

# 3 Goals & Objectives

The City of St. Charles' Comprehensive Plan looks forward over the next 10-15 years and expresses what the City desires to become in the future. This section presents the Plan's goals and objectives which outline how the City can achieve its desired outcome. The goals and objectives form the framework for planning recommendations, policies, future projects and actions:

**Goals** describe desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.

**Objectives** describe more specific actions that should be undertaken by the City to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

Together, the goals and objectives provide specific direction and serve as a guide for the evaluation of development proposals and land use alternatives. They are based heavily on the input and topic areas that resulted from the multi-faceted community outreach process in order to provide a reliable policy guide for decision-making in the City. In addition to the input received from extensive public participation, these goals and objectives are based on input from the Comprehensive Plan Task Force.

**The Goals and Objectives are numbered for reference purposes only and are in no particular order.**

Goals and Objectives have been established for:

- » Residential Areas;
- » Commercial and Office Areas;
- » Industrial Areas;
- » Transportation and Circulation;
- » Infrastructure and Development;
- » Community Facilities;
- » Parks, Open Space and Environmental Features;
- » Image and Identity;
- » Economic Development; and,
- » City Services and Administration.



A mixed use building situated along the Fox River

*These men upon arrival will first build their homes on the hills overlooking this river... Stores will open. Industry will come. Schools will be built, and soon church spires will rise up in the community.*

*- Legend of the Four Sons of Charlemagne*





Residential Areas

Goal 1

Maintain the City’s image and desirability as a great place to live by preserving and enhancing the diversity, quality, character, safety, affordability, and appeal of residential neighborhoods.

Objectives

- 1. Promote residential development and redevelopment of a variety of housing and dwelling unit types and densities in accordance with the Land Use Plan, and ensure the Zoning Ordinance and other regulatory tools are updated appropriately.
- 2. Work with home owners associations and property management companies to enforce property maintenance requirements in private residential developments.
- 3. Strictly enforce buffering, landscaping, screening and lighting requirements of adjacent commercial areas to minimize the negative impacts of commercial development on residential uses.
- 4. Discourage “cut through” commercial traffic on local streets through signage, enforcement, traffic calming and other measures that focus vehicles on streets designated to carry through-traffic.

Goal 2

Maintain existing housing stock as the foundation of the City’s traditional neighborhoods.

Objectives

- 1. Accommodate residential renovation and redevelopment through an expedient, yet thorough permitting process.
- 2. Inventory and enhance regulatory protections for the City’s historic homes.
- 3. Preserve sound existing housing through regular, active code enforcement and preventative maintenance programs.
- 4. Explore the creation of a vacant building registration and inspection program to prevent foreclosed properties from having a detrimental impact on surrounding properties.
- 5. Prevent the impacts of incompatible development on residential areas through implementation of the Land Use Plan and buffering, screening, and separation requirements where necessary, and provide areas of transitioning residential and commercial density and intensity of use between established residential areas and surrounding uses where appropriate.

Goal 3

Develop new housing that is representative of the local character and take advantage of the local goods and services the City offers.

Objectives

- 1. Consistently administer and enforce residential development regulations, including compliance with setbacks, height, tree preservation, stormwater, bulk, density and other development regulations.
- 2. Consistently administer and enforce residential construction regulations, including construction hours, fencing, trash and debris, parking, and other construction related activities that can impact nearby properties.
- 3. Develop a Residential Design & Pattern Book and Manual to ensure that new and infill residential construction (including infill and teardown construction) and additions are of an appropriate scale and character to surrounding architecture.
- 4. Amend development policies to ensure that new neighborhoods include basic pedestrian infrastructure and open space allowances.

Goal 4

Enable residents to be life-long citizens by adopting an “aging in place” approach to development, maintenance, and related services.

Objectives

- 1. Explore the creation of a property maintenance program to assist residents, particularly seniors, with affordable lawn cutting and snow removal services.
- 2. Promote the economic importance, and support the provision of, a variety of housing types (such as single-family, multi-family and senior housing) and economic choices (owner-occupied and rental) within the City that meet the specific needs of elderly residents, including accessibility, single-story units, multi-sensory technologies, etc., and help sustain a high quality of independent living.
- 3. Maintain the existing affordable housing stock so that long-term residents and workers can afford to live in St. Charles.





Commercial & Office Areas

Goal 1

Develop attractive and highly functional retail and commercial areas that are market responsive, create a diverse tax base, and serve the needs of the City’s residents and, in some areas, a larger regional market.

