



Downtown St. Charles



Trail System

Community Profile

St. Charles, Illinois

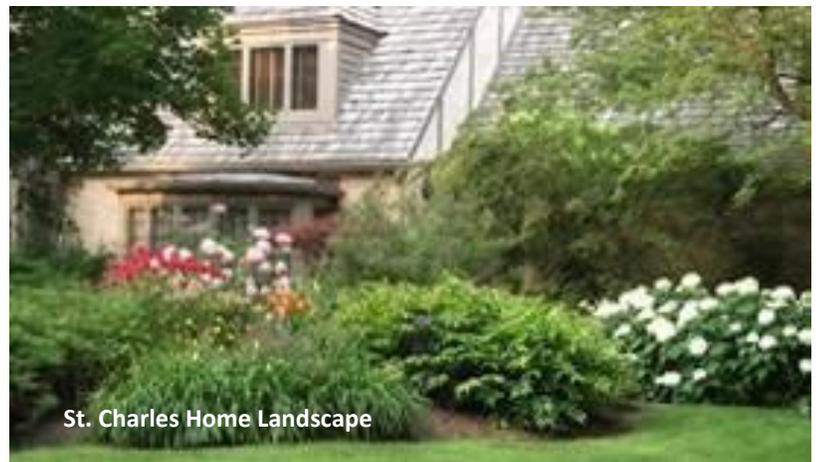
2016



Mt. St. Mary Park

Population Category: 30,000 to 40,000

AIB Participation History: 2015, 2016



St. Charles Home Landscape

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Municipal Information
- 3 Introduction to St. Charles, IL
- 4 Floral Displays
- 6 Landscaped Areas
- 10 Urban Forestry
- 14 Environmental Efforts
- 16 Heritage
- 19 Overall Impression
- 22 Best Idea
- 24 Map
- 25 Contacts



Spring is a season enjoyed by all ages in St. Charles



MUNICIPAL INFORMATION

Population: 33,533

City Website: <http://www.stcharlesil.gov/>

City Contact Name: Mayor Ray Rogina

AIB Committee Chair Contact: Maureen Lewis,
lewisp262@aol.com

Town Area in Square Miles: 35.55 square miles

Acres of Active Recreation: 1,105 acres of parkland, or 33 acres per 1,000 residents or that are spread throughout 62 parks of all variety, 10 of which are designated as Passive Natural Areas

Acres of Passive Recreation: Estimated 400 acres

Do You Have a Volunteer Coordinator: Instead of a single coordinator, we have several volunteer groups. A lead organization with over 200 active volunteers is the "Downtown St Charles Partnership" Executive Director is Lynne Schwartz, lschwartz@downtownstcharles.org



INTRODUCTION TO ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS

St. Charles is a city of over 33,000 that is pleasantly situated along the rolling wooded banks of the Fox River just 35 miles west of Downtown Chicago. Incorporated in 1834, St. Charles has a rich history of manufacturing, trade, transportation and “bootstrap” development. Enterprising pioneers from the East established our town, where industry soon thrived. By the turn of the 20th Century, St. Charles was welcoming hardworking newcomers from Belgium, Germany, Czechoslovakia and beyond.



Today St. Charles attracts international employers, has innovative schools, beautiful parks, and unique and historic architecture. You will see during your tour that St. Charles’ designation as the Pride of the Fox is well deserved. We are a city moving into the future as boldly as we tackled our storied past. Our pride in where we live and work is what drives us. We live the Spirit of leaving places better than we found them and feel blessed to be able to do so.

The Pride and DIY spirit that built this beautiful city continues today with St Charles’ burgeoning population of entrepreneurs and volunteers. You will see evidence of their efforts in many areas on your tour, from new restaurants and entertainment venues to innovative green businesses to the artful & creative Chair-ity event underway right now.



We are pleased to once again add America In Bloom as an effort on our “to-do” list. We are blessed with a supportive Mayor, Ray Rogina; a stellar Park District; and many proactive civic organizations including a Convention & Visitors Bureau, Downtown Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, River Corridor Foundation, History Museum, and ad hoc committees such as the one formed for AIB.

We are stewards of a spirit given to us by those before us. We pass it on to our next generation in such things as parades --Holiday Electric Light, St. Patrick’s and Memorial Day—which draw up to 20,000 viewers, and several major festivals. Summer kicks off with the acclaimed Fine Arts Show, then June’s Festival of the Fox and the Mid America Canoe Race. The Big Bang fireworks show follows on July 4th on the river, which amplifies the “bombs bursting in air.”

Events continue all summer long. STC Live showcases talented performers in the local plazas, pubs and restaurants, and is capped off by September’s Jazz Fest Weekend. In addition we have weekly concerts in Lincoln Park, a Farmers Market, Sculpture in the Park and October’s Scarecrow Fest, an annual extravaganza in its 31st year.

This principle of doing by many was fostered by early town leaders and benefactors Lester and Dellora Norris, heirs to a Texaco oil fortune. Their benevolent donations resulted in hospitals, athletic facilities, parks, theaters and more. Their philosophy was simple, yet relevant even today: “The people are the engine that makes it work. We only provide some of the fuel.”



The pictures above represent the hard work and dedication of residents to help make St. Charles beautiful.

FLORAL DISPLAYS - ATTRACTING ATTENTION WITH COLORFUL PLANTS

St. Charles' history of glorious flower displays is well documented in text as well as photographs. As the city blossomed from sleepy river town to popular tourist destination, merchants, residents and community groups worked hard to make sure that St. Charles's cultured floral arrangements matched the glistening beauty of the city's centerpiece, the majestic Fox River.

Municipal

The City's floral displays are located in the downtown area, city parks, city signs and various container plantings. The City and the Pottawatomie Garden Club collaborate to plan and plant the downtown area.

Our town features large container plantings and hanging baskets as well as in-ground plantings in and around the downtown area. Approximately 1,900 plants are displayed in:

- 32 planter boxes decorating our two downtown bridges, Main Street and Illinois Street
- Other planter boxes located at major intersections
- 22 large, moss-lined hanging baskets lining the business section



Seasonal floral displays enliven the downtown area.

The St. Charles Park District beautifies the community with floral displays throughout its neighborhood parks, as well as the Pottawatomie Park and Baker Community Centers, Primrose Farm, Hickory Knolls Discovery Center. District staff design and maintain 45 large containers as well as dozens of colorful display beds using approximately 21,000 plants each year to create a festive atmosphere throughout the community.

Horticulture staff members use the District's greenhouse to grow a large number of annuals, including petunias, begonias, snapdragons, salvia, marigolds, vinca, melapodium, geraniums, lantana, impatiens and New Guinea impatiens.



Pottawatomie Golf Course

For a harmonious and uniform design the downtown color scheme was determined by the Pottawatomie Garden Club, the City of St. Charles and the horticulturist at a local greenhouse grower. The color scheme was chosen to include magenta, purple, white and yellow.

In addition, certain plantings also contain Purple Fountain Grass and tropicals such as Dipladenia and Plumbago for added height and visual interest.

The City's Public Works Dept. and the Park District follow a maintenance plan that begins with purchasing high-quality plants. Throughout the growing season, written criteria are strictly followed to maintain the plants and achieve maximum performance. They are fertilized, watered and inspected throughout the summer by staff to ensure the best, most colorful displays.

The floral displays featured in the downtown area are created for three seasons of color. The planter boxes and containers are planted the third week of May for continuous summer color. The second plantings occur during the second week of September. This seasonal planting includes fall colors and plants that tolerate cooler temperatures. The third planting occurs the 3rd week of November and includes miniature fir wreaths with contrasting colorful bows for the winter season.

Business

St. Charles has a thriving business community that strongly supports the beautification efforts of the City. Particularly invested are those businesses in the downtown corridor. Each business accepts the responsibility of maintaining, nourishing and watering their displays.

