



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CITY OF ST. CHARLES, MINNESOTA

December 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION





St. Charles City Hall

DOCUMENT PURPOSE

The St. Charles Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document, grounded in community input, that provides a framework for local decision making and informs the direction of St. Charles' future. A comprehensive plan helps guide investment, growth, development, and redevelopment by offering both a broad vision for the community and specific policies, goals, and strategies for how to achieve that vision.

St. Charles last adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2011. Since then, St. Charles has continued to grow its population, complete a variety of projects, and face new challenges. To ensure the community's continued vibrancy and proactively plan for the next 20 years of community change and growth, St. Charles is updating its Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of this updated Comprehensive Plan is to build on previous planning efforts and create a plan that reflects the current needs and future goals of St. Charles. St. Charles' 2045 Comprehensive Plan looks out 20 years into the future to provide a long-term and high-level framework for future change, new development, and public infrastructure in the community.

PLAN PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan process unfolded over a 12-month period and incorporated a combination of community input, feedback from City staff and Planning Commission and City Council members, analysis of available demographic and other data, and insights from project consultants.

Staff and consultants kicked off the Comprehensive Plan process in January 2025, launching a community survey and coordinating the project schedule. Initial survey findings were shared with the Planning Commission and City Council and used to draft the overarching plan goals in spring of 2025. Throughout the summer, additional feedback was gathered through focus groups, providing topic-specific insights on areas including economic development, parks and recreation, and governance.

The content for the Comprehensive Plan was drafted throughout the summer and early fall of 2025. The chapters in the comprehensive plan provide a summary of where St. Charles is today, what forces are influencing its future, and goals and strategies for moving forward. The draft plan was shared with the public and City staff and council members for review in November of 2025. Feedback was incorporated into the final draft of the plan and City Council adopted the plan on December 9, 2025.



A mural at the Winona County Fairgrounds in St. Charles

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement during the planning process refers to both the opportunities for public input provided and the ways in which information about the plan and process was shared out to the community.

The public provided feedback via:

- A community-wide online survey
- A series of focus group meetings facilitated by City staff
- An online review of the draft plan
- A public hearing

Information was shared with the public via:

- The City website
- Water and sewer bills
- Social media posts
- Email lists

In addition to these broader outreach efforts, information was shared with and guidance provided by the Planning Commission and City Council during a series of regular and joint meetings.

THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The St. Charles Community Survey was open to the public from January through April of 2025 online via the City's website and in hard copy form at City Hall. Notice about the survey was distributed in water and sewer bills, posted online, and shared via social media channels. The survey was designed to gather feedback on quality of life, relevancy of previous comprehensive plan goals today, and preference on housing types. The survey received 376 responses. A short summary of the responses received is included in this chapter. Detailed responses can be found in Appendix A.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- 81% of respondents feel **"excellent" or "good"** about the **quality of life** in St. Charles
- The top three attributes identified as **"very important"** for the choice to live in St. Charles are **sense of community, housing cost, and businesses**.
- When asked to describe St. Charles' **greatest asset** in one word or phrase, the most common answers included: **community, location, and small-town atmosphere**
- When asked to identify what St. Charles needs most, the most common answers were: **businesses (specifically hotels and restaurants) and indoor recreation opportunities**.
- Respondents were asked to rank what elements of life in St. Charles are **currently working well**. The top four areas that were most identified as **"excellent" or "acceptable"** were:
 - » Ease of **travel by car** (94.3%)
 - » **Neighborliness** of residents (82.8%)
 - » **Ease of walking** (80.4%)
 - » Overall **appearance** (78.5%)



A community garden on a vacant plot of land in St. Charles



Community programming at the St. Charles Public Library



A local business in a re-purposed church



A scene from Gladiolus Days, an annual event in St. Charles



Athletic facilities at the High School



The skate park is a feature of one of St. Charles' community parks

- The top four areas that were most identified as “**needs work**” included:
 - » **Employment opportunities** (51.6%)
 - » **Variety of housing options** (46.6%)
 - » **Public places** where people want to spent time (44.5%)
 - » Opportunities to be **involved in community decision-making** (41.5%)

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

The survey also asked about the relevance of the goals from the previous comprehensive plan. Most survey respondents indicated that the goals from the plan were still relevant today.

- 93.7% of respondents indicated that the goals “**maintain community vitality and character**” and “**preservation and enhancement of natural features**” are still **very relevant**.
- Similarly, 92.4% of respondents indicated that “**encourage citizen participation**” is also still **very relevant**.

There was less consensus around goals that were identified as no longer relevant.

- 11.3% of respondents indicated that “priority of being an inclusive community” is no longer relevant
- 10.7% said “conservation of historical presence of Whitewater Ave” is no longer relevant.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

A total of four focus group meetings were held during the comprehensive planning process. One focus group, conducted on July 29, focused on business and economic development topics. Stakeholders at this meeting included community members who own or are involved in managing businesses in St. Charles.

An additional three general focus group sessions were held on July 30, July 31, and August 4, 2025. These sessions brought together community stakeholders to share their perspectives, priorities, and ideas to inform the vision and direction of the plan. A total of 28 participants attended focus groups.

KEY THEMES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS INCLUDED:

- Desire for **more diverse businesses**, particularly those that support tourism (e.g. hotel, restaurants), provide entertainment (e.g. breweries), and strengthen the downtown corridor.
- Need for a hotel emphasized across groups
- Need to **support local businesses, downtown businesses** with specific programs.
- Importance of **maintaining small-town charm** and community character while supporting **steady, smart growth**
- Support the development of **more housing** that offers a range of **affordability options** and **housing types** that meet needs during different life phases.
- **Senior housing** is particularly important
- It is important to **maintain and invest in public spaces**, recreation opportunities, and local and regional trail connectivity.
- Better **connectivity** between Enterprise Dr/I-90 and downtown will help businesses.
- **Marketing/promoting** St. Charles businesses and tourism both **within the community** and **beyond the city boundary** is important
- Need for **improved intersections** to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and create better traffic flow

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The St. Charles Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document that informs future investment, growth, development, and redevelopment in the City of St. Charles and addresses a range of topics pertaining to the wellbeing of the community. The plan describes the community's aspirations for the next 20 years, identifies goals and policies, and provides a flexible framework for the continued evolution of the community. The plan also recommends concrete strategies and implementation steps that will facilitate community action and shared accountability. The Comprehensive Plan document includes the following:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Community Context
- Chapter 3: Land Use
- Chapter 4: Housing
- Chapter 5: Economic Development
- Chapter 6: Transportation
- Chapter 7: Parks and Recreation
- Chapter 8: Public Facilities and Services
- Chapter 9: Implementation

WHAT'S IN A CHAPTER?

- **Existing Conditions Summary**, which provides an analysis of the current conditions and review of relevant trends in St. Charles relating to each planning topic.
- **Framing Concepts** provide more detailed discussion of the big ideas expressed in the goals and policies. This may include maps that show where in the community particular goals and policies apply, detailed descriptions of specific policy ideas, diagrams, and precedent photo imagery.
- **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are often long-term in scope. The chapter goals are topic-specific and align with the City's guiding principles.
- **Policies** are statements intended to guide City Staff and Council decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies often also describe ongoing activities.
- **Actions** detail a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements and address the who, what, when, where, and how of reaching a goal. The actions are the specific steps needed to turn the goals into a reality



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The St. Charles Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles describe community values that are intended to be achieved through the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. These principles guide the goals, policies, and actions found within each chapter of the Plan. Rather than being focused on a particular topical area, like housing or parks, guiding principles are interrelated across many areas and will likely be implemented through collaboration and action of multiple departments and community partners.

1

Continue to ensure that everyone who lives in, works in, or visits St Charles feels welcome, respected, and connected to the community.

2

Strive for a community-centered approach to planning, growth, and development that maintains St. Charles' character while embracing new ideas and creativity in all facets of community life.

3

Sustain a vibrant local economy by supporting local businesses and facilitating investment in downtown and new development.

4

Encourage diverse, high-quality housing options that serve the needs of all residents through all phases of life.

5

Preserve, enhance, and provide access to the unique natural features and public green spaces in and around St. Charles.

6

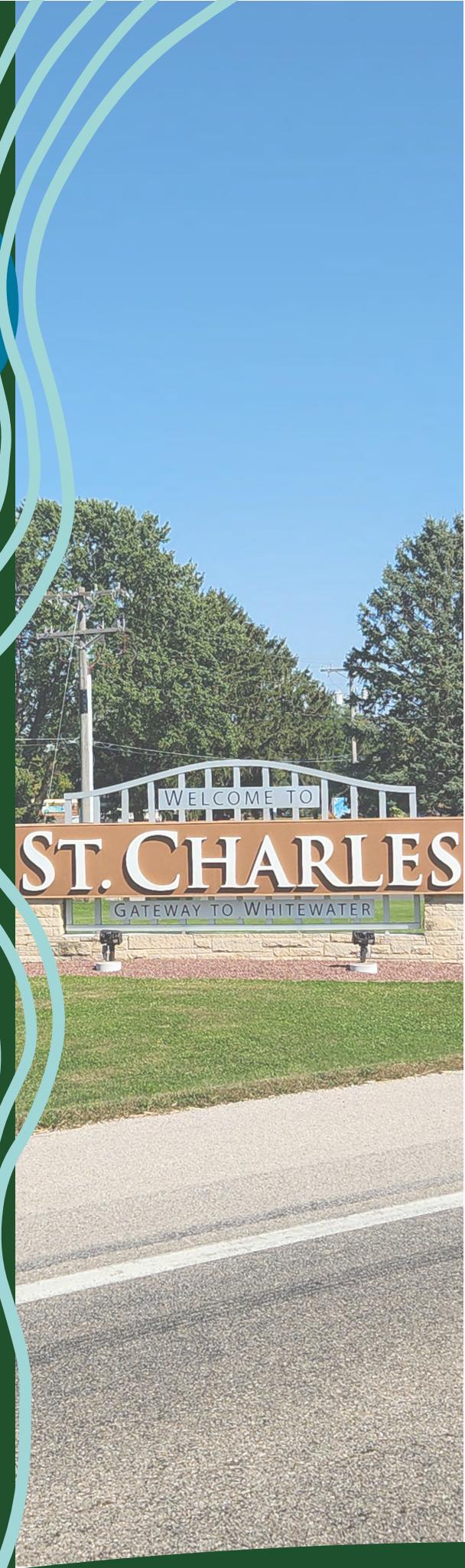
Foster an engaged community through transparent decision-making processes, varied opportunities for participation, and clear communication.

7

Preserve the historic character of downtown St. Charles along Whitewater Avenue.

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COMMUNITY CONTEXT



INTRODUCTION

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 Whitewater State Park. The city is centrally located between several population centers, 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.

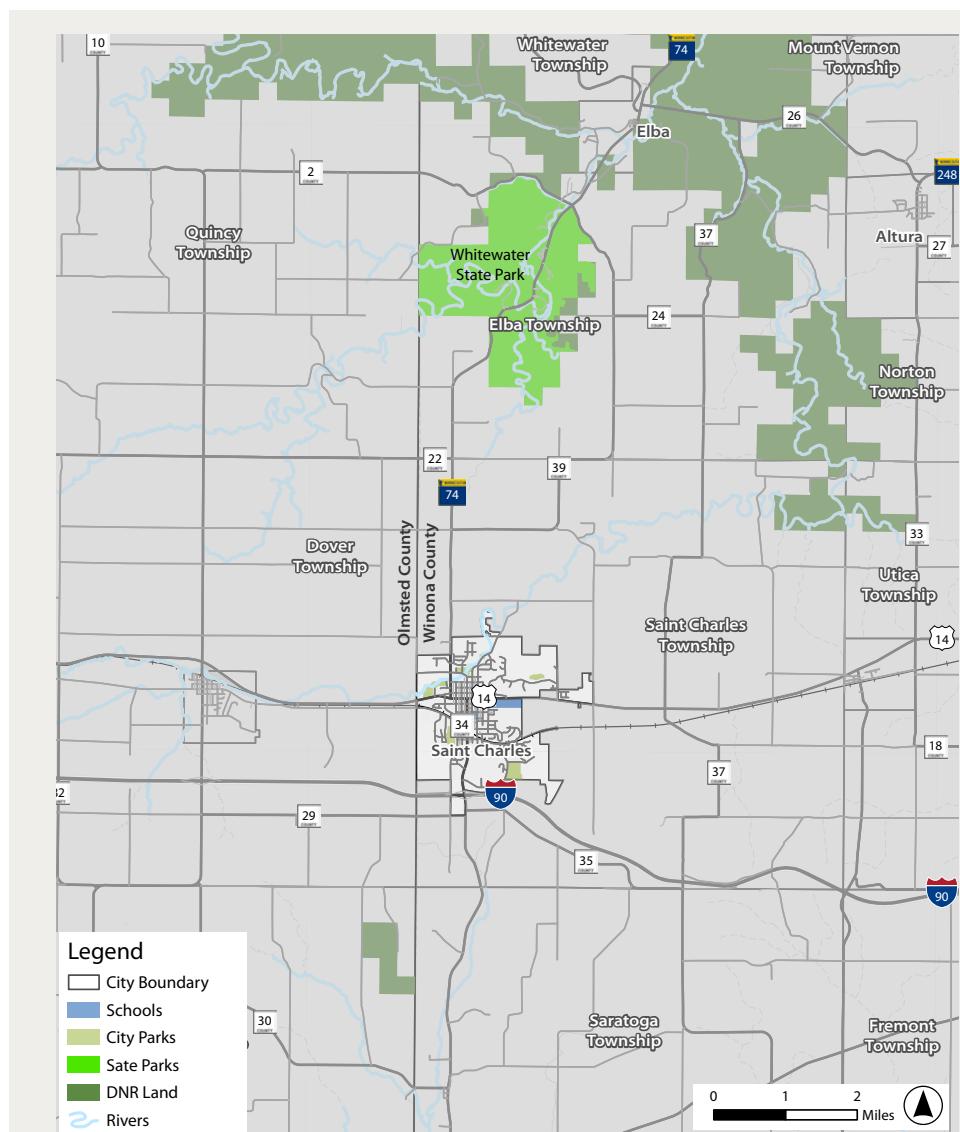


Figure 2.1 Community Context



DEMOCRAPHICS

By looking at demographic data, we can better understand current dynamics and potential issues and opportunities in the St. Charles community. Are certain populations growing or shrinking? How have conditions changed over time? How does St. Charles compare to its neighbors, the region, the state? The following section addresses such questions across a range of topics, drawing from the U.S. Decennial Census, American Community Survey, State Demographer's Office, and other sources.

POPULATION

The current population in St. Charles is estimated to be 4,021. The population of St. Charles continues to increase. After a significant period of growth from the 1970s through the 2000s, the rate of population increase has slowed slightly in St. Charles, though the city has seen an overall population increase of 22% since 2000.

Figure 2.2 shows the percent change in population for St. Charles, Winona County, and Olmsted County. Although St. Charles

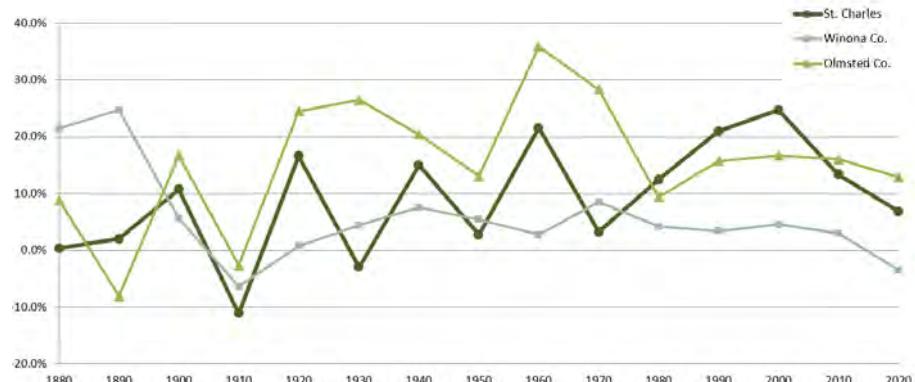


Figure 2.2 Percent change in population for St. Charles, Olmsted County, and Winona County

is located in Winona County, the pattern of percent change in population in St. Charles is more similar to that of Olmsted County, which lies just west of St. Charles.

The Minnesota State Demographer projects modest population decline (8%) for Winona County between 2025 (50,849) and 2050 (46,799). However, Olmsted County is projected to see population growth of 23% in the same period. Because population changes in St. Charles have historically reflected those of Olmsted County, it is expected that the population of St. Charles will continue to grow due to its proximity to Rochester and the growth trends in Olmsted County.

HOUSEHOLDS

Similar to most cities in Minnesota and national trends, the average household size in St. Charles is decreasing. In the past 10 years, household size in St. Charles declined from 3.1 in 2010 to 2.5 in 2020. A smaller average household is notable because this means that there are additional housing units needed for the same number of people. In other words, even if St. Charles was not projected to grow, a decrease in household size means even more housing units are needed to house the same sized population. Because St. Charles has seen growth in the past 10 years and is expected to continue growing, planning for a variety of housing types will be important to ensure housing stock can keep up with demand for all types of housing.

There are 1,604 households in St. Charles. Of all the households, 65.3% are married couple or cohabitating couple households, 25.7% are single householders without children, and 9.1% are single households with children under 18. 33.6% of all households have at least one individual under age 18 and 23.6% of households have at least one individual aged 65 or older.

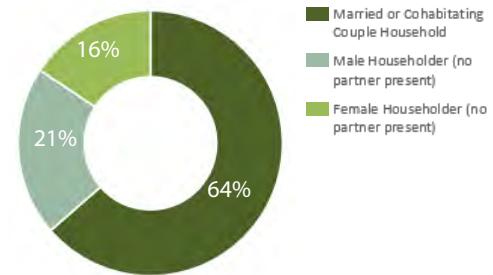


Figure 2.3 Types of households in St. Charles

	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	1,604	100%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH INDIVIDUALS UNDER 18 YEARS	539	33.6%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH INDIVIDUALS 65 YEARS AND OVER	379	23.6%

Figure 2.4 Households with minors or individuals age 65 and above

AGE & GENDER

St. Charles' gender distribution is even, with 49.7% of the population identifying as female and 50.3% as male. The median age in St. Charles is 35.8 years, which is younger than both Winona County (37.8) and Olmsted County (37.1).

Figure 2.5 depicts St. Charles age pyramid in 2020. Population pyramids help visualize and anticipate upcoming population shifts by showing population by age cohorts. Looking at the pyramid, St. Charles can anticipate needing more senior housing and downsizing housing over the next 20 years as the population currently aged 50-59 and 60-69 continues to age.

Figure 2.6 shows the percent of St. Charles' population in age cohorts in 2000, 2010, and 2020. Since 2000, St. Charles has seen a notable increase in residents ages 55-64 and 65 - 74. In 2000, 6.3% of the population was aged 55-64 and 6.5% of the population was aged 65-74. In 2020, 11.8% of the population was aged 55-64 and 8.2% was aged 65-74. However, the percent of residents aged 75 and up has slightly decreased during the same period, from 9.1% in 2000 to 7.6% in 2020. Given the number of residents in the 55-74 range, the

percent of residents aged 75 and up will experience an increase as the population continues to age.

Since 2010, there has been a notable decrease in the percent of the population under age 5 and between ages 25-34, which suggests a decrease in young families in St. Charles.

RACE

St. Charles is predominately white. 85% of the population of St. Charles is white, with 5.9% identifying as two or more races, 5.6% as other, 2.4% as Asian, and less than 1% as Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. 9.1% of the population is Hispanic.

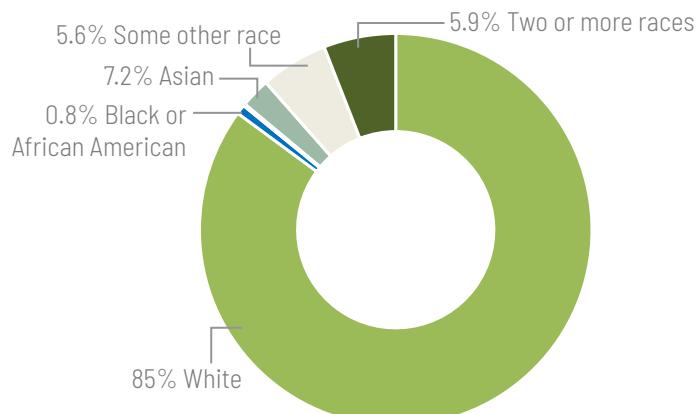


Figure 2.7 St. Charles population by race

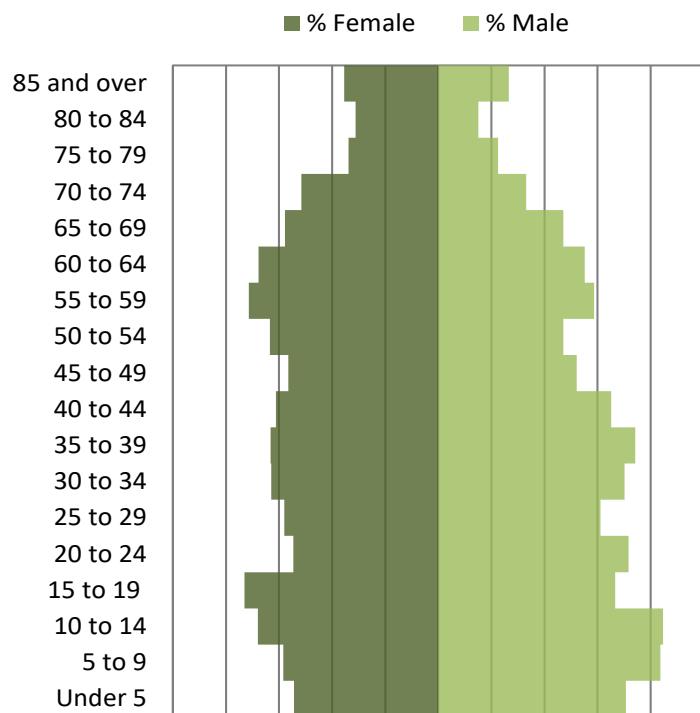


Figure 2.5 Age pyramid for St. Charles, 2020

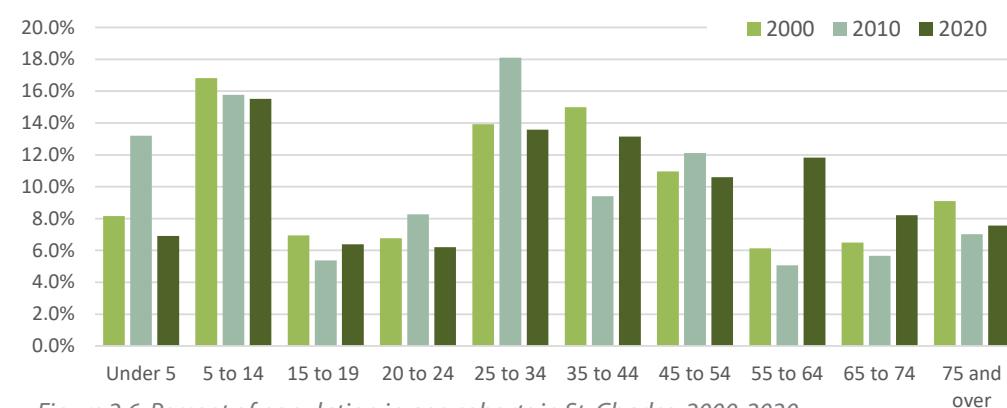


Figure 2.6 Percent of population in age cohorts in St. Charles, 2000-2020

EDUCATION

Of St. Charles residents 25 years and older, 6% of residents do not have a high school diploma, 20% are high school graduates, 21% have associate's degrees, 26% have a bachelor's degree and 10% have some form of graduate or professional degree.

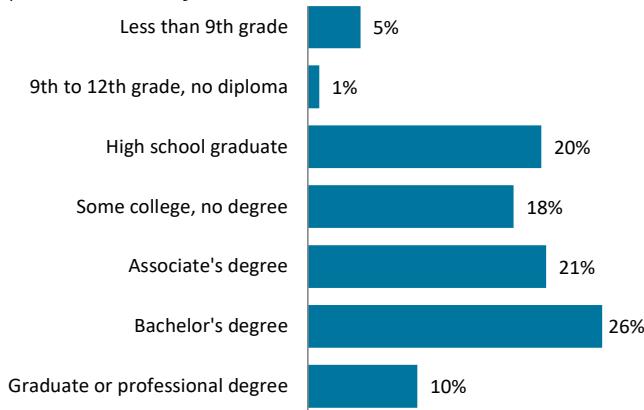


Figure 2.8 Educational attainment in St. Charles

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income in St. Charles is \$96,544, which is notably higher than the median income in Winona County (\$70,198) and slightly higher than the median income in Olmsted County (\$93,494). This demonstrates another way in which St. Charles tends to reflect the trends of Olmsted County rather than Winona County.

Figure 2.9 depicts the distribution of household income. In St. Charles, 10% of households make less than \$35,000, 31% of households make between \$35,000

and \$75,000, 39% of households make between \$75,000 and \$150,000, and 20% make over \$150,000. 3.3% of people in St. Charles fall below the poverty line.

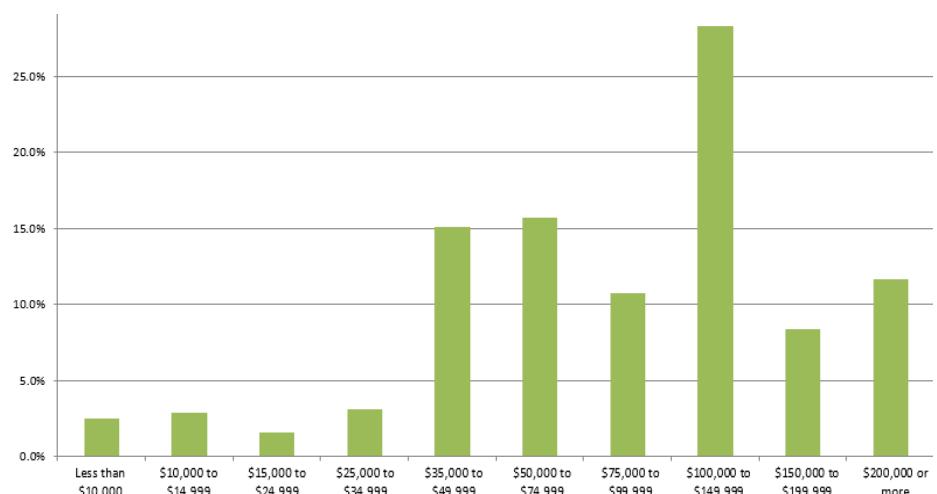


Figure 2.9 Household income distribution in St. Charles

EMPLOYMENT

There are an estimated 1,427 residents of St. Charles who are currently employed. A majority of these residents (86%) are employed outside of the City, with 51% working in Olmsted County and 28% working in Winona County. An estimated 259 people both live and work in the City of St. Charles. Around 80% of people who are employed within the City live elsewhere (outside the city limits). Figure 2.10 depicts the inflow and outflow of workers and residents in St. Charles. 45% of the jobs available in St. Charles are in the fields of health care or social assistance.

63% of the people employed in St. Charles are female while 37% are male. Of St. Charles residents who are employed, 47% are male and 53% are female. This suggests that more male residents are employed outside of St. Charles compared to female residents.

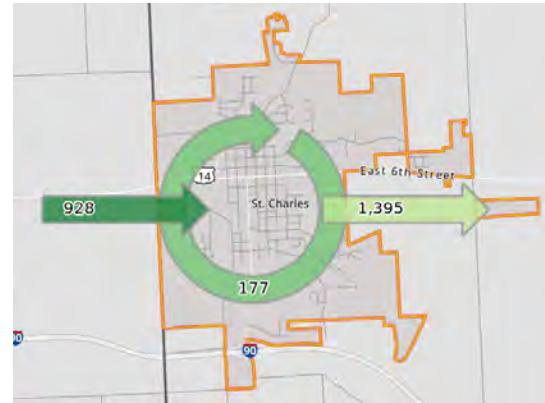


Figure 2.10 Inflow/Outflow analysis

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LAND USE



OVERVIEW

The Land Use chapter serves as the City's high-level, long-term guide for future growth and development in the community. Careful planning helps balance different land uses to guide development and preserve the character and natural surroundings of the community.

The foundation of the future land use plan is an inventory, mapping, and analysis of St. Charles' existing land uses, development patterns, and community character. Recognizing how past land uses shape present character and function within St. Charles directs which areas the Comprehensive Plan should focus on when it comes to land use and development going forward.

Supporting the plan's goals of balancing growth, development, and St. Charles' community character, the Land Use chapter provides guidance for the appropriate types of and locations for future development. This chapter will be used to help determine future public investments in infrastructure and facilities, make decisions concerning private development proposals, and set priorities for future planning efforts.

The Land Use chapter also provides broad direction for the regulation of land development, serving as the basis for the Zoning Code and Zoning Map. The future land use map identifies the City's desired development locations and patterns, including varying types of residential, commercial, business/industrial, mixed-use, public, and recreation/open space uses. The future land use locations and patterns are approximate, subject to interpretation, and adjusted as needed based on actual site conditions as future development is considered.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Steady growth is needed to sustain the schools, businesses, and offer jobs
- There is a need to balance growth with an emphasis on preserving the small-town atmosphere that the community feels characterizes St. Charles
- Growth means new greenfield development but also means reinvestment and redevelopment of underutilized and vacant properties
- As population growth and expansion occurs, St. Charles also needs to ensure investment in city amenities (i.e. parks and recreation) and ensure infrastructure is updated to accommodate new growth (e.g. road crossings are safe for pedestrians)



EXISTING LAND USE

Figure 3.1 shows the existing land use in St. Charles today. The existing land use map provides a visual tool for understanding and learning from the city's existing development patterns. Existing land use data is based on Winona County's tax classification data and aerial imagery analysis, which offers a snapshot of uses at the time this plan was written. Tax classification data does not always align with land use classifications and leaves some parcels undefined.

The development pattern in St. Charles mirrors that of many smaller, rural communities, with a clear downtown core and smaller lot residential at the center of the city, industrial and larger commercial uses along a rail corridor, and larger lot residential development transitioning into agricultural uses on the city's edges.

After agriculture, which makes up 33% of all land use, low density residential is the next largest land use, representing 26% of land in the city. Smaller lot single family homes are concentrated around the downtown core, with larger lots and newer developments characterizing the neighborhoods closer to the city boundaries. A majority of all homes are single family homes, though there are some twinhomes and townhouses mixed in with some of the newer developments. Less than 2% of land is used for medium density and high-density housing. Manufactured home park housing accounts for 1% of land.

Industrial land uses account for 6% of St. Charles' acreage. Industrial uses are concentrated along key access routes, including the rail corridor major roadways. Newer industrial development in the southern portion of the city has access to I-90. An additional industrial park is located in the northwest corner of the city.

Commercial uses only make up 1.6% of city acreage. The majority of commercial land is along Whitewater Avenue and Highway 14.

There is very little vacant land, at only 2% of the total acreage. This suggests there is limited potential for growth within the existing city boundary without redevelopment of existing uses, conversion of agricultural land into platted lots, or expansion of the city boundary.

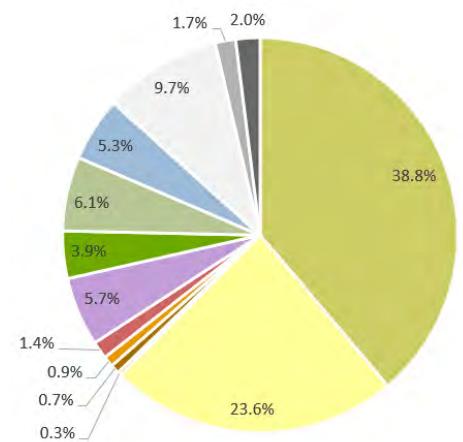
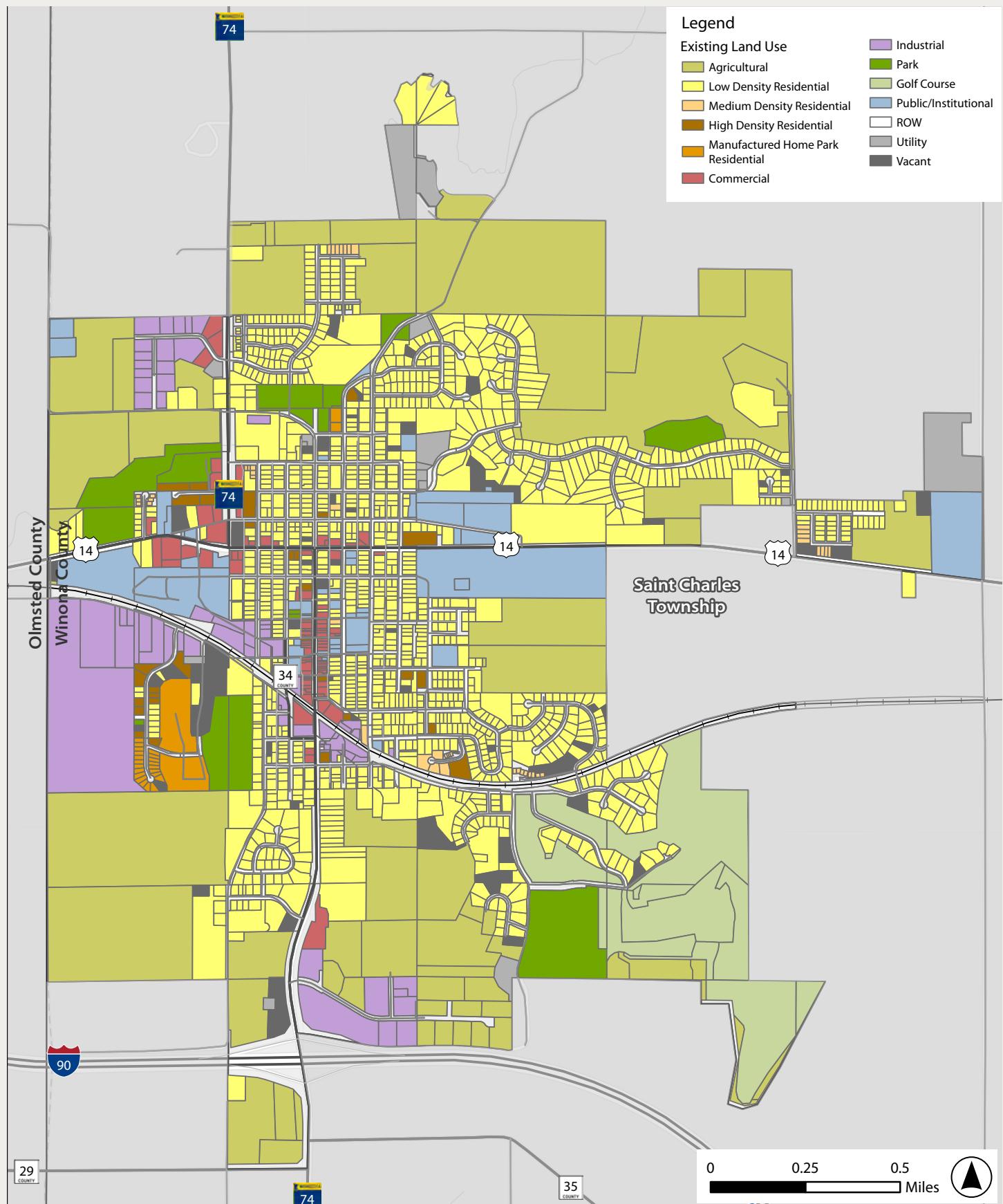


Figure 3.1 Chart of Existing Land Use

LAND USE	ACRES	ACREAGE PERCENT
AGRICULTURAL	1,018.69	38.8%
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	620.56	23.6%
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	8.56	0.3%
HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	19.10	0.7%
MANUFACTURED HOME PARK RESIDENTIAL	22.88	0.9%
COMMERCIAL	37.50	1.4%
INDUSTRIAL	148.29	5.7%
PARK	101.87	3.9%
GOLF COURSE	159.62	6.1%
PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL	138.01	5.3%
ROW	253.42	9.7%
UTILITY	43.89	1.7%
VACANT	52.00	2.0%
TOTAL	2,624.39	100.0%

Figure 3.2 Table of Existing Land Use Acreage



Existing Land Use Map

Figure 3.3 Existing Land Use in St. Charles

FUTURE LAND USE

Future land use designations are different from both existing land use classifications, which catalog what is there today, and zoning districts, which align properties with certain sets of regulations around specific permitted uses. Future land use designations, when applied through a map, identify:

- The preferred future character of an area and the general development density and intensity of land uses
- The desired mix of uses across the community
- The appropriate locations for the land use designations

Future land use designations are intended to represent the community's long-range vision and preferences, rather than its current regulatory environment.

Since the Zoning Code is one of the major implementation tools of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Code and Zoning Map should ultimately be updated to be consistent with the future land use designations and the future land use map.

The 2011 Comprehensive Plan did not include future land use designations nor a future land use map that covered the full extent of the city. Rather, the future land use chapter highlighted certain growth areas and identified specific uses that could fit those areas. The new future land use designations and map in this plan were developed through discussions with staff, Planning Commission, and City Council.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES



AGRICULTURE

Land guided for continued use as productive agricultural land.



LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land guided for neighborhoods with single-unit detached dwellings, two-unit dwellings, and accessory dwelling units. Areas guided for low density residential are connected to urban services (water, sewer) and have a density of 1-7 units per acre.



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land guided for neighborhoods with a mix of single-unit dwellings and multi-unit dwellings, including but not limited to duplexes, twinhomes, townhouses, small apartments, manufactured home parks, and accessory dwelling units. These areas are connected to urban services (water, sewer) and have a density range of 7-16 units per acre



HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Land guided for neighborhoods with multi-unit dwellings, including small and large apartment buildings. Apartment buildings should be scaled and designed to fit in with the surrounding character. These areas are connected to urban services (water, sewer) and have a density range of 16-32 units per acre. Areas guided for high density residential should have adequate access to accommodate traffic flows of residents.



MIXED-USE DOWNTOWN

This designation is meant to provide flexibility in uses along Whitewater Ave and the downtown area, encouraging a mix of housing types integrated with small-scale businesses and other uses characteristic of the historic development pattern of the downtown core. Uses within this designation may include residential, commercial, and public/institutional uses. Residential densities align with both medium and high density uses, and can range from 7-32 units per acre.



Existing medium-density housing in St. Charles



Existing high density housing in St. Charles



Downtown is a mix of commercial and residential uses



Golf courses are considered the same land use as parks and open space



Schools are an example of public/institutional uses



COMMERCIAL

Land guided for large- and small-scale commercial businesses providing goods and services. This includes regional-scale stores and shopping centers of various sizes, freestanding smaller businesses, office buildings, and other commercial enterprises. Buildings should be scaled appropriately to the surrounding neighborhood with appropriate buffers and pedestrian connections provided between commercial areas and adjacent residential neighborhoods.



HIGHWAY BUSINESS

Land guided for the integration of commercial and industrial land uses which are compatible with one another, including office, light industrial, and retail/service uses. The highway business designation provides flexibility in areas with close proximity and access to interstates and highways for uses that benefit from access to and visibility from high-volume roadways, such as those that are significant employment centers or offer destination commercial uses.



INDUSTRIAL

Land guided primarily for manufacturing, assembly, processing, packaging, warehousing, storage, distribution, or research and development of products, in order to provide employment opportunities and increase the city's tax base.



PARKS/OPEN SPACE

Land guided for public parks (local, county, regional, state, and federal), playgrounds, and playfields; private golf courses; open space uses; and recognition of vital environmental resources including waterways, steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains.



PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL

Land guided for public, semi-public, and private institutional uses including government, educational, religious, social, and healthcare facilities.



RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW)

Land preserved for public and semi-public infrastructure such as road right-of-way, railroad right-of-way, energy plants, sanitary sewer facilities, water utilities, and similar uses.