Objectives

- 1. Maintain a range of retail and service activities throughout the City.
- 2. Build upon the existing commercial zoning district structure to define and designate more specific functional roles for the various commercial areas within the City distinguished by developments with local, community, and/or regional service markets.
- 3. Fully implement and enforce design standards expressed in the Design Review Standards and Guidelines (Chapter 17.06 of the Zoning Ordinance) and Corridor Improvement Program.
- 4. Ensure that new commercial development and redevelopment is designed in scale with, and complementary to, existing adjacent development that aligns with the vision for future character.
- 5. New or expanded parking structures should be designed to complement the architecture and urban form of the surrounding area.
- 6. Ensure that all new, improved, and existing commercial developments are effectively screened and buffered from adjacent residential uses.
- 7. Ensure that all retail, office, and service commercial activities are logically organized by use and concentrated within or near areas of similar or compatible uses.

- 8. Recognize, support and encourage the catalytic role of new campuses and buildings of higher education in appropriate locations within the City.
- 9. Recognize, support and encourage the catalytic role of medical services in appropriate locations within the City.
- 10. Where applicable, require the design of new commercial developments to incorporate public amenities such as parks, plazas, arcades and connections to existing or proposed trails.
- 11. Integrate existing programs, such as the Downtown Façade Improvement Program and Corridor Improvement Grant Program, with potential new funding sources to assist businesses and property owners with façade improvements, landscaping, parking improvements, and modernization of aging structures and facilities.
- 12. Continue to evaluate the costs and benefits of using incentives and other techniques to initiate redevelopment of key opportunity sites.
- 13. Initiate programs to encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of older commercial buildings and areas which are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete including improvements to infrastructure, technologies, functionality, access, and operational footprints.
- 14. Implement a more systematic and proactive property maintenance and code enforcement process in commercial areas of the City.

Goal 2

Enhance the economic viability, productivity, appearance and function of the City’s commercial corridors, including Randall Road, Main Street, Lincoln Highway, and Kirk Road.

Objectives

- 1. Promote a healthy and mutually reinforcing mix of commercial, retail, and service uses along key corridors within the City including Randall Road, Main Street, Lincoln Highway, and Kirk Road.
- 2. Utilize a “character node” approach by requiring high-quality development along Randall Road and Main Street at key intersections with other arterial or collector streets that serve as the “front door” into the primary commercial corridors.
- 3. Establish design and improvement standards for commercial areas to guide the scale, appearance, orientation, and overall character of new development.
- 4. Encourage appropriate signage along corridors to ensure safe traffic movements into, out of, and through commercial areas.
- 5. Encourage large shopping centers or corporate campuses and office development to enhance the image of major corridors by orienting attractive facades, high-quality signage, and decorative landscaping towards the primary street frontage.
- 6. Review and update signage ordinances being flexible to the desire and necessity of business identification but mindful of its potential to block views, create visual clutter and detract from the appearance of the City and its commercial areas.
- 7. Promote the relocation of certain types of incompatible businesses that generate externalities related to aesthetics, access, noise, light or other nuisances to more appropriate places instead of the highly visible locations along major corridors.

- 8. Develop and install a streetscape program consisting of elements that strengthen the unified theme of the commercial areas such as benches, bus shelters, trash cans, streetlights, medians, way finding signage and other amenities.
- 9. Work cooperatively with IDOT and KDOT to facilitate desired improvements within their right-of-way including improved landscaping, lighting, and gateway signage.
- 10. Encourage the integration of transit infrastructure, facilities and technologies into the public right-of-way, private street networks, and major structures or destinations.
- 11. Identify underperforming and underutilized parcels and sites, such as the southeast corner of Main Street and Kirk Road, and work with property owners and developers to promote their redevelopment, encouraging parcel assembly where appropriate.
- 12. Promote the modernization and/or redevelopment of the Charlestowne Mall and other outdated commercial sites.
- 13. Promote coordinated and shared vehicle access to commercial properties along the City’s commercial corridors and remove redundant and unnecessary curb cuts to improve traffic flow and vehicular and pedestrian safety.
- 14. Consider adopting parking capacity maximums that preserve the character of commercial development and reduce storm water runoff.
- 15. Encourage shared parking programs and policies in commercial areas wherever possible.





- Goal 3**

Revitalize Downtown St. Charles as the symbolic “heart” of the community and enhance its role as the City’s primary mixed use pedestrian environment.