Most storefront businesses have one or more containers with summer annuals spilling over with color. While there are many displays to describe, we will focus on three examples:

- The Baker Hotel, built in 1928, was popularly known as the “Gem of the Valley.” In the 1930s the hotel and the Arcada Theater sparked a business and economic boom in St. Charles and it has been a busy and bustling town ever since. Many famous guests have stayed at the hotel throughout its history, including Presidents John F. Kennedy and Gerald Ford; Chicago Mayor Richard Daley; musician Louis Armstrong; and actors Donnie Wahlberg and Jenny McCarthy, who married at the Hotel in 2014. Each year the hotel owners invest in high quality, large annual plants grown by a local greenhouse, to adorn the famous rose garden that lies behind the hotel along the enchanting Fox River.



Master Gardener Idea Gardens

- The University of Illinois Extension Office's research farm, where volunteers who have completed the Extension Service's rigorous Master Gardener program maintain a variety of plantings throughout the growing season. Eighteen beds, known as the Idea Gardens, are planted with flowers, vegetables and perennials, and Master Gardeners are challenged to create designs that can be duplicated in residential gardens. The public is invited to the Idea Gardens to learn about the plants best suited to our growing conditions. About 1,000 plants fill the Idea Gardens.

- The St. Charles Country Club plants 1,000+ annuals each year in displays around the clubhouse and golf course.

Residential

It is estimated that 50% to 60% of all single-family residences in St. Charles have at least one container or bed of annuals on their property. Many more homes have floral displays in their front yards and back yards too. Home gardeners accept the responsibility of maintaining, nourishing and watering their displays.

Community Involvement

Founded in 1928, Pottawatomie Garden Club's objective is to cultivate the spirit of gardening in the broadest sense, to beautify home grounds and to encourage community beautification through gardening and education.

The Club has about 75 members who reside and live in the City of St. Charles. Many have homes with creative annual or perennial plantings in either in their front or back yards. To showcase these extensive and innovative displays, as well as share gardening ideas, the Club hosts an annual Garden Walk. In addition this hard-at-work set of volunteers maintains the native plantings along the Bob Leonard Walkway located next to the Fox River.

The Club's community efforts extend to other areas as well. Each year club members honor past members with a Memorial Tree Program; present an annual Landscape Commendation Award to businesses in the Township; and award thousands of dollars in scholarships to top horticulture students as well as significant financial support to gardening and environmental projects throughout the community.



Garden Club working on the Bob Leonard Memorial Walkway

Last year, America in Bloom Judges made this recommendation: Many plants are unfamiliar to residents and visitors. On selected plants add attractive educational signs with identification to inform citizens about plants that perform well in the region.

To embrace this excellent idea, our committee contacted a highly regarded local firm, Ball Horticultural Co., and made this suggestion for a pilot program. They wholeheartedly agreed to provide attractive educational signage with the species and variety name on labels to be placed in the most visible annual flowering beds in the downtown area. These educational signs identifying species by variety name will assist citizens, enabling them to select the best varieties for this region.

LANDSCAPED AREAS - DESIGNED TREE, SHRUB, TURF AND PERENNIAL PLANTINGS

Throughout the rolling streets of our riverside town, trees, shrubs and other landscaping elements reflect the character of each location. Stately oaks, elms and other specimen trees combine with ornamental and native shrubs to create a diversity, not only of species but also of textures, forms, and colors—the very elements that define good landscape design.

Municipal

The St. Charles Park District maintains 68 parks with varied landscapes, as well as 400 acres of natural areas—woodlands, wetlands and prairies—reflecting our area’s native heritage. District horticulture and naturalist staff select trees and herbaceous plants using the following criteria:

- Growing conditions: Soil type, drainage, available light
- Context: Impactful plants for beds viewed at a distance; subdued colors but interesting textures for plantings viewed up close; native plants in outlying parks to match surroundings
- Ease of maintenance: Plants that can tolerate low water and infrequent watering are required for sites with no water source. Low-maintenance plantings also help reduce labor costs as well as carbon footprint by cutting the number of vehicle trips to the site.



The Park system of St. Charles is highlighted by the James O. Breen Community Park, Mt. St. Mary Park, Pottawatomie Park and several designated natural areas, including two dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves: Norris Woods and Ferson Creek Fen.



James O. Breen Community Park is a 348-acre park located on the western edge of town. Features include 16 soccer and three football fields, and one rugby/lacrosse field; a dog park; the Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, a 10,500-sq. ft. LEED-certified nature center; a 130-acre natural area; 233 community garden plots; Otter Cove Aquatic Park; picnic areas; and basketball courts.

Thousands of community sports participants rely on the District to keep athletic field turf in top condition. Best management practices include:

- Integrated pest management techniques to minimize insecticide use
- Limited and timely application of herbicides and fertilizers

- Biosolid applications
- Higher mowing heights to suppress weeds and reduce stress on turf
- Aggressive aeration program to reduce compaction
- Field rotation to slow down wear patterns in the turf

West of the athletic fields sits the Hickory Knolls Discovery Center. Its landscaping elements were chosen for their sustainability and include deep-rooted buffalo grass, two rain gardens as well as native tree, shrub and herbaceous plantings. In addition, minimal curbing was installed so that rainwater could run into bioswales at the north and south edges of the parking lot.



Hickory Knolls
Discovery Center
Bioswale, at right



Directly behind the building is the Hickory Knolls Natural Area. Within these 130 acres is the unique Metra Prairie. In 2003, District staff worked with Metra Rail contractors to translocate sections of mesic and wet prairies that were in the path of the railroad's expansion. Several techniques were innovated during the project, including digging, lifting and sliding slabs of prairie; the process was likened to slicing and serving a very large sheet cake. Twelve years later, the distinctive "Metra Prairie" is now a stop during interpretive nature hikes.

The park's community garden plots can be rented either annually or perennially. To help feed those less fortunate, the Park District allows volunteers to garden on unrented plots after June 1st. The produce grown by these compassionate gardeners, along with excess produce donated by many others, is collected by District staff and delivered to the nearby Northern Illinois Food Bank. Donations to date total more than 5,000 lbs. of tomatoes, peppers, sweet corn, squash and other favorites.

Mt. St. Mary Park is a 29-acre park located in downtown St. Charles along the west bank of the Fox River. A series of improvements to Mt. St. Mary Park completed in 2011 were funded in part through an Illinois OSLAD grant and include a decorative paver walkway running the length of the shoreline; two overlook plazas; a new shelter; and pergola.

Community gardeners generously donate fresh produce to the local food bank.

This park also is home to an arboretum with 71 different species. This feature is merged with the District's Memorial Tree Program, which allows people to honor a loved one or special event while enhancing our local environment. In the past five years, the District planted over 65 trees through this program.

A final amenity of Mt. St. Mary is its Sculpture Garden. Sculpture in the Park is a joint project of District staff, the Sculpture in Park Committee and volunteers from the St. Charles Park Foundation to raise awareness of the sculptural arts and beautiful parks in downtown St. Charles. The program includes eight permanent sculptures with an annual rotating exhibit of up to 20 additional pieces.



I've Been Kissed by Sculptor Pokey Park in Mt. St. Mary Park

Pottawatomie Park was first developed in the 1930s as part of a WPA project. Its 47 acres feature a newly installed playground, recreated historic pavilion, walking path, ball fields, golf course, swimming pool and community center.

Behind the community center, District staff maintain an award-winning Demonstration Native Plant Garden. Nestled between the Community Center and the Fox River, this area showcases more than 100 native species along with signage that includes scientific and common names. Tours are given throughout the year to highlight blooming plants.

To resolve long-standing flooding issues in a sustainable fashion, the District has embarked on a project to improve drainage throughout the Native Garden. Besides an engineering component, the project also will include signage to educate public on improving drainage through use of native plants.

