



St. Charles Comprehensive Plan

A City Growing With Pride

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The Steering Committee and the Planners prepared five Concept Plans using information collected on land use, environmental restraints, development trends, transportation issues, and community input. The Concept Plans illustrate balanced growth scenarios by identifying compatible land uses, improving pedestrian facilities, creating alternative traffic patterns, and enhancing downtown.

- Community Structure
 - Downtown
 - State Highway 14 East Corridor
 - State Highway 14 West Corridor
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* Each of the sub areas will have a separate land use map and other generated maps and graphics supporting the proposed concepts

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APPENDIX

-2008 Winona County Housing Study

-Land Use Maps

The City of St. Charles would like to thank the following for their contribution to the development of this Comprehensive Plan:

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FOREWORD

The City of St. Charles lies among the rolling farmland of western Winona County with Olmsted County abutting the City to the west. St. Charles is the second largest city in Winona County, and occupies the southwestern Sections of St. Charles Township at the junction of State Highways 14 and 74 with Interstate 90 immediately south of the City. The South Fork of the Whitewater River flows along the northwestern portion of the City as it combines with other tributaries at the Whitewater State Park. The City is located in the center of a major population area with Rochester 20 miles to the west, Winona 25 miles to the east, and La Crosse, WI just over 40 miles to the southeast. The central location in proximity to many smaller communities in Winona and Olmsted counties also allows St. Charles to act as a retail hub for those communities.

Known as the “Gateway to the Whitewater Valley,” settlers founded the community in 1854 to work the fertile land amid limestone bluffs of southeastern Minnesota. The community quickly grew, and in four short years became a City. The coming of the railroad in 1864 accelerated the growth of St. Charles as the improved transportation, enabled convenient shipment of farm products.

According to the United States Census Bureau, St. Charles had a 2000 population of 3,587 residents occupying a land area of three and half-square miles (2,269-acres). The City has a projected 2007 population of 3,726 or an increase of 32-percent since the 2000 Census.



PURPOSE

Comprehensive planning can be defined as deciding where you want to go and how you will get there. This sounds easy enough. Yet planning for economic development, housing, roads, sewers, schools, environmental quality and parks is obviously more complex than planning a family trip, and it requires broad participation from the community. There are seven key steps in developing a comprehensive plan.

SEVEN KEY STEPS IN PLANNING

1. Organizing the process and engaging people in the Community to participate throughout.
2. Establishing a shared understanding of the most important issues and asking core questions about economic, environmental and social implications of these issues.
3. Identifying future needs and desires, and developing the vision; goals, policies and progress indicators that reflect them.
4. Developing strategies for addressing a Community's vision, goals and policies
5. Understanding relationships between possible plan strategies, accounting for their long-term costs and benefits, and choosing those that best fit a community.
6. Selecting plan bench marks, finalizing and adopting the plan.
7. Implementing the plan, tracking progress and updating the plan in future years as needed

A comprehensive plan generally includes background information on the essential cultural, demographic, economic, environmental, historic, physical and social elements of a community, the Community's vision, and the collection of goals, policies and strategies that will be used to realize that vision. The policies and background information can be separated into two documents, one that serves as the official plan and the other that is an official document of relevant background material that serves as the basis for all plans, reports and implementation activities. Sometimes strategies also are contained in a separate companion document called an implementation action plan.

The community should view this Plan as an advisory document, to not only the Planning and Zoning Commission, but also to all City Boards and Commissions as well as residents. The purpose of the Plan is to assist with decision-making relating to comprehensive planning activities in St. Charles over the next decade. The Winona County Planning Department wants to remind the Planning and Zoning Commission that the true value and implementation of this Plan will only be realized through the diligent efforts by City officials and residents.

Comprehensive planning is as much a process to engage the public in local decisions as it is to create a document for guiding development. The planning process is fundamentally a way for people with different perspectives to articulate the sort of community they would like to live in and leave behind. Planning can also help create a stable, predictable, fair set of policies and ground rules within which development, entrepreneurship and the marketplace can flourish. Above all, it is about making places better.

A Comprehensive Plan is an instrument for guiding the future of a community. The Comprehensive Plan includes goals, recommendations, and policies to guide St. Charles toward the vision that arose through the community planning process. The goals and recommendations contained in this Plan reflect the consensus of the residents of how to best achieve the desired future for St. Charles. The State of Minnesota through Statute 462.351 – 462.364 enables the City of St. Charles to create a Comprehensive Plan.

The Winona County Planning Department prepared this Plan with significant contributions from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the St. Charles Economic Development Authority, the St. Charles Planning and Zoning Commission, and from City residents. This Plan builds upon the two previous community planning efforts consisting of the 2000 Draft Comprehensive Plan and the 2005 Minnesota Design Team Charrette. The primary purpose of this Plan is a compilation of recommendations for the conservation and development of the physical form of St. Charles - this Plan also provides recommendations for the social and economic development of the City.

The following philosophies emerged as the basis for this Comprehensive Plan as means to *promote an appropriate balance of conservation and development for the City of St. Charles:*

- Encourage citizen participation,
- Preservation and the enhancement of natural features,
- Maintain community vitality and character,
- Sustain a diversity of housing options, and
- Conservation of the historical presence of Whitewater Avenue.
- Partnerships with businesses
- Priority of being an inclusive community



PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process began in the Spring of 2007, when the St. Charles Economic Development Authority (EDA) requested a proposal from the Winona County Planning Department describing the process for creating a comprehensive plan for St. Charles. The proposal used the two previous community planning efforts consisting of the 2000 Draft Comprehensive Plan and the 2005 Minnesota Design Team served as a starting point. The proposal also called for the formation of a seven-person Steering Committee composed of members of the City staff and elected officials, and community-minded individuals to help County Planners to identify opportunities and constraints.

The EDA recognizing the importance of having a Comprehensive Plan to aid the decision making process, approved of the proposal and forwarded it to the City Council with a favorable recommendation. The City Council knowing the value of a Comprehensive Plan accepted the recommendation from the EDA, and approved the proposal to create the plan.

County Planners began the task by reviewing information from the 2000 Draft Comprehensive Plan specific to Demographics, Industrial Development, Utilities, Parks & Recreation, and Public Facilities & Services as a foundation for the five Community Concepts. County Planners recognized at this early stage for the need to include discussions relating to the influence of the Whitewater River and trails on St. Charles. County Planners also spent several days of field inventorying and mapping during the summer as a means to create a current land use map of the City.

A significant component of the planning process consisted of gathering information and observations through interviewing key groups and Steering Committee meetings. Since September of 2007, the Steering Committee met twice a month to discuss and review land use scenarios for the Community Concepts. The County Planners conducted a Work Session on January 22, 2008 before the City Council and appointed officials as a means to collect comments of the Community Concepts.

The Steering Committee held the first Public Open House on March 5, 2008 in order to gauge the perceptions of the residents to the preliminary planning themes. The Committee introduced the five Community Concepts to the residents and asked them their opinions regarding the land use proposals illustrated in the concepts. Participants also had the opportunity to provide written comments regarding the concepts.

In the fall of 2008 the Comprehensive Planning process and efforts of the Steering Committee were put on hold as Winona County Planners were busy with the Winona County Zoning Ordinance update. In April of 2009 as the efforts were starting to kick into high gear, a fire at the North Star Foods plant took place. Subsequently, the entire building was lost. The Economic Development Authority put all of its efforts for the next year into devising a plan to rebuild the business with North Star Foods owners, Pat Thesing and Brad Arndt. Upon a January 2010 announcement that a rebuild was not feasible, the EDA then proceeded to move forward with providing the community a vision for the creation of a 37-acre commercial and industrial park to replace the lost business and jobs. During the April meeting of the Economic Development Authority, it was decided that in order to incorporate that vision with the overall direction of the City of St. Charles, the completion of the Comprehensive Plan was vital to the community as well as the Business Park project. Staff was directed to work with the data compiled in order to finalize the document.

Plan Summary

Chapter Two provides an analysis of community assets/inventory including: environment (natural and cultural), demographics, public facilities, transportation, economic development, housing, parks and recreation, information and communication, education, and emergency services. A brief description of the goals of each of the areas along with subsequent policies is related in each section.

Chapter Three contains the five Community Concepts: Downtown, State Highway 14 East and West Corridors, and State Highway 74 North and South Corridors. The Steering Committee and the Planners prepared the five Concept Plans using information collected on land use, environmental restraints, development trends, transportation issues, and community input. The Concepts illustrate balanced growth scenarios by identifying compatible land uses, improving pedestrian facilities, and creating alternative traffic patterns. Each Concept has an introduction, a listing of goals and objectives, an area specific land use analysis, and a description of opportunities.

Chapter Four concludes the Comprehensive Plan by drawing conclusions and providing possible implementation strategies for future Councils and community leaders. Again, the Comprehensive Plan is by nature a fluid document and should be reviewed and revised frequently to address opportunities, threats, as well as strengths and weaknesses as they evolve to grow into an economically resilient community and region.



HISTORY

St. Charles Comprehensive Plan – Historical Analysis

The City of St. Charles was founded in 1854 and incorporated as a city February 28, 1870. St. Charles was named after “St. Charles of Italy, who was born in 1538 and who became cardinal of Milan and secretary to Pope Pius IV” (The History of Winona County, 1913, p. 597). The City lies near the Whitewater River, which comes from the Dakota words, mini, “water,” and ska, “white.”

Early History

William Davidson was the first permanent settler in the area to become St. Charles in early April 1853, with Davidson earning the title of “old settler” through his pioneering spirit. In May 31, 1853, Louis H. Springer with his family arrived from Illinois at what is now Winona. The Springer Family continued westward, settling on the south bank of the south branch of the Whitewater River in Section 19, in what is now the City of St. Charles. Upon arrival, Springer built a *double log house* near a bridge that crossed the Whitewater River at the north end of the present day Whitewater Street. Springer opened the cabin for the accommodation of travelers. Subsequent settlers decided to locate beside the Springer Family, and a year later in 1854, Springer built a store to sell dry goods and groceries to the new arrivals. The store was located just south of his cabin/house and had the distinction of being “the first mercantile establishment and the first frame building in the settlement.” Besides the cabin/house that quickly become known as the Springer Inn (or Tavern), Springer operated the Post Office as its first Postmaster. Springer in late 1854 platted the City of St. Charles as the recorded owner.

The early history and growth of St. Charles is also closely associated with the neighboring Village of Chattanooga. As St. Charles grew along the south branch of the Whitewater River, by 1857 the Village of Chattanooga took shape a mile to the south at the end of a narrow valley. Joseph Birge owned a 240-acre farm lying between the two flourishing, yet unconnected villages. The appeal of linking St. Charles with Chattanooga led the County Commissioners to endorse a plan to construct a road through Birge’s great wheat field by guaranteeing the surveying and the sale of lots on either side of the road. However, Birge spoiled the vision of the Commissioners of a thriving little city, by dividing the lots to suit himself and sold them as rapidly as possible. There is still evidence of this unplanned development in the downtown cross streets as they are little more than alleys.

History of Winona County, (p. 602-603)

Timeline

1853 – Lewis H. Springer arrived with his family from Illinois and settled along the south bank of the south branch of the Whitewater River. He built a cabin near a bridge that crossed the river at the north end of Whitewater Street to accommodate travelers.

1854 – Springer builds the first mercantile establishment with dry goods and groceries and the first frame building in town. Springer also operated the post office and was the first postmaster.

1854 - St. Charles was platted late in 1854, with Lewis Springer as the recorded owner. The plat included 49 blocks and a public park.

1855 – M. Wheeler Sargeant opens a cabin as a public inn. It was known as the Wild Cat Tavern since a skin of a wild cat stuffed with straw and elevated on a pole gave intimation that entertainment for man and beast could be had.

1855 – First schoolhouse built on the west side of Church St. near the Murray house?

1856 – James and Joshua Easton erected the first framed public inn on what is now Winona St.

1856 – In July a violent tornado swept through the town. It ripped off the roof of Hiram Hall's house and uprooted many large trees. Considerable damage was done throughout the locality.

1857 – The original Village of Chattanooga was platted by Joseph Birge on the South Half of the Southeast Quarter of Section 19.

1864 – In February of this year the Winona & St. Peter Railroad Company finished laying the track from Winona to St. Charles and the train entered the city for the first time.

1864 – With the coming of the railroad business began to prosper and two lumber mills were opened in the same year.

1864 – The first addition to the Village of Chattanooga was platted, which includes the lots on both sides of Whitewater St. from 8th St. south to the Northwestern Tracks.

1867 – In February of this year a special act of the legislature organized the St. Charles school district.

1868 – An act of state legislature made Chattanooga part of the Village of St. Charles.

1870 – February 28th the legislature passed an act to incorporate the city of St. Charles and on March 1st the people of St. Charles adopted it. On March 8th S. W. Stone was elected the first mayor of St. Charles.

1878 – August 31 the stick framed wooden schoolhouse is destroyed by a fire that was started from a tinner's surface, used in repairing the tin gutters on the roof.

1878 – The new school was built at its current location between Church and Richland St.. It was built with brick and lasted until 1923 when the current school building was built in its place.

1891 – The bakery is the only building in the commercial district to survive a devastating fire because it is made of brick. The business district is subsequently moved to its current location to the south on Whitewater Ave.

1903 – A tornado hit the city killing eight people and destroying many buildings and other property around town including some of downtowns best architectural buildings.

1903 – In December of this year electric power first illuminated St. Charles.

1953 – Another destructive tornado hit St. Charles.

1990—Completion of the newly renovated St. Charles Family Aquatic Center that was later renamed the Mel Brownell Family Area Aquatic Center.

1994—City employees moved into the newly constructed City Hall which featured city offices, police offices, Council chambers, a community room, and a senior dining facility. This project was made possible by the Josephine Barr family.

1989—the City completed a major street overhaul on Highway 74 in the downtown district and replaced water, sewer, and electric.

2003—The St. Charles School District completed an addition to the elementary in order to retain its location in the downtown area.

2007—A major flood event destroyed what was known as Brookwood Trailer Park. In addition, commercial structures along West Fourth Street were damaged.

2009—A fire demolished the commercial food process plant of North Star Foods leaving the remaining structure unusable.

2010—The City of St. Charles purchased 28 acres along the I-90 corridor to open up the opportunity for continued growth. A 5-acre parcel adjoining that land was also purchased as well.

Notable people of St. Charles

Arthur Gerald Donahue

P/O Arthur Gerald Donahue was born in St Charles, Minnesota, [America](#) in 1913. He learned to fly privately and had his private and commercial pilot's licenses before he was 19 and for several years he instructed trainee pilots, gave pleasure flights and did some barnstorming. (Barnstorming was a popular form of entertainment in the 1920s in which stunt [pilots](#) would perform tricks with airplanes, often in groups as a flying circus. These aerialists — or

"barnstormers" as they became known — performed almost any trick or feat with an [airplane](#) that people could imagine. Barnstorming was also the first major form of [civil aviation](#) in the history of flight. For many pilots and stunt people, barnstorming provided an exciting and invigorating way to make a living as well as a challenging outlet for their creativity and showmanship.) In June 1940 he heard that pilots were being enlisted in Canada for the R.A.F. he went up, claimed to be [Canadian](#) was accepted and ten days later sailed for the UK. Six days after landing he was at 7 O.T.U. Hawarden. He joined [No 64 Squadron](#) at Kenley on the [3rd of August 1940](#). On the [5th of August 1940](#) he landed at Hawkinge with serious damage following a combat with [Bf 109's](#) off the French coast. He was wounded on the [12th of August 1940](#) at 17:40hrs over the South Coast when he baled out of his burning [Spitfire I \(X4018\)](#) with injuries to the right leg and burns. After some time in hospital he rejoined [No 64 Squadron](#) in mid-September. On the [29th of September 1940](#) he was posted to No 71 Squadron, newly-reformed at Church Fenton from American volunteers. With no operations being flown Donahue was posted away on [October the 23rd](#) at his own request and he rejoined [No 64 Squadron](#). Donahue was then posted to Singapore in late 1941. He was awarded the D.F.C. on the 27th of March 1942. He was killed in action on the 11th of September 1942.

Carl H. Fischer

May 22, 1907 — Nov. 23, 2005

ST. CHARLES, Minn. — Carl H. Fischer, 98, of St. Charles died Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2005, at Whitewater Healthcare Center in St. Charles.

Carl was born May 22, 1907, in Dorchester, Wis., to Dominick and Emma (Zaudke) Fischer. He graduated from Winona State University, where he participated in sports and lettered in track. Carl and Shirley Oswald Callahan were married June 8, 1968. She died Jan. 26, 1988.

In 1927, at the age of 22, Carl became indoctrinated in the Gladiolus flower. He grew and bred Gladiolus for the rest of his life with his work at his Noweta Gardens. Through the eight-year process of hybridizing the Gladiolus for each species, Carl created 100 of the current 180 All-American Glads. He received many awards for his glads. One of his most prominent was the 1997 Gold Medal from the Society of American Florists. Another amazing feat was the fact that Carl received 100 certificates of award from the All-American Gladiolus Society. Only 120 had been given out in the organization's history.

Survivors include two stepdaughters, Betty Virnig and Verna Gaulke, both of St. Charles; nieces and nephews, Joyce (Jerald) Newton of Riceville, Iowa, Lyman (Marlee) Fischer of Green Bay, Gordon (Mary) Fischer of Marshfield, Wis., Howard Fischer of Lake City, Minn., the Rev. Janet Fischer of Zumbrota, Minn., and Pam (Bob) Finstrom of Ottertail, Minn.; a sister-in-law, Dolores Fischer of Zumbrota; and a brother-in-law, Anvie Peterson of Roseville, Minn.

In addition to his wife, Carl was preceded in death by a brother, Walter, and two sisters, Edna Peterson and Louine Franz.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. Monday at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, with the Rev. James Callahan and the Rev. Janet Fischer officiating. Cremation will follow with spring burial of Carl's cremated body in Hillside Cemetery in St. Charles.

Gladiolus Breeding

Carl Fischer started Fischer's Nursery in 1935 in St. Charles, and renamed it Noweta Gardens in 1942. Fischer, who had been a school teacher, started to grow gladiolus in the summertime. He met Ralph Baerman, an English teacher, who also owned Colonial Gardens in Rushford and grew gladiolus. Baerman obtained the outstanding hybridizing stock of Kristian Prestgard of Decorah Gardens in Decorah, Iowa. Fischer learned from Baerman's experiences and used the Prestgard breeding stock. Fischer bred gladiolus continuously thereafter and achieved international fame. He had won 39 All American Awards by 1979. Fischer developed green gladiolus and has won most of the awards that exist for gladiolus introductions. He still operates the business.

Numerous other gladiolus breeders operated on a smaller scale. Former farmer Carlton Hector turned to breeding gladiolus after having a heart attack. He developed the outstanding cultivars 'Spic and Span' and 'King David'. Other breeders included Arthur Kerner of St. Paul, E.H. Lins of Cologne and Carl Summers of Lake City.

Melvin Brownell

Melvin (Mel) Brownell served as a Councilman from 1965-1977 and then went on to serve as the Mayor of St. Charles from 1978-2000. Mr. Brownell was instrumental in helping the City to achieve many of its projects. He was also the owner of Brownell Drug that was located in the downtown area up until his death. (More information to be added later).

Historic Buildings of St. Charles (Included on the National Register of Historic Places)



St. Charles City Bakery – Architect Conrad Bohn
Italianate brick commercial building constructed in 1876 in towns original business district



Trinity Episcopal Church
Carpenter Gothic style church with bell tower, built in 1874



Whitewater Avenue Commercial Historic District
Cohesive group of two-story brick commercial buildings constructed after 1891 fire

ENVIRONMENT -NATURAL AND CULTURAL

NATURAL

Winona County contains a diversity of landscapes extending from bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River to extremely fertile farmland dotted with unique karst features inland from the River. St. Charles occupies the upland plains of western Winona County with the South Fork of the Whitewater River flowing through the northern portion of the City. Sinkholes and other geomorphic elements indicative of an active karst landscape are present to the east and south of St. Charles in areas underlain by sedimentary strata.

St. Charles possesses a variety of land features that propose both strengths and weaknesses of the community. A mixture of natural features including wooded areas, wetlands, steep slopes, and hydric soils impact the city's growth patterns (see attached Wooded Areas and Wetlands, Steep Slopes, Hydric Soils, and Existing Conditions Maps).

The first natural feature that poses the greatest challenge that community leaders must be mindful of can be identified as the upper branch of the Whitewater River and adjacent flood plain. This natural environment impacts the city's growth patterns and how city utilities and transportation systems may be expanded into the future. Much of the flood plain area is governed by the Army Corp of Engineers, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regulations, FEMA and Winona County. These flood plain areas also meet designated wetlands criteria and therefore must comply with state wetland regulations. Careful consideration must be given to these areas in light of the various rules and restrictions associated with these areas.

Past flooding incidents in 1987 and 1991 have resulted in changes in land use patterns. The most recent change occurred in 2007. In April of 2007, a flood event whereby 14 inches of rain was received in less than 24 hours, served as a reminder of the delicate nature of land use in proximity of the south branch of the Whitewater River. Severe damage was seen in the City Park area as well as the residential neighborhood of St. Martin Avenue in addition to commercial properties located on Fourth Street and Day Care Drive directly adjacent to the floodplain. In addition, as a direct result of that flood, the mobile home park formerly known as Brookwood Trailer Park located on West First Street was later closed. Twenty-four units were either demolished or relocated out of the floodway

with the help of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The trailer park was repurposed as a Park & Ride for commuters traveling to and from Rochester and Winona.

Over the course of time St. Charles has incorporated natural water retention facilities such as the East and West Drainage ditches, dams, and retention ponds. These natural structures have been successful in diverting water through residential areas; however, these facilities must be maintained and improved in order to handle increasing capacity demands created through continuous development and growth.

While these natural components require attention and maintenance, they also provide valuable open space, wildlife habitat, and storm water runoff areas.

The variety of existing land uses and their accompanying natural features within the community have been dictated by such factors as local economy, historical trends, as well as local policies. As the community continues to grow, it is important to review existing, and future land uses. The community's existing land use is divided into 11 groups as follows:

EXISTING LAND USE

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Agriculture	873	40.6
Single Family	525	24.44
Multi-Family	34	1.56
Mobile Home park	42	1.94
Commercial	58	2.69
Residential Above Commercial	3	.15
Church	28	1.30
Community Facility	121	5.62
Agribusiness	7	.30
Enclosed or Light Industry	13	.59
Outdoor or Heavy Industry	100	4.64

Open Space-Park	67	3.1
Open Space-Private	129	6.02
Parking	2	.08
Cemetery	20	.94
Vacant	129	6

Much of the current land uses have been dictated by the wetlands, topography, soil types, highways, and streets (see attached Existing Land Use Map). With respect to residential growth, consideration should be given to maintaining or incorporating St. Charles' natural elements into future design plans. With today's active lifestyles, adopting plans that build on the natural environment of St. Charles and the surrounding area will help to draw an aging population. While the core of St. Charles' land use area is developed, being mindful of wooded areas, wetlands, and topography will maintain the natural landscape and character of the community.

Unique Geologic Setting

In the vicinity of St. Charles there is a bedrock formation that in Winona County is only found in the city of St. Charles and the surrounding townships of Saratoga, St. Charles, and Utica. The formation is the Decorah Shale. Areas where the Decorah Shale is the first bedrock to be encountered are like ribbons and knobs along or on tops of the hills in the area. (see accompanying map). The Decorah Shale because it is comprised primarily of shale provides an impervious layer. As water percolating downward from the bedrock and/or surfaces above it encounters this shale and water moves laterally until it reaches the soils at the land surface. These areas are commonly referred to as the Decorah Edge. Where the groundwater contacts the soil a biologically diverse wetland ecosystem can exist. In addition, the water flowing through the Decorah Edge is considered to be filtered by these unique soil/plant systems and may reenter the lower aquifer replenishing deeper water supplies with cleaner naturally treated water.

Urban developments in the Decorah Edge area cannot only disrupt the groundwater flow, filtering abilities of the soils, and unique habitats but because of the high water tables can result in wetness and water damage to structures. There are some houses in St. Charles that have wet basements and water problems that in all likelihood can be attributed to encountering this groundwater flow.

South Fork Whitewater River

The South Fork of the Whitewater River flows through the north end of St. Charles for approximately three miles. The South Fork of the Whitewater River from its source to the trout stream portion (approximately 9 miles downstream) is considered to be impaired for aquatic life and recreational uses due to sustained exceedances of the water quality standards for turbidity and fecal coliform respectively. The reach of the stream is on the “impaired waters list” or the Clean Water Act 303(d) list. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has submitted A Revised Total Maximum Daily Load Evaluation of Fecal Coliform Impairments in the Lower Mississippi River Basin in Minnesota (2005). The implementation activities to address the fecal coliform impairment are underway and are focusing on reducing nonpoint pollution problems on the South Fork. The Total Maximum Daily Load study to address the turbidity impairment has yet to be undertaken

The South Fork of the Whitewater River is a significant natural feature that meanders through St. Charles in the northern part of the city. The stream through the city flows through city owned park property. Much of the riparian corridor of the South Fork Whitewater within the City is in turf grass that provides little filtering in periods of high flow or from nutrients /herbicides or other chemicals that are used to manage the turf. Turf also provides little shading to the stream.

GOALS and RECOMMENDATIONS (Natural Environment)

- Protect and minimize growth around designated floodplain areas as incidents continue to exceed expectations.
- Incorporate the use of natural woodland areas and slopes into future housing and commercial design plans as a way to maintain St. Charles’ natural landscape and characteristics.
- The City should periodically review its zoning ordinance and map to ensure that new factors, trends, and market conditions incorporate the desired marriage of the incorporation of St. Charles’ natural elements.
- The City should monitor and review changes in Winona County, specifically relating to the urban fringe areas.
- The City should incorporate a process into its city code or subdivision ordinances that identify unique and historical areas within the community and should examine methods to protect, preserve, and promote those areas.

POLICIES and PROCEDURES

- ❖ The highest and best use for each parcel of land will be sought with environmental factors being accounted for.
- ❖ Water, ground, air, and noise pollution issues will be addressed when updating the zoning and land use considerations or expansion of the city boundaries are considered.
- ❖ The City will continue to support efforts to protect wetlands and other natural areas consistent with federal and state laws and guidelines.
- ❖ The City will support and preserve existing neighborhoods through zoning, subdivision, and building controls.
- ❖ New development and redevelopment should be designed and landscaped to preserve existing trees and vegetation, protect steep slopes, and maintain natural drainage features.
- ❖ The City will encourage the removal of existing buildings that have exceeded their useful life and promote the redevelopment of the site or designate the site to open space uses such as parks, trails, parking, etc.
- ❖ The City will support efforts to eliminate the impact of nuisance properties (i.e. junkie and dilapidated properties) or properties that pose a threat to life or EMS personnel or the health and safety of area residents.