**Objectives**

  1. Continue to revitalize Downtown with a mixture of uses including commercial, office, restaurant, and residential.
  2. Focus efforts and resources on development projects that are likely to catalyze other investment based on the population and benefits they bring to the Downtown.
  3. Permit and encourage temporary or seasonal uses, such as a farmers market, on underutilized sites and community open spaces that can attract desirable and complementary activities to Downtown.
  4. Continue the implementation of strategies included in the 2000 Downtown Strategy Plan and 2002 River Corridor Master Plan.
5. Maintain Downtown as a pedestrian-oriented area that is unlike any other commercial area in the community through mixed use development and infrastructure focused on walkability.
  6. Promote new infill development in the Downtown area and encourage the consolidation of smaller development parcels where possible to foster larger, more coordinated development opportunities.
  7. Strengthen or enhance or improve the pedestrian environment on Main Street as the heart of the Downtown area by working closely with IDOT to mitigate the impacts of truck and vehicular traffic, and coordinating pedestrian improvements with roadway enhancements, streetscaping, and private development.
  8. Build on the regulatory framework established by the Design Review Standards and Guidelines to foster a desired and predictable built form in the Downtown related to specific elements, including architectural detail, façade transparency, signage type and location, lighting, specific building materials appropriate for downtown, etc.
  9. Zoning for the Downtown should be analyzed and amended if necessary to adequately accommodate appropriate new development and establish the desirable physical form of the Downtown.
  10. Undue or inappropriate zoning regulations or procedures should be modified or removed as to eliminate unnecessary barriers to Downtown investment.
  11. Consider establishing a program to assist with improvements to existing buildings that bring them to current codes and standards so that they can sustain occupancy and market competitiveness.
  12. Manage truck traffic in Downtown, to the extent possible given IDOT jurisdiction over several significant corridors, so that it does not negatively impact the character and functionality of the area for patrons, residents and business owners.
  13. Ensure parking adequately supports businesses by conducting a circulation and parking needs assessment for Downtown and developing a plan for the continued provision of adequate parking.
  14. Require larger development and redevelopment projects within the Downtown to provide detailed parking and traffic studies which plan for current and future parking demand, access and circulation.
  15. Promote and encourage shared parking arrangements and facilities wherever feasible to minimize the land area within Downtown dedicated to parking.
  16. Require Downtown development to be compatible with the scale and uses of the surrounding area and minimize and mitigate any negative impacts on adjacent land-uses, including noise, pedestrian and vehicular traffic, late hours of operation, litter, etc.





Industrial Areas

Goal

Continue to support a diversified light industrial/business park/commercial service economic base that provides employment opportunities within the community.

Objectives

1. Preserve the integrity of the industrial park by preventing the encroachment of businesses or land uses that could impact the long term viability of industrial areas. Parking needs, traffic issues, and potential impacts to existing or future industrial business operations should be considered when uses such as entertainment or recreational uses, community facilities, schools, places of worship, etc. locate in industrial areas.
2. Establish and maintain regular lines of communication with industrial property owners and businesses.
3. Promote and encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of older industrial buildings and areas which are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete or undesirable including improvements to loading docks, technology infrastructure, access, building facades, signage, streetscaping, landscaping, and parking areas to accommodate more appropriate and market viable uses.
4. Encourage the use of green technology and best management practices (BMPs) in the development and redevelopment of industrial uses and market the City’s industrial areas as centers of green technology and light industrial.
5. Reclassify and rezone manufacturing areas which are functionally obsolete due to impactful proximity to residential, small lot size and challenging lot configurations. Identify industrial properties that may be potential brownfield sites in order to assess key redevelopment sites and seek funding for redevelopment.
6. Require all industrial development to meet specific applicable performance standards for noise, air, odor and any other forms of environmental pollution.
7. Utilize appropriate setbacks, screening, buffering, and site design to minimize the negative impacts of industrial uses on adjacent areas, such as noise, vibration, air pollutants, odor, truck traffic, large shadows, etc.
8. Ensure that all uses are effectively screened from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way, through the use of landscaping and fencing.
9. Maintain the public utilities and road infrastructure in all industrial areas to accommodate state-of-the-art technological needs of the businesses and the physical and circulation needs of truck traffic moving throughout the area.





## Economic Development

### Goal 1

Prioritize improvements to existing areas and developments including adaptive reuse and redevelopment.

