



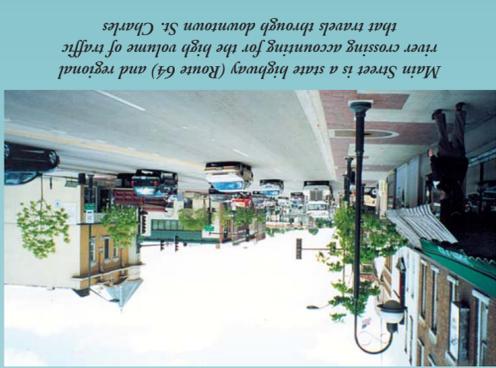
1. Promote developments and improvements that provide for the public's enjoyment of continuous waterfront activities.
2. Preserve architectural and historical integrity.
3. Promote a pedestrian-friendly, aesthetically pleasing, interesting and safe environment.
4. Preserve small-town character.
5. Solidify and maintain a vibrant and diverse retail base that promotes a quality shopping experience.
6. Prioritize underutilized parcels and corridors for redevelopment.
7. Promote a 24-hour environment featuring a variety of land uses.
8. Offer family oriented experiences and activities for all ages and incomes.

Guiding Principles for Design & Development

- The recognition of development corridors based on a "susceptibility to change" analysis that begins to frame the potential for new development or redevelopment within the downtown.
- The understanding that while some changes will have immediacy, the goal is to allow downtown St. Charles to continue its evolution in an incremental manner.
- The sense of a walkable district and logical perceptual boundaries are considered first in defining the downtown's boundaries; development of "downtown uses" should always remain within these bounds.
- A high priority placed on the development of a continuous riverfront loop.
- The promotion of new development and redevelopment projects adjacent to the riverfront in the downtown that make strong connections, with public access to the river being a primary goal.
- A goal to create an unbroken downtown streetscape focused on pedestrian activity along the primary streets of each downtown development corridor.
- An approach that advances patterns of development that more directly support the community's vision of a mixed use and easily walkable downtown district.
- An understanding that the diversity of the experience – and the change that the experience will be different during every visit – will create memories for people in downtown St. Charles.
- A strategy to expand on the downtown's character as a vibrant downtown on the river by adding public art and creating public and private gardens throughout.
- The promotion of downtown St. Charles' continued evolution as a mixed-use environment, striving for both horizontal and vertical mixing of uses.



A pedestrian and bike bridge to be attached to the railroad trestle at the north edge of the downtown district will enhance opportunities to create a continuous riverfront experience.



Main Street is a state highway (Route 64) and regional river crossing accounting for the high volume of traffic that travels through downtown St. Charles

- New development in the downtown should have a sense of permanence: the ability to insert a variety of uses into the same basic structure during its lifetime is the goal; flexibility is the key.
- Land in downtown St. Charles is precious; the community must make the best use of every square foot available in the core commercial areas.
- The advancement of guidelines that recognize the importance of the design character of downtown buildings.
- An approach to parking management that continues to locate parking structures in strategic locations and maximizes parking through shared uses.
- The ultimate elimination or relocation of surface parking areas – particularly those along Main Street and the riverfront – as parking structures are implemented to meet parking demands.
- An approach to traffic management that accommodates vehicles without compromising the safety and comfort of downtown pedestrians.
- The landmark Municipal Center on the east bank of the Fox River.



The landmark Municipal Center on the east bank of the Fox River.

A Framework for Creating the Future Downtown

Ultimately, the goal for downtown St. Charles is to create attractive patterns of development that support the community's vision and result in the highest, best use of the limited land resources. Fundamental to goals and redevelopment strategies advanced in the plan are:

- An approach to business development that does not advocate moving or eliminating existing businesses, but rather focuses on specific types of retail that might be introduced or expanded to enhance the quality and variety of the downtown business mix.
- An active recruitment strategy focused on small, independently owned retailers that will complement the existing downtown business mix.
- A passive recruitment strategy with regard to small and mid-sized national retailers, with a focus on directing these types of developments and businesses to an appropriate location.
- The application of appropriate Centralized Retail Management program functions and techniques that provide a method to achieve business development strategies.
- A consumer marketing strategy that moves beyond a segmented approach to promote and celebrate "The Great American Downtown" experience.
- The historic 1928 Hotel Baker was extensively renovated in 1998 with more than \$9 million spent through a private-sector investment. The hotel now features 21st century amenities while preserving its unique history and architecture.
- The understanding that a visionary plan cannot be implemented overnight; the timeframe for implementing this plan reflects its visionary nature and looking out over a period of 20 years seems appropriate to the kind of change outlined in the plan.
- The community's ideas behind the vision, goals and strategies presented in this plan have served to re-engage "veteran" leaders, volunteers and ambassadors, recruit new participants and enthusiasts, inspire new ideas, issue new challenges and build consensus.
- To that end, an exciting era of renewed prosperity is at hand, and the future of Downtown St. Charles is in your hands.

Introduction

Downtown St. Charles has seen substantial renewal and redevelopment in recent years. The public and private sectors are working together to bring about the most desirable future for the downtown area. From 1995 to 2000, more than \$35 million was invested in downtown infrastructure, public and private improvements.

