



CHANGE *for* **STL**

Building a Better St. Louis Together

July 2025

Transition Advisory Committees Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transition Advisory Report to the Honorable Mayor Cara Spencer and Her Administration

July 2025

This report incorporates the strategy, lived experience and expertise of more than 45 St. Louis leaders from a variety of backgrounds and sectors. These community-minded and dedicated individuals met over an eight-week time period beginning in early May, 2025, within the committee structure defined below:

- City Services
- Neighborhood Transformation
- Commercial Transformation
- Public Safety and Justice
- Inclusive Economy
- Education and Workforce Development

Initially, each of these committees were tasked with developing two short-term recommendations, two mid-term recommendations and two longer-term recommendations. However, the tragic tornado of May 16th required a deviation from the original plan. The tornado's devastation and far-reaching impact across generations of St. Louisans affected every committee member and every meeting. The committee process was adapted to include recommendations centered around disaster recovery and rebuilding.

The recommendations included in this report are suggestions for areas where Mayor Spencer's administration can focus city government's efforts, convene community stakeholders and leverage relationships across the region and state. These ideas are meant to offer guidance to the administration to inspire action, without being overly prescriptive.

The work of collaborative civic brainstorming, such as the work that is included in the following pages, can be a powerful tool for incoming elected leaders. It is the hope of the committee members and the transition team staff that the ideas included in these recommendations spur strategic thinking, collaboration and transformative policy solutions to build a better St. Louis, together.

Very respectfully,

The 2025 CHANGEforSTL Transition Advisory Committee

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CITY SERVICES

CITY SERVICES – OVERVIEW

PROJECT PILLAR

Build Systems to Achieve High-Quality City Services.

MISSION STATEMENT

To build systems to deliver efficient, high-quality services to residents and businesses to enhance the quality of life and the ease of doing business in St. Louis.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop data-driven strategies for optimizing city service delivery.
- Improve response times for and the effectiveness of resident services, including pothole repair, waste management, and snow removal.
- Build trust in city services through improved transparency and technology.
- Address illegal dumping and sanitation concerns.
- Streamline business licensing and permitting processes to support economic growth.
- Recruit and retain top talent for civil service roles to ensure a highly skilled workforce.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Reduced service request response time and substantial decrease in backlog.
- Higher resident satisfaction ratings for city services.
- More accessible and business-friendly permitting and support processes/services.

- High retention and increased recruitment of top civil service professionals to fill the high number of vacancies across the City.
- More public visibility and better department tracking of problems and resolution.

COMMITTEE DELIVERABLE

Synthesized report recommendation to CHANGEforSTL of how the Mayor's Office and broader city government can drive and/or support these outcomes, including best practices from other cities and organizations.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – CITY SERVICES

- **Don Pohl (Chair)** – President, Ranken Technical College
- **Patrick Brown** – Chief of Staff, Office of the Chairman, President & CEO, Ameren Corporation
- **Ken Franklin** – Director of Business Development and Community Engagement, Missouri American Water
- **Lesley Hoffarth** - President and Executive Director, Forest Park Forever
- **David Jackson** - Spokesman, African American Business & Contractors Association
- **Larry Middlebrook** - Ward 2 Democratic Committeeman
- **Jan Sandweiss** - President, Laclede's Landing Neighborhood Association
- **John Stiffler** - Executive Secretary-Treasurer, St. Louis Building & Construction Trades Council
- **Kim Thomason** - CFO/COO, Grand Center, Inc.
- **Deanna Venker** - Chief Operating Officer, St. Louis County

Mayor's office liaison: Julian Nicks

Facilitated/staffed by Joni Wickham and Rachel Painter

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (0-12 MONTHS)

1. OVERHAUL CITIZENS' SERVICE BUREAU (CSB) COMMUNICATION PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES

THE "WHY"

The CSB is a critical tool for resident engagement, basic service delivery, and problem solving. However, opportunities exist to improve the department's functionality and impact as well as resident satisfaction.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Audit previously closed requests to ensure action was taken.
- Create consistent feedback loops with constituents so that progress on reported issues is easily tracked.
- Reimagine CSB oversight, customer service, and staffing levels.
- Decrease response times through enhanced technological capability and staffing.
- Correlate CSB trends against all service departments and increase coordination among departments to develop solutions.
- Multi-stakeholder “road tour” or field survey mechanism to deepen awareness and context of conditions of city infrastructure.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Capture baseline citizen satisfaction data that enables improvement that is tracked.
- Track the average amount of time for a case to be closed (defined as action taken).
- Track the average amount of time for communication to be initiated after a service request is made.