#### Objectives

1. Build on and continue to implement the 2007 Economic Development Plan as a basis for strengthening retail, service, office, and industrial uses through St. Charles.
2. Where appropriate, consider using incentives such as Tax Increment Financing as a means of fostering redevelopment in Downtown, the Charlestowne Mall site, and other areas of the City identified as priority investment locations.
3. Promote the use of tax credit incentives and other grant programs to fund renovation and expansion.
4. Identify resources for the maintenance of the City's physical facilities including buildings, properties, and infrastructure. Consider implementing green infrastructure throughout the public realm to reduce long-term maintenance costs and attract additional funding and support.
5. Identify additional small business assistance programs to stabilize and improve conditions for existing businesses.
6. Renovate or redevelop aging shopping centers and commercial areas, such as the Charlestowne Mall, in order to maximize their contribution to the City's tax base.
7. Enhance the appearance of commercial districts to attract businesses and customers, particularly Downtown and Randall Road.
8. Improve commercial building design and development controls by developing and utilizing Design and Development Guidelines and other tools.
9. Accommodate renovation and redevelopment through an expedient, yet thorough permitting process.
10. Ensure that new development pays its fair share of public facilities and service costs, which are attributable to the demand for additional facilities or services.

### Goal 2

Work with the City's economic development partners to maintain and strengthen a diverse tax base through the attraction, retention, and expansion of businesses in the City.

#### Objectives

1. Support the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor's Bureau and the Downtown St. Charles Partnership and other non-profit organizations who share similar goals in their efforts to attract, market, and promote local businesses.
2. Support the need for the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the Downtown St. Charles Partnership to evolve based on their unique combination of successes and new challenges.
3. Coordinate with the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce and Downtown St. Charles Partnership to organize a task force whose mission is to identify opportunities to reduce the cost of doing business in St. Charles in order to enhance the City's competitiveness.
4. Continue to market St. Charles as a community of diverse businesses whose presence enhances the community's reputation as a place to live and work.
5. Promote the City's commercial corridors and Downtown through joint marketing efforts, community events, and district identification signage.
6. Develop and implement a strategic marketing and recruitment plan for targeted businesses types.
7. Coordinate planning and economic development activities in a manner which provides regular opportunities for contact between business and development interests within the City.
8. Seek an appropriate mix of retail, commercial service, office, and industrial uses throughout the City.
9. Maximize retail sales tax-generating uses, where appropriate, by concentrating retailers in Downtown and the City's commercial corridors.
10. Seek opportunities for new employment growth through the retention and expansion of existing employers.





## Transportation & Circulation

### Goal 1

Improve the safety, function and efficiency of vehicular movement and parking facilities within the City.

#### Objectives

1. Work with IDOT and Kane County to install and maintain “intelligent” traffic signals and systems, including synchronized signalization, real-time signalization phasing adjustments, transit and emergency priority technologies, real-time parking management and information systems, etc., along key corridors and routes to facilitate the efficient movement of vehicles within and through the City and minimize the impact of peak traffic flows.
2. Protect and improve the function of the street network through controlled access, land-use decisions, and street/intersection design improvements.
3. Complete logical “gaps” in the existing roadway network, such as extending Woodward Drive east to Randall Road, that would provide a greater level of local connectivity and mobility.
4. Continue to coordinate with relevant agencies to ensure that the Red Gate Bridge crossing is an effective pedestrian and bicycle connection over the Fox River for the north side of the community.
5. Ensure adequate resources are made available for the maintenance of City streets and public rights-of-way.
6. Eliminate or minimize the use of cul-de-sacs and dead end streets in new development and provide for and connect to stub-streets where appropriate.
7. Work closely with existing business owners to consolidate or remove unnecessary, redundant, obsolete or unsafe curb cuts by providing cross access between and shared access into businesses wherever possible.
8. Consider priority parking spaces for no- and low-emissions vehicles in all public parking facilities and the provision of similar spaces in private parking facilities.
9. Explore the feasibility of a car-sharing program and provide development incentives for the provision of car-share parking facilities.
10. Review existing parking in Downtown to identify opportunities to increase parking supply through changes to circulation or the orientation of existing parking spaces.
11. If validated through a parking needs assessment and separate feasibility and engineering analysis, expand public parking facilities in Downtown.
12. Throughout the City, establish a wayfinding signage system that directs motorists to key retail, office, industrial, and community facility destinations.
13. Establish specific traffic and circulation management strategies for areas impacted by congestion at specific times, such as neighborhood blocks surrounding schools or major destinations.





