

5 Community Facilities Plan

The City of St. Charles is a great place to live in part because of the dedication of the various government and non-profit organizations that provide necessary services to residents. Community service providers are essential to maintaining the public facilities, services, and organizations that make a community work, and are key contributors to the quality of life enjoyed by residents and the experience of visitors. Community facilities include public and quasi-public uses provided by the City, the County, and other governmental districts and organizations including schools, emergency responders, utilities, and the library.

This chapter highlights St. Charles' community facilities and presents recommendations to help ensure high-quality facilities and services are available and desirable throughout the City, today and in the future. The recommendations presented in this section support existing community facilities and services while encouraging new desirable facilities to locate in the City, and provides strategies and recommendations to ensure the City continues to be well served as it grows.

The Community Facilities Plan presents general policies and guidelines for community facilities; however, it is not intended to supersede goals and policies of other agencies, or substitute for the more detailed planning which should be undertaken by the City and other service agencies and organizations such as the County, school district, and park district. Since many of the community facilities are not under the control or direction of the City of St. Charles, it is important that the City maintain active communication and coordinate planning efforts with other agencies. The following recommendations underscore the need for the City to work with other service providers to accommodate the appropriate expansion of community facilities within the City.



The auditorium at St. Charles North High School

Education will become important in the life of this growing community. And you, my second son, are to be the guardian of this educational and cultural expression.

Soon after this community has been settled, men will band together to worship and you, my third son, are to be entrusted with the guardianship of this religious expression.

-Legend of the Fours Sons of Charlemagne



City Government and Facilities

The City of St. Charles runs smoothly thanks to the dedication of its city government. City Hall, located prominently on the Fox River near the Main Street Bridge, houses most of the City Government offices including the Mayor's Office, City Council, the City Administrator's office, finance department, human resources department, community development department, and economic development department. Together these people and their respective departments provide the city with services providing for the daily needs of residents.

Public Works

The Public Works Department is responsible for keeping the necessary infrastructure in St. Charles running smoothly, including electric utilities, water utilities, wastewater treatment, sanitary sewers, stormwater utilities, refuse/recycling, streets, sidewalks, municipal buildings, grounds, and the motor fleet for the City of St. Charles.

The Public Works Department is subdivided into four divisions:

- » Public Services Division
 - » Streets and Facilities Service Area
 - » Stormwater/Drainage
 - » Fleet Service Area
- » Electric Utility Division
- » Public Works Engineering Division
- » Environmental Services Division
 - » Sanitary Sewer
 - » Water

The City has two separate wastewater treatment facilities, the Main Treatment Plant at the Public Works Facility on 7th Ave., and the West Side facility that serves most properties west of Randall Road. Currently, the City is renovating the Main Facility biosolids plant. Additionally, the Department plans on adding another water tower at the former Little Woods School site.

Public Safety and Emergency Service

The St. Charles Fire Department has three stations plus a training tower. The police department, located just north of City Hall on the Fox River, runs a number of crime prevention and education programs in addition to fulfilling its law enforcement role. At this time, the Fire Department has no plans of adding any new facilities in St. Charles but will refurbish Stations 2 and 3, as well as the training tower.

Recommendations

It is important that essential public services that affect the health and safety of the St. Charles community are sufficiently planned. An expansion of the West Side wastewater treatment facility, a fourth additional fire station, and increased indoor parking for the police department are examples of potential projects that could be on the near term horizon. As utility infrastructure continues to age, the City should create a public works strategy that maps out improvement projects over the long term. This should include both repairing failing facilities and upgrading those that may be inadequate.

Consideration of the sustainability of public facilities and equipment – acquisition costs, maintenance costs, operational lifetime, environmental impact, and more – should be integrated into all regular maintenance and special projects moving forward. New and renovated buildings, for example, could incorporate LEED requirements when feasible and appropriate.



Schools

Primary and Secondary Education

St. Charles is served by District 303, which currently has 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 2 high schools. The district was formed in 1949 through the consolidation of a number of fragmented school districts. Today, 13,800 students attend the district's high performing schools. In addition to the public schools, a number of private schools are located in St. Charles. The good school system in St. Charles is a significant draw for new residents and is an important component for attracting new residents and businesses. It is also an asset treasured by current residents who desire to see it achieve even further levels of excellence. Family Circle Magazine ranked St. Charles number one in its "Best Cities and Towns for Families" award, in part due to the strong school system. The schools themselves have also won numerous awards including three U.S. Department of Education "Blue Ribbons," a spot on the U.S. News and World Report "Best High Schools" list, as well as more local awards.

Higher Education

While not currently possessing a college or university, there are many benefits that could result from a main or satellite campus of a higher learning institution locating in St. Charles. Universities bring with them residential demand by professors and students; secondary commercial activity; technology infrastructure, arts and culture, and other components of an intellectual economy; investment in the entire school system; and prestige for the City. A college or university would not only expand the range of education available within the City but would also be a productive use of available land that is otherwise unutilized.

Recommendations

To support and provide for the needs of the schools and school children within St. Charles, and to ensure that schools remain a valued asset for the community, the City should work with the School District to identify and prioritize future infrastructure projects. These may include direct physical improvements such as safe vehicle and pedestrian connections, as well as indirect improvements like screening and buffering from surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The City should investigate policies and programs to actively attract a university, community college, or other educational institution to locate a campus in St. Charles. Large underutilized or vacant parcels near both the former St. Charles Mall site and Charlestowne Mall are well suited for a campus use.