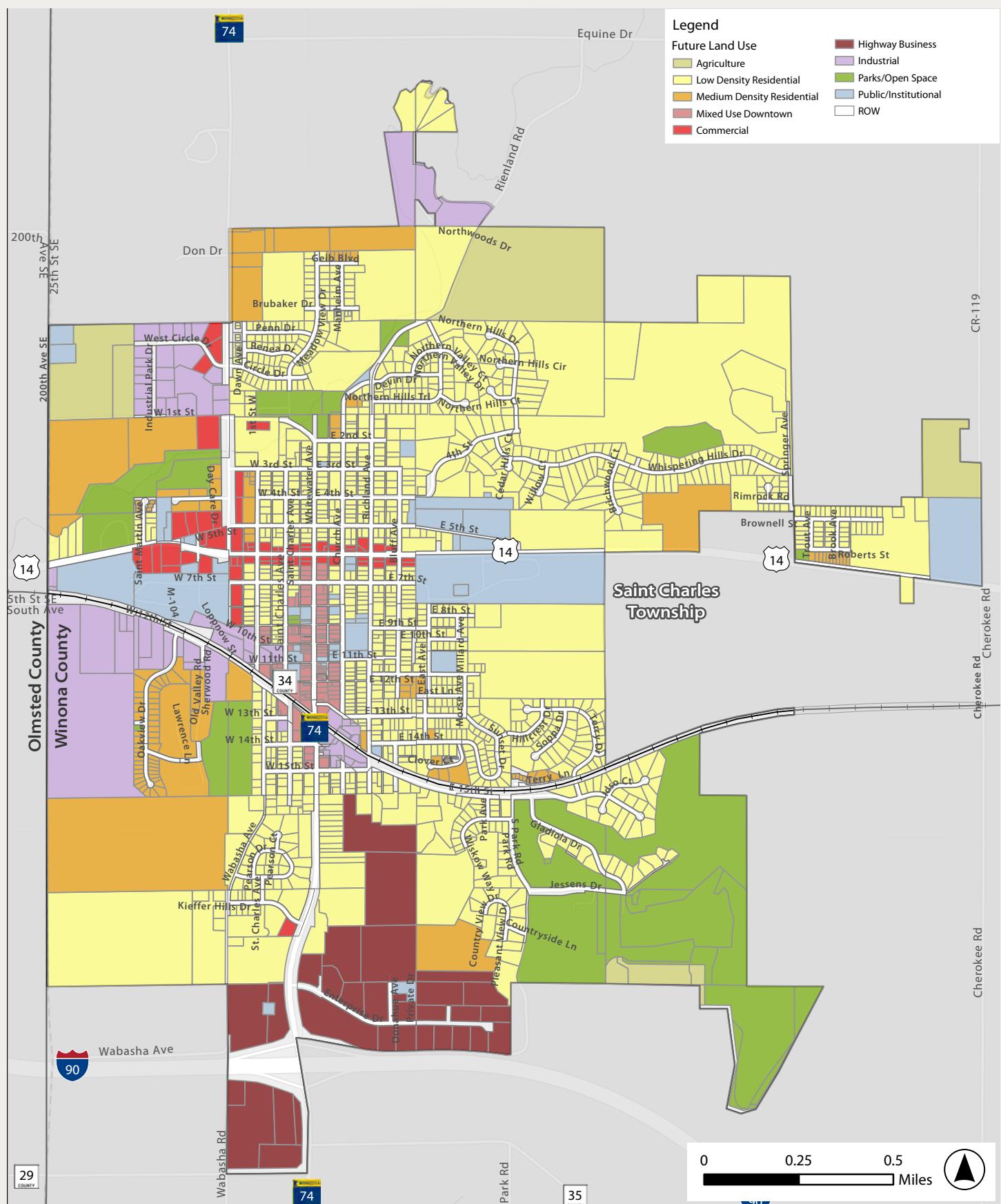


A NOTE ON HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

St. Charles has a variety of housing needs that can be met through incorporating different housing types in future development (for more on housing needs and types, see Chapter 4 Housing). The high density residential future land use category includes different multi-unit housing types. While high density residential is not explicitly identified on the future land use map in any particular area, it is a housing option that the City of St. Charles is willing to explore as appropriate sites emerge and there is demand within the community.

The following are common characteristics of sites suitable for high density residential:

- Access via roadway with higher traffic volume capacity
- Served by public utilities with adequate capacity infrastructure
- Transition from lower density residential to non-residential uses, such as near commercial districts



Future Land Use Map

Figure 3.4 Future Land Use Map for St. Charles

ORDERLY ANNEXATION AGREEMENT (OAA)

Orderly annexation agreements are entered into by cities and townships in order to plan for and accommodate growth of cities in a reasonable way that aligns with the goals of the city and the township. Examples of components that may be included in an orderly annexation agreement include:

- Shared goals that highlight priorities such as preserving prime farmland or protecting natural amenities.
- Requiring comprehensive development proposals prior to annexation, rather than a lot-by-lot approach.

GROWTH

In the context of land use, growth often refers to the expansion of the physical boundaries or land area of the city. Growth can also be used to describe adjusting densities and identifying opportunities for infill and redevelopment of underutilized properties. These strategies can accommodate population and economic growth without expanding the land area of the city.

Fostering growth within the existing footprint of St. Charles can be achieved through creating an environment friendly to developers and entrepreneurs. Finding ways to add flexibility and simplicity within city regulations and processes can facilitate growth by making it easier for developers, homeowners, and entrepreneurs to understand what the process for development or redevelopment looks like in St. Charles. Simplifying zoning regulations and expanding the permitted uses within certain districts can reduce barriers to infill and redevelopment of properties within the city. Balancing flexibility with standards that maintain the character of existing neighborhoods and the downtown will help preserve St. Charles' unique community identity.

However, only 2% of St. Charles' existing land use is vacant, which demonstrates there are limited opportunities for infill and redevelopment. The Comprehensive Plan should consider scenarios for expanding the land area of St. Charles over the next 20 years to best accommodate and provide opportunities for the community of St. Charles. Expanding the footprint of St. Charles can happen in a variety of ways, below is an example of a tool the City can use to expand its land.

ANNEXATION

Annexation is the process by which a city can add land from neighboring townships to the city boundary. It is typically done through orderly annexation agreements, whereby a city and a township enter into an agreement that aligns their priorities, land use goals, and the context for annexation.

St. Charles does not currently have any orderly annexation agreements with its neighboring townships.

In planning for growth and examining potential avenues and directions for St. Charles to grow, collaboration with neighboring townships and both Winona and Olmsted County is essential. Through incorporating potential growth scenarios into long term planning, the city can work with neighboring jurisdictions to promote compatible growth in the adjacent townships. As St. Charles grows and looks at annexation possibilities, developing orderly annexation agreements with neighboring townships is imperative.

FOCUS AREAS

The city has identified four focus areas to consider more closely when looking at future growth for St. Charles. These areas were identified through City Staff and City Council and Planning Commission input and are close to current city limits, have the potential to be efficiently and effectively served by public utilities, and have development marketability. Currently, development of these areas in their entirety is not readily feasible because there are no current orderly annexation agreements in place. However, by identifying these growth areas, St. Charles can create a phased approach to growth, marketing the areas that are currently developable in the near-term and working towards developing agreements with neighboring townships for longer-term growth.

The focus areas include:

- I-90 Commercial Corridor: Located in the southern portion of St. Charles, this focus area looks at commercial growth around I-90, identifying potential growth within and adjacent to the current city boundary.
- South Residential Area: This focus area looks at greenfield development in the southeast corner of St. Charles, emphasizing additional residential uses with proximity to I-90 and possible new commercial development areas.
- North Residential Area: Located around the northern spur of St. Charles, this focus area identifies additional residential development potential north of and around the existing city boundary.
- Hwy 14 East Corridor: Located on the eastern boundary of St. Charles along Hwy 14, this focus area examines growth potential for low and medium density residential uses.



Industrial uses in St. Charles

Due to administrative challenges, the focus areas identify expansion within Winona County. However, there is potential for St. Charles to expand to the west into Olmsted County as well. The City of St. Charles should collaborate with Olmsted County and townships within Olmsted County on any county-wide or regional planning efforts to ensure compatible uses and development patterns are guided for land bordering St. Charles on the west.

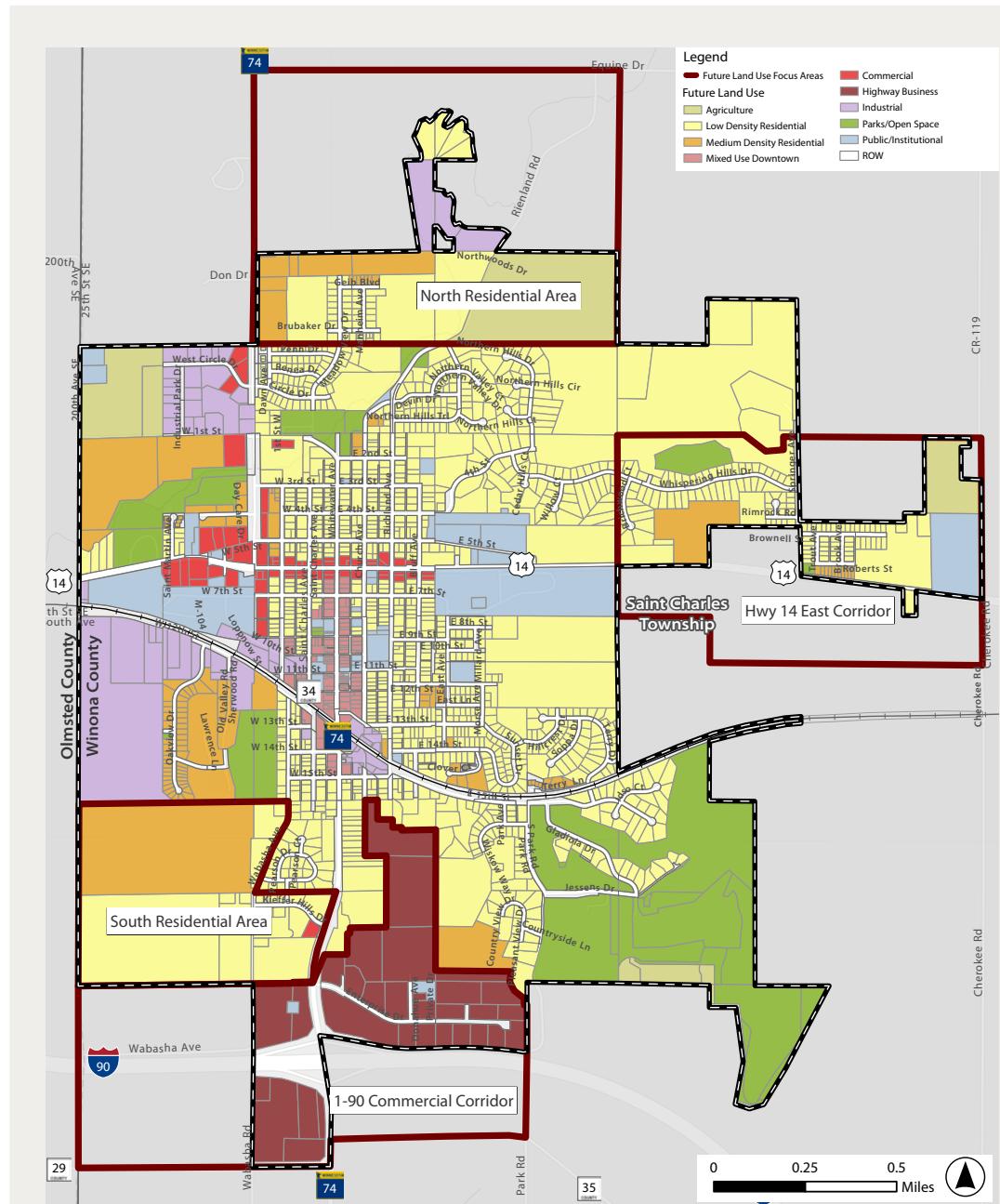


Figure 3.5 Future Land Use: Growth Focus Areas

I-90 COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR FOCUS AREA

The I-90 Corridor Focus Area (Figure 3.6) guides land for future commercial use. This corridor includes existing St. Charles land and identifies future growth areas south and east of the city's border along I-90. Access to and visibility from I-90, a major transit corridor, makes this location a prime area for commercial uses.

CONSIDERATIONS

PHASING

Within the existing city boundary, additional commercial development is likely to occur in the northern part of this focus area first, with future phases occurring south of I-90 then into the expansion areas that are currently outside of the city boundary.

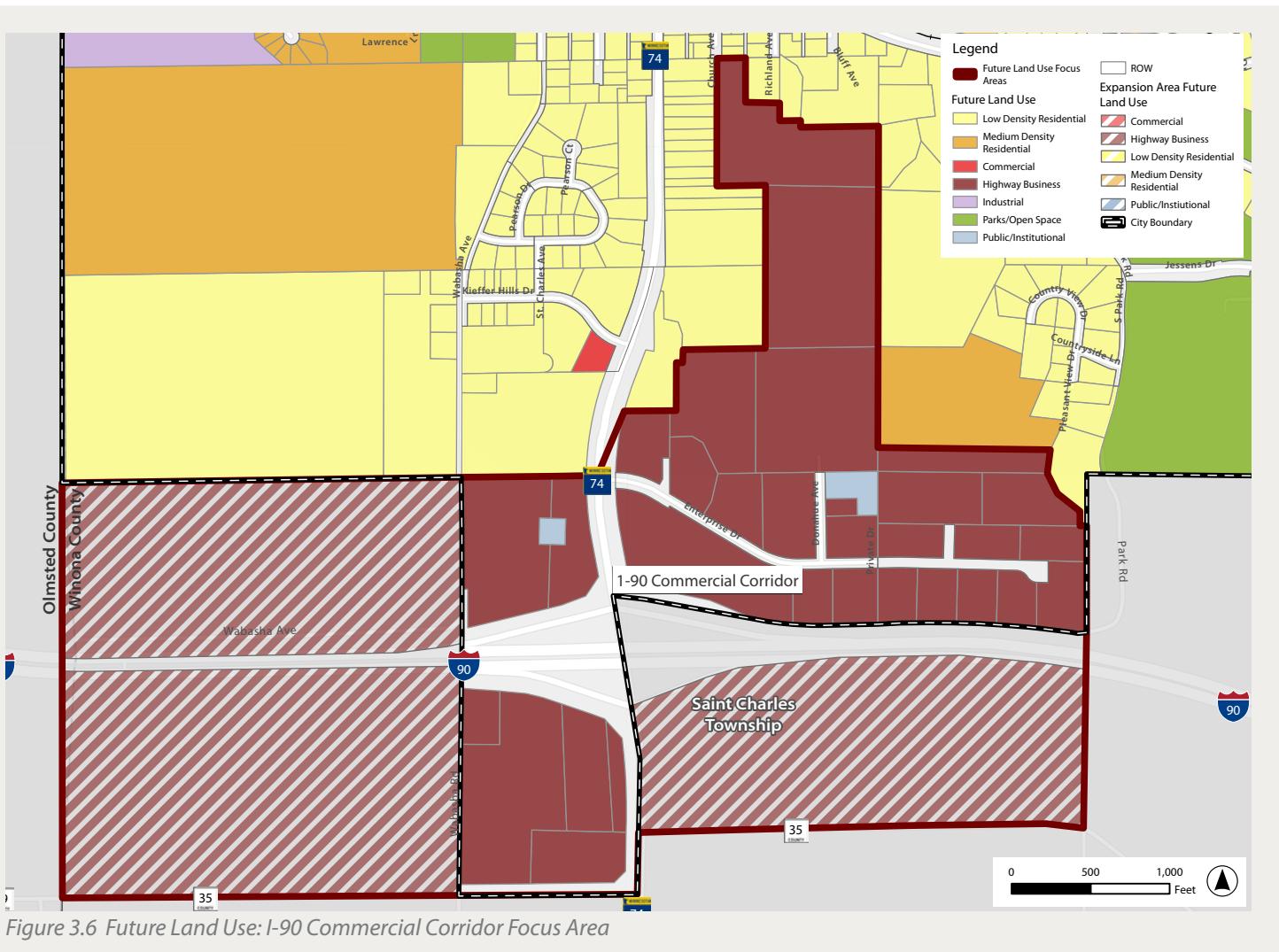
ACCESS & UTILITIES

Access to the northern portion of this focus area will be provided via Enterprise Drive, which runs parallel to and north of I-90. This is a newly developed area, and the next phase of commercial development in this focus area is likely to occur immediately north of the existing development where utilities are already stubbed.

Whitewater Avenue provides access to the portion of this area that is west of Enterprise Drive and south of I-90. These areas are likely to develop as a future phase, after the portion immediately north of Enterprise Drive.

NATURAL FEATURES

Although the land guided for commercial use abuts existing low density residential areas, topography and steep slopes create a natural buffer around the commercial uses, limiting the impacts of more intense usage of these areas on the neighboring residential areas.



HWY 14 EAST CORRIDOR FOCUS AREA

The HWY 14 East Corridor Focus Area (Figure 3.7) is predominantly guided for a mix of low and medium density residential uses. There is limited access to and from Hwy 14, so this area is less well-suited for commercial uses compared to the I-90 Corridor Focus Area. Additionally, existing single unit detached, small lot single unit detached, and two-unit residential uses within this focus area demonstrate that there is a demand for both low and medium density development in this area.

Existing commercial land in this area is unlikely to be converted to residential development in the near future, so this land continues to be guided for commercial use. There are opportunities for new medium density residential development adjacent to this commercial area, transitioning to the existing lower density neighborhoods in the surrounding areas.

Land in this growth area includes areas within the city boundary and immediately adjacent to it along the southern and northern edges.

CONSIDERATIONS

ACCESS

Limited access to Hwy 14 makes this growth area better suited for residential development rather than commercial uses. Access to the potential growth areas in this focus area is provided via Hwy 14, Springer Avenue, and Cherokee Rd (County Road 119). MnDOT is unlikely to allow additional access points along this stretch.

UTILITIES

North of Hwy 14, existing stubs for water and sewer utilities and local roadways suggest this will be the first phase of development, with lower density residential development south of Hwy 14 occurring later.

NATURAL FEATURES

South of Hwy 14, development constraints due to natural elements exist, including steep slopes in the area immediately east of the St. Charles city boundary and several potential or known karst feature sinkholes present in this area. These features create some challenges for development in this area. Existing low density residential uses in this area indicate that it is a viable land use option despite the presence of karst features.

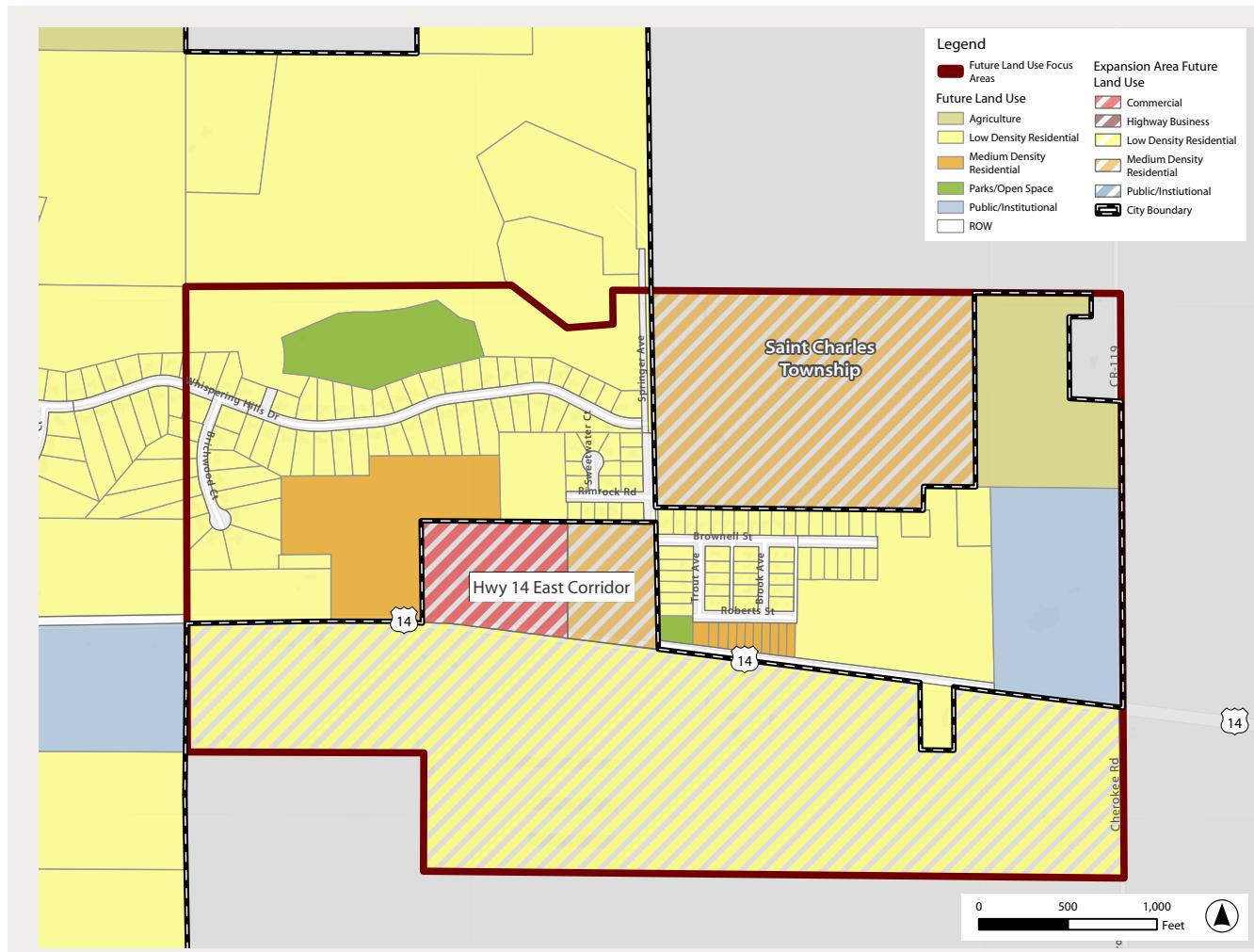


Figure 3.7 Future Land Use: Hwy 14 East Corridor Focus Area

SOUTH RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA

Low and medium density residential uses are identified as future land uses in the South Residential Focus Area (Figure 3.8). The land in this focus area is currently used for agricultural purposes, but recent residential development to the east and proximity to future commercial areas along the I-90 corridor make this area an ideal location for additional residential development in the future.

A mix of low and medium density units should be incorporated in this area, with medium density uses in the north transitioning to lower density uses in the south. Medium density in the northern portion aligns with existing densities to the north, where there is a current manufactured home park. Guiding for low density development in the south provides a transition between the future medium density units and the existing low density residential development in the eastern portion of this focus area.

CONSIDERATIONS

UTILITIES

Currently, some of the lowest water pressure in the city is found just north of this focus area in the manufactured home park. Additional development in this area would allow for looping utilities, improving pressure and service for all residents in this area.

ACCESS

Access to this area would likely be provided from the east, connecting new development through existing low density residential and out to Whitewater Ave, which provides access to I-90 to the south and downtown St. Charles to the north.

The presence of wetlands and steep slopes in the northwest of the focus area limits options for creating access from the north.

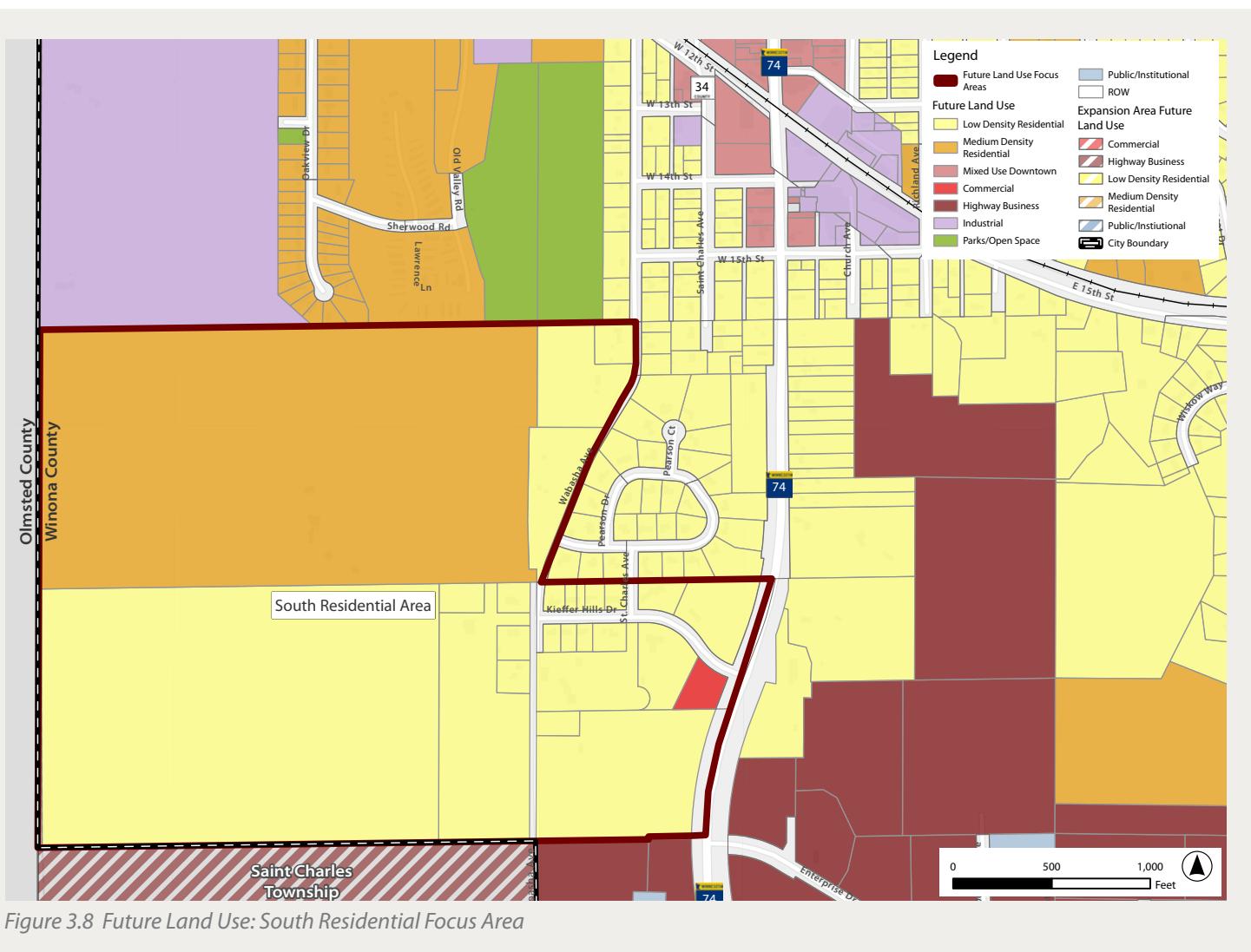


Figure 3.8 Future Land Use: South Residential Focus Area

NORTH RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA

The North Residential Focus Area (Figure 3.9) identifies land along the City's northern boundary where additional low density residential development would be appropriate for future expansion. This land is primarily agricultural land today.

CONSIDERATIONS

ACCESS

Access in this area is provided by Richland Avenue to the east and through the existing local road network located throughout the low and medium density development to the west. Additional access to the land located outside the current city boundary is provided via Whitewater Avenue (Highway 74) and Equine Drive.

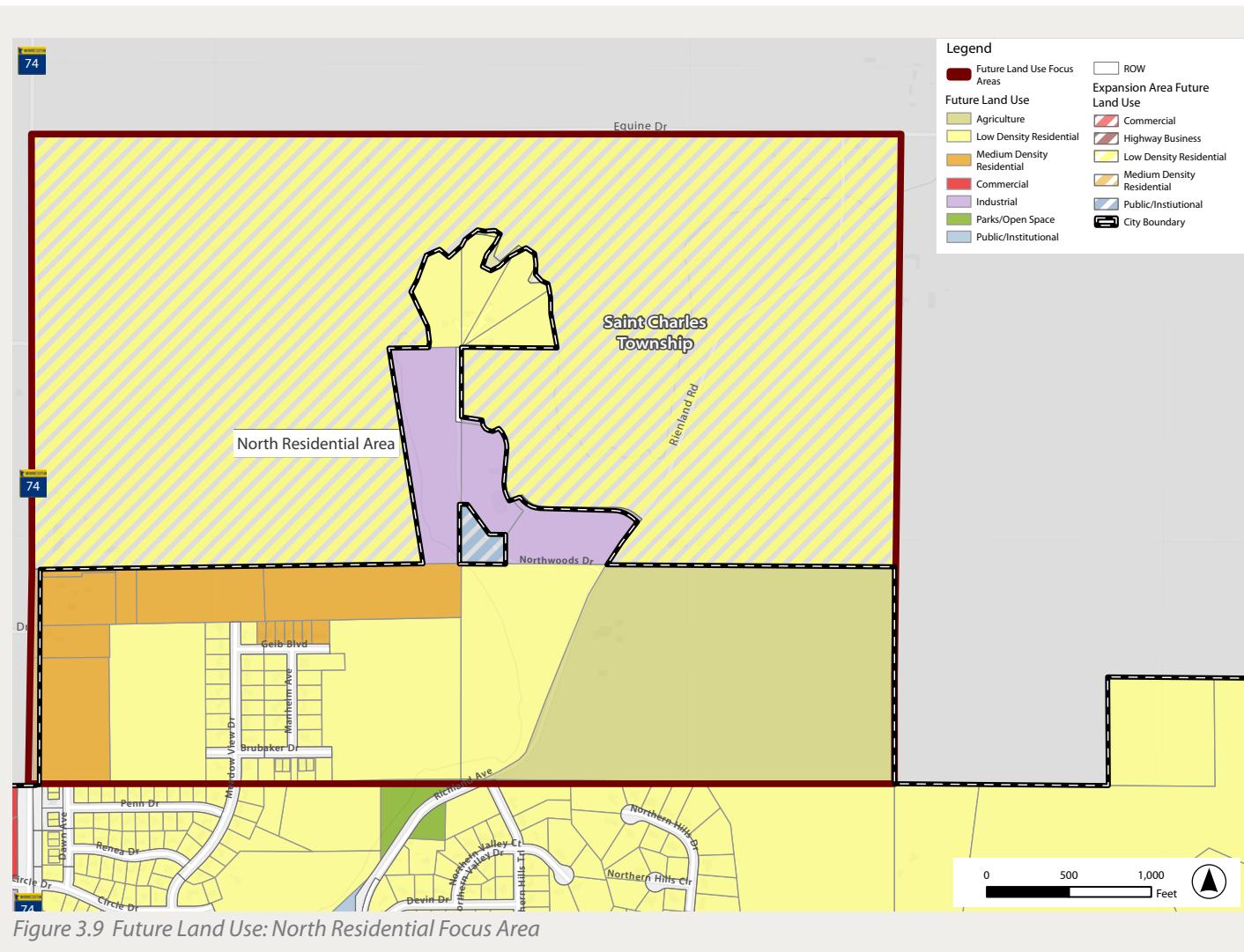
Richland Avenue provides a barrier between residential development and the current wastewater treatment plant and sanitary sewer district located in the eastern portion of this site.

UTILITIES

Utilities are available for extension on the western side of this focus area, which has seen new residential development in recent years. This area is likely to be the first phase of development that occurs in this focus area due to the availability of utilities and access roads.

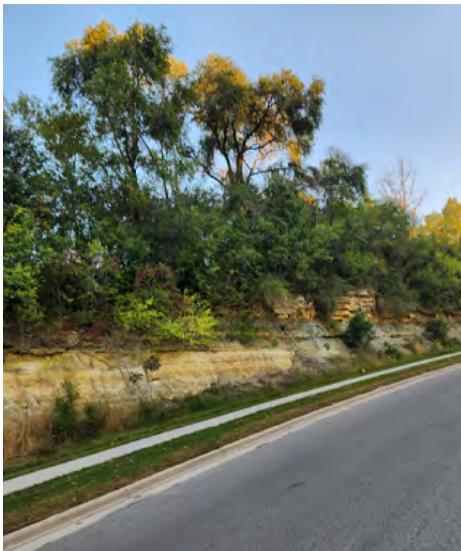
NATURAL FEATURES

The south branch of the Whitewater River runs through this focus area, dividing the land into eastern and western portions. Existing floodplain hazard areas following the river along with wetlands in the same area, limit development potential immediately adjacent to the river.





The South Fork of the Whitewater River flows through St. Charles



The limestone geology of St. Charles can create unique challenges for development in some areas

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

When planning for future growth and development, it is important to identify development constraints (Figure 3.10) in order to plan for efficient and cost-effective growth. Constraints include natural features, such as topography, rivers, wetlands, and soil types, in addition to human-created constraints, such as municipal water and sewer service areas and roadway access.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THEIR CONSTRAINTS

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.

GEOLOGY

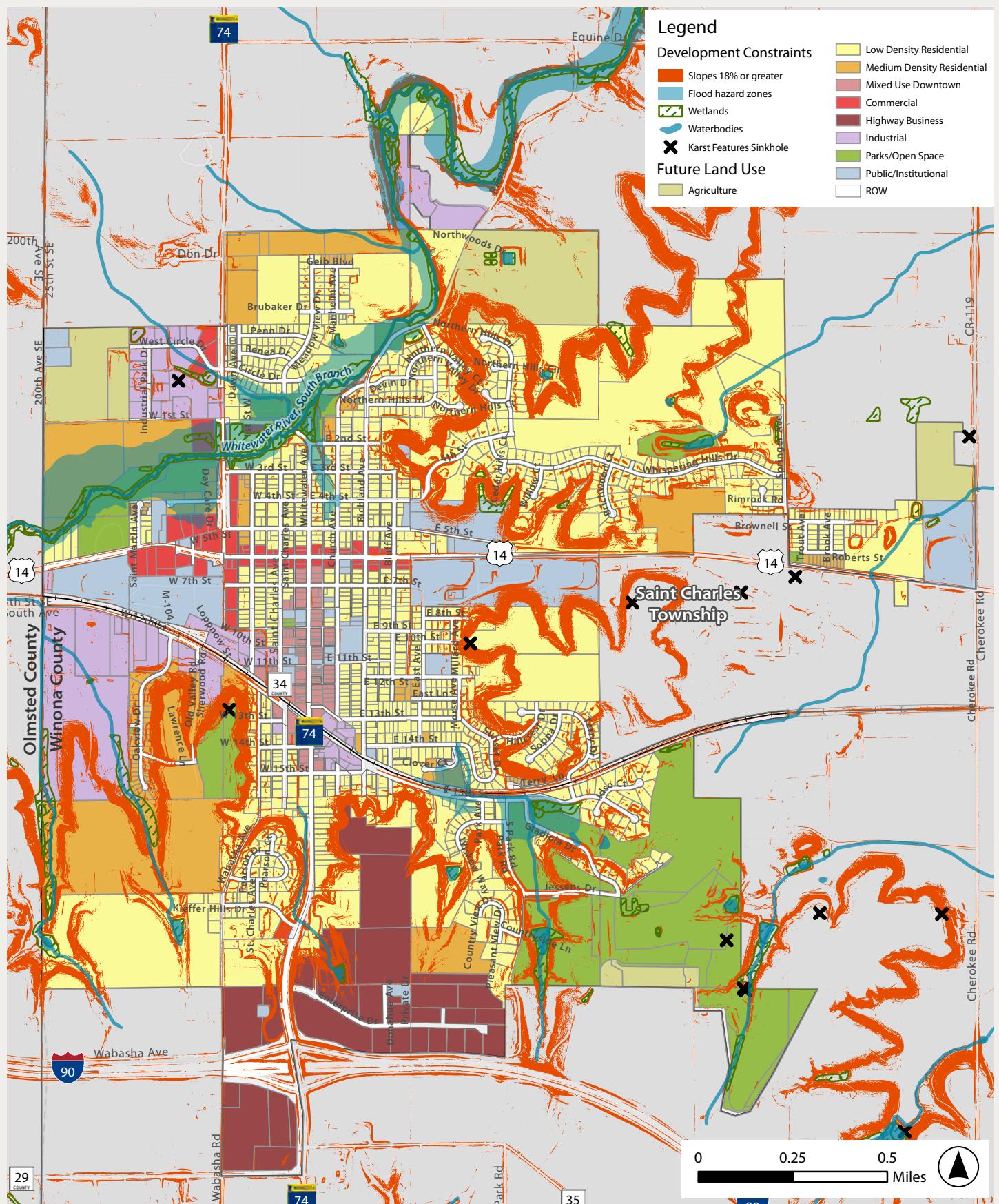
The geology of St. Charles is characterized as an active karst landscape. Karst landscapes are formed by the dissolution of layers of soluble bedrock, such as limestone, which creates cracks and fissures in the subsurface. Overtime, these cracks and fissures grow and widen, forming passages, caves, and sinkholes. Active karst landscapes are those in which the landforms and hydrology characteristic of karst landscapes are located within 50 feet of the land surface.

In karst landscapes, surface and subsurface water move differently and the line is blurry between the two, as groundwater appears and disappears as surface water frequently. This also means that pollutants and other contaminants move quickly through karst landscapes, and surface pollution can quickly contaminate groundwater.

There are several sinkholes present within and to the south and east of St. Charles. The presence of these sinkholes is a clear indicator of an active karst landscape. Given the geological characteristics of the landscape, it is important for St. Charles to monitor septic systems, wells, and groundwater as well as ensure sinkholes and other karst features are noted as development occurs.

WHITEWATER RIVER

St. Charles lies within the Mississippi River Winona Watershed. The South Fork of the Whitewater River runs through St. Charles. This branch of the river then joins the main stem, which is comprised of the Middle and North forks and runs north of St. Charles. A floodplain is identified along the South Fork of the Whitewater River in northern St. Charles.



Development Constraints Map

Figure 3.10 Development Constraints in St. Charles

KEY TERMINOLOGY

- **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are often long-term in scope. The chapter goals are topic-specific and align with the City's guiding principles.
- **Policies** are statements intended to guide City Staff and Council decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies often also describe ongoing activities.
- **Actions** detail a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements and address the who, what, when, where, and how of reaching a goal. The actions are the specific steps needed to turn the goals into a reality.



Planning for the future involves balancing growth with preserving the character of St. Charles

GOALS & POLICIES

GOAL 3.1

Maintain and enhance the quality of life within St. Charles through promoting continued investment in and redevelopment of underutilized and already-developed areas.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 3.1.1 Support redevelopment of underutilized parcels that is consistent with the historic character of the community and surrounding uses.

Policy 3.1.2 Explore opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization of aging downtown infrastructure.

Policy 3.1.3 Preserve existing neighborhoods through zoning, subdivision and building controls.

GOAL 3.2

Guide the location and form of new development to ensure growth is managed in an efficient, cost-effective manner that enhances St. Charles' existing community character.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 3.2.1 Encourage development in areas that can provide adequate infrastructure by supporting contiguous development and orderly annexation.

Policy 3.2.2 Continue to maintain relationships with neighboring townships in order to explore annexation as opportunities or issues arise.

Policy 3.2.3 Utilize and maximize public resources and external funding sources to explore the greatest growth potentials for St. Charles.

GOAL 3.3

As growth occurs, support investment in and development of community amenities including parks and recreation improvements, neighborhood trail connections, and infrastructure improvements.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 3.3.1 Invest in community infrastructure improvements and services that ensure continued quality of life for St. Charles residents in areas of redevelopment and new development alike.

Policy 3.3.2 Encourage the creation of developments that integrate trails and pathways and that have roadways that are designed for the safety of many types of users (bikes, pedestrians, cars, trucks etc.).

GOAL 3.4

As St. Charles develops, give consideration to the preservation of natural areas and resources.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
<p>Update City zoning standards to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, zoning standards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce barriers to development and redevelopment by establishing clear development review procedures, allowing for reuse of buildings, and allowing a mix of uses and housing types; and • Balance market-appropriate uses and standards that align with the existing and historic character of St. Charles 	Short-term	General Fund
<p>Work to develop an orderly annexation agreement with St. Charles Township. The orderly annexation agreement should be based on managed growth, and annexation should not be contemplated unless the area is directly contiguous with existing urban development, about to become urban in nature and able to be serviced by the City (as demonstrated in a capital improvement plan as needed).</p>	Mid-term	General Fund
<p>Work with St. Charles Township and Dover Township to help ensure land use decisions in areas likely to become urban in the future are not counterproductive (e.g. the siting of a structure in a location that is the likely projection of a future roadway).</p>	Ongoing	General Fund
<p>Lead efforts to eliminate nuisances relating to specific property(ies) and/or conditions which are deemed to have a 'blighting effect' upon adjacent properties and/or nuisance conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety of adjacent property owners.</p>	Short-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED, MN Housing)

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04

HOUSING



OVERVIEW

The Housing chapter of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on strategies the City can employ to foster an environment that supports diverse, high-quality housing options that meet the needs of St. Charles' current and potential future residents. Through identifying current housing needs and examining the population and market trends at work in St. Charles, this section of the plan aims to support the creation of affordable, diverse housing options while maintaining vibrant, welcoming neighborhoods.

The role a city plays in housing development and maintaining affordable and quality housing stock varies depending on the situation. If the city owns property, it can work directly with developers to create housing. In other cases, the city can ensure regulatory processes are favorable to the creation and preservation of affordable, diverse housing. Due to the different roles the City of St. Charles may play in relation to housing, the goals, policies, and strategies in this section often require the support of partners, such as homeowners and developers, or rely on public-private partnerships.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

The St. Charles community survey included several questions focused on housing. **46.6% of survey respondents said that the variety of housing options in St. Charles needs work.** Additionally, survey respondents indicated that the **most needed types of housing** in St. Charles include:

- **Single Family Homes**
- **Twinhomes/duplexes**
- **Townhomes**
- **Senior Housing**

Many respondents wrote in additional comments in the survey relating to housing. These comments fell into three different themes:

- St. Charles needs more **housing across a range of price points and styles**, including for-sale and rental options and accessible housing options.
- There is a need for **senior housing of a variety of types**, from single-level flats, apartments, and other accessible independent living options to assisted and full-spectrum care facilities.
- Residents identified need for a **greater range of price points for for-sale single-family homes** to accommodate both first-time and move-up buyers.



St. Charles' assisted living facility



Twinhomes in St. Charles

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The majority of St. Charles residents are home-owners, with 83% of units owner-occupied and 17% renter-occupied. There are approximately 1,690 housing units in St. Charles. 79% of housing units are owner-occupied, 16% are renter-occupied, and 5% are currently vacant.

Median monthly rent is \$941 and median home cost for home owners with a mortgage is \$1,509. The median home value of owner-occupied homes is \$231,300. There is a rental vacancy rate of 9.3% and an overall housing vacancy rate of 5%.

A household is housing cost burdened if they spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities. In St. Charles, 25% of owner-occupied households and 17% of renter-occupied households are housing cost burdened.

The housing stock in St. Charles has been built relatively steadily over the last 100 years, with 28% built before 1940, 26% built between 1980 and 1999, and 20% built between 2000 and 2019.