CULTURAL

According to the 2000 Census data, the City of St. Charles continues to experience an increasing minority population with 285 residents or nearly 9 percent of the population. These numbers are projected to increase or remain stable following the 2010 Census.

Over the last decade several minority organizations have been formed in order to help provide services to these residents. A Hispanic grocery store was opened in 2000 to help serve a part of that population while a Chinese restaurant was opened in 2006. The City works with the faith based community to help facilitate discussions of how to best serve that sector of the population. Such efforts have resulted in partnerships with Project Fine (a translation and resource service) as well as Latinos Unidos. The City also works closely with the Southeast Minnesota Rural Education and Resource Center to help connect resources such as United Way, Salvation Army, SEMCAC, Winona County Human Services, Southeast Minnesota Initiative Foundation, and others to help provide avenues of support to these residents.

GOALS and RECOMMENDATIONS

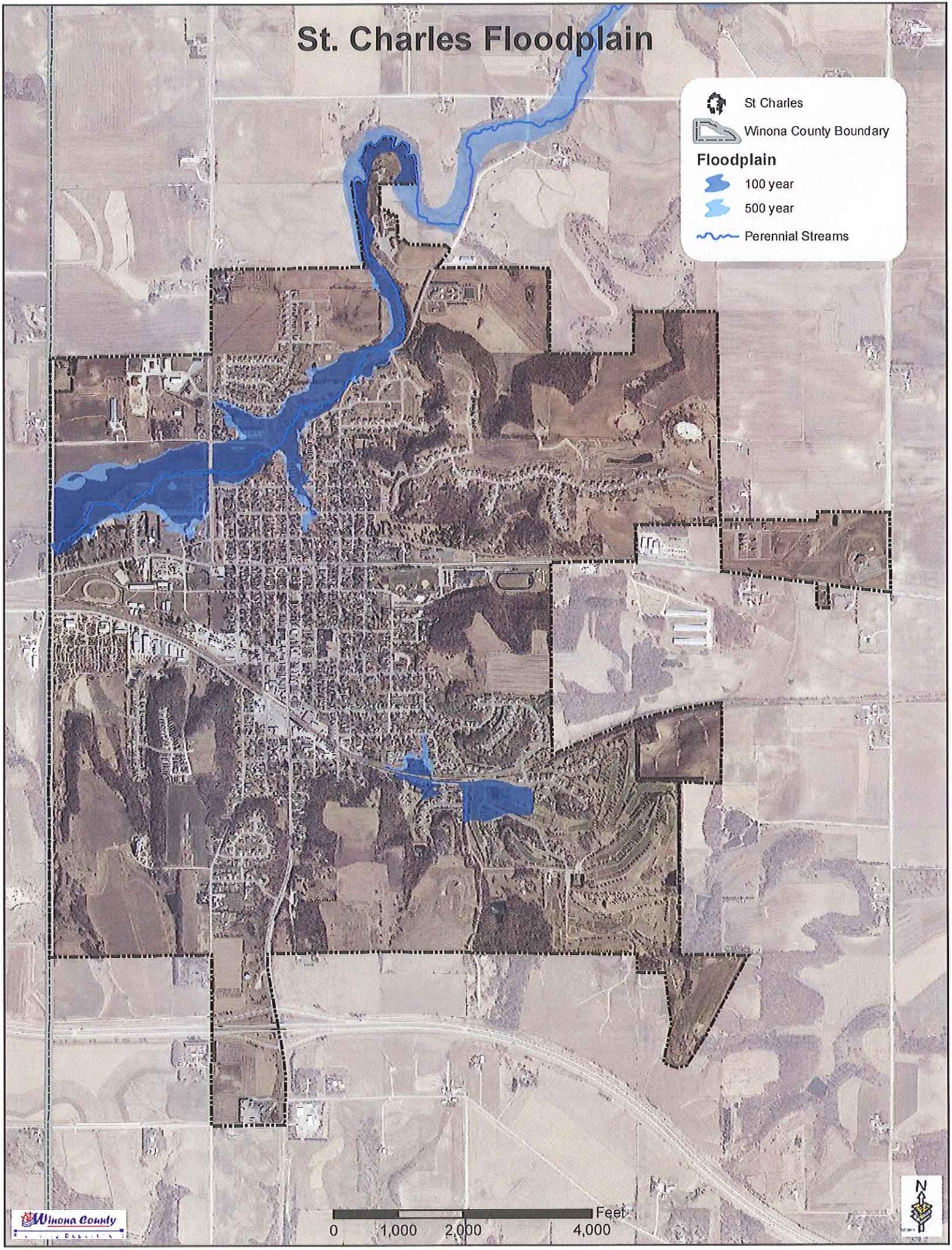
- The City should continue to foster relationships and partnerships to help develop this sector of the community whether through human service aspects, the faith based community, or economic development.
- The City should continue to implement training to both city staff and community residents that improve community relations and foster positive communications for the preservation of the strong community neighborhood programs and services.
- The City should continue to explore opportunities with various organizations to help with retention and growth of the minority population and explore programming that are vital to the community.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

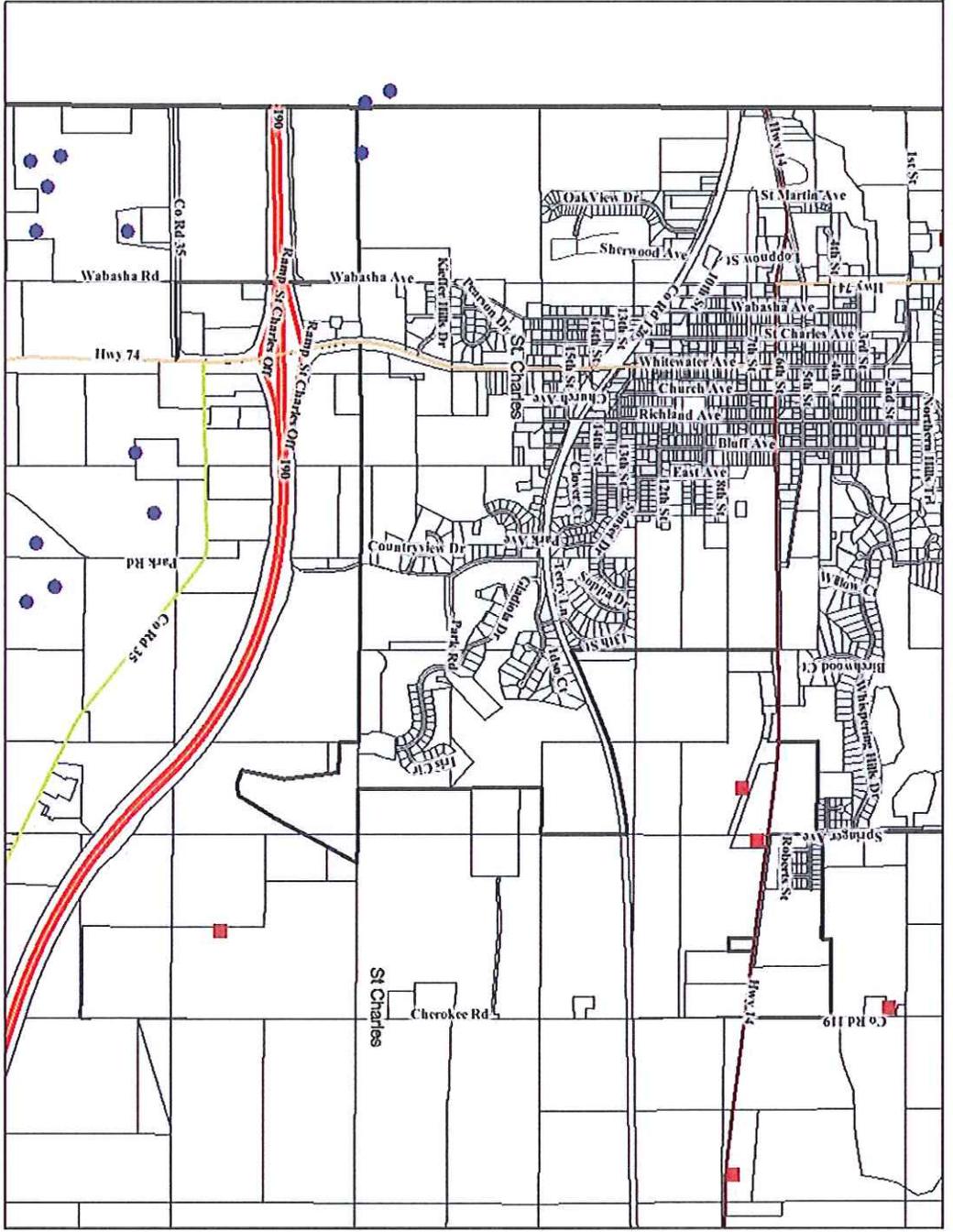
- ❖ The City should maintain a budgetary line item that focuses on supporting services and programs that help to build lines of communications with all minority residents.
- ❖ The City should maintain its commitment to fostering positive relationships with local, county, and state organizations that help serve the population.
- ❖ The City should help to promote cultural awareness and differences so as to build a greater community and foster volunteerism.

St. Charles Floodplain

-  St Charles
-  Winona County Boundary
- Floodplain**
 -  100 year
 -  500 year
 -  Perennial Streams

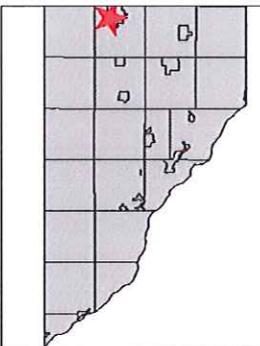


Karst Features



Map center: 43° 57' 36" N, 92° 3' 5" W

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for general reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION OR IN PLACE OF A SURVEY.



Legend

- Roads
- Local Roads
- Major Collector
- Minor Arterials
- Minor Collector
- Municipal Streets
- Principal Arterial
- Private Roads
- Karst Features**
- Springs
- Seeps
- Sinkholes
- Parcel
- Municipality_Labels
- County



Scale: 1:28,827



Demographics

Overview

Located 20 miles east of Rochester and 20 miles west of Winona, St. Charles offers big city conveniences with the advantages of small town living. Best known for being the Gateway to the Whitewater Valley, St. Charles is a vibrant community of 3,560 people comfortably nestled within the rolling hills and valleys of southeastern Minnesota. St. Charles is a great place to visit and an even better place to live. Our vibrant main street, small town charm, and scenic residential subdivisions make St. Charles a desirable place to live, work and raise a family. In St. Charles, recreational opportunities abound. The Majestic Whitewater State Park is only seven miles north of the city. We have five beautiful city parks offering a variety of activities, including picnic areas, volleyball courts, ball fields, playground equipment and biking and hiking trails. We are very proud of our Senior Center with and our expansive recreation programs. While you're here, play a round a golf at the St. Charles Golf Course, enjoy a warm summer day at our state-of-the-art Aquatics Facility, or visit our public library. If shopping is more your style, St. Charles' downtown area has several antique and specialty shops for your prowling pleasure, a pleasant outing for both the treasure seeker and browser.

Population

Compared to the surrounding area in Winona County, which saw a 4.5% increase in population between 1990 and 2000 St. Charles is growing much faster. In fact of all cities in SE Minnesota of comparable size St. Charles has the largest percent increase. Table B shows the population trends of St. Charles over the past 50 years and projections to the year 2030. The city has seen steady growth over the past 50 years. Between 1980 and 1990 St. Charles grew by 458 people to a total population of 2642 people, which is a 20.97% increase. Between 1990 and 2000 St. Charles grew by 653 people for a total population of 3295, which is 24.7% growth. This trend is projected to continue into the future with a projected population of 3935 by the year 2010 and 4486 by the year 2020.

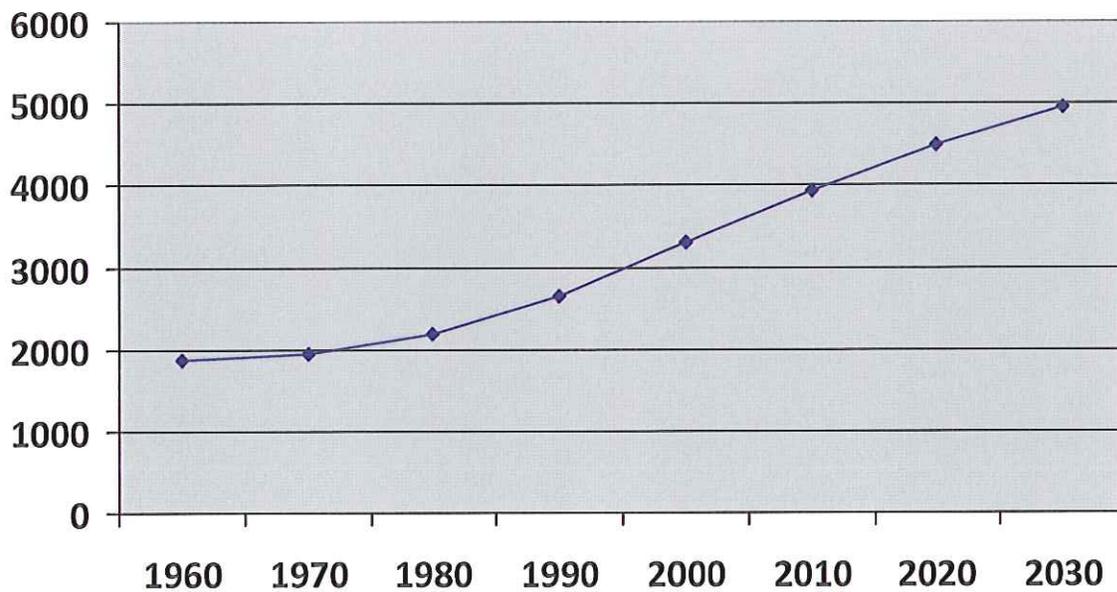
TABLE A.

	St. Charles	Lewiston	Plainview	Dover	Eyota	Rushford	Chatfield	Stewartville	Winona County
1990	3,295	1,484	3,190	438	1,644	1,696	2,394	5,411	49,985
2000	2,642	1,298	2,768	416	1,448	1,485	2,226	4,520	47,828
% Change	24.7	14.3	15.2	5.3	13.5	14.2	7.5	19.7	4.5

Factors that may slow growth

It is important to keep in mind that consumer attitudes and cost shifting on goods have changed the economic landscape substantially since the last census (on which these data projections are based). Rising transportation costs have changed location decisions made by individuals and families. Higher gas prices mean that people may choose to locate closer to work, or may consider mass transit options. This could have considerable consequences for the population growth of communities like St. Charles on the periphery of a metropolitan area. Additionally, slumping housing markets and lack of liquidity in the financial industry have slowed new development. It is difficult to predict when housing development might increase.

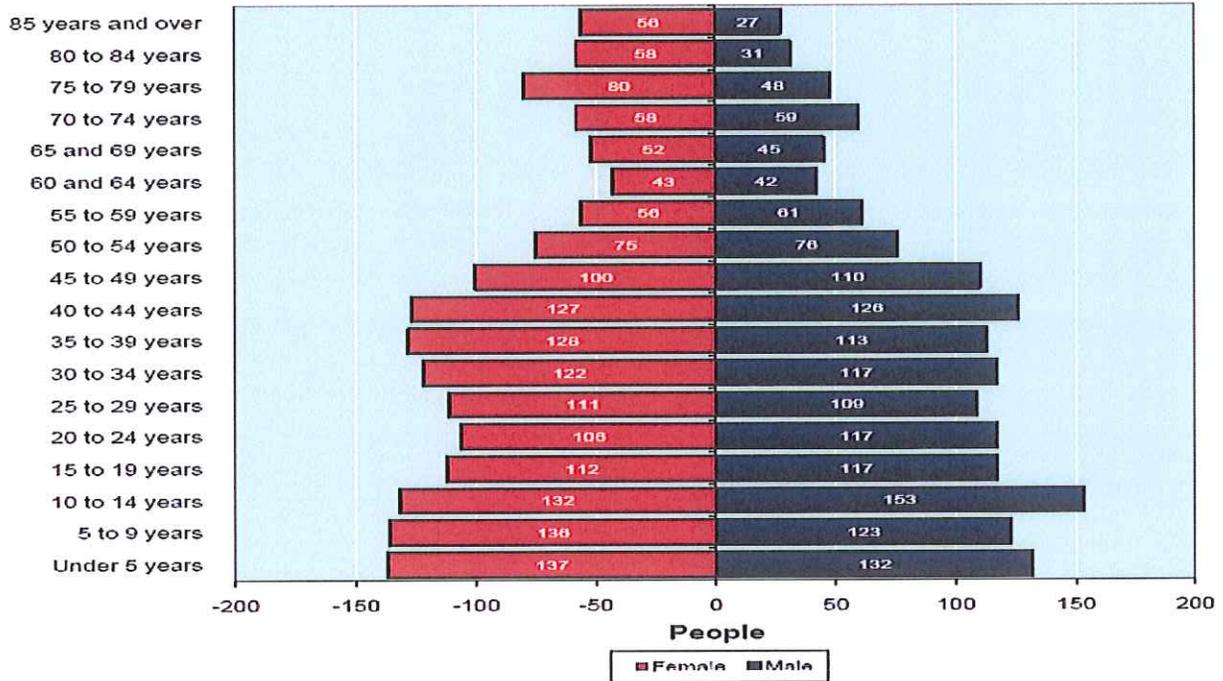
TABLE B.



Persons By Age

The two largest segments of the population according to age in St. Charles are the 14 years and under group with 24.67% of the total population and adults 30 to 40 years of age with 14.56% of the total population according to the 2000 census. This kind of population distribution is comparable to the 1990 census numbers, which showed the 14 and under group representing 26.61% of population and the 30 – 40 group representing 15.22% of the population. The median age is 33 years old, which reflects these concentrations in population among younger adults raising children.

TABLE C.



Household Composition

The 1990 census shows that there were 1000 total households, of which 715 were families. In 2000 St. Charles had 1238 total households of which 870 were families. The 870 families represent 70.3% of total households. Of the total households 482 have children under 18 years of age. Compared to the 1990 census figures households were up 23.8% and families were up 21.7%. This data shows that the households to families ratio has grown fairly evenly between 1990 and 2000.

TABLE D. One Person Households

	Number	Percent
Male Householder	114	9.2
Female Householder	178	14.4

TABLE E. Two or More Person Households

Family Households

Married Couple Family	719	58.1
Male, No Wife Present	37	3.0
Female, No Husband Present	114	9.2

Non-Family Households

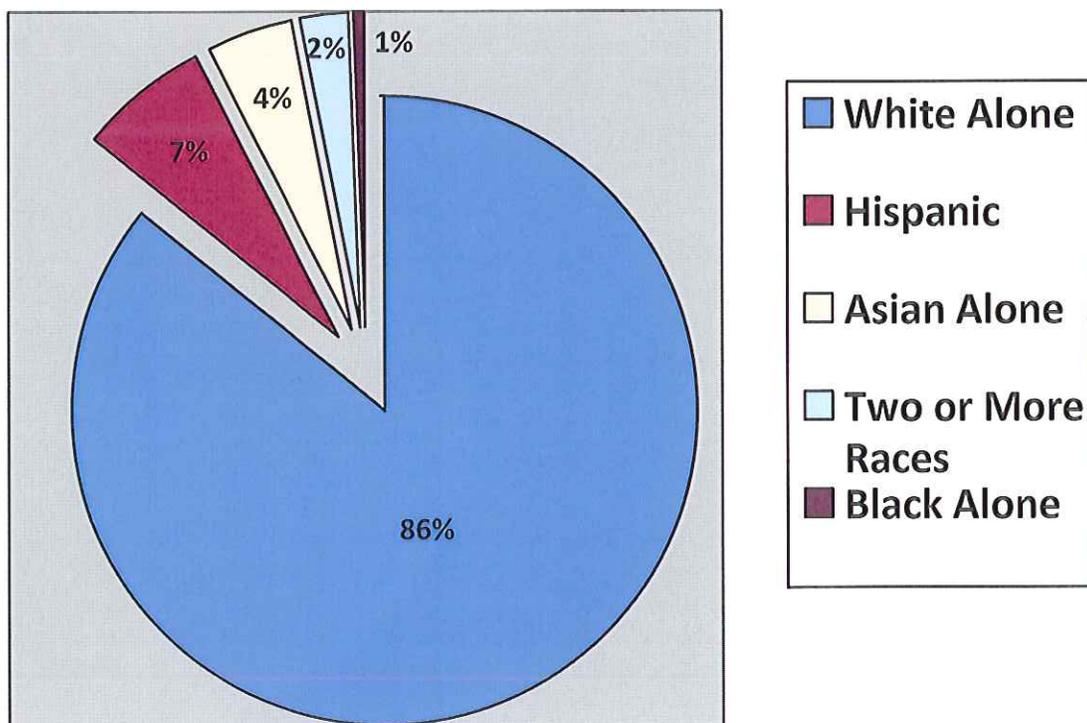
Male Householder	46	3.7
Female Householder	30	2.4

Totals	1,238	100
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Ethnic Composition

Racially St. Charles has seen small influxes in minority groups but remains predominantly a white population from northern European ancestry. 91.6% of the population reported as being white in the 2000 census. The white population is broken down into three major ancestral groups. Of the total population in 2000, 48% identified themselves as being of German ancestry, 21% identified as being of Norwegian ancestry, and 11% identified as being of Irish ancestry. The major minority populations according to the 2000 census were the Hispanic or Latino, Black, Asian, and American Indian populations. There were 163 Hispanics or Latinos represented in the 2000 census accounting for 4.9% of the total population. . The Hispanic or Latino group is the fastest growing minority group in St. Charles. This group saw a 202% increase during the 1990's. The Hispanic or Latino population grew from 54 people in 1990 to 163 people in the year 2000. There were 37 people of Black or African American heritage representing 1.1% of the population. 122 people of Asian ancestry accounting for 3.7% of the population were counted. And 22 Native Americans representing .7% of the population were represented in the 2000 census. Of these groups the Asian population is the only one not on the rise between 1990 and 2000

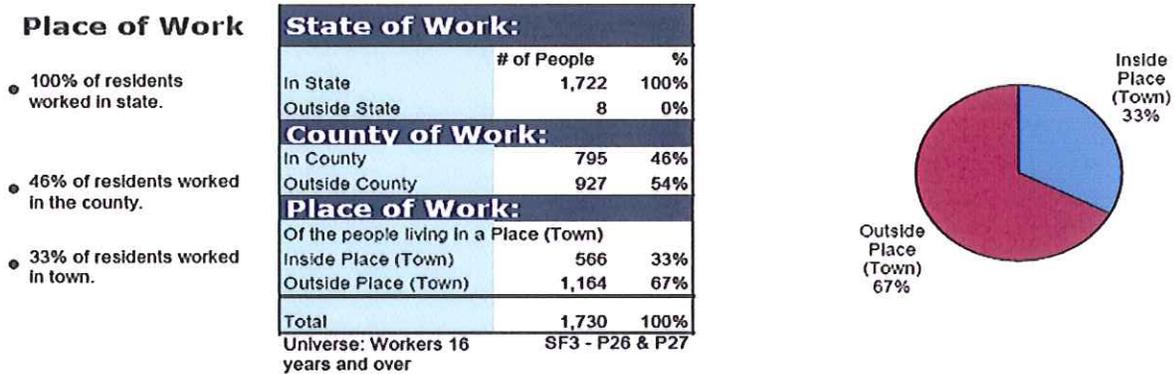
TABLE F. Races in St. Charles



Employment

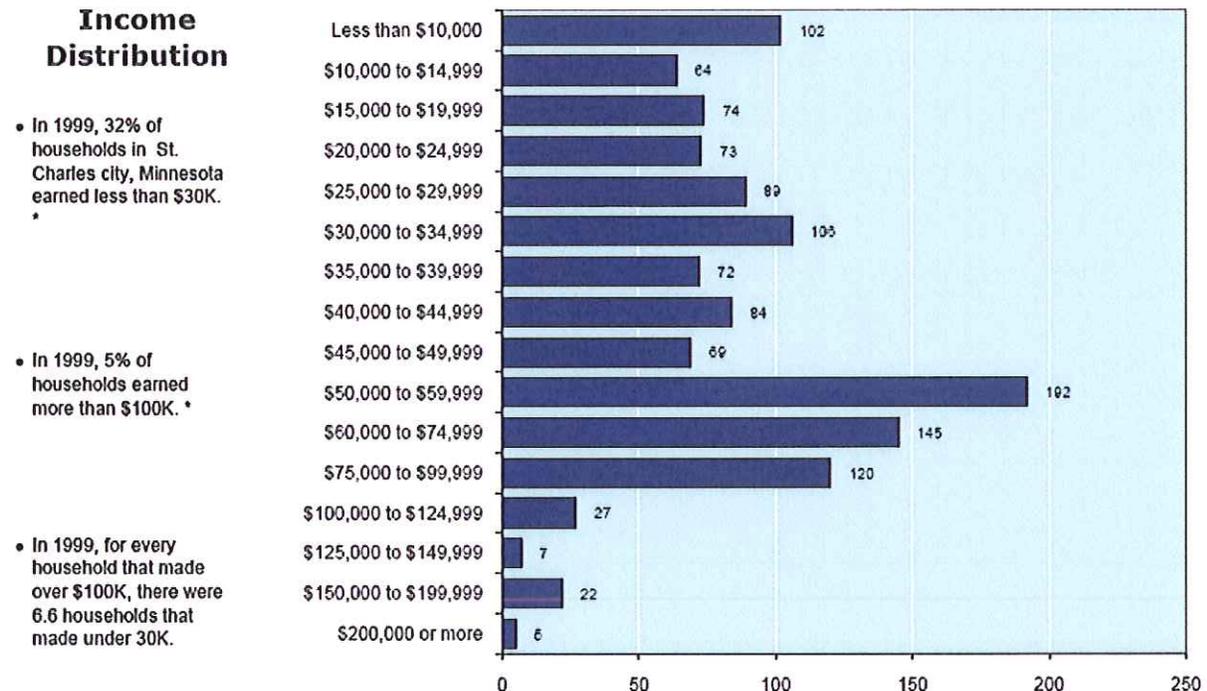
People who live in St. Charles have easy commutes to both Winona and Rochester for employment opportunities. The industries that employ the most people from St. Charles reflect both of these two cities with health care and manufacturing both among the top three employing industries. 27.6% of people in St. Charles who are employed work in the educational, health, and social services industries and 19.8% work in the health care and social assistance industry. Manufacturing accounts for 16.4% of the employed population. The average travel time to work is 23.8 minutes with 28.6% driving between 30 and 34 minutes.

