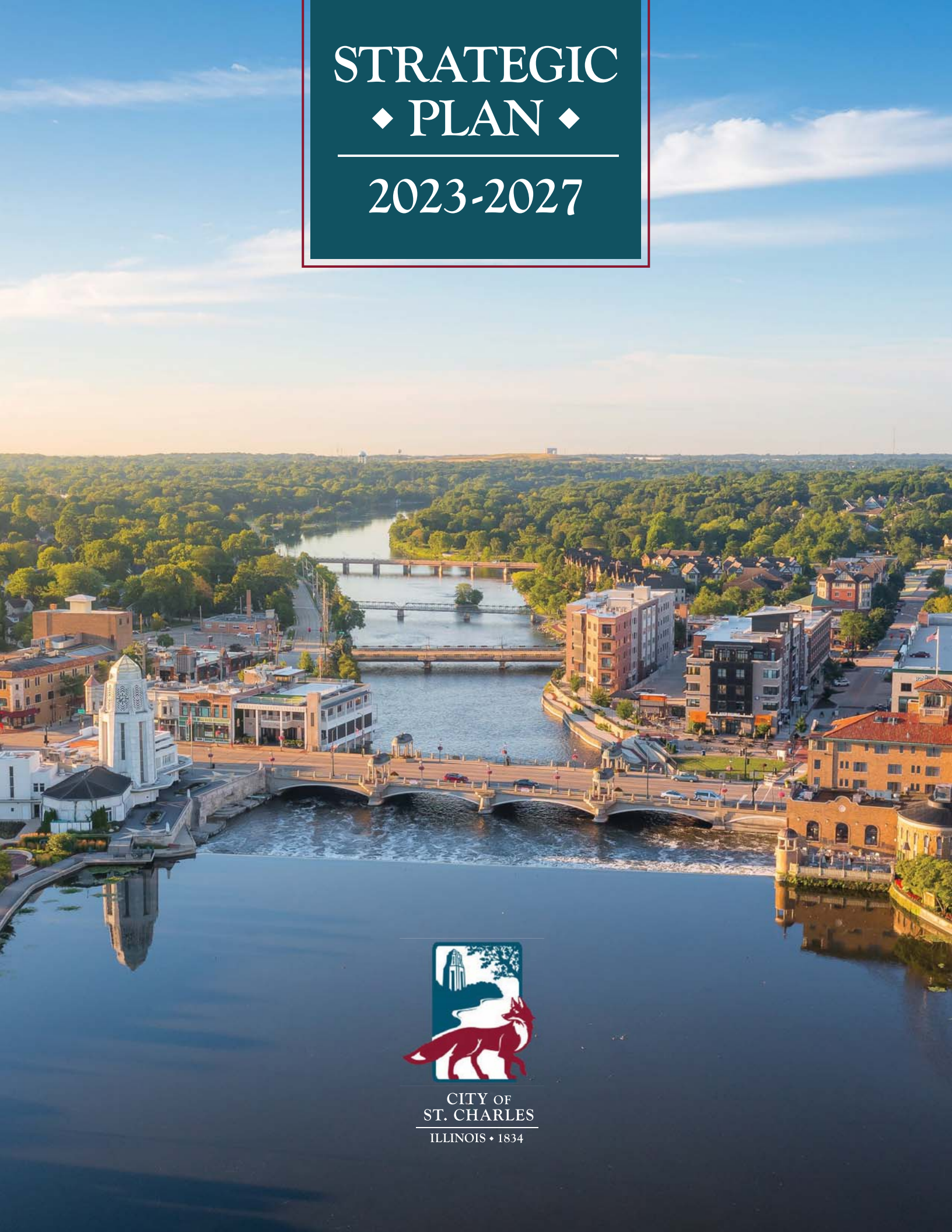


STRATEGIC ◆ PLAN ◆ 2023-2027



CITY OF
ST. CHARLES
ILLINOIS • 1834

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

St. Charles continues to be a place where people want to be — to live, visit, or operate a business. Being a vibrant, destination city that residents want to call home and where businesses thrive comes from purposeful planning.