Goal 2

Provide a coordinated transportation network for pedestrians and bicyclists in order to connect them to employment, shopping and recreational areas.

Objectives

- 1. Build on the analysis and continue to implement the recommendations developed as part of the 2003 St. Charles Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan effort to expand the bike path system and create a complete trail system that connects to the regional bike network.
- 2. Where appropriate, encourage new development/ redevelopment to include connections and amenities for pedestrians, bicyclists and commuters.
- 3. Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety throughout the City with an emphasis on safer and more convenient routes for non-motorized traffic.
- 4. Expand the City’s network of trails and sidewalks to provide better connections between residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, Downtown, and other commercial areas.
- 5. Conduct an analysis of potentially dangerous pedestrian crosswalks in Downtown and along other heavily trafficked roads, including Randall Road , East and West Main Street and certain collector streets, and improve them, where feasible, with additional lighting, signalization, bollards, bulb outs and/or curb extensions.

- 6. Identify key pedestrian routes and budget for streetlight replacement along those routes to include pedestrian-scaled lighting amenities and identify areas throughout the City needing enhanced lighting for pedestrian safety.
- 7. Budget for on-going maintenance and repair of sidewalks as part of the City’s Capital Improvement Plan, including the full utilization of the existing cost-sharing program with private property owners and a proactive stance by the City to address improvements where a larger public benefit exists.
- 8. Maintain and expand the sidewalk and crosswalk network throughout the City’s commercial districts, ensuring that sidewalks are located along both sides of all streets within these areas and that they connect to businesses and other destinations, and that crosswalks are provided that enhance mobility across significant traffic corridors.
- 9. Continue to implement traffic calming measures where appropriate on neighborhood streets, Downtown streets, and elsewhere to improve pedestrian safety and comfort.
- 10. Conduct and implement an on-street bike lane feasibility analysis and plan.
- 11. Work with the Police Department and school district to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Goal 3

Establish a high-quality public transit system as a vital part of St. Charles’s transportation network.

Objectives

- 1. Ensure that levels of public transit service are maintained and enhanced throughout the City.
- 2. Build on the 2010 Transit Circulator Study to create a Comprehensive Transit Plan to identify key traffic generators and destinations within the City and ensure they are adequately served by bus routes and other modes of alternative transportation.
- 3. Coordinate with transit providers to align land use policies to provide the greatest possible level of access to areas best served by regional and local bus transit.
- 4. Work closely with Pace or other transit providers to provide service to nearby Metra terminals in order to maximize regional mobility.
- 5. Work with area employers and businesses to promote and implement traffic demand management and reduction techniques including the use of public transit, carpooling, walking and bicycling.
- 6. Promote vanpooling, employer shuttles and Metra feeders as an economical, convenient and environmentally-friendly alternative to driving.
- 7. Inventory and assess the condition and location of all transit shelters in the City and ensure schedules are adequately posted, shelters are in good condition, and links are in place to City’s sidewalk system, community facilities, employment centers and other key destinations.
- 8. Work closely with Kane County and transit providers to implement a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, including facilities, infrastructure, rolling stock and technologies, for the Randall Road corridor.





Infrastructure & Development

Goal

Maintain high-quality, environmentally friendly, and efficient infrastructure systems and networks through regular investment and maintenance to meet the changing needs of the City today and in the future.

Objectives

1. Continue to budget for and implement the improvement, expansion, and maintenance of the community's infrastructure, including roadways, electric infrastructure, stormwater drainage system, water production and distribution infrastructure, and sewer collection and treatment infrastructure.

2. Continually study pavement and sidewalk condition analysis to identify and prioritize roads and sidewalks in need of repair, and continue the City's sidewalk repair program based on evaluations of concrete deterioration and trip hazards.

3. Use strategic investment in infrastructure to guide development to priority areas and make existing and future growth areas competitive for local and regional economic development.
4. Encourage participation in the City's Sidewalk Gap Program in order to expand the community's pedestrian infrastructure, and take a proactive stance on the improvement of sidewalk segments where a general public benefit exists.

5. Promote the coordination of infrastructure and utility projects with other agencies to reduce City costs through economies of scale and prevent/avoid redundant investments.

6. Investigate and pursue options for continued, expanded implementation of green infrastructure integrated with Best Management Practices (BMP's) for infiltration-based stormwater management throughout the City to address flooding issues, improve water quality, and reduce long-term maintenance costs. Monitor the performance and cost/benefit of these strategies and fine tune them over time to be best adapted for St. Charles.