TABLE G. Location of Employment



Income Distribution

TABLE H.



IN SUMMARY

The population in St. Charles is continuing to grow because of the community's proximity to Rochester, the region's major economic engine, and its high quality of life. This quality of life is based on factors such as quality housing options, strong school systems, and a diverse business sector for goods and services. St. Charles has the opportunity to continue to see a growth rate higher than the surrounding area by capitalizing on the strengths listed above, a below average tax rate and by continuing to identify new opportunities for growth and expansion.

As the data shows, St. Charles has a large portion of its population that commutes out of the City each day for work. This trend is very likely to continue into the foreseeable future due to the proximity of the community to the economic centers of Winona and Rochester. This fact should not be viewed as a negative, but instead be utilized to explore opportunities to make St. Charles the most attractive option for people looking to work in Rochester but not live there.

Also, as Winona and Rochester continue to grow, and the land prices and costs of doing business in those communities continues to rise, neighboring communities like St. Charles offer a more affordable option for industrial and commercial development as well. This creates jobs and tax base for the community. St. Charles's job is to continue to position itself for that growth.



PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The City of St. Charles is charged with providing a wide variety of public facilities and subsequently public services associated with those investments into the community. The delivery of these facilities and services has arisen from community needs, traditions, and opportunities.

Public services provided by the local government vary greatly depending on the needs of the community. Those public services complement and support many other elements of the community that have been identified by the public for the public good. The public services are those that the citizens believe have a public purpose or mandate to the progress and sustainability of the community.

The City currently provides the following services:

- Fire protection
- Police protection
- Volunteer Ambulance service
- Library
- City hall, community center, senior center
- Schools

Private services important to the community:

- Physician (clinic)
- Drugstore
- Skilled nursing facility/long-term care facility
- Veterinarian
- Dentist
- Chiropractor
- Assisted Living
- Daycare Center

- Not all services may be represented within the list

Fire Protection:

The City of St. Charles features a 28 member volunteer fire department with six units ranging from a grass rig, a 3,000 and 2,200 gallon tanker, equipment van, rescue pumper, and an aerial pumper with 65' ladder (1200gpm). It has a fire insurance rating of 5. The department provides excellent fire protection as well as rescue coverage to our area. The current Fire Hall was constructed some time in the mid 1960s with a larger bay being added on in the early 2000s to accommodate the 65' ladder truck. The Fire Hall currently has six bays and an office/training area with a small attached kitchen and single bathroom.

Volunteer Ambulance Service:

The St. Charles Volunteer Ambulance Service features 16-19 active Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT), which is a national certification. The service receives continual training to be able to qualify for numerous variances that exceed traditional services. In 2010, the service expanded to include two rigs to help with back-to-back calls. On average the service answers 350 calls a year (296 medical/57 trauma-2010). The service provides coverage for a growing service area. Fast access to Medivac Emergency Helicopter service is available out of both Rochester, Minnesota and LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

Police Protection:

The St. Charles Police Department is served by a Chief of Police, three full-time officers, and 8 part-time officers. The department currently utilizes four squads for full and part-time officers to provide coverage and community policing programs. Prior to 2009 the department operated with two squads. However, following the April fire of North Star Foods it was realized that without adequate cruisers the department could not help to protect the community. In addition, it was observed that maintenance and repair issues would temporarily render the department less effective if a squad car was down. Additional police protection is provided by the Winona County Sheriffs Department and the Minnesota State Highway Patrol to surrounding communities on an as needed basis.

Library

The St. Charles Public Library was constructed in 1946 with an addition completed in 2004. According to 2010 statistics there are currently 25,389 pieces of material that are part of the collection. Also in 2010 approximately 45,713 pieces were circulated both locally and throughout the South East Library Collaborative Organization (SELCO) system. In 2011, a new roof was placed on the pre-existing structure. The Friends of the Library organization has been a huge help to provide funding to the organization.

City Hall/Community Center/Senior Center

The new City Hall/Community Center/Senior Center was constructed in 1994 to house City administration, Council Chambers, the St. Charles Police Department, the St. Charles Volunteer Ambulance services, the senior center as well as the community center.

The City Administration building houses offices of the City Administrator, Public Works Superintendent, Park and Recreation Director, as well as the Deputy Clerk, City Accountant, and Administrative Assistant. City Hall hours are open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

Technology and computer enhancements were completed by Hiawatha Broadband Communications in 2009 with the installation of an additional camera and lighting system to help provide a live feed to the residents of St. Charles. A computer upgrade was completed in 2011 with a new server and desktop units. The former computers were repurposed to be used within the St. Charles Public Library system.

The St. Charles Senior Center is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. SEMCAC provides meals at 11:30 a.m. Regularly scheduled events are organized through the Senior Center.

The St. Charles Community Center can hold up to approximately 200 individuals. It is rented to provide space for public day and evening meetings. Kitchen facilities are available for use between both the Community Center as well as the Senior Center.

In 2008 the exterior stucco was given a new coat with joints and seals being redone. In 2012 the flat roof is slated to be completed redone as it has exceeded the life of the 15 year warranty. Other small improvement have been made to the building over time in order to take into account safety, advancing technologies, effectiveness and energy efficiencies.

Needs Analysis

While no major gaps or deficiencies of existing public facilities were initially identified by the comprehensive steering committee, the need for improved fire and ambulance facilities was later identified as a result of the 2007 floods and later the 2009 North Star Foods fire. A lack of an Incident Command Center was identified. The current fire hall is 60-plus years old with outdated communication facilities, a lack of training and gear storage, as well as a lack of parking for EMS personnel. This is also an issue for ambulance personnel as well. In 2005, the house and property located just south of the fire hall was purchased for an eventual expansion. At present the St. Charles Volunteer Ambulance members who live out of town and are providing 24 hour weekend coverage stay at the house. It has been determined to be a temporary housing option. As the police department looks to expand, it was determined that expanding the police department into the existing garage stalls attached to the current city hall would provide for additional interrogation rooms, locker rooms, and work space for the department. Also, this new remodel could provide for a temporary holding cell and separate police entrance as the community grows and is responsible for handling more of its own investigations, etc. The St. Charles School District recently completed a priority list and it was determined that green space and improving traffic flow at the elementary location was a top priority (The District priority schedule dated 1/10/2011 is included as an appendix).

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOALS:

- Continue to provide quality services at the most appropriate cost.
- Evaluate facilities, equipment and services as to their cost effectiveness, efficiency, and safety.
- As the community grows and surrounding communities grow or economic issues jeopardize surrounding services (i.e. fire, ambulance) programs should be evaluated as to how to effectively and efficiently provide the services requested.
- Continue to work with local and area legislators to educate them on the need for continued support of services in Greater Minnesota.
- Solicit community input as to the services and facilities that are necessary, vital, or even a desire of residents to help stimulate growth and pride in the community.
- Enhancing either the Fire Hall or the City Hall structure to serve as an Incident Command Center to follow the Emergency Management Plan.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES POLICIES:

- ❖ As needed, the City will review and analyze the maintenance and upgrade of public facilities and delivery of public services to the public.
- ❖ The City will continue to provide facilities and services to all residents in a safe and dependable manner, improving and maintaining its systems as necessary.
- ❖ New public facilities and services will be reviewed and considered on the initial cost and future on-going maintenance and delivery of services.
- ❖ Federal, State, County and creative local funding sources will be explored as necessary to assist City program.
- ❖ Qualified staff will be recruited and continuing educational opportunities will be provided to existing employees to ensure quality delivery of services.
- ❖ The City will review existing building and facilities to ensure proper and adequate delivery of services.
- ❖ Public relations and keeping the public informed about existing and new issues is vital to the community's future.



TRANSPORTATION

A good transportation system is vital to the City's residential and business growth and stability. As the City continues to position itself for growth, it is essential to look at existing and future transportation infrastructure and systems. The goal of a transportation system is to provide safe and efficient access from all areas of the community.

An important part of the City's potential growth is dependent on transportation. Highway access for residents, commuters, and businesses alike is very important. The City has good highway access with State Highway 74 with nearly 4,400 commuters in the downtown area and US Highway 14 with 6,800 (MnDOT, 2007). The City also has good access to nearby Interstate 90 where 13,600 commuters travel daily (MnDOT, 2007). These connections are illustrated through the county transportation map that is included in this section. This highway system provides a vital link with Rochester, Austin, Albert Lea, Winona, Minnesota, and La Crosse, Wisconsin. This system provides access for goods and services and links many commuters to and from the community for employment.

The continuation and expansion of the walking/bike trail system throughout the City would be an asset to the transportation network as well as to the park and recreation system. The City continues to work with Winona County in developing not only an internal walking/bike trail system, but how to connect that network regionally. In 2010-2011, the City was awarded a matching grant to begin work connecting St. Charles to Whitewater State Park via a walking/bike path that will extend 7 miles. It was determined that providing alternative modes of transportation to an aging population as well as the youth of the community would be strong asset to the community. A map of the existing and future bike/walking path system is included within this section and should be updated annually.

Convenient parking for downtown businesses is vital to the future success of the Commercial Business District. Employers and employees should continue to be reminded that prime parking areas should be kept available for customer use. In 2010, an additional public parking lot with 29 spaces was added as a cooperative venture between the United Church of Christ and the St. Charles School District. It is located on the corner of 11th and Church Avenue across from the elementary school. In addition, on the recommendation from the Minnesota Design Team, a pedestrian facility that connects the elementary school to Highway 74 downtown along 11th Street, was added as part of the project. In addition, as a result of the 2007 floods, a parking lot in the former Brookwood Trailer Park was constructed that holds approximately 89 vehicles. This is used as both a Park & Ride for commuters to Winona and Rochester, but will serve as a future bike trail head for tourists and enthusiasts to use to gain access to internal bike/walking trails and eventually a regional trail system.

City streets and other transportation infrastructure should continue to be properly maintained to assure public health and safety. St. Charles's transportation system has been key to its growth and success. People's dependence on the automobile and desire for convenience will further dictate future transportation systems.

As an agricultural community, St. Charles has always been located on the rail line, which may hold future possibilities for economic growth via either commercial or commuter rail transportation. The State of Minnesota continues to explore the possibility of high speed rail which would more than likely travel along the river route through Winona, but a corresponding commuter train may be likely as it would connect Rochester to Winona.

Presently, the City is experiencing some congestion and safety problems during peak usage in a few areas. Because of the original design of the downtown corridor which features narrow streets running east and west, visibility is limited and the chance for congestion is increased. Additionally, some side streets such as along Church Avenue by the elementary school creates unsafe areas for pedestrian travel. These are just a few areas of concern. As the community grows, the importance of a good internal transportation system will increase.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS:

- Plan, develop, and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system to meet existing and future needs.
- Encourage alternate transportation methods less dependent on motor vehicles.
- Continue to seek state and law aid through programs and departments such as: Safe Routes to School, state bonding, Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and others.
- The City should review its trail systems, sidewalks, byways, and bike paths annually in order to encourage a variety of modes of transportation.
- Partner with regional and high speed rail initiatives.
- Plan for future modes of transportation and integration into entire

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES:

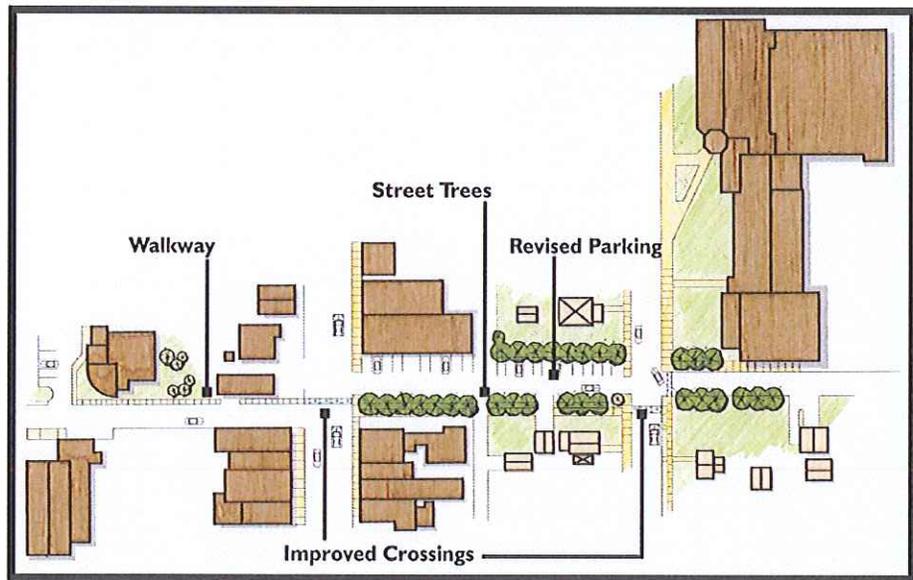
- Identify major transportation routes and necessary rights-of-way and easements needed to meet the long-term needs of the community.
- Plan the overall transportation system to comply with widely accepted design and safety standards.
- Base the local roadway system to comply with widely accepted design and safety standards.
- The City will adhere to a maintenance plan to ensure that existing curbs, gutter, and road surfaces are well maintained.

- The City should continue to incorporate trail/path networks into new subdivisions and plan connections to the existing trail/path system.
- The City should continue to update its capital improvement plan, which will interlink with a plan to replace and maintain city streets with an underground utility replacement program.
- Promote and encourage walking and biking as an alternate transportation link.
- The City should continue to fund long term bike/walking paths in order to improve pedestrian access, movement, and crossing to provide both convenience and safety.
- Add bike racks downtown.
- Continue to work Winona County on the development of a regional trail system.

Eleventh Street Pedestrian Corridor



The concept introduces order to the muddled functionality of Eleventh Street between Whitewater and Church Avenues by balancing the competing needs between motorists, pedestrians, and service users. The essential feature of the concept is the narrowing of the pavement width to accommodate a tree-lined walk along its southern edge to create a vital pedestrian corridor between the School and the Library. The concept also introduces much-needed greenery and opportunities for enhanced landscaping beside the walk in the Downtown Core, and provides parallel parking adjacent to the walk as a means to buffer it from passing vehicles.





Wabasha Avenue

Pedestrian Flows

St. Charles Avenue

Library

10th Street

9th Street

Whitewater Avenue

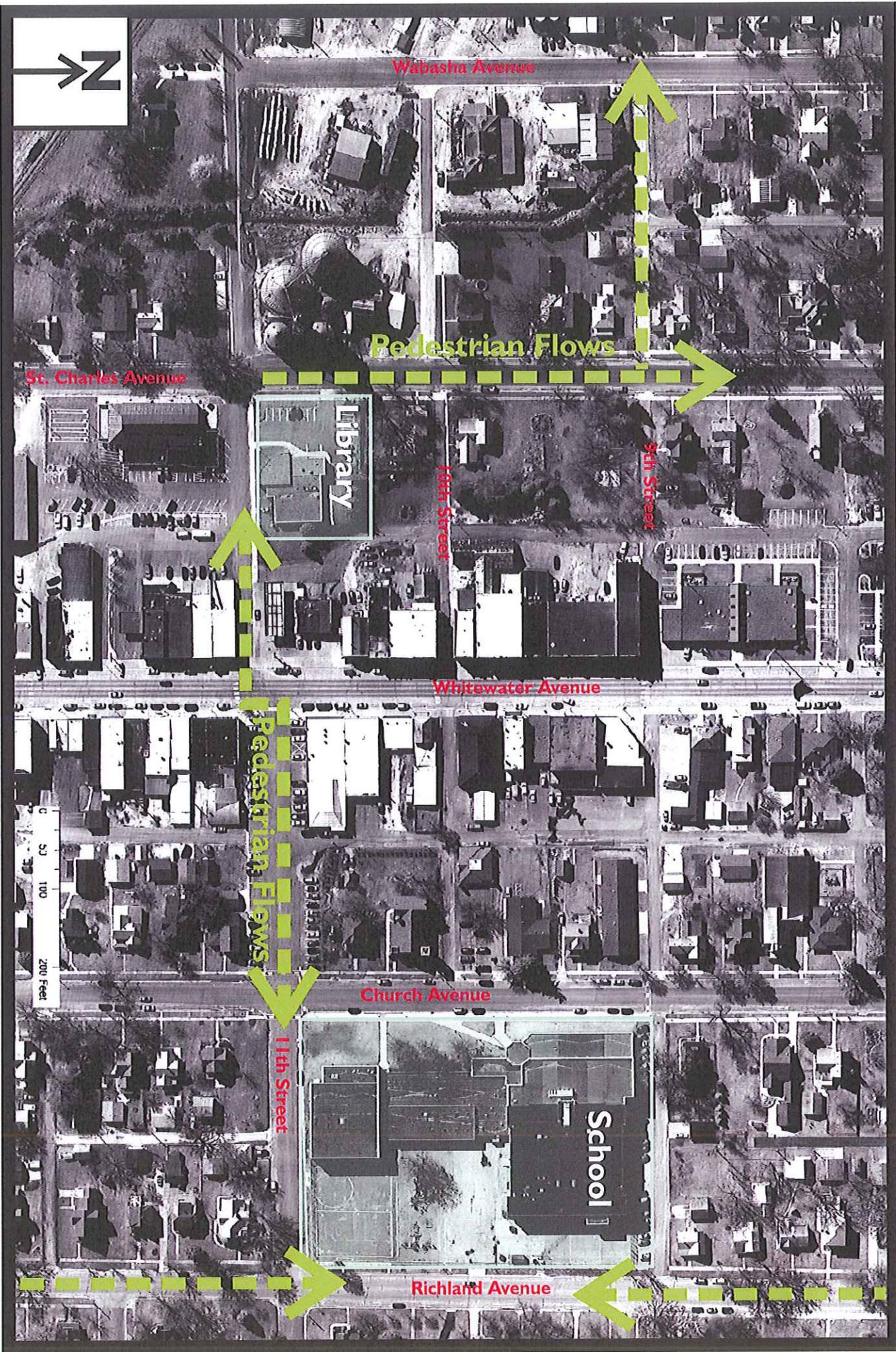
Pedestrian Flows

Church Avenue

11th Street

School

Richland Avenue



St. Charles Trails

Trail Type

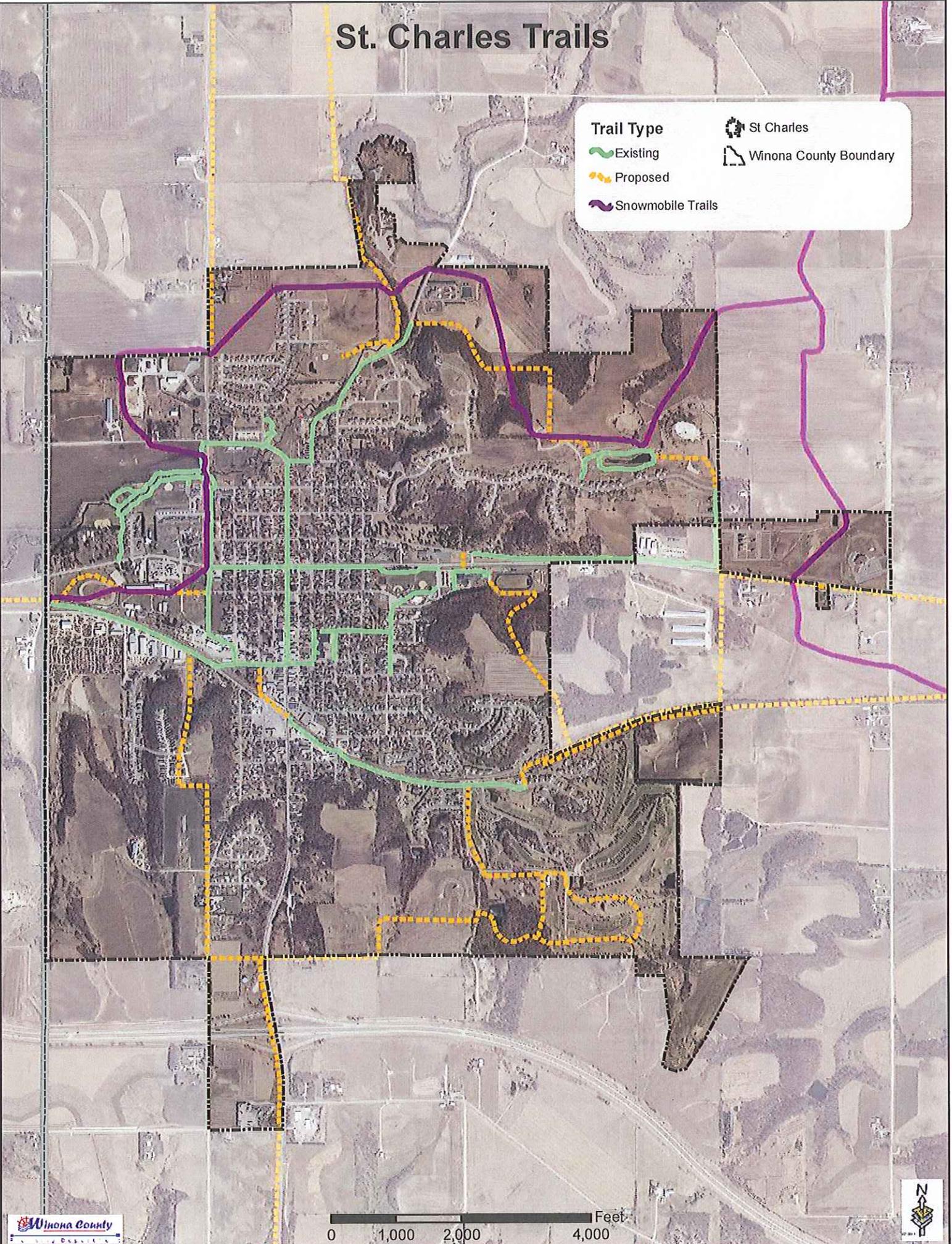
Existing

Proposed

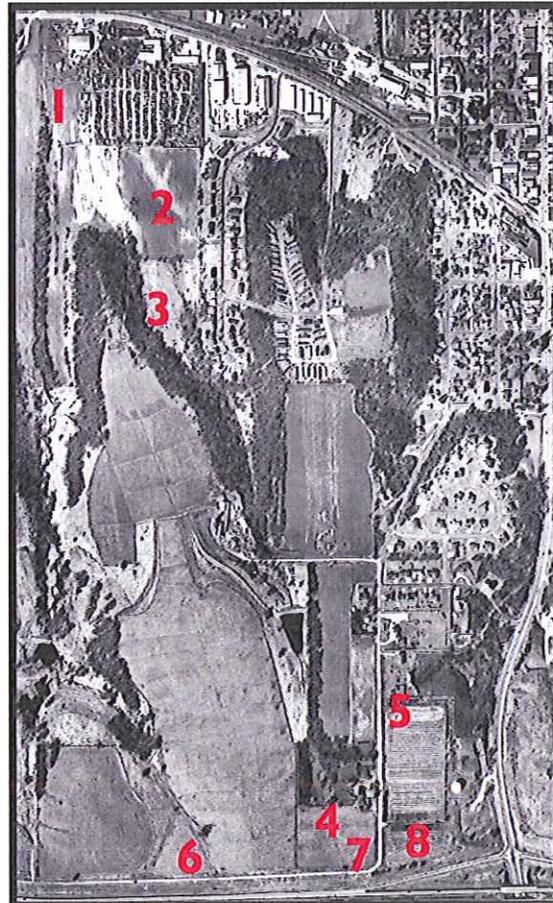
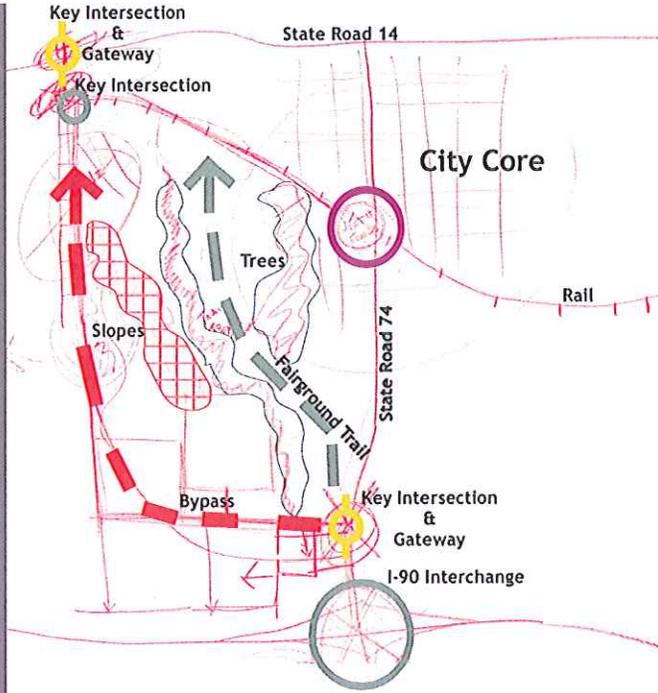
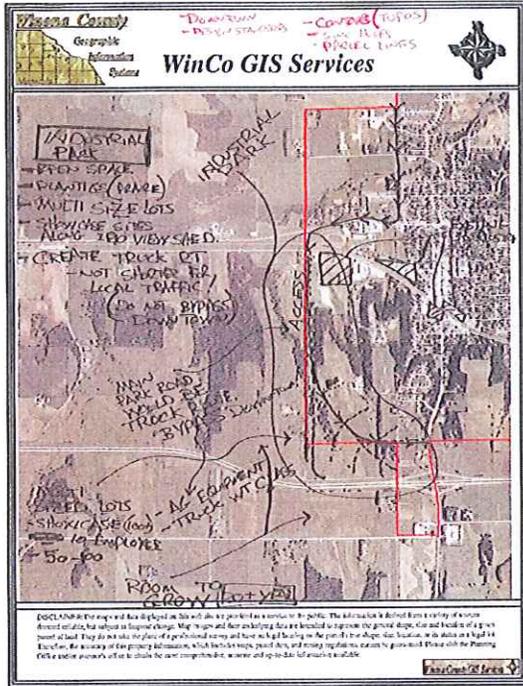
Snowmobile Trails

St Charles

Winona County Boundary



Whitewater Avenue Bypass Site Analysis





Parks and Recreation

A community must plan to meet the needs of all ages and types of users. It is important to recognize the relationship of active and passive recreation. Active recreation would be considered leisure activities usually performed with others, often requiring equipment and taking place at prescribed places, sites, or fields, i.e., swimming, tennis, baseball, and playground activities. Passive recreation would include any leisure time activity not considered an active, i.e., bike riding, hiking, walking, picnicking. Recreation facilities need to separate and enhance the relationship between active and passive recreation as to co-exist in our current environment in order to not hinder either recreation.

