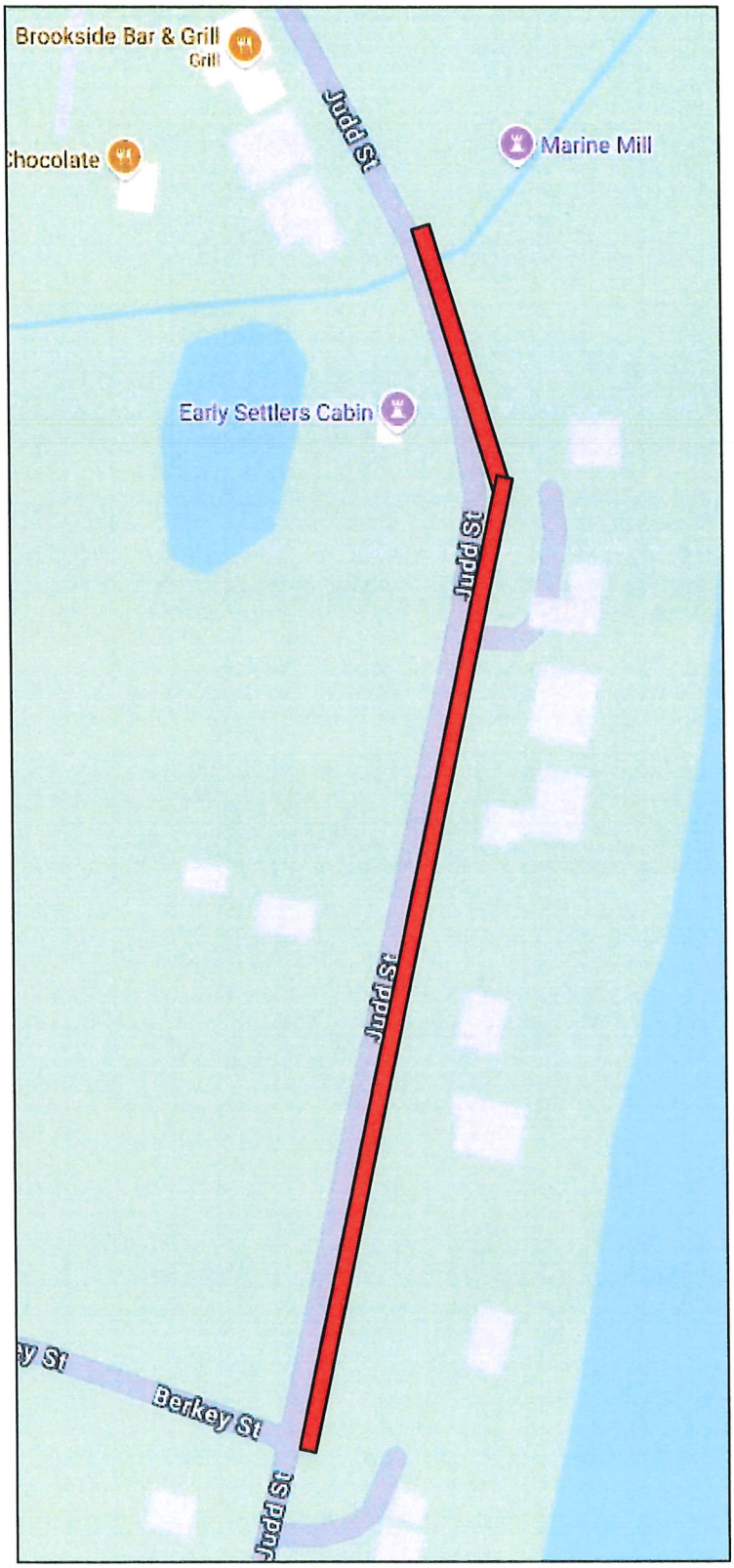
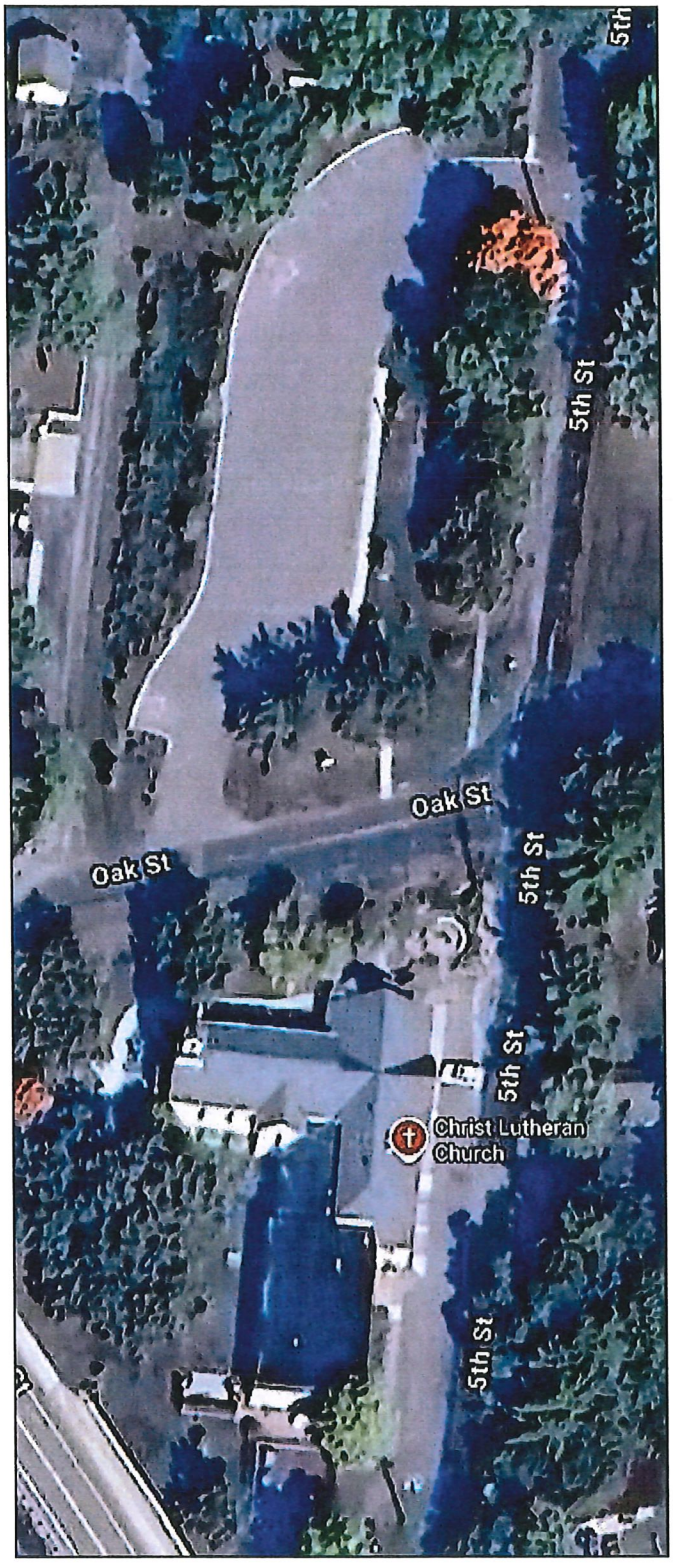


Appendix 2: Street sign example

Appendix 3: CLC parking lot



Appendix 4: MVS/MMFS parking lot