At the north end of the Park is the Pottawatomie Golf Course. Designed in 1939 by famed golf course innovator Robert Trent Jones Sr., the course is ranked 15th best 9-hole course in America according to Golf World magazine. In 1997, it became the first 9-hole golf course to be internationally certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary and is one of only 234 courses in the world to achieve this status. To keep this prestigious standing, the course goes through an extensive recertification procedure every three years, focusing on the preservation of wildlife habitat. With the arrival of the Emerald Ash Borer beetle in the St. Charles area, Golf Course staff arranged for removal of 59 infested trees and then implemented a tree replacement program that focuses on species diversification, along with selections that enhance erosion control and course aesthetics.

Park District Natural Areas

The Park District manages more than 400 acres of natural areas, including woodlands, wetlands and prairies. Staff continues to monitor local land availability for additional high-quality parcels to be acquired. St. Charles has two designated Illinois State Nature Preserves with Norris Woods and Ferson Creek Fen. Additionally, Hickory Knolls Natural Area has been designated as a Land & Water Reserve by the IL Nature Preserves Commission.

Community Unit School District 303

A proponent of active community volunteerism, District 303 involves students in landscape projects. At Richmond Elementary, students created a Kids Garden located at the school's entrance for all to enjoy. Additionally, nearly 6,000 students from local Community Unit School District 303 attend science and social studies classes in natural settings within the St. Charles Park District parks to learn about forestry, wetlands, and ecology. In addition, Munhall Elementary School each year plans and participates in Arbor Day events within the community.

Business

Located at the eastern edge of St. Charles, Aquascape is a business passionate about gardening—specifically, water gardens. In fact, St. Charles now is known as the Water Garden Capital of the World, thanks to a cooperative effort between



Interpretive signs help educate visitors regarding the Mt. St. Mary Park shoreline stabilization project.



Groups tour and learn about native landscaping in the Native Plant Demonstration Garden .



Students attend a tree planting ceremony in the Richmond Elementary School Kids Garden

the City Council and Aquascape's Chief Sustainability Officer, Ed Beaulieu.

Beaulieu and Aquascape agreed to put several water gardens throughout the city. "It's a good move by the city and by Aquascape to bring people to the town and experience how great man-made water features can be," Beaulieu said. "Water gardens are promoted, thus benefiting Aquascape and its customers, and St. Charles' landscape is beautified, giving travelers yet another reason to visit."

Landscaping at Aquascape's headquarters is dominated by a 250 foot x 90 foot water feature that recreates watersheds throughout Illinois. The north end of the pond mimics the craggy bluff topography of Jo Daviess County; the center section of the pond reflects the flat, marshy of central Illinois' farmland. Next in the pond is the wetlands area, designed to mimic natural filtration and planted with 3 to 5 ft. of gravel-anchor bare root aquatic plants. At the southern end of the pond grow bald cypress, which represent the swamps of Southern Illinois. This area houses the pumps which recirculate the water back to the northern edge of the pond.

Residential

To ensure that the impacts of development are offset by open space, the City in cooperation with the Park District created the Land/Cash Ordinance. This ordinance stipulates that for each 1,000 anticipated residents of a development, 10 acres must be donated to the Park District. The cash in lieu of land is set at the amount of \$240,500 per acre. This ordinance is vital to meet the demand for open space within the community and creates beautiful neighborhood parks as illustrated by Harvest Hills Park, Fox Chase Park or the new Belgium Town Park.

The Hunt Club neighborhood is part of a large development that was established over 30 years ago on the city's east side. This subdivision is home to numerous houses that participate in the Pottawatomie Garden club's annual garden walk. The Allicino home, located at 1126 Keim Trail, has created wonderful highlights by making a garden through the woods and adding a stunning water feature with a stream and waterfall. The back yard plantings grow in harmony with the site's mature trees, while the front yard features a stone walk and lovely perennial garden.



Winkler home landscape and gardens

The Winkler home, located at 2355 Persimmon Drive, displays a landscape that compliments the French Country style house and also showcases the owners' passion for garden art. Sweeping flower beds of hosta, ground covers and other perennials ribbon the front yard of the home. Numerous crabapples and Washington hawthorns provide a canopy of spring color and dappled shade to a front courtyard. Low stone walls gracefully curve and punctuate the many island flower beds providing restful vistas of color and texture throughout the grounds.

Community Involvement

Each year the Park District benefits from thousands of hours of volunteer service provided by members of the community. Two notable events include Make a Difference Day and National Public Lands Day. On these special Saturdays, families, scout troops and school groups gather at the Hickory Knolls Natural Area and are assigned to age- and ability-appropriate tasks such as native wildflower seed collection, seed processing and invasive brush removal.

Other volunteer opportunities include the District's weekly work days, which rotate between four different natural areas: Hickory Knolls; Norris Woods; Ferson Creek Fen; and Persimmon Woods. In addition, the landscape in front of the Hickory Knolls Discovery Center is largely maintained by volunteers, each of whom have "adopted" a section as their own.

Other community involvement of note is the work completed along Route 31 in an area known as the North Gateway. The



St. Charles Kiwanis club removed invasive brush along the Fox River shoreline there, a project that resulted in a much more scenic view of the river and Pottawatomie Park for visitors approaching St. Charles from the north.

After cleaning up the shore, Kiwanis partnered with the City, Park District, Downtown St. Charles Partnership and River Corridor Foundation to build the River North Gateway. Work included building stairs for pedestrians to an existing bike bridge, providing easy access to Pottawatomie Park and the east side of downtown. Sustainable landscaping, designed by the all-volunteer U of I Extension Master Gardeners, and a waterfall bring beauty to the entrance and a bench offers a place to enjoy the vista across the Fox River to Pottawatomie Park.

In 2015, a local business sought to enhance the landscape at one of St. Charles' most visible locations, Lincoln Park. Working with local partners Hotel Baker, Blue Goose Market, Colonial

Cafe, Arcada Theatre, The Finery and Blacksmith Bar, Zimmerman Ford and the Kane County Chronicle, as well as the Park District and the City, Scott Corbin of Jank Guitar secured funding for the installation of a sculpture titled Guitar of St. Charles. The piece was cast by local sculptor Ray Kobald, whose bronze sculptures can be seen throughout the downtown area. Besides enhancing the landscape at Lincoln Park, the sculpture also will serve as tribute to a new music award program, the Guitar of St. Charles Jank Award. The honor will be given annually to 10- to 18-year-olds who have made a series of achievements for the musical arts.

URBAN FORESTRY

Trees not only complement the City's character and beauty, but also clean the air, reduce noise and stormwater runoff and provide shade and windbreaks. Trees increase property values and enhance the economic vitality of business areas. A renewable resource, trees also reduce erosion of topsoil, lower heating and cooling costs and provide habitat for wildlife.

Municipal

[The City of St. Charles Code Book's Chapter 12.20 addresses Trees and Shrubs.](#) This ordinance promotes the planting, maintenance, restoration and survival of desirable trees and shrubs within the city; protects the community's residents from personal injury and property damage; and protects St. Charles' urban forest.

The Code Book also covers planting requirements which include the size of trees, spacing, location, and trees that are restricted from use. Requirements outlined include planting, removal, trimming/pruning, and mulching of trees in the public right-of-way and the issuance of a city permit for any of the above, unless already authorized by these ordinances. Public nuisances which may require trimming or removal are clearly defined as well as who is responsible for watering and fertilizing of trees in the parkway.

In 1997, St. Charles joined approximately 3,008 communities nationwide, including 178 other communities in Illinois, to become a Tree City USA. The City also has been awarded the Foundation's Growth Award in 13 of the last 17 years.



Trees in parks and public right of ways are maintained with the help of technology.



