

1 Introduction & Background

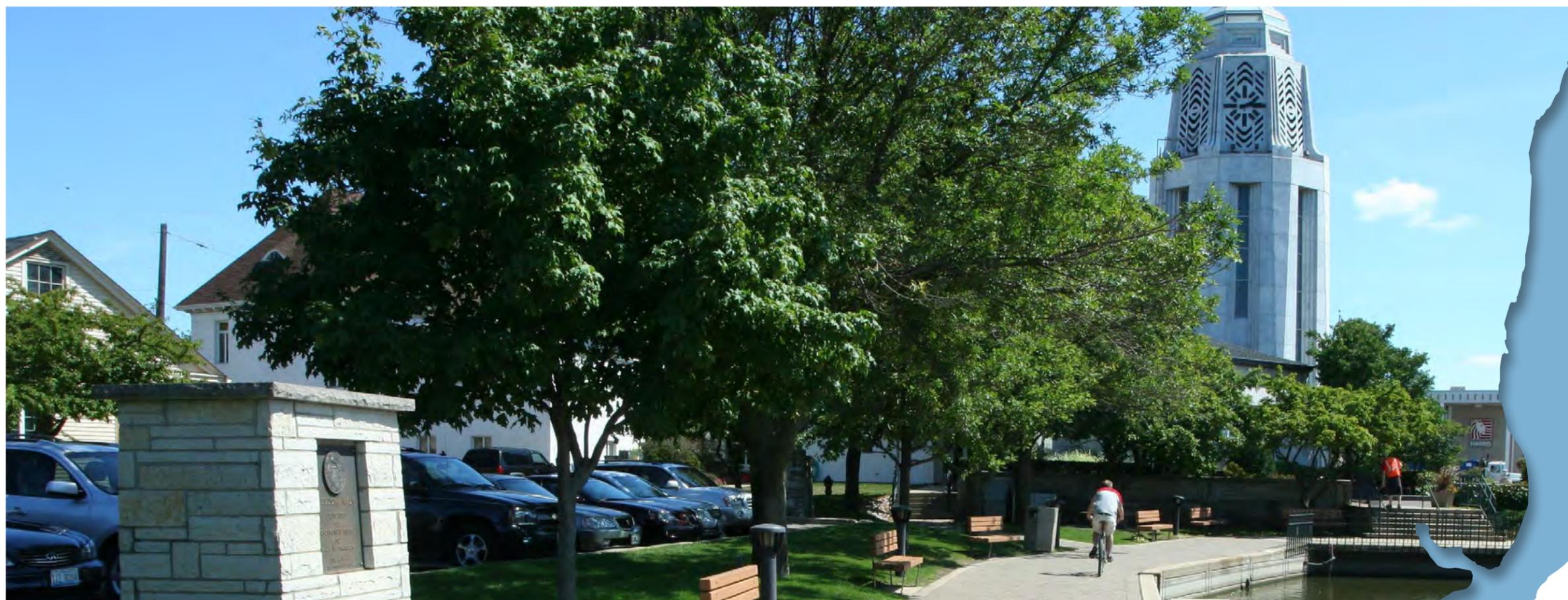
The City of St. Charles, which straddles the picturesque Fox River, is a community with a rich history, an engaged citizenry, historic architecture, and strong sense of community pride. Since being settled in the early 19th century, St. Charles has gone from the camp of just a few Pottawatomie Indians, to an industrial and manufacturing center, and finally to a nationally recognized, family-oriented community. In 1950, the population of St. Charles was only 6,709. Today, St. Charles boasts 32,974 citizens. People visit St. Charles for the weekend and then return for good.

The City of St. Charles also has a strong legacy of engaged and progressive leadership. The mission statement of the City reflects this commitment to good governance and community service:

Preserve our heritage, foster opportunity, build community, and enhance quality of life for all.

The City has commissioned this Comprehensive Plan in order to uphold this mission statement. The last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1996. Major changes that have occurred since the last plan's adoption include the First Street Redevelopment (2006), adoption of an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (2008), and an updated Zoning Ordinance (2006).

An updated Comprehensive Plan will address these changes and others that have occurred in the City in the last fifteen years. This plan will set a course to guide land use decision-making for the next twenty years, ensuring that St. Charles continues to improve upon its legacy with an eye toward the future. The City has commissioned this Comprehensive Plan in part to provide more robust guidance for future development. Historically, St. Charles has experienced much of its growth through annexation. The City recognizes that this type of growth becomes less possible as the City matures, and that new forms of economic growth must be pursued. This plan will provide guidance on these issues, as well as improved information on character and quality, including considerations for neo-traditional neighborhoods and vertically mixed land-uses.



*Preserve our heritage,
foster opportunity,
build community, and
enhance quality of life
for all.*

*- Mission Statement of
the City of St. Charles*



Community History

St. Charles was originally the site of two summer camps of the Pottawatomie Indian tribe who camped near the shallows of the Fox River where they forded and fished the river. Settlers arrived in the Spring of 1834, when Evan Shelby and William Franklin from Indiana laid their claim on a tract of land high on the east river bluff, near the current intersection of State and Fourth Avenues.

Settlers were attracted to the area's varied natural setting. To the west were extensive prairie lands while dense woods grew on both sides of the River to the north.

By the mid-1830's, a bridge had been built, as well a saw mill, carding mill, and grist mill. A general store was built at East Main and First Avenue in 1836, an event that spurred further development. The town was initially named Charleston, but later changes its name to St. Charles in 1839 after a dispute with another town in Illinois with the same name.