The City has a nice variety of park facilities. These facilities provide a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities.

PARK & RECREATION SYSTEM

St. Charles has systematically created a comprehensive park and recreation system taking advantage of the surrounding landscapes for the enjoyment of its residences and visitors. The system ranges from open space beside the Whitewater River to Jessens Park located near the golf course with each facility offering an array of amenities and experiences. Importantly, as the City expanded beyond its core area, new residential areas complemented the existing parks with new additional recreational opportunities as well as providing necessary drainage management.

St. Charles maintains three recreational facilities and seven parks.

Recreational Facilities

Mel Brownell Aquatic Center

St. Charles completed the \$1.5-million, Mel Brownell Aquatic Center in June of 1999. The Aquatic Center features a 181-foot water slide, six lap swim lanes, one

diving board, a drop slide, zero-depth entry with three water features, large sun deck, and a concessions area.

Skate Park and Ice Skating Rink

St. Charles constructed a new hockey rink in 1999 adjacent to the Tennis Courts.

Tennis Courts

The City shares the operation of Tennis Courts with the St. Charles School District.

Parks

Brookwood Park

Brookwood Park consisting 2.5-acres opened in 2000, and lies at the northern end of Whitewater Avenue, that now features a parking facility that will accommodate 89 automobiles with the acquisition of an additional 7 acres when Brookwood Trailer Park was eliminated due to the Flood of 2007. The City improved the Park by adding new playground equipment and a pavilion with further improvements of a pedestrian trail with a bike/walking trail and bridge financed through donations by the Whitewater Trailblazers Snowmobile Club.

City Park

The St. Charles City Park consists of 31-acres and lies on the north side of Highway 14 and west of Highway 74. This park is the City's most utilized in the St. Charles Park system. City Park has an extensive assortment of playground equipment and recreational facilities including:

- 3 pavillions
- 3 ballfields
- 1 basketball court
- 1 football/soccer field
- 3 sand volleyball courts
- 1 skate park
- 1 paved bike/walking trail encircling the South B

Jessens Park

Jessens Park is located on the southeast border of the City adjacent to the St. Charles Golf Course. The park consists of 10 acres and currently features a 9-hole Frisbee golf course, a sledding hill that is utilized in the winter, a pavilion, playground equipment, hiking trails, and forest lands. The park is planned to host a fishing pond stocked by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Kieffer Park

Kieffer Park is approximately 5 acres and was donated by Paul Kieffer, the owner of Sherwood Mobile Home Park. Since 2005, Mr. Kieffer has donated \$20,000 to be used toward the purchase of new playground equipment, a basketball court and a soccer field. It also features a pavilion, and a paved parking facility for 12-15 vehicles.

Meadowview Park

Meadowview Park was donated by Gieb Construction and consists of 5 acres and is the second of two new parks created as a result of the Parkland Dedication Ordinance. The park features playground facilities, a paved parking lot for approximately 18 vehicles, a pond, and a walking/bike trail.

Oakview Park

Oakview Park consists of one residential lot along Oakview Drive in the southwest section of the City. This neighborhood park has playground equipment and a basketball hoop.

Whispering Hills Park

Whispering Hills Park consists of 9 acres and was the first of two new parks created from the Parkland Dedication Ordinance. The park was donated by Gathje Construction. The park features playground equipment, a fountain with a pond, a parking lot, and a paved walking/bike trail around the pond.

PRAIRIE DESIGN OF EXISTING AND FUTURE PARKS

Currently vast amounts of money are spent on the maintenance of parks throughout the City to maintain 'lawn' quality parks. By establishing areas in existing parks to showcase native prairie plantings, not only is there less maintenance for the city but also it can be used as a public education tool to local schools and visitors showing the habitat that is being restored in the city. Along the Whitewater river allowing natural vegetation buffers and creating 'river viewing points' will showcase how St. Charles has embraced a running river through its boundaries. (See image 'City Park'). The result of these investments will benefit all users of the park system and will showcase St. Charles as a responsible environmental city.

ACCESS

St. Charles only has a limited designated bike path / trail system connecting one park facility to another, and without a comprehensive path / trail system, most residents and visitors rely on driving to the various facilities. Residents do have the ability to take

advantage of local bike lanes for park access or navigate the paved trail along the Whitewater River.

With the creation of a regional trail system proposed and currently being worked on, St. Charles will be welcoming more tourists and visitors to the city as the system is established. By creating an organized and simple internal system of signage and information points the city can benefit greatly to the tourism that will be introduced to them. Through lodging, retail, and food services St. Charles has the opportunity to become a stopping point on a well-traveled trail system. Not only will the trail system be providing visitors to the city but also interstate and local traffic will be able to use the visitor center at the center of the city to learn and use what St. Charles has to offer.

What 100 Tourists a Day Mean to a Community (jobs created)*

*US Chamber of Commerce Study

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Retail</u>	<u>Hotels/Ent.</u>	<u>Restuarants</u>
Construction	0.19	0.41	0.52	0.19
Manufacturing	0.84	1.91	2.43	1.87
Transportation	8.21	0.68	0.87	0.37
Communication & Utilities	0.19	0.55	0.70	0.28
Wholesale Trade	0.39	0.68	0.87	0.94
Retail Trade	0.97	34.23	2.09	1.12
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	0.65	1.36	1.22	0.75
Hotel & Amusement	0.13	0.27	22.08	0.19
Eating/Drinking Places	0.78	2.05	1.74	24.84
Services	2.13	5.73	6.26	2.72
Others	0.06	0.00	0.17	0.09
TOTAL	14.55	47.87	38.95	33.37=134.74 jobs

Winona County Fair Grounds

The fair grounds are located at the western edge of St. Charles. The grounds are primarily used for the yearly Winona County Fair. Multiple outbuildings are located on the property along with an outdoor horse riding arena and also a grand stand with dirt infield. Camping is also available at the grounds with electrical and water services available. The fair grounds have been an asset to the community for 100 years. Utilizing the Winona County Fairgrounds as a multiple use facility is not just beneficial to the property owner, but also to the City of St. Charles' economic base. Events can generate local investment in restaurants, lodging, and retail.

NEW PARK/VISITOR CENTER

The creation of a new park facility located in the downtown district will tie all neighborhood park and recreation facilities together. A kiosk would be an integral part to the park making information easy to gain for visitors. The kiosk should provide citywide information regarding walking tours of historic homes and also maps of regional/city trail systems. Located off of the downtown main street the location would give the user a sense of exploring the rest of the city. (Historical Location- Carl Fisher (Mr. Gladiola) lived just west and south of the existing city hall, an open space is currently there next to the residence.)

The location would also be designed to accommodate the large bicycle traffic that would be stopping at the park. Amenities such as public bathrooms, bike racks, and a variety of resting options would give visitors a destination to take a break.

The park would be designed around a historical theme of the gladiola days and the history of St. Charles. The park would be an educational/example of native vegetation highlighting how native prairies have been established at other parks throughout the city.

PARK AND RECREATION GOALS:

- Create and maintain a balanced system of interconnected and regional parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces.
- Promote a trail and byway system that interconnects park and recreation areas to each other, both in the city and regionally.
- Provide each new neighborhood with access to a park. As new housing development occurs, planning how to interconnect with the nearest appropriate park should be considered.
- Explore avenues for local, state, and federal funding of projects to be considered by the community.

PARK AND RECREATION POLICIES:

- ❖ Encourage continued use of school property and other public and private facilities and playgrounds for public use.
- ❖ Provide adequate funding to maintain existing park and recreational systems. An acceptable balance should exist between maintenance and capital improvement expenditures.

- ❖ The City and Park Board should maintain and annually update a long range plan for park revenue and expenditures for meeting the changing needs of the community.
- ❖ The Park Board should develop a master plan for each park area to guide future development of each area as needs change.
- ❖ The City should recognize the importance of open space and work toward improving, acquiring, and enhancing these areas for the public good.

St. Charles Trails

Trail Type

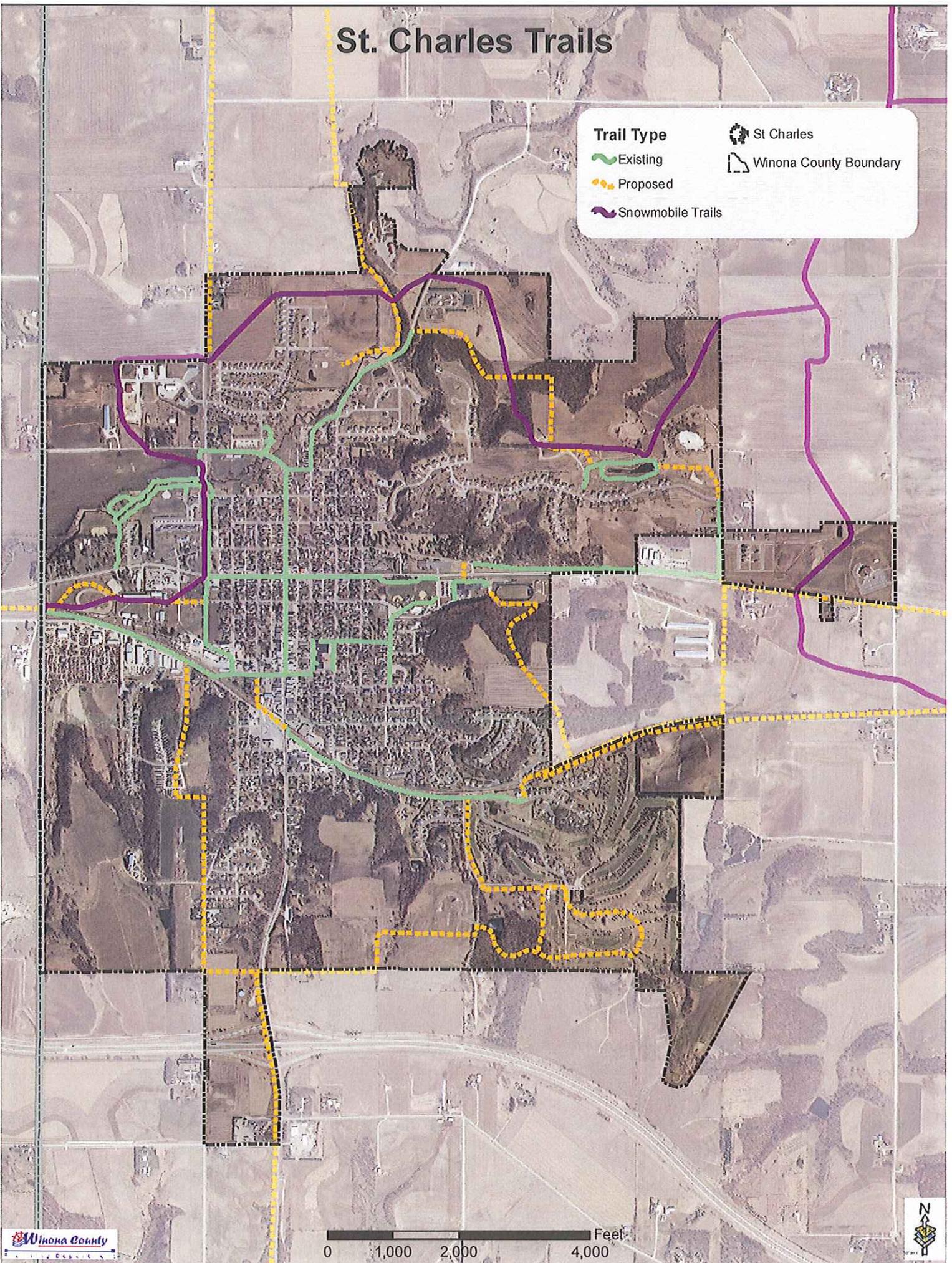
Existing

Proposed

Snowmobile Trails

St Charles

Winona County Boundary





HOUSING

A community's housing stock is its most significant long-term capital asset. As is typical in most communities, housing is the largest single land use in St. Charles. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of local housing trends and existing conditions. This analysis will shape the goals and policies included this chapter.

While construction in St. Charles has been consistent historically, the level of construction accelerated tremendously in the 1990's. The number of houses built in the 1990's equaled the three previous decades combined.

Existing Housing Characteristics:

The following section takes a look at the existing housing stock in the City of St. Charles.

Table 14 Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Year Built - St. Charles						
Pre-1940	1940-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-2000*	2000-2008**
280	154	60	101	75	229	224

Source: 2000 Census; City Building Permits

* The Census reported units constructed through March of 2000. Because of weather conditions, it is assumed that permits for housing that was occupied in March/April 2000 would have been issued in 1999.

** 2008 permit issuance is through August

Table 15 Renter-Occupied Housing Units by Year Built - St. Charles						
1939 and Earlier	1940-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-2000*	2000-2008**
86	14	23	89	84	50	58

Source: 2000 Census; City Building Permits

* The Census reported units constructed through March of 2000. Because of weather conditions, it is assumed that permits for housing that was occupied in March/April 2000 would have been issued in 1999.

** 2008 permit issuance is through August

At the time of the 2000 Census, approximately 31% of the City's owner-occupied housing units were built prior to 1940, and approximately 48% of the City's owner occupied units were built prior to 1960. Statewide the averages were approximately 21% of the owner occupied housing was built prior to 1940, and approximately 41% was built prior to 1960, so that would mean that the owner-occupancy housing in St. Charles was older than state average.

Statewide, approximately 65% of rental housing was built since 1960. In St. Charles, 75% of the rental housing was built after 1960, so the rental housing stock in St. Charles is newer than average.

Housing construction in St. Charles has been very strong since 2000, but the construction activity has slowed significantly due to the troubled housing and credit markets and difficult national economic conditions.

As the economy rebounds and credit markets loosen, St. Charles is positioned for growth in the future. This growth can be projected because of a number of factors. First, the community's geographic location is ideal as it lands directly between the region's two economic centers of Rochester and Winona. St. Charles is also located along the two major transportation ways of Minnesota State Highway 14 and Interstate Highway 90. The following sections also illustrate the fact that the community has an existing housing stock encompassing a wide range of income levels but also contains a large number of buildable lots that vary in price as well.

Housing Affordability:

Home sale values in St. Charles for 2007-2008.

Table 20 St. Charles Home Sales by Price Range - 12-Month Sales Period		
Sale Price	Number	Percent
Less than \$60,000	1	2.3%
\$60,000-\$99,999	5	11.4%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	6	13.6%
\$120,000 - \$139,999	5	11.4%
\$140,000 - \$159,999	7	15.9%
\$160,000 -\$179,999	6	13.6%
\$180,000 - \$199,999	5	11.4%
\$200,000 - \$224,999	1	2.3%
\$225,000 - \$249,999	3	6.8%
\$250,000 - \$274,999	3	6.8%
\$275,000 - \$299,999	1	2.3%
\$300,000+	1	2.3%
Total	44	100%

Source: Winona County; Community Partners Research, Inc.

The above table illustrates that the community contains a wide range of housing price options.

Sales were distributed in all of the defined price ranges, but the vast majority of sales were between \$100,000 and \$199,000. Fewer than 14% of all sales were for less than \$100,000, and approximately 20% were for more than \$200,000.

Available Residential Lots:

A housing market study was conducted in 2008 and the following information was listed regarding available residential lots in the City of St. Charles.

Table 18 Residential Subdivisions and Lot Availability - 2008			
Subdivision/Phase	Improved Lots Available for Sale	Estimated Price Range	Future Phases/ Development Potential
Northern Hills Phase I and II	45 to 50 lots available	\$32,000 to \$76,500	One more phase of 30 lots possible
Meadowview Estates	14 lots available including 1 twin home	\$32,000 to \$39,900	15 acres for possible future development
Whispering Hills	21 lots available	\$45,000 to \$49,000	120 acres for possible future development
Countryside Acres	10 lots available	\$45,000 to \$89,900	45 acres for possible future development
Pine Ridge	21 lots available	N/A	N/A
South Fork	16 lots available + 2 multifamily lots	\$20,247 to \$28,275 + up to \$4,000 deferred lien	Second phase with 39 single family and 2 multifamily lots

Source: Community Partners Research, Inc.

Northern Hills - One of the largest active residential subdivisions in St. Charles is Northern Hills. This 90 acre parcel has already had two development phases, with 100 lots improved to date. Approximately 25 acres remain undeveloped, and would be planned for a future phase of 30 lots. Of the 100 lots developed in the first two phases, approximately 50 to 55 have been sold, and the remaining lot inventory remains available, priced between \$30,000 and \$76,500, with all assessments paid. As many as 12 of the available lots are higher priced lots (\$55,000+) that are very large, have trees and walk-out potential. During the peak construction years earlier in the decade, Northern Hills was selling up to 10 lots per year. However, since 2005, lot sales have slowed significantly, and in 2007, only three sales occurred. Some of the lot sales in 2006 and 2007 were for speculative home construction, and some of these spec homes have been for sale for more than one year.

Meadowview Estates - This subdivision is in its fifth development phase. The first phase began in 1993, with the most recent phase constructed in 2005. Since its creation, nearly 100 lots have been improved. At the time of this Study there were 14 lots available for sale, including one lot that was platted for a twin home. Prices range from \$32,000 to \$39,900, with all assessments paid. The twin home lot is listed at \$39,900, but the cost per unit would be half this amount. The owners of this subdivision also have a spec home for sale for \$210,000. This house was completed in the fall of 2007. To date, 12 twin home units have been constructed and sold in Meadowview Estates. These units have an association arrangement for yard care and property maintenance. The last unit that was sold was priced at \$210,000. Empty-nesters and retirees have been the primary market for these units.

Whispering Hills - This is a larger subdivision that has had six development phases since 1996, with 102 improved lots created. The most recent phase was completed in 2005 and added 24 lots. Eighteen lots remain available from the most recent phase, along with three lots from a prior phase. There are also two model homes for sale, for \$279,900 and \$313,000. Lot prices range from \$45,000 to \$49,000 with all assessments paid. Most of the houses that were built in recent years are \$250,000 or more, and are aimed at the trade-up segment of the market. All of the lots in Whispering Hills are for single family detached housing. The parcel has 120 acres still available for development, and the next phase will create lots for twin home construction. However, market conditions are not conducive to additional lot development, and the next phase is on hold. Earlier in the decade, this subdivision had been selling eight to ten lots per year, but in 2007, only three lots were sold.

Countryside Acres - This subdivision is on the south side of the community and was developed in 2006. Some of the lots in the subdivision are nearly 1 acre in size. Two lots were sold in 2006, and one home was built, with 10 lots still available for sale. Lot prices were lowered in 2007, and range from \$45,000 to \$89,000, with all assessments paid. All of the lots are for single family detached housing. There are as many as 45 additional acres in the parcel that could be used for future subdivision phases.

South Fork - This subdivision is publicly owned, and was developed by the SE MN Multi-County HRA. The lots were developed in 2004, but some pre-sale activity occurred in the fall of 2003, as an area nonprofit acquired three lots for speculative home construction. Of the 26 single family lots created, there are 16 still available for sale. Only one lot was sold in 2007. Ten new homes have been constructed, although one is a speculative home that is still for sale. Nine of the 10 homes in this subdivision were constructed as spec houses, and most of these were sold for \$150,000 or less. When lots are sold, the buyer agrees to construct a home in approximately one year. The HRA records a three-year repayment agreement against the property that requires an additional payment of \$3,000 to \$4,000 if the house is sold during that time, to prevent profit-taking from the subsidized lot. The two multifamily parcels in the subdivision have not been used, but negotiations are underway with a private builder for the construction of up to four town house units on one of the lots, as a first phase in up to eight town houses being constructed. The units would be sold for owner-occupancy. Additional land is available at South Fork, and a second phase of the project could add 39 more single family lots and two additional multifamily lots.

Pine Ridge - Another subdivision exists in the City, but no information was obtained. An estimated 20 lots remain available in this subdivision.

Hillcrest Estates -

Source: 2008 Winona County Housing Study from Community Partners Research, Inc.

HOUSING GOALS:

- Provide an adequate supply of safe, energy efficient housing for individuals of all income levels throughout the community.
- Enhance and maintain existing neighborhoods.
- Promote non-motorized connections between residential areas throughout the community.
- Maintain and rehabilitate existing housing stock.
- Promote increased energy efficiency in new and existing housing.
- Promote construction within existing housing developments.

HOUSING POLICIES:

- ❖ Continually review and modify, as needed, local ordinances to make sure that they accommodate all housing needs of an economically diverse community.
- ❖ Continue to incent energy efficiency improvements in homes.
- ❖ Encourage mixed housing neighborhoods that maintain the predominantly single-family character of the community but also provide a range of housing types, densities, and costs.
- ❖ Work with federal, state and local agencies to secure financial assistance for housing programs.
- ❖ Continue to develop non-motorized connection of residential sectors of the community with new bike trails and pedestrian walkways
- ❖ Explore and identify opportunities to reutilize and redevelop existing parcels where rehabilitation of the buildings is not cost-effective
- ❖ Assess the effectiveness in meeting housing demands and monitor the achievement of the housing policies not less than once every 5 years
- ❖ Encourage residential infill development on existing lots in the City, including the preparation of an inventory of potentially available lots with utilities
- ❖ Encourage commercial/residential multi-use in downtown commercial area



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The business and economic health of a community is one of the most important components to a healthy and thriving community. Building and retaining a strong commercial and industrial base can have many positive impacts on a community. These impacts can be seen in a number of different areas from providing jobs to its residents and contributing to its tax base, to being a source of community pride and psychological strength to a city. One of the best ways to illustrate this point is to imagine two similar communities, one with a downtown area consisting of vacant or blighted buildings and one that has a thriving business sector. The health of the business sector of a community is projected across the entire city. This means that if the business sector is viewed as dying, the city is viewed as dying and if the business sector is healthy and growing, the community is viewed as vibrant and attractive.

St. Charles has a fairly diverse economy featuring manufacturing, retail, professional services, and tourism. St. Charles location presents many opportunities as it is positioned centrally between the local economic centers of Rochester and Winona. The community is also situated between two major traffic routes Interstate 90 to the south and State Highway 14 on the north end of town.

The community is primed for industrial development highlighted by the privately owned Whitewater Industrial Park. Whitewater Industrial Park has lots immediately available for development with electric, water and sewer, street, curb and gutter infrastructure already in place. The community is also currently exploring the development of a community business park near Interstate 90 in order for the community to take advantage of its proximity to this major traffic-way. St. Charles looks to take advantage of several State of Minnesota programs to promote development. Some of these programs include the Public Infrastructure Grant Program, the Redevelopment Grant Program and the JOBZ program.

Tax Increment Financing and Tax Abatement are other business subsidies that the City uses to encourage development. There is an application process for any subsidy and projects are granted subsidies based on set criteria. The projects chosen would not happen without the subsidies.

Another program utilized by the City to assist the business community is an active revolving loan program. This program is designed to offer low interest, gap financing loans to St. Charles businesses to assist with start-up or expansion costs when traditional financing is not feasible.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

- Increase job opportunities for all skill levels.
- Expand commercial and industrial tax base.
- Maintain and continue development of a strong, diversified, and balanced economic base and create a favorable climate for economic development and ongoing business activities.
- Work to retain existing businesses, and assist them, when possible, in any expansion efforts.
- Strengthen the relationship between City Government and local businesses.
- Promote a hard-working, available, well educated and trained labor force.
- Encourage continued job skills training for work force.
- Encourage preservation and rehabilitation, as feasible, of the historic buildings and other distinguishing and attractive features of the community.
- Develop more pronounced link for the community to Interstate 90.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:

- ❖ Actively promote development and redevelopment within St. Charles, including use of financial incentives where necessary
- ❖ Target businesses that provide livable-wage jobs.
- ❖ Participate in the state legislative process on economic development and business issues.
- ❖ Communicate with all business sectors often through surveys and forums to prevent job loss and to measure business climate for issues
- ❖ Seek out and promote programs offering job-skills training to maintain a qualified labor supply.
- ❖ Encourage development in areas that can provide adequate infrastructure, by supporting contiguous development and orderly annexation.
- ❖ Utilize public investment in infrastructure around Interstate 90 interchange to maximize tax base growth.
- ❖ Promote continued development in existing industrial park until filled to capacity.
- ❖ Assist, if necessary in the redevelopment of former site of North Star Foods.
- ❖ Develop programs to promote enhancement and rehabilitation of downtown.
- ❖ Continue to utilize local, state, and national financial assistance programs for economic development.
- ❖ Leverage local public investment to maximize impact of incentives

- ❖ Focus maximum effort on retaining and expanding existing businesses in the community..
- ❖ Encourage business sector to develop opportunities for local graduates to grow the human capital of the community.
- ❖ Provide necessary public infrastructure and utilities.



UTILITIES / INFRASTRUCTURE

Control of utility extensions is one method for a city to control the pace of development. The existing utility systems and their ability to be expanded are key to a city's ability to grow. The City's utility systems have been well maintained, but expansion will be required to adequately serve any future growth. In addition, maintenance of the existing infrastructure is vital to maintaining a viable long-term future. As the City looks to its future and needs with that of market costs.

Utilities need to be provided in a safe, efficient, and equitable manner. All existing utilities were previously inventoried (1999) to help identify existing inadequacies and problem areas. Only a few areas were identified as major concerns at that time.

The City maintains a maintenance schedule as outlined through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and at present time, adequately serves the current state of growth. As new problems or opportunities present themselves, the City will need to review the situation and take appropriate action.

Continuing federal, state, and local environmental standards and controls have a major impact on future expansions. Future development of the City should be encouraged in areas where utility extension can occur in a planned manner, keeping safety, efficiency, and financial feasibility issues in mind.

Natural Gas:

Natural gas is provided to the area by Minnesota Energy. Services to industrial and commercial customers include: gas transportation services, agency service, firm and interruptible supply operations, balancing services, cooperative financing on energy projects, engineering support, energy consulting, billing, metering, firm capacity management, special packages, and more.

Water:

The City of St. Charles five wells have been tracked by the Minnesota Department of Health (see table). Of these five, two have been abandoned and one deepened. Two of the wells presently use water drawn from the Ironton - Galesville bedrock formation and the other is a multiple aquifer well open from the Jordan to the Galesville.