The City is comprised of 15 square miles with approximately 18,924 publicly owned trees planted and maintained by the City, for an estimated 1,261 public-owned trees per square mile. The City has 94 species of trees, including: maples, bald cypress, birch, lindens, oaks, ginkgos, hackberry, buckeye, hawthorn, horse chestnut, Kentucky coffee tree, ironwood, lilac, linden and pear. Tree preferences are given to species native to the Northern Illinois Region and are transplanted from stock grown in this region. The City does restrict a handful of tree species from being planted via the ordinance in Chapter 12.20. These species are listed here by common and scientific name.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Norway Maple Species	Acer Platanoides
Weeping Willow	Salix Niba
Poplars (except Cottonless Cottonwood)	Populus albo and others
Box Elder	Acer negundo
Tree of Heaven	Ailanthus altissima
Chinese Elm	Ulmus siberica
Female Ginkgo	Ginkgo biloba female
Mulberry	Morus alba and others
Black Locust	Robinis pseudoscacis
Sycamore	Platanus occidentalis
Seedline from soft (silver) maple	Acer Saccharinum
All fruit trees	
All Ash trees	
Pine or Spruce trees	
Russian Olive	Elaeagnus angustifolia



The City works with residents to ensure the success of newly planted parkway trees.

The City has also made an effort to preserve its heritage trees, including a large oak located on the City' Public Works Facility. During the facility expansion in 2004-'06, a species survey was performed and this particular oak, located in the Electrical storage area, was determined to be very old. Tree Commissioners recommended the City save the tree; thus the tree was protected by installing a curbed island along the drip line.

Tree maintenance

The Public Services Division of Public Works is responsible for monitoring the health and safety of all its publicly owned trees. Staff inspects, plants, removes, treats and prunes the trees in the right-of-way. The work conducted on these trees is managed through a combination of software database systems called TreeKeeper (TK) and the City's Global Information Systems (GIS). Both systems are able to locate and identify all publicly owned trees within the city limits. Tree specifications such as species, location, size, year planted, last pruned, treated or inspected are documented in the database.



Munhall Elementary School students perform the Arbor Day skit, Tree Trouble.

Citizens' tree-related requests or issues also are documented in the system; in turn, requests are converted into work orders. Staff then inspect trees and determine appropriate solutions. Afterward, the database is updated, providing years of history on each tree the City owns. In addition to planting, this past year the emphasis has been pruning. In 2015, approximately 3,667 trees have been trimmed providing a solid canopy structure for the future growth of each tree.

The Park District also uses technology to track its portion of the St. Charles urban forest. Using ArcGIS, Graf Tree Care identified all trees within the managed areas of our parks, gave each tree a number and noted GPS coordinates. Along with the species name, the system also logs other data including: diameter at breast height (DBH); health condition status (1-5 scale, 1 being the best); amount of deadwood; and required maintenance.

This inventory helps the District maintain a maintenance schedule. After pruning a tree, condition notes are updated and the

date is posted. If the tree is diseased or has health issues and treatment is required, the application date also is noted. This is very helpful because not all applications are done annually; some are done twice a year, every other year, or every three years.

The inventory also helps ensure a diverse population of trees, which is important in today's urban forest. If a park site has good species diversity, it will not be devastated if a pest kills off one species like EAB did to ash trees. The mapping system also makes it easy to locate open planting spaces for new trees and helps in the species selection based on the site's environment and potential for stormwater runoff. The system also is used to track the District's Memorial Tree Program for permanent locations and notes.



Memorial Trees in Mt. St. Mary Park

Data also is being used to confirm whether any District trees meet the qualifications to be listed in Illinois's Big

Tree Register: https://web.extension.illinois.edu/forestry/il_big_tree.html

After reviewing the STCPARKS tree inventory and measuring trees on site, a few trees may be at champion status: Langum Park, black cherry, 37DBH; Pottawatomie Park, red oak, 59DBH; and Mount St. Mary Park, mulberry, 42DBH. Other possible contenders include: Primrose Farm, black walnut, 40DBH; Taly Park, silver maple, 76DBH; Delnor Woods Park, shag-bark hickory, 30DBH and cottonwood, 55DBH. These trees are all within managed parks; other, even larger trees might be growing in our natural areas.

Residential and Business

The City's Code book Chapter 17.26 also includes landscaping requirements for new development. The chapter has sections on landscaping that is required in various locations of a property, including public street frontage and parking lot landscaping. Chapter 17.26.090.C requires one shade, ornamental or evergreen tree per every 50 lineal feet of public street frontage. This chapter of the code book also includes the landscaping requirements for interior parking lot and landscape islands 17.26.030.K.

The City also offers a tree planting program both spring and fall. Trees are planted on viable publicly owned planting sites in residential, commercial and industrial areas. This program offers residents and business owners the opportunity to upgrade the size of the tree being planted adjacent to their property, choosing between select species in an effort to diversify the urban forest. Shortly after planting, gator bags are placed on the trees so recipients may assist in maintaining the newly planted trees. Historically, the City's general fund has always included approximately \$100,000 for the forestry program.

The City also offers a 50/50 program for residents and businesses requesting an additional tree along the right-of-way adjacent to their property. This program shares the cost between the resident or business making the request and the City. This process includes an inspection by the forestry team to assure it is a viable planting site i.e., has sufficient space for growth, unobstructed by underground and overhead utilities and sufficient space from driveways or intersections.

Over the last six years City workers removed 5,400 city-owned ash trees infested with Emerald Ash Borer. Due to the severity of the infestation, the City in 2010 created an EAB Policy Plan which addressed not only the removal but also replacement of affected trees. In 2011, the City applied for a \$3,000,000 bond to remove and replace ash trees affected by the Emerald Ash Borer. This costly undertaking was well worth the commitment needed to maintain the integrity and beauty of the St. Charles urban forest.

With the EAB program winding down, the Tree Commission has taken the initiative to develop an Urban Forestry Management Plan. The plan outlines the goals and the industry's best management practices for the City of St. Charles' urban forest, maximizing the environmental and aesthetic benefits of the tree population while minimizing risk and costs. The 30-page document is in its final draft and will be presented to the City Council for approval later this year.

Educating residents on tree care has been an initiative for many years and that will continue in the future. Proper watering, filling of gator bags, mulching and routine inspections for infestations or diseases as well as the advantages of diversifying our urban forestry has been ongoing with informational articles published in the City's monthly publication of "The Den", and on the City's website. In addition, door-tags outlining new tree care are left for residents when a tree is planted in the right-of-way adjacent to their property.

Preservation and restoration of natural areas

St. Charles has 10 designated Tree Conservation Areas that are protected through ordinances in the [City Code Book Chapter 8.30](#). TCA designation protects the existing private trees within the city to the greatest extent possible, while allowing for reasonable development of property.

Delnor Woods Park

Delnor Woods Park represents a unique transformation of a privately owned golf course to a beautiful passive-recreation park. The park has a number of pre-settlement oak trees. Capitalizing on the native tree stand, grasslands and wetlands, the walking paths creates an enlightening tour of the park. In addition, this park has a pond with a dam and fishing stations. The stream and dam was a wonderful location to utilize native plants for stabilization. The picnic shelter hosts a place for the Park District's outdoor summer nature camps to learn about this park site and all of its amenities.



Delnor Woods Park

Community Involvement

The City has an active Tree Commission composed of nine volunteer commissioners. The Commission meets eight times per year to review the pruning and planting of trees, plan the annual Arbor Day Celebration, and initiate public education efforts regarding the value and care of neighborhood trees.

Noting an increase in invasive species at Langum Woods, one of the few old-growth forests still owned by the City, Tree Commissioners initiated ecological restoration there in March of 1999. Since then the Commission has brought together City and Park District staff to conduct periodic restoration work days. Participants include local students, Boy Scout troops, church groups and families. These volunteers clear paths, remove fallen branches and brush, replant displaced specimens and spread wood chips along the woods' trails.