The path of the current IL Route 64 was initially an Indian trail and later a route of passage between Chicago and the Mississippi River. Hotels sprang up along the route by 1841 to accommodate those passing through. St. Charles was briefly served by a branch of the Galena and Chicago Union rail line, but this service was terminated in 1860 and so had little effect on the economy of the City. In 1871 the Chicago, St. Paul, and Kansas City Railroad established a depot in the town and regular rail service was initiated. By the early 20th century, interurban rail lines connected the City to Elgin, Aurora, Chicago, and elsewhere. Factory work around this time drew hundreds of Swedish, Lithuanians, Belgians, and Danes.

The rise of the automobile in the 1920's created further connections between St. Charles and the surrounding communities. Tourism became a major component of the St. Charles economy and identity in the period between 1920 and 1940. St. Charles became known as a resort town during this period, with the new Hotel Baker and Arcada Theater helping to promote and develop this new role for the City. Despite the influx of visitors, St. Charles did not experience the explosive growth of permanent residents until later. Major industrial development began in the mid 1960's with three manufacturing districts appearing in the community: the Delnor Industrial Park, St. Charles Industrial Park, and the Central Manufacturing District.

The City limits have undergone two major expansions, the first in 1856 and the second nearly a century later in the 1950's. In the 1950's the industrial focus moved from the center of town to the outskirts. This allowed for larger sections of industrial development on undeveloped land and left the downtown area to develop in a more conventional fashion. Main Street during this time period became a dominant organizing feature and the City's primary commercial arterial.

In the 1970's people began to view St. Charles as a desirable city in which to raise a family. Later, the 1980's saw a wave of intensive residential expansion. Along with this growth came large scale commercial development and more annexation, though not on the same scale as previously experienced.

Today, St. Charles has three unique commercial centers and numerous residential neighborhoods surrounding them. While Main Street/64 remains the dominant thoroughfare and a major commercial corridor, new development along Randall Road and to a lesser extent around the intersections of Kirk Road and 64 have become the dominant growth areas in the City. St. Charles is today an award-winning community renowned for its high quality of life and natural beauty.

Core Qualities

In 1970 the Mayor of St. Charles, C. V. Amenoff, told the tale of the four fox statues adorning the Main Street Bridge. These foxes, it is said, were the sons of Charlemagne, and represent the four guardians of the still growing St. Charles settlement. The first, the guardian of the civic, business, and industrial life of the community, corresponds to this plan's economic development and community engagement sections. The second and third foxes, the guardians of educational, cultural, and religious expression, will be represented through the creation of the community facilities section of the plan. And the fourth fox, which guards the legacy of the Fox River wandering through the wilderness, will be represented by the parks and open space section of the plan. These are the core qualities that contribute to St. Charles' greatness.

While the Comprehensive Plan cannot possibly live up to the legendary stature of the four foxes, it strives to represent and defend the culmination of their wisdom and to add the additional considerations that will help St. Charles and its people succeed now and in the future. Of course, this plan addresses other topics such as transportation and infrastructure and implementation.

Community Setting

The City of St. Charles is located approximately 35 miles west of the City of Chicago and straddles both DuPage and Kane Counties. Bisected by the Fox River, St. Charles is in the Fox River Valley and is part of a “tri-city” area along with the Cities of Geneva and Batavia. In some respects, this area demarcates the western boundary of the expanded Chicago metropolitan region due to the size, density, and availability of transit in these cities.

St. Charles is essentially equidistant to I-88, I-90 and I-355, yet none of these major access routes could be considered conveniently nearby. For this reason, St. Charles enjoys a sense of isolation from the surrounding metropolitan region—a quality that some view as an asset and that others see as a weakness.

St. Charles is well known throughout the region, and even nationally, as a great place to live. 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. In 2011, Family Circle Magazine rated St. Charles #1 Best Town for Families.

Planning Jurisdiction

The Comprehensive Plan addresses issues within the municipal boundaries of the City as well as unincorporated areas adjacent to the City. Planning by the City for these unincorporated areas is permitted by state law to promote orderly growth and change. The Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-12-5) allows a Comprehensive Plan to plan for an area extending 1.5 miles from the current corporate boundary. The Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-12-9) also encourages negotiations between communities with overlapping jurisdictions.