7. Promote the adaptation of sustainable technologies and application of sustainable management practices to existing development throughout the City.
8. Promote the use of sustainable design, engineering, and development practices for all new development in the City. Encourage the integration of green technologies into buildings, pavement, and landscapes, including green roofs, permeable pavement systems, renewable energy systems, bio-retention, rainwater harvesting re-use systems and other strategies.

9. Promote the use of integrated sustainable practices for the retrofit or redevelopment of all sites in the City. Where practical, demonstrate sustainability with the integration of green practices into public streets, parking lots, sidewalks, parks, and facility renovations over time.

10. Periodically review and update the City's development policies and codes, including the Subdivision Control Ordinance and Stormwater Management Ordinance, and update as appropriate to ensure consistency in the integration of high quality, high performance urban design and ecological water management standards.

11. Continue to seek grants, loans and other sources of intergovernmental funding to assist with capital improvements and projects to minimize the financial impact on the City.
12. Continue to collaborate with environmental advocacy groups such as the Conservation Foundation and others to educate the public about the benefits and values of integrated green practices for individual residential and business sites.

13. Review and evaluate new development and retrofit/redevelopment proposals to ensure pedestrian mobility and amenities are included and prioritized.

14. Plan and budget for beautification elements to be incorporated into planned infrastructure improvements such as landscaped parking lots, planted medians, landscaped sidewalks, and street trees.

15. Consider incorporating the use of solar powered street lights, LED/LEP lights, and other green technologies into future roadway improvements and street lighting replacement.

16. Employ green practices to attract additional alternative sources of funding, support, and revenue for otherwise conventional public infrastructure projects. Combine and leverage various resources to maximize the value of first costs and reduce long-term operational and maintenance costs.





## Community Facilities

### Goal

Ensure the provision of high-quality public facilities, including municipal and educational facilities, for all residents of the City of St. Charles.

### Objectives

1. Support the Public Library District's efforts to modernize and enhance their facility as a civic anchor for the Downtown.
2. Work with the School District to review the existing parking facilities, buildings, drop-off/pick-up areas, and bus parking, including ingress and egress, to ensure they are adequate and if not, identify opportunities for improvement.
3. Work with the School District to ensure proper buffering surrounding school facilities and safe and adequate access to school sites.
4. Ensure the City continues to benefit from an adequate level of fire and police protection throughout the City.
5. Enhance the physical relationship between school facilities and surrounding neighborhoods through enhanced pedestrian connections and better traffic management for buses and vehicles during peak traffic times.
6. Continue to support the operation of other important community service providers, including religious institutions and the Illinois Youth Center and others, and maintain positive and mutually beneficial relationships with each organization.
7. Work with service providers to seek appropriate locations for specialized facilities and services for senior citizens, youth, and disadvantaged populations, in particular daytime facilities for the homeless.
8. Work with other public agencies to maintain adequate and appropriate sites and facilities for the provision of public services.
9. Conduct a comprehensive life cycle assessment for City buildings, equipment, vehicles, facilities, and properties and develop/revise a multi-year maintenance plan and on-going maintenance program.
10. Consider pursuing LEED certification for new or renovated City facilities.
11. Increase efforts to identify alternative sources of funds such as grants to fund a wide range of public projects including, but not limited to City facilities, parks and recreation enhancements, transportation improvements, economic development related projects, and social services.
12. Using various design and signage tools, reinforce community landmarks such as City Hall, the Central and Moody Millington Historic Districts, and the many historic homes and structures in and around the Downtown area.
13. Recognize, support, and encourage the catalytic role of new campuses and buildings of higher education in appropriate locations within the City.
14. Recognize, support, and encourage the catalytic role of medical services in appropriate locations within the City.





Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features

Goal 1

Work with the St. Charles Park District to continue to provide opportunities for passive and active recreation through high-quality facilities and programming.

Objectives

- 1. Work cooperatively with the Park District and other interested agencies and stakeholders to implement the Park District Comprehensive Master Plan that is intended to guide the development of physical facilities and amenities, recreational programs, protection and restoration of environmental assets, the use of financial resources, creation of a positive image, inter-governmental cooperation, the use of volunteers, and the efficient use of natural resources.
- 2. Work with the Park District to market and promote the City’s trail system including the on-line posting of the existing and proposed trail system.
- 3. Where appropriate, collaborate with the Park District in identifying grants and securing alternative funding for parks, open space, trail segments, trail connections, and other recreation amenities for the community.
- 4. Work with the Park District to identify potential park site locations in any identified underserved areas of the community, in particular small-scale playgrounds and pocket parks.