Volunteers help clear invasives from Langum Woods.

The City of St. Charles has been celebrating Arbor Day since 1997. The event is held yearly on the last Friday of April at Lincoln Park located in downtown St. Charles. The event is widely attended by the community, incorporates community involvement and includes a variety of demonstrations, education materials, tree raffle, and music. Local scout troops, students, musicians and tree experts volunteer their time and effort in the event. Local businesses donate trees for the Arbor Day planting, offer free perennials and provide arborist tree-climbing demonstrations. Fourth graders from Munhall School also present a tree-related skit that ties in not only with Arbor Day but also their forest ecology curriculum.

At the time of this writing the Tree Commission also is considering reorganizing and expanding into a Natural Re-

sources Commission, where the scope of the committee would broaden to other areas than just trees. The mission of the Natural Resources Commission would seek to preserve, enhance, manage and protect the City's environment. This could include: water, protection of the riverbank, herbaceous plants, soil quality, bioswales, recycling, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND AWARENESS

Located within the Fox River Watershed, St. Charles is a city of residents who take pride in 'thinking global, acting local.'

Municipal

The Park District has taken a lead role in demonstrating how green practices such as reuse and recycling can be implemented. Besides coordinating the installation of recycling containers in community centers as well as parks, the District's Green Team also is working with select schools within local District 303 to launch Feed the Green Machine. This innovative effort engages both teachers and students to collect gently used supplies at the end of the school year. Items will then be donated to School & Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education, a.k.a. SCARCE, for distribution to students in need in the Chicagoland area and beyond.

Per AIB judges' suggestions regarding recycling in the downtown area, the City has purchased and will soon install two new containers that will encourage people to sort trash from recyclable materials such as plastics, glass and paper. We expect the locations of the new recycling containers to be as follows: One located in the plaza on First Street Plaza, and the other in the plaza on the Main Street side of the Municipal Building.



Last year's judges also noted that St. Charles does not offer any activities specific to Earth Day. Having offered such events in the past, and noting that attendance peaked at 300, with little follow-up from participants, the Park District has since adopted an approach that takes the Earth Day message and spreads it throughout the year. In-school recycling assemblies, field trips and the new Green Machine program reach a much larger audience—more than 2,000 students during the 2015-16 school year—and instill positive behavior changes over a much longer period of time than a one-day, Earth Day event.

- **Biosolids Re-use:** The City's two wastewater plants produce approximately 4,000 cubic yards a year of nutrient-dense biosolids. Rather than sending it to a landfill, the City applies it to farmland. The process is permitted and regulated by the IEPA and USEPA.
- **Recycle My Fridge Program:** Recycling an old energy-guzzling appliance can save as much as \$100.00 a year. Residential customers of the City of St. Charles Electric Utility can schedule a free pickup of any working refrigerator or freezer that is a secondary unit and in return receive a \$35.00 check.
- **Leaf and Yard Waste Pick-up Program:** Through the City's curbside brush pick-up, brush is chipped and later used as mulch. Leaves from fall curbside leaf pickups are used to create a commercial compost product, diverting tons of material from landfills.
- **Recycling Participation:** St. Charles boasts a 90% residential participation rate in curb side recycling.
- **Electronics Recycling:** A new state law, combined with the sheer volume of televisions turned in, has caused the City to suspend its electronics recycling dropoff program. However, every effort is being made to inform residents about

Kane County's monthly Recycling Event, which accepts electronics including TVs. This event is held on the second Saturday of the month in St. Charles.

Effective Communication of environmental strategies and initiatives

- The City web site, www.stcharlesil.gov, features a tab, Green St. Charles. These web pages help residents stay current with the city's green efforts and help educate the community on what can be done to protect the environment.
- HomeEnergySuite, also on the City web site, is a tool residents can use to calculate energy savings from home improvements.
- The Den newsletter: This bimonthly City publication includes articles on green initiatives.

New programs, Improvements and innovation

Business

Clarke Companies is a global environmental products and services company. Its mission is to make communities around the world more livable, safe and comfortable by pioneering, developing and delivering environmentally responsible mosquito control and aquatic services to help prevent disease, control nuisances and create healthy waterways. The home office in St.

Charles is exemplary for its adaptive reuse of a former tax mapping company by retrofitting the building with an ambient light-sensing lighting control system, and solar panels to provide minimal demand for electrical energy. Other site improvements include organic vegetable garden beds for employee use and consumption; rainwater catchment system; walking paths within native vegetated open space; electric vehicle charging stations; and an outdoor employee café.

Aquascape Designs is a LEED Certified Building with the largest sloping green roof in North America, planted with native prairie grasses and flowers with a complete irrigation system recycling rain water which reduces off-site outflow of water by 100%. Permeable paver parking lots to slow rain water runoff from site and let it percolate into the ground water.

Residential

This past year, after six years of detailed planning, residents of The Oaks of St. Charles, a townhome community built in the 1970s on the challenge to rejuvenate their neighborhood—and to resolve longstanding drainage, erosion and sedimentation problems that impacted downstream owners and the Fox River. Driven by the installation of a modern storm-water drainage system, the private street (White Oak Circle) was totally rebuilt with new sidewalks, and street and walkway LED lighting. Extensive terracing and new perimeter fencing was installed and landscaping is well underway. The Oaks of St. Charles is at the city's southern gateway, and now a jewel in the city's crown.

In other areas of town and throughout the surrounding community, many residents take part in an effort known as Conservation@Home. Initiated by The Conservation Foundation, an organization dedicated to preserving and restoring local lands and waters, Conservation@Home encourages residents to make earth-conscious choices in their home landscapes. Recommendations include placing some turf grass with drought-resistant native plants; installing rain barrels and reducing or eliminating chemical use. Participants' properties are denoted with an attractive Conservation@Home placard.

Community Involvement

Since the year 2000, the Park District has trained nearly 1,000 residents from St. Charles and throughout Kane County to become volunteer monitors in a unique environmental effort, the Calling Frog Survey. As amphibians, frogs split their life cycle between water and land, and hence are important indicators of environmental health. Survey participants learn to



Screen shot of one of the many Green St. Charles pages found on the City website

identify local frog species by sight as well as by sound, then visit an assigned monitoring location to determine which species are present. Findings reported via the www.frogsurvey.org website and data is used by local land managers when

The City relies on volunteers to assist with keeping the town clean. Since 2004, 2,177 volunteers have assisted with this task and provided more than 160,000 hours of improvement efforts.



Volunteers monitor frog species and water quality throughout the St. Charles area.

The River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles is a non-profit 501-C organization. It supports and advocates for projects that will enhance the downtown riverfront environment as a destination for cultural, educational, and economic opportunities that are accessible to all.

The Foundation is comprised of volunteers from across the community that share a common love for the Fox River and the city of St. Charles. In addition to civic volunteers, members of the City of St. Charles Public Works Department, the St. Charles Park District, the Pottawatomie Garden Club and the Kane County Board are active participants.

The Foundation is initiating a water quality testing program to monitor dissolved oxygen, phosphorus and micro-biological life on a monthly basis throughout the entire St. Charles portion of the Fox River. The testing samples will be gathered by the high school environmental students during months when school is in session and by either the Park District summer program or the Boy Scouts during the summer months. Test sites and methodologies will be determined by the Friends of the Fox organization and sample testing to be conducted at the St. Charles waste water treatment laboratory facility. Some testing equipment will be provided by the St. Charles Education Foundation. In addition to providing the students with real-life environmental project experience, the test results will provide an excellent benchmark to monitor water quality as the Active River Project is implemented.

HERITAGE - PRESERVING YOUR PAST FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

St. Charles first became established in 1836 when a bridge and dam were built. Though our town has seen many changes since then, a strong preservation ethic has ensured that many elements of cultural and natural history remain today.