St. Charles Wells

Well #	Date Completed	Depth	Aquifer	Status 2005
#1 219166	1930	175	Prairie du Chien	Abandoned
# 2 219164	1965	220	Prairie du Chien	Abandoned 1983
#3 219162	1966	667'	<u>Multiple</u> Open from Jordan to Galesville	106.1 MGY
#4 161426	1983	736'	Ironton- Galesville	7.8 MGY
220517 (Deepened in 1983) #4	1974	405'	Jordan	
# 5 161430	1983	702'	Ironton- Galesville	32.2 MGY

The City of St. Charles' MDNR appropriation permit # 690007 allows for the withdrawal of 980 gallons per minute of water with a yearly permit of 340 million gallons per year (MGY). 2005 reported withdrawal was 145.2 MGY. The City of St. Charles has an approved Emergency and Conservation Plan by the Minnesota DNR in 2000. A revised plan will be written for the next deadline date of 2008. The Emergency and Conservation Plan describes the city's effort to conserve water and react to emergency water supply concerns.

The City treats the raw water with chlorination and fluoride treatment. The water is stored in two storage tanks with capacities of 150,000 gallons and one million gallons. The demand for more water has resulted in a Capital Improvement Plan allocating money for a new well to be drilled in 2012-2015 and also the construction of a new water filtration plant. However, due to the loss of its largest water user in 2009 (North Star Foods fire) that construction may be postponed given the lack of demand.

According to Minnesota Department of Health records there have been no violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act Maximum Contaminant Levels for the City of St. Charles. The City of St. Charles informs its residents regarding the quality of the water supply through the Consumer Confidence Report provided through the City's spring newsletter.

Community public water systems are required to delineate, inventory, and manage an inner wellhead management zone. Additionally, they must also create a formal wellhead protection plan. Wellhead protection planning involves delineation of the wellhead protection area and drinking water supply management area, as well as an assessment of the well(s) vulnerability. The wellhead protection plan includes goals, objectives, plan of action, evaluation program, and a contingency plan.

A Phasing list has been developed for community/nontransient water suppliers that indicate the order by which these water suppliers will be brought into the Wellhead Protection Program. St. Charles originally ranked 274 out of 3,373 water suppliers. Its present rank is 494 to enter the Wellhead Protection Program. The City is currently working on its Wellhead Protection Plan which will be completed by 2013.

Sewer and Wastewater Discharge

The City of St. Charles along with the cities of Dover and Eyota jointly operate the Whitewater Pollution Control Facility – Dover-Eyota-St. Charles Sanitary District. This plant was brought on line in 1978 and has a capacity of 1,600,000 gallons a day with an average demand of 800,000 gallons a day and a peak demand of 1,600,000 gallons a day. St. Charles' portion is 510,000 gallons a day, which is an average annual rate of 1,623 lbs. of BOD per day. In September 2006, the District was given final approval to construct and operate a Class A wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that will treat 2.18 million gallons per day average wet weather flow. The expansion is occurring at the site of the existing WWTP. The facility currently has an average wet weather design flow of 1.12 million gallons per day. Another phase of the project is anticipated to start in 2015 and will increase the capacity of the plant to 2.54 mgd. The existing system consists of inceptor sewers with 53,489 feet of sanitary sewer line. There are a number of changes that will be made through the expansion that will upgrade the ability of the WWTP to treat the wastewater. The effluent from the WWTP is discharged to the South Fork of the Whitewater River in St. Charles

The discharges of the City of St. Charles residents and businesses to the sewer system comprise roughly 50% of the wastewater that is treated by the plant.

In 2007 a study was conducted to evaluate issues relating to inflow and infiltration (I & I). I & I relates to the movement of clean stormwater and groundwater into the sewer system. There has been a problem of I & I in St. Charles particularly during storm events when it is estimated that the discharge to the WWTP may increase by 50 percent. The results of the study will provide the information concerning where actions need to be focused. Based on the results of this study, sewer lines in specific areas of the city will need to be upgraded.

Stormwater Management and Floodplain Management

Much of St. Charles's storm drainage system is more than 30 years old with two primary conveyance ditches that move stormwater to the South Fork of the Whitewater River. There are twelve ponds in St. Charles that are utilized to reduce peak discharges to the two ditches.

Polaris Group developed a Stormwater Management Plan that was adopted by the City in 2004. The goals of the plan are:

- 1) Manage storm water regionally, encourage dual- purpose facilities, and protect wetlands.
- 2) Minimize flooding potential while minimizing the public capital expenditure necessary to control runoff
- 3) Manage water to protect the South Fork of Whitewater River and Trout Run Creek (south of I90 along HWY 74)
- 4) Prevent erosion and sedimentation.

There are areas in the northern part of St. Charles along the South Fork Whitewater River and the conveyance ditches that are within the floodplain of the South Fork Whitewater River and are also prone to flooding. There have been incidences where homes have been inundated with water during periods of flooding.

In 2007, a 500 year flooding event traveled through the northwest portion of St. Charles and damaged both commercial and residential property. Eventually, with FEMA and the Department of Natural Resources assistance, the Brookwood Trailer Park was removed and replaced with greenspace and a parking lot. The public works department subsequently cleaned out trees and roots out of the south branch of the Whitewater River in 2008 to try and mitigate future flooding. Again, in 2010 another rain event struck the area. While no businesses were damaged in that area, flooding did persist. It was recognized that in the downtown area on the east side of Highway 74 from 10th to 11th Street insufficient drainage posed an immediate threat to businesses. A construction project was completed which alleviated that threat.

Electric

The City of St. Charles has operated as its own public electric utility since 1903. Currently it serves almost 1,800 commercial and residential customers. It is a member of the Upper Midwest Municipal Power Association which is a collective of 15 other cities throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The City of St. Charles purchases its power directly from Dairyland Power Cooperative. Prior to 2008, the City residents enjoyed a 10-year contract that did not see any rate increases despite a growing volatility in the coal and oil markets. In 2008, after seeking Requests for Purchase Power Agreements from many purchase providers, Dairyland Power was awarded the contract. A 20-year agreement was signed and will expire in 2028.

To date, the City of St. Charles Electric Utility maintains approximately 34 miles of power lines both above and below ground. Currently, the City of St. Charles has territory agreements with Tri-County Electric Cooperative and Alliant Energy (ITC).

In 2003, the utility company completed an electric project that upgraded the service lines from 2,400 volt to 7,200 volt. Outdated primary feeder lines were replaced with underground wiring. In addition, the substation was rebuilt as part of the project.

In order to avoid being charged demand by Dairyland Power Cooperative the City of St. Charles built a generator plant in 2004, which now can generate 8.8 Megawatts and can cover the City's entire load in emergency outages for short periods of time. The anticipated savings initially from the project was approximately \$350,000. However, 2010 estimates showed the demand savings of nearly \$500,000.

In addition, the City constructed a new steel sided Public Works building in 2004 to house electric, water, sewer, and streets on a 7-acre parcel to the north of town off of Richland Avenue called Northwoods Drive. The department also maintains a structure at Richland and 15th Street next to an active City well building.

The City continues to investigate wind turbines as an alternative form of energy for the community. The State of Minnesota has mandated that the community reach a goal of 25 percent of renewable energy provided by electric providers by 2025 to its customers.

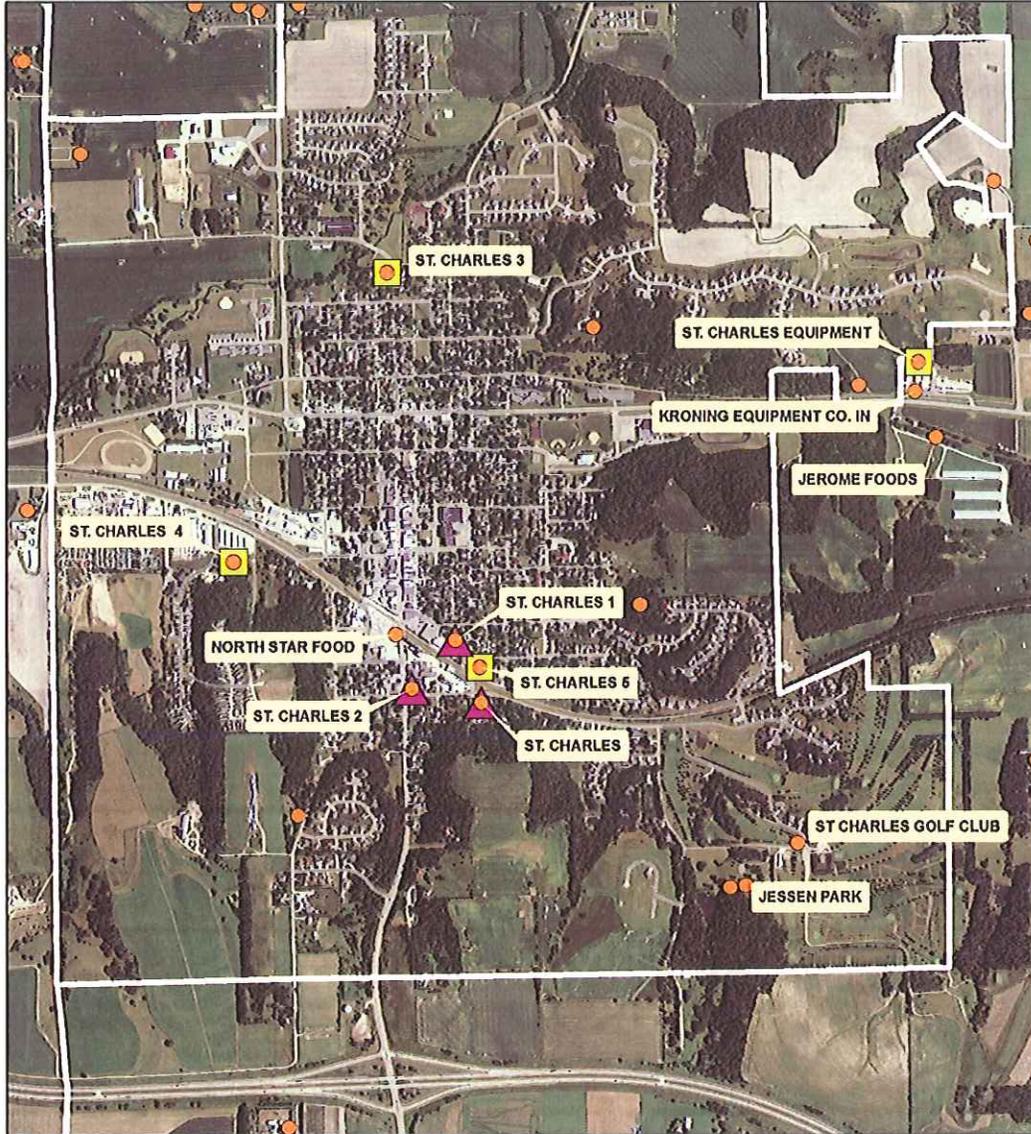
UTILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS:

- Provide City utilities to all residents in a safe, reliable, and affordable manner.
- The City should continue to review its present policies and set clear policies for future utility extensions and upgrades.
- Explore various opportunities and threats.
- Investigate potential federal, state, regional, county and alternative funding sources when applicable to assist in the replacement, expansion, and maintenance of the utility system.
- Consideration should be given to aesthetic values and the natural environment when replacing and expanding city utilities.
- Continue to explore renewable energy opportunities for the community.
- The City should continue to explore possible funding sources to accommodate water system improvements.
- Continue to explore the best possible long-term purchase power contracts.
- Continue to explore alternative forms of energy that will help create sustainable energy for the City and its residents.

UTILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES:

- ❖ Overhead utilities should be placed underground when feasible.
- ❖ The City utility systems will be expanded and maintained in the most cost-effective manner.
- ❖ The City will develop a long-range maintenance plan for the utility systems to ensure that the City's investment in infrastructure is well maintained.
- ❖ The City will work with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Health, and all other applicable agencies or regional groups to ensure that water and storm water management needs are being met in the community.
- ❖ The City will continue to utilize and adapt policies that reduce sediment and erosion and storm water run off issues.
- ❖ Review policies and ordinances that maintain a sustainable utility and ongoing operation.
- ❖ Continue to revise and update a Capital Improvement Plan for all utilities that promotes the most cost effective use fees for services.
- ❖ Continue to seek Federal, State, or private funding sources for infrastructure projects.
- ❖ Adopt user fees that promote conservation in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- ❖ Additional redundancies for electric service should be instituted when practical.
- ❖ The Wellhead Protection Plan will be completed in 2013 and updated as necessary in order to assure the safety and security of the community's water supply.

Well Location Map St. Charles, Mn

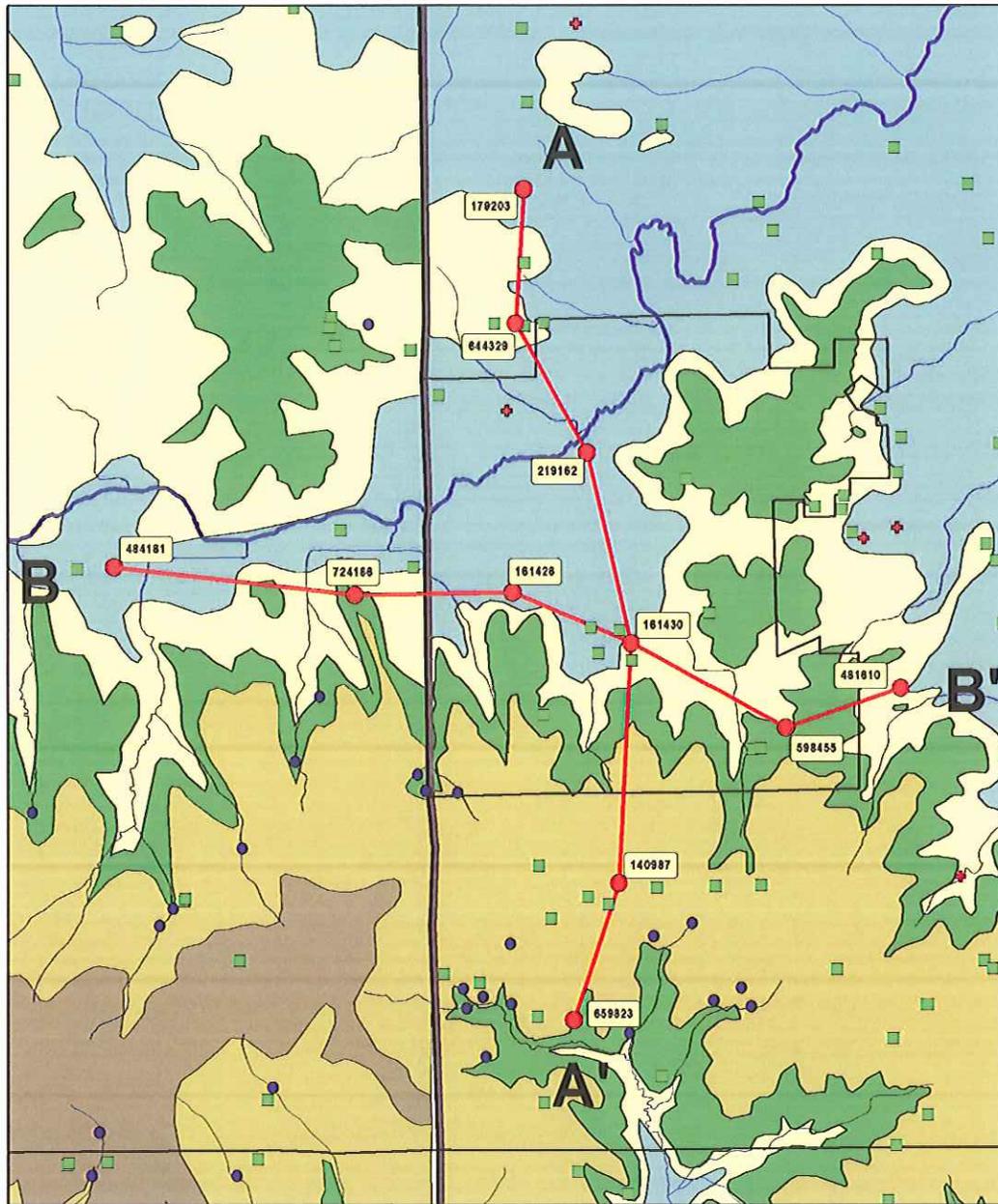


- Well with Verified Location (CWI)
- ▲ Old Community Supply Well
- Active PWS Well

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet



JLB, 2011



Bedrock Geology

Geologic Units - By County

Olmsted County

- Galena/Prosser Member
- Galena/Cummingsville Member
- Decorah-Platteville-Glenwood
- St. Peter Sandstone
- Prairie du Chien Group

Winona County

- OGAL - Galena Group
- ODPG - Decorah-Platteville-Glenwood Fms.
- OSTP - St. Peter Sandstone
- OPSH - Shakopee Fm.

- Section_Wells
- Section_Lines
- rivers
- Streams
- County Well Index
- Spring
- Stream Sink
- Sinkhole
- Minor Civil Division
- County

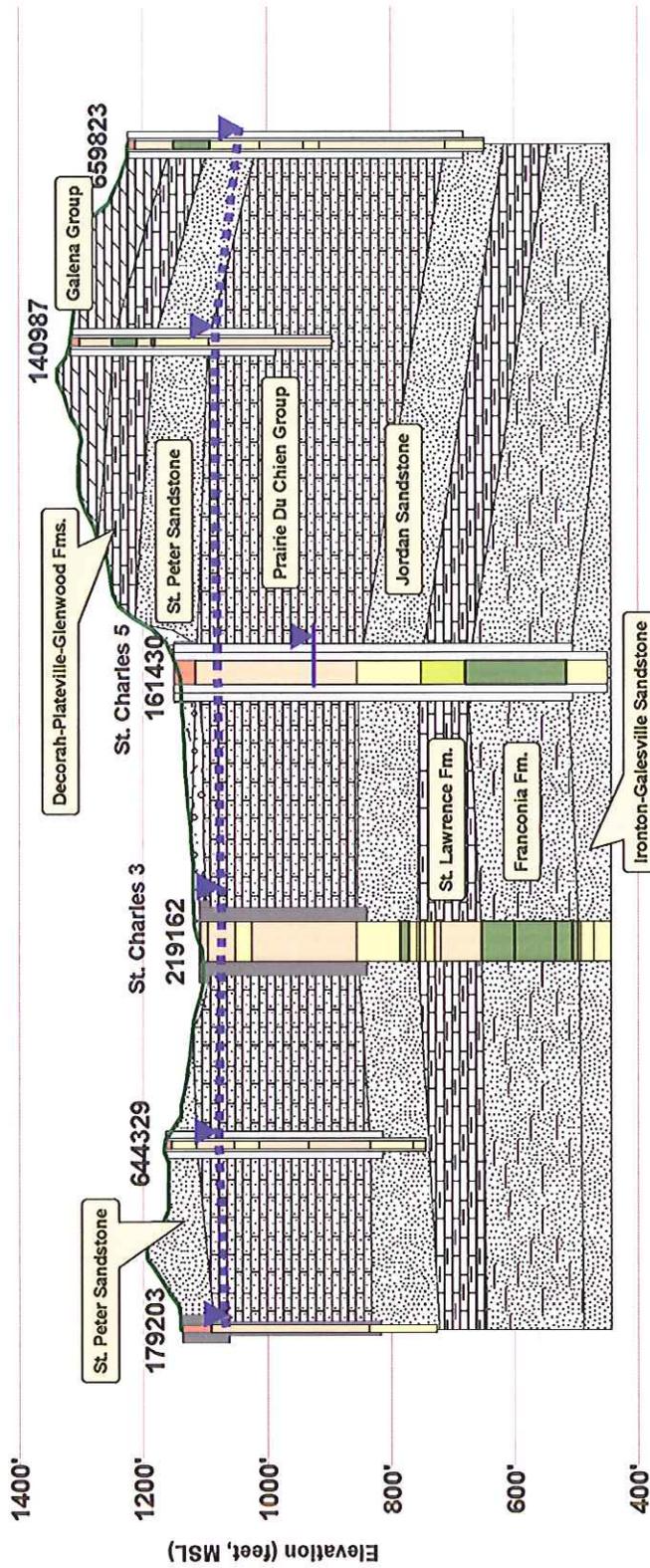
0 2,000 4,000 8,000 Feet



Geologic Cross Section A - A'

A' South

A North



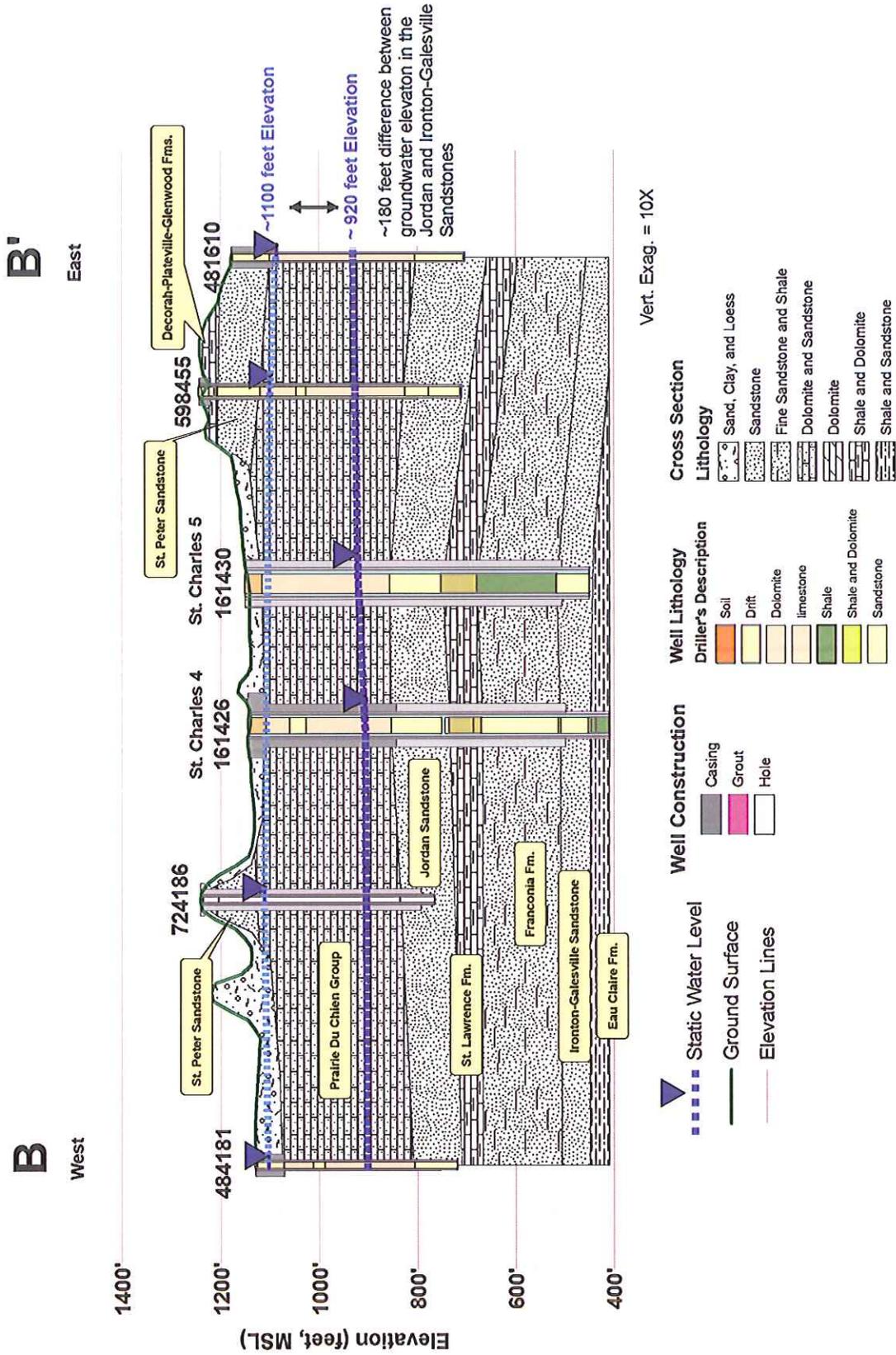
Vert. Exag. = 10X

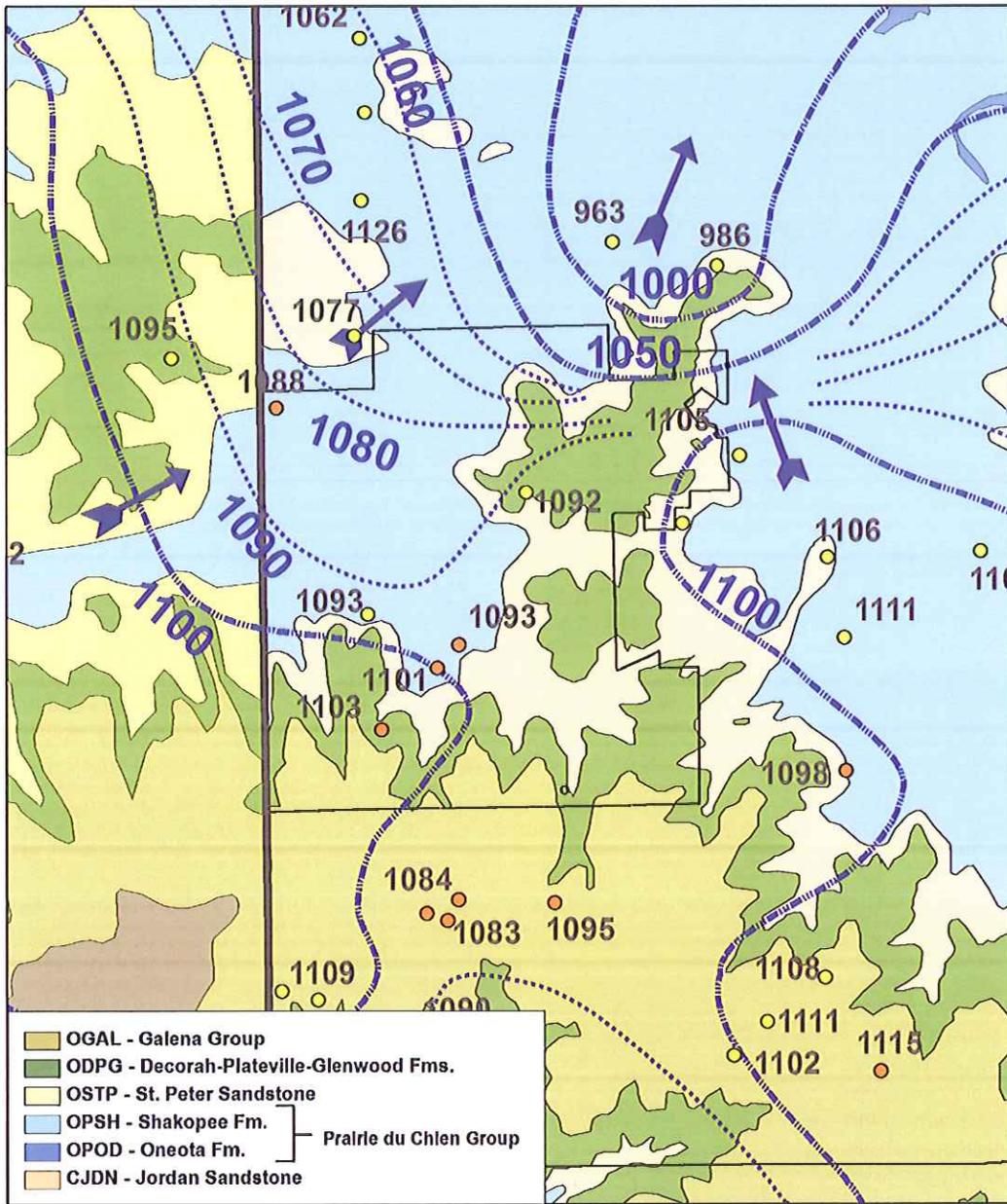
	Static Water Level		Casing		Grout		Hole		Screen
	Ground Surface								
	Elevation Lines								