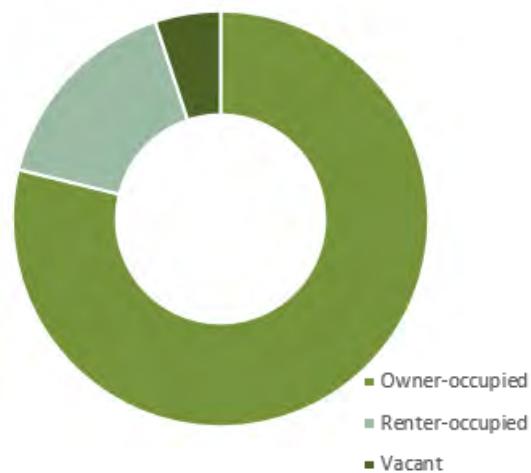


Figure 4.1 Occupancy of housing units in St. Charles

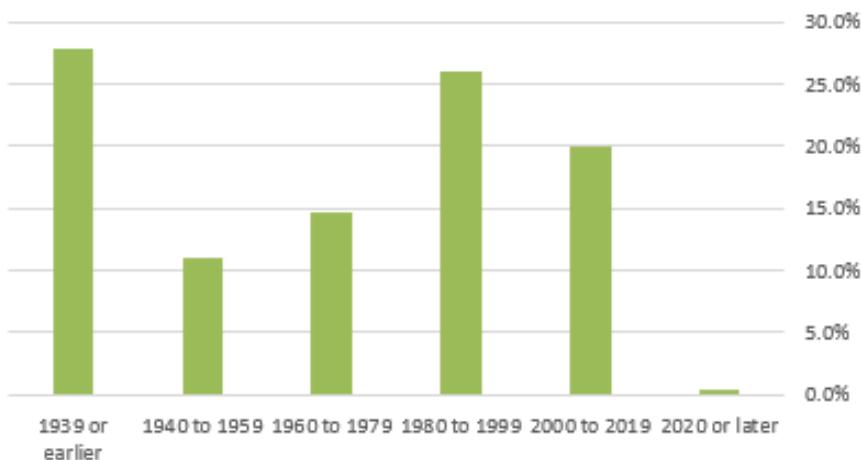


Figure 4.2 Percent of St. Charles housing units by year built

The housing mix in St. Charles is dominated by single-family detached units (79%), and the majority of residential land in St. Charles is zoned R-1 one- and two-family residential zoning (89%). Although the city allows two-unit structures, such as duplexes and twinhomes, in its low-density R-1 zoning district, the majority of housing units currently constructed in the city are detached single-unit dwellings. With 89% of all residential land zoned low density (R-1), and only 4% of land in the city currently vacant, there are limited options for development of multi-unit and medium- or high-density housing. For more on land use and housing, see Chapter 3: Land Use.

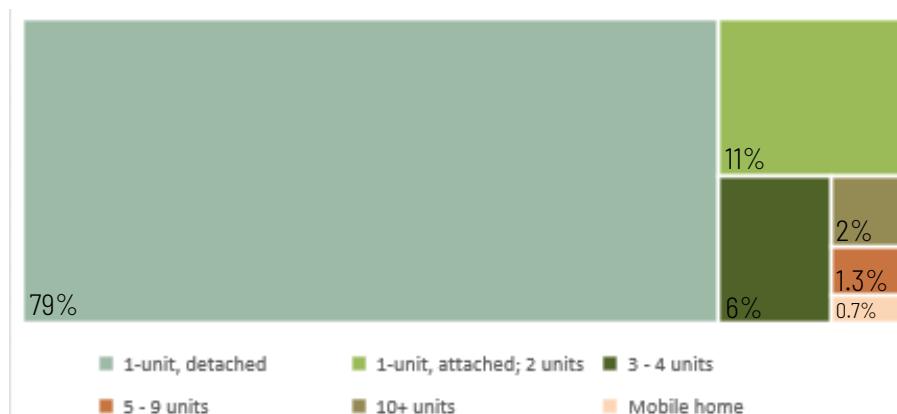
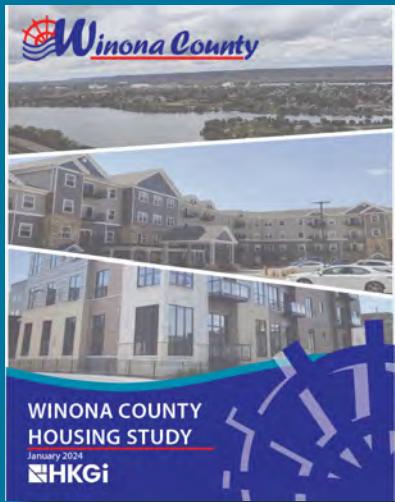


Figure 4.3 Percent of St. Charles housing units by unit type



The Winona County Housing Study looked at housing demand across the county and in four specific cities, including St. Charles.

WINONA COUNTY HOUSING STUDY

In 2024, Winona County completed a housing study that analyzed the existing housing stock, identified barriers to housing development, and examined population and market trends to determine future housing demand. The housing study looked at housing county-wide and focused on several cities, including St. Charles, providing estimated demand for housing units, total acreage needed to support the identified housing demand, and specific strategies and actions to address the identified barriers to housing development.

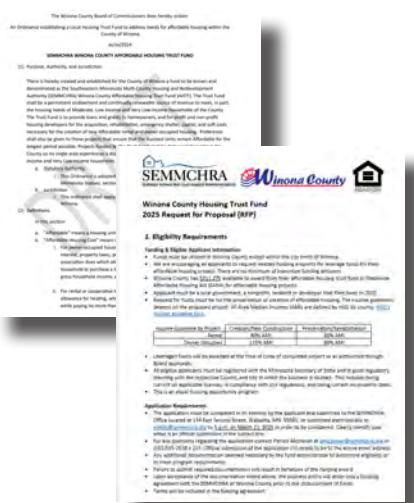
The housing study found that, over the next five years in St. Charles, there is a total demand for 130 – 220 units of housing, including rental, senior, and for-sale housing units. Of that 130-220 units, there is a demand for 60-91 single-family detached homes, 26-39 townhome and twinhome units, and 45-90 senior housing and apartment units. Looking forward another 5 years, there is a need for an additional 50-70 total units needed.

The study also found that St. Charles will need 14-24 acres of land to accommodate the new housing developments in the first 5 years, and an additional five to nine acres to accommodate growth in the five years after that.

Table 7. St. Charles Future Housing Demand and Land Needs Summary

Housing Category	2022-2027 (Units)	Land Needed (Acreage)	2028-2033 (Units)	Land Needed (Acreage)
<i>Single Family Detached Homes</i>	60 - 91	10.0 - 16.0	21 - 28	3.6 - 4.8
<i>Townhomes and Twinhomes</i>	26 - 39	2.5 - 3.9	9 - 12	0.9 - 1.2
<i>Apartments and Senior Housing</i>	45 - 90	1.8 - 3.6	20 - 30	0.8 - 2.8
Total	130 - 220 Units	14.3 - 23.5 Acres	50 - 70 Units	5.3 - 8.8 Acres

*Figure 4.4 St. Charles Future Housing Demand and Land Needs Summary
(Source: Winona County Housing Study)*



AREA HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS

SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA MULTI-COUNTY HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (SEMMCHRA)

SEMMCHRA is the housing and redevelopment authority serving Dodge County, Fillmore County, Goodhue County (except for the City of Red Wing), Houston County, Wabasha County and Winona County (except for the City of Winona). Its mission is to enhance and strengthen communities through advocacy, collaboration and promotion of self-reliance, housing and community development.

When it comes to housing, SEMMCHRA aims to provide “affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing” to residents in the counties it serves. Programs offered by SEMMCHRA include rental assistance, family self-sufficiency programs, rental and single-family property rehabilitation, first-time homebuyer loans, and down payment assistance.

In addition to housing, SEMMCHRA has programs to assist with redevelopment of slum and blighted properties and support other economic development activities.

WINONA COUNTY HOUSING TRUST FUND

In 2024, Winona County adopted a Housing Trust Fund ordinance, establishing a trust fund to support local affordable housing units. The Winona County Housing Trust Fund is administered through SEMMCHRA. Eligible applicants, including local governments, nonprofits, landlords, and developers can apply to the housing trust fund to receive funding towards affordable housing development projects.

HOUSING CHOICE

Housing choice refers to offering different styles or types of housing units as well as ensuring there are a mix of rental and for-sale units at different price points.

As people move through different life stages, they also require different things from their housing. For example, a young person who has recently moved to St. Charles for work is likely not ready to buy a house yet. They might be more interested in a one- or two-bedroom apartment. A young couple looking to buy their first home can more easily afford a one-to-two-bedroom single-family house. Meanwhile, the family down the street who has a few kids is looking for a larger three- or four-bedroom house to grow into. As children move out and people age, they might look to downsize and find a home that requires less maintenance where they can comfortably age in place, such as a townhome or single-level flat.

By offering a variety of rental and for-sale housing types, a community can ensure that residents are able to meet their housing needs during all phases of life. This makes a community attractive for potential residents and ensures current residents are able to call St. Charles home their whole lives.

MISSING MIDDLE

When discussing housing types, the concept of “missing middle” housing is often referenced. Missing middle housing refers to a range of multi-unit and/or medium density housing units that are compatible in scale and form with detached, single-unit homes. The below examples of housing types can all be considered missing middle housing.

HOUSING TYPES



Small Lot Single-Unit Homes

Similar to single-unit homes, these are designed for occupancy by a single household but are located on smaller lots, providing for higher housing densities.



Duplexes, Triples, and Quadplexes

Multiple units attached within the same structure that can either be side by side or lower/upper levels and could have separate or shared entries.



Townhouse/Row Houses

This is a group of attached housing that increases density while providing for defined, separated living spaces in an efficient design. The property could include a shared lawn, garden, or walking paths.



Mixed-Use

Housing units located above or within the same building as businesses or uses other than residential. Mixed-use units include second-story apartments above retail, office, and other uses along Whitewater Ave.



Small Scale Apartments

This housing type is a multi-unit building with multiple floors, similar in height to the surrounding buildings, and a shared building entry.



Senior Living

Units in a variety of layouts or building types that are limited to individuals ages 55 or older. Residents may be independent, require a low level of services provided (assisted living), or require high level 24-hour care due to health issues.



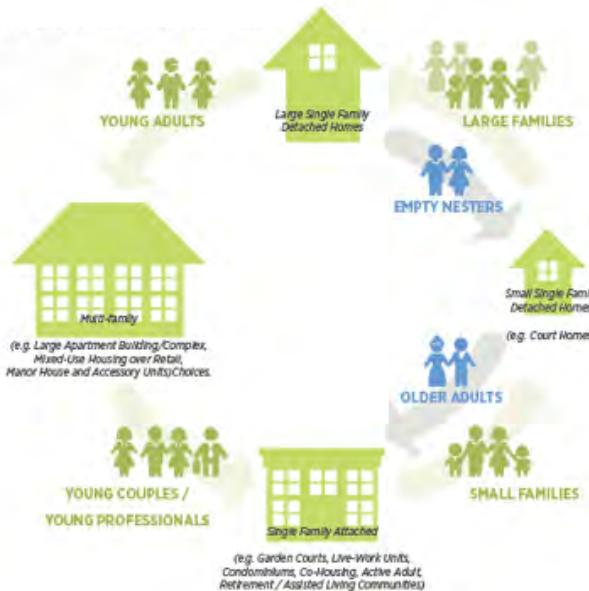
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

A smaller, self-contained residential unit that is legally part of a residential lot that includes another home. ADUs can be internal to or attached to another home, incorporated into a garage, or a separate structure.



Detached Courtyard Housing

A group of smaller, detached houses that are built close together and located around a common open space, which can include amenities such as a shared lawn, gardens, or walking paths.



A graphic model of one version of the housing life cycle.

Source: Cumberland Regional Tomorrow Quality Growth Toolbox

HOUSING LIFE CYCLE

Planning for housing in a community is inherently tied to population trends. People have different housing needs during different phases of life. Not only is it important to understand if a population is growing or shrinking, but it is also imperative to look at which age groups within a population are growing or shrinking, and how quickly. The development of diverse housing supports the natural cycle of housing as different generations move between different types of housing.

To address the life-cycle needs of residents it is critical that a community provides a wide range of housing:

- Types (i.e. apartment/townhome/condominium rental, townhome/condo/single-family owner occupied, assisted living);
- Sizes (i.e. one, two, three-bedroom rentals; starter homes; move-up homes); and,
- Values: (i.e. efficiency – luxury rental units; starter homes – executive homes).

Ensuring that a community offers housing to suit the needs of different life phases sustains that community because it allows residents to remain in the city as they move through different housing goals and needs. If a community is missing certain types of housing, such as mid-level single family homes or rental apartments, it can create stagnation in the housing market, as residents cannot find the housing that they need and so they cannot move to a new stage in the housing cycle. This limits the next generation that would typically occupy the housing phase of the previous generation. For example, if there are limited options for downsizing adults, they will remain in larger, single-family homes. This means that younger families looking to move up to a larger home will remain in their starter homes, limiting the number of homes available to the next generation of first-time homebuyers.

Figure 4.5 displays a breakdown of population by age categories based on housing cycle stage for St. Charles. Since 2000, St. Charles has seen an increase in population across a majority of age categories, with the exception of those ages 40-49 (move-up home buyers) and a more limited increase in people ages 50-59 (empty nesters). This suggests that there is a need for home types across the housing cycle, from rental units and first-time home buyers to senior living. A notable increase in the number of residents ages 60-69 suggests there will be a growing need for senior living in a variety of forms.

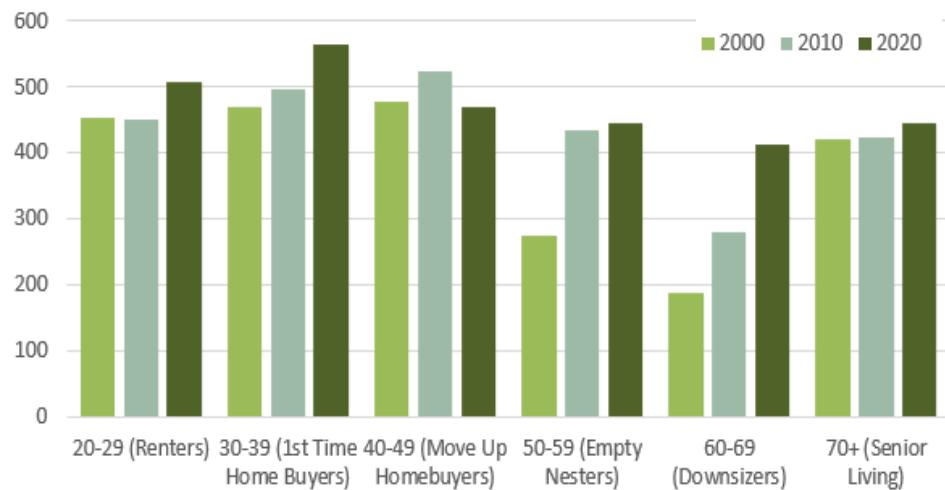


Figure 4.5 Population by age categories and housing life cycle phase

MIX OF HOUSING TYPES

The existing housing mix in St. Charles primarily consists of single-family homes but does include a variety of examples of missing middle housing types including twinhomes and quadplexes, townhomes, and small apartments. Accommodating St. Charles' projected growth will not require major increases in the densities of existing neighborhoods but rather can be absorbed through a combination of the incremental thickening of neighborhoods and annexation and development in areas currently outside the city limits.

Incremental growth or thickening refers to an approach that seeks to integrate missing housing choices into existing neighborhoods gradually over time. One of the key principles of incremental city development is the use of historic and existing structures and resources to serve as a foundation for future development.

Supporting the development of new housing types and allowing housing types per lot can enable flexibility and support for the housing market as it fluctuates. This allows a range of developers to respond to the market instead of being reliant upon only a handful of owners or developers who tend to build the same type of housing products. Diverse housing types and developer ownership also allows St. Charles to be competitive in its housing access, enabling easy entrance into the housing market by creating a range of investment opportunities for homeowners and renters.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability varies widely depending on the region, incomes, available housing types, and support programs within a city. There are also a variety of ways to determine what affordability means in the context of housing. General guidance dictates that households should spend no more than 30% of their income on total housing costs. For renters, this includes their rent, utilities, and other housing costs. For homeowners, this includes mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and any additional housing costs. For individuals and households looking for housing, finding what they consider "affordable" can be measured in several different ways. When households are having to spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs, they may qualify for different forms of subsidized housing.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) generally defines housing as affordable if it costs less than 30% percent of a household's income. However, to qualify for subsidized housing, HUD's Section 8 Income Guidelines provide different measures of affordability. Section 8 guidelines define low and moderate incomes on a sliding scale, depending on the number of persons in the family. For example, a four-person household is considered 'moderate income' if their family income is 80 percent of the area's median family income. Figure 4.6 shows the income limit calculations for a family of four in Winona County in 2025 and what are considered affordable monthly housing costs based on income.

Affordability Levels in Winona County	Income	Maximum Monthly Housing Costs (30% of income)
Winona County Median Family Income (MFI)	\$105,700	\$2,642
Low Income (Up to 80% of Median Family Income)	\$84,550	\$2,114
Very Low Income (Up to 50% of Median Household Income)	\$52,850	\$1,321
Extremely Low Income (60% of Very Low Income limit)	\$31,700	\$793

Figure 4.6 HUD definitions of affordability for a four person household in Winona County

US CENSUS TERMINOLOGY

Family vs. Household Income

The U.S. Census Bureau classifies household and family income differently. Household income is defined as total money received in a calendar year by all household members 15 years old and over. Family income is the total income received in a calendar year by family members related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Many households are not families, for example, single people living alone or with non-related roommates are considered a non-family household. Median household income is often lower than median family income, however, most housing data references family income rather than household income. In St. Charles, the median household income is \$96,544 whereas the median family income is \$110,878.

Median vs. Average Income

'Median' income differs from 'average' income. 'Median' is created by dividing income distribution data into two groups, one having incomes greater than the median and the other having incomes below the median. 'Average' income is calculated by adding all incomes together and dividing the total by the number of responses



A single-family home in St. Charles



Multi-unit housing in St. Charles

Figure 4.7 shows the median family and household incomes in St. Charles, along with median monthly housing costs. Based on this data, St. Charles is considered an affordable place to live.

Median Values in St. Charles	Amount
Median Family Income (MFI)	\$110,878
Median Household Income	\$96,544
Median monthly housing costs for owners with mortgage	\$1,509
Median monthly housing costs for renters	\$941
Median home value	\$231,300

Figure 4.7 Median incomes and housing costs in St. Charles

Another way to examine housing affordability is to use the housing affordability index. The affordability index measures whether a household earning the median family income can qualify for a mortgage loan on a median value home in the area. In St. Charles, the Housing Affordability Index is 122, indicating that a family earning median income has more than enough income to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home assuming a 20% downpayment. The value of 122 indicates that a median family has approximately 120% of the income needed to qualify for a conventional mortgage loan.

To ensure that people can remain in St. Charles, the city should continue to support a diverse mix of housing options and actively build or maintain partnerships that connect residents with the services they need to afford housing.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

- **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are often long-term in scope. The chapter goals are topic-specific and align with the City's guiding principles.
- **Policies** are statements intended to guide City Staff and Council decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies often also describe ongoing activities.
- **Actions** detail a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements and address the who, what, when, where, and how of reaching a goal. The actions are the specific steps needed to turn the goals into a reality.

GOALS & POLICIES

GOAL 4.1

Encourage a balanced supply of housing choices that ensures all residents can access housing that meets their needs throughout their life in St. Charles.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

- Policy 4.1.1 Support development of housing types that accommodate the range of household sizes and lifestyle preferences of existing and future residents.
- Policy 4.1.2 Support the development of rental housing.
- Policy 4.1.3 Promote development of housing options that provide aging in place and senior living options for residents.
- Policy 4.1.4 Support development of a range of affordable and market rate housing options to meet all income levels.
- Policy 4.2.5 Create flexibility in standards and allow differing housing densities while maintaining neighborhood character.

GOAL 4.2

Support reinvestment in and maintenance of existing housing as the city's housing stock ages.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

- Policy 4.2.1 Explore partnership and funding opportunities that support rehabilitation and expansions of existing homes to meet lifecycle maintenance needs and changing housing market conditions.
- Policy 4.2.2 Provide support and education around financial tools for housing rehabilitation and development.
- Policy 4.2.3 Build capacity at the neighborhood level for community improvement projects and maintenance of neighborhood identity.
- Policy 4.2.4 Ensure all homes, including long- and short- term rentals, are maintained in safe condition.

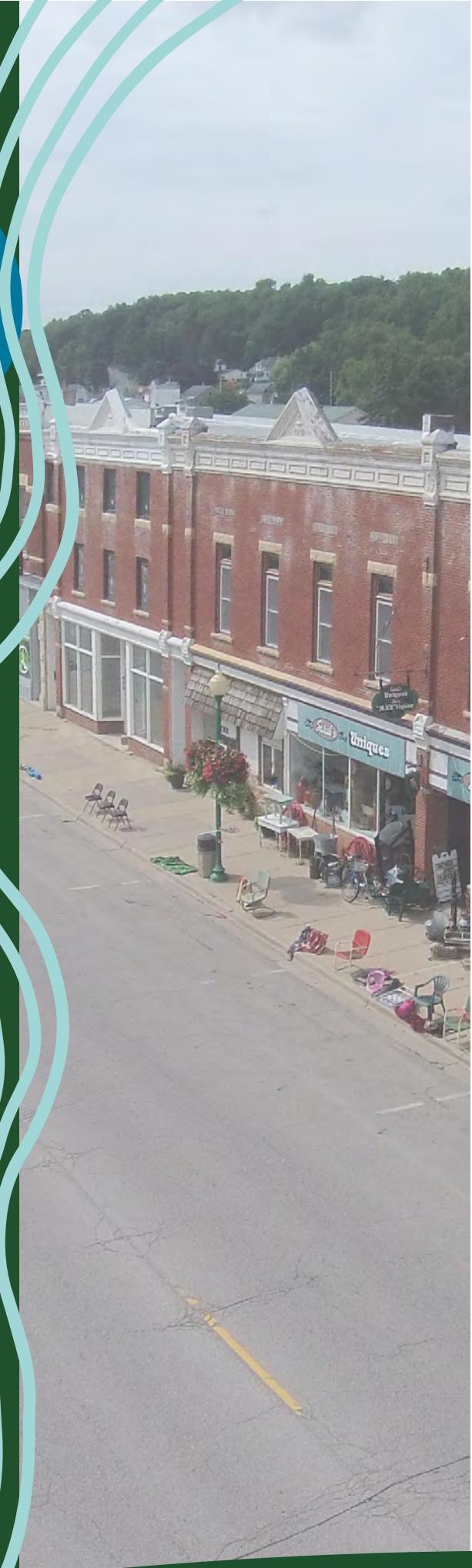
ACTIONS

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
<p>Revise zoning code to allow for a wider range of housing options through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding residential uses to include a range of missing middle housing types • Evaluating and reducing minimum lot sizes and dimensional standards to ensure they are compatible for different housing types • Simplifying development standards and procedures 	Short-term	General Fund
<p>Revise the zoning map to encourage housing development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align zoning map with the future land use map • Rezone vacant, infill, and redevelopment parcels to meet the city's projected demand for different housing types 	Short-term	General Fund
<p>Maintain and regularly update a database of local and regional organizations, grants, information, and opportunities relating to and supporting housing efforts.</p>	Ongoing	General Fund
<p>Create outreach and engagement plan to attract more land developers and homebuilders.</p>	Short-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED)
<p>Strengthen code enforcement to address blight concerns through maintaining property standards.</p>	Ongoing	General Fund
<p>Develop outreach program to homeowners and landlords to work with them to address blight and provide resources for upkeep and maintenance of existing properties.</p>	Mid-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED)



05

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



OVERVIEW

In the context of the Comprehensive Plan, economic development refers to the strategies and policies used to grow the local economy and improve quality of life. It includes areas such as workforce development and job creation, attraction and retention of businesses, and redevelopment of existing structures.

Economic development is one key area of the Comprehensive Plan that requires the support of and partnerships with a variety of different local and regional entities, including the St. Charles Area Chamber of Commerce, Winona County, and local business and industry leaders. Economic development is integrated into many other sectors and is impacted by developments and improvements in areas such as Land Use, Transportation, and Parks & Recreation.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Reinvestment in downtown is important for creating a vibrant main street and maintaining the character of historic St. Charles.
- A hotel was frequently identified as a key business missing from St. Charles by both community members who took the Community Survey and business owners during the economic development focus group.
- Additional businesses, including restaurants/bars/breweries and entertainment businesses, such as movie theaters and bowling alleys, are needed to create a vibrant downtown and offer community spaces year-round.
- Generally, there is a desire for more locally run businesses to diversify the economy and provide different job opportunities within St. Charles.
- 51.64% of survey respondents indicated that employment opportunities need work.
- Business owners attending the Business Focus Group provided additional insights relating to economic development:
 - » There is a need for connectivity within the community to bring visitors from the Enterprise Drive area to downtown and vice versa.
 - » Lack of workforce is a challenge for local businesses as they have to compete with Rochester wages. There is also competition between local businesses for the local workforce.



Existing businesses in St. Charles create jobs, provide essential services, and help anchor the local economy



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Business activity in St. Charles occurs in several areas. Retail, restaurants, services and other commercial establishments are located along Whitewater Ave and 6th Street (Hwy 14) in the center of St. Charles. There is also a growing commercial area south of town along Enterprise Drive, near I-90, with larger commercial and industrial businesses, including destination retail and travel-oriented retail. Industrial uses are concentrated along the railroad that runs just south of downtown, with some located in the newer industrial park northwest of downtown.



EMPLOYMENT

According to the 2023 ACS, the unemployment rate for St. Charles was 2.10% in 2023. The most recent unemployment statistics for 2025 are provided on a county basis. Winona County had an unemployment rate of 3.4%, up from 2.6% in 2023, and Olmsted County has an unemployment rate of 3.2%, up from 2.3% in 2023. Based on the county trends, it is likely that the St. Charles unemployment rate has increased slightly from the 2023 ACS estimates.

Figure 5.1 shows the breakdown of employment by sector for St. Charles residents. The primary industries that St. Charles residents work in are educational services and healthcare, and social assistance and manufacturing.

Figure 5.1 St. Charles workforce by industry

INDUSTRY	PERCENT OF WORKFORCE
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2.00%
Construction	7.40%
Manufacturing	19.10%
Wholesale trade	1.70%
Retail trade	10.20%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.60%
Information	2.70%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.70%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6.60%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	35.20%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	0.80%
Other services, except public administration	2.00%
Public administration	2.00%



INFLOW/OUTFLOW ANALYSIS

Data from the 2020 census shows that 86% of the employed St. Charles population is employed outside of the City. An estimated 51% of these workers are employed in Olmsted County while 28% are employed in Winona County. Of the people employed within the City of St. Charles, 80% live outside of the city boundary.

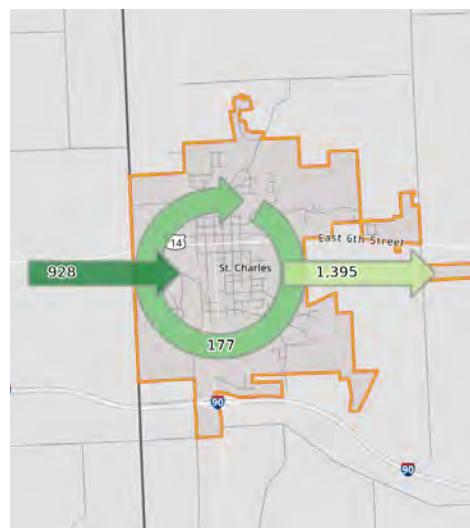
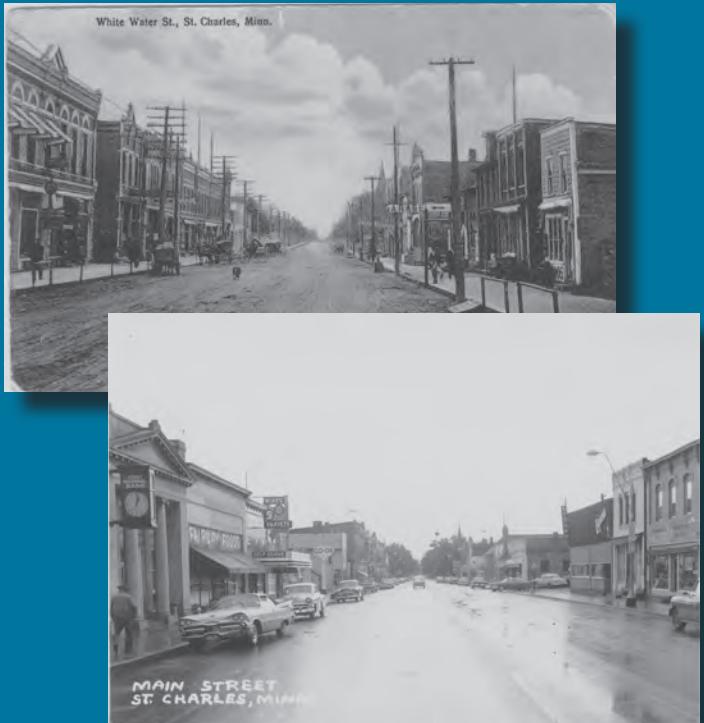


Figure 5.2 Inflow/Outflow for St. Charles

WHITEWATER AVENUE AND THE DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR



Whitewater Avenue has always been the commercial heart of St. Charles

The stretch of Whitewater Avenue between 6th Street and 13th Street is the main downtown area in St. Charles. This district has a distinct historic character and is home to a variety of local businesses. The previous Comprehensive Plan identified conservation of the historical presence of Whitewater Avenue as a key guiding philosophy for the Plan. Through economic tools, such as the revolving loan fund, and infrastructure improvements, like the 11th Street streetscape project (see Chapter 8 Transportation for more information), the City has demonstrated a commitment to fostering a unique and vibrant downtown.

The City of St. Charles' Economic Development Authority (EDA) runs a Revolving Loan Fund Program to support local businesses. Applicants can use the loan program financing as a direct loan or as a guarantor to a conventional bank loan. There is an average of three to four loans active at any given time in the community with a total of around \$45,000-50,000 available in funding. Minimum and maximum loan amounts are \$1,000 and \$25,000 respectively. EDA loans may not exceed 50% of the available EDA fund balance.

In 2026, the City plans to increase the amount of available funding to \$100,000, which may increase the maximum loan amount depending on city policy. Initial capitalization for the EDA loan program comes from the State.

The EDA also runs the Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program, which is a deferred loan program for businesses to use towards repairs, such as facade improvements. As long as business owners own the business for five years after the loan, the total amount is forgiven.

There remains a number of opportunities for redevelopment and investment along this corridor. The City should continue its support for the revolving loan fund, development of additional funding programs, and opportunities to collaborate with and streamline processes for businesses and developers along Whitewater Avenue's downtown corridor should remain a priority for St. Charles.

CHATTANOOGA INNOVATION PARK

The Chattanooga Innovation Park, also referred to as Enterprise Drive, is located in southern St. Charles with direct access to I-90. This park provides land for a wide range of business uses. Portions of the 35-acre plat have already been developed, with additional lots available. The City advertises competitive tax and utility rates, existing infrastructure provision, and a willingness to partner with developers to support investment and long-term growth in the area.



Enterprise Drive offers development opportunities with close proximity to I-90

FRAMING CONCEPTS

DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

As a city, St. Charles has a variety of economic development tools it can employ to support different types of development, including redevelopment along its main street, small business support, housing, and larger-scale commercial development. The EDA employs tools, such as the Revolving Loan and Commercial Rehabilitation Loan programs. Others, the City is willing to employ under the right circumstances.

Typically, the most relevant economic development and financing tools used by cities include tax increment financing (TIF), tax abatement, and grant funding. In addition, there are some instances when tools including special assessment districts, special service districts, and improvement districts may be utilized to finance improvements such as infrastructure expansion. Below is a brief description of TIF and tax abatement tools, with more elaboration on the other tools in the Chapter 9: Implementation.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the primary development finance tool available to Minnesota cities (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.174 through 469.179). Through tax increment financing, the property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured and used to finance activities needed to encourage the development. The challenge in using TIF lies with the complex and ever-changing statutory limitations. Under state statutes, there are different types of TIF, each with different requirements and limitations, such as duration of the district or qualifying geographic areas.

The most common types of TIF districts include Economic Development, Housing, and Redevelopment Districts.

An **Economic Development TIF** district can be used for industrial development and, in cities under 5,000 people, for commercial, office and retail development. These districts can be established when a city finds it is necessary to (1) discourage commerce, industry, or manufacturing from moving their operations to another state or municipality; (2) increase employment; or (3) preserve and enhance the tax base of the state. The TIF Act defines specific types of uses that are eligible for the establishment of this form of district.

A **Housing TIF** District can be established for a project, or a portion of a project, intended for occupancy, in part, by persons or families of low and moderate income.

A **Redevelopment TIF** District can be established for areas where there is a high concentration of blighted or structurally substandard buildings. In order to qualify for a redevelopment TIF, 70% of the area of the proposed district must be occupied by buildings, streets, utilities, or other similar structures, and more than 50% of buildings must be structurally substandard. For areas that do not meet the level of blight required, renewal and renovation TIF districts are an option, but these have a shorter duration period.

Table 5.3 lists the types of TIF districts and the differences in duration, qualifying areas, and permitted uses.

Figure 5.3 Tax Increment Financing District Types, Requirements, and Restrictions.

DISTRICT TYPE	DURATION LIMIT	GEOGRAPHIC AREAS THAT QUALIFY	PERMITTED USES OF INCREMENTS	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS AND % OF TOTAL (STATEWIDE, 2022)
Economic Development	8 years	No restrictions	Manufacturing; Warehousing; R&D facilities; Telemarketing; Tourism in qualifying counties; Commercial developments in small cities; Workforce housing outside seven-county metro area	290 (17%)
Housing	25 years	No restrictions	Housing for low- or moderate-income renters or homeowners	599 (36%)
Hazardous Substance Subdistricts	25 years	Parcels in a TIF district containing polluted sites and contiguous parcels	Site acquisition and cleanup	22 (1%)
Redevelopment	25 years	70% occupied by buildings, 50% of which are substandard, or certain railyards, or tank facilities	Correction of conditions justifying creating district	729 (44%)
Renewal and Renovation	15 years	70% occupied by buildings, 20% of which are substandard and another 30% require renovation	Correction of conditions justifying creating district	27 (1%)
Soils Condition	20 years	Site contains pollution and cost of cleanup exceeds lesser of \$2/sq. ft. or the fair market value of the land	Site acquisition and cleanup	12 (1%)

Table source: Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department <https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/issinfo/tif/dist.aspx>

TAX ABATEMENT

Tax abatement acts like a simpler and less powerful version of tax increment financing. With TIF, the city controls the entire property tax revenue from new development. Under the abatement statute (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.1812 through 469.1815), the city, county and school district have independent authority to grant an abatement.

Abatement in Minnesota works more like a rebate than an abatement. The city (and other units abating taxes) adds a tax levy equal to the amount of taxes to be abated. The revenue from the abatement levy can be returned to the property owner or retained and used to finance development activities. Tax abatement can be used to finance key development actions related to implementation of items in the Comprehensive Plan: land acquisition, site preparation, and public improvements.

Unlike TIF, tax abatement is not tied to specific forms of development. It can be used in association with all forms of private development.

The statute grants the authority to issue general obligation bonds supported by the collection of abated taxes. The proceeds of the bonds may be used to pay for (1) public improvements that benefit the property, (2) land acquisition, (3) reimbursement to the property owner for improvements to the property, and (4) the costs of issuing the bonds. These bonds can be issued without an election and are not subject to the debt limit. Tax abatement cannot be used for property within a TIF district, so it can be a useful tool for areas that do not qualify for redevelopment or other TIF districts.

GRANT FUNDING

The City may choose to pursue grant funding for various projects. These opportunities typically come from sources outside the City including state and federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED), and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) as well as community organizations like the St. Charles Area Community Foundation. Projects which may be supported by grant funding vary broadly, ranging from redevelopment assistance to contamination assessment and cleanup to community event planning and organization.



Businesses provide critical services for the community that make life easier for residents, such as child care centers and pharmacy

PROMOTING ST. CHARLES

During the community engagement process, community members and business leaders in St. Charles expressed that more emphasis should be placed on promoting all that St. Charles has to offer, both to the existing community and to visitors. St. Charles can strategically market itself for a variety of purposes, including:

- To support existing businesses, services, and community assets;
- To retain and attract new residents and a local workforce; and
- To promote development and investment in St. Charles.

In order to promote the City to different audiences, St. Charles should employ multiple targeted marketing approaches. Each of these approaches should highlight desirable qualities of St. Charles in alignment with the goals and guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan. Below are examples of the qualities of St. Charles that can be highlighted in order to target different audiences. Marketing efforts should be developed in partnership with the business community, Chamber of Commerce, and other stakeholders.

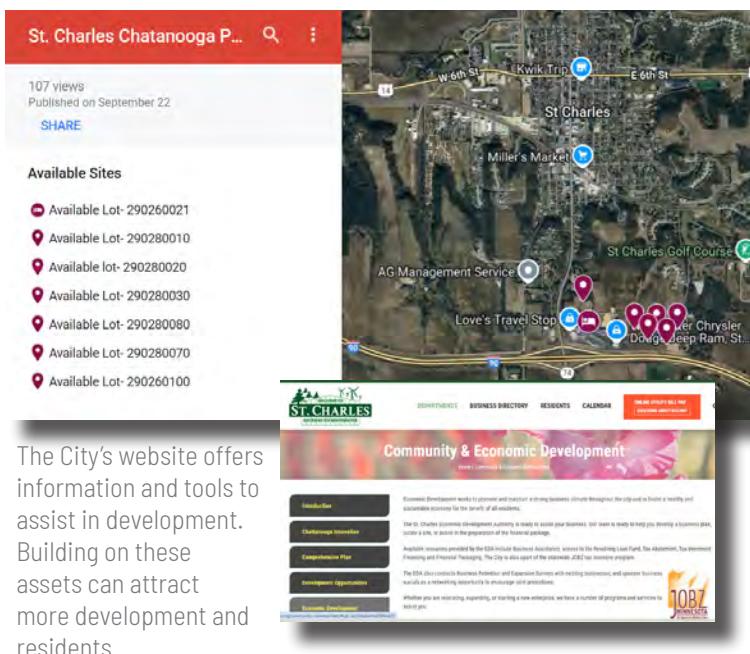
SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES, SERVICES, AND COMMUNITY ASSETS

- **Investment tools:** The revolving loan program is a key tool the City currently uses and is looking to expand that supports existing businesses and entrepreneurs within the community. When possible, seeking funding through state grant programs to further fund this program and develop additional supports, such technical assistance grants, signals to residents and business owners that the City wants to create a welcoming business environment.
- **Community connectivity:** With several commercial centers in town, including downtown along Whitewater Ave and south along Enterprise Drive, it is important to identify existing community assets, highlight the different active areas throughout the City, and emphasize the physical connections between these hubs. Strategies such as citywide branding efforts or wayfinding signage will clearly signal a cohesive identity within the business community to visitors and residents alike and will help people to move through the community.

RETAIN AND ATTRACT RESIDENTS/LOCAL WORKFORCE

- **Quality of life:** Many people considering a move to a rural area are doing so as a lifestyle choice, choosing a destination with access to the outdoors, a slower pace of life, being close to family, and other quality of life factors rather than moving primarily for a job. With its proximity to Whitewater State Park, sense of community, and location between Winona and Rochester, St. Charles provides a quality of life that many people are looking for.
- **Affordability:** 83% of St. Charles residents are homeowners. Median monthly housing costs amount to \$1,509 for homeowners with mortgages, which is an affordable payment for an annual income of \$60,360. The median household income in St. Charles is \$96,544. This indicates that homeownership is an attainable goal. With City efforts to continue to

expand housing options, St. Charles is poised to be an attractive place for people looking to buy a home.



PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT IN ST. CHARLES

- **Supportive development environment:** With the Enterprise Drive area poised for development in close proximity to I-90, St. Charles offers an attractive place for business development. St. Charles should promote the ways in which the City is willing to partner with developers and business owners to move projects forward, including thoughtful land use planning and advertising development sites.
- **Advertise the community's needs:** Residents and business owners identified certain enterprises and uses that are lacking in St. Charles. Specifically, there is a clear desire for a hotel and hospitality businesses. The City should work to identify potential sites that would be suitable for this type of development and to attract developers to support this vision.

GOALS & POLICIES

GOAL 5.1

Promote St. Charles as a community to invest in.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 5.1.1 Work with partners to enhance the regional and national visibility of St. Charles as a place to do business, grow industry, and participate in the workforce and economy.

Policy 5.1.2 Improve messaging and wayfinding within St. Charles to connect and direct people to the different commercial areas in the city.

Policy 5.1.3 Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with local and regional economic development entities to promote investment.

Policy 5.1.4 Develop more pronounced link for the community to Interstate 90.

GOAL 5.2

Encourage and support investment in downtown St. Charles along Whitewater Avenue through both existing and new businesses.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 5.2.1 Continue to invest in and support local small businesses through City initiatives, such as the Revolving Loan Fund through the EDA.

Policy 5.2.2 Encourage preservation and rehabilitation, as feasible, of the historic buildings and other distinguishing and attractive features of the community.

GOAL 5.3

Support the development of a strong local workforce and work to attract new businesses that provide livable wage jobs.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 5.3.1 Encourage business sector to develop opportunities for local graduates to grow the human capital of the community.

Policy 5.3.2 Identify key partnerships to support and facilitate workforce readiness, training, and employee retention programs.