Municipal

The City of St. Charles has a Historic Preservation Ordinance, established to:

- Foster awareness of the City's unique history embodied in its architecture and historic sites.
- Protect the character of areas with significant historic, architectural, or aesthetic features.
- Protect and increase property value of historic areas and designated sites.

City resources regarding preservation are available at www.stcharlesil.gov/historic-preservation Prominent historic structures include:

- St. Charles History Museum is located in the fully renovated McCornack Oil Company building at 215 East Main Street, which operated as a gas station from 1928 until 1990. The building was renovated and the museum relocated there from the Municipal Center in 2001.
- The St. Charles Municipal Center was designed by architect R. Harold Zook and built in 1940 on the east bank of the Fox River in the heart of downtown. The building features an 84-ft.-tall octagon-shaped tower with stained glass win-

dows, capped by a diamond-shaped translucent top that glows at night with color-changing lights. A large indoor mural depicts historical people and structures. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

- Jones Law Office building was relocated in 2014 to its new home in Langum Park facing Route 25. Steven Sandborn Jones, a lawyer, moved to St. Charles in 1838 and is credited with proposing the city’s name change from Charleston after finding that Illinois already had a town by that name downstate. The law office was used as a holding cell for deserting soldiers during the Civil War.
- Pottawatomie Park Pavilion – The Park District, with assistance from private donors, rebuilt the 1892 pavilion on its original site, matching the original design.



Jones Law Office on the move

In addition, St. Charles’ rich heritage is evident in many of the outdoor sculptures and murals, including:

- “Colonel Baker on Bench,” Hotel Baker, 100 West Main Street
- “Dellora Norris,” Municipal Center Plaza, 2 East Main Street
- “Ekwabet,” Freedom Trail, 2 State Avenue
- “Sons of Charlemagne,” Main Street Bridge
- “Read Them Like a Book,” St. Charles Public Library, 1 South 6th Avenue
- “Classic Cars on Cedar,” mural at 1st Street Parking Deck
- “Pottawatomie Park, c. 1895,” mural at Francesca’s, 200 South 2nd Street
- “Walkin’ Brick Blues,” East side of building at 106 South Riverside Avenue
- “Reflections,” Volunteer Plaza, North side of Municipal Center, 2 East Main Street; dedicated in June 2015, honoring volunteerism as exemplified by Max and Doris Hunt



Taking a ‘selfie’ with sculpture Colonel Baker

The St. Charles Public Library (www.stcharleslibrary.org) has a Local History Files and Reference Area, which includes local history books about St. Charles and Kane County, as well as vertical files housing newspaper clippings, pamphlets, and other paper items organized by topic. Included are files on historic buildings, local families, industries and businesses having a long association with St. Charles.

A few of the books available at the St. Charles Public Library include:

- “Reflections of St. Charles: A History of St. Charles, IL, 1833-1976” by Ruth Seen Pearson, 1976
- “St. Charles: An Album from the Collection of the St. Charles Heritage Center” by Wynette A. Edwards, 1999
- “Celebrating History, 1940-1990: A Pictorial Essay, Vol. I, Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the St. Charles Historical Museum” by St. Charles Historical Society, 1990
- “St. Charles on Parade: 1834-1984” by St. Charles Sesquicentennial Commission, 1984

Business

Conservation, Restoration, and rehabilitation of properties:

- Batavia Enterprises, Inc. repurposed the historic former Dukane building on the east side of St. Charles, converting it to the Cedar Avenue Business Center. Batavia Enterprises also acquired and converted the former Shelby School building into an office building.
- Doc Morgan Inc. converted the former St. Charles Post Office building into office space.
- Nuovo Italia restaurant operates in the former St. Patrick Church, constructed in the early 1850s.
- The Filling Station Pub & Grill is an appropriate name for a restaurant and nightclub located in a converted gas station in downtown St. Charles.
- Century Corners is a shopping and dining area located in Victorian buildings one block east of the Fox River and one block north of Main Street. Most of the buildings were once homes and now house unique retail destinations.
- Fox Island Square is a multitenant retail and office building located just west of the Fox River, in a brick factory building that previously housed the Howell Manufacturing Co., and before that, Crown Electrical Manufacturing Co.

Residential

The St. Charles Public Library maintains a listing of historically significant buildings in St. Charles, including numerous homes:

Hunt House (also known as Dunham-Hunt House), at 304 Cedar Avenue, is the oldest brick house in St. Charles, built in 1836 and constructed of bricks from Penny's Brickyard, located where Baker Memorial Park is now located. At the time, most homes in the area were frame buildings or log cabins. The house is the earliest example of Greek Revival architecture in St. Charles.

The West Side School bell tower, which was moved to the back of the Dunham-Hunt House property many years ago, was recently relocated to a more visible site along Cedar Avenue, allowing more people to easily view the tower.

The Raymond Judd House, at 309 South 6th Avenue, was built in 1878 and is the only Mission-Style house in St. Charles. It served as a private residence until the 1940s, when it was converted to Valley Rest Home, a nursing home that operated until 1970. The house then reverted to a private residence, but has been vacant for a number of years. A developer proposed demolishing the house in 2014, but the plan was rejected by the City Council. The Judd mansion is now undergoing renovation and will be the centerpiece of a development known as Heritage Green.



This house has been identified as a Sears 'Mitchell' kit home.

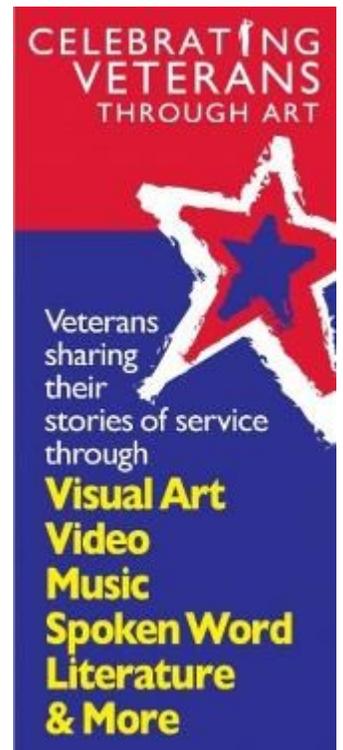
Sears houses – A number of Sears kit houses were built in St. Charles between 1908 and 1940. The Historic Preservation Commission has a preliminary survey by a paid specialist of all mail-order catalog homes (not just Sears homes). It's noted whether the homes are documented or suspected as mail-order catalog homes. The survey is informational only, with no city-funded recognition or plaques at this time. There is more to be done before landmarking these homes. Further, many such homes have been changed over the years and are no longer significant architecturally, according to Steven Smunt of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Community Involvement

The Historic Preservation Commission is a group of seven (7) citizens appointed to:

- Interpret and apply review standards to building permits applications and development projects in the Historic District.
- Review and recommend to City Council on designation of new historic districts or landmarks.
- Inform and educate citizens of the historic and architectural heritage of the City.
- Consult and assist property owners of historic buildings.
- Review and recommend on Facade Improvement Grants.

Celebrating Veterans Through Art, an event that ran from November 7-14, 2015, was sponsored and presented by the St. Charles Arts Council, American Legion Post 342, AMVETS Post 503, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5036, St. Charles School District 303, and People for the Arts/East High School. The event featured an art gallery, concert, public art installation, videos of veteran interviews, a reception and an Honor Walk. The art gallery used art, video, literature and displays to honor veterans and tell their stories of service and sacrifice. Veteran interview videos were created by St. Charles East High School Class of 2017 students, as a part of the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. St. Charles sculptor Guy Bellaver contributed "Yes I Served and I am Your Neighbor," which featured photos of local veterans while in service and today. "Surfacing," by sculptor Rita Grendze, was installed on the front lawn of the Baker Community Center.