I am pleased to present the City of St. Charles Strategic Plan for 2023-2027. It establishes the City's vision and priorities, and outlines the actions that will help us achieve them. We will use this plan to guide our budget and policy decisions for the next five years.



It is our residents and businesses that make St. Charles the great city that it is. We reached out to the community in the strategic planning process so they could share what matters most to them. We encouraged participation by holding both in-person and virtual meetings. We also hosted a dedicated website where members of the community could pin comments, ideas and photos. The site successfully drew more than 10,000 visits.

Along with community feedback, information from established plans and key stakeholders contributed to this plan.

In our last community survey, 99% of residents surveyed said St. Charles is an excellent or good place to live. We look to uphold that level of satisfaction as the Strategic Plan will guide decisions about City services, programs, and initiatives.

I would like to thank St. Charles City Council, City leaders and staff, and all in the community who came together to share their suggestions. I look forward to seeing our plan come to life and to reaching the goals we set for our City as we build on the continued successes for St. Charles in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lora A. Vitek". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lora A. Vitek

Mayor

WHO WE ARE

Mission Statement

We provide exceptional Services, honor Tradition,
and foster a thriving Community.



Vision Statement

An engaged community with a sense of place
and belonging where everyone is welcome.



Guiding Principles

EXCELLENCE

We strive to provide high quality services
and an exceptional quality of life.

ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION

We encourage all voices be heard and create accessible opportunities
for everyone to participate and contribute to our community.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

We prepare for the future and cultivate progress
while valuing our natural environment and resources.

RESPECT

We treat our residents, businesses, employees,
and visitors with dignity.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

We foster a safe and vibrant environment in which new ideas and
perspectives combine with our unique character to create a sense of place.

STEWARDSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We pledge to be honest, reliable, and open in our decision-making,
communications, and actions to earn and retain the trust of our community
because we take pride in the importance of our service to the public.

PLAN AT A GLANCE

What is a Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan is a living document that guides the City of St. Charles in its decision-making. The Strategic Plan defines WHAT the city wants to become and its vision for the future. It also defines what the city will prioritize and focus on to achieve its vision, the specific actions that will be taken, and how progress will be measured.

The City of St. Charles has identified four Strategic Priorities, as shown in the graphic below. Each Strategic Priority has a goal statement, strategic goals, and outcome objectives which are further explained on the subsequent pages.





BALANCED AND THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

BALANCED AND THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT

Support economic growth that respects our unique character and contributes to a diverse local economy by facilitating developments that enhance the community's quality of life.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- ◆ Evaluate existing development programs, policies, and codes and ensure all are updated to improve efficiency and impacts on community stakeholders.
- ◆ Ensure zoning, land use, and other policies align with the community's vision and development goals.
- ◆ Partner with regional and local river advocacy organizations to explore strategies to enhance the river's health while providing opportunities to recreate and enjoy.
- ◆ Create a mobility plan that includes streets, sidewalks, bike paths, and traffic-calming to enhance walkability and accessible movement throughout the city.
- ◆ Complete a comprehensive downtown parking plan to enhance the parking experience for visitors and residents.
- ◆ Identify top priority development sites and implement a targeted development attraction plan to increase select business interests.
- ◆ Support the real estate and broker community in the attraction of development and new businesses to help ensure alignment with the community's vision and development goals.
- ◆ Create a business retention/visit program to increase the City's awareness of the local business environment and facilitate the retention of existing businesses.
- ◆ Promote and encourage the development of diverse and quality housing options to help ensure all can live in our community.
- ◆ Streamline development process workflow to improve entitlement process, permitting procedure, and communications with the developer community.



OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Update the City's Comprehensive Plan with community engagement by the end of 2027.
- ◆ Conduct 24 business visits annually, prepare comprehensive findings report, and present to City Council.
- ◆ Create and implement a business/development attraction campaign and disseminate a progress report to City Council quarterly.
- ◆ Determine and publish top priority development sites for the east side, west side, and downtown annually.
- ◆ Create and implement a developer satisfaction survey by the end of 2023.
- ◆ Conduct a Development Review Process study by January 2023.
- ◆ Complete the Downtown Comprehensive Parking study, which includes a signage analysis, by April 2023.
- ◆ Create a developer procedure and process playbook by the end of 2024.
- ◆ Review existing development programs, policies, and codes and update as needed:
 - Economic Development Incentive Policy by the end of 2023.
 - Downtown Overlay District by the end of 2023.
 - Affordable Housing requirements and programs by the end of 2024.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Improve the community's experiences with the City through engaging methods of communication to enhance accessibility, increase awareness, and encourage discussion.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- ◆ Modernize the City's digital presence to increase accessibility, information sharing, and services online.
- ◆ Employ digital tools for residents and community partners to increase opportunities for feedback, discussion, and two-way engagement.
- ◆ Strengthen relationships with community partners and neighborhoods to increase the City's visibility and improve its public presence.
- ◆ Enhance communication platforms to increase outreach and awareness of city services, accomplishments, initiatives, procurement listings, and job opportunities.
- ◆ Provide interpersonal training opportunities for city employees to enhance their interactions with the public and each other, particularly in high-stress or volatile situations.
- ◆ Increase transparency of City operations to expand community understanding.
- ◆ Evaluate public meeting structure to foster increased communication between staff, elected officials, and the public.
- ◆ Explore strategies or initiatives that recognize a diverse community that is accessible and welcoming to the public.



OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Launch a new City website by the end of 2023.
- ◆ Complete the implementation of the Public Engagement Platform by the end of 2025.
- ◆ Create a new online portal for residents to view and pay utility bills by the end of 2023.
- ◆ Increase the number of digital forms over current PDFs/paper forms on the City website.
- ◆ Develop an open data portal by the end of 2025.
- ◆ Increase the City's attendance and participation at community partner meetings and events (e.g. taxing jurisdiction, business associations, service groups, or community groups).
- ◆ Increase the number of City residents enrolled to receive monthly newsletter.
- ◆ Increase the number of followers and engagement on social media platforms.
- ◆ Increase the number of non-safety personnel employees with interpersonal, de-escalation techniques, mental health recognition and communication, and customer service training by 2024.
- ◆ Evaluate the procurement process and determine methods to increase participation from vendors.
- ◆ Update the Crisis Communication Plan by the end of 2023.
- ◆ Explore branding and communication standards by the end of 2024.
- ◆ Conduct an updated resident survey by the end of 2027.
- ◆ Establish regular meetings with community partners to coordinate and enhance digital service delivery by the end of 2023.
- ◆ Publish and present to City Council a progress report of the strategic plan outcomes objectives annually.



ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

St. Charles will commit necessary resources to improve its infrastructure and meet public service expectations, so St. Charles continues to be a desirable community for people and businesses.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- ◆ Develop a workforce strategy that focuses on retention, recruitment, and staff development to fulfill the City's mission and achieve its strategic priorities.
- ◆ Evaluate departmental core services to align resources, identify challenges, and ensure service level expectations are maintained.
- ◆ Update facility studies for presentation of capital maintenance and improvement plans to the City Council to ensure alignment with strategic priorities, community needs, and service level expectations.
- ◆ Develop infrastructure maintenance plan (roads, bridges, facilities, and fleet) to ensure service delivery and proper asset maintenance continuity.
- ◆ Evaluate water quality to understand potential needs and costs related to water supply within the city.
- ◆ Ensure that programs, policies, and procedures are accessible, inclusive, and represent and respond to the needs of the community.
- ◆ Implement technology to improve internal and external processes and increase efficiencies.
- ◆ Identify and prepare for high risk, low frequency disaster preparedness events including planning for the immediate aftermath and long-term impacts in order to provide stability in the community.
- ◆ Evaluate risks to the organization to identify and address potential security issues and technology concerns.



OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Conduct water quality study and present to City Council by the end of 2025.
- ◆ Review existing capital plans, programs, and policies and update as needed:
 - Complete a Road Maintenance Plan by end of 2023.
 - Complete Street Rating Evaluation and update the Streets Maintenance Plan by the end of 2023.
 - Complete the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Complete Streets Plan by the end of 2023.
 - Update the Homeowner Sewer Assistance Policy by early 2024.
 - Update the Connection Fee Policy by early 2023.
 - Update the Water Utility Master Plan by the end of 2023.
 - Update the Sewer Utility Master Plan by the end of 2025.
 - Update the Electric Utility Master Plan by early 2024.
- ◆ Complete an Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Operations Plan and adopted by the end of 2024.
- ◆ Conduct a Technology Risk Assessment and present the assessment to City Council by the end of 2024.
- ◆ Develop a Strategic Technology Plan by the end of 2025.
- ◆ Increase views of job postings and applications for jobs through the City's applicant tracking system.
- ◆ Reduce vacancy time for hard-to-fill positions.



FINANCIAL WELLNESS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Implement policies, practices, and procedures that manage long-term liabilities, increase understanding and awareness of the City's fiscal condition, and continue the efficient use of City resources to ensure ongoing financial strength and sustainability.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- ◆ Ascertain appropriate level of annual revenues needed to fund the City's core capital project programs with ongoing revenue sources.
- ◆ Evaluate and implement utility rates that provide the resources necessary to fund improvements to the City's water, sewer, and electric utility systems.
- ◆ Evaluate the City's charges for services for development-related items to better understand the costs and benefits of doing business in St. Charles.
- ◆ Identify ways to expand fiscal and budget transparency for the community to increase understanding of the City's finances.
- ◆ Maintain an appropriate general fund reserve balance in relation to the City's overall financial position to provide financial stability.
- ◆ Develop a Debt Issuance and Management Policy that will manage current outstanding debt and provide guidance for the evaluation process of issuing of new debt.



OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Complete and update the City's capital planning process and projections and identify level of revenues needed to fund the improvements with ongoing revenues on a long-term basis.
- ◆ Determine and set appropriate utility rates to fund operating, capital and annual debt/loan debt service requirements on an annually basis.
- ◆ Development Services Fee study completed by the end of 2025.
- ◆ Improve the content and presentation of the City's annual budget document to provide clearer and more information to be more in line with GFOA best practices for the FY 2025-26 budget document.
- ◆ Continue to develop and issue for the community an annual Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) which summarizes the City's financial condition at the end of the year.
- ◆ Evaluate current fund balance metrics to determine if any changes should be recommended by the end of 2024.
- ◆ Implement and revise, if necessary, the City's Debt Policy by April 2023.
- ◆ Maintain good ongoing relations with bond rating agencies.

PROJECT TIMELINE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategic plan is the result of the combined efforts of our City's residents, elected officials, employees and stakeholders. The City of St. Charles would like to thank all those who participated in the months-long process of providing knowledge and insights while also expressing gratitude to the BerryDunn consulting team for providing direction and expertise throughout the various stages of the process.



Elected Officials

Mayor • Lora Vitek

Ronald Silkaitis • Ward 1

Bill Kalamaris • Ward 1

Rita Payleitner • Ward 2

Ryan Bongard • Ward 2

Todd Bancroft • Ward 3

Paul Lencioni • Ward 3

David Pietryla • Ward 4

Bryan Wirball • Ward 4

Ed Bessner • Ward 5

Steve Weber • Ward 5



City Leadership

Heather McGuire • City Administrator

Derek Conley • Director of Economic Development

Russell Colby • Director of Community Development

Larry Gunderson • Director of Information Services

Bill Hannah • Director of Finance

James Keegan • Police Chief

Jennifer McMahan • Director of Human Resources

Peter Suhr • Director of Public Works

Scott Swanson • Fire Chief



BerryDunn Consulting Team

Seth Hedstrom • Principal

Shannon Flowers • Project Manager and Facilitator

Maddi Powers • Facilitator

STRATEGIC PLAN ♦ 2023-2027



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