Encouraged by the progress made to date, our community's leaders and downtown advocates remain convinced that well-defined community based strategies are needed to manage future growth and development, both public and private.

The Downtown St. Charles Strategy Plan has been created with the help of community leaders and volunteers to:

- Establish effective strategies and guidelines for quality design, development and redevelopment.
- Promote a creative mix of activities and environments that will enhance and maintain historic downtown St. Charles as an economically vibrant and competitive central business district.

The Community's Vision for Downtown St. Charles

Residents, business people and civil leaders all played an active role in creating this plan. This plan is the synthesis of our community's ideas and creativity, as reflected in the Community's Vision for Downtown St. Charles.

The future of downtown St. Charles will be a place treasured by those who live, work, shop and play there. It will maintain its architectural and historical integrity, small-town qualities and pleasing, safe environment. At the same time, it will be a place of vitality where people go to engage in cultural, social, recreational, entertainment and commercial activities.

Downtown will host a diversity of indoor and outdoor opportunities for shopping, entertainment, dining, recreation, and culture for families of all types and income levels. Investors, developers and entrepreneurs will capitalize on redevelopment opportunities for attaining this diversity. Redevelopment will be focused on under-utilized parcels, corridors and riverfront areas.

The physical environment and the social and commercial activities in the downtown will reflect a refined community character and values. People will live, work, recreate and shop downtown.

Downtown St. Charles will be a vibrant retail and dining district. Shoppers will enjoy walking and wandering in mercantile sectors featuring a flow of vibrant, diverse and distinctive shops. A quality mix of restaurants and delicatessens will offer shoppers and workers a delightful break. Downtown St. Charles will have a lively nighttime personality. People from throughout the region will be attracted to the downtown's quality mix of dining and entertainment experiences.

People will enjoy the downtown's recreational qualities centered on the riverfront and parks. Residents and visitors will be seen enjoying a variety of recreational activities, including sightseeing, walking, jogging, biking, picnicking, fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

Main Street will be an artery for vehicular traffic and a pedestrian-oriented stream of economic vitality crossing the natural beauty of the Fox River. Accommodations of vehicular modes of travel will be convenient and functional as well as aesthetically designed.

St. Charles residents, as a whole, will continue to participate in the planning and decision making processes that determine the success and future of the downtown.

Community Information Directory

City of St. Charles

2 E. Main Street,
St. Charles, IL 60174
(630) 377-4400
www.stcharlesil.org

Downtown St. Charles Partnership

213 Walnut Street
St. Charles, IL 60174
(630) 513-5386
www.dtown.org

Great St. Charles Area Chamber of Commerce

103 N. First Avenue
St. Charles, IL 60174
(630) 584-8384
www.stcharleschamber.com

St. Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau

311 N. Second Street
St. Charles, IL 60174
(630) 377-6161 • (800) 777-4373
e-mail: stc-cvb@elnet.com
www.visitstcharles.com

St. Charles Public Library

1 S. Sixth Avenue
St. Charles, IL 60174
(630) 584-0076
www.st-charles.lib.il.us

St. Charles Park District

101 S. Second Street
St. Charles, IL 60174
(630) 584-1055
www.st-charlesparks.org



Voted America's Best!

In 2000, St. Charles was honored for its downtown revitalization efforts by being named a winner of the Great American Main Street Award, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center. The award serves to recognize the strong public-private partnership and exceptional volunteer efforts that have defined each evolutionary phase of the community's downtown revitalization initiative.

DOWNTOWN St. Charles STRATEGY Plan



for The Great American Downtown

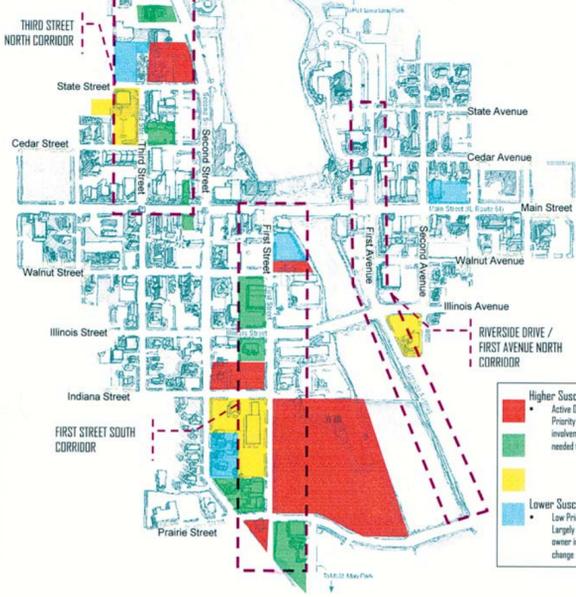
A joint project of
City of St. Charles



and
Downtown St. Charles Partnership, Inc.