Youth involvement

St. Charles North High School students are using www.historypin.org to provide visitors to the online site with photos and information about St. Charles sites and buildings. Working with the St. Charles History Museum, students research historic photos and postcard views and match those with photos of the same locations as they appear today. Users can download a tour of the featured sites. The St. Charles History Museum and the Greater St. Charles Convention and Visitors Bureau will include a link on their Websites.

The St. Charles History Museum works with the two St. Charles High Schools and is involved with the schools' History Clubs.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

St. Charles is a city rich in history, which is embraced by its residents and offers a sense of community pride. At the same time, it is a city that is forward thinking, ever-evolving to meet the changing needs of the community and instill that sense of pride for generations to come. The long-range vision for the city is outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2013, which defines community goals and objectives, and provides guidance for implementing programs and policies for the City's future growth.



Floral displays complement iconic buildings in downtown St. Charles.

St. Charles is fortunate to have elected officials and city staff that are focused on continuous improvement and are well supported by a number of independent organizations that all work toward the common good of the community, and who support and complement each others' efforts. These organizations include:

- Chamber of Commerce Community Unit School District 303
- Downtown St. Charles Partnership (DSCP)

- Greater St. Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)
- River Corridor Foundation
- St. Charles Arts Council
- St. Charles Park District

Service Clubs are active and many, and include Breakfast and Noon Rotary International Clubs; Kiwanis International; Pottawatomie Garden Club; and the TriCities Exchange Club.

Municipal

The City maintains a regular schedule for street cleaning, sanitation, and road repair. In addition, there are appropriately placed garbage and recycling receptacles, making it effortless for visitors to assist in this effort.



The Electric Parade is a highlight of Holiday Homecoming weekend.

In the downtown area volunteers collaborate with city staff to conduct regular Walkabouts. This consists of walking the downtown area as a group, taking note of any public or private property in need of cleaning or repair. City staff then follows up to ensure the proper action is taken.

In 2009 the city built a new fire station, and in 2013 updated the Water Treatment Facility. The efforts for functional and aesthetic upkeep of public property continued in 2014 when the city built a new parking lot in the northwest quadrant of downtown to accommodate visitors to that area, as well as completed a roof and façade upgrade to the city's municipal building.



The school district also performs regular maintenance, with Superintendent Schlomann keeping building and grounds maintenance budgets intact. His philosophy is that the outward appearance is important to community and school pride. Students pitch in too. The St. Charles North High School baseball team manicures the ball field at that school. Two of the middle schools sell annuals and mums as fundraisers.

A number of programs and ordinances keep graphic elements appropriate in design and number:

- Zoning Ordinance Update – City Council amended the ordinance to include a deadline for businesses to correct signs that do not meet current size, height or setback regulations.
- City banner Program – This regulates the placement and aesthetics of temporary signage and banners displayed by businesses throughout the city.
- Public Art – A variety of public art can be appreciated in the downtown area and beyond. Sculpture in the Park is a free exhibit in Mt. St. Mary's Park, which runs from May through October each year.
- Decorative way-finding – This consists of signs at City Limits entries; directional signs for points of interest; and way-finding kiosks with maps at eleven locations downtown.

Banners in downtown St. Charles promote local recreation opportunities.

Business

As a part of the overall appearance of the community, commercial property owners are encouraged to maintain and improve their buildings. Once again, the City and community groups have programs in place to encourage and support these efforts:

- City Façade Program – A matching grant to encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of downtown building facades. Many of the downtown renovation/restoration projects completed over the past 15 years were funded in part by this program.
- City Corridor Improvement Grant – A matching grant for plant material and installation for the purpose of encouraging property owners along major arterial streets and in the downtown area to improve aesthetics with floral displays or landscape upgrades.
- DSCP Storefront Improvement Grant – Downtown business owners can apply for this matching grant to purchase or update more minor exterior elements, such as awnings, signage and/or lighting.
- Downtown Business Economic Incentive Program – A matching grant to encourage the rehabilitation and investment of properties in the downtown district, implemented May 1, 2015.
- Chamber of Commerce Awards – Annual recognition of businesses, individuals and organizations in the areas of Community Development, Community Development and Civic Image.
- DSCP Vacant Storefront Window Panels – Installed by DSCP volunteers and staff, with property owner permission, in an effort to improve the overall aesthetic and promote the space to prospective tenants.

Residential

The cooperative efforts between the city of St. Charles and these civic organizations result in a better quality of life for residents. In 2011, St. Charles earned the designation of the #1 City for Families by Family Circle magazine, which was based on factors such as affordable housing, good neighbors, green spaces, a strong public school system and giving spirits. The City of St. Charles was named one of the “150 Great Places in Illinois,” by the AIA Illinois and one of the “Top 10 Towns To Live In” by West Suburban Magazine.



St. Charles Farmers Market

As evidenced throughout this profile, our residents enjoy clean, safe neighborhoods, access to many recreational pursuits and a lively downtown shopping and dining area. The pride they feel is reflected in the appearance.

Just to the west of town lie hundreds of acres of farmland. Residents are able to enjoy the bounty of these agricultural areas through the St. Charles Farmers Market. Operated on Fridays, the Market is outdoors on 4th Avenue, just north of Main Street, from June through October, and indoors at Baker Memorial United Methodist Church from November through May.



Community Involvement

St. Charles is a community of caring, involved citizens. There are countless opportunities for residents to get involved and make an impact in the community. For example, the majority of St. Charles' civic organizations rely on volunteers, either solely or to a large degree, to accomplish their objectives and carry out their missions. Some of the programs include:

- Kane County Adopt-A-Highway – This program allows citizens, groups and businesses to support anti-litter efforts by

volunteering to provide litter collection along certain county highways in St. Charles.

- DSCP Activities and Events – As a volunteer-driven organization, the DSCP relies on volunteers year round to implement its programs. Special Event committees plan and execute the St. Patrick's Parade, Fine Art Show, and Holiday Homecoming events. New this year is Movie in the Park, with a theme of Community appreciation.
- DSCP Chair-ity Event – Residents, community groups and businesses can decoratively paint an Adirondack chair for exhibit in downtown St. Charles. Last year, the program raised \$4,750 for public improvements in the downtown area.
- Park District – Volunteers assist in a number of areas, including animal care and farm chores; pool pre and post-season setup and cleanup; and cleanup efforts at the District facilities.

Volunteer efforts are recognized in a number of ways:

- Chamber of Commerce – Annual Charlemagne Award given to someone with a distinguished history of service to the community, as well as other awards which recognize leadership and active participation.
- DSCP – Volunteer Recognition Events; City Council Presentation for STC Live performers; Parade Float Awards
- Park District – Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- River Corridor Foundation – Acknowledges volunteers with written Thank You cards, complimentary Riverboat Rides and Colonial Café vouchers. An annual Golden Turtle Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the Foundation and furthering their mission.

The progress of St. Charles continues because of the collaborative efforts of the government, citizenry and civic organizations. Each step of the way, we build on what has been done, ensuring continued community pride for generations to come.

BEST IDEA

Walking and bicycling are two of the best ways to take in St. Charles and all our scenic town has to offer. Over the past year, the City and Park District have worked with other area agencies to improve accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists alike, refining trail connections, improving signage and creating safer crossings throughout our region. Such interconnectivity is part of the City's Comprehensive Plan; St. Charles Comprehensive Plan; 2015 River Corridor Amended Master Plan and St. Charles Bike and Pedestrian Plan.

The first improvement was led by KDOT (Kane County Department of Transportation) and focused on the Fox River Trail that follows the Fox River through St. Charles. KDOT worked with several partners, including St. Charles Park District, in updating trail signage along the path. Trail users will benefit from better directional signage, mile markers and branding, all designed to improve navigation throughout this popular segment of the 43-mile Fox River Trail.