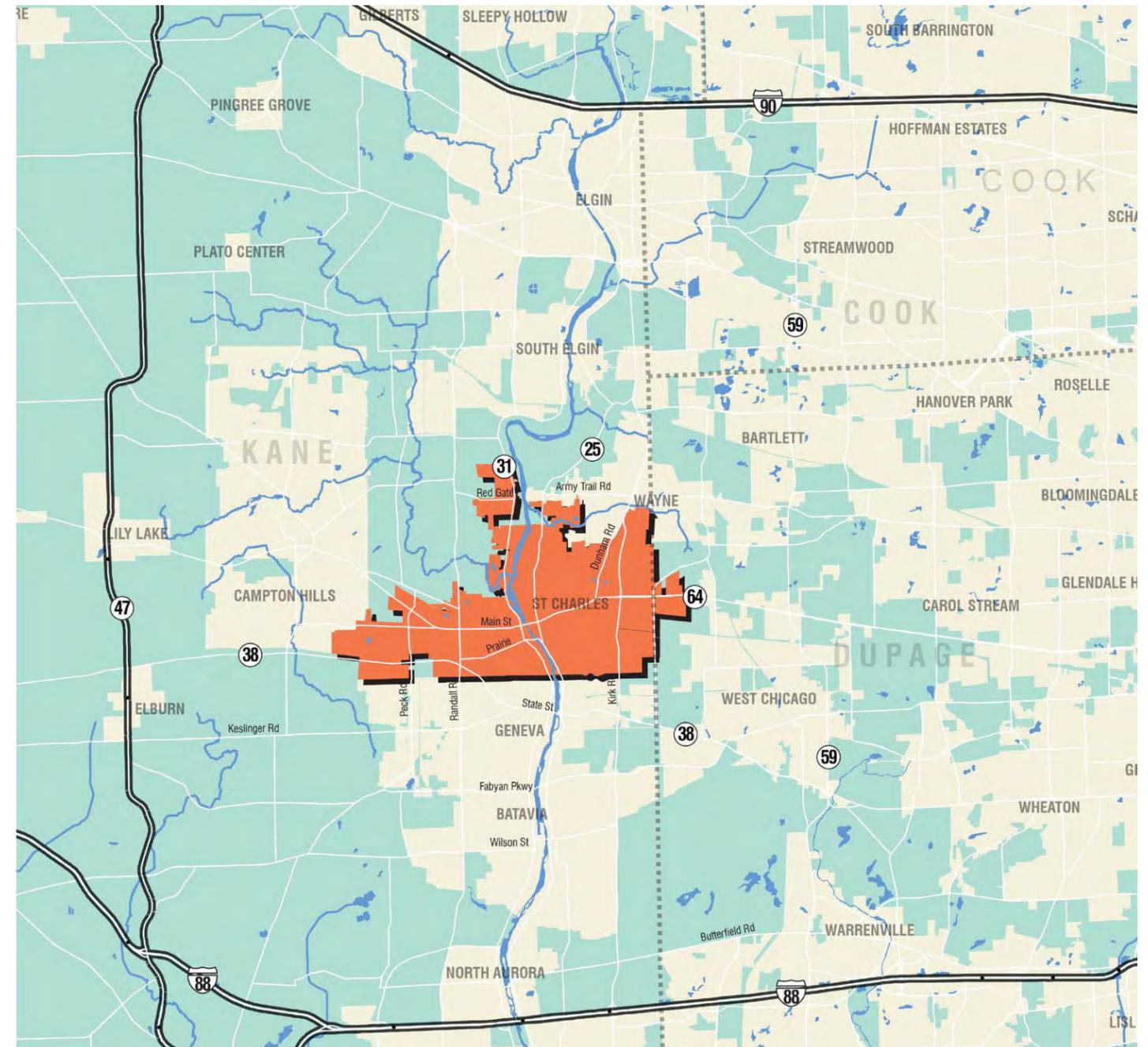
The City’s planning jurisdiction as shown in the maps contained in this Plan is defined primarily by the corporate limits of neighboring municipalities and jurisdictional boundary line agreements with South Elgin (2005), Wayne (2011), West Chicago (2001 and 2013 proposed amendment), and Geneva (1995). Land uses in the northwestern portion of the City’s extraterritorial planning jurisdiction are defined in an inter-governmental agreement with South Elgin and Kane County (2005).

Past Plans and Studies

A goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to build upon past plans and studies. Care must be taken to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan does not conflict with the goals and recommendations already established, except where conditions have changed and warrant reconsideration of past conclusions. Where possible, the Comprehensive Plan will build off of these previous efforts.

The last complete comprehensive plan was adopted in 1990; two updates to that plan were completed in 1996 and 2003. These plans served as a background for the writing of the current Comprehensive Plan. A thorough summary of the other documents listed below is included in the Existing Conditions Report.

- » 2000 Downtown Strategy Plan
- » 2002 River Corridor Master Plan
- » 2003 St. Charles Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan
- » 2007 Economic Development Plan
- » 2007 Applied Composites Area Plan
- » 2008 Strategic Plan
- » 2010 Transit Circulator Study
- » 2011 Park District Comprehensive Master Plan
- » Kane County 2040 Plan
- » CMAP’s Go To 2040





Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the City’s official policy guide for physical improvement and development. At the most basic level, the Comprehensive Plan is intended to direct orderly growth and change as well as maintain and enhance the livability of the City. The Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for the future to describe an ideal St. Charles, based on community input and consensus, to ensure that quality of life remains high. In addition, plans and recommendations are provided for key focus areas, including: West Gateway, East Gateway, Downtown, and Main Street.

The Planning Process

The City of St. Charles’ comprehensive planning process incorporated an eight step program as illustrated to the right. The process was designed to produce a Comprehensive Plan by assessing existing conditions and influences, establishing a vision, and developing policies and recommendations to serve as a guide for community decision making. The planning process was built on a foundation of community input and outreach, the Plan’s recommendations refined based on feedback from the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, City officials, City staff, and the community-at-large. The final Plan focused on both community-wide and area-specific recommendations.

Use of the Plan

The Plan is comprehensive in every sense of the word: every parcel of the City’s planning area is evaluated; the timeframe is of a length that allows for implementation and tracking; and the types of analyses and subject areas address every aspect of livability. Though not regulatory in nature, as a policy document with such a comprehensive scope, it guides the creation or amendment of City regulations as well as individual actions and investments. For example, the Plan provides policy direction on annexing property, changing zoning, reviewing development and redevelopment projects, and identifying public infrastructure improvements.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the “ground rules” for private improvement in the community. It is intended to be used by the City Council, Plan Commission, other boards, commissions, and agencies, and City staff to review and evaluate development proposals, to ensure projects are consistent with the long-term planning objectives of the community. The Plan also provides direction to assist in undertaking public improvements, ensuring the City is prepared to meet the challenges of the future and continue to efficiently and effectively allocate its resources.

Finally, the Plan serves as an important marketing tool to promote the City’s unique assets and advantages. As a marketing tool, the Plan can spur desirable development and redevelopment throughout the community, in the growth areas, within the downtown area, or along aging commercial corridors.

Organization of the Plan

The following Chapters form the City’s updated Comprehensive Plan:

- » Chapter 1: Introduction & Background
- » Chapter 2: Vision
- » Chapter 3: Goals & Objectives
- » Chapter 4: Land Use Plan
- » Chapter 5: Community Facilities Plan
- » Chapter 6: Parks & Open Space Plan
- » Chapter 7: Transportation Plan
- » Chapter 8: Subarea Plans
- » Chapter 9: Culture & Identity Plan
- » Chapter 10: Design Guidelines
- » Chapter 11: Implementation



Community Profile

An analysis has been conducted to establish a firm understanding of existing market conditions within the community and inform decision making with regard to land use and development. The following community profile is a summary of a more detailed analysis presented in the Existing Conditions Report earlier in the planning process.