Public Library District

The St. Charles Public Library is located downtown just east of City Hall and south of Main Street and has four remote drop-off locations, including two in the City. The library houses over 400,000 books and other materials. It also provides a full calendar of activities for both children and adults. The library is planning a renovation and remodeling or expansion of the facility in the next 3-10 years. An interim parking lot was constructed in 2012.

Recommendations

The City should work with the Library to ensure it has enough capacity to serve all St. Charles residents now and in the future. The City should also look for opportunities to collaborate on programming that may serve multiple missions, such as using the Library as a venue for public meetings. The Library expansion could strengthen the eastern gateway into downtown.



County and Other Facilities

A number of Kane County facilities exist within the boundaries of St. Charles and its planning area, including the Kane County Courthouse, Kane County Sheriff, Traffic Court, Judicial Center, and Juvenile Justice Facility. While government facilities such as county buildings have historically been located in downtown areas and civic hubs, the Kane County buildings are mostly located in commercial corridors coexisting with retail and function as more of an office type use than a traditional civic use.

The Kane County Fairgrounds (not owned or operated by Kane County) is located on the west side of Randall Road, north of Lincoln Highway/IL Route 38. In addition to the annual “County Fair,” the Fairgrounds hosts events year-round including flea markets, dog shows, and private parties. When the Kane County Fairgrounds established itself at this location, Randall Road was not the commercialized corridor it is today.

Other quasi-public facilities include fraternal and veterans organizations and numerous places of worship. These facilities often act as *de facto* community centers for area residents.

Recommendations

The City should continue to work with the County to plan for potential expansion, relocation, or construction of facilities. In particular, the City should encourage and assist the County to locate its facilities away from commercial corridors and toward more use-appropriate areas of the City.

Although the Fairgrounds generates tourism for the City, as well as admission tax for special events, it is a single-purpose, destination type facility that may not fit the surrounding context along Randall Road. The City should explore development of the Fairgrounds’ Randall Road frontage, including alternative improvements that could better connect the commercial areas located to the north and south of the Fairgrounds.

The City should continue to encourage the location of quasi-public facilities in the community as they provide a variety of services to area residents.

Delnor Hospital/Cadence Health

St. Charles is served by Cadence Health in nearby Geneva, Illinois. St. Charles also has a number of health facilities for non-emergency care including the Tri City Health Partnership, a free medical clinic for residents without insurance benefits. In addition, there are several retirement and assisted living facilities, small doctor’s offices, dental offices, and other healthcare facilities throughout St. Charles.

Recommendations

The City should continue to work with healthcare providers to ensure that they remain in the community and that they continue to provide high-quality medical services. In addition, the City should work with other organizations to seek appropriate locations for specialized facilities and services for senior citizens, youth, and disadvantaged populations, in particular daytime facilities for the homeless.

Community Facilities Plan

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Community Schools Key

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Ferson Creek Elementary School | 10 The Goddard School |
| 2 St. Charles North High School | 11 Richmond Elementary School |
| 3 Wredling Middle School | 12 Haines Middle School |
| 4 St. Charles East High School | 13 Munhall Elementary School |
| 5 Wild Rose Elementary School | 14 Fox Ridge Elementary School |
| 6 St. Patrick Catholic School | 15 Davis Elementary School |
| 7 MadesJohnstone Center | 16 Kensington School |
| 8 Thompson Middle School | 17 Bridges Montessori School |
| 9 Lincoln Elementary School | |

Government/Community Facility Key

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| 18 Pottawattomic Community Center | 25 St. Charles Fire Station 2 |
| 19 St. Charles Township Offices | 26 St. Charles Fire Station 3 |
| 20 St. Charles Police Station | 27 Kane County Judicial Center |
| 21 St. Charles Fire Station 1 | 28 St. Charles Municipal Utilities Complex |
| 22 City of St. Charles City Hall | 29 South Avenue Public Works Yard |
| 23 St. Charles Public Library | 30 Illinois Youth Center |
| 24 Baker Community Center | 31 U.S. Post Office |

Quasi-Public Facilities Key

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| 32 Hosanna Lutheran Church | 42 St. Patrick Catholic Church |
| 33 Wild Rose Program Center | Baker Memorial United Methodist Church |
| 34 New Covenant Bible Church | 43 Methodist Church |
| 35 Riverside Community Church | 44 Lazarus House |
| 36 North Cemetery | Apostolic Church of Greater Chicago |
| 37 Union Cemetery | 46 Redeemer Fellowship Church |
| 38 Bethlehem Lutheran Church | 47 Kane County Fairgrounds |
| 39 St. Charles Episcopal Church | 48 South Cemetery |
| 40 St. John Neumann Church | 49 St. Charles Heritage Center |
| 41 Trinity Vineyard Christian Fellowship | 50 St. Charles Moose Lodge 1368 |

Public Facilities Legend

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|--------------------------|--|
| Elementary School | Police/Fire Stations |
| Middle School | Kane County |
| High School | St. Charles Park District |
| Private School | Church/Place of Worship |
| Special Education School | Utility |
| City of St. Charles | Other Public/Semi-Public facilities or sites |