The second improvement was the addition of bike fix-it stations, also along the Fox River Trail. In 2015, the St. Charles Park District was a recipient of a county grant that allowed two separate bicycle repair stations to be installed near our



Chair-ity Event for awareness of downtown public improvements.



Bob Leonard Walkway in bloom

downtown area. One station is located on the south side of the Prairie Street bridge and the other is located in Pottawatomie Park. These additions had an immediate and extremely positive impact for bicyclists, as noted through social media comments.

In addition to bike fix it stations, the city recently concluded a bike rack inventory. Having bike racks located at key locations throughout the community is vital to increase bike use. This bike rack inventory will be utilized in two ways. First, the inventory will be used to monitor bike racks and to make decisions of where to add or delete racks in the future. Second, bike rack locations will be added to the bike trail maps published by the Downtown St. Charles Partnership.

The third improvement was the City's installation of push-button crosswalks at critical connection points. The first location implemented links our community's popular James O. Breen Community Park with Harvest Hills, a large residential development. This park, home to the Otter Cove Water Park, Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, a dog park and 200 acres of athletic fields, can now be safely accessed by the hundreds of families and kids who choose to walk or ride their bikes there. A second push-button crosswalk is in planning stages and is proposed for Dunham Road, at a crucial point connecting a large residential neighborhood with East High School.

The Downtown St. Charles Partnership is spearheading our town's fourth interconnectivity improvement. A new Walking App, along with additional signage, will provide the means for area residents walk to destinations new and old throughout the downtown area.

A final improvement is the concept designs created in 2015 Amended River Corridor Master Plan. One of the proposed concepts calls for St. Charles to implement "walking loops" throughout the downtown area. These loops would connect to the existing Fox River Trail, Freedom Trail and Bob Leonard Walkway using under-bridge walkways. These sidewalks, similar to those in other river towns, will make it possible to cross busy streets safely and, by diverting pedestrians and bicyclists, also help ease congestion at key roadway intersections.

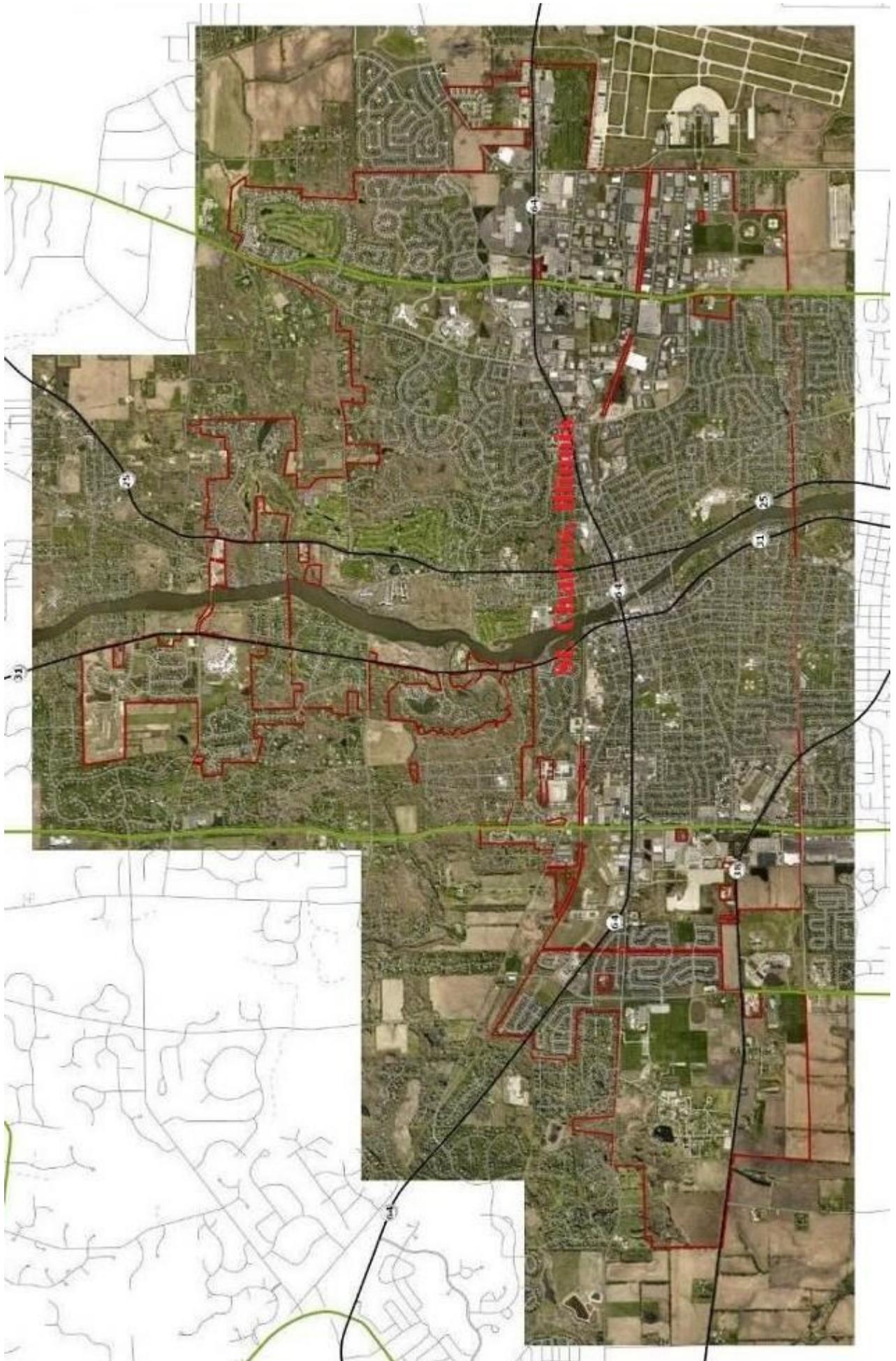


Bike repair station along the Fox River Trail



The two pictures above are examples of how many people connect with neighbors north and south along the Fox River Trail.

MAP



CONTACTS

Maureen Lewis	AIB steering committee	mlewis@stcharlesil.gov
Diane Cullen	AIB steering committee	Dianecullen@sbcglobal.net
Steve Amatangelo	AIB steering committee	Steve.amatangelo@sartorius-intec.com
Barbara Campbell	AIB Committee Chair	aurabjc@att.net
Steve Martin	AIB Committee Chair	smartin@firststatebank.biz
John A Thornhill	AIB Committee Chair	jatlDC@sbcglobal.net
Lynn Schwartz	AIB Committee Chair	lschwartz@downtownstcharles.org
Holly Cabel	AIB Committee Chair	hcabel@stcparks.org
Chris Adesso	AIB Committee Chair	cadesso@stcharlesil.gov
Frank Esposito	AIB Committee Chair	Espo524@gmail.com
Nona Wolfram Koivula	AIB Volunteer	wolframkoivulanond@sbcglobal.net
Chuck Parr	AIB Volunteer	chuckparr@comcast.net
Pam Otto	AIB Volunteer	potto@stcparks.org
Erika Young	AIB Volunteer	eyoung@stcparks.org
Lisa Garhan	AIB Volunteer	lgarhan@stcharlesil.gov
Isabel Soderlind	AIB Volunteer	isoderlind@stcharlesil.gov
Alison Costanzo	History Museum Director	scostanzo@stcmuseum.org
Diane Conn	Pottawatomie Garden Club	dlbconn@att.net
Mayor Ray Rogina	St. Charles Mayor	
Peter Suhr	City of St. Charles, Public Works	psuhr@stcharlesil.gov
Mark Koenen	City of St. Charles, Administrator	mkoenen@stcharlesil.gov
Jane Erickson	Pottawatomie Garden Club	Janie Erickson@yahoo.com
Sarah Fellerer	U of I Extension	Fellerer@illinois.edu