

St. Charles: A New Vision



Reimagined image of the St. Charles City Centre Complex west entrance to City Hall and the Recreation Center and Senior Center from 2nd Street.

Shaping St. Charles: *Balancing Heritage and Progress*

St. Charles stands at a pivotal moment in its history. As one of Missouri's fastest-growing communities, the City faces the challenge of expanding public safety, civic services and community spaces while preserving its distinctive historic character.

Public Safety and Service: *Building a Strong Foundation*

As St. Charles continues to grow, so does the importance of well-equipped, efficient emergency services. The City's investment in new fire stations and the renovated police department headquarters demonstrate a commitment to safety and readiness.

Fire Station No. 2 and Fire Station No. 3 are new facilities designed to meet the operational needs of today's fire service while offering flexibility for future growth. These stations feature drive-through apparatus bays that can accommodate a range of vehicles and modern accommodations to support 24/7 staffing.

Planned renovations to Fire Station No. 1 and Fire Station No. 5 ensure that existing assets remain current, with upgraded infrastructure, energy-efficient systems, and optimized layouts to improve response times and extend service life.

The renovation of the police department enhances operational efficiency and strengthens response capabilities. Key upgrades include a state-of-the-art Emergency Operations and Dispatch Center, a specialized forensics lab, improved security features for officers and customers, and modernized



St. Charles Fire Station No. 2, apparatus bay.



St. Charles Fire Station No. 3, exterior.

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workspaces. These improvements position the department to meet both current and future demands, ensuring a more effective response to emergencies.

Renovations to the courts are designed to improve capacity, communication and security. A more secure entry lobby and court room along with new audio-visual technology allow for a faster and more seamless judicial process. Together, these civic investments reinforce St. Charles' commitment to their citizens in creating responsive and transparent governance.

Community Wellbeing: Revitalizing Public Spaces

At the heart of St. Charles' municipal evolution is the City Centre Complex, integrating City Hall, retail space and reimagined community amenities such as a Senior Center, Recreation Center and Farmers Market. Supported by ample structured parking, the Complex is strategically positioned at the north end of Historic Main Street linking and expanding the Frenchtown District.

Serving as both a physical and symbolic bridge, the City Centre Complex connects two vibrant riverfront neighborhoods. It provides a central location for city



Reimagined St. Charles City Hall east view from Main Street.



Reimagined St. Charles City Hall Lobby.

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operations, community events and local commerce, creating a more accessible and connected civic environment.

A hallmark of JEMA's work in St. Charles is the revitalization of facilities central to community life. These projects extend beyond renovation, reaffirming the City's dedication to the health, culture and connection of its residents.

As St. Charles continues to grow, the City has outpaced the capacity of its current City Hall. Anchoring the revitalized district is a new City Hall offering a thoughtful blend of past and future integrated into the historic structure of the former American Car Foundry railcar workshops. This modern civic building features state-of-the-art security, expanded public engagement areas, accessible community forums, and right-sized office spaces tailored to meet the City's evolving needs. Positioned above a new two-story public parking structure, the facility will also provide increased, safe and secure parking for the entire district.

Among the buildings being renovated within the City Centre Complex, one will be reimagined as a new home for the Senior Center and a state-of-the-art Recreation Center.



Reimagined St. Charles Recreation and Senior Center Commons.

This historically significant structure has been carefully preserved and modernized to meet the needs of today. The renovations improve accessibility and function while maintaining the building's original charm. The result is a vibrant, welcoming space that will host a variety of programs, social activities and services for older residents. The Recreation Center will offer fitness facilities, sports courts, an elevated running track and wellness programs for residents of all ages. With modernized amenities and versatile spaces, the center is designed to accommodate everything from youth sports to community events, fostering connections across generations.

Additionally, the dynamic Sawtooth Building, located north of the new City Hall, will be renovated to serve as the new home of the community Farmers Market creating a vibrant hub for local food, artisan goods and cultural events while promoting economic sustainability and strengthening connections between residents and local producers.

Urban Connectivity And Economic Development

While each project serves its own purpose, collectively they form an interconnected vision for St. Charles. By strategically locating facilities, enhancing accessibility and creating shared spaces, the City is strengthening connections among neighborhoods, businesses and civic institutions.



Reimagined St. Charles City Centre Complex Pocket Park.

The City Centre Complex plays a central role in this connectivity, linking historic districts with modern amenities. Its combination of municipal services, retail and public space encourages foot traffic, supports local businesses, and makes downtown more accessible for residents and visitors alike.

Design Philosophy And Long-Term Impact

The St. Charles project's design philosophy centers on creating spaces that foster joy, community connection, resilience and adaptability.

Risk is good. Not properly managing your risk is a dangerous leap. -Evel Knievel

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From fire stations that support evolving operational models to civic complexes that unite multiple public functions, each project balances utility with identity. Historic structures such as the Recreation and Senior Center are preserved with care, while new buildings are designed to harmonize with their surroundings.

The work in St. Charles serves as a model for other Missouri municipalities seeking to balance progress with preservation. Thoughtful, adaptable design strengthens community bonds and enhances quality of life for decades to come.

A Shared Vision For The Future

The transformation taking place in St. Charles is more than a collection of building projects; it is a coordinated effort to create a stronger, more connected, and more resilient community.

With investments in public safety, governance, community spaces and economic development, St. Charles is ensuring it remains a city where residents feel safe, engaged and proud of their shared heritage.

These projects demonstrate how Missouri municipalities can embrace the future without losing sight of what makes their communities unique. By uniting functionality with a strong sense of place, St. Charles is building not just for today, but for generations to come.

JEMA's work in St. Charles reflects a shared vision of creating forward-looking architecture that simultaneously shapes a foundation for future generations while respecting history and heritage.

JEMA is partnering with St. Charles on a series of new major municipal projects, which include public safety facilities (fire and police stations), a City Hall, a recreation center, a senior center, a farmer's market, and a park. Each initiative enhances functionality, fosters civic engagement, and respects the architectural character that makes St. Charles unique. 🌱

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John Mueller is the founder and managing partner of JEMA, bringing more than 20 years of experience leading award-winning projects across the United States. He is actively involved in every JEMA project and is a passionate advocate for community building and sustainable design.