	Soil
	Drift
	Dolomite
	limestone
	Shale
	Shale and Dolomite
	Sandstone

	Clay, Sand and Loess
	Sandstone
	Fine Sandstone and Shale
	Dolomite and Sandstone
	Dolomite
	Shale and Dolomite

Geologic Cross Section B - B'

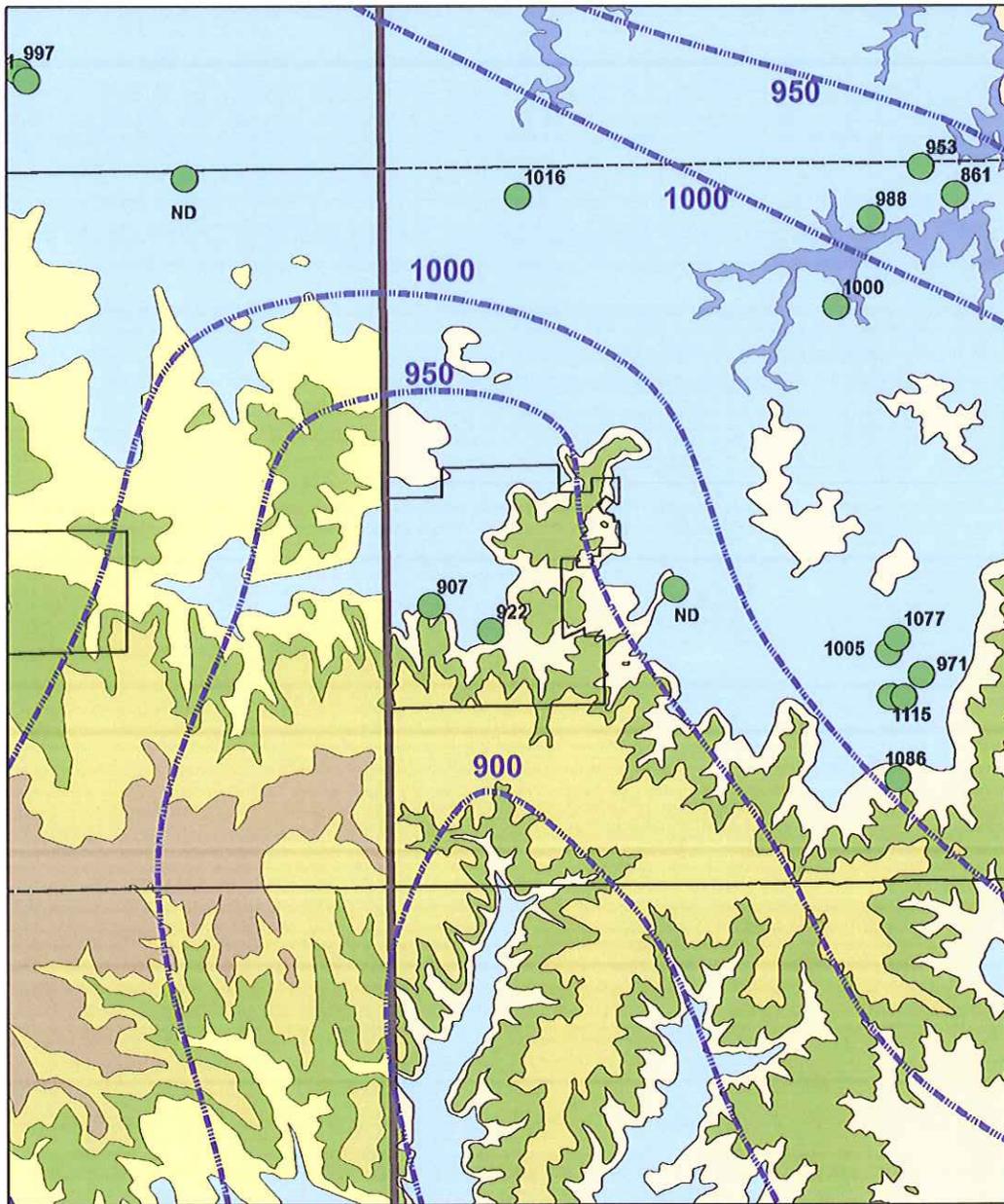




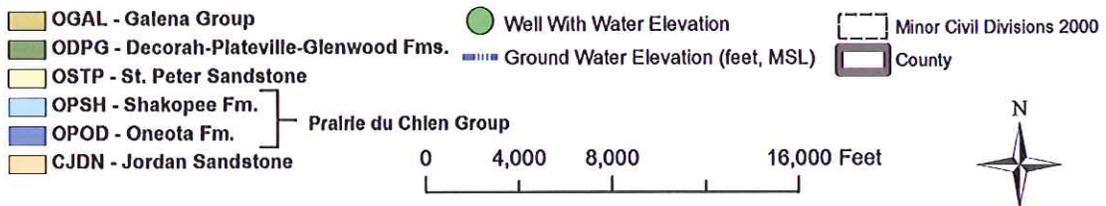
Groundwater Elevations Prairie du Chien - Jordan Aquifer

0 2,000 4,000 8,000 Feet





Groundwater Elevations Franconia-Ironton-Galesville Aquifer





TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION

Technology is changing every aspect of our lives. Innovations in information and communication technologies are rapidly and profoundly transforming the way we work, do business, govern and communicate. The City of St. Charles has the opportunity to use information and communication technologies to improve the community for its citizens, businesses and overall economy.

The community's residents are increasingly relying on technology to connect them to work, school, family and friends, and their community. They are also using technology to acquire goods, services and information. These technologies include home computers, the internet, cable television along with cellular and land-line communications. It has the potential to promote citizen involvement in the community and to increase social connectivity. Therefore, efforts should continue to promote access to quality and state of the art technology for all citizens through as many channels as possible.

By themselves, public and private institutions may not be able to absorb the investments to provide the desired infrastructure. However, public/private partnerships could be the vehicle that provides the technology to meet the needs of the residents and businesses.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION GOALS:

- Encourage availability of state of the art technology.
- Provide access to services through shared technology.
- Improve delivery of public services by utilizing technology to provide alternative means for transactions and distributing information.
- Create public wireless hotspots throughout the community

TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES:

- ❖ Support communication infrastructure needs for emergency services.
- ❖ Incorporate and maintain quality and up-to-date technology for City services and facilities.
- ❖ Support infrastructure for state of the art communications and technology for businesses in St. Charles.
- ❖ Play as active of a role as possible in designing and locating telecommunications infrastructure.
- ❖ Promote municipal television and the City's website as ways to increase community communication and involvement.

- ❖ Support electronic commerce by encouraging the development of the appropriate infrastructure.
- ❖ Support the creation of high-technology remote work centers.
- ❖ Encourage employers to establish policies that will allow more people to telecommunicate.
- ❖ Promote affordable and equal technology access to all.
- ❖ Develop partnerships among business, governments, and schools to share technology costs, equipment and training.

Community Structure

Community structure describes the overall form of the built environment of St. Charles. Structure is an important consideration in the Comprehensive Plan since it addresses how people, both residents and visitors, perceive and understand the community. Structure is also an important guide for land use regulations and decisions since the community can implement these controls to enhance community character.

St. Charles has the following discernable structural features:

- A commercial downtown centered on Whitewater Avenue,
- Traditional residential neighborhoods,
- A mixture of uses along the Highways 14 & 74 Corridors,
- Outlying residential areas, and
- Tracts of land dedicated to agriculture.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes these structural features and consideration should be given to all as land use decisions are made.

Highway 74 North Corridor –Traveling up Highway 74 North building and maintaining the existing infrastructure of public facilities and parks along with the existing Whitewater Industrial Park was of high priority. Looking at additional lots just north of the current Industrial Park on the west side of Highway 74 was explored as a potential option. On the east side of Highway 74, continuing the R-1 Single Family Residential was of utmost importance. Traveling further north along Highway 74 the R-1 Single Family Residential district would be expanded along the corridor. An improved intersection would be incorporated while arterial commercial services could be implemented within the site of the intersection. A Rural Residential designation could be developed to allow for larger single family homes on larger acreage lots.

Highway 74 South Corridor-In identifying the community's strengths the I-90 corridor was viewed as having the greatest potential for St. Charles. Because of the proximity to Interstate 90, transportation and accessibility is a key factor for many businesses. The four corners surrounding Interstate 90 were identified as the most prominent area for commercial and industrial growth due to transportation routes, potential availability of land, and existing utility extensions.

As the community grows, it was determined that bringing a mix of services and industry to St. Charles would help promote its resiliency and long-standing security in Southeast Minnesota. Combining three aspects of industry in Regional Commercial (C3), Office & Research (O&R), and Light Industry (I-1) would help to provide that sustainability. An additional map shows how a Business Park Land Use designation helps to accommodate the development of professional, light industrial, and commercial/retail services in an office park or campus setting. The performance standards would encourage a high quality of site planning, architecture, and assure adequate open space to create an attractive and unified design. To the north of Interstate 90 it was determined that to help provide with transportation routes and eventually expand to the east with a residential plat, a frontage road was necessary in order to expand on all four corners and utilize all four corner assets. Proposed road constructions were determined to be vital to the north easterly and north westerly expansions.

Southwest Conceptual-In trying to maximize the community's western most border, a preliminary plan was conceptualized. More indepth topography of the area was briefly considered and it was the understanding of the committee that excavation and a roadmap must remain flexible as detailed information of soil and grades was not available. In studying the area and the needs of the community, it was agreed that a mix of professional office space and light industrial services would be a good use of the area. In addition, providing more multi-family and townhome facilities would be a good fit. Along the Interstate 90, it was determined that 45-acres could be premium space for a potential outlet center with adjoining parcels for potential hotel expansions.

Highway 14 East Corridor –As the community expands to the east along the Highway 14 corridor it was determined that to utilize the transportation corridor in the most effective manner, the Highway 14 commercial corridor would be expanded along the travel route. Because of the large tracks of land contiguous with each other, the Regional Commercial (C-3) designation was planned along that area. In addition, because of the flat area it would make development of that area more plausible. Single Family Residential would extend along the peripherals of the Regional Commercial district. With the transportation rail route on the south side of Highway 14, allowing for potential growth of Light Industrial would allow for potential growth of those industries requiring a future potential spur line.

Downtown Analysis – The Downtown commercial district is the core of the City as Highway 74 serves as the major travel route for tourists, commercial vendors, and residents. In exploring the downtown opportunities and weaknesses it was determined that the major problem with the downtown corridor was two fold: the lack of parking and the lack of pedestrian facilities to allow for better flow.

It was discussed that connecting various components of the City through pedestrian facilities like sidewalks would be beneficial to all demographics of the City. One of the key intersections of the downtown that was pinpointed for improvement was 11th Street. In 2010 prior to completion of the comprehensive plan, a 50/50 matching grant was received from the Minnesota Department of Education for the redevelopment of a

parking lot and 11th Street sidewalk improvement. It was completed in the fall of 2010, which helped to connect the elementary school to the library. The project also helped to create 29 additional public parking spaces that would help to alleviate street parking along Church Avenue in front of the school. In addition, the Minnesota Department of Transportation completed a mill and overlay project in the downtown corridor on Highway 74 in the summer of 2010. Numerous handicap ramps were improved or installed as part of that reconstruction project.

In 2009, the City lost its largest employer with North Star Foods that occupied 2.5 acres of prime downtown space. In working to rebuild the company the City initiate a plan that would place them along the I-90 corridor. This was viewed by the Economic Development Authority and the business as the best opportunity for growth. After receiving word that a rebuild would not be possible, the City Council and EDA continued to investigate the plan further and subsequently received funding for the creation of an initial 30 acre Commercial/Industrial Business Park. However, in trying to maximize all of its assets, the former 2.5 acre site is looked at as another opportunity. The City continues to work with the owner to try and redevelop the site. The EDA agreed that a better future investment of tax dollars was to explore a larger location that utilized past infrastructure investment along the Highway 74 south corridor.

As the City's core, it was also discussed that rehabilitation of the existing downtown business facades was an important project that should be addressed in the future. Maintaining and preserving the historic value of the downtown business corridor is something that should be balanced against updating and rehabilitation of structures that have since exceeded their useful expectation. With the help of a civic group thus far known as the "flower committee" that was the genesis of the Town Meeting Initiative sponsored by the Southeast Minnesota Initiative Foundation, part of the downtown attraction is providing bold colors through the use of flowers and banners. In addition, the City has always recognized and honored its patriotic residents through incorporating service member flags as well as the American flag.

LAND USE GOALS:

- While the comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for the community, consideration for the best land use practices and uses should be considered by the Planning & Zoning and City Council.
- Administration and Council should continue to investigate state, federal, and other funding opportunities to help aid in the development of the land use plan.
- Continue to modify, adapt, and promote city land use policies that both protect the various districts, but also promote a safe, viable, and cost effective use of the land through zoning, subdivision, and building controls.
- Give consideration to the natural elements of St. Charles as developments grow.

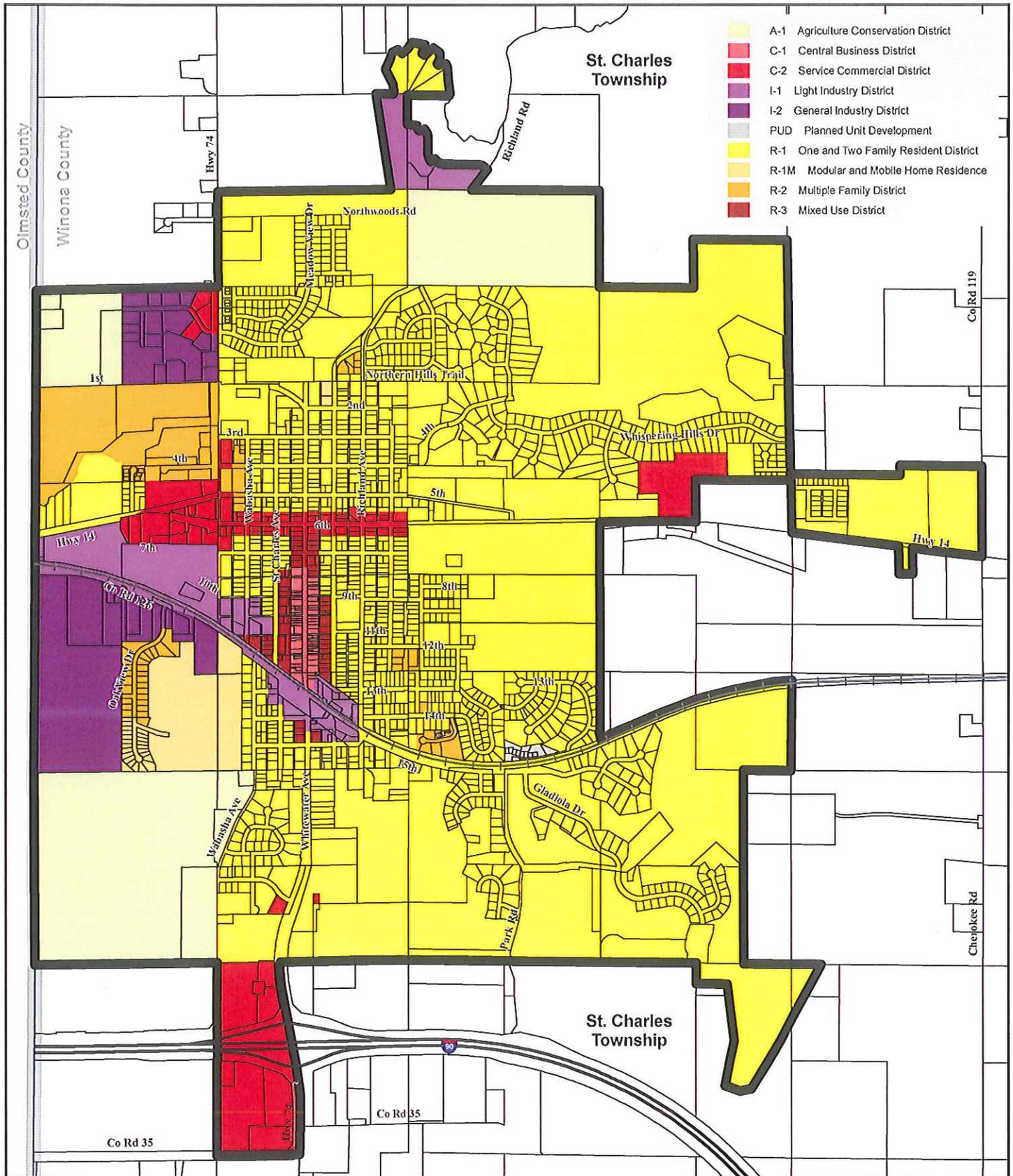
- Promote orderly growth and work with all of our township neighbors to systematically annex land into the City.
- Promote commercial land use development and redevelopment where and when necessary in order to continue to build a resilient community.
- Continue to look for programs and policies that promote the restoration and rehabilitation of the downtown corridor.
- Zoning and land use considerations will address water, ground, air, and noise pollution issues.
- New development and redevelopment should be designed and landscaped to preserve existing trees and vegetation, protect steep slopes, and maintain natural drainage features where and when possible.

LAND USE POLICIES:

- ❖ Adopt City Land Use Ordinances that are current and adopt the values and philosophies of the community while periodically reviewing its zoning ordinance and maps to ensure that new factors, trends, and market conditions are reflected as well.
- ❖ Encourage development in areas that can provide adequate infrastructure, by supporting contiguous development and orderly annexation.
- ❖ Explore potential redistricting for areas of development or redevelopment.
- ❖ Target businesses that are good business partners and work within the existing confines of the community.
- ❖ Work with state, local, and county agencies and officials to help adopt land use values and policies that promote positive development.
- ❖ Develop programs that help to maintain and sustain the existing development while anticipating future threats.
- ❖ Annexation will be explored as projects or issues arise. Discussion with neighboring townships with regard to annexation of land outside of the corporate city limits will be held to determine issues and concerns of parties involved.
- ❖ Explore opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization of the aging downtown infrastructure.
- ❖ Standards for reuse of these redeveloped areas should be established to allow for the best and highest reuse of these areas.

- ❖ Utilize and maximize public resources to explore the greatest growth potentials for St. Charles.
- ❖ Partnering with various agencies and lenders to promote the vision of sustainable growth.
- ❖ Seek guidance from local boards and commissions for land use practices.
- ❖ In order to enhance the overall image of the community and protect the health and safety of its residents, efforts should be made to remove slum and blight.
- ❖ The City should continue to enforce policies for the removal of old cars and junk throughout the community.
- ❖ Policies that promote energy efficiencies, as well as safe and well-designed structures should be pursued and enforced.
- ❖ Adopt policies that promote fair and equitable use of downtown commercial sidewalk space amongst business owners and that meet safety, fire and building standards.

Zoning Districts



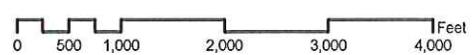
- A-1 Agriculture Conservation District
- C-1 Central Business District
- C-2 Service Commercial District
- I-1 Light Industry District
- I-2 General Industry District
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- R-1 One and Two Family Resident District
- R-1M Modular and Mobile Home Residence
- R-2 Multiple Family District
- R-3 Mixed Use District

Data Source: Compiled from St Charles Zoning ordinance.

Disclaimer: This map is for comprehensive planning purposes only.



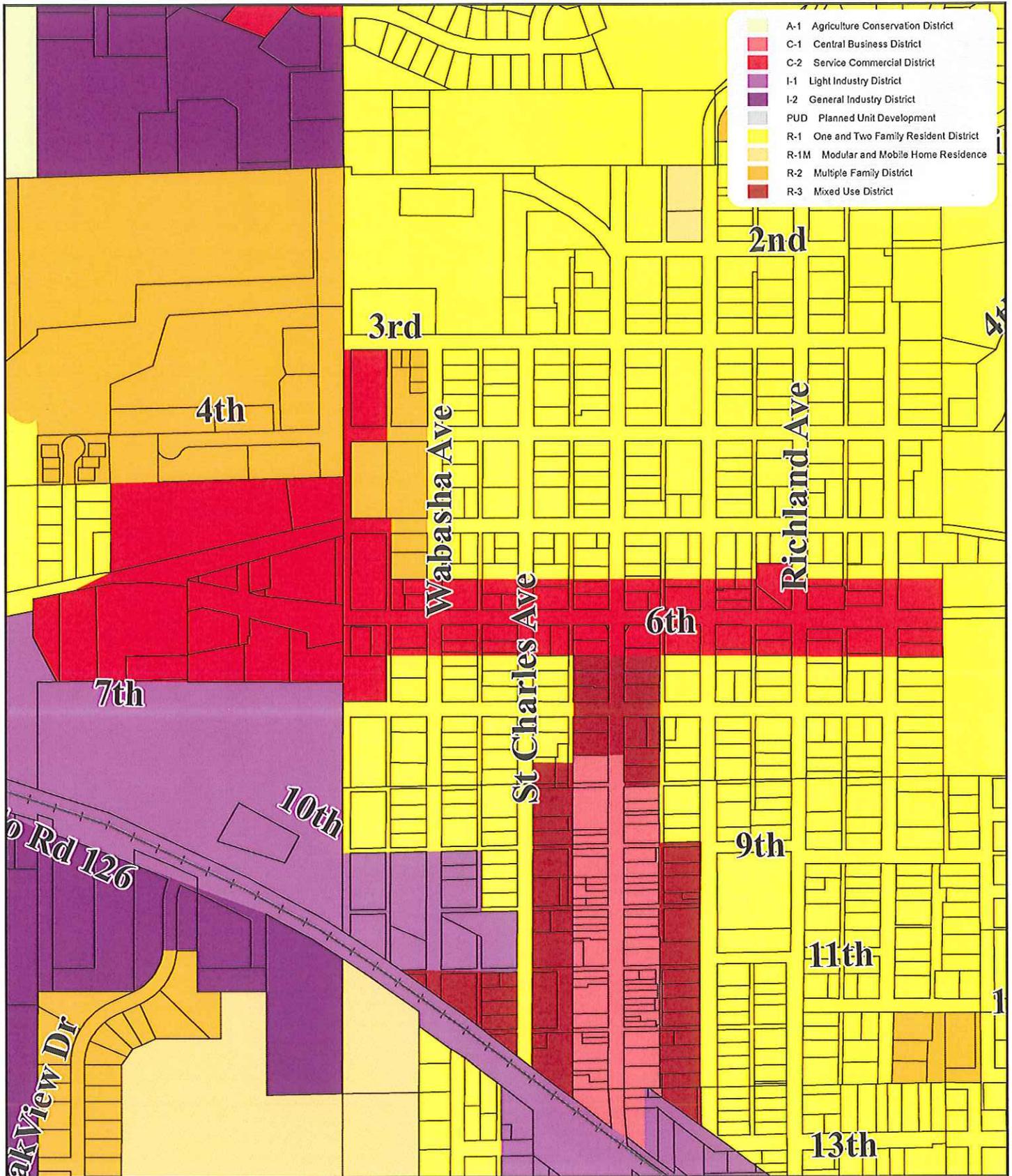
St Charles Economic Development Authority



St. Charles Comprehensive Plan

A City Grewed with Pride

Zoning Districts - Hwy 14 Corridor

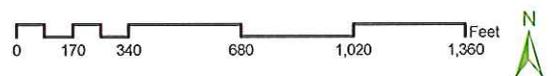


Data Source: Compiled from St Charles Zoning ordinance.

Disclaimer: This map is for comprehensive planning purposes only.