2. IDENTIFY CURRENT SERVICE DELIVERY GAPS AND CLEAR EXISTING BACKLOG (FOCUSING INITIALLY ON TRASH PICK UP, STREET RESURFACING, POTHOLES, AND SNOW REMOVAL)

THE “WHY”

Providing basic city services is the hallmark of a high-functioning local government entity. The ability to attract economic development opportunities, leverage educational institutions, ensure safe neighborhoods and create conditions for inclusive growth are key to city service delivery. Currently, delivery of city services does not meet expectations and there are key ways in which the city can improve performance.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Incorporate community engagement into this plan as a mechanism for prioritization.
- Assess gaps against a framework of what is currently being done, what should be done, and what resources (financial and staffing) are necessary to achieve established goals.
- Decisions should be made now on snow removal processes including equipment purchases, technology upgrades, supply shifts needed, and communications plans.
- Institute the mantra of “Find a way to say yes.”

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Capture baseline citizen satisfaction data that enables improvement that is tracked.
- Define realistic goals for service delivery improvement.
- Celebrate wins to establish credibility.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-3 YEARS)

1. DEVELOP A CITYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN

THE “WHY”

A strategic plan is not only a useful tool for organizing priorities and desired outcomes, but can also help guide resource allocation decisions and long-term visioning. St. Louis is a diverse community with a broad set of opportunities as well as tough challenges that must be tackled. Establishing a citywide strategic plan will help align stakeholders and define success for years to come.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Operational plan to support the overall strategy.
- Asset map to develop shared understanding of what is currently available, including private sector partnerships.
- Level set of existing revenue streams to create a holistic understanding of budget constraints, including assessing opportunities to create new revenue streams.
- Consider creating a more collaborative and priority-based budget process.
- Strategies to address workforce shortages within city government.
- Public engagement to gather feedback and direction from a variety of stakeholders.
- Conduct a landscape analysis to determine what works well in other cities.
- Plan for increased coordination between developers and utilities to preserve infrastructure assets.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Cultivation of pertinent data (revenue information, workforce needs, etc).
- Development and implementation of public engagement process.
- Creation of feedback mechanism(s).

2. RETHINK CODE ENFORCEMENT

THE “WHY”

Proper code enforcement can help preserve the integrity of neighborhoods. The committee embraces the Center for Community Progress’ values of equitable, efficient, and effective code enforcement, which helps “maximize compliance while minimizing intervention from local government.”

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Streamlined application process and increased funding for minor home repair.

- Enhanced communication with neighborhoods about minor home repair opportunities.
- Code enforcement/permitting that creates conditions where structures are safe and healthy to inhabit.
- Commercial/industrial permitting framework.
- Insurance to cover damage caused by neighboring properties.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of applications received for minor home repair assistance.
- Number of occupancy permits.
- Length of time to execute similarly situated projects.
- Reduction in number of dangerous buildings.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PRIORITIZE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

THE “WHY”

City staff and local elected officials can become so mired in the day-to-day operations of local government that considerations for long-term sustainability become an afterthought. However, this sort of long-term thought can be transformational, particularly for a community like St. Louis, that has suffered persistent population decline.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Ideas on how to raise revenue, including neighborhood revitalization to attract industry and residents to the city (investing in the Riverfront in particular could yield economic benefits).
- Strategies/tactics to foster population growth, including prioritizing public safety and supporting properly resourced parks and community assets .
- Increased collaboration with the County.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of new revenue opportunities developed.
- Track increases in population (Fort Worth could provide a blueprint in how to accomplish this).
- Number of areas where City-County coordination is improved.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPENSATION STUDY

THE “WHY”

A vital component of increasing basic service delivery is recruiting and retaining a

well-trained, customer service-focused local government workforce. Budgetary constraints make it difficult for local government to offer competitive compensation packages, leaving the organization without needed staffing. The groundwork should be laid for this compensation study now, as this type of effort takes time and requires funding.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Salary comparisons for similarly-situated cities.
- Benefit comparisons for similarly-situated cities.
- Suggestions for increasing the competitiveness of city government as an employer.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Completion of study.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND REBUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CONDUCT AN ANALYSIS OF CITY-OWNED ASSETS TO DETERMINE ABILITY TO WITHSTAND A NATURAL OR HUMAN-DRIVEN DISASTER

THE “WHY”

We live in a world where government leaders must be prepared for increasing numbers of natural disasters as well as tragedies driven by human behavior. It's important to understand the condition of city-owned assets and their ability to withstand catastrophic circumstances considering this type of infrastructure could serve as hubs for disaster response.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Breakdown of city-owned assets by location, size and condition.
- Plan for structural improvements, if necessary.
- Identify funding sources for improvements.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Creation of analysis.
- Track progress towards needed improvements.