Policy 5.3.3 Support housing strategies that will generate workforce housing opportunities.

Policy 5.3.4 Continue to improve community amenities and activities to create a welcoming environment for new residents.

GOAL 5.4

Foster a supportive business environment that encourages growth and development across a variety of scales and sectors.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 5.4.1 Provide a strong business culture supporting a diversity of businesses, including those new to business and seasoned entrepreneurs.

Policy 5.4.2 Continue evaluating and adapting City policies to ensure they do not create barriers for certain industries while they help regulate for the benefit of the residents of St. Charles as needed.

Policy 5.4.3 Maintain and develop relationships with key state agencies to ensure continued technical support is provided for new and existing businesses.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

- **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are often long-term in scope. The chapter goals are topic-specific and align with the City's guiding principles.
- **Policies** are statements intended to guide City Staff and Council decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies often also describe ongoing activities.
- **Actions** detail a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements and address the who, what, when, where, and how of reaching a goal. The actions are the specific steps needed to turn the goals into a reality.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Evaluate current City policies and ordinances to determine where changes can be made to reduce any barriers that exist in local regulatory processes and licensing to ensure City is not contributing barriers to business development.	Short-term	General Fund
<p>Develop a unified brand and marketing strategy for promoting development and investment opportunities in St. Charles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify organizations that can provide input and support for a marketing strategy, including the Chamber of Commerce, EDA, and other community organizations and business groups. Highlight the community assets that can attract labor force and new industry to the area. 	Short-term	General Fund
Conduct a survey or conversations with business owners who have used the revolving loan fund to understand what worked, how to improve the program, and what other types of funding programs could help existing local businesses.	Short-term	General Fund
Seek funding for additional programs to support redevelopment on Whitewater Avenue based on input from business owners.	Long-term	State grant funding (DEED); General Fund
<p>Develop wayfinding signage to create connections between I-90, Enterprise Drive, and Whitewater Ave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with business owners to understand current traffic patterns and ensure signage is developed in an efficient and effective way. 	Mid-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED)
Create and maintain a list of available redevelopment properties along Whitewater Avenue to share with interested developers, entrepreneurs, and business owners.	Ongoing	General Fund



06

PUBLIC FACILITIES



OVERVIEW

The Public Facilities chapter of the Comprehensive Plan helps guide investment in and prioritize long-term projects relating to the City's infrastructure. This chapter focuses on ways the City can invest in infrastructure to maintain and modernize current systems, ensuring that residents and community members are provided with quality services even as the City continues to grow. This includes public infrastructure like stormwater, sanitary sewers, and drinking water, as well as private services, such as broadband and telecommunications. The goals and policies listed at the end of the chapter should be used to help make decisions regarding public and private investment in infrastructure.

PHYSICAL & HUMAN INFRASTRUCTURE



Physical infrastructure refers to the built components of a system, including roads, water and sewer systems, and buildings. Most elements that people typically think of as infrastructure fall into this category.



Human infrastructure refers to the needed capacity and day-to-day running of operations that is required to maintain and provide high-quality services to the community. Human infrastructure may look different for each type of public service or facility. In general, it includes EMTs and firefighters, city staff, teachers, volunteers, and other staff that help provide services to the community. In smaller cities, human capacity is often a critical factor when it comes to maintenance and expansion of services.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Utility costs feel expensive to residents. It is important to find ways to ensure utility costs are affordable to community members.
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure is needed in addition to expansion of services.
- Consistent snow removal is important.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

PUBLIC SERVICES

The City of St. Charles currently provides a variety of services that support the needs of the community. These services fall into three categories: Civic Infrastructure, Emergency Services, and Education. These categories all require investment in different forms of physical and human infrastructure to maintain. See the next page for more information on each of the services provided by the City.

- Civic Infrastructure: City hall, community center, library, senior center
- Emergency Services: Fire, police, and volunteer ambulance service
- Education: Schools

PRIVATE SERVICES

In addition to the public services provided by the City of St. Charles, there are a number of private entities that also serve the residents of St. Charles with essential services. Examples of some private services offered in the community include a child care center, assisted living and long-term care facility, clinic, and pharmacy.

PUBLIC SERVICES PROVIDED BY ST. CHARLES



Public Safety Building

In 2016, the City of St. Charles constructed a new public safety building to house the fire and ambulance services. The facility includes garages for the emergency vehicles of both departments, offices, a shared kitchen, and a conference/training room. Additionally, there are three sleeping quarters, showers and crew living quarters, which allows the departments to recruit volunteers from outside the city limits. Volunteers must be within 5 minutes of the building when they are on call, so living quarters in the public safety building ensure the departments can include volunteers from other places beyond city limits.



Volunteer Ambulance Service

The St. Charles Volunteer Ambulance Service responds to calls within a 100-mile service area that includes the City of St. Charles and the Townships of Saratoga, Elba, and St. Charles. The agency responds to around 300-350 calls annually, providing Basic Life Support (BLS) care. The current crew consists of 24 EMTs, 5 EMRs, 2 Paramedics. There are two part-time EMTs and one full-time EMT, with the remaining members consisting of volunteers.

In 2022, due to the challenges of staffing rural ambulance services, the City of Lewiston took ownership of the St. Charles ambulance license. This means that the St. Charles crew operate under the Lewiston Ambulance's license and leadership. The Lewiston Ambulance Director also serves as the Ambulance Director for St. Charles. Both communities are engaged in a process to enter into a Joint Powers Agreement to combine services, increasing efficiencies and improving the long term sustainability of providing emergency medical services to the region.



Library

The St. Charles Public Library was constructed in 1946 with an addition completed in 2004. The library has a collection of over 26,000 books, magazines, CDs, and DVDs available to its patrons. With an annual circulation of over 44,000, a staff of four librarians, and membership in SELCO (Southeastern Libraries Cooperating), the St. Charles Public Library meets the needs of the community. 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.



Police Protection

The St. Charles Police Department is served by a Chief of Police and two part-time and seven full-time sworn Peace Officers. The Department's jurisdiction covers an area of approximately 3.8 square miles. The Department provides 24/7 police coverage and responds to all fire and medical emergencies. Each officer is a certified Emergency Medical Responder (EMR). Additional police protection to surrounding communities is provided by the Winona County Sheriff's Department and the Minnesota State Highway Patrol on an as needed basis.



Fire Protection

The City of St. Charles features a 30-member volunteer fire department with six units ranging from a grass rig, a 3,000- and 2,200-gallon tanker, two Engines/rescue pumper, and an aerial pumper with a 65-foot ladder (1,500 gallons per minute). The department has a fire insurance rating of 5.



City Hall/Community Center/ Senior Center

The City Hall/Community Center/Senior Center was constructed in 1994 to house City Administration, Council Chambers, the St. Charles Police Department, the senior center, and the community center. Over time, improvements have been made to the building in order to take into account safety, advancing technologies, and energy efficiencies.

The City Administration portion of the building houses the offices of the City Administrator, Public Works Director, Park and Recreation Director, as well as the City Clerk, City Accountant, and Administrative Assistants. City Hall is open Monday through Friday.

The St. Charles Senior Center section of the building is open weekdays and Semcac, a regional community organization, provides meals at 11:30 a.m. Regularly scheduled events and activities are organized through the Senior Center.

The St. Charles Community Center portion of the building 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 and the Senior Center.



A groundwater storage tank in St. Charles



The St. Charles Public Works building



The sanitary sewer plant in St. Charles

PUBLIC UTILITIES

WATER

The City of St. Charles has five wells which have been tracked by the Minnesota Department of Health. Two of the wells presently use water drawn from the Ironton - Galesville bedrock formation and the other is a multiple aquifer well open from Jordan to Galesville. 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). In 2005, reported withdrawal was 145.2 MGY.

The City treats raw water with chlorination and fluoride treatment. The water is stored in three storage tanks with capacities of 1000,000, 150,000, and 1,000,000 gallons, respectively.

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 in the City's spring newsletter.

WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Wellhead protection programs allow cities to manage and protect both the surface and subsurface areas surrounding a water well or wellfield that supplies a public water system. In Minnesota, 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. St. Charles adopted a Wellhead Protection Plan in September 2014. Wellhead protection plans are recommended to be updated every 10 years, so St. Charles is due for an update to the current plan. The wellhead protection plan includes goals, objectives, plan of action, evaluation program, and a contingency plan.

SEWER AND WASTEWATER DISCHARGE

The cities of St. Charles, 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 per day with an average demand of 800,000 gallons per day and a peak demand of 1,600,000 gallons per day. St. Charles's portion is 510,000 gallons a day.

The facility currently has an average wet weather design flow of 1.12 million gallons per day.

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. The City of St. Charles has been aggressively addressing inflow and infiltration (I & I) issues by lining sanitary sewer mains annually since 2012.

The District has updated four pumps since 2015, which has improved the efficiency of the lift station and reduced the need to use the backup system when high flow occurs.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Much of the St. Charles storm drainage system is more than 40 years old with two primary conveyance ditches that move stormwater to the South Fork of the Whitewater River. There are 14 ponds in St. Charles that are utilized to reduce peak discharges to the two ditches. The west side drainage ditch is scheduled to be replaced in 2027.

Polaris Group developed a Stormwater Management Plan that was adopted by the City in 2004. Then 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 I-90 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.

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.

More recently, the City of St. Charles has completed two phases of its Whitewater River Restoration Project. The goal of the project is to restore fish habitat, stabilize banks, and plant native species along the portions of the Whitewater River in and around St. Charles. Phase 1, which began in 2022, restored 2,500 ft of riverbank through St. Charles City Park. Phase 2 began in June 2025, and restored approximately 3,775 ft of the Whitewater River from the MN Hwy 74 bridge to the pedestrian bridge east of Meadow View Park.

Funding for the Whitewater Restoration Project comes from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Conservation Partners Legacy program. Future phases will be scheduled according to funding availability and will focus on the remaining portion of the river within the City boundaries. The project will reconnect the river to part of its original floodplain, which will aid in reducing future flooding along the river.



Restoration work along the Whitewater River helps with flood mitigation



A solar field in St. Charles

ELECTRIC

The City of St. Charles has operated as its own public electric utility since 1903. Currently it serves over 1,800 commercial and residential customers. It is a member of the Upper Midwest Municipal Energy Group, 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. A Purchase Power Agreement with Dairyland Power was established in 2008 and has since been extended through 2032.

To date, the City of St. Charles Electric Utility maintains approximately 38 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 along the northern edge of town, off of Richland Avenue called Northwoods Drive. The department also maintains a structure at Richland Avenue and 15th Street next to an active City well building.



An electric substation in St. Charles



The St. Charles Power Plant

FRAMING CONCEPTS

DENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT AND UTILITY COSTS

Cost of utilities and service provision was frequently cited as a concern for St. Charles residents. As in many smaller cities, finding financial resources to pay for infrastructure improvements is a significant challenge for St. Charles. As the physical elements of St. Charles' infrastructure age, improvements and upgrades of facilities need to be carefully evaluated and prioritized relative to available financial resources.

Bringing new users into the system helps distribute infrastructure costs across a larger number of users. As St. Charles continues to grow, identifying ways to develop along the existing infrastructure networks is important. Expansion of infrastructure networks can impact costs, so in addition to new development, increasing density and opportunities for infill development are equally as important. These types of development fill gaps in St. Charles' existing neighborhoods and downtown, creating additional demand for utility services without having to expand the infrastructure network. See Chapter 4 Housing, for more information on housing density and infill development.

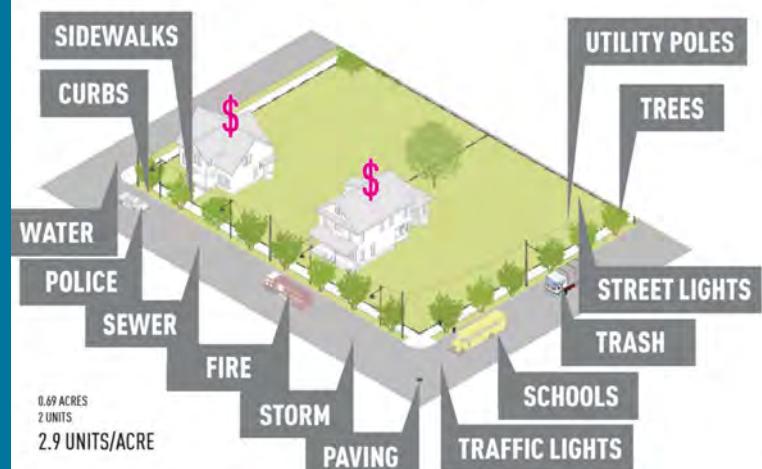
RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The changing climate presents a challenge for infrastructure systems. Our systems, specifically water, sanitary, and storm sewers are being asked to function under different circumstances than those for which they were designed. Changing precipitation patterns, such as an increase in the intensity of rainstorms, create unique challenges for maintaining and upgrading systems.

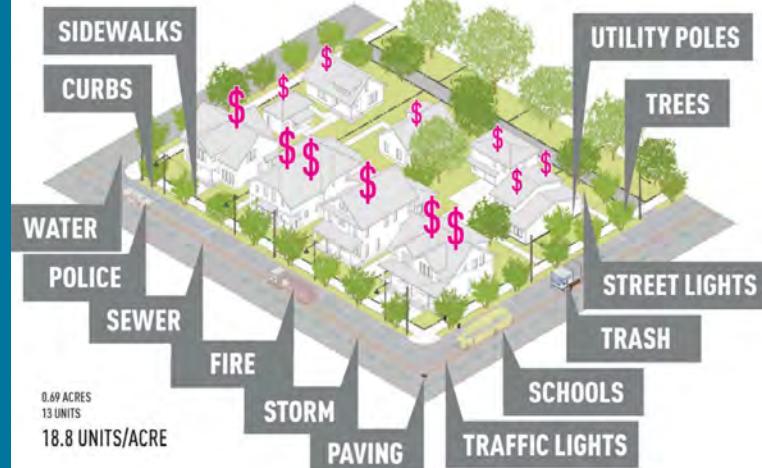
Since 1980, the average annual precipitation in Winona County has increased by 4.8 inches, and Olmsted County has seen an increase of 4.1 inches. This is compared to an average increase of 1.8 inches across the state during the same time period. Similarly, temperatures in Winona County have increased by an average of 2 degrees Fahrenheit compared to 1.8 degrees across the state. Olmsted County has experienced an average increase of 1.7 degrees during the same period.

This means that as the City maintains and expands its infrastructure networks, it needs to factor in changes such as accommodating heavier rainfall. Considering climate changes and new risks will ensure that the infrastructure in St. Charles is resilient, providing quality service with few disruptions for residents.

HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE + SERVICE NEEDS



HOUSING CHOICE & INFRASTRUCTURE + SERVICE NEEDS



Higher density and infill development on vacant sites can distribute infrastructure costs across more users. (Image source: Congress for the New Urbanism)

KEY TERMINOLOGY

- **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are often long-term in scope. The chapter goals are topic-specific and align with the City's guiding principles.
- **Policies** are statements intended to guide City Staff and Council decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies often also describe ongoing activities.
- **Actions** detail a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements and address the who, what, when, where, and how of reaching a goal. The actions are the specific steps needed to turn the goals into a reality.

GOALS & POLICIES

GOAL 6.1

Continue to provide quality services at the most appropriate cost to all residents.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 6.1.1 Bolster the resilience of public service provision through investing in the human capacity and resources that make service provision possible.

Policy 6.1.2 Solicit community input as to the services and facilities that are necessary, vital, or desired by residents to help stimulate growth and pride in the community

Policy 6.1.3 Continue to work with local and area legislators to educate them on the need for continued support of services in Greater Minnesota.

GOAL 6.2

Continue to provide reliable, efficient, and affordable City utilities to all residents.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 6.2.1 Invest in water and sewer maintenance and replacement on an annual basis through the Capital Improvement Planning process.

Policy 6.2.2 Bolster the resilience of physical infrastructure and awareness about how to prepare and act in the event of shocks or stressors, such as flooding or periods of drought.

GOAL 6.3

As St. Charles continues to grow, maintain, update, and expand facilities, infrastructure, and services in a resilient and equitable manner.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 6.3.1 Maximize storm water infiltration and surface filtration to minimize need for underground storm water infrastructure.

Policy 6.3.2 Proactively pursue projects to promote infrastructure resiliency through incorporating new methods of stormwater management, pursuing grant funding for resilient infrastructure projects, and considering resilience when upgrading system components.

Policy 6.3.3 Emphasize the importance of resilient infrastructure in new development.

Policy 6.3.4 Ensure system upgrades benefit residents equitably to ensure quality service delivery throughout the community.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Identify and pursue state and federal grant funding and loan programs, as well as private investment, for infrastructure improvement and expansion projects	Ongoing	General Fund
Update Wellhead Protection Plan	Short-term	General Fund
Revise and update Capital Improvement Plan for utilities to ensure cost-effective use fees and high-quality service provision through investment in priority projects	Short-term	General Fund
Develop inventories and long-range maintenance plans for water and sewer system service provision	Mid-term	Enterprise funds; State grant funding (MPCA)
Identify state and federal funding, as well as private investment, for continued education and training for emergency service providers, such as firefighters and volunteer EMTs	Ongoing	
Review and update policies on determining public service provision expansion for new development	Short-term	General Fund
Apply for Phase 3 and Phase 4 funding for Whitewater Restoration Project.	Mid-term	General Fund; State grant funding (MN DNR)
Continue to work with local and area legislators to educate them on the need for continued support of services in Greater Minnesota, especially emergency medical and fire response services.	Ongoing	

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07

PARKS & RECREATION



OVERVIEW

The Parks and Recreation chapter focuses on City-owned parks and recreation assets including the upkeep and maintenance of neighborhood and community parks, prioritization of new park improvements, and the maintenance and expansion of trail networks. In addition to parks and trails, recreation includes City programming, such as youth sports, and City facilities, such as the Mel Brownell Aquatic Center. In planning for the future of parks and recreation, it is important to realistically examine and balance the need for asset maintenance and the demand for new facilities. Considering the broader region and its recreational offerings can help the City meet the needs of its residents through emphasizing connectivity and collaboration with regional recreation destinations and opportunities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

St. Charles maintains seven parks, 8.5 miles of trails, and an aquatic center as part of its parks and recreation system. Below are an inventory and description of these components.

The City's parks are classified by who they are designed to serve. A park intended to serve neighborhood residents has different needs than a park that focuses on the community as a whole. This is not to say the parks are exclusive to one group, or that uses cannot overlap, but rather it allows for a prioritization of investments based on the needs of the primary park patrons.

CITY PARKS

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Neighborhood parks are the building blocks of the park system. They are active recreation areas, serving the residents and neighborhoods of St. Charles. These parks are typically located within 1/2 mile of all neighborhood residences that they are intended to serve, and ideally within a 1/4 mile. This distance is calculated based on the route someone would typically walk in order to get to a park. This means a park may not be serving an area, even if it is closer than 1/2 mile, if barriers such as high-speed roads, railroads, or natural features prevent someone from walking there. While some adults may feel comfortable crossing a road like Highway 74, a young child on summer break may not be able to do the same safely.

Neighborhood parks should include basic park amenities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, an open play field area, and sidewalks or trails for walking around. These are features that every St. Charles resident should be able to reach without needing to get in a car. Additional amenities may include basketball courts, tennis courts, natural features, public art, or shelters, among other things. Neighborhood parks should have at least one side that fronts on a public road. This improves safety, use, and maintenance.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Provide year-round and indoor options for recreation, specific suggestions from community members included indoor playgrounds, indoor pool, and community center.
- Desire for increased activities and programming for community members of all ages that include non-athletic activities
- Interest in park improvements that reflect current recreation trends, such as adding pickleball courts
- Support for trail connections to key community and regional destinations, including Whitewater State Park

COMMUNITY PARK

Where neighborhood parks are primarily intended to serve people who live nearby, community parks are intended to serve all residents of St. Charles. These parks may have natural features that are unique to one location (such as the river) or a special use (such as the skate park). These parks may be "drive-to" parks, but efforts should be made to connect them by trail as well.

In addition to their unique features, community parks should have gathering locations such as picnic shelters, trails for walking, and parking. Where appropriate, they should also include natural areas. They may also include features found in neighborhood parks such as playgrounds and open play areas. Community parks could include additional community focused features such as a bandshell or rentable spaces.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES

City-owned athletic facilities fall under both the neighborhood and community parks designation. Currently, athletic facilities include ballfields, rectangular fields (for soccer, football, etc.), sand volleyball courts, basketball courts, temporary pickleball courts, and tennis courts. The City shares these facilities with the school district.

Table of Existing Parks and Park Amenities in St. Charles.

PARK NAME	PARK SIZE	PARK CATEGORY	PARK AMENITIES
Keiffer Park	14 acres	Neighborhood Park	Playground; open field (used as a soccer field); pavilion
Whispering Hills Park	9 acres	Neighborhood Park	Playground; pond; walking/bike trail loop; pavilion
City Park	31 acres	Community Park	3 pavilions; 4 sand volleyball courts; an open green space that it is utilized for various activities including soccer, kickball, frisbee toss, or a game of catch football; 2 sets of children's playground equipment; a climbing wall; 3 baseball fields that are utilized by the local school district; Bike/walking trails that connect to the City's larger trail system; skate park; parking
Meadow View Park	9 acres	Neighborhood Park	1 baseball diamond; a playground; trail access
Jessens Park	30 acres	Community Park	1 pavilion; 1 playground; dog park (partnership with the St. Charles Lions); Jessen's Pond stocked with panfish (partnership with DNR); 18-hole disc golf course; winter sledding hill
Oakview Park		Neighborhood Park	Playground, basketball hoop
Brookwood Park	2.5 acres	Neighborhood Park	Playground; pavilion; trail access
Unnamed Future Park	0.6 acres	Neighborhood Park	To be constructed - likely will include a playground.

Figure 7.4 Existing Parks and Park Amenities in St. Charles



City Park is a community park



The school and City share athletic facilities



Jessens Park offers passive recreation options



Trails along the Whitewater River in City Park



The Mel Brownell Aquatic Center



Whitewater State Park brings visitors to the area

TRAILS

The City of St. Charles maintains a network of 8.5 miles of paved, multi-use trail. The trails are largely located on the outer edges of town and connect neighborhoods with parks and schools. One of the longer trail segments runs along W 12th St and the rail corridor in the southern part of town, creating a vital east-west corridor for pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition to multi-use trails, a number of snowmobile trails pass through St. Charles. Local clubs, such as the Whitewater Trailblazers, help maintain these trails.

MEL BROWNELL AQUATIC CENTER

The Aquatic Center operates Early June – Mid August and provides outdoor aquatic recreation opportunities. The Center features six lap swim lanes, one diving board, one drop slide, a 181-foot water slide, a zero-depth entry point with three water features, and a sun deck and concessions area.

The Aquatic Center charges fees for use. Daily rates, admission packages, and seasonal memberships are available. In 2025, daily rates were \$5.00 per day (all ages), a package of 20 admissions for \$75 (\$3.75/admission), and seasonal memberships were offered at a rate of \$190 for family membership or \$85 for single membership.

Aquatic programming is also offered through the Aquatic Center. Programming includes youth and adult swim lessons, swim team, and water aerobics.

PROGRAMMING

St. Charles offers a variety of programming opportunities through the Parks and Recreation Department. On an annual basis, there are around 25 offerings, including multiple seasons/sessions for the same activity. Offerings include: baseball, basketball, dance, golf, kickball, softball, t-ball, track and field, flag football, soccer, and adult volleyball. In 2024, around 550 participants utilized parks and recreation programming. For some activities, participants are considered individuals who sign-up, while for some team sports, each team is considered a participant, so the participation numbers do not reflect the exact number of individuals partaking in recreation programming.

REGIONAL RECREATION

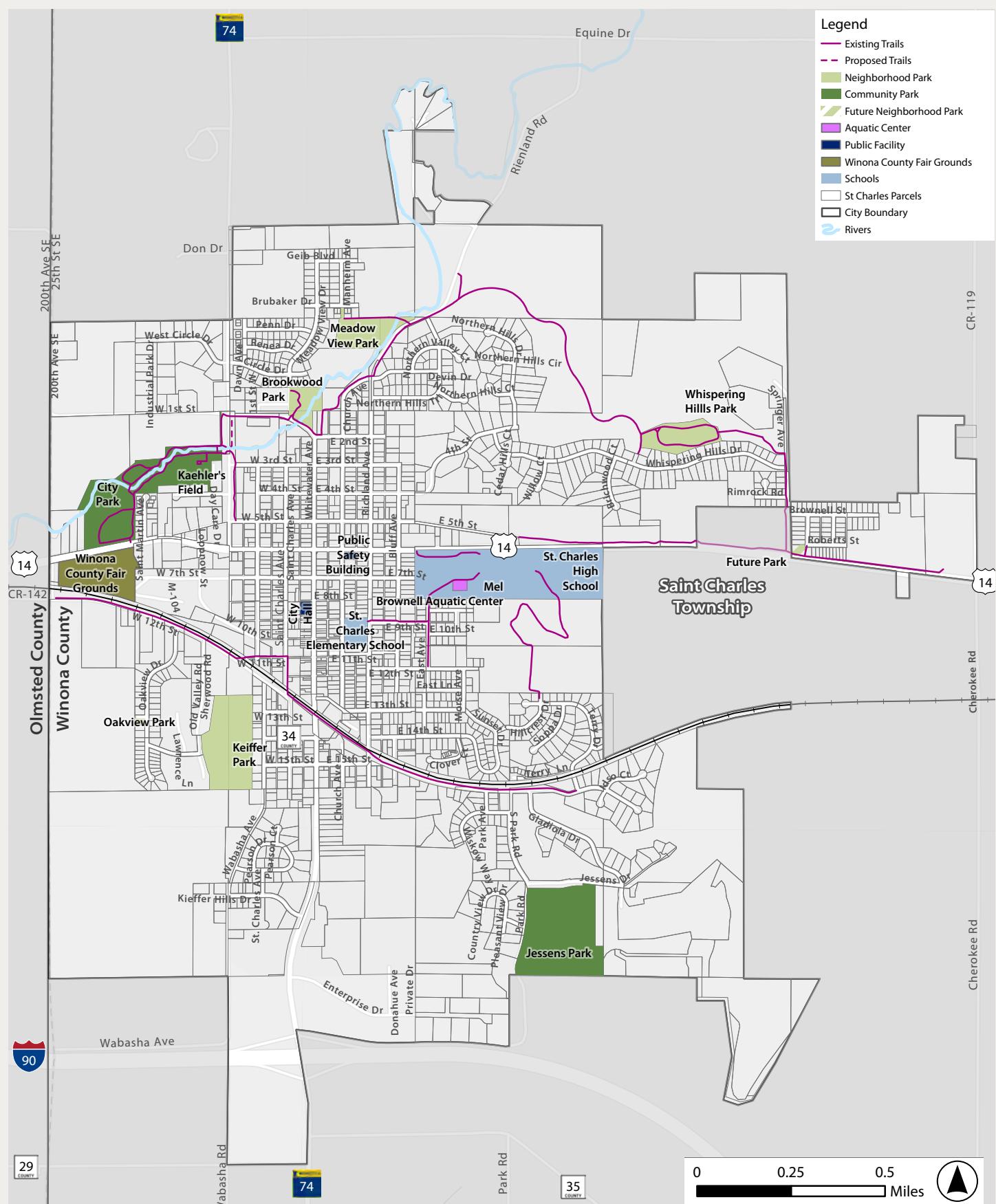
In addition to the City parks and recreation system, St. Charles offers residents access to regional recreation opportunities. While not managed by the City, these assets are critical components of the wider recreational network in the region and should be considered when planning future recreation improvements in St. Charles.

WHITEWATER STATE PARK

Located approximately 7 miles north of St. Charles, Whitewater State Park offers a variety of unique recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Whitewater State Park is 2,700 acres and features limestone bluffs and deep ravines for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and camping. Trout fishing is popular in the Whitewater River and Trout Run Creek. Winterized cabins, a visitor center, and interpretive programs offer year-round recreation and exploration of the park.

WINONA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

The Winona County Fairgrounds are located on the western edge of St. Charles. Facilities on the property include outbuildings, an outdoor horse arena, and grand stand with dirt infield. The Winona County Fairgrounds are primarily used for the annual Winona County Fair.



Existing Parks and Trails

Figure 7.5 Existing Parks and Trails in St. Charles



Parks can serve multiple purposes, including stormwater mitigation



Parks offer spaces for community events



Different recreation options create diverse opportunities within the park system

FRAMING CONCEPTS

PARKS AS MULTI-FUNCTIONAL, RESILIENT SPACES

Our changing climate is resulting in more severe weather events, such as intense rainfall events. Parks offer opportunities for cities to increase their resilience to extreme events through green infrastructure, ecosystem restoration, and use of sustainable materials. Extreme weather events also impact the health and well-being of residents via air and water quality, and extreme heat. Park facilities can provide relief from extreme heat and other events through minimizing urban heat impacts and by offering places with shade and water features for cooling.

Parks represent large landholdings that can serve multiple recreational and resilience purposes. There is a growing movement in communities across the state to support integrated stormwater management (green infrastructure), and increased interest in supporting native landscapes through conversion of traditional turf (grass) lawns to pollinator lawns and prairie restoration. By establishing areas in existing parks to showcase native prairie plantings or convert traditional turf to pollinator-friendly lawns, not only is there less maintenance for the City but also opportunities for creating an education tool to be used by local schools and visitors. Stormwater mitigation and treatment, floodwater storage, pollinator habitat, ecosystem restoration, and opportunities to manage invasive and native plant species are all functions parks can serve.

Warmer winters and more extreme heat events in the summer have affected the recreational activities available to residents at different times in the year. Climate trends should be considered when evaluating park system upgrades in order to maximize functionality and use of park facilities. For example, consider what types of winter recreation can occur without large investment in infrastructure that relies on consistently cold temperatures or deep snowpack.

RECREATION FOR ALL

More communities are building parks and facilities that facilitate placemaking opportunities and offer places to gather. Fostering social interaction through inclusive recreation opportunities is a key role parks can play. In local communities, parks offer no- and low-cost ways for people to gather, engage, and meet off-line and outdoors. There is an increasing emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility, and parks can lead the way in providing spaces where all ages and abilities feel welcome.

In the future, as St. Charles replaces or upgrades existing park facilities, such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and trails, special consideration should be given for accessibility. Some ways to think about inclusive play are to:

- Expand inclusive play offerings based on universal design principles. Consider how playgrounds can accommodate children and adults with varying needs. Seating, shaded areas, resilient surfacing, low-slope pathways, and proximity to parking areas are all ways to increase accessibility, in addition to upgraded play features or ADA-accessible equipment.
- Offer varied programming that is accessible to participants of different ages and abilities.
- Consult with advocacy groups, schools, parents, and neighbors to match inclusive and accessible elements with the people who will most benefit.
- Partner with communities to use underutilized open spaces for community gardens, gathering spaces, and other low-impact social spaces.

Looking at improving existing conditions can also increase the City's ability to create places to gather, such as finding additional opportunities to use the County Fairgrounds and adding covered areas and shelters. For example, adding a covered structure behind the City Hall, which would create additional gathering places.

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

As the City grows, St. Charles is responsible for the corresponding growth and development of its park and recreation system in order to serve new residents. Minnesota Statutes 462.358 allows cities to require that a reasonable portion of the buildable land of a subdivision be dedicated to the public or preserved for public use as parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, or open space. In order to require dedication for parks, a city must have a Parks and Open Space Plan or a Parks component in its Comprehensive Plan and an adopted Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The city must also establish an essential nexus and ensure any fees are based on fair market value. An assessment of the City's park dedication ordinance is recommended to confirm that the land and fees required are roughly proportional to the need created by the subdivision.



As St. Charles grows, so should its park system

GOALS & POLICIES

GOAL 7.1

Create and maintain a balanced system of interconnected local and regional parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 7.1.1 Encourage continued use of school property and other public and private facilities and playgrounds for public use.

Policy 7.1.2 Provide adequate funding to maintain existing park and recreational systems. Prioritize maintenance and upgrades to existing facilities over expansion.

Policy 7.1.3 As new housing development occurs, ensure residents have access to an appropriate neighborhood and/or community park.

GOAL 7.2

Promote a trail and byway system that interconnects park and recreation areas to each other, both in the city and regionally.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 7.2.1 Support partnerships with MnDOT and use of grant and state funding to fill gaps in the existing trail network.

Policy 7.2.2 As new development occurs, support expansion of trail networks that connect new areas to existing trail systems and the nearest appropriate park.

GOAL 7.3

Create and maintain high quality, sustainable parks, corridors, and green spaces.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 7.3.1 Prioritize native plantings, pollinator-friendly gardens, and other resilient landscaping practices.

Policy 7.3.2 When expanding trails or other open spaces, prioritize areas that connect to existing green spaces or are along corridors to foster resilient ecosystems.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

- **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are often long-term in scope. The chapter goals are topic-specific and align with the City's guiding principles.
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- **Actions** detail a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements and address the who, what, when, where, and how of reaching a goal. The actions are the specific steps needed to turn the goals into a reality.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Evaluate current maintenance plans to identify opportunities to reduce mowing and maintenance over the long-term with restored natural landscapes.	Short-term	General Fund
Develop inventory of park facilities and assets, such as playgrounds, picnic tables, benches, etc. in order to plan accordingly for maintenance and upgrades.	Short-term	General Fund
Develop master plan for each park area to guide future development as maintenance and upgrades are required.	Mid-term	General Fund
Identify local entities, including the school district and recreation organizations/clubs, to form partnerships with to support upkeep and improvements to facilities.	Short-term	General Fund
Conduct accessibility audit of recreation facilities and identify priority improvements that increase inclusive play opportunities.	Short-term	General Fund
Conduct a park dedication study to establish essential nexus for park dedication requirements and ensure fees are based on fair market value.	Mid-term	General Fund



08

TRANSPORTATION



OVERVIEW

The transportation section of the comprehensive plan focuses on safe, efficient movement of people and goods around the community and making connections to the broader region. Maintenance of transportation infrastructure makes up a significant portion of city budgets, so careful planning to ensure a balance between thoughtful network expansion and maintenance of existing infrastructure is critical. The transportation system in St. Charles consists of three main components:

Roadway network. This network supports mobility within and through the community for all modes of transport. It is comprised of locally-owned and state-owned facilities, which means different authorities have jurisdiction over the design, maintenance, and function of the roadway.

Sidewalk and trail network. This network supports the transportation and recreational needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and recreational vehicles (snowmobiler, ATVs). Similar to the road network, there are different jurisdictions for different trails and sidewalks. This means there are different funding sources available for maintenance and different authorities in charge of things like preservation, enforcement, and snow removal.

Regional transportation assets. In St. Charles, Rolling Hills Transit provides critical connections to the region, particularly for residents without access to a personal vehicle. Although not managed by the City of St. Charles, it is important to note the role they play in the region to better understand and plan for an efficient and effective transportation network.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

ROADWAYS

ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the type of service they are intended to provide. Individual streets and highways do not function independently – most travel involves movement through a network of roadways. This travel is served by a hierarchy of roadways within the transportation network. Functional classification defines the role any one street or highway plays in distributing the flow of trips throughout the network. St. Charles has four functional classifications of roads: principal arterials (interstate), minor arterials, collectors, and local streets (Figure 8.1).

PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS (INTERSTATES)

Principal arterials carry the highest traffic volumes and serve the majority of the trips entering or leaving St. Charles. They typically connect regional commercial and employment centers with residential areas. They are high-speed facilities

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Community feedback

- Improved transit options, especially connections to Rochester are needed
- The biggest safety concerns are dangerous intersections and road crossings that are not designed with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind
- Road crossings and intersections near the school are a high priority for improvement.
- Regular maintenance of sidewalk facilities is important
- There is a desire for regional trail connections and a trail to Whitewater State Park

that also serve as primary bus transit routes and generally have controlled or restricted points of access. I-90 is the principal arterial roadway that serves St. Charles.

MINOR ARTERIALS

Minor arterial roadways accommodate trips of moderate length at lower speeds and with lower traffic volumes than principal arterials. Highway 14 (6th Street) is considered a minor arterial roadway in St. Charles.

COLLECTORS

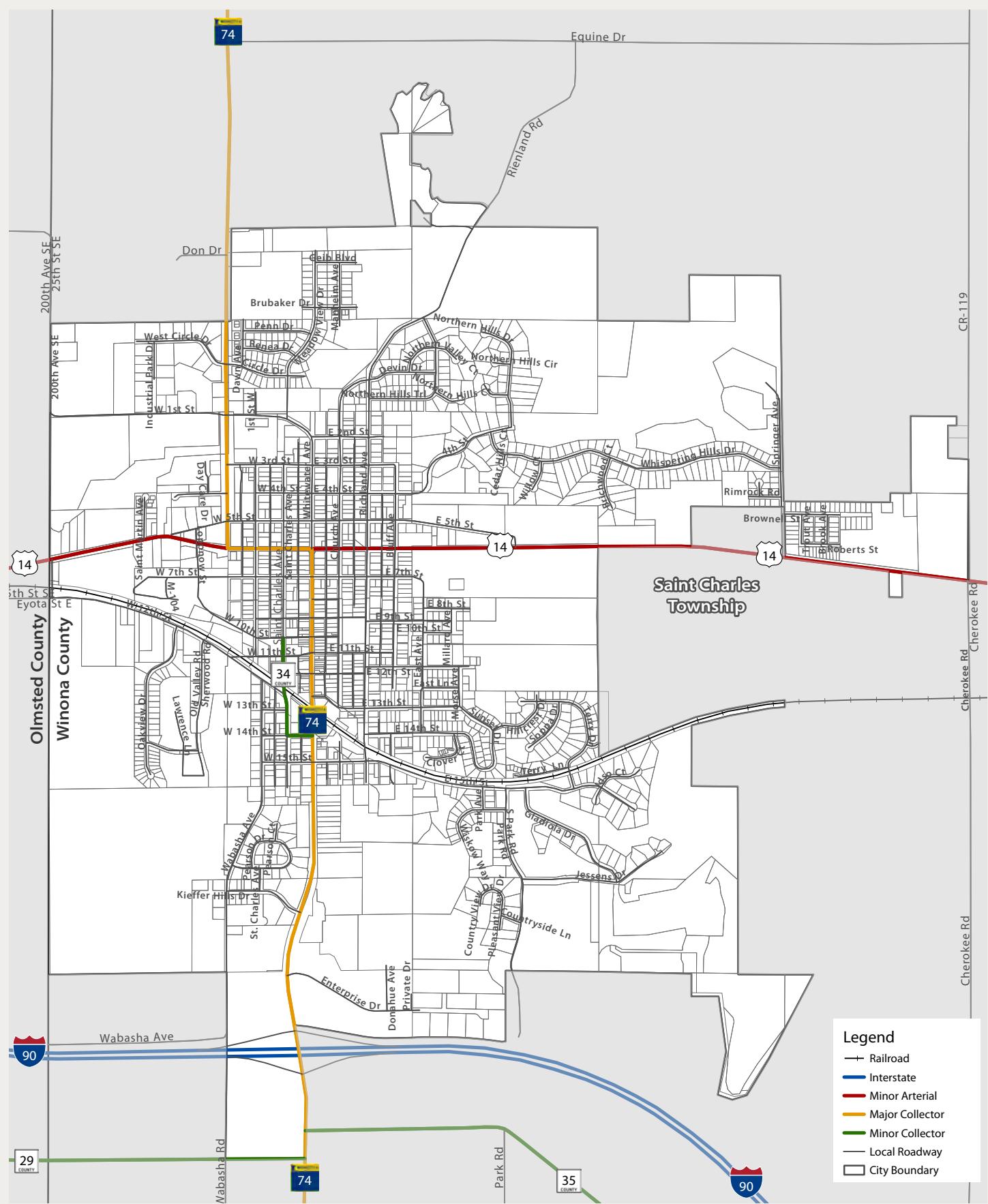
Roadways that are major collectors provide a balance between access and mobility. They provide the links that move local traffic to and from the arterial system, and often support retail or other commercial areas. Whitewater Ave (Hwy 74) is a major collector street in St. Charles, passing through downtown and connecting it to I-90 and Enterprise Drive.

LOCAL STREETS

All other streets in St. Charles are classified as local streets. Local streets provide the highest level of direct access and therefore carry the lowest traffic volumes at the lowest speeds.

ROADWAY JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction (ownership) over St. Charles' roadways is divided between a number of different levels of government or other agencies, including the state, county, township, and municipal level, as well as some private roads (Figure 8.2). Understanding roadway jurisdiction is important as it determines funding sources and partners for roadway projects, including any pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure improvements desired on roadways.



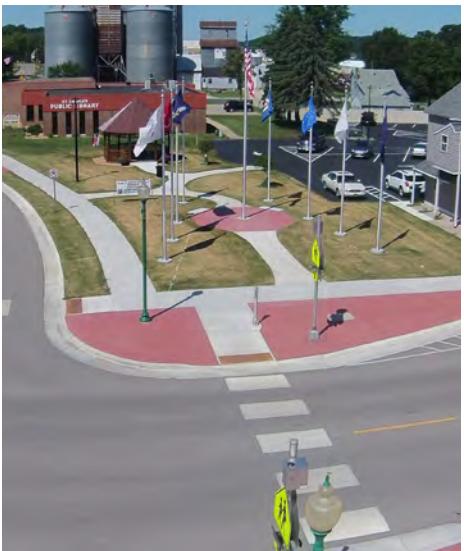
Functional Class Roadway Map

Figure 8.1 Roadways by Functional Classification

Transportation 75



St. Charles has a trail network that connects users to parks and other community destinations



Sidewalks and safe crossings are key components of transportation networks



Rolling Hills provides a critical community service by providing regional transit

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

A well-connected transportation network should incorporate safe, efficient routes for all modes of transportation, from motor vehicles to bicyclists to pedestrians. Active transportation refers to those modes of transportation that are human-powered, such as walking, biking, and rolling. A robust active transportation network not only provides convenient routes and connectivity, but also ensures users feel safe, particularly at intersections and along busy roadways.