The profile begins with a demographic overview of recent trends in population, households, income, and labor force and employment. This is followed by an assessment of St. Charles' competitive position within the residential, commercial, and industrial markets. The analysis identifies the issues the community is facing and will likely face and creates a foundation to assist with future land use designation and planning objectives.

At the time of analysis, data from the 2010 US Census have only been recently released and represent the most accurate snap shot of St. Charles' current population. Given the recent release of data, demographic projections which are based on Census data have yet to be finalized. Additional market data regarding housing, income, and retail demand were also obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey and ESRI Business Analyst, a nationally recognized provider of market and demographic data.

Demographic Data

Changes in population, households and demographic composition will influence future land use and development as well as other issues within St. Charles. The City of St. Charles has grown steadily over the past decade and has maintained a core population of households with families. Over the last decade, the median age has increased while the typical household has fewer persons. Median household income has increased, but the rate of increase has been slightly slower than that of inflation since 2000. While the economic downturn has affected communities throughout the Midwest, the St. Charles market has not experienced the same level of impact as other markets.

- » St. Charles' population has increased by more than 18% over the last decade to 32,974 in 2010. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.7%.
- » The number of households in St. Charles has grown by 2,073 (a 20% increase) since 2000 to 12,424 in 2010. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.8%.
- » Between 2000 and 2010, the median age of the City has increased by nearly 8% to 39.4 years old.
- » It is estimated that the median household income within St. Charles has increased by an average annual rate of slightly more than 1.0%

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY City of St. Charles, 2000 - 2010

	2000	2010	Total Change 2000 - 2010
Population	27,896	32,974	5,078 (18.2%)
Households	10,351	12,424	2,073 (20.0%)
Median Age	36.6	39.4	2.8 (7.7%)
Average Household Size	2.62	2.56	-0.06 (-2.3%)

Source: ESRI Business Analyst;
Houseal Lavigne Associates

Labor and Employment

Employment by Industry

Employment estimates for 2009 (the most recent year for which data are available) show that the City's economy is relatively diverse with several industries employing between 5% and 15% of the workforce. Despite recent employment loss, the range of significant employers within St. Charles points to long term economic stability in the community.

TOP FIVE EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES City of St. Charles, 2009

Industry (NAICS Code)	Employees	
	17,974	100.0%
Manufacturing	2,599	14.5%
Retail Trade	2,345	13.0%
Educational Services, Private & Public	2,131	11.9%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,828	10.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,370	7.6%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst;
Houseal Lavigne Associates

Employment Projections

Industries that are projected to be the largest contributors to job growth in St. Charles between 2008 and 2018 include:

- » Health Care and Social Assistance (425 new jobs)
- » Educational Services (224 new jobs)
- » Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (208 new jobs)
- » Administrative Services & Waste Management (206 new jobs)
- » Accommodation & Food Services (201 new jobs).

Residential Market

Housing Profile

Overall, the most predominant type of housing in St. Charles is an owner occupied, single family home with three or four bedrooms. Rental units make up approximately 25% of the local housing stock and consist primarily of multi-family structures.

- » Approximately 71% of all housing units in St. Charles are owner occupied and over three quarters of these owner occupied housing units are single family detached homes.
- » Approximately 75% of all rental units in the community are in multi-family structures while only 9.5% are in single family detached homes.
- » An equal number of owner occupied units have three and four bedrooms while rental units typically have two bedrooms.
- » Just under one quarter of all housing units in the City are contained in multi-family units.