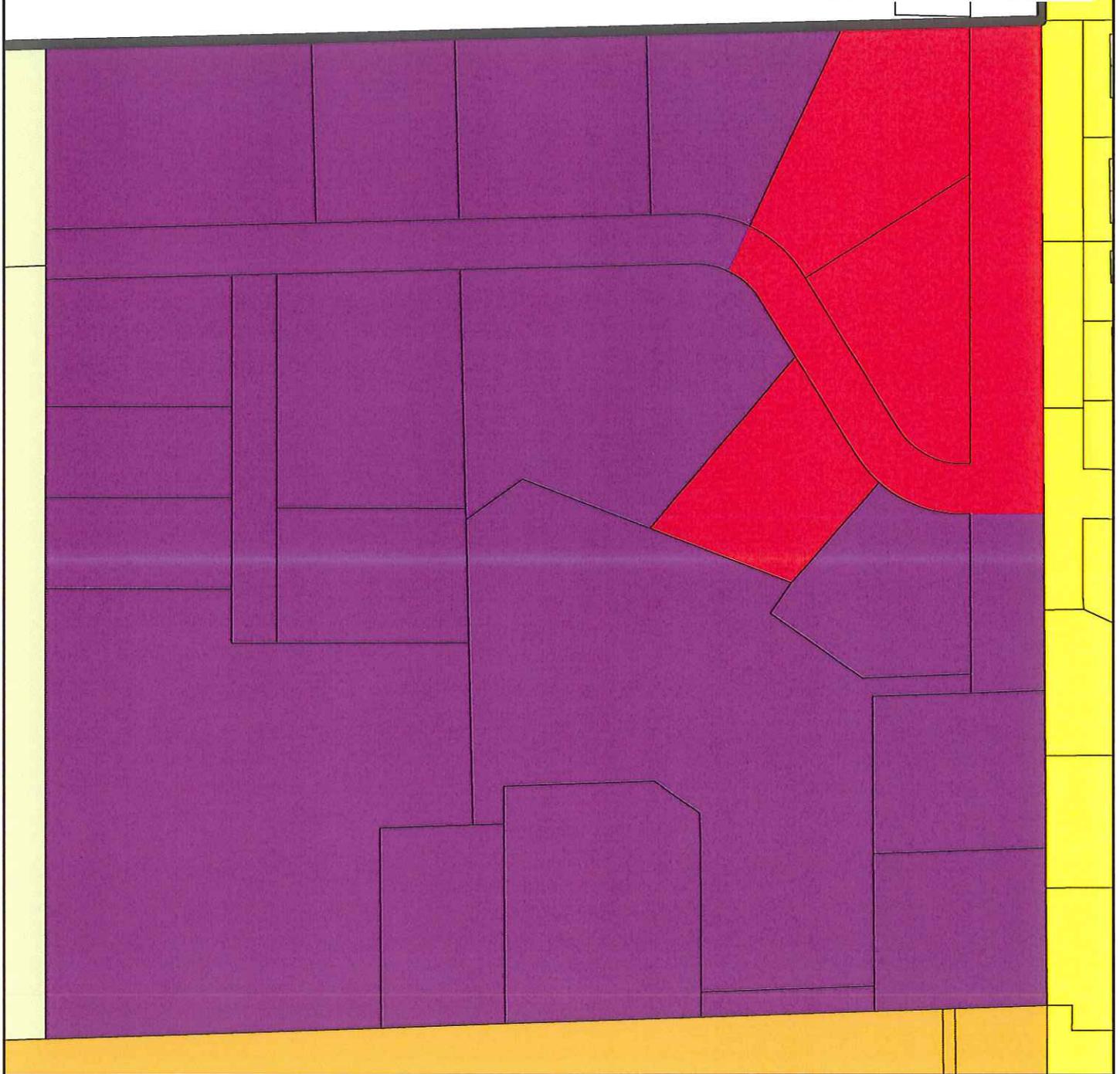
St Charles Economic Development Authority



Zoning Districts - Industrial Park

St. Charles
Township

- A-1 Agriculture Conservation District
- C-1 Central Business District
- C-2 Service Commercial District
- I-1 Light Industry District
- I-2 General Industry District
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- R-1 One and Two Family Resident District
- R-1M Modular and Mobile Home Residence
- R-2 Multiple Family District
- R-3 Mixed Use District

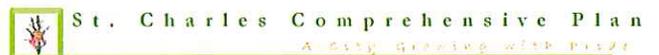
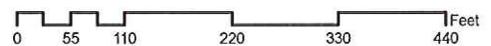


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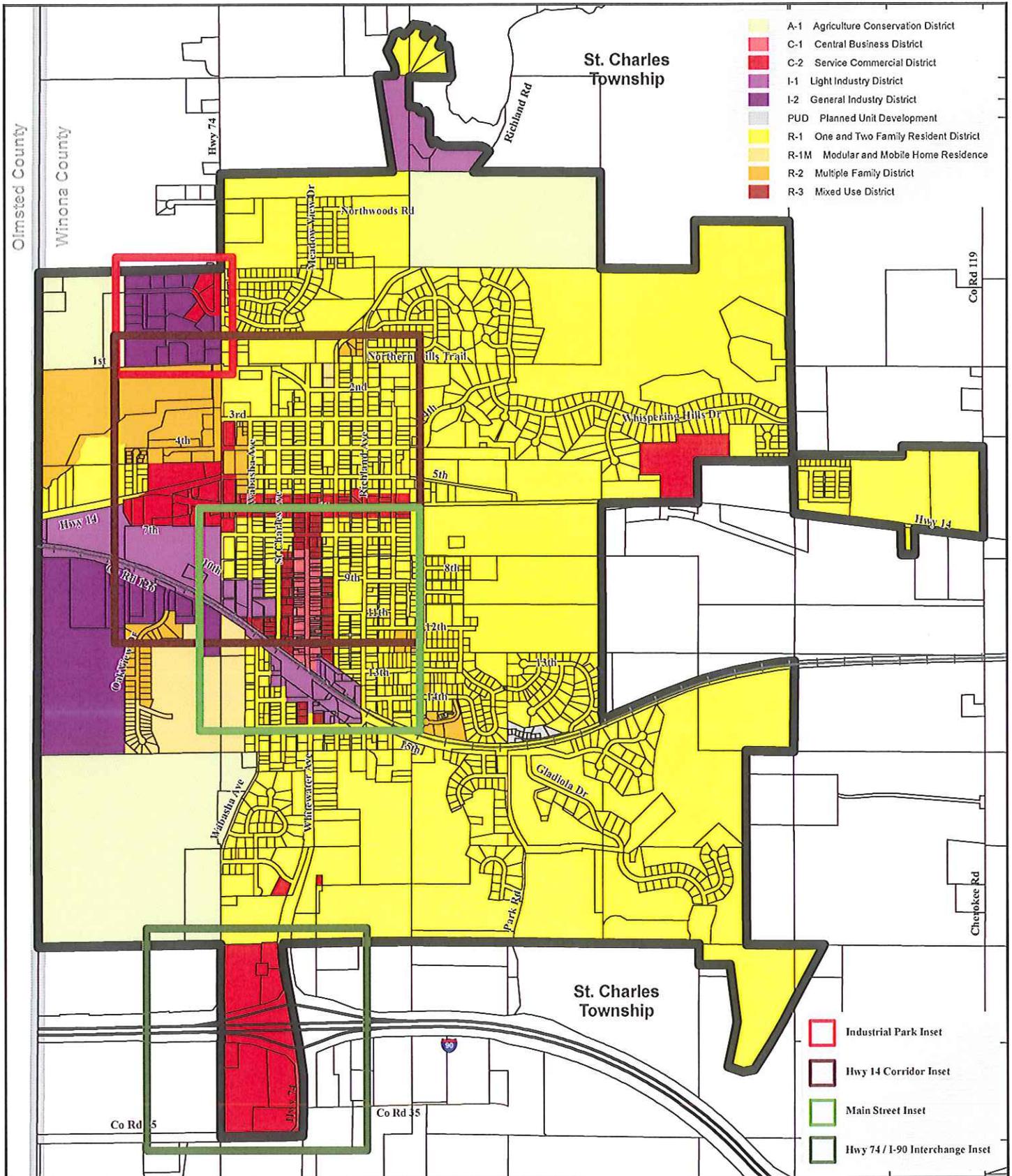
Disclaimer: This map is for comprehensive planning purposes only.



St. Charles Economic Development Authority



Zoning Districts

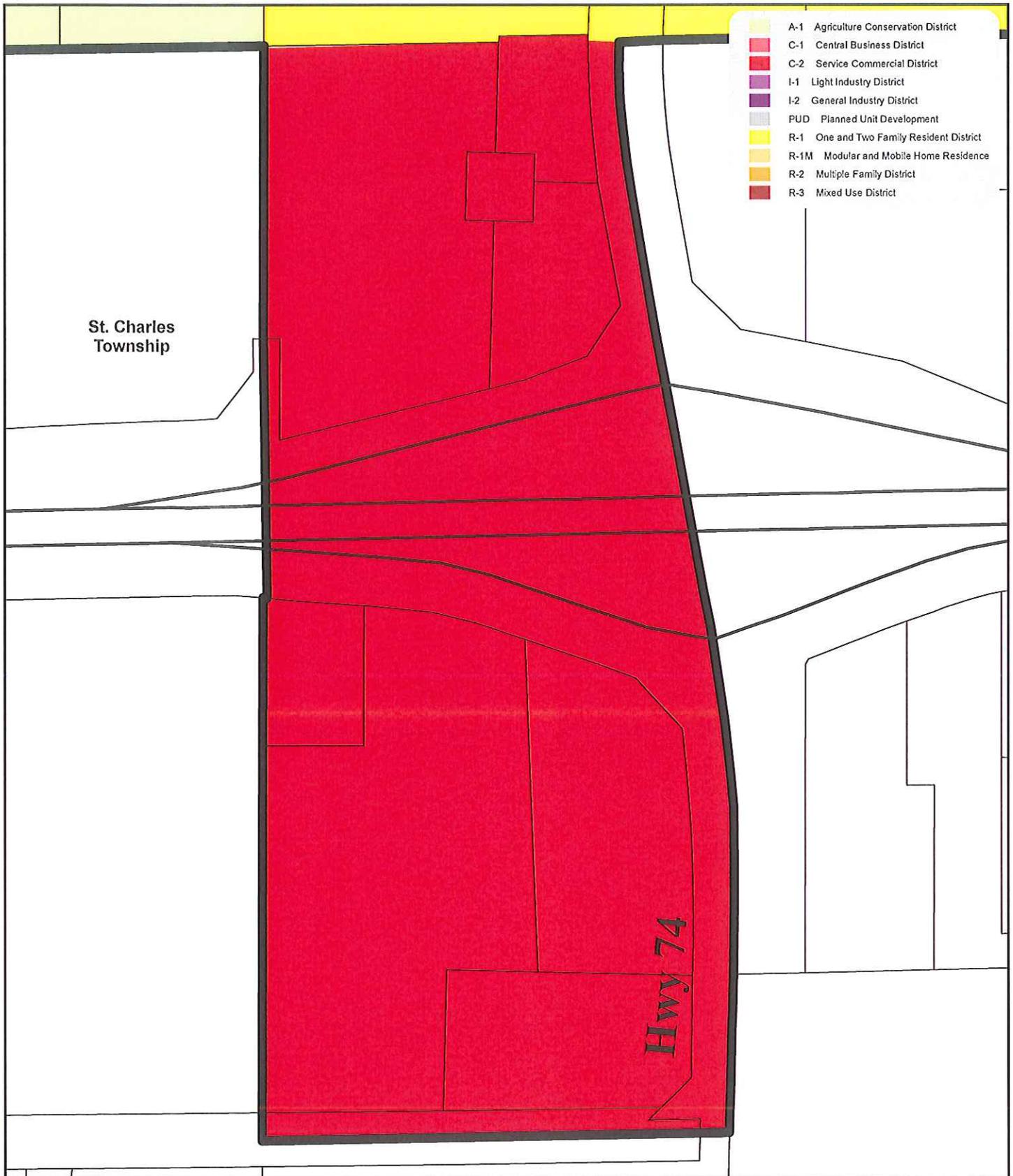


Data Source: Compiled from St Charles Zoning ordinance.

Disclaimer: This map is for comprehensive planning purposes only.



Zoning Districts - Interchange Area



St. Charles Township

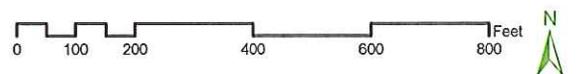
Hwy 74

Data Source: Compiled from St Charles Zoning ordinance.

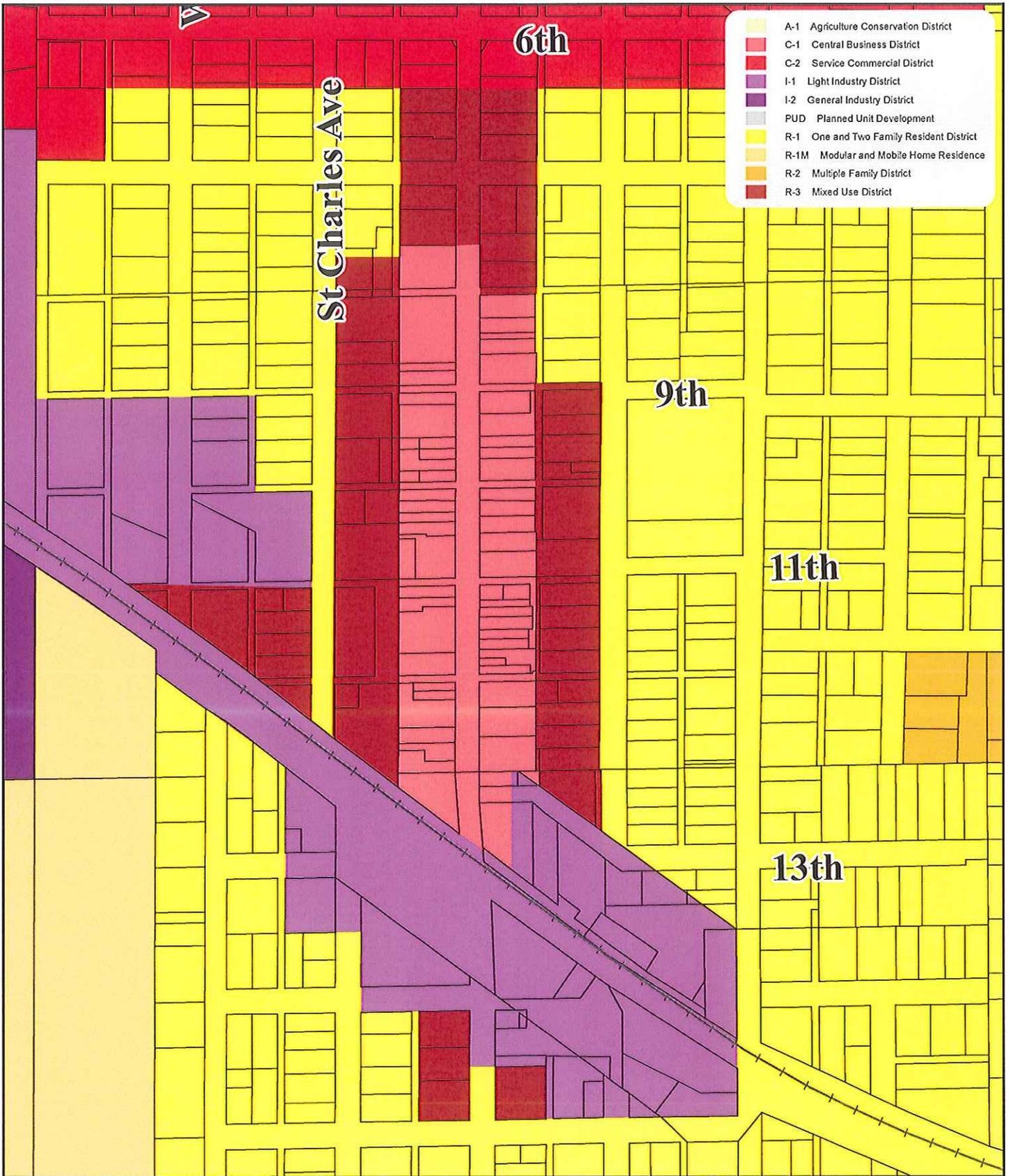
Disclaimer: This map is for comprehensive planning purposes only.



St. Charles Economic Development Authority



Zoning Districts - Main Street

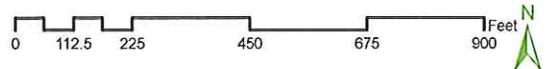


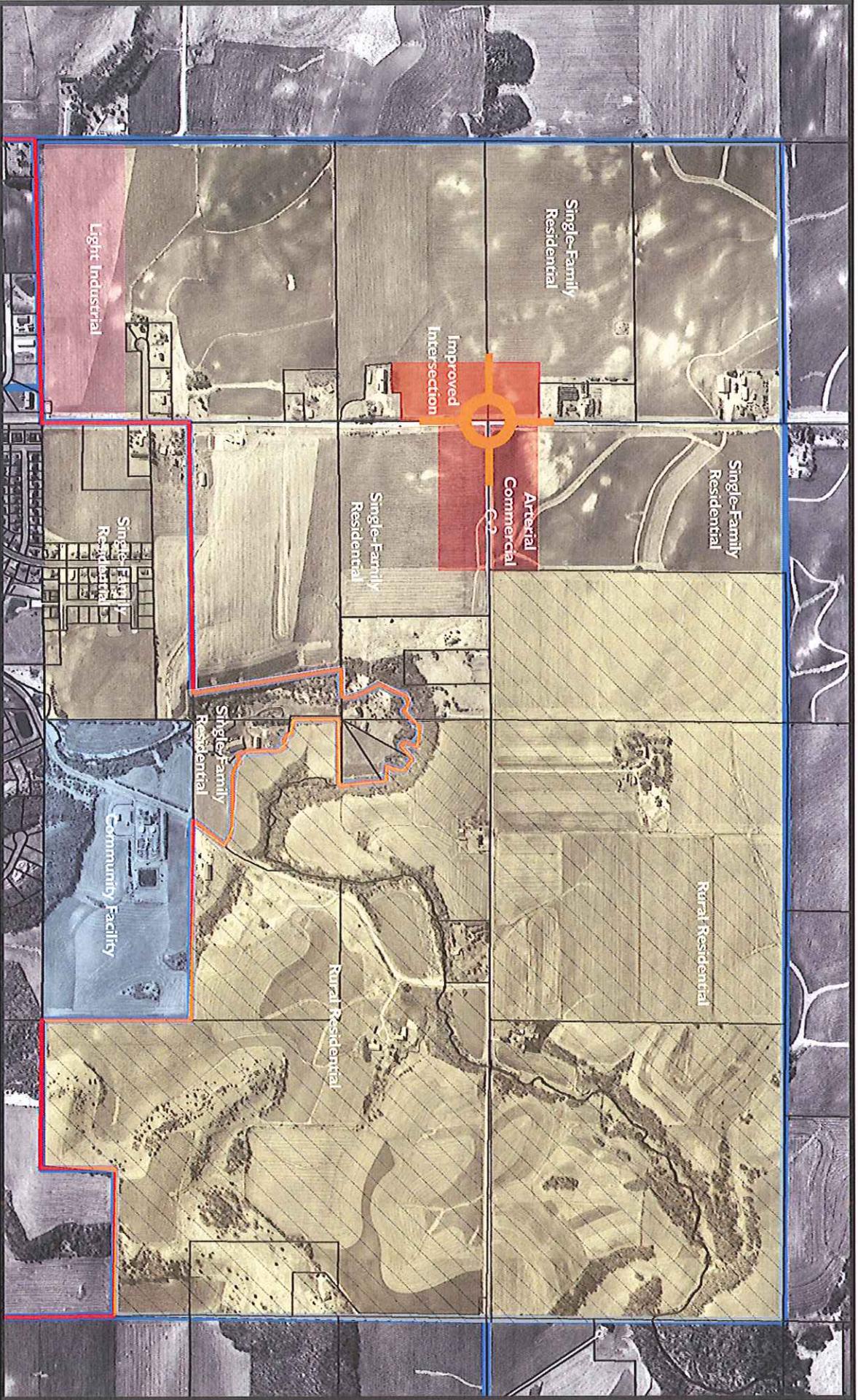
Data Source: Compiled from St Charles Zoning ordinance.

Disclaimer: This map is for comprehensive planning purposes only.