Following the adoption of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, St. Charles made concerted efforts to improve the active transportation network in town. Through a Safe Routes to School project, the City made improvements along 11th Street to create a welcoming pedestrian corridor, connecting users to the St. Charles elementary school and downtown area. Improvements included increasing visibility at intersections and crossings, street calming measures to slow traffic at intersections, and colored pavement treatments.

SIDEWALKS

A key component of an active transportation network is sidewalks. There is a well-connected sidewalk network in downtown St. Charles, with sidewalks present on at least one side of the street throughout the downtown area. However, newer developments north of 3rd St and in the southeastern part of the City along and around Sunset Drive do not have sidewalks. As development continues, the City should work with developers to ensure adequate sidewalk and/or trail facilities are provided in new development to connect new residential areas into the existing active transportation networks.

TRAILS

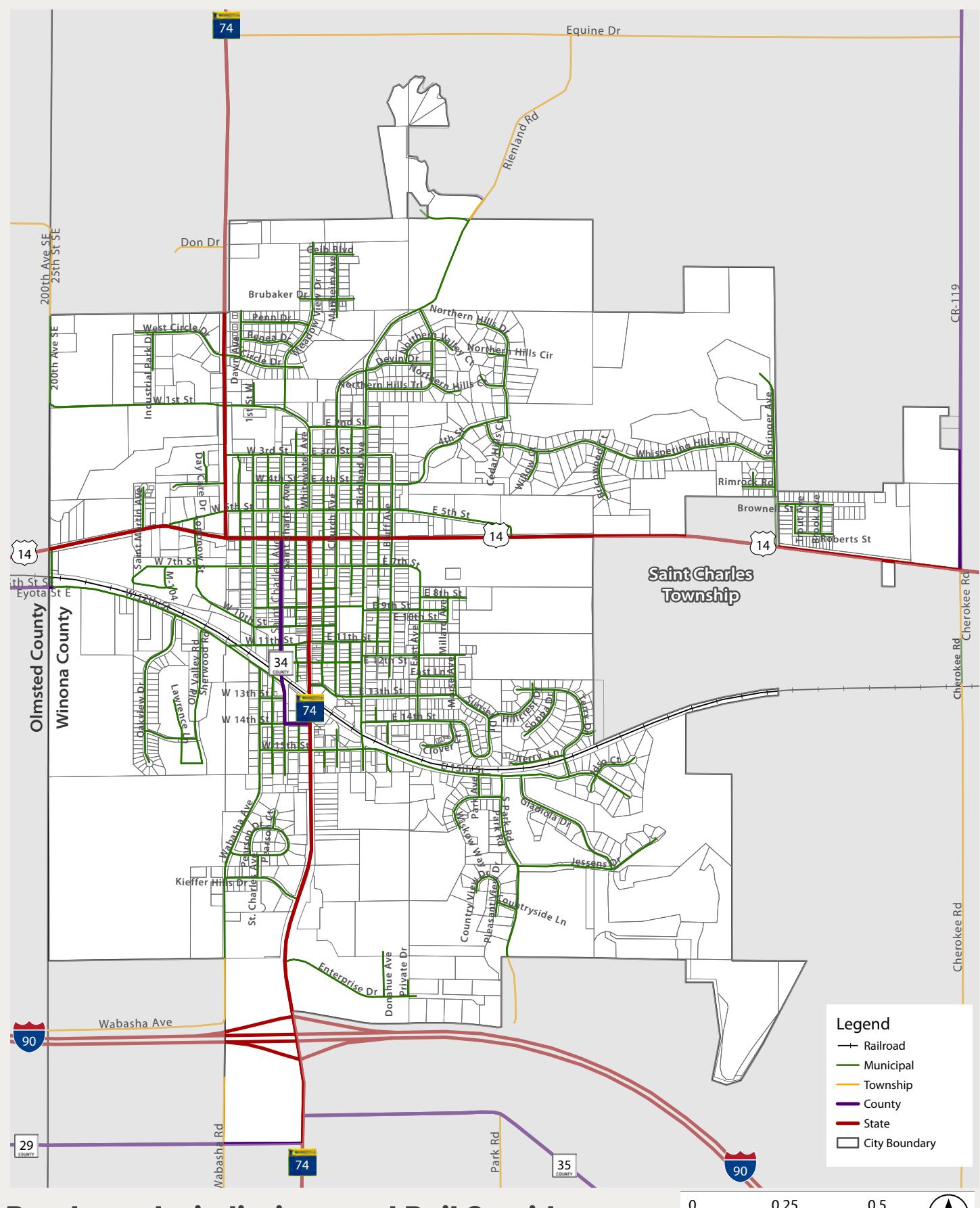
The trail network in St. Charles is largely designed to connect residential areas to key destinations, including recreational amenities and schools. The longest trail segment is located in the northern part of the city and connects City Park to Whispering Hills Park, following the Whitewater River. On-street bicycle facilities provide some connectivity along 12th street and the rail corridor in the southern part of the City, but there are no trail facilities in the south part of St. Charles. Future trail expansion should focus on connecting residential areas in southern St. Charles to the existing trail network and the schools and parks in northern St. Charles.

Community feedback indicated interest in expanding trails and, specifically, creating a trail connection to Whitewater State Park. Although it is not feasible for the City to pursue a trail connection to the state park at this time, any opportunities to connect to regional trails, the state park, or other nearby destinations should be pursued as they arise. Examples of opportunities include partnerships with Winona and Olmsted Counties, grant funding, and/or collaborations with adjacent townships and other jurisdictions. For a map of trails and more information on trails, see Chapter 7 Parks and Recreation.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Rolling Hills Transit provides curb to curb local transportation service to St. Charles, Eyota, and Dover. Service began in 2015 and is a partnership between SEMCAC, MnDOT, the City of St. Charles, and the St. Charles Economic Development Authority. Service is provided on an as-needed basis between the hours of 7:00am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

While Rolling Hills Transit will take people to Winona and Rochester, there are no other regularly scheduled regional transportation options for reaching Winona or Rochester.



Roadway Jurisdictions and Rail Corridor

Figure 8.2 Roadway jurisdictions and rail corridor in St. Charles



A rail corridor crosses through the southern end of St. Charles



High visibility crossings create safer intersections for all users



Bump-outs at intersections help calm traffic

RAIL AND FREIGHT

A rail corridor runs through southern St. Charles. There are no current industries that utilize the rail in St. Charles and the train makes no stops in the city. Uses along the corridor are predominately industrial, with some residential uses along the eastern portion of the rail corridor in the city.

FRAMING CONCEPTS

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets are streets that are designed to be safe for people of all ages using various modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.

Complete streets:

- Are easy to cross and travel along
- Increase opportunities for physical activity
- Safely accommodate multiple modes of transportation
- Result in increased walkability, a characteristic of a livable, desirable community

Given the challenges of road maintenance and practicalities of funding infrastructure projects in a small community, it is not realistic to expect an entire network of complete streets in the city. However, St. Charles can integrate elements of complete streets into the design of roads and adopt policies that align with the goals of complete streets in order to make St. Charles' road network safer and more comfortable for all users. Based on community feedback, pedestrian and bicycle routes that cross 6th Street (Hwy 14) are high-stress areas. St. Charles should incorporate complete street design elements into key 6th St intersections whenever possible and prioritize intersections and improvements on routes to the high school.

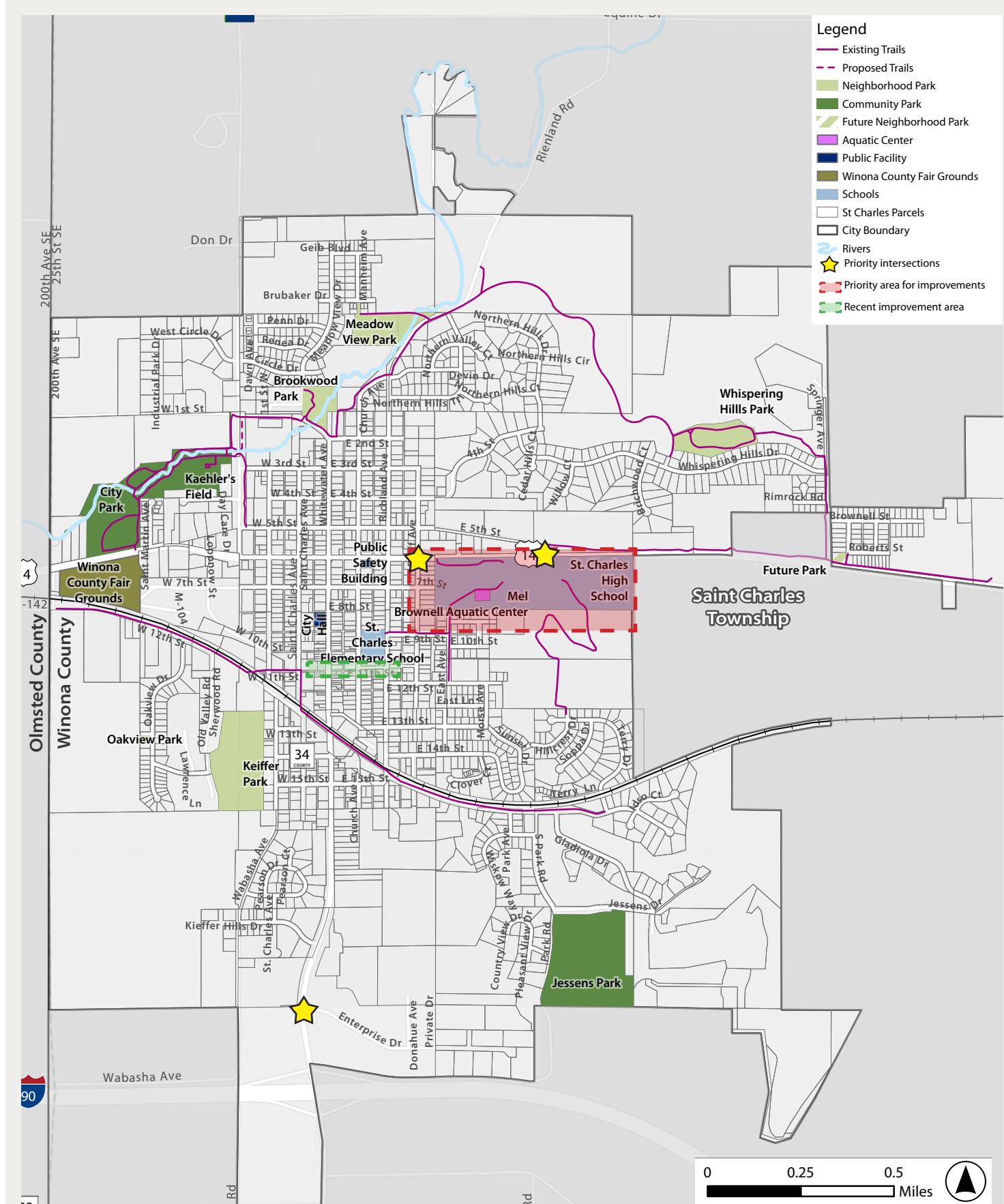
Key complete street elements that can be added to St. Charles' road network include:

- Wayfinding systems directing users to key civic destinations along the route: parks, schools, trail heads, business districts
- On-street bike lanes or off-street multi-use trails, depending on roadway configuration and property impacts
- Landscape and streetscape amenities that are sensitive to adjacent land uses and climate sensitive (i.e. accommodate flooding, snow removal)
- Aesthetically designed and functional stormwater systems
- Intersection improvements to facilitate safe traffic turning and safe pedestrian crossings
- Traffic calming strategies that direct through traffic to primary streets and manage neighborhood traffic
- A maintenance and operations plan to account for upkeep of the street

As St. Charles completes future infrastructure projects and works with the county on road improvements, efforts should be made to incorporate complete street elements.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

A key transportation-related concern identified by the community was dangerous intersections. Designing intersections with all roadway users in mind, from cars and freight trucks, to pedestrians and cyclists will create a safer network and more enjoyable experience for users.



Potential Intersection Improvement Sites

Figure 8.3 Potential intersection improvement sites in St. Charles



Example of wayfinding that applies to all modes of transportation



Wayfinding can be used to direct bicyclists to safer routes



Signage should build on existing City branding

Key intersections to examine or consider designing with complete streets in mind include (see Figure 8.3):

- 6TH Street and Bluff Ave by the school
- Enterprise Drive and Trunk Highway 74
- Planned new intersection near Enterprise Drive and Highway 74
- Creating additional crossing opportunities near the High School on 6th St

Understanding the underlying cause for concern at intersections, such as high speeds, blind corners, multi-modal conflicts, or other challenges will ensure that redesigned intersections address the major safety concerns.

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding can be defined as spatial problem solving; it is knowing where you are in the environment, where your desired location is, and how to get there. A good wayfinding system is a critical component of all cities and towns. Principles of wayfinding include:

- Using landmarks to provide orientation cues and memorable locations
- Providing well-structured paths
- Creating individual identities at each location
- Limiting users' choices in navigation
- Using survey views (give navigators a vista or map)
- Providing signs at decision points to help wayfinding decisions
- Using sight lines to show what's ahead

St. Charles currently lacks a comprehensive and effective wayfinding system to guide residents and visitors to community assets, including parks, trails, schools, downtown, historical assets, and businesses. Business owners identified a need for wayfinding between the Enterprise Drive and I-90 corridor and downtown St. Charles.

Steps should be taken to improve the city's overall wayfinding system, including the following priorities:

- Cues to the downtown core for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians coming from different locations
 - » Prioritize signage connecting I-90 and Enterprise Drive to downtown
- Cues for pedestrians and bicyclists indicating preferred routes based on existing infrastructure
- Build off existing gateway signage at the City's main entrances with additional directional signage
- Wayfinding for regional destinations
 - » Whitewater State Park and other state parks and forests; Winona, Rochester
- A story-telling, historic wayfinding system that provides information about historic downtown St. Charles
- Wayfinding that incorporates public art

GOALS & POLICIES

GOAL 8.1

Plan, develop, and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system that balances existing and future multi-modal user needs.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 8.1.1 Maintain guidelines for new roadways and trails to comply with widely accepted design and safety standards.

Policy 8.1.2 As new properties are developed or annexed, continue to plan for the future roadway system that makes logical, efficient connections.

Policy 8.1.3 Correlate future road construction/reconstruction with municipal utility construction and reconstruction.

Policy 8.1.3 Ensure Complete Street elements are considered for all roadway construction or reconstruction projects.

GOAL 8.2

Continue to invest in and preserve existing transportation infrastructure to offer an effective network that provides equitable access and service throughout the entire community.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 8.2.1 Invest in street maintenance and replacement on an annual basis through the capital improvement planning process.

Policy 8.2.2 Invest in sidewalk and trail maintenance on an annual basis through the capital improvement planning process.

Policy 8.2.3 Seek grant funding (federal, state, county) and private partnerships and proactively program street improvements to be paired with grant funding cycles.

Policy 8.2.4 Prioritize investment in projects that fill gaps in the existing transportation networks.

Policy 8.2.5 Plan for safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle options when reconstructing the existing roadways.

GOAL 8.3

Support bicycling and walking as transportation options and ensure bicycle and pedestrian networks are developed alongside motorized networks.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Policy 8.3.1 Incorporate trail/path networks into new subdivisions and plan connections to the existing trail/path system.

Policy 8.3.2 Collaborate with Winona County and other regional partners to support the development of a regional trail system.

Policy 8.3.3 Continue to fund long term bike/walking paths in order to improve pedestrian access, movement, and crossing to provide both convenience and safety.

Policy 8.3.4 Encourage alternate transportation methods less dependent on motor vehicles.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

- **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state as a result of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals are often long-term in scope. The chapter goals are topic-specific and align with the City's guiding principles.
- **Policies** are statements intended to guide City Staff and Council decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies often also describe ongoing activities.
- **Actions** detail a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements and address the who, what, when, where, and how of reaching a goal. The actions are the specific steps needed to turn the goals into a reality.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Identify major transportation routes and necessary rights-of-way and easements needed to meet the long-term needs of the community in order to plan for phased acquisition accordingly	Ongoing	General Fund
Update CIP regularly to account for needed roadway improvements	Ongoing	General Fund
Add facilities to support bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, such as benches and bike racks at strategic locations along trails, parks, and downtown.	Ongoing	General Fund; MnDOT grant funds
Continue to seek state aid and grants to help fund the city's transportation infrastructure through Safe Routes to School, state bonding, DNR, and MnDOT grants.	Ongoing	MnDOT grant funds; state funds; General Fund
Create a plan and design options for improving safety at key intersections for all modes of transportation.	Short-term	MnDOT grant funds; General Fund



09

IMPLEMENTATION



INTRODUCTION

The successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will take continued community investment and engagement similar to the effort to create the plan. Government agencies, schools, businesses, nonprofits, advocacy groups, residents, and the community as a whole will all play key roles in supporting the implementation of the Plan. Continuing the community's strong partnerships will be key in moving priority strategies forward, using this Comprehensive Plan as a guide and the identified implementation tools as a means for accomplishing tasks.

Due to the long-term scope of this plan, it is likely that specific priority actions will evolve over time. However, the guiding principles identified by the community that shape this plan can continue to serve as guideposts for decision making even as funding opportunities, development priorities, and other factors influence short-term implementation priorities.

This plan replaces the City's 2011 Comprehensive Plan and will remain in effect until another is adopted.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The community is a critical partner in implementing the St. Charles Comprehensive Plan. An engaged community will help create momentum for initiatives, provide essential input for projects and concepts, and provide the human capacity to help staff boards, commissions, and volunteer positions. However, community members often cite government transparency as an area to improve upon.

Barriers to an accessible and transparent government refer to factors that limit or prevent individuals from accessing information and participating in government services and activities. These barriers can take many forms, including physical, technological, linguistic, and cultural. As the make-up of St. Charles' population continues to evolve and technology changes how people obtain information and provide input, it is important that the City adapts accordingly. A focus on accessible and transparent city government is critical for maintaining and improving relations between city government and its residents, businesses, and organizations.

Ways that residents and stakeholders can become more involved in community life in St. Charles include:

- Joining the Planning Commission, City Council, or other City boards and commissions
- Attending and engaging in public meetings
- Exploring options for and attending public programming, such as events at the library, community center, and senior center
- Volunteering at and/or attending community events



CITY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

REGULATORY TOOLS

Developing tools for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will further aid the implementation process and be a valuable asset for completing the projects and initiatives contained within the Plan. The tools the City can utilize for implementation include:

CITY ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS

The City has the authority to enforce and create ordinances, including zoning, subdivision, other regulations, and administrative approval processes to maintain health safety, and welfare in the community. These controls should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, as the Comprehensive Plan provides a broad policy framework.

- **Zoning Ordinance:** a key step after adopting a comprehensive plan is updating the City zoning ordinance to align with the land use guidance outlined in the new Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan provides a long-term strategy for how a city will develop, the Zoning Ordinance provides on-the-ground standards and requirements to ensure land is developed and redeveloped in alignment with the goals and priorities of the City.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

A CIP is a plan which outlines the timing of and funding for capital improvement projects such as roadway improvements or construction of public buildings over several years. Creating and updating a CIP on a regular basis ensures the budget and funding priorities of the city are in alignment with the priorities in the Comprehensive Plan and allows the city to plan strategically for community growth and transformation.

BEST PRACTICES

PARTNERSHIPS

Creating and maintaining partnerships within and outside the community will strengthen opportunities to accomplish projects and ease understanding of complex situations.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Having user-friendly and accessible information for the community to be informed and opportunities to be involved will be necessary for achieving goals and build trust.

MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING AND NEW PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Planning documents should build upon each other and be effective in the process of moving the City to its desired future. Monitoring the initiatives in related planning documents will be necessary for cohesive implementation actions. Examples of planning documents might include: a Parks and Trails System Plan, a Marketing Strategy Plan, and a Downtown Plan.

ENHANCEMENT OF VOLUNTEERISM, PHILANTHROPY, AND LEADERSHIP

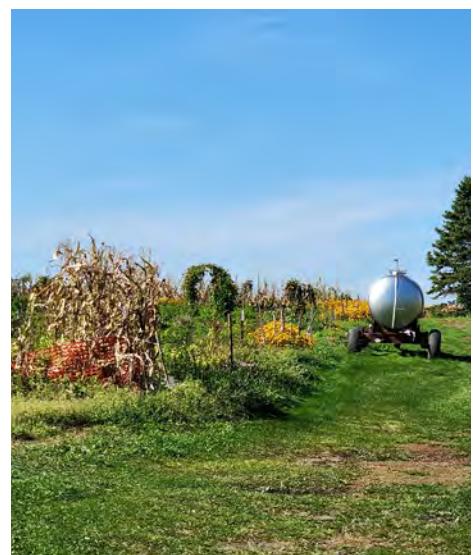
The City should continue to boost civic engagement as there are many individuals, grass-roots or non-profit organizations that have a passion for helping their community. This can make a big difference in implementing Plan priorities efficiently. Civic engagement can contribute to a high quality of life, creating a sense of place, building strong community bonds, and achieving objectives.



A gathering space behind City Hall



A community event at the Library



By the St. Charles Community Garden



What's on Wednesday community event



The Winona County Fairgrounds are housed in St. Charles

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

In addition to broadly applicable tools, there are a number of different economic development-specific tools that cities can use to fund and support development. Tax increment financing and tax abatement are two of the most common tools, and are described in-depth in Chapter 6: Economic Development. This section provides information on additional tools.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429). A special assessment is a means for benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements, and to spread the impact over a period of years. This tool can be applied to both the construction of new improvements and the rehabilitation of existing improvements.

Eligible improvements include sanitary sewer, water, storm sewer, streets, sidewalks, street lighting, park, streetscape, and parking.

Special assessments provide a means to borrow money to finance public improvements. Chapter 429 conveys the power to issue general obligation improvement bonds to finance the design and construction of public improvements. Important factors in the use of improvement bonds include:

- A minimum of 20% of the cost of the improvement must be assessed against benefited properties.
- Beyond the 20% threshold, any other legally available source of municipal revenue may be used to pay debt service on improvement bonds.
- Improvements bonds are not subject to any statutory debt limit.
- Improvement bonds may be issued without voter approval.

Careful consideration must be given to setting the amount of the assessment. From a legal perspective, the amount of an assessment cannot exceed the benefit to property as measured by increased market value. There are also practical considerations. In growth areas, cities must decide how to allocate costs between current and future development. Assessment policies must consider how to make this allocation and the financial resources needed to carry future costs until development occurs. For reconstruction, the challenge becomes determining how much benefiting property owners should pay for enhancing an existing improvement. Within this limitation, several factors will shape the amount of the assessment.

- The amount of the assessment must be 20% or more of the improvement cost to allow the issuance of bonds.
- Local improvement policies and/or decisions made on previous projects often create parameters for assessments. Likewise, assessment decisions should be made with consideration of the potential implications for future similar projects.
- The assessment must strike a balance between equity and feasibility. Properties that benefit from improvements should pay a fair share of the costs. The assessment must be affordable for both the property owner and the city. Reducing the assessment to the property requires the city to allocate other revenues to the project.

SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT

A special service district is a tool for financing the construction and maintenance of public improvements or to provide special or a higher level of service within a defined area. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 428A.01 through 428A.10 govern the creation and use of special service districts. A special service district provides a means to levy taxes (service charge) and provide improvements and service to a commercial area.

The district can provide an alternative means of financing the construction of any of the public improvements discussed previously with special assessments. The service district approach avoids the benefits test imposed by special assessments; the test for the district is that the amount of service charges imposed must be reasonably related to the special services provided. The costs of improvements could be spread across a district or phase area rather than through assessments to individual properties.

Another important use of the special service district is the maintenance of public improvements. If some of the improvements described in the Plan require a level of maintenance above the typical public improvement, a special service district can become a source of revenue. Without a special service district, these costs are typically borne through the City's General Fund.

The process to create a special service district and to levy taxes must be initiated by a petition of property owners and is subject to owner veto. The use of a special service district requires a collaboration of property owners and the city.

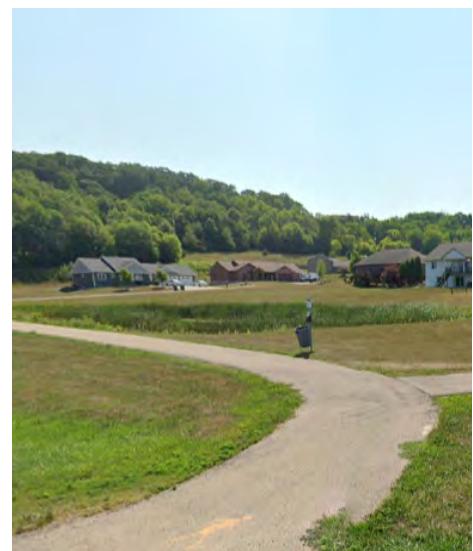
The service charge applies solely to non-residential or multi-unit residential property. State Law limits the application of a service charge to only property that is classified for property taxation and used for commercial, industrial, public utility purposes, multi-unit residential, or is vacant land zoned or designated on a land use plan for commercial or industrial use. Other types of property may be part of the service district, but may not be subject to the service charge.

STORM SEWER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A storm sewer improvement district (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 444.16 through 444.21) is a special taxing district. The district is established by ordinance. The City has the ability to levy a tax on all taxable property within the district. Revenues from the tax levy can be used to acquire, construct, reconstruct, extend, maintain, and otherwise improve storm sewer systems and related facilities within the district. The City may also issue general obligations bonds, secured by the district tax levy, to pay for improvements.



Whitewater Avenue is the center of St. Charles' commercial district



Trails connect neighborhoods to key destinations like parks and schools

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The action items listed in the following tables come from the individual chapters in the Comprehensive Plan. These action items are steps the City can take in order to implement the goals and policies outlined in each chapter and represent concrete ways the City can move St. Charles in a direction that aligns with the Guiding Principles in this document.

LAND USE

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
<p>Update City zoning standards to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, zoning standards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce barriers to development and redevelopment by establishing clear development review procedures, allowing for reuse of buildings, and allowing a mix of uses and housing types; and• Balance market-appropriate uses and standards that align with the existing and historic character of St. Charles	Short-term	General Fund
Work to develop an orderly annexation agreement with St. Charles Township. The orderly annexation agreement should be based on managed growth, and annexation should not be contemplated unless the area is directly contiguous with existing urban development, about to become urban in nature and able to be serviced by the City (as demonstrated in a capital improvement plan as needed).	Mid-term	General Fund
Work with St. Charles Township and Dover Township to help ensure land use decisions in areas likely to become urban in the future are not counterproductive (e.g. the siting of a structure in a location that is the likely projection of a future roadway).	Ongoing	General Fund
Lead efforts to eliminate nuisances relating to specific property(ies) and/or conditions which are deemed to have a 'blighting effect' upon adjacent properties and/or nuisance conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety of adjacent property owners.	Short-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED, MN Housing)

HOUSING

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Revise zoning code to allow for a wider range of housing options through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding residential uses to include a range of missing middle housing types • Evaluating and reducing minimum lot sizes and dimensional standards to ensure they are compatible for different housing types • Simplifying development standards and procedures 	Short-term	General Fund
Revise the zoning map to encourage housing development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align zoning map with the future land use map • Rezone vacant, infill, and redevelopment parcels to meet the city's projected demand for different housing types 	Short-term	General Fund
Maintain and regularly update a database of local and regional organizations, grants, information, and opportunities relating to and supporting housing efforts.	Ongoing	General Fund
Create outreach and engagement plan to attract more land developers and homebuilders.	Short-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED)
Strengthen code enforcement to address blight concerns through maintaining property standards.	Ongoing	General Fund
Develop outreach program to homeowners and landlords to work with them to address blight and provide resources for upkeep and maintenance of existing properties.	Mid-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Evaluate current City policies and ordinances to determine where changes can be made to reduce any barriers that exist in local regulatory processes and licensing to ensure City is not contributing barriers to business development.	Short-term	General Fund
Develop a unified brand and marketing strategy for promoting development and investment opportunities in St. Charles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify organizations that can provide input and support for a marketing strategy, including the Chamber of Commerce, EDA, and other community organizations and business groups. • Highlight the community assets that can attract labor force and new industry to the area. 	Short-term	General Fund
Conduct a survey or conversations with business owners who have used the revolving loan fund to understand what worked, how to improve the program, and what other types of funding programs could help existing local businesses.	Short-term	General Fund
Seek funding for additional programs to support redevelopment on Whitewater Avenue based on input from business owners.	Long-term	State grant funding (DEED); General Fund
Develop wayfinding signage to create connections between I-90, Enterprise Drive, and Whitewater Ave. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with business owners to understand current traffic patterns and ensure signage is developed in an efficient and effective way. 	Mid-term	General Fund; State grant funding (DEED)
Create and maintain a list of available redevelopment properties along Whitewater Avenue to share with interested developers, entrepreneurs, and business owners.	Ongoing	General Fund

PUBLIC FACILITIES

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Identify and pursue state and federal grant funding and loan programs, as well as private investment, for infrastructure improvement and expansion projects	Ongoing	General Fund
Update Wellhead Protection Plan	Short-term	General Fund
Revise and update Capital Improvement Plan for utilities to ensure cost-effective use fees and high-quality service provision through investment in priority projects	Short-term	General Fund
Develop inventories and long-range maintenance plans for water and sewer system service provision	Mid-term	Enterprise funds; State grant funding (MPCA)
Identify state and federal funding, as well as private investment, for continued education and training for emergency service providers, such as firefighters and volunteer EMTs	Ongoing	
Review and update policies on determining public service provision expansion for new development	Short-term	General Fund
Apply for Phase 3 and Phase 4 funding for Whitewater Restoration Project.	Mid-term	General Fund; State grant funding (MN DNR)
Continue to work with local and area legislators to educate them on the need for continued support of services in Greater Minnesota, especially emergency medical and fire response services.	Ongoing	

PARKS AND RECREATION

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Evaluate current maintenance plans to identify opportunities to reduce mowing and maintenance over the long-term with restored natural landscapes.	Short-term	General Fund
Develop inventory of park facilities and assets, such as playgrounds, picnic tables, benches, etc. in order to plan accordingly for maintenance and upgrades.	Short-term	General Fund
Develop master plan for each park area to guide future development as maintenance and upgrades are required.	Mid-term	General Fund
Identify local entities, including the school district and recreation organizations/clubs, to form partnerships with to support upkeep and improvements to facilities.	Short-term	General Fund
Conduct accessibility audit of recreation facilities and identify priority improvements that increase inclusive play opportunities.	Short-term	General Fund
Conduct a park dedication study to establish essential nexus for park dedication requirements and ensure fees are based on fair market value.	Mid-term	General Fund



TRANSPORTATION

ACTION ITEMS	TIMING	FUNDING
Identify major transportation routes and necessary rights-of-way and easements needed to meet the long-term needs of the community in order to plan for phased acquisition accordingly	Ongoing	General Fund
Update CIP regularly to account for needed roadway improvements	Ongoing	General Fund
Add facilities to support bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, such as benches and bike racks at strategic locations along trails, parks, and downtown.	Ongoing	General Fund; MnDOT grant funds
Continue to seek state aid and grants to help fund the city's transportation infrastructure through Safe Routes to School, state bonding, DNR, and MnDOT grants.	Ongoing	MnDOT grant funds; state funds; General Fund
Create a plan and design options for improving safety at key intersections for all modes of transportation.	Short-term	MnDOT grant funds; General Fund

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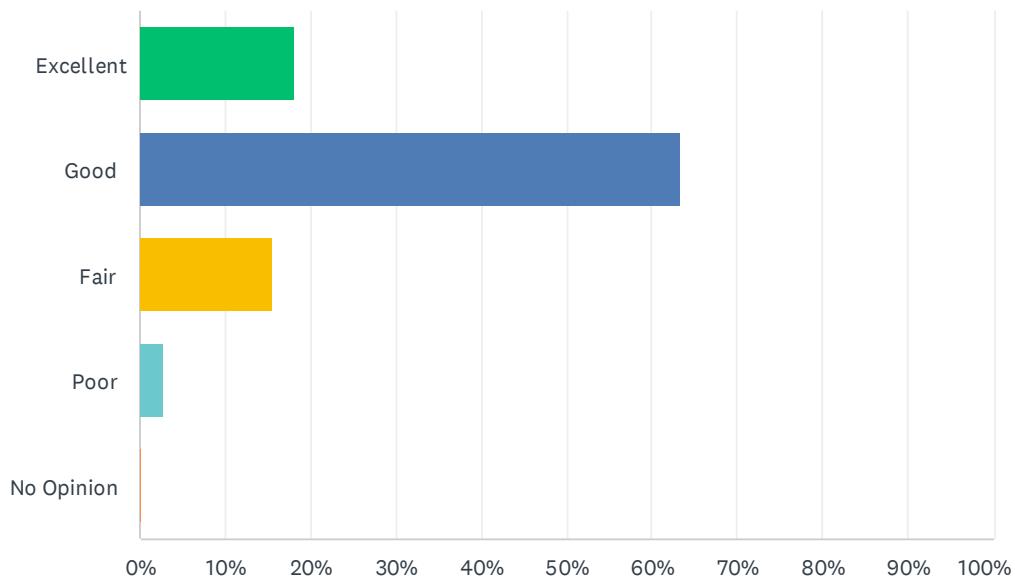
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APPENDIX A COMMUNITY SURVEY



Q1 How do you feel about the quality of life in St. Charles?

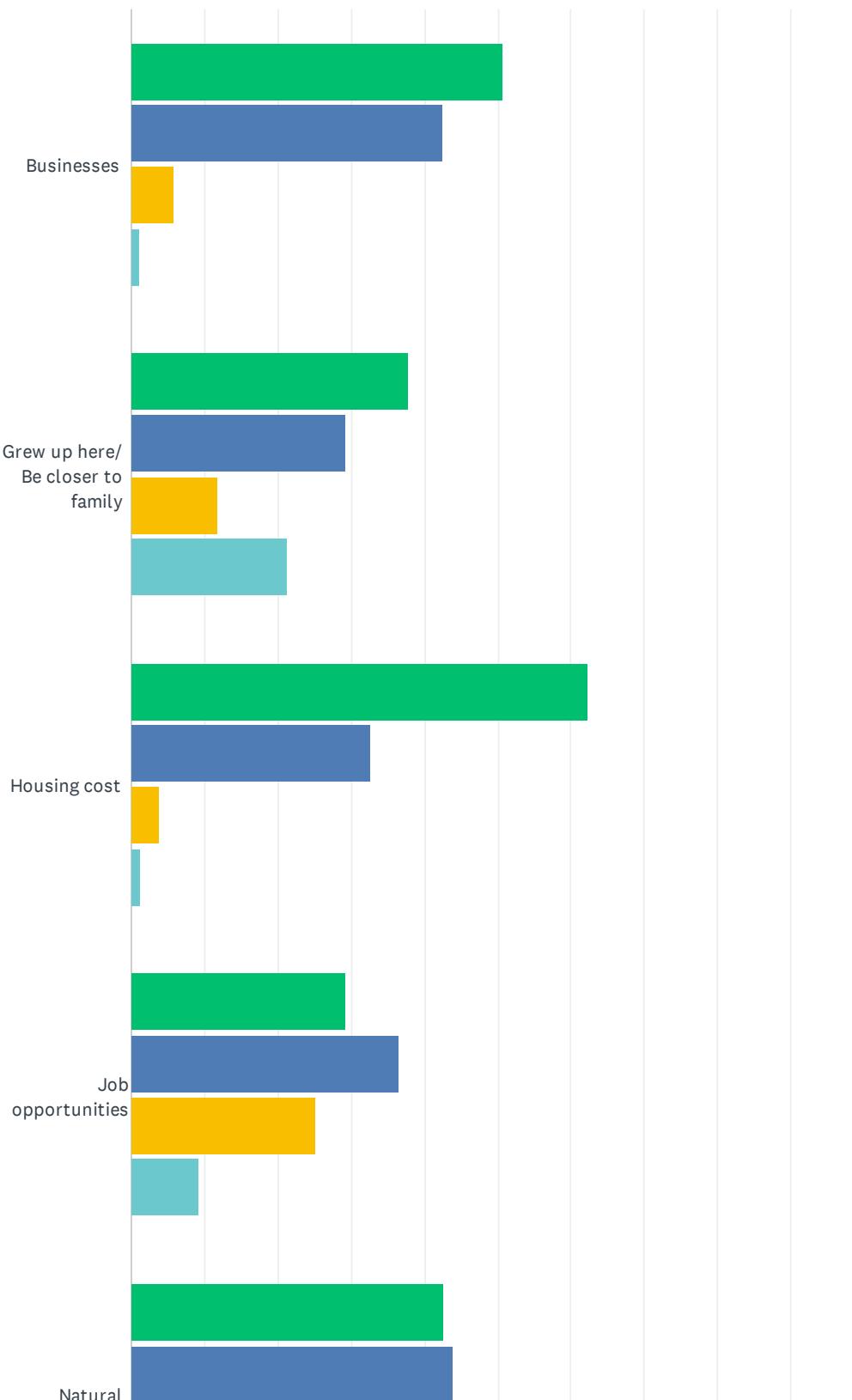
Answered: 366 Skipped: 10



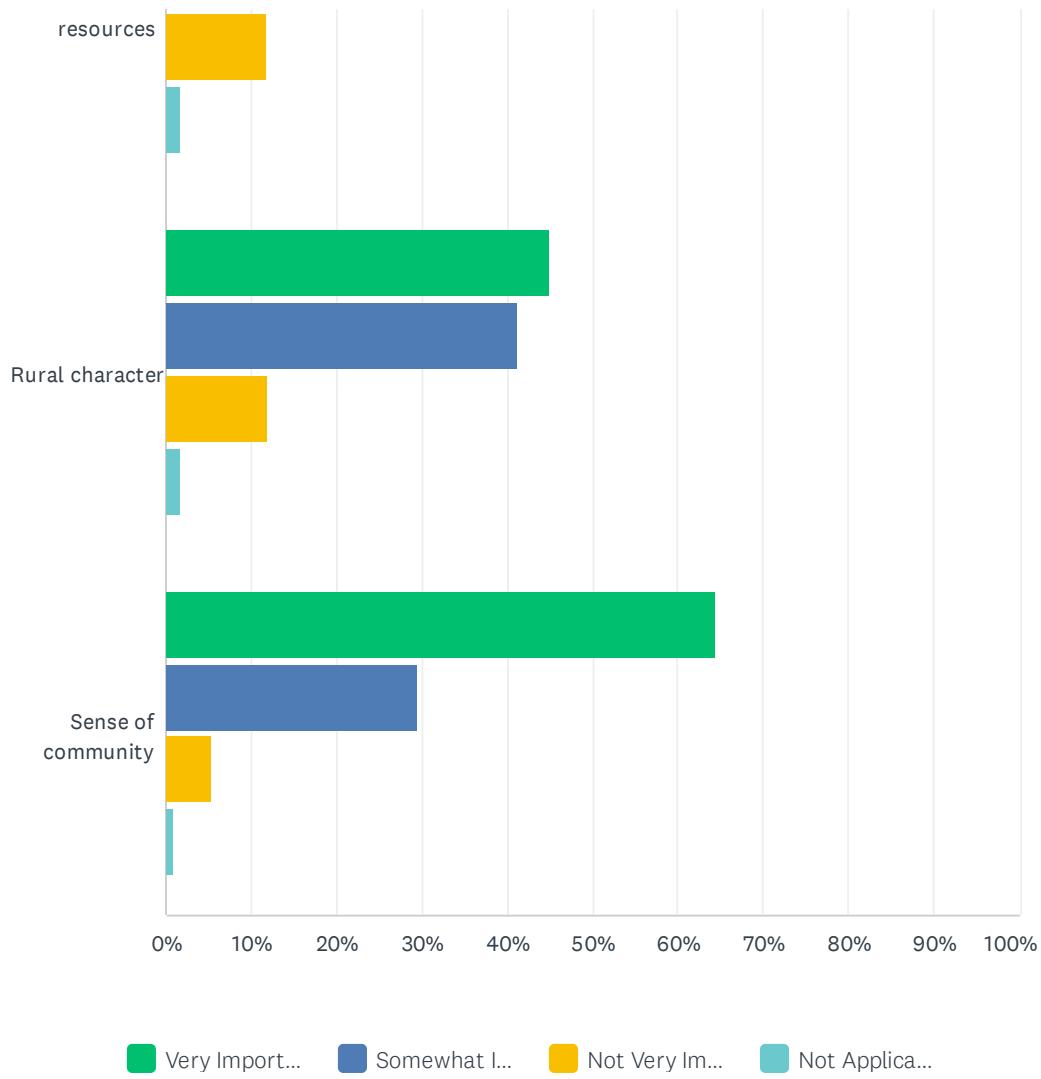
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	18.03%	66
Good	63.39%	232
Fair	15.57%	57
Poor	2.73%	10
No Opinion	0.27%	1
TOTAL		366

Q2 How important are the following attributes in your choice to live in St. Charles?