- 5. Enhance access to and connectivity along the Fox River through open spaces and trails that link to community and regional networks, and manage land use and development along the river to prevent the insertion of uses that detract from the character of or accessibility to the river.
- 6. Should it be determined that there is the demand or desire for major new parks or facilities, work cooperatively with the Park District to identify the best locations and types of investment, considering access to local and regional roadways, the impacts of traffic, noise, etc. on surrounding areas, potential spin-off development opportunities, the provision of infrastructure to the site, the opportunity cost of developing the property as another use, and other financial, environmental, or physical impacts that may occur.
- 7. Continue to work with the Park District to address the City’s stormwater issues.

Goal 2

Protect and promote the City’s unique environmental assets and promote the importance of environmental issues and sustainable practices to residents and businesses.

Objectives

- 1. Provide opportunities for increased public participation in environmental advocacy.
- 2. With the Park District, continue to link parks and open space with the multi-use trail system.
- 3. Collaborate with the Park District to ensure adequate resources for the maintenance of City-owned environmentally-sensitive lands and to continue restoration, management, and long-term stewardship of all natural landscapes in the City, especially high-quality, diverse native landscape systems.
- 4. With the Park District, create a Public Areas Beautification Plan for the City which should include recommendations for improving and increasing green space.
- 5. With the Park District, install environmental education and interpretive signage throughout the community in locations with natural areas and important environmental assets.
- 6. Establish local ordinances and regulations to preserve and protect trees and other environmental features throughout the City and its neighborhoods.

- 7. Establish and/or strengthen zoning, development, and other appropriate regulations to protect and maintain floodplains, flood-prone areas (Localized Poor Drainage Areas), wetlands, remnant natural areas, mature native tree stands, and other environmentally sensitive landscape elements.
- 8. Continue to actively monitor the outbreak of Emerald Ash Borer and other harmful insects that threaten the City’s trees and environmental features and take proactive measures to protect these important community amenities including planting and promoting a diverse array of tree and plant species.
- 9. Explore sustainably-focused strategies to improve water quality in stormwater detention ponds in the City to prevent or minimize the formation of algae, pest breeding habitat, and plant, animal, and insect species known to be invasive to natural areas. Strategies include reduction in use of lawn chemicals, infiltration/treatment with green infrastructure such as bio-retention for smaller rain events upstream of the pond, constructed wetland/floating restorers, and/or mechanical aeration. Design, implement, maintain and operate these strategies to rely upon renewable resources (water, energy, etc.) to the degree possible.
- 10. Continue to prohibit the burning of leaves and other landscape waste; encourage composting and integration into local soils to improve fertility and water retention. Promote the use of controlled prescribed burns as a method to manage and steward natural (prairie, woodland, wetland) landscapes when performed under permit by trained personnel.





Image & Identity

Goal

Maintain a positive image and identity of the City that is distinct, recognizable, and reflective of its’ Fox River setting, natural history, architectural heritage, and legacy of innovation and leadership; amplify this “sense of place” to help distinguish St. Charles from other nearby communities and reinforce local pride.

Objectives

1. Encourage compatible and high-quality design and construction for all development/redevelopment with an emphasis on site design, building orientation, architecture, building materials and site improvements.

2. Provide for consistent and high-quality maintenance of all local streets, parkways, sidewalks, water towers and other visible municipal infrastructure.

3. Continue the promotion and enforcement of the Design Guidelines for the City’s current and future historic districts and landmark sites and buildings.

4. Provide information for walking tours of the City’s historic areas through web-based guides or easily accessible printed maps.
5. Implement streetscape enhancements that build upon and strengthen the theme(s) of local St. Charles branding. Integrate locally inspired materials, details, and forms into the streetscape elements- pavement, seating, signage, etc.

6. Create gateway features consisting of signage, walls, sculptures, pylons, fountains, lighting, monuments, and/or landscaping at key locations within the community to announce entry into St. Charles and to distinguish the City from adjacent municipalities.

7. Encourage subdivision and business park monument signs to include the City of St. Charles’ name and/or logo to promote the City’s identity.

8. Install wayfinding signage to direct vehicles to key community destinations including Downtown, historic districts and sites, major recreational amenities, and important community service providers.