Housing Market Implications

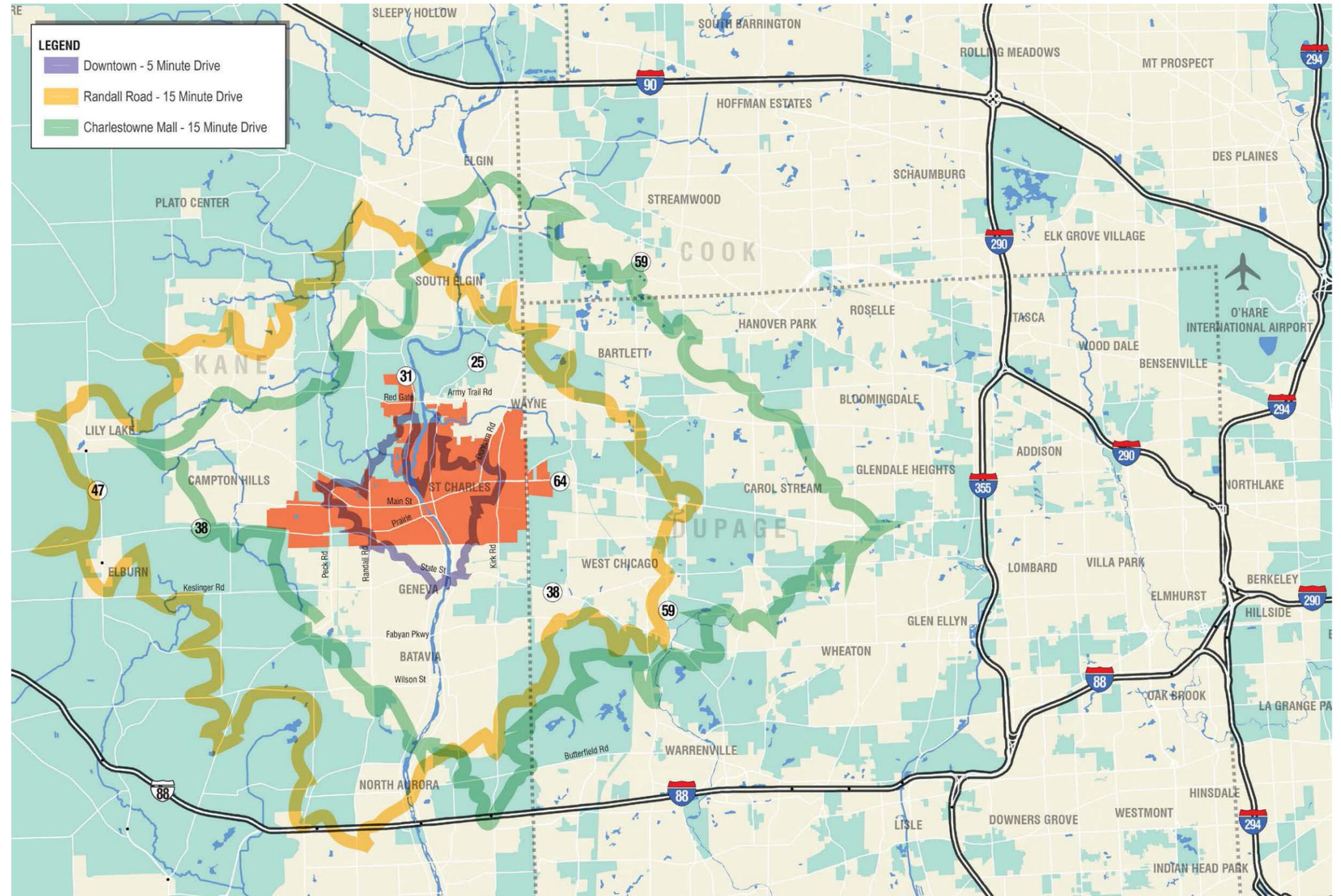
The City of St. Charles is projected to experience continuing growth in the older more affluent age/income cohorts. Younger (25 to 34 year old) households are also projected to increase. Both of these groups are typically the primary market for multi-family and single family attached housing, both for-sale and rental. These units include condominiums, townhomes, row homes, and apartments. On the other end of the spectrum, the City is also projected to experience a moderate increase in some of the lower household income sectors over the next several years. While the increase is not large, officials should continue to monitor the availability of quality affordable housing dispersed throughout the City.

Overall, the St. Charles housing market has been stable in comparison to the larger regional and national market. This should continue to have a positive impact in attracting reinvestment and buyers of all product types.

Retail Market Market Areas

The potential for commercial development at any given location is influenced by several factors, including local and regional demand for goods and services, the health of commercial districts, the location of surrounding commercial nodes, and the consumer spending patterns of the area's population.

For the purposes of this analysis, separate retail market areas have been defined for the communities three major commercial areas: Downtown St. Charles, Randall Road, and Charlestowne Mall. These retail market areas represent the geography from which St. Charles businesses will draw the majority of their customers and is used in estimating potential demand for retail goods and services. The Charlestowne Mall area and Randall Road corridor have larger market areas that reflect their larger regional draw while the downtown has a smaller market area which primarily relies on local residents.





Retail Gap Analysis

The following analysis uses a comparison of projected spending by market area households to the existing supply of retail space, assessing the potential for retail development. This “gap” analysis provides an indication of “surplus” (positive numbers) or “leakage” (negative numbers) within a given retail category.

Downtown St. Charles – 5 Minute Drive

The presence of a surplus within a given retail category suggests that there is at least enough retail space to accommodate demand for the range of goods and services provided by stores in that category. Conversely, leakage indicates that demand exceeds supply and consumers are spending dollars outside of the market area. This leakage could potentially be recaptured and may represent a commercial opportunity within the market area. It is important to distinguish between support in the market and development potential of a specific site or location. The availability of alternative sites, specifications of particular retailers, the number of projects actively pursuing tenants, and similar issues can affect whether market potential translates to development potential.

In analyzing retail supply and demand within the Downtown market area, there is currently an oversupply of retail space of approximately \$297 million. Within the market area, there are approximately 12,707 households contributing to a current retail demand of \$431.7 million. This demand equates to a potential expenditure per household of nearly \$34,000, with a current supply of over \$57,000 per household. This figure includes all retail, eating, and drinking establishments.

Randall Road – 15 Minute Drive

For households within a 15 minute drive of the Randall Road corridor, it is estimated that there is an unmet retail demand of nearly \$290 million. The 63,398 households within the market area contribute to a retail demand of approximately \$2.5 billion, while the supply is only \$2.2 billion. This equates to an unmet demand of more than \$4,500 per household.

Charlestowne Mall – 15 Minute Drive

Retail supply within the Charlestowne Mall market area is approximately \$608 million less than current demand. There are approximately 81,929 households contributing to a current retail demand of \$3.2 billion. This demand equates to a potential expenditure per household of more than \$39,000, with a current supply of less than \$32,000 per household. As with the other two market areas, this figure includes all retail, eating, and drinking establishments.

Development Potential

Downtowns typically serve the local market area, relying on the local population for the majority of their customers. The Downtown St. Charles retail market area is relatively saturated and there does not appear to be any additional opportunities for retail expansion in the near term. While the retail market is saturated at the local level, the Randall Road corridor and Charlestowne Mall area rely on larger market areas where unmet demand still exists.

While the City of St. Charles was incorporated more than 135 years ago, the areas surrounding the community have only more recently been developed. As such, St. Charles is located in a stable, but maturing commercial landscape where the supply of retail space is still shifting to meet the needs of a growing population.

RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS PROFILE

Downtown, Randall Road & Charlestowne Mall Market Areas, 2010

	Downtown - 5 Minute Drive Time	Randall Road - 15 Minute Drive Time	Charlestowne Mall - 15 Minute Drive Time
Summary Demographics			
2010 Population	32,567	187,350	250,052
2010 Households	12,707	63,398	81,929
2010 Median Disposable Income	\$58,837	\$65,848	\$65,818
2010 Per Capita Income	\$38,231	\$37,169	\$35,077

	Retail Gap by Market Area (\$M)		
Summary	Downtown	Randall Road	Charlestowne Mall
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	-\$297.4	\$289.8	\$607.6
Total Retail Trade	-\$242.0	\$260.3	\$513.4
Total Food & Drink	-\$55.4	\$29.6	\$94.2

	Downtown		Randall Road		Charlestowne Mall	
Key Industry Groups	Retail Gap (\$M)	Potential ¹	Retail Gap (\$M)	Potential ¹	Retail Gap (\$M)	Potential ¹
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	-\$84.1	-210,200	\$137.3	343,222	\$199.4	498,537
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	-\$11.4	-28,398	-\$6.4	-16,041	\$18.9	47,305
Electronics & Appliance Stores	-\$12.5	-31,305	-\$22.9	-57,194	-\$16.7	-41,772
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	-\$15.5	-38,635	-\$65.4	-163,536	-\$41.3	-103,356
Food & Beverage Stores	-\$100.9	-252,257	-\$29.8	-74,554	-\$31.8	-79,424
Health & Personal Care Stores	-\$7.4	-18,455	\$6.1	15,342	\$8.3	20,639
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	-\$14.0	-35,082	-\$8.8	-21,891	-\$7.4	-18,531
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	-\$3.3	-8,266	-\$8.4	-20,917	-\$2.3	-5,677
General Merchandise Stores	-\$14.4	-35,997	-\$34.8	-87,022	\$44.4	110,938
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	-\$20.5	-51,323	-\$10.3	-25,662	-\$14.5	-36,210
Nonstore Retailers*	\$13.2	32,998	\$116.3	290,789	\$140.5	351,192
Food Services & Drinking Places	-\$55.4	-138,576	\$29.6	73,946	\$94.2	235,472

¹ Potential based on an average annual sales per-square-foot of \$400.

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

*Nonstore retailing includes all categories of retail uses that do not have physical store (bricks and mortar) locations. This includes internet sales, vending, kiosks, newspaper delivery and related categories.



Industrial Market

The Chicago area industrial market is classified into several subareas. The City of St. Charles is located within what is considered the Fox Valley market area and includes the DuPage Airport and the communities of St. Charles, Geneva, Batavia and West Chicago. The Fox Valley market is situated between two much larger subareas, the I-88 Corridor and the I-90 Northwest area.

Within St. Charles, the largest concentration of industrial/business park uses is concentrated in the area defined as the East Gateway Industrial District. This area is located on the eastern edge of the City proximate to the DuPage Airport. There are also industrial type uses spread throughout St. Charles, with the second largest concentration being the Foundry Business Park on the west side of the City.

The St. Charles market and larger Fox Valley area is projected to stay on its current pace in terms of vacancy rates, rents, and leasing activity for the foreseeable future. While there are sites available for new development, it is anticipated that speculative development will be minimal. As with the office market, build-to-suit projects will likely be the source of any future development in the near term.

INDUSTRIAL MARKET STATISTICS				
Metropolitan Chicago, Second Quarter 2011				
Submarket	Total Inventory		Vacancy Rate	Under Construction
	Buildings	Square Feet		
<i>Fox Valley</i>	495	32,089,494	11.9%	0
I-90/Northwest	431	25,672,633	10.8%	0
I-88 Corridor	771	61,834,957	10.9%	0
Chicago Metro	16,410	1,193,181,550	10.8%	717,958

Source: ESRI Business Analyst



Existing Land Use

Land use and development patterns have broad implications for the character, development, and overall well-being of the St. Charles community. The collection and analysis of land use data is important since so many aspects of the health of the community are related to land use. For example, residential and industrial areas should be separated since their uses are not typically compatible with one another. Through careful land use planning, planners can ensure that incompatible uses are separated. The land use pattern in St. Charles contains distinct areas of commercial, residential, and industrial uses, while Downtown is primarily a mix of almost all types of uses.

Existing land use designations describe how an area is used at a given period in time. Land use maps are useful on both a micro and a macro scale. By looking at the entire land use map for the City of St. Charles, it is clear that Downtown, Randall Road, and East Main Street are hubs of commercial activity. On a micro-scale, land use maps are helpful in discerning the fine-grained texture of uses. The mix of industrial and single family uses to the northwest of Downtown, for example, can be clearly seen on the Existing Land Use Map—an observation that could influence future plans.

Following is a description of the land use classifications identified on the existing land use map. These classifications as well as the land use map itself are based on a parcel-by-parcel field reconnaissance survey.

Residential

Detached Single Family

Detached structures that house one family and are typically owner-occupied, though this use also includes rental houses.

Attached Single Family

Residential structures that are connected horizontally. Single family attached housing is typically two stories high, but individual units do not stack vertically.

Multi-family Residential

Structures that contain multiple housing units, are usually stacked vertically and attached horizontally, and typically have common hallways and other amenities. This category includes senior housing and assisted living facilities.

Commercial

Includes restaurants, retail stores, entertainment venues, grocery stores, and other uses.

Commercial Service

Provides a service as the primary product.

Office

Includes medical and dental offices, real estate agencies, financial firms, and other places of business.

Industrial

Light Industrial

Involves the manufacture of goods, processing of materials, storage, and distribution.

Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing

Includes major employment centers with heavy industrial uses that create significant pollution, noise, visual blight, and other activities incompatible with nearly every other use.

Public

Local government facilities including government offices, public safety uses, public service agencies, and other uses that are both government-owned and that relate to the operation of the City and the local area.