Answered: 369 Skipped: 7



St. Charles Community Survey



Very Important Somewhat Important Not Very Important Not Applicable

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL
Businesses	50.82% 187	42.39% 156	5.71% 21	1.09% 4	368
Grew up here/ Be closer to family	37.70% 138	29.23% 107	11.75% 43	21.31% 78	366
Housing cost	62.33% 230	32.52% 120	3.79% 14	1.36% 5	369
Job opportunities	29.16% 107	36.51% 134	25.07% 92	9.26% 34	367
Natural resources	42.74% 156	43.84% 160	11.78% 43	1.64% 6	365
Rural character	45.08% 165	41.26% 151	12.02% 44	1.64% 6	366
Sense of community	64.40% 237	29.35% 108	5.43% 20	0.82% 3	368

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Services: Seniors Chore Program, Group Exercises - Zumba, etc., Headstart Program, Library	3/27/2025 9:55 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

programs for individuals and families in the evenings, Community Education for adults, teens, and kids, and similar.

2	Anytime there is a community event, it seems like the same people doing the same thing and the majority of the community is left out.	2/16/2025 7:32 PM
3	Dies fell all inclusive and very clique	2/4/2025 9:58 PM
4	Lowering the city bill	2/4/2025 1:06 PM
5	I'd like to have more outdoor activities for kids. An improved ice rink where kids can play hockey games without loosing their ball or buck constantly.	2/4/2025 11:57 AM
6	Great Public Schools / Education	2/3/2025 11:06 AM
7	Public space, common sense development	2/1/2025 6:21 PM
8	Quality Education and Childcare	2/1/2025 9:43 AM
9	Hobby clubs and community activities for middle aged people.	1/31/2025 3:20 PM
10	We need something like north star again	1/31/2025 12:58 PM
11	Winona Fair and gladiolus days suck and are outdated.	1/30/2025 6:24 PM
12	School District - very important	1/29/2025 11:22 AM
13	Amenities for families- parks, swimming pool,etc	1/25/2025 8:52 AM
14	Feeling of safety for family/children, maintenance of the trail system and parks	1/25/2025 7:54 AM
15	Safety/low crime	1/24/2025 3:37 PM
16	Tear down the ugly Motel full of junk!! A disgrace!!!! More playground equipment at City Park.	1/24/2025 2:29 PM
17	Improving our school district, Diversity, Innovation, Making our community attractive/stand out from others for tourism, and our community	1/24/2025 2:00 PM
18	Diversity of more relevant small business options in downtown St Charles	1/24/2025 1:38 PM

Q3 In a word or phrase what is St. Charles' greatest asset?

Answered: 293 Skipped: 83

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Community	4/16/2025 10:30 AM
2	Friendship	3/29/2025 7:19 AM
3	Rundown	3/28/2025 11:50 AM
4	As close as you can get to Rochester wages without giving up the "cheaper is always better" Winona county lifestyle.	3/28/2025 11:23 AM
5	Not a clue!	3/28/2025 10:58 AM
6	Community	3/28/2025 8:49 AM
7	Walking path	3/28/2025 8:14 AM
8	Small town atmosphere with access to many larger towns and amenities	3/28/2025 7:17 AM
9	Location	3/28/2025 5:21 AM
10	Rolling Hills Transit	3/27/2025 9:55 PM
11	proximity to rochester but small town feel	3/27/2025 9:14 PM
12	Location between Winona & Rochester	3/16/2025 6:49 PM
13	Location and size. Small enough to be a good community, but big enough to have some amenties. Close to whitewater and the river	3/12/2025 8:53 AM
14	It's people	3/6/2025 9:40 AM
15	Nice neighborhoods, clean, good school system, aquatic center.	3/4/2025 6:20 PM
16	Diverse leisure activities, ie trails and parks	2/27/2025 11:07 PM
17	Its size. Small enough for community big enough for variet	2/26/2025 11:35 PM
18	Community	2/26/2025 3:46 PM
19	The smaller communities around town.	2/26/2025 12:28 AM
20	Proximity to Whitewater State Park, the library	2/24/2025 10:46 PM
21	Lot's of activities to bring the community closer together.	2/24/2025 9:23 PM
22	Events like WOW brings people together	2/24/2025 4:35 PM
23	Natural setting	2/23/2025 7:37 PM
24	Location	2/23/2025 7:08 PM
25	Community members	2/23/2025 3:45 PM
26	Our greatest asset is that we do not rely on franchises and big chains. Our community looks, feels, and is distinct from other towns in our area of similar size.	2/23/2025 1:14 PM
27	Good sport	2/23/2025 9:26 AM
28	Having a grocery store	2/22/2025 7:09 PM
29	Millers Market	2/22/2025 4:24 PM
30	Walking trails	2/21/2025 7:36 AM
31	location	2/20/2025 1:25 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

32	Small town and would like it to stay this way.	2/20/2025 9:37 AM
33	Schools	2/19/2025 11:16 PM
34	The people	2/19/2025 3:29 AM
35	Location	2/18/2025 3:23 PM
36	Closeness to Rochester while still being in another county	2/18/2025 2:44 PM
37	First Responders	2/18/2025 9:15 AM
38	Small town atmosphere	2/17/2025 3:29 PM
39	Welcoming	2/17/2025 12:38 PM
40	Community	2/17/2025 9:25 AM
41	Gateway to Whitewater	2/17/2025 9:04 AM
42	Location (between rochester and winona) by places with things to do.	2/16/2025 7:32 PM
43	Community Involvement	2/16/2025 6:57 PM
44	Whitewater State Park and WMA	2/16/2025 4:15 PM
45	It's smile and a wave	2/16/2025 1:53 AM
46	Safe community and great community	2/15/2025 8:49 PM
47	20 miles away from rochester and winona	2/14/2025 4:36 PM
48	Whitewater State Par	2/13/2025 10:37 PM
49	Peace and quiet	2/13/2025 4:33 PM
50	welcoming	2/13/2025 12:40 PM
51	Small town with conveniences	2/12/2025 8:58 PM
52	Gateway to Whitewater	2/12/2025 8:46 PM
53	Close Knit Community	2/12/2025 5:08 PM
54	Have all essential stores and services: good schools, grocery, pharmacy, clinic, hardware, vet, restaurants and bars	2/12/2025 7:28 AM
55	Whitewater state park	2/11/2025 10:39 PM
56	having their own electric company	2/11/2025 12:09 PM
57	Rural atmosphere	2/11/2025 11:42 AM
58	Community	2/11/2025 5:48 AM
59	Amenities	2/10/2025 8:44 PM
60	Close to Rochester	2/10/2025 2:14 PM
61	Close to 90, small town atmosphere	2/9/2025 1:16 PM
62	Small town community	2/9/2025 12:25 PM
63	Bedroom community with a quality, clean town.	2/9/2025 7:11 AM
64	The people	2/9/2025 12:15 AM
65	Community activities	2/8/2025 6:47 PM
66	del's cafe	2/8/2025 5:51 PM
67	Small town living	2/8/2025 5:29 PM
68	Busy little community	2/8/2025 8:23 AM
69	schools	2/7/2025 10:08 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

70	School	2/7/2025 7:27 PM
71	Location	2/7/2025 6:29 AM
72	Location	2/6/2025 9:07 PM
73	Calm	2/6/2025 7:58 PM
74	Location	2/6/2025 4:00 PM
75	Quietness	2/6/2025 9:41 AM
76	Livability	2/6/2025 8:56 AM
77	Small town	2/6/2025 7:20 AM
78	Close-knit community	2/6/2025 5:18 AM
79	Safe and near whitewater	2/5/2025 10:42 PM
80	I feel safe (other than people stealing at night)	2/5/2025 9:27 PM
81	Long term residents who enrich and build the community	2/5/2025 9:12 PM
82	Variety of businesses, esp grocery store	2/5/2025 7:47 PM
83	Schooling and Community involvement/activities	2/5/2025 6:40 PM
84	Location	2/5/2025 3:14 PM
85	Community	2/5/2025 1:18 PM
86	Na	2/5/2025 12:17 PM
87	my hometown	2/5/2025 11:46 AM
88	Community	2/5/2025 11:02 AM
89	Small town feel	2/5/2025 9:28 AM
90	Location	2/5/2025 7:15 AM
91	Small town atmosphere	2/5/2025 5:23 AM
92	Small town atmosphere	2/5/2025 1:41 AM
93	Older adults sense of community	2/4/2025 9:58 PM
94	The people	2/4/2025 8:51 PM
95	Great people friendly	2/4/2025 8:34 PM
96	Sense of community and community events	2/4/2025 7:33 PM
97	Small town charm	2/4/2025 7:19 PM
98	Has a basic variety of businesses	2/4/2025 6:44 PM
99	It's a very welcoming town/community for the most part	2/4/2025 5:29 PM
100	Accessibility	2/4/2025 2:34 PM
101	Very supportive of small businesses	2/4/2025 11:07 AM
102	Dells Cafe	2/4/2025 4:40 AM
103	Whitewater	2/3/2025 8:33 PM
104	SENSE OF COMMUNITY	2/3/2025 8:18 PM
105	outrageous utility bill cost. I hear it all the time from coworker and surrounding community member "Utility cost of living in St. Charles is a reason I would never live there."	2/3/2025 5:22 PM
106	People	2/3/2025 5:10 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

107	Location	2/3/2025 11:06 AM
108	Sense of community	2/3/2025 10:49 AM
109	Size and business	2/3/2025 9:23 AM
110	The people that make the community.	2/3/2025 6:23 AM
111	Its community	2/2/2025 10:15 PM
112	Not overpopulated	2/2/2025 9:18 PM
113	Neighborhood	2/2/2025 9:14 PM
114	Safe, not overpopulated	2/2/2025 6:27 PM
115	Community	2/2/2025 11:56 AM
116	Family	2/2/2025 11:41 AM
117	Safe small town feel	2/2/2025 8:07 AM
118	small town	2/1/2025 10:19 PM
119	Business	2/1/2025 9:00 PM
120	Being a small town, and having that small town feel.	2/1/2025 7:12 PM
121	Friendly community	2/1/2025 6:21 PM
122	Community	2/1/2025 12:53 PM
123	Citizens who care about each other and their community	2/1/2025 9:43 AM
124	It's people	2/1/2025 8:04 AM
125	Being loyal and committed to being a community	2/1/2025 6:42 AM
126	Safety	1/31/2025 9:29 PM
127	Location	1/31/2025 7:36 PM
128	Gateway to Whitewater State Park	1/31/2025 7:35 PM
129	Grocery store	1/31/2025 7:26 PM
130	loves	1/31/2025 7:09 PM
131	Millers Market	1/31/2025 6:14 PM
132	Location	1/31/2025 5:32 PM
133	It's people	1/31/2025 4:02 PM
134	The people who live here	1/31/2025 3:20 PM
135	Community events	1/31/2025 3:08 PM
136	Thursday on 3rd	1/31/2025 2:10 PM
137	Whitewater park	1/31/2025 12:58 PM
138	Close community	1/31/2025 11:25 AM
139	Close to Winona and Rochester	1/31/2025 10:41 AM
140	Whitewater	1/31/2025 6:36 AM
141	Sense of Community	1/30/2025 10:28 PM
142	Quiet/kind small town	1/30/2025 10:23 PM
143	Community	1/30/2025 10:19 PM
144	What it all offers	1/30/2025 9:13 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

145	Small town	1/30/2025 9:04 PM
146	Whitewater	1/30/2025 8:42 PM
147	Friendliness of the town, small businesses, safety, community events, good schools	1/30/2025 7:49 PM
148	Community events	1/30/2025 7:19 PM
149	Rural	1/30/2025 7:19 PM
150	Small town feel	1/30/2025 6:24 PM
151	Small town	1/30/2025 4:48 PM
152	A&W root beer floats	1/30/2025 4:26 PM
153	Location and accessibility to Roch and Winona	1/30/2025 1:03 PM
154	Location	1/30/2025 11:08 AM
155	Close knit community	1/30/2025 10:35 AM
156	Progressive image-love the Main Street updates to buildings	1/30/2025 7:52 AM
157	It's people	1/30/2025 12:05 AM
158	Small town feel	1/29/2025 9:30 PM
159	Landscape	1/29/2025 7:54 PM
160	Community	1/29/2025 6:24 PM
161	Our diverse community is always in support of one another.	1/29/2025 5:00 PM
162	It's people.	1/29/2025 1:02 PM
163	Location	1/29/2025 12:53 PM
164	Location	1/29/2025 11:53 AM
165	Good downtown, sense of community	1/29/2025 11:34 AM
166	The grocery store	1/29/2025 8:03 AM
167	Community	1/29/2025 7:45 AM
168	Location	1/29/2025 6:07 AM
169	Close to interstate 90	1/29/2025 5:30 AM
170	Parks	1/29/2025 12:44 AM
171	We need to keep it low cost	1/28/2025 11:31 PM
172	Its people	1/28/2025 11:16 PM
173	Sense of community	1/28/2025 9:50 PM
174	Versatility - small town with everything you need.	1/28/2025 8:48 PM
175	School	1/28/2025 8:00 PM
176	Location between larger cities	1/28/2025 7:44 PM
177	A great mix of people	1/28/2025 7:17 PM
178	Whitewater State Park	1/28/2025 7:09 PM
179	Location	1/28/2025 6:25 PM
180	We have everything needed to live comfortably and enough businesses for convenient shopping.	1/28/2025 5:57 PM
181	Location	1/28/2025 4:37 PM
182	Small town feel	1/28/2025 2:34 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

183	Business	1/28/2025 2:11 PM
184	Location	1/28/2025 1:40 PM
185	The people that keep the programs running!	1/28/2025 1:39 PM
186	Great community	1/28/2025 1:37 PM
187	Community involvement	1/28/2025 12:21 PM
188	Whitewater state park	1/28/2025 10:01 AM
189	Having a single-town school district.	1/28/2025 8:40 AM
190	diversity	1/28/2025 8:24 AM
191	Pool, library, trails, sporting fields	1/27/2025 10:22 PM
192	The 5% of community members that keep the community programs and events going.	1/27/2025 10:12 PM
193	Overall safe	1/27/2025 7:42 PM
194	Small town community that bonds together	1/27/2025 4:45 PM
195	Community	1/27/2025 2:33 PM
196	It's location to larger cities, state parks, major highway.	1/27/2025 12:48 PM
197	Amenities and programming	1/27/2025 11:40 AM
198	Making sure the streets are clear	1/27/2025 8:02 AM
199	Location	1/27/2025 6:28 AM
200	Friendly	1/27/2025 6:19 AM
201	Small town, close enough to bigger markets	1/26/2025 10:08 PM
202	Community	1/26/2025 9:26 PM
203	It's citizens	1/26/2025 9:16 PM
204	Affordable housing close to Rochester	1/26/2025 8:07 PM
205	Close to other towns that have more activities to choose from.	1/26/2025 5:22 PM
206	Great community	1/26/2025 4:32 PM
207	Small town feel, low taxes	1/26/2025 4:22 PM
208	Community events	1/26/2025 10:22 AM
209	Location	1/26/2025 7:09 AM
210	Community events, wow, etc	1/25/2025 11:01 PM
211	Tight community	1/25/2025 9:31 PM
212	Whitewater	1/25/2025 7:43 PM
213	Welcoming	1/25/2025 6:59 PM
214	Shared community	1/25/2025 3:56 PM
215	Variety of stores	1/25/2025 2:39 PM
216	Whitewater River	1/25/2025 2:32 PM
217	Accepting	1/25/2025 1:43 PM
218	Geographic proximity to Rochester and winona	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
219	Geographical location - good distance to most things	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
220	The diversity found in the community. Another asset is the tight knit community feel.	1/25/2025 12:18 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

221	Cheaper gas, and quick drive to whitewater	1/25/2025 10:48 AM
222	It's people	1/25/2025 8:52 AM
223	Feeling of welcome, sense of being 'home'	1/25/2025 7:54 AM
224	Small town friendliness	1/25/2025 7:32 AM
225	Community	1/25/2025 6:55 AM
226	Variety	1/25/2025 6:52 AM
227	Nearby Whitewater State Park and WMA	1/25/2025 6:03 AM
228	The people	1/25/2025 5:43 AM
229	Winona county fair	1/25/2025 12:35 AM
230	It's necessity stores, and community feel	1/24/2025 11:33 PM
231	Proximity to Whitewater	1/24/2025 11:02 PM
232	Small town	1/24/2025 10:23 PM
233	Location	1/24/2025 10:21 PM
234	Resources that are available to residents	1/24/2025 9:58 PM
235	Small town feel	1/24/2025 9:43 PM
236	Location	1/24/2025 9:42 PM
237	Proximity to larger cities	1/24/2025 9:31 PM
238	Community	1/24/2025 9:27 PM
239	Great school and a small town feel	1/24/2025 9:25 PM
240	Community!!	1/24/2025 9:20 PM
241	It's people and community that supports one another	1/24/2025 9:19 PM
242	Sense of community	1/24/2025 9:02 PM
243	Location	1/24/2025 8:50 PM
244	Centrally located between Rochester and Winona	1/24/2025 8:05 PM
245	Community	1/24/2025 7:13 PM
246	The people that make our community.	1/24/2025 6:56 PM
247	The residents	1/24/2025 6:38 PM
248	Community support	1/24/2025 6:23 PM
249	Public safety. Parks Dept, golf course, park & rec offerings	1/24/2025 5:51 PM
250	Location and its parks, and bike/walking trails	1/24/2025 5:37 PM
251	Close to Rochester and Winona. Also close to I90.	1/24/2025 5:36 PM
252	Parks and Rec department	1/24/2025 5:20 PM
253	Whitewater and county fair	1/24/2025 5:19 PM
254	location	1/24/2025 5:18 PM
255	The people	1/24/2025 5:11 PM
256	Location	1/24/2025 5:10 PM
257	The sense of community	1/24/2025 5:10 PM
258	Inclusion	1/24/2025 5:08 PM

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259	Location for working in Rochester or Winona with ease of getting on I-90	1/24/2025 5:00 PM
260	Beauty and nature	1/24/2025 4:59 PM
261	Location	1/24/2025 4:56 PM
262	Location	1/24/2025 4:53 PM
263	Affordable housing	1/24/2025 4:49 PM
264	Having a sense of "community"	1/24/2025 4:49 PM
265	Sense of community	1/24/2025 4:48 PM
266	N/A	1/24/2025 4:47 PM
267	Sense of community, people looking out for one another.	1/24/2025 4:36 PM
268	Napa	1/24/2025 4:30 PM
269	The PEOPLE	1/24/2025 4:30 PM
270	Sense of community	1/24/2025 4:27 PM
271	Small town feel	1/24/2025 4:25 PM
272	Small town	1/24/2025 4:20 PM
273	Its proximity to Mayo. St Charles leaders need to capitalize on this and build more housing to build our tax base.	1/24/2025 4:14 PM
274	Community	1/24/2025 4:07 PM
275	Small Town Living	1/24/2025 3:59 PM
276	Small town feel	1/24/2025 3:37 PM
277	The Police Department and Community Center	1/24/2025 2:29 PM
278	Whitewater State Park and the nature of the area	1/24/2025 2:00 PM
279	Community	1/24/2025 1:38 PM
280	Willingness to include.	1/24/2025 1:21 PM
281	Community	1/24/2025 1:15 PM
282	Gateway to Whitewater	1/24/2025 12:58 PM
283	It's proximity to Rochester and Winona, along with its geography and landscape.	1/24/2025 12:58 PM
284	Small Town feel (people, nature, etc)	1/24/2025 12:39 PM
285	small size	1/24/2025 12:34 PM
286	small town atmosphere	1/24/2025 12:29 PM
287	Neighbors helping neighbors	1/24/2025 11:57 AM
288	Great location, friendly people, nice variety of small businesses, bike/walking trails and parks	1/24/2025 11:45 AM
289	Community	1/24/2025 11:35 AM
290	Community events	1/24/2025 11:26 AM
291	Small town but has what you need.	1/24/2025 11:05 AM
292	Location and landscape	1/24/2025 11:00 AM
293	People	1/24/2025 10:58 AM

Q4 In a word or phrase what do you think St. Charles needs most?

Answered: 294 Skipped: 82

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Accountability from Council and Administrator	4/16/2025 10:30 AM
2	Better school system grocery store that isn't charging unbelievable prices...it would be nice to keep business local & not have to travel for affordable prices.	3/31/2025 2:31 PM
3	Southfork park	3/29/2025 7:19 AM
4	Indoor play ground or pool for winter	3/29/2025 3:04 AM
5	Needs to follow through	3/28/2025 12:02 PM
6	Leadership	3/28/2025 11:50 AM
7	Staff with at least average IQ, of which there are currently none	3/28/2025 11:23 AM
8	Stepility, better people in charge!	3/28/2025 10:58 AM
9	Friendships and respect for others	3/28/2025 8:49 AM
10	A hotel with indoor pool	3/28/2025 8:14 AM
11	Hotel	3/28/2025 7:17 AM
12	Job opportunities to bring in young families	3/28/2025 5:21 AM
13	New Christmas lights!	3/27/2025 10:56 PM
14	Better schools with a lower student/teacher ration.	3/27/2025 9:55 PM
15	Sports Complex or hotel/motel	3/27/2025 9:28 PM
16	more housing	3/27/2025 9:14 PM
17	Indoor recreation area	3/16/2025 6:49 PM
18	A more active downtown. A nice restaurant or bar on main street would be good. Or microbrewery where "The Garage" is.	3/12/2025 8:53 AM
19	Housing	3/6/2025 9:40 AM
20	Senior housing	3/5/2025 10:59 AM
21	A recreation center.	3/4/2025 6:20 PM
22	More community communication/organization	2/26/2025 11:35 PM
23	Better traffic flow by the Love's	2/26/2025 3:46 PM
24	Realizing the needs of their customers.. residents I meant.	2/26/2025 12:28 AM
25	Make downtown area more appealing	2/24/2025 10:46 PM
26	A hotel with a pool	2/24/2025 9:23 PM
27	Common sense	2/24/2025 6:43 PM
28	More events for the community	2/24/2025 4:35 PM
29	Art	2/23/2025 7:37 PM
30	Improved Schools	2/23/2025 7:08 PM
31	Better traffic control near loves	2/23/2025 3:45 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

32	We need to improve our attractiveness to small businesses that offer unique opportunities. There are too few options for weekend dining, and very limited options for families and children/teens. To get nearly anything done, or to do nearly anything, one must travel to Rochester or Winona.	2/23/2025 1:14 PM
33	A decent hotel	2/22/2025 7:09 PM
34	Cheap Single Family Homes	2/22/2025 4:24 PM
35	restaurants and businesses	2/21/2025 7:36 AM
36	better leadership schools and government	2/20/2025 1:25 PM
37	Downtown could look much better.	2/20/2025 9:37 AM
38	A hotel.	2/19/2025 11:16 PM
39	Stop lights coming from Loves. I think it's very important	2/19/2025 3:29 AM
40	Dining variety	2/18/2025 7:48 PM
41	More businesses and home lots	2/18/2025 3:23 PM
42	Large event space	2/18/2025 2:44 PM
43	More affordable commercial property for small businesses	2/18/2025 9:15 AM
44	Public transportation	2/18/2025 1:44 AM
45	More and higher paying jobs.	2/17/2025 3:34 PM
46	Amish ovens back	2/17/2025 3:29 PM
47	More activities for children in the evenings when parents able to drop off or attend as well doesn't cost much	2/17/2025 12:38 PM
48	Taco Bell	2/17/2025 9:25 AM
49	Rebirth of old housing	2/17/2025 9:04 AM
50	More inclusive community events.	2/16/2025 7:32 PM
51	Education Improvement	2/16/2025 6:57 PM
52	A strong economic base. This is largely a bedroom community. Unlikely to ever change. The lack of diversity, equity and inclusivity options stagnate growth. In other words, there isn't much here to sustain the community. It limps along. Without access to the larger communities from Rochester, Winona and La Cross metropolitan area, I would go crazy trying to live here. Been here almost three years and its been a bitch to make friends.	2/16/2025 4:15 PM
53	Less Republicans	2/16/2025 1:53 AM
54	Cheaper Utilities	2/15/2025 8:49 PM
55	Rec Center, Movie theater, bowling	2/14/2025 4:36 PM
56	Vibrant Downtown	2/13/2025 10:37 PM
57	Activities	2/13/2025 4:33 PM
58	Nice restaurants, a draw for surrounding areas to eat here too	2/12/2025 8:58 PM
59	Hotel	2/12/2025 8:46 PM
60	Direction	2/12/2025 5:08 PM
61	Diversity, flood protection, clean water, transit options to Rochester	2/12/2025 7:28 AM
62	A stronger and more stable public school district	2/12/2025 6:22 AM
63	Updated parks and more/updated outdoors pickle bill courts p	2/12/2025 6:08 AM
64	Industrial companies	2/11/2025 10:39 PM
65	Something done about the deer population in the city	2/11/2025 12:09 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

66	Thriving Businesses	2/11/2025 5:48 AM
67	Good leadership that includes all	2/10/2025 8:44 PM
68	Pickleball courts	2/10/2025 2:14 PM
69	Communication	2/9/2025 10:45 PM
70	Affordable housing for seniors	2/9/2025 1:16 PM
71	Dim the lights of the industrial park by I-90 it's ruined the night sky.	2/9/2025 12:25 PM
72	New lots for more homes	2/9/2025 7:11 AM
73	More things to do...restaurants/bars, bowling, movie theater, etc	2/9/2025 12:15 AM
74	More restaurants and event space	2/8/2025 6:47 PM
75	a motel or hotel	2/8/2025 5:51 PM
76	Affordable housing	2/8/2025 5:29 PM
77	More bars and restaurants	2/8/2025 8:23 AM
78	progressive community	2/7/2025 10:08 PM
79	Lower taxes	2/7/2025 7:27 PM
80	Lower property taxes!	2/7/2025 6:29 AM
81	Better community spaces	2/6/2025 9:07 PM
82	Outdoor Pickleball Courts	2/6/2025 4:00 PM
83	Better restaurants	2/6/2025 9:41 AM
84	Destination retail and restaurants to bring people here	2/6/2025 8:56 AM
85	Get rid of half the employees and vehicles	2/6/2025 7:20 AM
86	Restaurants, Rec Center Type	2/6/2025 5:18 AM
87	Reface downtown and more retail businesses open down town.	2/5/2025 10:42 PM
88	More businesses that stay open	2/5/2025 9:27 PM
89	More varied opinions in city government	2/5/2025 9:12 PM
90	Pickleball courts	2/5/2025 7:47 PM
91	Family restaurants/family owned businesses, Apartments	2/5/2025 6:40 PM
92	None	2/5/2025 3:14 PM
93	Strategy for the right growth	2/5/2025 1:18 PM
94	Na	2/5/2025 12:17 PM
95	Dentist, Bowling alley	2/5/2025 11:46 AM
96	New and more businesses	2/5/2025 11:02 AM
97	Good leaders	2/5/2025 9:28 AM
98	Less Liberals on the city council	2/5/2025 5:23 AM
99	lower property taxes	2/5/2025 1:41 AM
100	Lower utility costs!!! It is out of control	2/4/2025 9:58 PM
101	More jobs	2/4/2025 8:34 PM
102	A brewery	2/4/2025 7:33 PM
103	More events	2/4/2025 7:19 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

104	A bike trail connection to Whitewater State Park.	2/4/2025 6:44 PM
105	To make use of those solar panels that sit in a field doing nothing	2/4/2025 5:29 PM
106	Affordable housing	2/4/2025 2:34 PM
107	Lower cost of utility bill. It is much higher than surrounding communities prevents St. Charles future growth.	2/4/2025 10:03 AM
108	more communication	2/4/2025 4:40 AM
109	Hotel	2/3/2025 8:33 PM
110	MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTRACT YOUNG WORKERS	2/3/2025 8:18 PM
111	lower cost of utilities	2/3/2025 5:22 PM
112	To lower monthly utility costs	2/3/2025 5:10 PM
113	A safe way for children to cross highway 14	2/3/2025 11:06 AM
114	maintaining the sense of community as we grow	2/3/2025 10:49 AM
115	Business	2/3/2025 9:23 AM
116	More indoor family fun things to do.	2/3/2025 6:23 AM
117	To be safer	2/2/2025 10:15 PM
118	Recreational Center	2/2/2025 9:18 PM
119	Downtown businesses	2/2/2025 9:14 PM
120	Small/local (healthy) restaurants	2/2/2025 11:56 AM
121	Businesses	2/2/2025 11:41 AM
122	mass transit	2/1/2025 10:19 PM
123	More business down town	2/1/2025 9:00 PM
124	Reducing taxes	2/1/2025 6:21 PM
125	More businesses, shops	2/1/2025 12:53 PM
126	More, affordable housing apartment buildings	2/1/2025 9:43 AM
127	More lots to build homes	2/1/2025 8:04 AM
128	More businesses on Main Street	2/1/2025 6:42 AM
129	Diversity	1/31/2025 9:29 PM
130	Jobs	1/31/2025 8:57 PM
131	Affordable housing	1/31/2025 7:35 PM
132	Better support for the school:	1/31/2025 7:26 PM
133	regulations	1/31/2025 7:09 PM
134	Diversity	1/31/2025 6:43 PM
135	Bowling alley	1/31/2025 6:14 PM
136	Hotel	1/31/2025 5:32 PM
137	To finish the downtown businesses in a more timely fashion. To keep the buildings correct for the period of when they were built.	1/31/2025 4:02 PM
138	A Christmas market, a farmers market land a general small business growth.	1/31/2025 3:20 PM
139	Someone that does more for the kids a better park and rec dept	1/31/2025 2:10 PM
140	Businesses not crafty shops like it used to be	1/31/2025 12:58 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

141	Fiscal responsibility	1/31/2025 11:25 AM
142	Lower taxes	1/31/2025 10:41 AM
143	Hotel, event center, bars, an attraction	1/31/2025 6:36 AM
144	More affordable housing	1/30/2025 10:28 PM
145	Another local bar that did events	1/30/2025 10:23 PM
146	Few more dining options	1/30/2025 10:19 PM
147	More active main street	1/30/2025 9:04 PM
148	Hotel	1/30/2025 8:42 PM
149	More dining	1/30/2025 8:20 PM
150	More community events, affordable housing, small businesses	1/30/2025 7:49 PM
151	A better school district.	1/30/2025 7:19 PM
152	Indoor children's activities, more restaurant options	1/30/2025 7:15 PM
153	Restaurants, more food choices, door dash, etc	1/30/2025 6:24 PM
154	Kids activities/businesses	1/30/2025 4:48 PM
155	More work places, better adult living services, low income housing for people who own pets	1/30/2025 4:26 PM
156	A revitalizes downtown. We need more restaurant options, more old town feel, a brewery or something similar. Make area attractive for all to enjoy, similar to Lansboro	1/30/2025 1:03 PM
157	Housing lots	1/30/2025 11:08 AM
158	business diversity and beautification of the downtown district	1/30/2025 10:35 AM
159	Reduce utility costs	1/30/2025 7:52 AM
160	A recreation center for people of all ages	1/30/2025 12:05 AM
161	Business development	1/29/2025 7:54 PM
162	Entertainment, more restaurants and bars	1/29/2025 6:24 PM
163	Advertisement/video of our locally owned restaurants/stores/shops, the beauty of our agricultural land, the highlight of our police/firefighters/ambulance.	1/29/2025 5:00 PM
164	Clothing store	1/29/2025 1:02 PM
165	Small businesses	1/29/2025 12:53 PM
166	Cleaned up!	1/29/2025 11:53 AM
167	More businesses, expand on parks and outdoor recreation the kids love the school forest.	1/29/2025 11:34 AM
168	Public gathering spaces or non bar activities	1/29/2025 11:22 AM
169	Nothing	1/29/2025 8:03 AM
170	More businesses and restaurants	1/29/2025 7:45 AM
171	Housing development	1/29/2025 6:07 AM
172	Solar/wind to help with community utility bills	1/29/2025 5:30 AM
173	Lower tax's to keep attracting people from olmstead county	1/28/2025 11:31 PM
174	More and cheaper rental homes/apartments	1/28/2025 11:16 PM
175	Indoor play area for toddlers	1/28/2025 9:50 PM
176	Education support to ensure our schools don't fail.	1/28/2025 8:48 PM
177	Another restaurant/grill/bar	1/28/2025 8:00 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

178	Hotel / convention center	1/28/2025 7:44 PM
179	More housing under 300k	1/28/2025 7:17 PM
180	More businesses	1/28/2025 7:09 PM
181	An industrial employer with multiple well paying jobs	1/28/2025 6:25 PM
182	Upgrade family recreation (pool, bowling alley, places that provide/offer family fun events . A nice hotel/event center would create more jobs .	1/28/2025 5:57 PM
183	Descent lodging that includes space for special events and wedding reception.	1/28/2025 4:37 PM
184	More bike trails and recreation opportunities.	1/28/2025 2:34 PM
185	Hotel	1/28/2025 2:27 PM
186	Lowered property taxes	1/28/2025 2:24 PM
187	Lower taxes	1/28/2025 2:11 PM
188	Larger lot sizes.	1/28/2025 1:40 PM
189	Character.. a draw to downtown.	1/28/2025 1:39 PM
190	Lower taxes	1/28/2025 12:21 PM
191	Better school system	1/28/2025 10:01 AM
192	Vibrancy on Mainstreet.	1/28/2025 8:40 AM
193	dentist	1/28/2025 8:24 AM
194	A hotel with a indoor swimming pool	1/27/2025 10:22 PM
195	High employment non government business	1/27/2025 10:12 PM
196	More businesses	1/27/2025 7:42 PM
197	Better exposure where community members can volunteer	1/27/2025 4:45 PM
198	More volunteers and town "beautification"	1/27/2025 2:33 PM
199	A hotel would be beneficial.	1/27/2025 12:48 PM
200	Housing	1/27/2025 11:40 AM
201	Lower property tax	1/27/2025 8:02 AM
202	Industrial business and community center/venue	1/27/2025 6:28 AM
203	Hotel	1/27/2025 6:19 AM
204	Hotel	1/26/2025 9:26 PM
205	More retail	1/26/2025 9:16 PM
206	A high quality restaurant and to get the buildings downtown finished. Currently you many unfinished building projects in the downtown area an eyesore.	1/26/2025 8:28 PM
207	A downtown that offers more unique shopping and dining experiences to draw more people to ourtown.	1/26/2025 5:22 PM
208	Hotel	1/26/2025 4:32 PM
209	Earlier morning plowing, consistent sidewalks	1/26/2025 4:22 PM
210	More things to do. Community Rec Center, better Park n Rec programs.	1/26/2025 3:37 PM
211	More than one restaurant/bar. One that you don't have to have a membership to attend. Entertainment.	1/26/2025 10:22 AM
212	More businesses. Computable leadership. Good tax base.	1/26/2025 7:09 AM
213	Brewery/restaurant	1/25/2025 11:01 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

214	Bike trail to Elba	1/25/2025 7:43 PM
215	Aldis!	1/25/2025 6:59 PM
216	A place for families to engage with each other all seasons of the year	1/25/2025 3:56 PM
217	New Christmas decorations. The ones we've had for 25 years are pitiful	1/25/2025 2:39 PM
218	More boutique stores, brewery, or a sandwich shop.	1/25/2025 2:32 PM
219	Restaurants. Not McDonald's and Hardee's, but think downtown New Ulm or Chatfield even.	1/25/2025 2:17 PM
220	Housing	1/25/2025 1:43 PM
221	More volunteers for the ambulance and fire department	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
222	More volunteers	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
223	A strong educational system and support for families.	1/25/2025 12:18 PM
224	More options for food and activities	1/25/2025 10:48 AM
225	A community center - gym space, walking track, indoor pool, indoor play for kids and adults	1/25/2025 8:52 AM
226	Need to start working on some housing development	1/25/2025 8:49 AM
227	Hotel, continued support for the local and downtown area so it stays vibrant	1/25/2025 7:54 AM
228	Large heated indoor swimming pool available to the entire community	1/25/2025 7:32 AM
229	Great education	1/25/2025 6:55 AM
230	Tax Cut	1/25/2025 6:52 AM
231	More options for dinning and shopping in town	1/25/2025 6:03 AM
232	A place to gather	1/25/2025 5:43 AM
233	A bar like Mauers or Tony's. Something more lively then good sport	1/25/2025 12:35 AM
234	A UPS/Fedex drop location	1/24/2025 11:33 PM
235	Revitalized downtown and invest in the greenspace. Try again for bike trail to Whitewater	1/24/2025 11:02 PM
236	Commerce-shopping or other entertainment avenues	1/24/2025 10:21 PM
237	Cheaper electricity and garbage/recycling rates	1/24/2025 9:58 PM
238	Hotel	1/24/2025 9:43 PM
239	Not sure	1/24/2025 9:42 PM
240	Lower taxes	1/24/2025 9:31 PM
241	Activities for youth	1/24/2025 9:27 PM
242	Hotelfor many reasons.	1/24/2025 9:25 PM
243	More businesses	1/24/2025 9:20 PM
244	More unity among businesses and committees. Stand for one cause	1/24/2025 9:19 PM
245	Business growth. Get school back on track.	1/24/2025 9:11 PM
246	More business downtown	1/24/2025 9:02 PM
247	Apartment building	1/24/2025 8:50 PM
248	Culture	1/24/2025 7:13 PM
249	Growth and partnership to sustain small town immunities with community focus.	1/24/2025 6:56 PM
250	More variety of businesses	1/24/2025 6:38 PM
251	Dining, hotel	1/24/2025 6:23 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

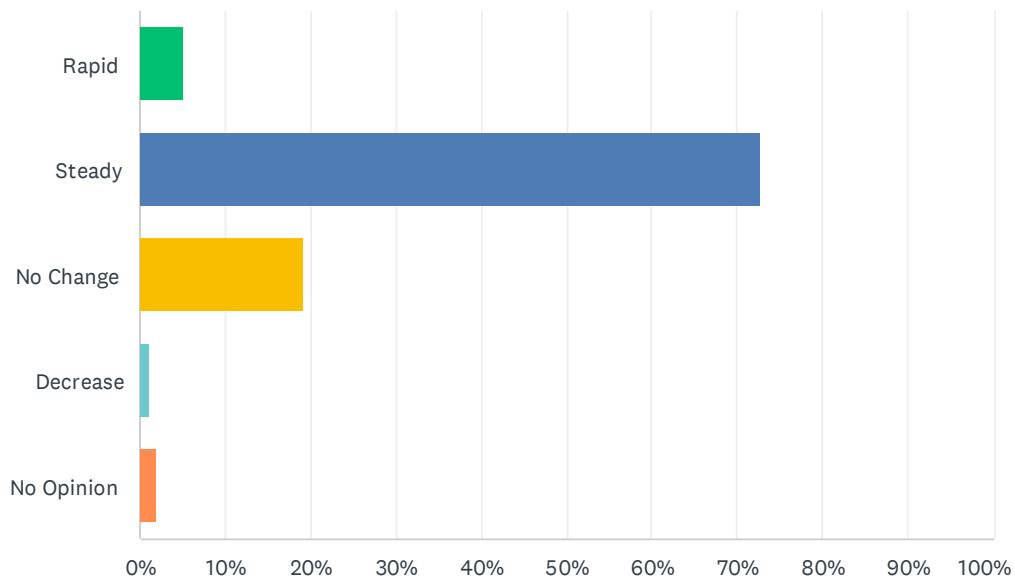
252	More small businesses downtown. Restaurants, brewery. Reasons for non-SC residents to travel/shop/eat here.	1/24/2025 5:51 PM
253	Family activity / recreation center for winter indoor activities and safer ways to cross the highways besides one traffic light.	1/24/2025 5:37 PM
254	Motels, reception halls, more housing	1/24/2025 5:36 PM
255	Family entertainment, ie: bowling alley, movie theater	1/24/2025 5:20 PM
256	Get rid of all lastines	1/24/2025 5:19 PM
257	Dentist	1/24/2025 5:18 PM
258	Hotel	1/24/2025 5:10 PM
259	More housing developments	1/24/2025 5:10 PM
260	Growth	1/24/2025 5:08 PM
261	Keep costs down.	1/24/2025 5:00 PM
262	The school district to get back on track	1/24/2025 4:59 PM
263	Restaurant	1/24/2025 4:56 PM
264	Nicer facilities	1/24/2025 4:53 PM
265	More activities for kids to do	1/24/2025 4:49 PM
266	More affordable housing	1/24/2025 4:49 PM
267	Jobs with sustainable pay and benefits. Until more residents can make a comfortable living in town, St. Charles will remain a bedroom community where most adults commute to work.	1/24/2025 4:48 PM
268	Cohesiveness	1/24/2025 4:47 PM
269	More businesses downtown to attract and keep business local	1/24/2025 4:36 PM
270	To stock Jessens pond	1/24/2025 4:30 PM
271	A revived downtown	1/24/2025 4:30 PM
272	More things to do with kids—indoor pool, bowling, ect	1/24/2025 4:27 PM
273	Indoor space for families. Ie bowling, roller rink, movies etc	1/24/2025 4:25 PM
274	Restaurants	1/24/2025 4:20 PM
275	Higher housing supply	1/24/2025 4:14 PM
276	Downtown retail	1/24/2025 4:07 PM
277	Community programs for kids	1/24/2025 3:37 PM
278	A splash pad in city park and a hotel with water park.	1/24/2025 2:29 PM
279	Willingness to try new things to make our community better place to live/visit.	1/24/2025 2:00 PM
280	Growth	1/24/2025 1:38 PM
281	Growth.	1/24/2025 1:21 PM
282	Hotel	1/24/2025 1:15 PM
283	Variety of Business. Too many empty store fronts on main street	1/24/2025 12:58 PM
284	Additional housing options, including more rural options. Some intersections need improvement as well.	1/24/2025 12:58 PM
285	More groups and activities for locals of all ages that don't focus on religion or having family here.	1/24/2025 12:39 PM
286	main street businesses	1/24/2025 12:34 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

287	More restaurants and businesses	1/24/2025 12:33 PM
288	to force residents to take better care of their property	1/24/2025 12:29 PM
289	Decent supper club	1/24/2025 11:57 AM
290	Affordable housing, not necessarily apartments but single family homes that are reasonable for first time home buyers, single income families	1/24/2025 11:45 AM
291	Home	1/24/2025 11:35 AM
292	Children activities: ie. Bowling, movie theater, indoor playground, mini golf	1/24/2025 11:26 AM
293	Eliminate animosity around schools	1/24/2025 11:00 AM
294	Appearance - updating of homes/businesses	1/24/2025 10:58 AM

Q5 What rate of growth would be most beneficial to our community?