9. Review, update, and strengthen the City’s landscape ordinance to ensure new development includes suitable, ecologically-based and aesthetically appropriate landscape areas, treatments, and long-term maintenance strategies integrated with stormwater approaches and other site functions to ensure long-term beauty and performance.
10. Expand and implement landscaping and tree planting and maintenance programs, such as the Corridor Improvement Grant Program, that beautify the residential and commercial areas of the City. Encourage these landscape enhancements to incorporate green infrastructure landscape strategies, especially when incentivized or encouraged by the City.

11. Develop a program to bury and/or relocate overhead utility lines along key commercial areas, including Downtown, Randall Road, and East Main Street, and where possible, coordinate such improvements with other planned capital improvements.

12. Expand the City’s Facade Improvement Program to encourage Downtown private property owners to implement landscaping, façade and signage improvements to their sites, buildings and businesses.

13. Implement a program to screen fixed utility locations, such as lift stations, pump houses, transformer sites, antennas, telephone switches, etc.

14. Through development policies and regulations, preserve prominent viewsheds to important natural and built features of the community, including the Fox River, Downtown, outlying historic structures, etc.
15. Review and update signage ordinances being flexible to the desire and necessity of business identification but mindful of its potential to block views, create visual clutter and detract from the appearance of the City and its commercial areas.

16. Strictly enforce landscaping, screening and signage requirements including non-conformity and amortization regulations of non-conforming signs.

17. Review development controls to ensure that they require appropriate screening of public utilities, dumpsters, rooftop equipment, etc.

18. Develop a marketing campaign to promote the advantages and benefits of living, working, visiting, or doing business in the City.





City Services & Administration

Goal 1

Continue to provide high-quality and efficient City services to meet the day to day needs of residents and businesses and create a safe and well-organized support system allowing both neighborhoods and businesses to thrive.

Objectives

- 1. Provide reliable infrastructure to the residents and businesses within the community including electricity (power and substation locations), water supply and distribution, sanitary sewers, and telecommunications.
- 2. Ensure the City continues to benefit from an adequate level of fire and police protection throughout the City.
- 3. Analyze City service levels to identify potential efficiencies in the administration and provision of services and departments.
- 4. Develop, monitor, and implement a Long-Range Financial Plan for the City and formally adopt long term strategies and solutions to address difficult financial decisions.
- 5. Maintain a consistent, yet flexible, budgeting process that can adapt to changing economic conditions.

- 6. Make available existing and/or new financial resources to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 7. Continue to regularly review and update the City’s Zoning Ordinance to appropriately meet the changing needs of the community.
- 8. Consider increases in the fines charged by the City for property maintenance as a measure to address foreclosed homes and other properties suffering from deferred maintenance.
- 9. Monitor fees charged for City Services to ensure fees charged are both fair and accurate and consider the use of fee-based services for some City services that are currently provided within the City’s tax levy for all properties.
- 10. Promote the Renewable Energy Program that enables City residents and businesses to purchase electricity from renewable sources in the State of Illinois.
- 11. Continue to coordinate the review and input of new development proposals with all affected City departments and public agencies such as the School District, and Park District.

Goal 2

Maintain a high level of communication with residents, business owners, property owners and partner agencies.

Objectives

- 1. Continue community outreach efforts for large capital projects, including opportunities for public review and comment such as open houses or online tools to solicit input and feedback.
- 2. Continue to utilize and promote the “community on-line mapping tool” introduced during the Comprehensive Planning process to maximize public input on future planning issues and projects.
- 3. Improve customer service levels at all points of contact with residents and provide regular training to ensure that a consistent message is delivered regarding City policies.
- 4. Continue to regularly update and publish information through the City’s multiple news platforms including the City website, local newspapers and social media outlets.
- 5. Maintain transparency related to City operations, including public finances and large City expenditures.
- 6. Establish a protocol for communication with Home-owners Associations to update residents on City projects and gather input.

- 7. Actively encourage resident participation in notifying the City of potential code violations.
- 8. Coordinate with the Metro West Council of Governments and adjacent communities, including South Elgin, Geneva, Wayne, West Chicago and Campton Hills, to assist in realizing mutual objectives and addressing issues, such as traffic, environment and growth, which transcend municipal boundaries.
- 9. Maintain a positive channel of communication with agencies such as Metra, Pace, Regional Transportation Authority, Kane County, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and major local service providers for better coordination regarding projects on their properties or within their jurisdiction.