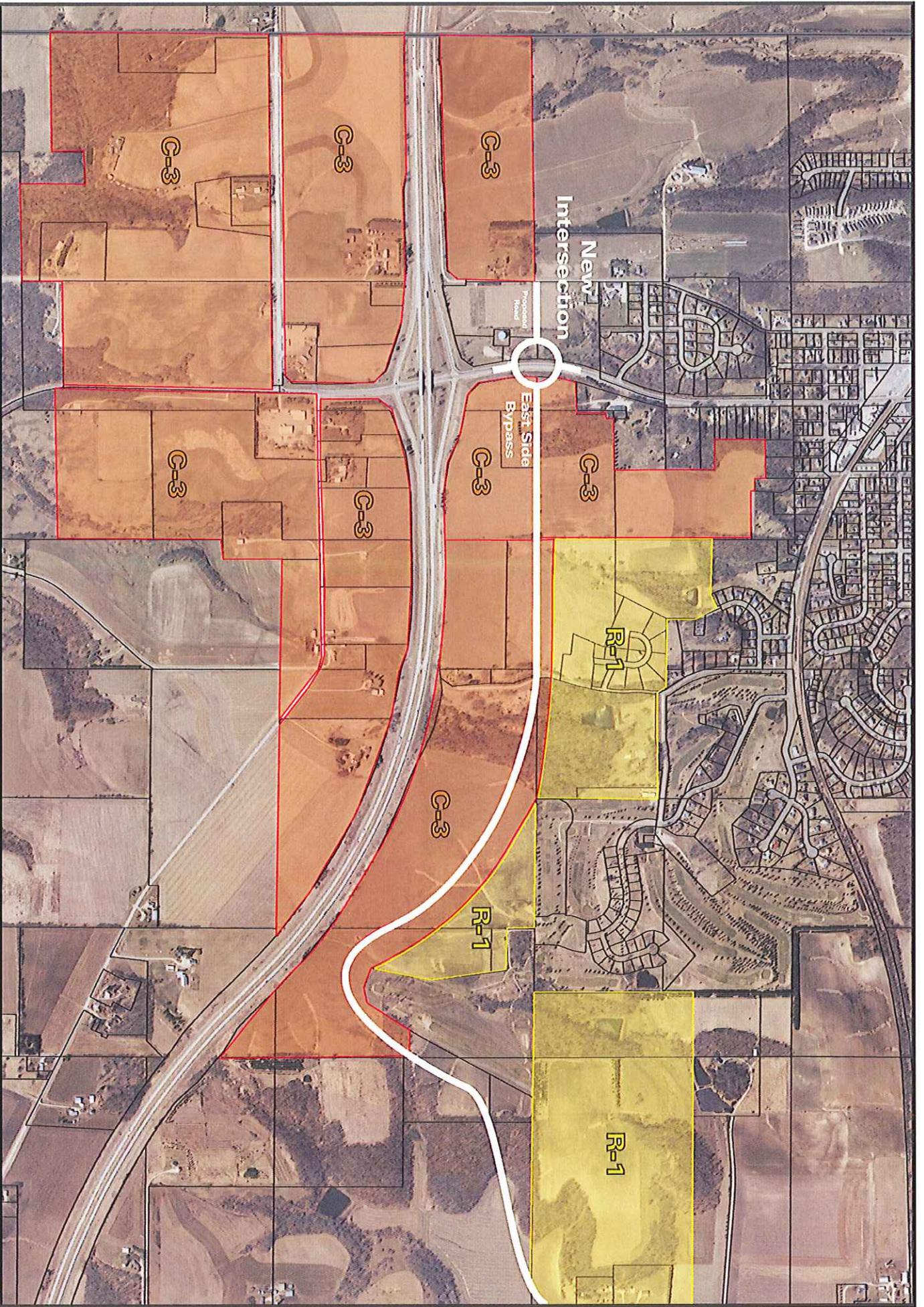


St. Charles Economic Development Authority





**Highway 74 North Corridor
Future Land Uses**



New Intersection
Proposed Road

East Side Bypass

C-3

C-3

C-3

C-3

C-3

C-3

R-1

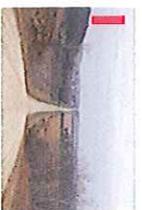
C-3

R-1

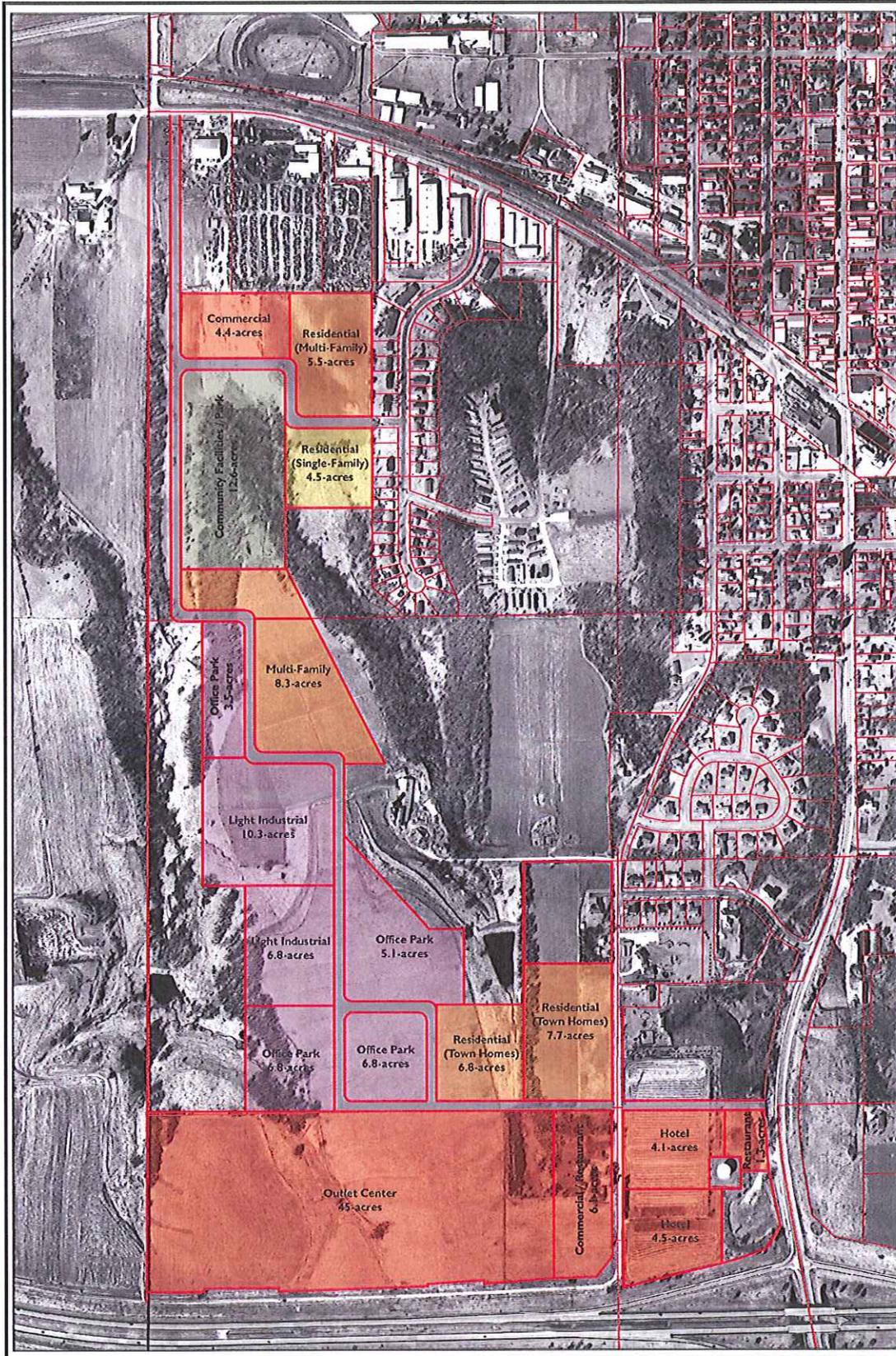
R-1



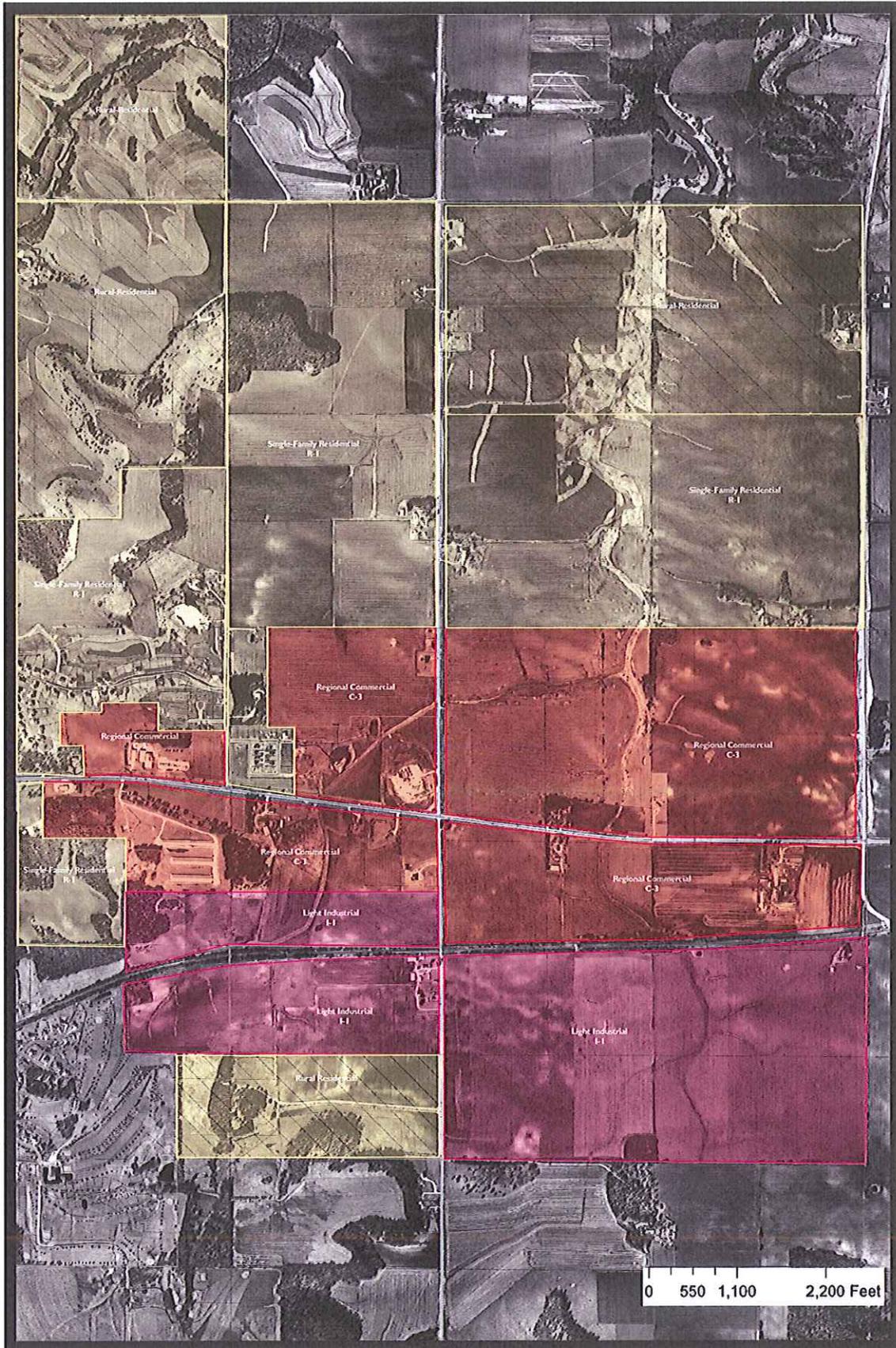
South east Site Analysis



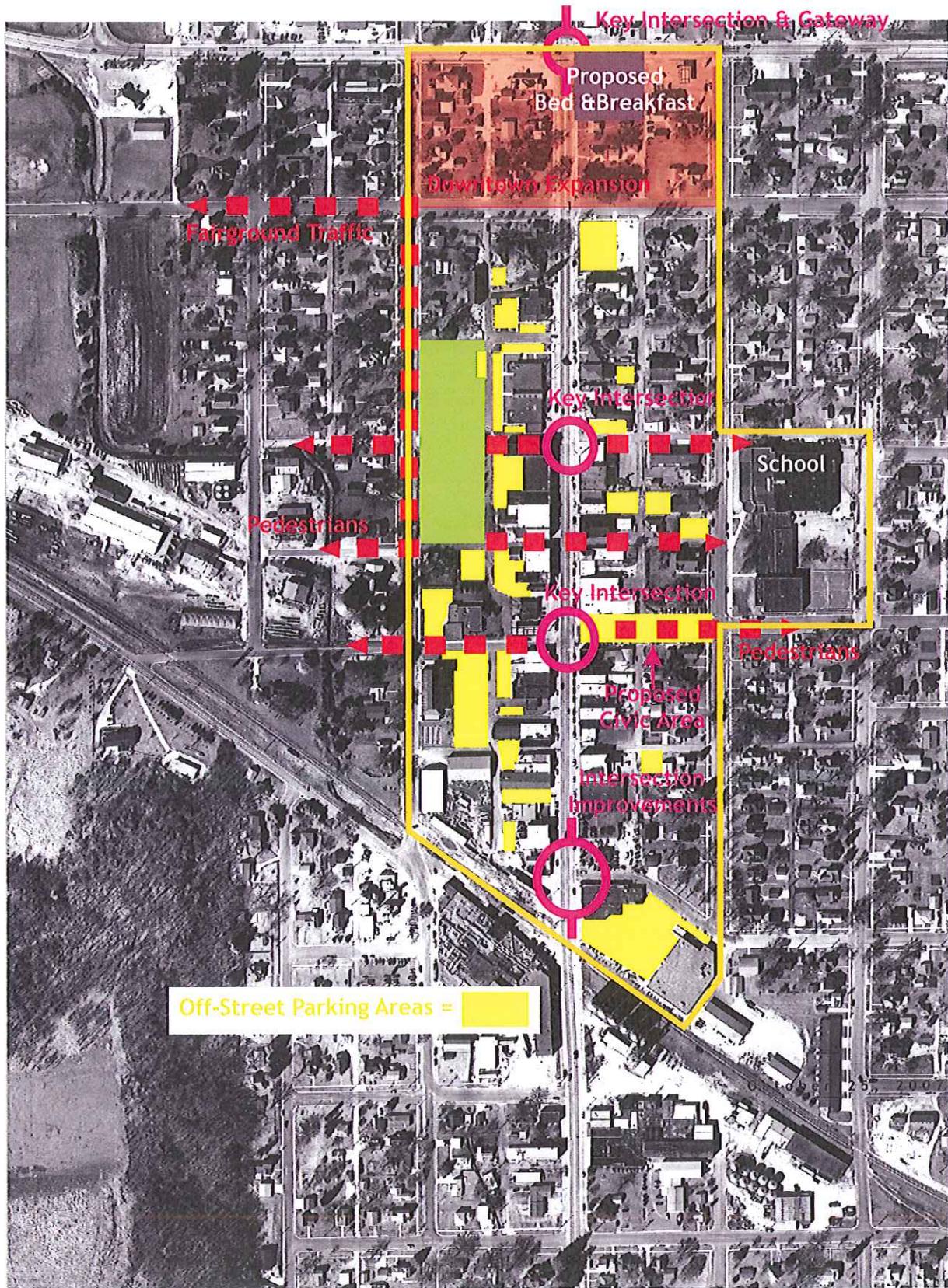
Southwest Conceptual Land Use Plan



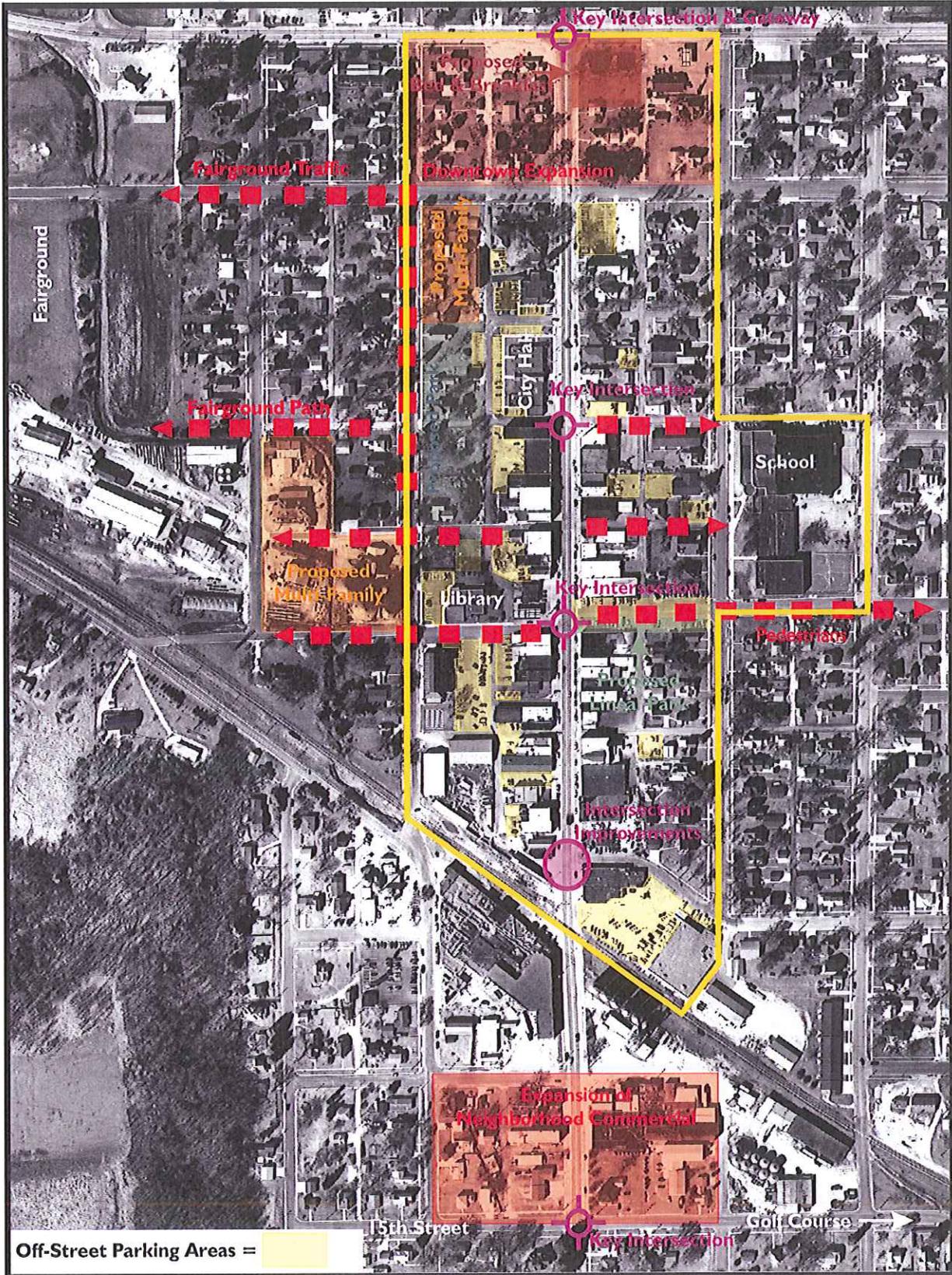
Highway 14 East Corridor Future Land Uses



Downtown Site Analysis



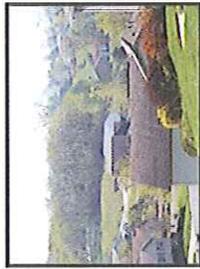
Downtown Analysis & Opportunities



Regional Commercial District Design Standards



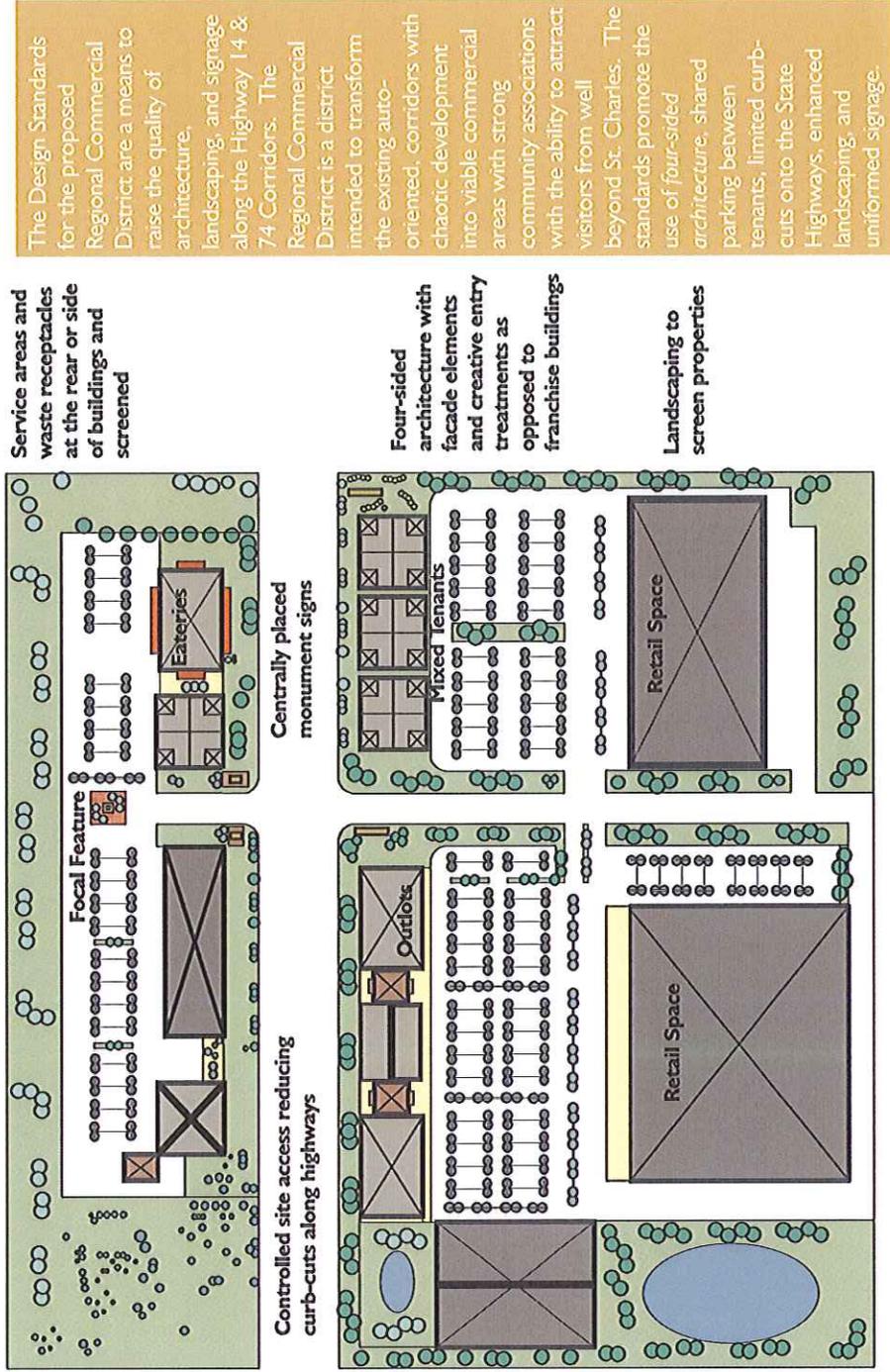
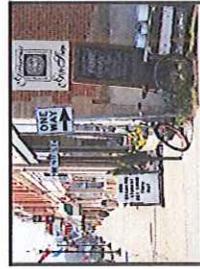
Rain gardens configured as vegetated parking lot islands



Roofing treatments such as tiles, slate, or metal seam with baked enamel colors to create a defined top

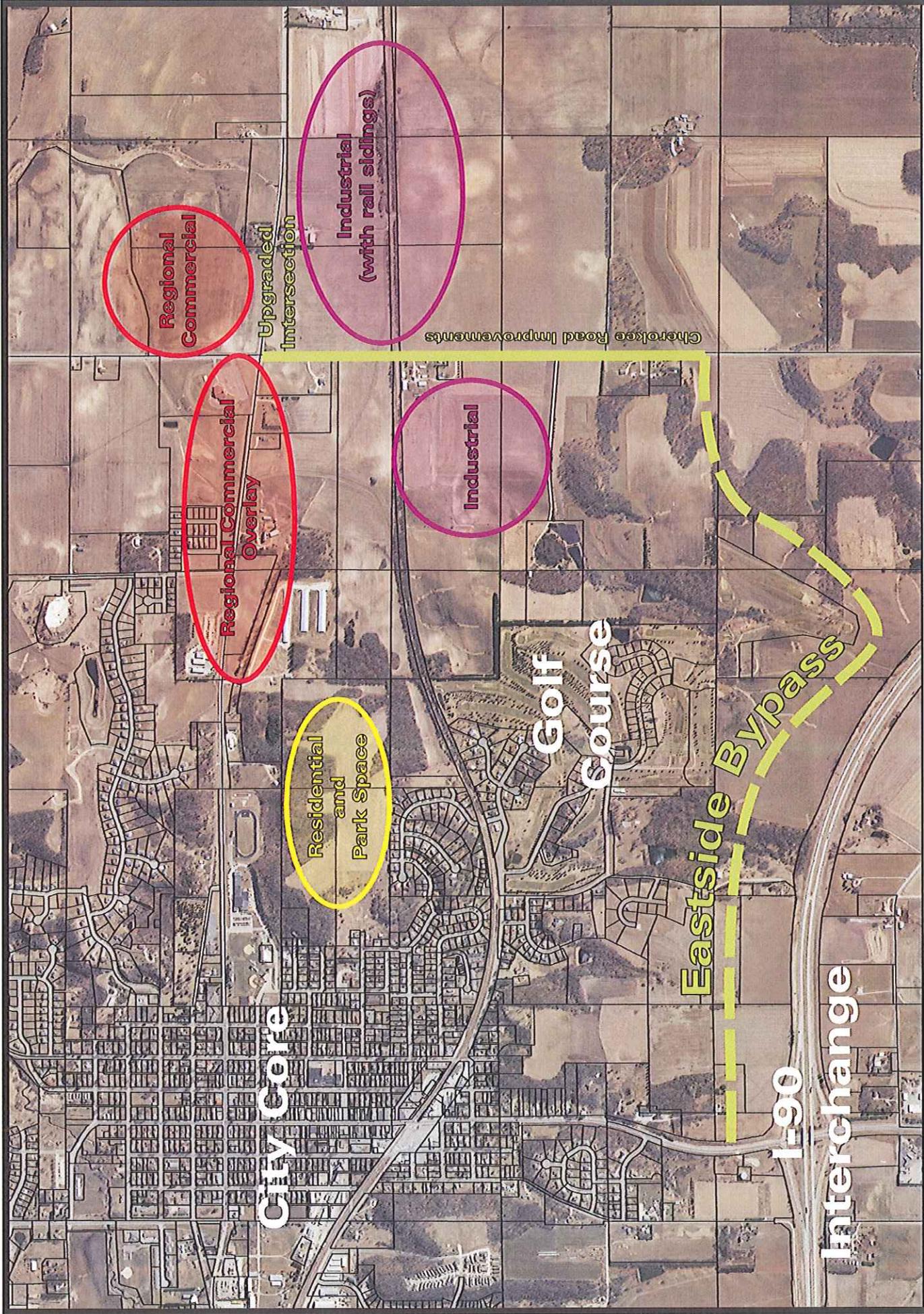


Retention ponds as a landscape amenity



Service areas and waste receptacles at the rear or side of buildings and screened

The Design Standards for the proposed Regional Commercial District are a means to raise the quality of architecture, landscaping, and signage along the Highway 14 & 74 Corridors. The Regional Commercial District is a district intended to transform the existing auto-oriented, corridors with chaotic development into viable commercial areas with strong community associations with the ability to attract visitors from well beyond St. Charles. The standards promote the use of four-sided architecture, shared parking between tenants, limited curb-cuts onto the State Highways, enhanced landscaping, and uniformed signage.



CONCLUSION / IMPLEMENTATION

CONCLUSION

The planning process in St. Charles is not over. Formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan establishes the goals for the direction of the City, including both policy objectives and achievement strategies. One should view the formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan as the beginning of the journey, not the end. Without continuing advancement to implement and update the Plan, community efforts up to this point will have little lasting impact into the future.

There are several critical requirements for effective implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. First, St. Charles should continue to evaluate and amend its regulatory measures, such as the zoning ordinance, which can enforce the Plan's policies and recommendations. Second, the City should continue its development of project scheduling devices, such as its Capital Improvements Plan, which implements a priority-based system of the most important public improvements in infrastructure and public facilities within the parameters of budgetary guidelines. Third, City officials must ensure that the citizens of St. Charles continue to be actively involved in this and future planning projects to ensure their needs and concerns are being met by these plans. Some good examples of this would be the citizen groups that came together for the Minnesota Design Team visit and the Town Meeting Initiative. These groups worked together to identify projects that would improve the community immediately and over the long term. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be monitored, reviewed and assessed. These assessments will allow for changes to be made that address changing conditions of society.

Tools to help St. Charles with implementation of the goals and policies set forth in this Comprehensive Plan are discussed below.

DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCES

Zoning Ordinance: Zoning is the primary regulatory tool used by governmental units to implement planning policies. It consists of the Official Zoning Map and the supporting ordinance text. The purpose of St. Charles's Zoning Ordinance is; 1) To protect the public health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare, 2) Identify the most appropriate use of land throughout the City 3) Provide for the compatibility of different land uses, 4) Promote orderly development of the residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and public areas, 5) Conserve the natural and scenic beauty and attractiveness of St. Charles, 6) Conserve the value of properties, and 7) Protect the environment.

The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map may be amended from time to time to reflect new goals, policies and opportunities identified by the Community. The City Council has tools to make these amendments through review by the Planning Commission. Great care should be taken in reviewing and approving these amendments to minimize affects on neighboring land owners. The City should review its existing Zoning Ordinance and Map for inconsistencies with the adopted Future Land Use Map contained in the new Comprehensive Plan. After this review, the

City should create a schedule for amending the zoning documents to reconcile divergences. Any changes in zoning should be done as orderly and contiguously as possible, with great care taken to minimize affects on current and neighboring land owners. Spot zoning should be avoided.

The second step is to review, update and refine the zoning ordinance to implement and enforce the goals and policies of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Subdivision Ordinance: This ordinance is enacted for the purpose of safeguarding the best interest of the City of St. Charles, the homeowner, and the developer by requiring well planned subdivisions through the establishment of design and construction criteria including things like dedicated green space, and improves land records by establishing standards for surveys and plats.

Parks Ordinance: The purpose of this Ordinance is to provide standards and regulations for the design and construction of any new parkland areas as well as establishing rules for the use of and conduct within the existing parks.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN (CIP)

As indicated above, another potential tool for implementation is the Capital Improvement Program, which would prioritize and schedule large capital projects usually over a five to ten year period. City staff first compiles a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five to ten years, including transportation and public facilities projects. Then all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates prepared, and potential funding sources identified.

In the current fiscal climate, the City's financial resources will always be limited and there will always be competition for those resources. The Capital Improvement Program allows St. Charles to provide the most critical public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints. Many of the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan can be articulated in a Capital Improvements Program. Through this CIP, the recommendations can be prioritized, budgeted and programmed into the City's decision making process.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The City of St. Charles benefits from an active citizenship, involved and aware of issues and concerns throughout the community. St. Charles should continue to encourage opportunities for citizen participation at all levels of the planning and development processes through appointed citizen commissions and boards, and attendance and participation at public meetings. The City should continue to use as many media outlets as possible to provide public information. This can be accomplished through the City's website (the web address is www.stcharlesmn.org), local cable access television channels, public service announcements on local radio, informational brochures, and press release distribution to area newspapers.

This Comprehensive Planning effort is a continuation of a healthy dialogue among local residents concerning the future of the community. Wide publicity has been given to this Comprehensive Plan with a number of citizens being involved in the planning discussions. This Plan will affect everyone in the City, and everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to planning decisions.

REVIEW AND REVISION

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document. The planning process must be continuous. The Plan should be monitored and updated when necessary. If public attitudes change or new issues arise that are beyond the scope of the current Plan, the document should be reviewed and updated. From time to time, certain changes to the Plan document will be required. The Planning

Commission and City Council should carefully review proposed changes and their implications and actively seek citizen comment on such proposals. If changes are found to be appropriate, they should be formally added to the Plan by legal amendment. Also, the entire Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and modified to ensure that it continues to be an up-to-date expression of St. Charles's goals and intentions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Comprehensive Planning: St. Charles should review and amend the Comprehensive Plan as necessary, but at a minimum every five years, to ensure its usefulness as a practical guide for current and future development. The Planning Commission should lead the review and update process with assistance, as needed, by a community volunteer committee.

Development Ordinances: The City should continue to bring the zoning map into conformance with the Land Use Plan as future projects are reviewed. To support the orderly growth of St. Charles, the City should continually evaluate, maintain and enforce development performance standards to promote land use efficiency, quality development, and attractive neighborhoods.

Comprehensive Transportation Plan: St. Charles should partner with the Department of Transportation to prepare a Comprehensive Transportation Plan that details the current conditions, and highlights any deficiencies, of the transportation system. This plan could explore the current traffic flow issues and outline goals and policies to make the system more efficient. This plan would also outline criteria for prioritizing projects and expenditures, and hopefully provide a mechanism aimed to provide adequate and consistent funding for these projects through budget priority.

Annexation: St. Charles should maintain a policy of Orderly Annexation to contain development allowing for the most efficient use of existing utilities and infrastructure. Regular discussions should continue with the neighboring townships as the community continues to grow in size.

Summary Statement

The goals, policies, and suggestions contained in the Comprehensive Plan are not intended to be the entirety of the answers to St. Charles's needs. This Plan is a reviewable document, and is intended as a starting point to make St. Charles a better place to live, work, recreate, and do business through community input.