Quasi-Public

Quasi-Public facilities include places of worship, community centers, and other uses that are not owned by the government.

Utility

Locations of permanent utility infrastructure such as pumping stations, treatment plants, and electrical substations.

Parks and Open Space

Designated parks and open space areas are protected from redevelopment and maintained by the park service or other entity.

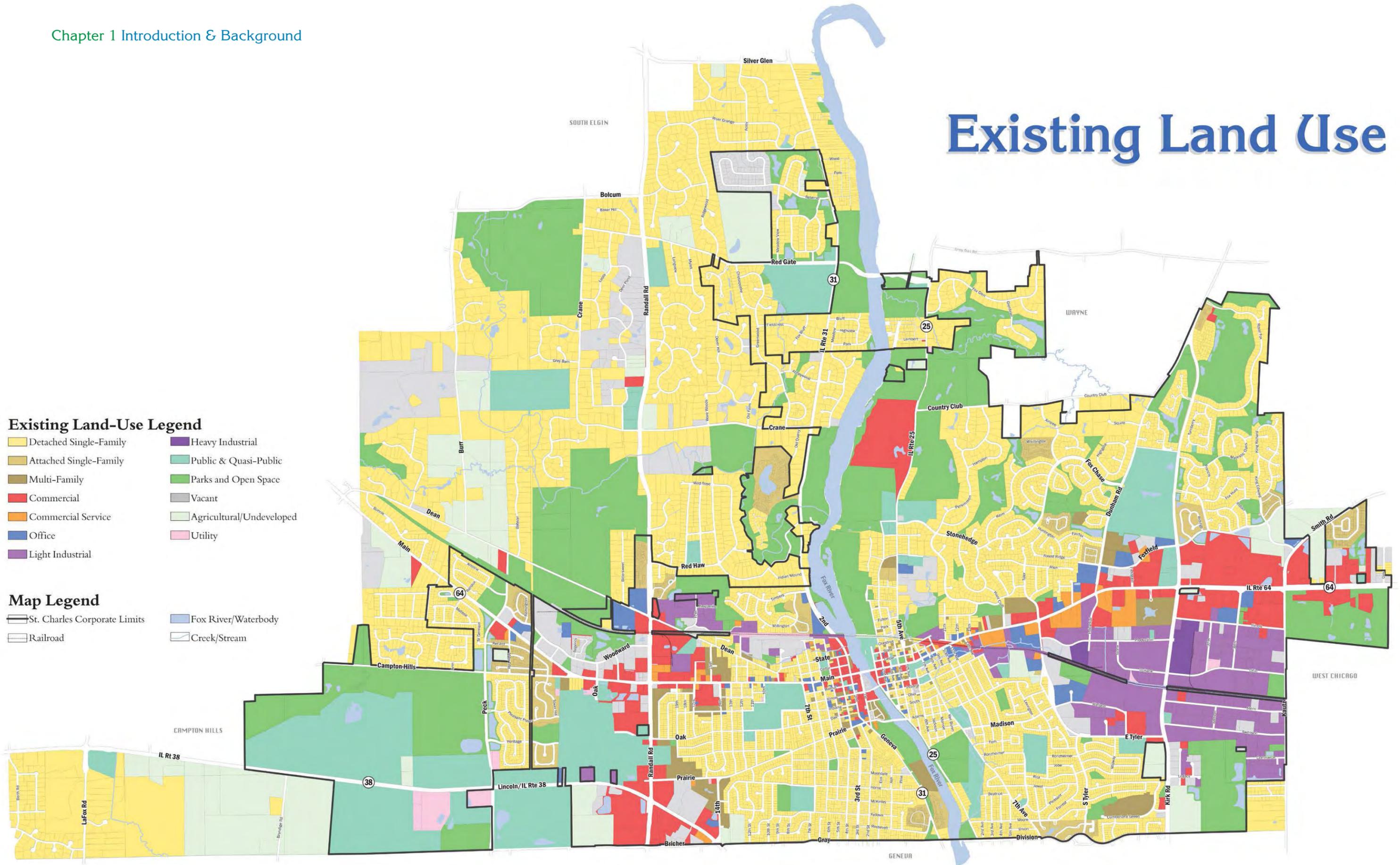
Agricultural/Undeveloped

Includes land actively used for agriculture as well as former farmland that could be developed in the future.

Vacant

A parcel is considered vacant when it contains empty lots that can reasonably be considered available for redevelopment.

Existing Land Use



Existing Land-Use Legend

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Detached Single-Family | Heavy Industrial |
| Attached Single-Family | Public & Quasi-Public |
| Multi-Family | Parks and Open Space |
| Commercial | Vacant |
| Commercial Service | Agricultural/Undeveloped |
| Office | Utility |
| Light Industrial | |

Map Legend

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| St. Charles Corporate Limits | Fox River/Waterbody |
| Railroad | Creek/Stream |



Community Outreach

St. Charles is known as an engaged community with high levels of civic participation. A community outreach strategy was developed with this in mind in order to provide every opportunity for community involvement. The planning process for the St. Charles Comprehensive Plan sought input from a broad spectrum of the community including residents, business and property owners, community service providers, elected/appointed officials, and City staff.

A variety of outreach efforts were used to provide multiple avenues to gather feedback regarding existing conditions and local issues, needs, and the aspirations of City residents. Outreach exercises were also used to promote a sense of community and foster stewardship for the plan by underscoring that participants' voices have been heard and that their ideas have influenced the final decisions.