Answered: 365 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rapid	5.21%	19
Steady	72.60%	265
No Change	19.18%	70
Decrease	1.10%	4
No Opinion	1.92%	7
TOTAL		365

Q6 If you would like to elaborate on your answer above, please do so here.

Answered: 104 Skipped: 272

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The residents are encouraged to compete with each other on how dirty their yards can be. The city seems to love this behavior and encourages people to trash the town.	3/28/2025 11:50 AM
2	Shit runs downhill, and St Charles is at the bottom of that hill.	3/28/2025 11:23 AM
3	keep taxes lower with all of the rising costs everywhere our taxes, businesses, school, should be kept priority	3/27/2025 9:14 PM
4	Slow growth to support school	3/5/2025 10:59 AM
5	I think having enough people for businesses to be sustainable is important but I also think to quick of growth leads to more issues. Quality over quantity!	2/26/2025 11:35 PM
6	I love seeing our community grow. I think it brings in more opportunities for the people living here for jobs and other possible businesses to open and thrive here.	2/24/2025 9:23 PM
7	I would prefer to see development of what is already here rather than growth for the sake of growth. However, to improve our community, there must be some growth. That growth should be conservative to preserve our community feel.	2/23/2025 1:14 PM
8	Small communities like St Charles thrive best when there's an incentive for young new families to move to town. I believe many criteria for this are already being met. One that's lacking is affordable single family housing, not just apartments but genuine homes.	2/22/2025 4:24 PM
9	Our government and school system needs to be more Transparent, equal and make better decisions before any growth!	2/20/2025 1:25 PM
10	We moved to St. Charles because it is a small town. Would like it to remain the same.	2/20/2025 9:37 AM
11	More affordable homes for families and more businesses for teens to work at.	2/17/2025 12:38 PM
12	More people will boost local businesses. People of S.C. don't seem to like change, that's why there is only a few who try to do new things for the community, and maybe new/more people will help bring some positive change.	2/16/2025 7:32 PM
13	Rapid isn't broad enough. I'd rather see consistent rapid growth that is responsive to the real-time and anticipated needs that is also visionary.	2/16/2025 4:15 PM
14	Our community has grown making crossing 14 more dangerous and time consuming.	2/15/2025 8:49 PM
15	We need more option on housing so that our community has the opportunity to grow	2/12/2025 6:08 AM
16	The ability to build new homes is starting to cost way too much. If we can open up some land for development that would be great.	2/9/2025 7:11 AM
17	steady would be better to let people adjust to changes	2/8/2025 5:51 PM
18	to let people get used to the changes	2/8/2025 5:29 PM
19	I would love to see modernization of parks and community spaces, more community events, attraction of more businesses, especially locally owned businesses, more walking/biking paths, investment in activities for adults and children	2/6/2025 9:07 PM
20	I wish the city would work to require clean up/demolition of unsafe and/or abandoned structures such as half burned hotel across from city hall. You have owners in the immediate vicinity making capital improvements to attract retail/housing and absolutely nothing has been done to deal with what I can only imagine is a mold and vermin infested structure.	2/6/2025 8:56 AM
21	Living in a small town is best; our families are amazing, our programs are well run and more people means more challenges, good or bad.	2/6/2025 5:18 AM

St. Charles Community Survey

22	I would hate to see the community lose its charm by rapid growth. It's too close to a beautiful state park to lose its beauty.	2/5/2025 10:42 PM
23	We do not need to grow just to grow but we need to continue to bring in new families to support the school and long term community	2/5/2025 1:18 PM
24	Don't want another Rochester	2/5/2025 12:17 PM
25	When I moved to St. Charles 30 years ago it was a charming small community with appropriately sized city government & property taxes. I have witnessed city hall go from a small well equipped group of individual to the current "keep Pace" with Rochester mentality. The small town atmosphere is what drew us to St. Charles 30 years ago. ST. Charles has lost that small town atmosphere which drew us to move here and raise our 2 children.	2/5/2025 1:41 AM
26	We have lived in saints fir over 30 years and the costs in the 5 years of utility costs is off balance and the town is being charged more ,man's there does not seem to be any urgency from the city government to lower or address this issue.	2/4/2025 9:58 PM
27	They need to lower the city bill 2 people in 1 house should not be paying almost \$300.00 that is bull crap.	2/4/2025 1:06 PM
28	If utility costs are not contained growth will not happen. Many residents have mentioned this concern to me.	2/4/2025 10:03 AM
29	New people welcome them	2/4/2025 4:40 AM
30	To fast leads to uncontrollable costs. Need to grow at a steady planned rate.	2/3/2025 8:33 PM
31	MORE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	2/3/2025 8:18 PM
32	Cost of utilities need to be reduce in order for St. Charles to grow	2/3/2025 5:22 PM
33	Based upon how enrollment is down at the schools, attracting young families to the area should be a priority	2/3/2025 11:06 AM
34	With larger communities comes larger problems. I feel that our community is in a sweet spot right now with keeping the small town charm but with great resources and availability of resources for the community members we currently have.	2/3/2025 10:49 AM
35	St. Charles is a great size town. Growing too big too fast will take away the small town feel and potentially increase crime rates. Keep it small.	2/3/2025 6:23 AM
36	The bigger the city the more problems it has	2/2/2025 10:15 PM
37	If rate of growth is referring to population? I believe if it grew larger people would leave more often. People come here to get away from the big city lifestyle.	2/2/2025 9:18 PM
38	Need more affordable housing.	2/1/2025 7:12 PM
39	Slow. Carefully planned infrastructure to support growth.	2/1/2025 9:43 AM
40	Rapid growth is unsustainable. No growth is stagnant. Decreased growth is death.	1/31/2025 7:35 PM
41	Multiple teachers continue to voice their concern with having a toxic work environment, and no support from administration.	1/31/2025 7:26 PM
42	There is a need for young families to revitalize the dwindling school enrollment.	1/31/2025 6:43 PM
43	Always want to be growing	1/31/2025 5:32 PM
44	We need more businesses so there are more job opportunities in town.	1/31/2025 4:02 PM
45	Growth is inevitable, sustainable growth is more advantageous overall as rapid growth would mean a loss of standards overall.	1/31/2025 3:20 PM
46	Our swimming pool could be open longer hire not only high school kids but others put more effort in things to do for the kids Ice skating is used every day when it is kept up! It's things like this that don't get attention but kids love having things to do	1/31/2025 2:10 PM
47	We need some industrial business	1/31/2025 12:58 PM
48	Our utility bills are ridiculous compared to other towns larger and smaller.	1/31/2025 10:41 AM

St. Charles Community Survey

49	There are no new housing developments/lots available in the city	1/30/2025 10:28 PM
50	Keep us rural	1/30/2025 8:38 PM
51	Steady growth allows the community to continue to grow and continue diversifying.	1/30/2025 4:48 PM
52	Me and my boyfriend both work in healthcare and we had a very hard time finding an apartment that would accept our cats	1/30/2025 4:26 PM
53	I don't believe we should over populate the St. Charles area, but I think the structures and buildings we have could be revitalized. Add some nicer apartment options.	1/30/2025 1:03 PM
54	I am for growth, however, I would like to still maintain the small-town vibe. We need to take advantage of having Rochester nextdoor to us, and offer more single-family housing.	1/30/2025 10:35 AM
55	Instead of continuing to build new, why don't we work on updating the homes that are already here. Offer different price points of living costs. The Habitat homes are \$275,000 with a monthly payment of \$1700. That's insanity. Don't let subpar builders in the community that do not back their work.	1/29/2025 5:00 PM
56	If you drive down Hwy 14, weeds in the ditches are always there, gravel parking lots look awful, the houses around town that are left to disrepair and just junk in the yards.	1/29/2025 11:53 AM
57	Small growth would allow local businesses to be more successful and open the opportunities for more improvement.	1/29/2025 11:22 AM
58	Steady growth will allow the town to keep up with the increase of residents.	1/29/2025 7:45 AM
59	Read about Batesville School District Arkansas and how solar helped https://www.batesvilleschools.com/solarinitiative	1/29/2025 5:30 AM
60	Rapid growth brings crime	1/28/2025 11:16 PM
61	I love the size of our town and ability to have small town feel without the Rochester feel/congestion and crime.	1/28/2025 8:48 PM
62	Housing will always be an issue, a nice steady pace that allows families to still find affordable housing.	1/28/2025 7:44 PM
63	We need to grow, to keep the school and local businesses strong	1/28/2025 7:17 PM
64	St. Charles is currently growing at a steady pace that local resources can support. That is working. Let's not grow faster.	1/28/2025 6:25 PM
65	Rapid growth is hard to plan for and provide services for which increases stress. Steady growth can be maintained.	1/28/2025 1:39 PM
66	Population booms ruin small towns. More crime, less resources, greedy developers and big business destroys small business/families. Keep our small town a small town.	1/27/2025 2:33 PM
67	I think a hotel is needed to house families visiting, here for sports tournaments, etc. St. Charles is lacking in that area. Having one small motel which needs major updating is not a great option.	1/27/2025 12:48 PM
68	I believe the city of Saint Charles is growing at a fairly moderate rate. At this time I do not see the need to speed up or slow down.	1/27/2025 8:02 AM
69	This community needs to look for businesses that attract people. Plus, when homes or businesses become abandoned, they need to be replaced with something new on a timely basis.	1/27/2025 6:19 AM
70	I love the size of our town. It's perfect for raising a family.	1/26/2025 9:16 PM
71	If a city isn't growing it is dying.	1/26/2025 8:28 PM
72	We like the small town feel. We do not want the town to get too big or grow rapidly.	1/26/2025 3:37 PM
73	We need to stay a small town. If we don't then we'd need larger schools, more emergency vehicles, etc. we are a good size now.	1/25/2025 9:31 PM
74	I prefer the small town but would love to have more downtown options - shops and nice restaurants (not fast food).	1/25/2025 2:17 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

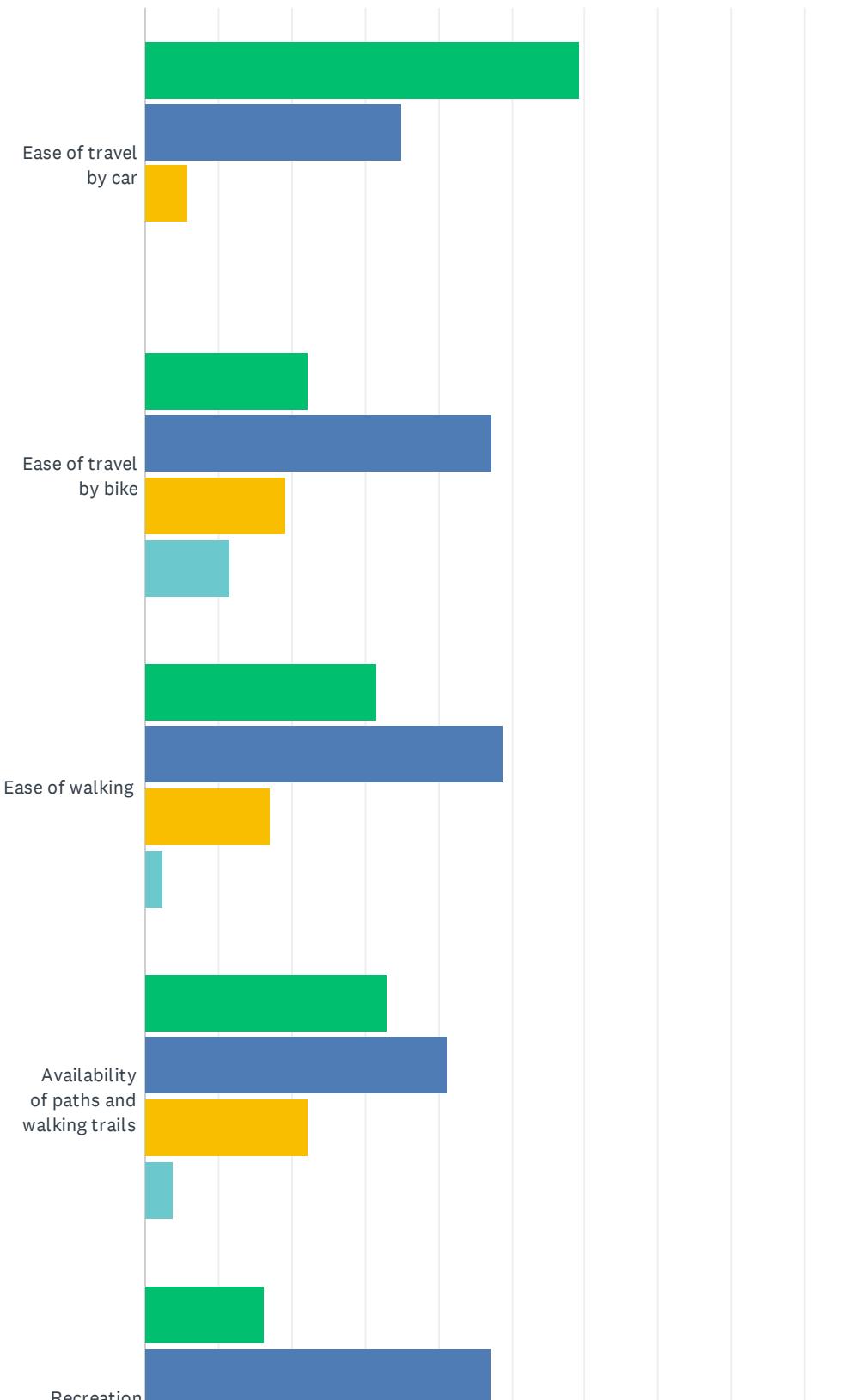
75	Sustainable growth	1/25/2025 1:43 PM
76	We have no land to build houses and failed industrial parks	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
77	Things are expensive, so it will take time.	1/24/2025 11:02 PM
78	Healthy steady growth is better than a fast rapid boom	1/24/2025 9:43 PM
79	We like the small town.	1/24/2025 9:42 PM
80	Most of us live here because we enjoy living in a small town close to larger towns and job opportunities. If Saint Charles were to grow too fast or too much, it would lose what makes it an amazing place to live.	1/24/2025 9:27 PM
81	The bedrock is the school and the growth of the community. Let's keep supporting this vision. We do need more housing.	1/24/2025 9:25 PM
82	I think we need to bring in some more businesses so people can have more job opportunities	1/24/2025 9:20 PM
83	Steady change allows for gradual growth and being able to deal with uncertain events that might pop up, growing too rapidly can be a great thing but could also set a community back quicker too.	1/24/2025 9:19 PM
84	City is opposed to new apartments	1/24/2025 8:50 PM
85	More quality restaurants	1/24/2025 7:13 PM
86	In simple terms More family's = more business More business = More money More money = More opportunities	1/24/2025 6:56 PM
87	Perfect size for a small town, close enough to Rochester and Winona	1/24/2025 6:23 PM
88	I'm okay with steady growth but our schools are maxed and citizens are less willing to pass additional levies or referendums to support expansions or new construction.	1/24/2025 5:51 PM
89	Increased people should mean Increased jobs/opportunities. This shouldn't just be a commuter town	1/24/2025 5:19 PM
90	Try to keep st charles an affordable place to live. Don't waste money on fancy stuff only a few want but cost the many.	1/24/2025 5:00 PM
91	A nice community center (bigger and more amenities than the one we currently have).	1/24/2025 4:53 PM
92	A steady rate of growth would allow for housing to be built to accommodate and changed made to schools to accommodate influx of children.	1/24/2025 4:48 PM
93	An indoor pool would be nice too	1/24/2025 4:25 PM
94	I would like to see our "bedroom town" stay just that.	1/24/2025 3:59 PM
95	I'd prefer to keep small town st Charles a small town	1/24/2025 3:37 PM
96	Paint the damn road lines after winter, not before! It makes out town look unkept all summer otherwise!! Salt and scaping take it all away. Do it 3 times a year. Polish the community hall floors because they don't match the newness like the rest of the buiding.	1/24/2025 2:29 PM
97	I have lived here for over 15 years, St. Charles is conservative- so anything rapid will be hard for the community to support ie) lack of school referendum support with 2 failed votes before one was actually passed. We need young families involved in community and school initiatives but it is the same people doing the work and it isn't sustainable.	1/24/2025 2:00 PM
98	Keep attracting businesses to help provide tax money, attractiveness to live, and show a willingness to grow.	1/24/2025 1:21 PM
99	Continued growth would take away from the small town feel. We do lose some already focusing on tourists to whitewater, but that also has been needed historically.	1/24/2025 12:39 PM
100	limit sprawl, enhance the character of the downtown, growth does not equal quality of life	1/24/2025 12:34 PM
101	Responsible growth would be appreciated. Don't just allowing any large chain retailer into town	1/24/2025 12:33 PM
102	it should remain a small town, we don't need anymore growth	1/24/2025 12:29 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

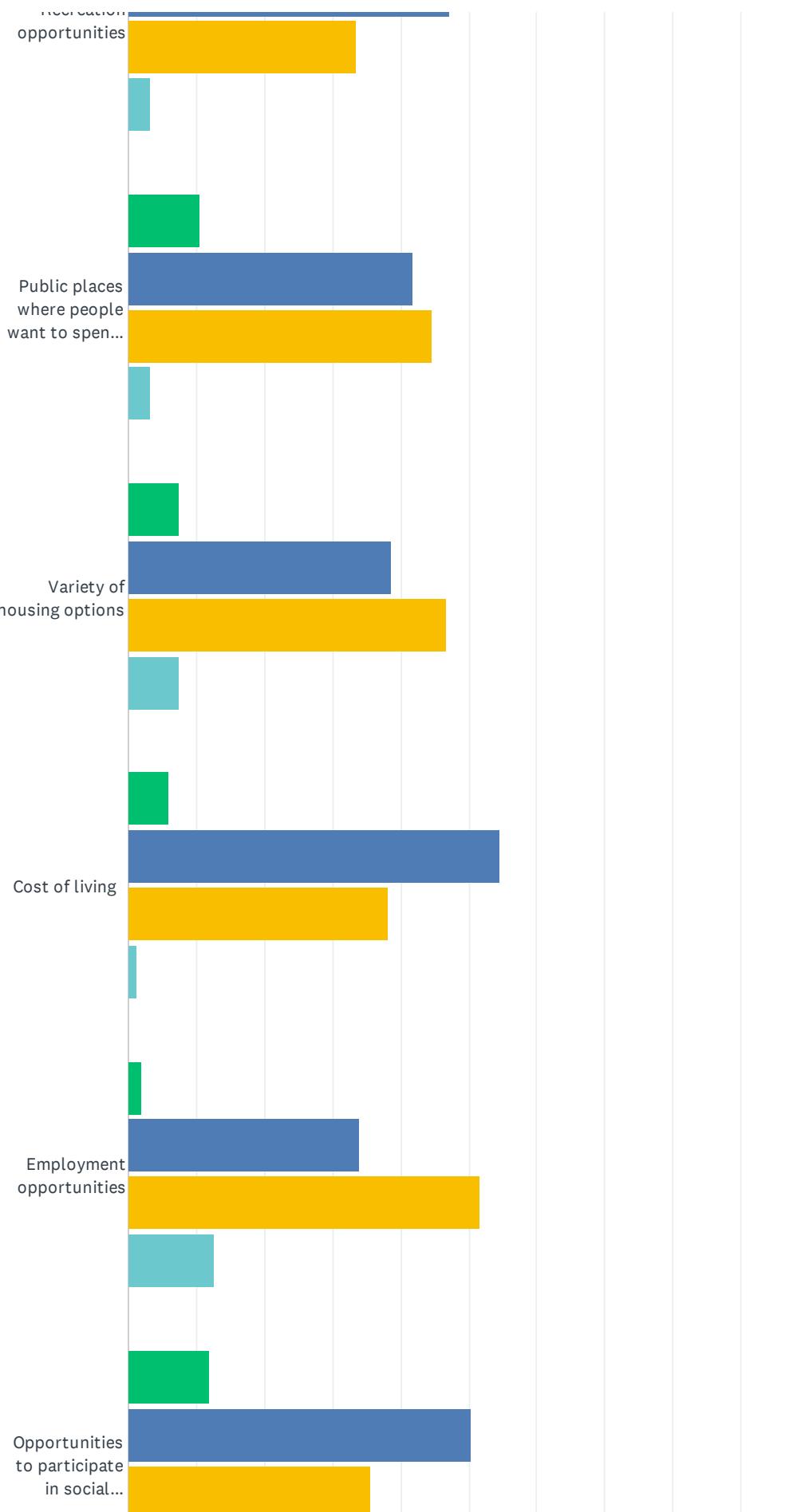
103	Rapid growth is no good for any city, steady planning and growth make cities stronger and well planned out for the future. To rapid of growth, many things fall through the cracks because economics don't grow rapidly and stay consistent.	1/24/2025 11:57 AM
104	Growth that happens too fast usually ends up being problematic	1/24/2025 11:45 AM

Q7 Rate the following statements based on what is going well, and/or what needs work in St. Charles.

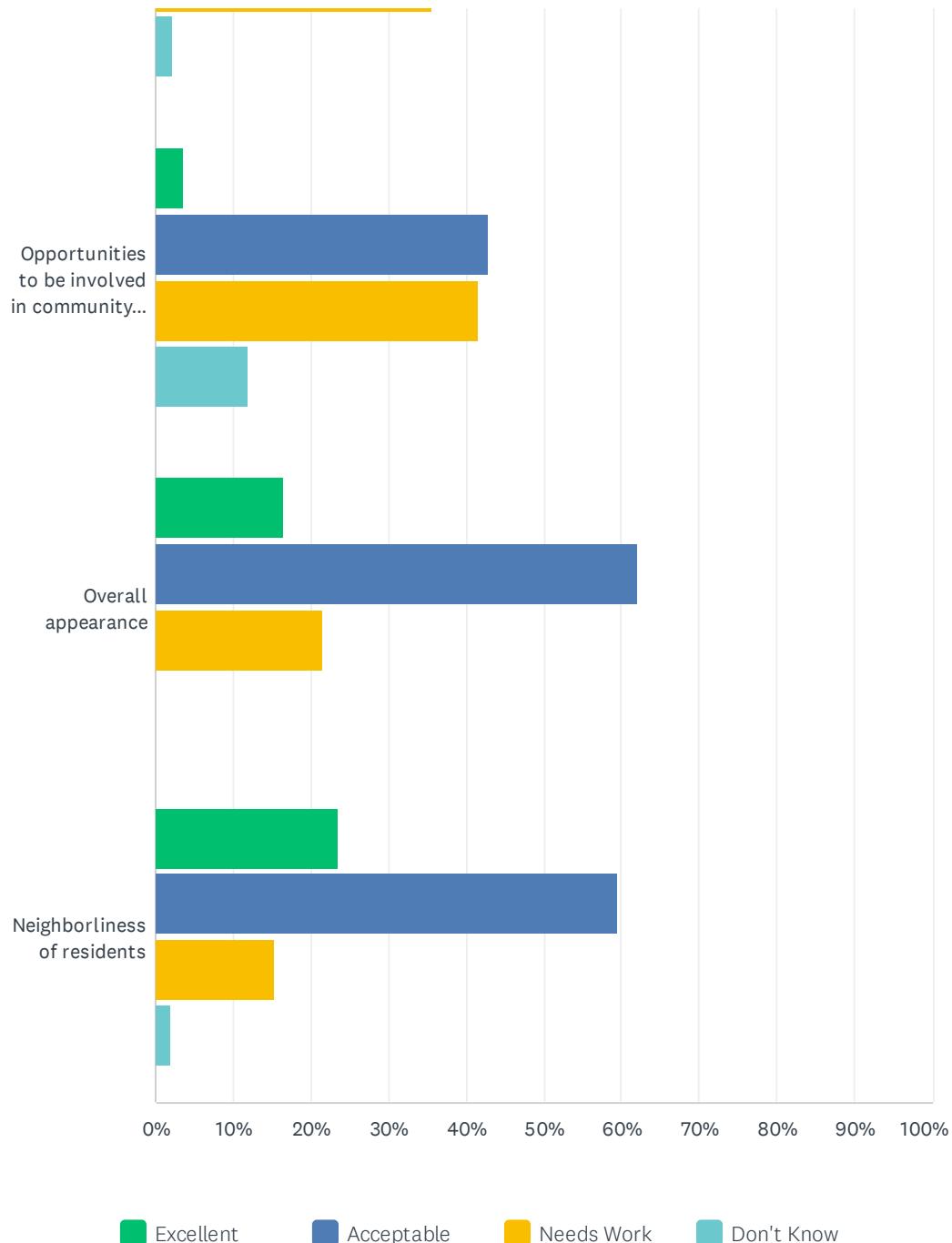
Answered: 368 Skipped: 8



St. Charles Community Survey



St. Charles Community Survey



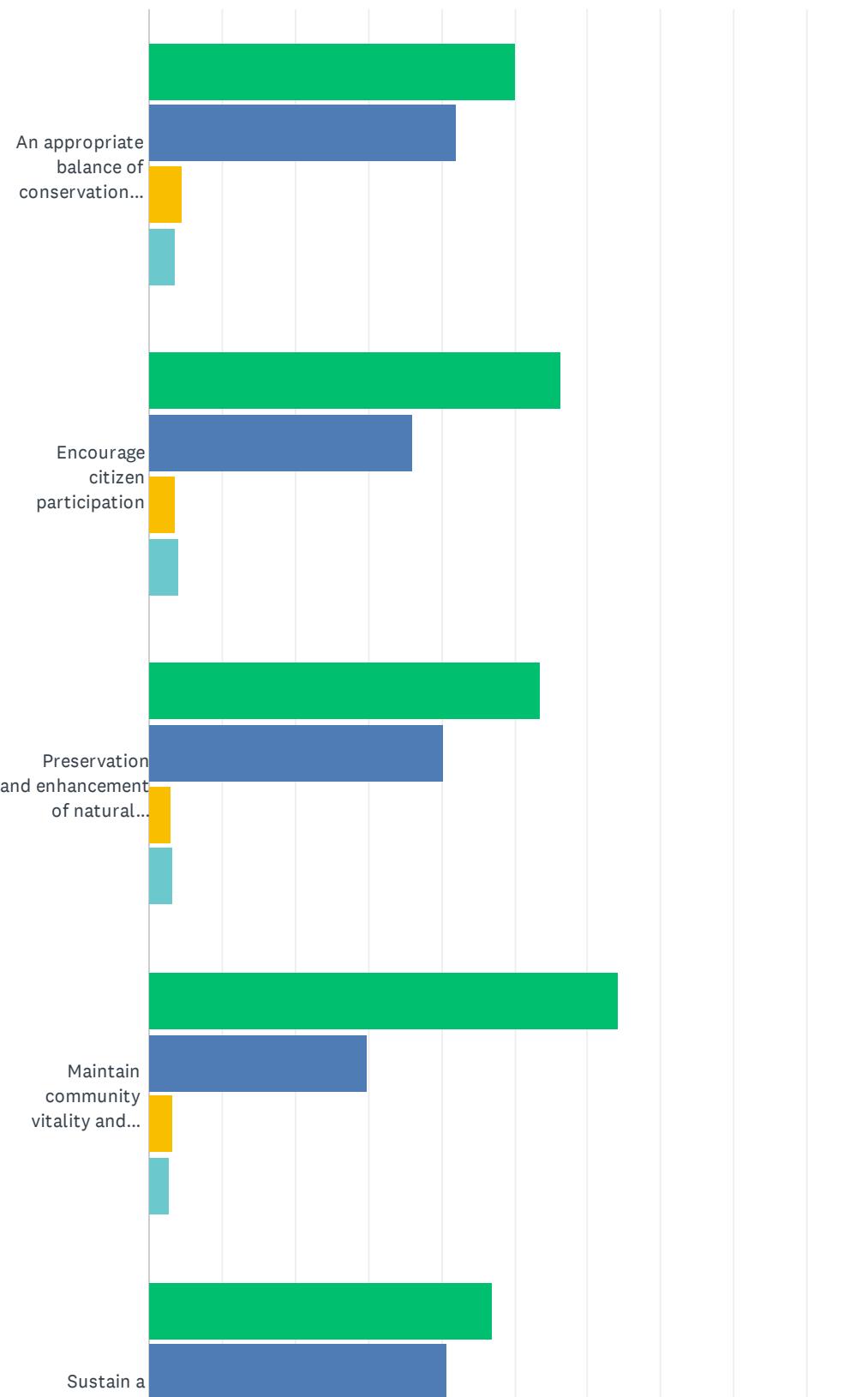
■ Excellent ■ Acceptable ■ Needs Work ■ Don't Know

St. Charles Community Survey

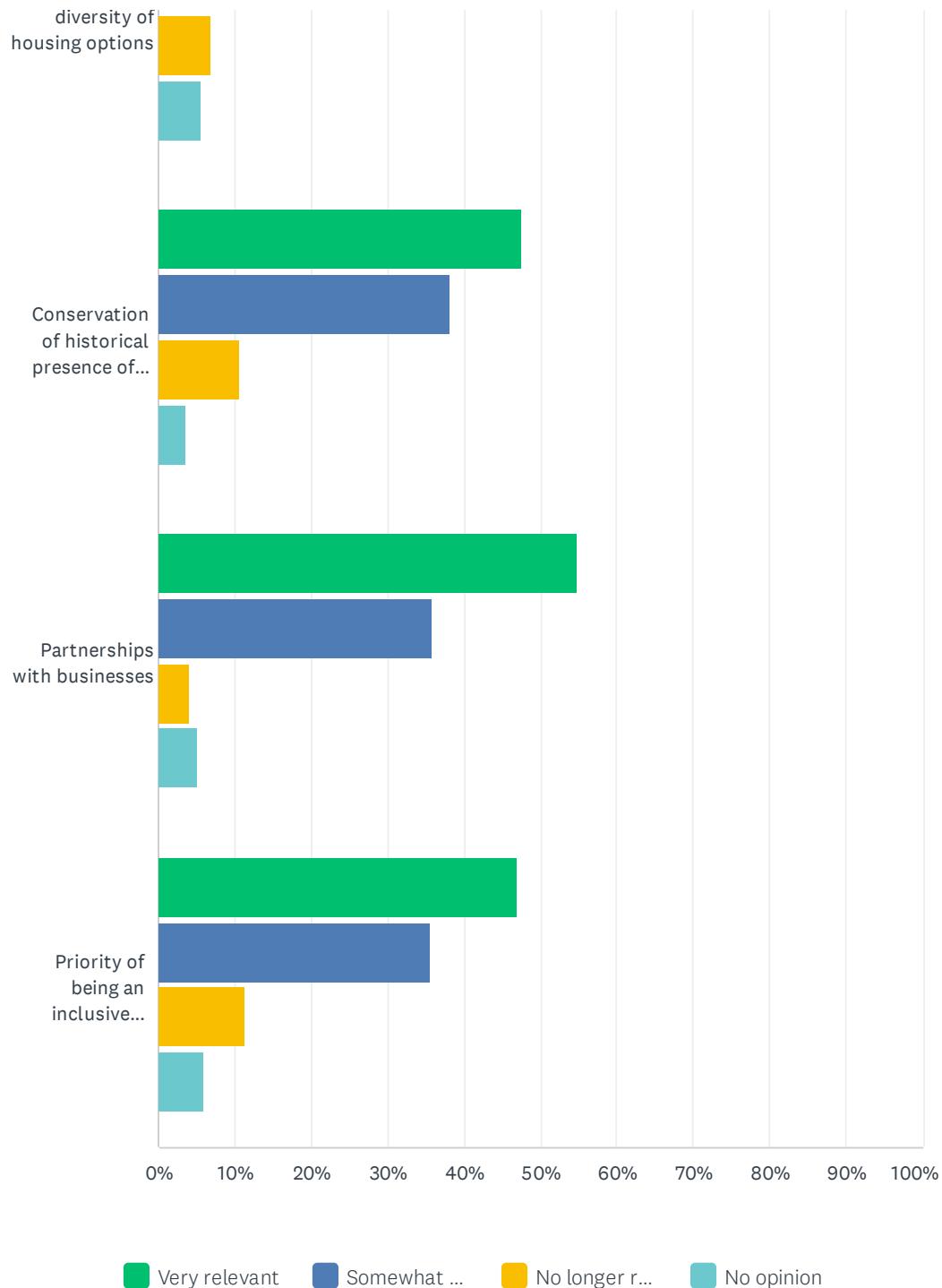
	EXCELLENT	ACCEPTABLE	NEEDS WORK	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Ease of travel by car	59.24% 218	35.05% 129	5.71% 21	0.00% 0	368
Ease of travel by bike	22.13% 81	47.27% 173	19.13% 70	11.48% 42	366
Ease of walking	31.52% 116	48.91% 180	17.12% 63	2.45% 9	368
Availability of paths and walking trails	32.97% 121	41.14% 151	22.07% 81	3.81% 14	367
Recreation opportunities	16.16% 59	47.12% 172	33.42% 122	3.29% 12	365
Public places where people want to spend time	10.38% 38	41.80% 153	44.54% 163	3.28% 12	366
Variety of housing options	7.36% 27	38.69% 142	46.59% 171	7.36% 27	367
Cost of living	5.99% 22	54.50% 200	38.15% 140	1.36% 5	367
Employment opportunities	1.91% 7	33.88% 124	51.64% 189	12.57% 46	366
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	12.02% 44	50.27% 184	35.52% 130	2.19% 8	366
Opportunities to be involved in community decision making	3.55% 13	42.90% 157	41.53% 152	12.02% 44	366
Overall appearance	16.35% 60	62.13% 228	21.53% 79	0.00% 0	367
Neighborliness of residents	23.43% 86	59.40% 218	15.26% 56	1.91% 7	367

Q8 Below are the goals from St. Charles' current Comprehensive Plan. How relevant do you think these goals are for the future of St. Charles?

Answered: 367 Skipped: 9



St. Charles Community Survey



Very relevant Somewhat relevant No longer relevant No opinion

St. Charles Community Survey

	VERY RELEVANT	SOMEWHAT RELEVANT	NO LONGER RELEVANT	NO OPINION	TOTAL
An appropriate balance of conservation and development	50.14% 183	41.92% 153	4.38% 16	3.56% 13	365
Encourage citizen participation	56.28% 206	36.07% 132	3.55% 13	4.10% 15	366
Preservation and enhancement of natural features	53.42% 195	40.27% 147	3.01% 11	3.29% 12	365
Maintain community vitality and character	64.11% 234	29.86% 109	3.29% 12	2.74% 10	365
Sustain a diversity of housing options	46.85% 171	40.82% 149	6.85% 25	5.48% 20	365
Conservation of historical presence of Whitewater Ave	47.54% 174	38.25% 140	10.66% 39	3.55% 13	366
Partnerships with businesses	54.79% 200	35.89% 131	4.11% 15	5.21% 19	365
Priority of being an inclusive community	46.98% 171	35.71% 130	11.26% 41	6.04% 22	364

Q9 (Optional) If you could add one goal to the list above, what would it be?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 278

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Revitalize downtown. It's the face of our community and not the greatest looking.	4/16/2025 10:30 AM
2	Clean up the land by the church looks bad when you drive into town	3/29/2025 7:19 AM
3	Increase on property tax to support a bigger dump site so everyone has the ability to clean up their yards.	3/28/2025 11:50 AM
4	This is all BS and everyone knows it. Your name is the only factor in thriving in St Charles. Honestly you've all earned the dump of a town you've built and this survey will have no bearing on your future because at the end of the day, you just do what gives you immediate personal gain. Run it into the ground. I love seeing it get worse since I left.	3/28/2025 11:23 AM
5	Inspect places before they are rented. My family was without heat the whole winter and our landlord could have cared less and we have a baby even and your town didn't do nothing about but made me go in circles, well now your screwed cause the county is taking care of it.	3/28/2025 10:58 AM
6	HOTEL and MOVE Kwik Trip like Chatfield and Eyota did	3/28/2025 8:14 AM
7	Insist that residences are kept clean and free of trash and old, non licensed vehicles	3/27/2025 10:56 PM
8	Add more recreation for individuals and families.	3/27/2025 9:55 PM
9	Expand businesses in downtown on main street. In particular a nice restaurant/bar possibly with outside seating. St. Charles needs additional gathering space for community, particularly younger adults.	3/12/2025 8:53 AM
10	Give us a damn break.	2/26/2025 12:28 AM
11	Have to have reason for people to go to.	2/24/2025 10:46 PM
12	Do more for our Veterans. And those who died for us. I	2/24/2025 6:43 PM
13	We don't want low income housing and apartment complexes built.	2/23/2025 3:45 PM
14	Community involvement in decision making and shared information! a public forum with open suggestions and likewise for the school board. no special meetings!!!	2/20/2025 1:25 PM
15	Keep our small town small.	2/20/2025 9:37 AM
16	Grow	2/18/2025 3:23 PM
17	A lot of community events/activities are based on physical activities (sports and outdoor recreation). Some involve alcoholic beverages and large groups of people. Create some events that include people who don't like physical activities and/or people who don't/can't consume alcohol. Examples: Board games, TTRPGs, or movie nights. (Smaller groups of these can even be hosted at a home.)	2/16/2025 7:32 PM
18	More community events!	2/15/2025 8:49 PM
19	Growth - both business and residential	2/13/2025 4:33 PM
20	Updating parks and reasons why people would want to move to St. Charles or stop in at Charles	2/12/2025 6:08 AM
21	Bring back Main Street business. It's nothing like it used to be.	2/11/2025 10:39 PM
22	Does diversity of housing options include affordable AND accessible housing? Also, accessibility needs to be considered in all city planning. Please include a disabled person in the planning.	2/9/2025 12:15 AM
23	Clean up some homes that are cluttered.	2/8/2025 5:29 PM
24	Invest in the arts/cultural resources: places and events that will bring people together and help	2/7/2025 10:08 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

newcomers feel they can be part of the community

25	Lower property taxes	2/7/2025 6:29 AM
26	Acquire and take down dilapidated downtown building on Broadway and Wabasha Ave. Motel and Buzz	2/6/2025 4:00 PM
27	Encourage businesses that would make us a destination town.	2/6/2025 8:56 AM
28	Too much focus on improving the public schools right now; let's focus on the items listed above	2/5/2025 9:27 PM
29	One last cosmetic thing to consider would be two cross walks with lights like we have on our main street. I'd love to see them placed near the high school as well as the area near kwik trip that the kids cross. I think not only would it benefit the school but it would also benefit the community when kids/adults are out going to the pool, walking to the fair, daily walks/bikers ect. It over all would enhance the safety of anyone walking across that street and I think those are key areas where they'd benefit the most.	2/5/2025 6:40 PM
30	Clean up areas that have been sitting for years unfinished.	2/5/2025 11:02 AM
31	Address the high cost of utilities for a town that as the solar panel field and no impact fir residential utility bills, the amount is exorbitant compared to comparable communities.	2/4/2025 9:58 PM
32	Create more jobs	2/4/2025 8:34 PM
33	I'd like to see the ditch that runs along Hwy 74 and past subway cleaned up. When you enter our town it's one of the first things you see and is an eyesore. (Sorry I know this isn't really a goal in the sense of the way the question was asked	2/4/2025 11:57 AM
34	Lower the cost of utilities significantly. Completely outrageous the rate we pay today.	2/4/2025 10:03 AM
35	Fix Whitewater Avenue road - or make alternate truck Route	2/4/2025 4:40 AM
36	Lower cost of utilities. Make them more in order with surrounding towns	2/3/2025 5:22 PM
37	Lower city utility bill. Cost is way higher than communities of same size	2/3/2025 5:10 PM
38	Display and preserve the city history	2/3/2025 10:49 AM
39	Indoor Public Recreation	2/2/2025 9:18 PM
40	Summer park and rec 'hang out' program (board games, crafts, pool) for kids ages around 7-11, instead of just sports	2/2/2025 11:56 AM
41	Senior Citizens	2/1/2025 10:19 PM
42	Make a new entrance for love truck stop semi and cars don't stop	2/1/2025 9:00 PM
43	Reduce spending and taxes, don't use surpluses to support over spending divisions	2/1/2025 6:21 PM
44	Indoor recreational area, outside of schools.	2/1/2025 9:43 AM
45	A new development for people to build on/ improvement of st Charles schools so teachers stop leaving.	2/1/2025 8:04 AM
46	Please consider accessibility in all areas of town. Whispering Hills is easily walkable. The poorest parts of town are not walkable.	1/31/2025 9:29 PM
47	Expand and enhance our educational offerings.	1/31/2025 7:26 PM
48	clean up the commercial properties	1/31/2025 7:09 PM
49	Nurture The Arts	1/31/2025 6:43 PM
50	To attract new and encourage business growth. New shops - filling empty shops etc. with the aim to increase jobs and variety.	1/31/2025 3:20 PM
51	It would be nice to see a hotel or motel / restaurant	1/31/2025 2:10 PM
52	Parks,railroad,	1/30/2025 7:43 PM
53	If you bring more businesses here then people would spend money here, I stead of going to	1/30/2025 6:24 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

Rochester or Winona. Grow with the community and meet the needs of a growing community. Kids need jobs and there are not enough available as the class sizes grow.