Prepared by
Downtown Professionals Network, Batavia, Illinois, USA

Creating the Future Downtown St. Charles

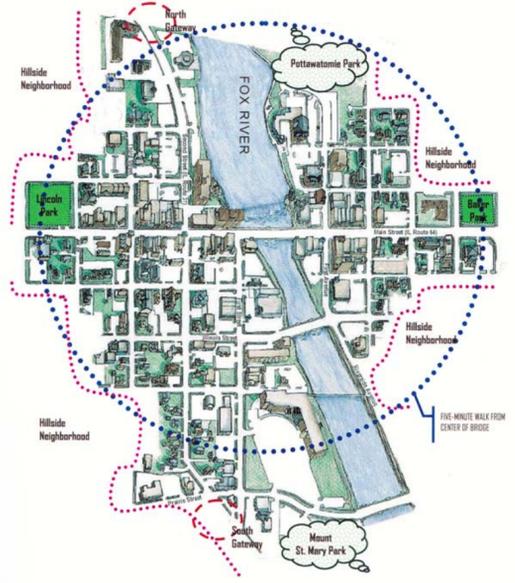


Susceptibility to Change

Patterns of change in the downtown might be attributed to the degree of susceptibility to change. The patterns reveal areas where potential for change will likely result in concentration of development and redevelopment activities.

Downtown Boundaries

Logical boundaries for the downtown can be framed from the natural patterns of the river valley, the location of significant community features (such as parks), the presence of neighborhoods and the focus of the Fox River. Corridors for development and redevelopment activity generally fall within the bounds of a five-minute walk.



A radius forming a five-minute walk boundary (centered on the Main Street Bridge) is a key to creating a pedestrian experience in the downtown. The boundary of a five-minute walk includes nearly all of the downtown (reinforcing the notion of these areas being downtown neighborhoods.)



The termination of State Street at the Fox River should be a highlight of this corridor. Development should frame views to this focal point and give the sense that the street extends to the river. The character of development along the street is important; it does not merely frame the view, it creates a feeling of vitality.



Redevelopment of the public parking lot along Route 31 (provided a new public parking structure is developed) offers the opportunity to highlight the public walkway that exists with buildings and interesting pedestrian spaces, rather than parked cars.



New "urban" residential uses frame a gateway to the downtown at the intersection of First Street and Rt. 31. The gateway itself might be signage, sculpture or landscape – or a combination of these elements that forms an appropriate image for the downtown.



Primary Street Level Uses

Uses vary within each corridor, with patterns focusing on street-level retail near Main Street, street-level residential to the south end of First Street and street-level office to the north end of Third Street. In all cases, upper levels should be office or residential.

Business Development Zones

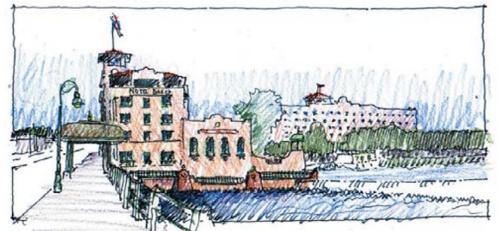
Business development zones are recognized based on development patterns and existing groupings of businesses within the development corridors. Business development strategies focus on the introduction and expansion of business types that will strengthen the quality and variety of the downtown business mix to promote shopper and pedestrian circulation.

The Great American Shopping Route

"The Great American Shopping Route" is proposed to promote pedestrian and shopper circulation throughout the downtown area. Special features include Shopper Lockers that promote "park once, shop twice" convenience and scenic views that "reward" shoppers along the route.



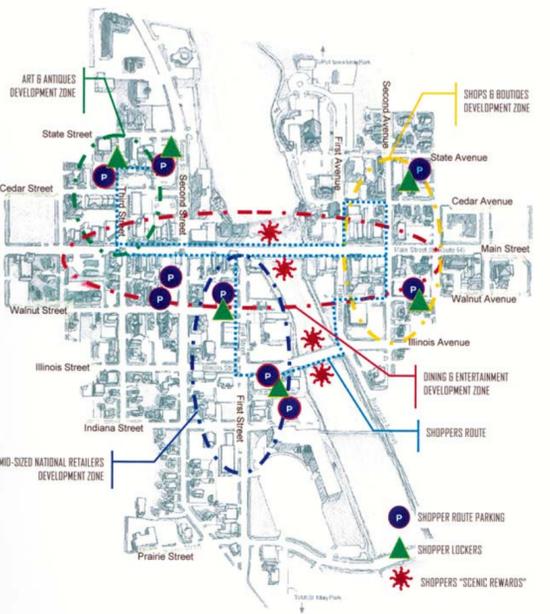
The appropriate character for public and private spaces in Century Corners is found in the garden landscapes of a residential neighborhood. These spaces should bring beauty, life and a sense of comfort to Century Corners (not simply a functional solution to a problem of the neighborhood's fabric.)



Difficulties in creating a continuous riverfront pedestrian experience occur at several locations. A connection around the base of Hotel Baker might reflect the architecture of this historic structure and provide an important link between Main Street and the riverfront north of the hotel.



A link to the Fox River from First Street occurs at the south side of the Manor Restaurant. The idea of a "garden link" is introduced, and the parking lot next to the garden is conceived as a "courtyard" rather than a parking lot.



Downtown St. Charles... The Great American Downtown!