The following is a summary of the community outreach efforts that were completed in the early stages of the planning process and used to document existing conditions and identify issues. The following activities were conducted as major components of the outreach process:

- » Project Website
- » Project Initiation Meeting and Workshop
- » Community Workshop
- » Business Workshop
- » Subarea Workshops (East Side, West Side, and Downtown)
- » Key Person Interviews
- » Community Wide Visioning Workshop
- » Charlestowne Mall Visioning Workshop
- » Community Open Houses

Comprehensive Plan Task Force

A Comprehensive Plan Task Force was appointed by the Mayor, with the advice and consent of the City Council, in order to oversee development of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Representatives were appointed from City Council, Plan Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, as well as former and current members of the Housing Commission, Zoning Commission, First Street Design Committee, Downtown St. Charles Partnership Board, and residents at-large.

Project Website

A project website was created in order to provide a single source for all information related to the Comprehensive Plan process. The website contained project information and updates, meeting notices and summaries, and downloadable copies of draft documents for the duration of the process and beyond. In order to provide convenient and comprehensive information, the project website was linked to the City's website. Visitors also had the option of subscribing to an RSS feed to be notified of updates to the website. The project website will remain active after the plan making process.

Project Initiation Workshop

Wednesday, June 29, 2011

On Wednesday, June 29, 2011, a project initiation meeting was held with the Comprehensive Plan Task Force (CPTF) at City Hall, to set the foundation for the planning program and review and discuss the overall direction and policy issues facing the St. Charles community. The meeting reviewed overall project objectives and concluded with a Project Initiation Workshop. The workshop solicited the views of the CPTF regarding their concerns and aspirations for the City of St. Charles and its planning area.

St. Charles Comprehensive Plan Project Initiation Workshop

Wednesday, August 31, 2011

On Wednesday, August 31, 2011, the first Community Workshop for the Comprehensive Plan process was held. The workshop was the first of many face-to-face outreach events scheduled for the Comprehensive Planning Process. During this meeting, residents were given an opportunity to voice their concerns, the things they like about the City, and to hear the ideas of their friends and neighbors. Additionally, this event provided a chance for community members to learn about the purpose of a comprehensive plan and the process to be undertaken.

East Side Subarea Workshop

Thursday, September 22, 2011

On Thursday September 22, 2011, a community workshop was held at the St. John Neumann Church to give the community a chance to voice their concerns about the area of St. Charles to the East of the Fox River. This was an interactive workshop where residents were able to place labels on a map indicating areas of concern and then follow up with a description on an index card. Following this opening exercise, residents, community leaders, and other stakeholders participated in a discussion about the exercise.

West Side Subarea Workshop

Thursday, September 28, 2011

On Thursday September 28, 2011, a community workshop was held at the Kane County Circuit Clerk Building to give the community a chance to voice their concerns about the area of St. Charles to the West of the Fox River. This was an interactive workshop where residents were able to place labels on a map indicating areas of concern and then follow up with a description on an index card. Following this opening exercise, residents, community leaders, and other stakeholders participated in a discussion about the exercise.

Business Workshop

Tuesday, October 4, 2011

A workshop for St. Charles business owners and members of the development community was held on Tuesday, October 4, 2011 at the Council Chambers at City Hall. The workshop provided attendees with an opportunity to identify issues facing the City with an emphasis on the business environment and development regulations. Approximately 30 individuals participated in the workshop, which was conducted as an informal discussion amongst members of the business community, City staff, and the consultant.

Key Person Interviews

October 11 & 12, 2011

As a part of the Community Outreach phase of the Comprehensive Plan's planning process, confidential interviews were conducted with individuals to discuss existing conditions and potentials within the St. Charles community. Interviewees from all facets of life in St. Charles were asked to participate. These individuals work at local businesses and non-profits, as elected officials, community leaders, and citizens who have a unique connection to the community's history.

Interviews were conducted on October 11 and October 12, 2011 and lasted approximately 30 minutes each. Each interviewee was asked a series of questions regarding the community.

Downtown Subarea Workshop

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

On Wednesday, October 12, 2011, a downtown community workshop was held at the Baker Memorial Community Center to give the community a chance to voice their concerns about the downtown areas of St. Charles. This was an interactive workshop where residents were able to place labels on a map indicating areas of concern and then follow up with a description on an index card. Following this opening exercise, residents, community leaders, and other stakeholders participated in a discussion.

Community-Wide Visioning Workshop

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

On Wednesday, November 30, 2011, a community-wide visioning workshop was held at the City Hall to provide the community a chance to collaboratively craft a vision for St. Charles. This was an interactive workshop where residents were able to mark on a map the places they would like to see changes to their community. Following this mapping exercise, groups presented a summary of their vision to the workshop attendees.

The groups were encouraged to categorize their ideas by topic. These topics were transportation; parks, open space, and recreation; cultural, arts, and image; sustainability and environment; residential and neighborhoods; community facilities; and a category for ideas that don't fit into one of these defined topics.

Charlestowne Mall Visioning Workshop

Thursday, August 9, 2012

On Thursday, August 9, 2012, a visioning workshop was held at the City Hall to provide the community a chance to collaboratively craft a vision specifically for the Charlestowne Mall within the East Gateway Subarea. Groups were asked to assume the role of future journalists covering the past 10 years of developments at the Mall.

Using a map, markers, and example photos of different types of development, each table was also asked to develop two distinct visions for the mall site: one which assumes that the mall structure stays but is adapted or repositioned, and another that assumes the mall structure is gone and the entire site can undergo comprehensive redevelopment. Following this mapping exercise, groups presented a summary of their vision to the workshop attendees.

Community Open Houses

August - December, 2012

Towards the end of the planning process, a series of open houses were held at City Hall. At each open house members of the community could review the current version of the Plan, talk to the project team, and provide feedback and comments. These events were crucial for the formation of the Plan, both because they allowed the project team to hear directly from individual stakeholders and because they kept residents updated about how the Plan was progressing. The dialogue inspired by these open houses led to direct improvements to the Plan at all stages.