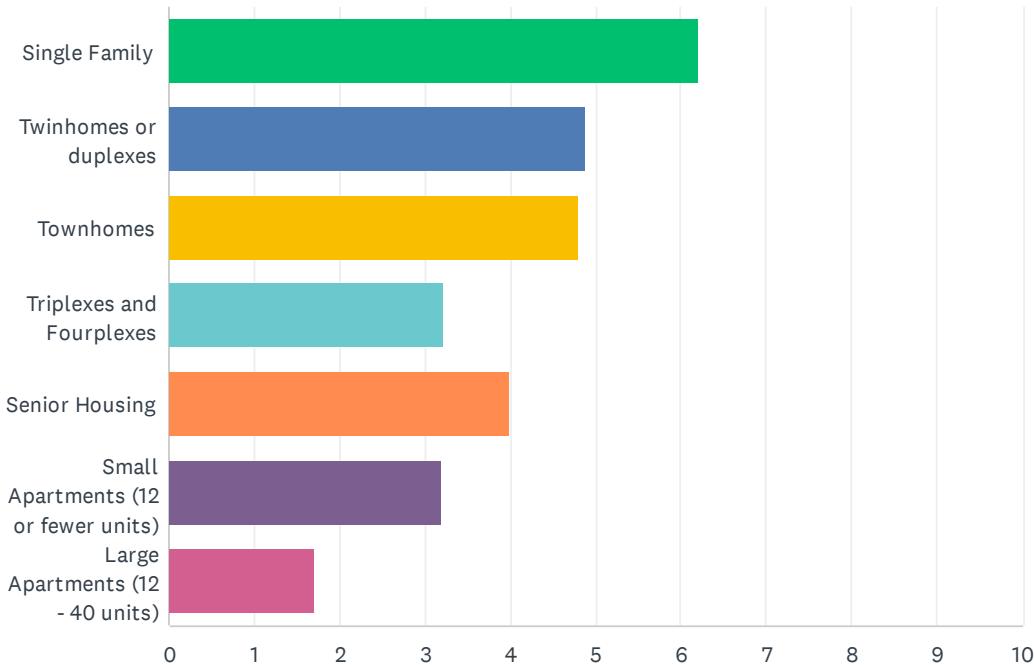
54	In Plainview, MN there are townhomes owned by Three Rivers that are affordable and accept animals. I would love to see this in St. Charles someday	1/30/2025 4:26 PM
55	beautification and business diversification of the downtown district	1/30/2025 10:35 AM
56	An overpass for safe crossing of highway 14.	1/29/2025 5:00 PM
57	Abandoned houses must be dealt with. There is a home on my block that is dangerous for the neighborhood children. It must be removed. Nobody has lived there for many years and it is a health hazard. Please make this a priority.	1/29/2025 11:34 AM
58	Attracting business's	1/29/2025 7:45 AM
59	Bring in more places to work, manufacturing, or some place where people can work and make a decent wage.	1/29/2025 5:30 AM
60	Continue to attract residents by being a lower cost of living alternative to Olmstead County	1/28/2025 11:31 PM
61	Need to tie the state park to the community more.	1/28/2025 7:17 PM
62	A way to welcome newcomers	1/28/2025 7:09 PM
63	Licensing for in home business opportunities!! Seasonal boutiques draw business from out of town and allow homeowners the opportunity for financial growth!!	1/28/2025 4:37 PM
64	Upgrade existing parks. Especially Jessen.	1/28/2025 1:40 PM
65	Economic and Public school development	1/27/2025 10:22 PM
66	Keep Mitch Walch out of town. He will single handedly bring down the quality of life with every single decision he makes.	1/27/2025 2:33 PM
67	Bring in a hotel and additional restaurant options.	1/27/2025 12:48 PM
68	City government needs to get behind resident initiatives and work together	1/27/2025 6:28 AM
69	Hotel	1/27/2025 6:19 AM
70	Bring in businesses to empty downtown buildings.	1/26/2025 9:16 PM
71	Requiring residents to keep their property neat and clean (no junk in yards, lawns mowed, etc.).	1/26/2025 5:22 PM
72	Consistent sidewalks, streets plowed earlier	1/26/2025 4:22 PM
73	More affordability- taxes and utilities.	1/26/2025 7:09 AM
74	Need businesses that residents can work at	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
75	More inclusion of all types of families in community events.	1/25/2025 12:18 PM
76	Indoor Community engagement and activity space	1/25/2025 8:52 AM
77	Enhancing safety for pedestrians to cross Hwy 14 near the high school. Add a biking/walking trail connecting the town area to Loves gas station area. Improve safety of the turn from Loves on to Whitewater— too many semi trucks getting stuck.	1/25/2025 7:54 AM
78	Update our parks and equipment	1/25/2025 7:40 AM
79	Use facebook more to communicate with the younger homeowners.	1/25/2025 12:35 AM
80	The congestion on Hwy 74 Loves intersection was poorly planned	1/24/2025 9:43 PM
81	Attrack and retain business along with subdivision growth for housing.	1/24/2025 9:25 PM
82	Need to spend and invest to fire	1/24/2025 9:11 PM
83	More cultural activities, events	1/24/2025 7:13 PM
84	Encourage City participation	1/24/2025 6:56 PM

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85	Securing a hotel and some dining options	1/24/2025 6:23 PM
86	Cohesiveness between ALL businesses not just the very few that seem to wanna run the whole town	1/24/2025 4:47 PM
87	Bike trail to connect to Whitewater state park	1/24/2025 4:36 PM
88	To NOT have Marijuana stores in this town. Disappointed to hear you are pursuing this. Your actions need to be made transparent to the community.	1/24/2025 4:07 PM
89	Public safety. Want to feel confident letting young kids out in public as we did when we were kids.	1/24/2025 3:37 PM
90	Willingness to adapt with changing times.	1/24/2025 1:21 PM
91	Preservation and enhancement of natural features	1/24/2025 1:06 PM
92	Promote new businesses on Main Street and preserve history. Help restore buildings and add to the character.	1/24/2025 12:58 PM
93	Sidewalks!!! Safe walking areas are still a gap for many residential reas and that is a very common activity for many of all ages. Example: Richland Ave	1/24/2025 12:39 PM
94	Include a representative population of the community on city boards, and in discussions about the city	1/24/2025 12:34 PM
95	lower utility bill costs.	1/24/2025 12:29 PM
96	Improve how city enforces its ordinances	1/24/2025 11:57 AM
97	Bring back the vitality that whitewater avenue had decades ago with small businesses and community events. Make it enticing for new businesses to come downtown	1/24/2025 11:45 AM
98	Better the school system	1/24/2025 11:00 AM

**Q10 What type of housing do you feel is most needed in St. Charles?
Please rank the following options from 1-7 with 1 being the most needed.**

Answered: 370 Skipped: 6



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Single Family	69.46% 257	11.35% 42	5.95% 22	4.05% 15	4.05% 15	3.24% 12	1.89% 7	370	6.21
Twinhomes or duplexes	8.65% 32	32.97% 122	24.32% 90	15.95% 59	10.54% 39	6.49% 24	1.08% 4	370	4.89
Townhomes	7.57% 28	27.03% 100	31.62% 117	15.41% 57	10.00% 37	6.76% 25	1.62% 6	370	4.80
Triplexes and Fourplexes	1.35% 5	3.51% 13	8.38% 31	28.38% 105	28.38% 105	19.46% 72	10.54% 39	370	3.21
Senior Housing	5.14% 19	13.78% 51	17.30% 64	22.16% 82	27.57% 102	8.38% 31	5.68% 21	370	3.99
Small Apartments (12 or fewer units)	4.59% 17	8.65% 32	9.19% 34	11.62% 43	14.32% 53	47.84% 177	3.78% 14	370	3.19
Large Apartments (12 - 40 units)	3.24% 12	2.70% 10	3.24% 12	2.43% 9	5.14% 19	7.84% 29	75.41% 279	370	1.71

Q11 What housing types, if any, are missing from the list above that are needed in St. Charles?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 307

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Affordable	3/31/2025 2:31 PM
2	Modern appartments	3/29/2025 3:04 AM
3	Multi-use with more access to bars	3/28/2025 11:50 AM
4	Definitely invest in another tent city at the buzz. They're your best residents.	3/28/2025 11:23 AM
5	A new nursing home/care facility.	3/27/2025 9:55 PM
6	I would like to see more mixed use development. We should avoid increasing our municipal footprint while also focusing on developing our population. This could also improve our community, if people live where things happen.	2/23/2025 1:14 PM
7	We do not need to be a suburb. Keep our small town charm.	2/20/2025 9:37 AM
8	Twin homes and larger AFFORDABLE apartments	2/19/2025 11:16 PM
9	Assisted living	2/19/2025 3:29 AM
10	Tiny home community	2/18/2025 2:44 PM
11	None	2/17/2025 3:29 PM
12	None	2/17/2025 1:42 PM
13	Castles?	2/16/2025 7:32 PM
14	Low Income	2/16/2025 4:15 PM
15	Beach front 😊	2/16/2025 1:53 AM
16	Mobile Homes	2/14/2025 4:36 PM
17	Senior Housing	2/13/2025 12:40 PM
18	Senior housing. There is only one small one halter heights	2/11/2025 10:39 PM
19	Condos	2/9/2025 10:45 PM
20	more affordable options	2/8/2025 5:51 PM
21	Affordable	2/8/2025 5:29 PM
22	There are quite a few smaller sized apartments but they are run down. It would be nice to have either a larger apartment complete or smaller ones that were updated and affordable. Ones that I have lived in before are falling apart and are pricy for what you are getting.	2/8/2025 8:23 AM
23	N/a	2/7/2025 6:29 AM
24	Single family home rental options	2/5/2025 9:27 PM
25	It would be nice to see maybe a hotel? It would be nice to have visiting families have that option of staying and would bring in more visitors resting right off 90 and hopefully benefit and bring in more traffic to our small businesses.	2/5/2025 6:40 PM
26	More single family	2/5/2025 1:18 PM
27	Homes that a single person could afford	2/5/2025 9:15 AM
28	Single family	2/4/2025 8:34 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

29	Patio homes for seniors and then their affordable homes would be available to 1st time buyers	2/3/2025 8:33 PM
30	Need more senior housing	2/3/2025 8:18 PM
31	tiny home options	2/3/2025 10:49 AM
32	I don't think we need to build big buildings/houses to have them sit empty or bring riff raff in.	2/3/2025 6:23 AM
33	None, List is already too large for what is needed in my opinion.	2/2/2025 9:18 PM
34	Housing for handicapped; both mentally and physically handicapped.	2/2/2025 9:14 PM
35	Low income	1/31/2025 9:29 PM
36	Anything affordable	1/31/2025 10:41 AM
37	None	1/30/2025 7:49 PM
38	None	1/30/2025 7:43 PM
39	Nice apartments or "loft" apartments	1/30/2025 1:03 PM
40	Affordable	1/30/2025 7:52 AM
41	Fresh start homes (tiny homes/sheds), with contracts to help individuals get on their feet, obtain employment, secure a bank account, make a transportation plan, graduate into an apartment/house of their own.	1/29/2025 5:00 PM
42	Comment on single family housing - we need more housing in the \$200,000 - \$500,000 range.	1/29/2025 11:22 AM
43	None	1/29/2025 7:45 AM
44	Better nursing home	1/28/2025 9:50 PM
45	More townhome for active seniors, then they can sell their large single family homes to new families.	1/28/2025 7:17 PM
46	Affordable single family homes.	1/28/2025 7:09 PM
47	AFFORDABLE rental properties and one level single family homes.	1/28/2025 4:37 PM
48	Mid-level housing for working people, who aren't ready to buy. But don't want to live in low-end apartments.	1/28/2025 8:40 AM
49	Single family homes in a variety of prices ranges	1/27/2025 10:22 PM
50	Large apartment complexes	1/27/2025 10:12 PM
51	Single family homes is the most important.	1/27/2025 8:02 AM
52	55 + residential association	1/27/2025 6:28 AM
53	Long term care facility that is modern and locally owned. The current nursing facility is terrible. The worst in the area. We need something our community would be proud of.	1/27/2025 6:19 AM
54	Tiny houses	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
55	Condos	1/25/2025 12:31 PM
56	No opinion	1/25/2025 7:54 AM
57	Hotel	1/24/2025 11:02 PM
58	None, keep the large apartments to large cities	1/24/2025 9:27 PM
59	Small homes. Like Winona has.	1/24/2025 9:11 PM
60	Affordable	1/24/2025 5:19 PM
61	Affordable single family homes with neighborhood requirements to help with appearances,	1/24/2025 4:48 PM
62	Vrbo and hotel	1/24/2025 4:36 PM
63	N/a	1/24/2025 4:25 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

64	Would be nice if st Charles adjusted zoning rules to allow mother in law suites/accessory dwellings to be built on private property.	1/24/2025 4:14 PM
65	New smaller 2 bedroom homes.	1/24/2025 2:29 PM
66	Mixed-Use Development/Buildings	1/24/2025 1:38 PM
67	Single family 1-3 acre subdivisions.	1/24/2025 12:58 PM
68	NA	1/24/2025 12:39 PM
69	Affordable for low incomes, but still attractive	1/24/2025 11:57 AM

Q12 Please add any additional thoughts or comments you'd like to share with the planning team.

Answered: 102 Skipped: 274

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Add playground in the Southfork division Rent out spots in the old mayo parking lot for campers and trailers. Crack down on non running vehicles	3/29/2025 7:19 AM
2	I know it's usually give the people what they want, so more access to drinking and driving and open drug use in the town. Maybe the buzz could host some events?	3/28/2025 11:50 AM
3	If you can't fix the problem, there's good money to be made in prolonging it. But you already know that. Cheers!	3/28/2025 11:23 AM
4	Help people get a life in the town instead of calling cops cause it's fun for them. Let them know to mind their business and if it is loud it's called turn the damn TV up.	3/28/2025 10:58 AM
5	Hotel needed and get the shitty old Motel lot that sits across from the community center torn down such an eye sore	3/28/2025 8:14 AM
6	Have owners finish building projects on Main Street, especially ones that have been ongoing for several years. Tear down the old down town motel!	3/27/2025 10:56 PM
7	The Nursing Home/Care facility is not on par with better care facilities. The concrete block walls and worn out carpets that I viewed while visiting were depressing. I was informed by admissions that private rooms were not an option however "someone did just get a single room because they threatened harm to their roommate". Their roommate had to continue sharing a room with someone else while the person who was threatening violence received a private room. Families settling in our area may not feel this would be a good place for themselves if/when needed or for an elderly relative who they would like close by.	3/27/2025 9:55 PM
8	I applaud St. Charles for their Disc Golf course. I think St. Charles has great activities for the community like WOW. I do think we need to liven up the downtown a bit with space for people to go out to eat, sit outside when it's nice. Have a good meal or share a nice beer. A microbrewery would be fantastic in St. Charles.	3/12/2025 8:53 AM
9	Need to have more town homes for seniors that still live on their own. They then can sell their single family home to younger people.	3/6/2025 9:40 AM
10	The entrance to go up the hill to Love's Get Crazy with all the semis and other traffic trying to leave and people trying to get into town. Now with the taco truck planning on being in the gravel lot across from the loves is going to be even more traffic.	2/26/2025 3:46 PM
11	We don't want large apartments or any more land to be developed	2/23/2025 3:45 PM
12	As the Gateway to Whitewater, we should place increased priority in preserving our natural surroundings. Our light pollution is out of control and our growth has not encouraged a connection with the state park that could lead to increased tourism to our area, boosting our local economy. Our proximity to Whitewater has been a missed opportunity.	2/23/2025 1:14 PM
13	The intersection at 74 and the hill that goes up to the loves needs to change.	2/23/2025 7:03 AM
14	Access to get across Streets downtown	2/19/2025 3:29 AM
15	As a small business owner I'm forced to look at Dover or EYOTA to expand my business. Commercial property is scarce in St. Charles.	2/18/2025 9:15 AM
16	Finish buildings on main street.	2/17/2025 1:42 PM
17	Find a better way to reach the community, I stumbled onto this survey by accident. I live in S.C., I don't get the press, I live alone and have little contact with a few other residents. None of whom would know of things going on unless they were involved. More social media presence. Maybe start a YouTube channel?	2/16/2025 7:32 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

18	Collaborate with the Rochester and Great River Trail initiatives to help extend the bike/hiking trail from Rochester to WWSP. It isn't enjoyable to bike along MN-74 into and out of WWSP. Even paving the gravel road between St Charles and Dover would go a long way to alleviating the reliance to using HWY 14 as a connector for cyclists between St Charles and Dover.	2/16/2025 4:15 PM
19	Need groundwater protection	2/12/2025 7:28 AM
20	We need industry like north star to rejuvenate main Street and hopefully get real businesses back not gyms, hair salons, and craft shops back in the 70s and 80s we had a thriving main Street	2/11/2025 10:39 PM
21	In re: transportation- would be good to have more transportation options to surrounding communities and Rochester. public transportation is lacking. Also, We need to finally address speed limits around the high school and safe crossing - too many kiddos playing frogger across 14. lets not have a fatality in order to do what's right. finally- More support for our fire/ambulance and police forces. as we grow, there will be greater need.	2/9/2025 10:45 PM
22	Would love to see local businesses be more active in the community and have more events to bring people together.	2/9/2025 12:25 PM
23	Does diversity of housing options include affordable AND accessible housing? Also, accessibility needs to be considered in all city planning. Please include a disabled person in the planning.	2/9/2025 12:15 AM
24	Please modernize the parks to make them family-friendly, safer, accessible, and serve all ages!! Also looking for more practice fields for outdoor sports and other types of outdoor and indoor community spaces	2/6/2025 9:07 PM
25	Please please consider plowing our bike/walking paths when there is snow. The one that goes along 14 by the high school/john deere and the path by the sewer plant tucked back in there by the fields and trees.	2/5/2025 9:27 PM
26	The utility prices in the community are too high for a town this size, which has a solar field in the town. Utility bills have consistently risen to an exuberant rate	2/5/2025 9:12 PM
27	Acquire dilapidated buildings, especially downtown and remove.	2/5/2025 7:15 AM
28	Again the issue of high cost of utilities in this town needs to be addressed!	2/4/2025 9:58 PM
29	Love that the community leaders are looking for feedback. That alone means a lot	2/4/2025 7:33 PM
30	I think the City needs to put out quarterly reports of any changes in utility rates that are planned. This is one of the worst aspects of St Charles is their utility plan and the continuing rise in costs without any notification. It's never ending!!!	2/4/2025 5:29 PM
31	Lower utility costs seems to be going higher and higher. Someone needs to take accountability and lower cost.	2/4/2025 10:03 AM
32	City costs are way too high. To many city employees and a vehicle for each of them.	2/3/2025 8:33 PM
33	Should have some industry/business that would attract younger educated people.	2/3/2025 8:18 PM
34	I will move from St. Charles and advise others to do the same if utility cost are not reduced significantly.	2/3/2025 5:22 PM
35	Utility costs puts St. Charles in jeopardy of growth. Cost is substantially larger than communities of the same size.	2/3/2025 5:10 PM
36	Keep the small town home town feel and think about what increases crime rates and stay away from it.	2/3/2025 6:23 AM
37	A public recreation center could allow people to have something to do in the colder months. The pool is excellent for the summer months. A place to play basketball, pool, ping-pong, volleyball & just run around at in the cold months. I believe it creates a stronger community. Gives kids more of an option to get out with friends in the winter months. Another place to volunteer at in the community is beneficial also. Thank you.	2/2/2025 9:18 PM
38	There are concerning racism issues in the community.	1/31/2025 6:43 PM
39	More food options	1/31/2025 6:14 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

40	Can anything be done to improve the appearance of apartments, town homes etc as they look too similar to one another. They lack the warm visual style of the more traditional homes in st Charles. They feel very sterile - like the "copy and paste" design akin to those of concentration camps. And the grey... can we move past dead grey? can something be done to add visual upliftment?	1/31/2025 3:20 PM
41	Zone to allow more single family houses to be built.	1/31/2025 3:08 PM
42	Assorted housing maybe some of your older middle class are not going to rent a apt by the junk yard you could draw more if in different areas	1/31/2025 2:10 PM
43	Stop buying new stuff and adding unnecessary staff/positions. Spend money like it's your own.	1/31/2025 11:25 AM
44	Create a better space down main street to host social events. Like a thursdays on first expect with food trucks and street games that goes on every weekend in the summer. Really play into the fact we have whitewater right there for our use	1/31/2025 6:36 AM
45	Would love to see the focus on improving the lifestyle of current residents. Hopefully not expanding with apartment buildings.	1/30/2025 9:04 PM
46	PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOUR DOGS POO AND PEE. MORE IF IT IS IN AN PARK.	1/30/2025 7:43 PM
47	Rodeos draw crowds, Bingo draws a crowd, get the community to open up and find things that are not just what we have always done . New will interest people, same old pushes people away.	1/30/2025 6:24 PM
48	Keep large apartments/living complexes out of the community. If landlords are going to rent the city needs to have something in place to keep rented property quality in check.	1/30/2025 4:48 PM
49	The city should consider adding a public beach for summer time activities and/or winter time activities such as ice skating.	1/30/2025 10:35 AM
50	The high school students running across 14 is dangerous. There must be a better safer solution than asking kids to walk towards town to cross. I don't live that way but I see it when I pick up my kids and it is concerning. Also not sure if this is related but adding park rec opportunities for children with special needs would make us feel like welcomed members of the community. We have to go to Winona or Rochester and it would be nice if there was some language in park rec pamphlet about how kids with special needs can join or even special classes or opportunities.	1/29/2025 11:34 AM
51	I recently moved to St Charles - 2 years ago - here are my favorite/most used things about this town. Library (!!!), parks (could use updates) , walking trails, WOW, downtown Halloween event, Glad days, fair, city dump, fireworks (add a band/event along with fireworks) Improvement ideas- Establish a farmers market or place to sell local goods. I have to travel to other towns to get a variety of fresh veggies in the summer. WOW seems to be a town favorite - but would like to see more local business involvement. (It was difficult for me to know what local businesses have to offer, in talking with locals most do not know what businesses have to offer either) Would WOW be successful if it was more frequent? bi-weekly? Limit chain businesses! Why are there only a few businesses downtown? We have lots of space - let's make it more attractive for businesses to come to St Charles! More involvement with Whitewater State Park - such a big attraction/resource that is not utilized. Pull people that are visiting Whitewater to St Charles businesses!! Weekend events/dances would draw up campers (state park is booked solid every weekend of the camping season! Lazy D is also very busy) I used to live in a town that survived on summer tourists and they held many weekend events to draw people into town. NEED advertisement at the State Park and Lazy D!! Road concerns - main street is terrible (rough road) - the intersection by Loves is unsafe. Clean up fairgrounds - looks junky City Rec Activities - sports leagues, after work/weekend activities Make volunteer/donation opportunities more visible. I would love to volunteer more locally instead of going to Rochester. Ride service??	1/29/2025 11:22 AM
52	Please keep The vitality of the community at the forefront of planning. Finding ways to bring in new residents and business's to reduce the tax burden on current residents.	1/29/2025 7:45 AM
53	I would like to see a redevelopment of city park. Perhaps add more ball fields (quad set up) and concentrated parking. Improve trails/side walks for kids to walk to school. North Richland is loaded with parked cars, busy traffic, and busy intersections. I never felt my kids were safe walking that route as an Elementary student.	1/29/2025 6:07 AM
54	If you can cut residents utility bills by investing in a large solar field, THAT would entice people	1/29/2025 5:30 AM

St. Charles Community Survey

to live here. Build a cheaper cost of living = people will come

55	Pond off Springer Ave/Rimrock road needs to be cleaned up. Lots of flooding in back yards off Rimrock Rd as the water pools and doesn't reach the pond	1/28/2025 9:50 PM
56	We do not need additional large apartment buildings within this town.	1/28/2025 8:48 PM
57	Would like to see a bike trail to Whitewater State Park.	1/28/2025 2:34 PM
58	Thank you for all of your considerations!	1/28/2025 1:39 PM
59	More athletic fields and indoor space. The athletic and club offerings have grown between the schools and city sharing space more space is needed.	1/27/2025 10:22 PM
60	Growth has to accompany businesses and housing. St. Charles needs a larger workforce to attract businesses but housing will only come when there is a demand for workers.	1/27/2025 10:12 PM
61	Please focus on enhancing our town, not expanding our town. Keep in mind that every decision has consequences and don't let those consequences ruin how great of a town we already have. SC features every kind of housing I can think of, we don't need to add more low income apartment buildings.	1/27/2025 2:33 PM
62	Adding another venue or gathering space. The Moose Lodge is good but other options would be beneficial. Also, as mentioned above, acquiring a hotel that offers gathering space, a pool, etc. for families to utilize for themselves or guests. Another nice restaurant would be welcomed also. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.	1/27/2025 12:48 PM
63	Would be outstanding to make the outdoor pool larger with more to do. Climbing wall, more water slides, etc. also having access to trails for golf carts to cruise on.	1/27/2025 8:02 AM
64	Bike trail that leads to Whitewater State Park.	1/27/2025 6:19 AM
65	The city should not give money to businesses for improvement without requiring the improvements being 100% complete first. Then the money can be distributed. Also those improvements can't be something like a new roof while leaving the front facade ugly.	1/26/2025 8:28 PM
66	It seems it is time to update/replace our town's Christmas decorations. They were quite pathetic this past Christmas.	1/26/2025 5:22 PM
67	This town needs a Hotel	1/26/2025 4:32 PM
68	Bike path to whitewater?	1/26/2025 4:22 PM
69	A hotel would be great. A brewery, a restaurant. We can't attend the moose because we aren't members so the only place to really grab a drink and dinner is good sport. We need something else!	1/26/2025 10:22 AM
70	We need a NICE Hotel and decent eating establishment- not fast food. Fill the empty spaces on Main Street with service industries. Utility rates and taxes need to be brought under control.	1/26/2025 7:09 AM
71	My parents would like to move to Saint Charles, but need one level housing - townhome preferred. The prices are so high - similar to one family homes.	1/25/2025 11:01 PM
72	Some streets do not have sidewalks and I see a lot of people walking in the street. Would be nice to see more sidewalks around town so people can safely get to the walking paths/trails.	1/25/2025 6:59 PM
73	Consider walking/biking trails connecting whatever newer developments are planned to the town area.	1/25/2025 7:54 AM
74	The intersection on Hwy 74 near the industrial park needs attention. We have nearly been hit there on several occasions. It's a bad intersection and needs to be addressed.	1/25/2025 7:32 AM
75	I wish St. Charles would take advantage of the fact that one of the most popular state parks in the state is only a few miles away - tourism.	1/25/2025 5:43 AM
76	Drive in theater. Okoboji has one and they get a huge crowd of people from miles away. A gun range- I think people would use it even if there is a membership fee. Brewery/Distillery.	1/25/2025 12:35 AM
77	Other small towns with robust downtowns are able to pull in money from inside and more importantly from outside the community. This is where Whitewater becomes so vital.	1/24/2025 11:02 PM
78	Came from dakota, we had free recycling from the winona county. Why am I paying that here?	1/24/2025 9:58 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

Waste management is expensive. Do you look for alternatives, like Sunshine Refuse out of winona? Why are electricity rates a lot higher than elsewhere? Comparing rates, you're about 25% higher than xcel energy.

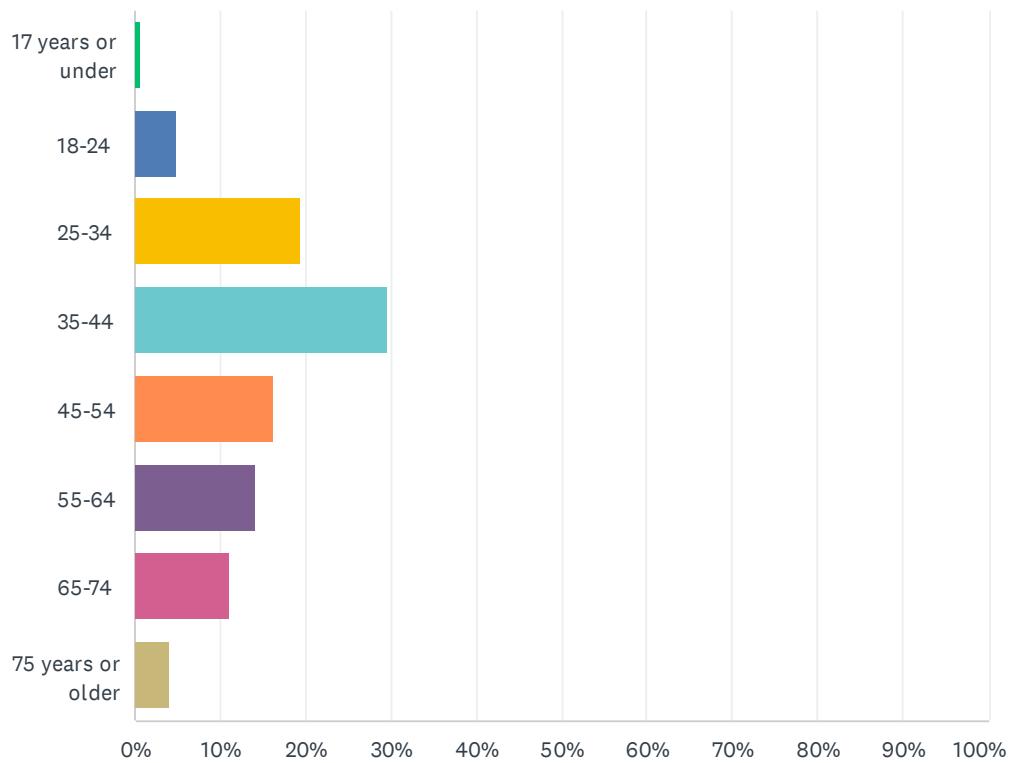
79	Large apartments, would it create more "rif raf" to the sc community if we have more low income housing available..? Would hate to see it go downhill due to inviting nature of low income apartments similar to Rochester	1/24/2025 9:43 PM
80	Good work on the survey. I do think housing and growth is related to the school. People want to move here, but where can they buy houses or find colae in their budget?	1/24/2025 9:25 PM
81	Thankful a survey is given to allow everyone to have a voice. There are great leaders in this community and continue to keep the ball moving forward. I hope they know their efforts are noticed and my family loves living in st Charles.	1/24/2025 9:19 PM
82	I think it's great that the city is interested in the opinions of its taxpayers. This makes us feel valued and part of the same team.	1/24/2025 9:02 PM
83	You can't grow without change	1/24/2025 8:50 PM
84	How can we get involved? I have a degree in Public Mgmt and have studied urban planning	1/24/2025 7:13 PM
85	I feel so blessed to call this community home. I ask that the city take this opportunity to not only hear from the community but take action to support them through it to create real change to make our town thrive.	1/24/2025 6:56 PM
86	St. Charles offers great things to the community that other small towns nearby do not offer: pool, library, golf course, etc. we have several parks in town and they all offer so much potential. More resources should be invested to revitalize some of our parks and make them better. For decades, there have always been issues with field availability, gym availability, etc. for our young athletes. I realize the school district plays a role in that, and if the city can't add those types of facilities, then they should improve and/or expand the existing facilities.	1/24/2025 5:51 PM
87	They have to be affordable	1/24/2025 5:36 PM
88	We need hotels. We are the gateway to Whitewater state park and the first big town next to the interstate and first minnesota town travelers stop at while traveling to the west.	1/24/2025 5:19 PM
89	Bringing in jobs with benefits and that pay enough to sustain a family would keep residents in town. Most of the individuals in my neighborhood work in Rochester, Winona or LaCrosse. I would love to not have to commute but can't afford not to.	1/24/2025 4:48 PM
90	N/a	1/24/2025 4:25 PM
91	To NOT have Marijuana stores in this town. Disappointed to hear you are pursuing this. Your actions need to be made transparent to the community.	1/24/2025 4:07 PM
92	Development is important as long as it keeps Saint Charles as a "small town" which is what attracts a lot of people to the town.	1/24/2025 3:37 PM
93	Add more playground equipment to the Meadow view park and for gosh sakes put up a new streetlight that actually works-teens have been caught having sex down there in the slide. Pickleball courts.	1/24/2025 2:29 PM
94	Please continue to focus on safe routes to school for our students ie) Hwy 14 crossing to cross to get to elementary school and high school. Crossing at and even two blocks down from Kwik trip is a disaster waiting to happen.	1/24/2025 2:00 PM
95	I believe mixed-use development homes create a better walk-able city. These are beneficial to all folks, especially our senior folks who may not be able to drive around. It expands the opportunities for small businesses while also providing additional opportunity for population growth.	1/24/2025 1:38 PM
96	Nice to see a survey. Hopefully the responses are taken seriously.	1/24/2025 1:21 PM
97	Additional housing options would be welcome in this community. Additional apartments, townhomes and duplex structures would offer great benefit to lower income individuals and families. Additionally, larger parcel lots (1-3 acre) for single family homes would be great to see. There should be semi-rural options for those who want to maintain the country lifestyle and bring more money into the community.	1/24/2025 12:58 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

98	Senior housing would be beneficial with the average age in town (NOT a nursing home). If there is additional housing that is focused on seniors , it opens single family homes for new young couples to move in. Please search Wunderhaven in Fall Creek WI for reference. Not a nursing home, but a small area dedicated to housing specific designed for aging populations.	1/24/2025 12:39 PM
99	The approach to Love's Truck Stop and other businesses in that area is horrendous and extremely dangerous. The planning team and experienced DOT architects need to reevaluate that intersection and come up with a plan to make it more semi-truck friendly and safer for all motorists. Seriously, I have almost been involved in numerous auto accidents in that area because the hill and intersection go to/from Love's was very poorly designed.	1/24/2025 12:33 PM
100	Thank you for the survey, it's great to get community input!	1/24/2025 11:45 AM
101	Need more and nicer options for people to rent	1/24/2025 11:35 AM
102	Do not lose the small town/country atmosphere. Keep the charm and build more community with people interaction.	1/24/2025 11:26 AM

Q13 In which category is your age?

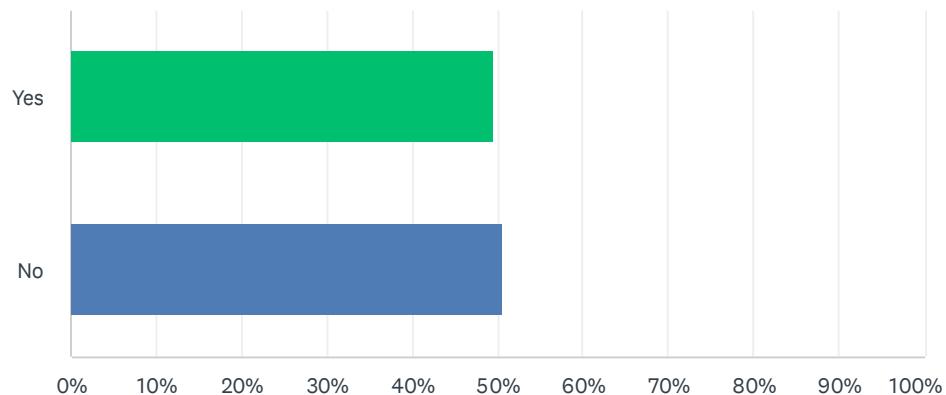
Answered: 364 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 years or under	0.55%	2
18-24	4.95%	18
25-34	19.51%	71
35-44	29.67%	108
45-54	16.21%	59
55-64	14.01%	51
65-74	10.99%	40
75 years or older	4.12%	15
TOTAL		364

Q14 Do any children 17 or under live in your household?

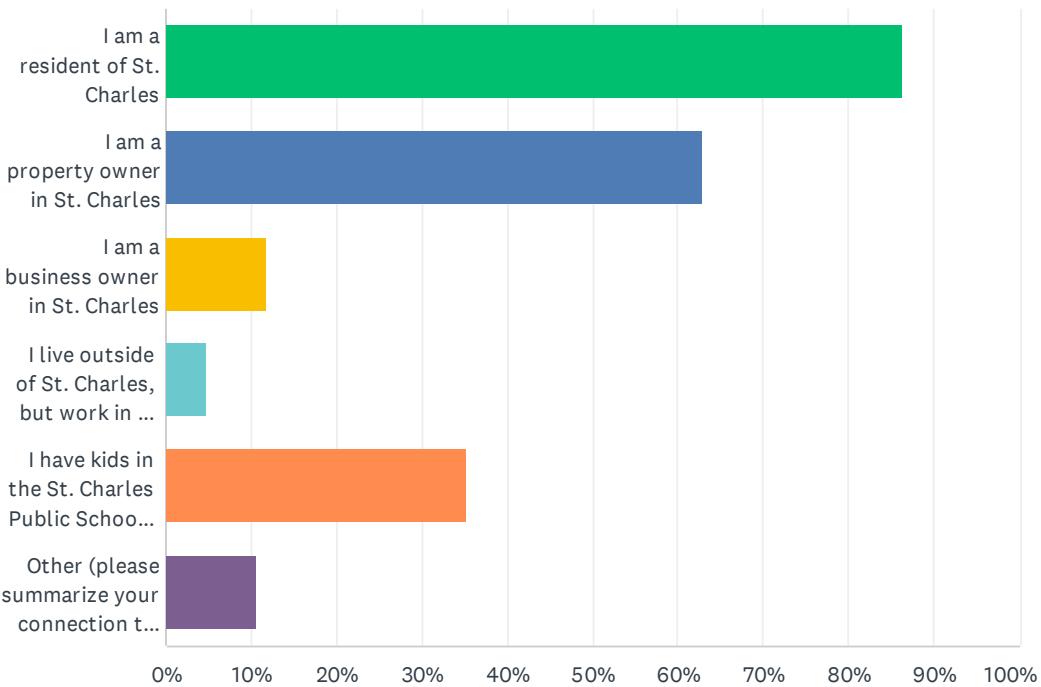
Answered: 364 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	49.45%	180
No	50.55%	184
TOTAL		364

Q15 Tell us about yourself (check all that apply):

Answered: 364 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
I am a resident of St. Charles		86.26%	314
I am a property owner in St. Charles		62.91%	229
I am a business owner in St. Charles		11.81%	43
I live outside of St. Charles, but work in the area		4.67%	17
I have kids in the St. Charles Public School District		35.16%	128
Other (please summarize your connection to St. Charles)		10.71%	39
Total Respondents: 364			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR CONNECTION TO ST. CHARLES)	DATE
1	My parents grew up here, I grew up here and now raising my kids here.	4/16/2025 10:31 AM
2	Loved here all my life but find myself going out of town to buy things I need due to the RIDICULOUS prices.	3/31/2025 2:32 PM
3	Durrr	3/28/2025 11:24 AM
4	I was born and raised here	3/27/2025 10:57 PM
5	Grew up here	3/16/2025 6:50 PM
6	Live in SC Township	3/6/2025 9:43 AM
7	Retiree	2/24/2025 10:46 PM

St. Charles Community Survey

8	I have lived here all my life	2/22/2025 7:10 PM
9	Live outside of St Charles. Have great grandkids living in town & going to schools	2/19/2025 3:32 AM
10	I grew up in St.Charles, and I would like to move back.	2/17/2025 3:35 PM
11	I have farms in the area	2/17/2025 1:45 PM
12	I live in elba and go to school in SC	2/17/2025 9:25 AM
13	Lived here my whole life and used to own a business on main Street	2/11/2025 10:41 PM
14	I live right outside the City of St. Charles on a farm.	2/9/2025 12:26 PM
15	I live outside St Charles but participate in a lot of activities and patronize a lot of businesses in St Charles.	2/6/2025 9:09 PM
16	born & raised within 10 miles of St. Charles. Went to St. Charles school	2/5/2025 11:48 AM
17	I work in town.	2/5/2025 11:03 AM
18	Have three adult children living in St.Charles.	2/3/2025 8:19 PM
19	Live just outside of town, grew up in the St. Charles community	2/3/2025 10:49 AM
20	I work in Saint Charles	1/31/2025 7:37 PM
21	I use to live in st.charles. Moved but still visits family. Wanting to move back one day	1/30/2025 11:33 PM
22	Many family members live and work here	1/29/2025 3:22 PM
23	Farm nearby but try to shop nearby.	1/29/2025 1:03 PM
24	Live in dover	1/29/2025 12:45 AM
25	Lived here all my life	1/28/2025 2:28 PM
26	I homeschooled my children and belong to a local homeschool coop..	1/28/2025 1:40 PM
27	grand kids in district	1/28/2025 8:24 AM
28	I have grandkids in the school district.	1/27/2025 12:49 PM
29	I wish to continue living in St. Charles during my retirement years; however, feel elderly living options are limited.	1/26/2025 5:24 PM
30	Will be a resident in 2025	1/25/2025 1:44 PM
31	Located just outside city limits with a Saint Charles address.	1/25/2025 7:32 AM
32	I have lived here for 29 years.	1/24/2025 9:26 PM
33	I work here! :)	1/24/2025 9:20 PM
34	Firefighter/EMT	1/24/2025 9:03 PM
35	son's family (2 granddaughters) live St. Charles	1/24/2025 5:20 PM
36	I have grandkids and family that visit-No hotel sucks!!!!	1/24/2025 2:30 PM
37	Looking to move back to this community.	1/24/2025 12:59 PM
38	25 yr city resident now outside of city limits	1/24/2025 12:35 PM
39	Church and shopping (live near district boundary)	1/24/2025 11:06 AM