2. PLAN FOR CLEAR AND CONSISTENT CRISIS COMMUNICATION

THE “WHY”

Disasters are emotional and confusing times. Residents often want more answers than are immediately available. However, clear and consistent communication can reduce angst and possibly even save lives.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Accessible and transparent leadership.
- Consistent public updates.
- Use of communications assets that meet residents where they are (digital natives versus non-digital natives) with consideration of cell phones as a primary conduit for information/alerts.
- Coordination with utilities.
- Coordination with education institutions.
- Evaluation of most effective use of emergency operations center.
- Single point of communication.
- Utilize nonprofits with subject matter expertise.
- Glean best practices from other cities that experienced disasters (Asheville, New Orleans, etc).

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Development of the plan and related public awareness of established processes.
- Number of drills/training sessions.

SUMMARY

Improving city services is a critical component of Mayor Spencer's vision for St. Louis. The city services transition advisory committee was deliberate in recommending action items that would achieve short-term, tangible improvements in basic service delivery while also encouraging bold longer-term thinking. This work was steeped in the reality that St. Louis has experienced steady population decline (and by extension – its tax base) in recent decades, yet city government still has responsibility for maintaining public infrastructure, providing city services, and ensuring a high quality of life for residents. This dynamic will require creativity, collaboration and a solution-oriented approach to creating lasting change.

The tragic tornado and related disaster recovery efforts illuminated heightened challenges this committee had previously understood to be priorities including trash pick up, vacant and abandoned buildings, and responsiveness to service requests. The committee's post-disaster work was guided by the thought that crises can be conduits for bold change, a sense of urgency, and transformative leadership - all of which are necessary during this moment of rebuilding in St. Louis.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES (BOTH PEOPLE AND MATERIALS)

- Center for Community Progress' Strategic Code Enforcement [Framework](#)
- [This](#) video about building a culture of saying yes
- Current City [Budget Process](#)
- [Strong Towns](#)



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NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION

NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION – OVERVIEW

PROJECT PILLAR

Drive large-scale transformation of neighborhoods.

MISSION STATEMENT

To foster vibrant neighborhoods that all residents choose to call home with a focus on underserved communities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Speed up blight elimination programs to restore and repurpose vacant parcels.
- Support paths to homeownership and home improvement initiatives to increase the number of housing units and homes that shape our neighborhoods.
- Enhance community well-being and connect neighborhoods.
- Fix infrastructure needs of various neighborhoods (e.g., water and sewer, sidewalks).
- Promote arts, culture, and local businesses to create vibrant community corridors.
- Nurture local community leadership and resident-guided planning capacity.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Housing and Urban Development Agencies, Community Development Organizations, Local Artists and Small Businesses, Residents and Neighborhood Leaders

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Reduction in vacant and blighted properties, especially in North St. Louis.
- Increased community-led investment in neighborhoods, local businesses and cultural initiatives.
- Improved access to parks and community spaces.
- Increase access to economic opportunity

COMMITTEE DELIVERABLE

Synthesized report recommendation to the Transition Team of how the Mayor's Office and broader city government can drive and/or support these outcomes.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION

- **Audrey Ellermann (Co-Chair)** – President, Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood Association; President, Brickline North CDC
- **Aaron Williams (Co-Chair)** – Senior Project Manager, Penn Services; Board Chairman, 4theVille
- **Dara Eskridge** – CEO, Invest STL
- **Bill Etling** – Senior Vice President, Nestlé Purina PetCare North America
- **Paul Woodruff** – Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, St. Louis Community Credit Union
- **Gabriela Ramirez-Arellano** – VP, Entrepreneurship, Cortex Innovation District
- **Brian Phillips** – Assistant Vice Chancellor, Washington University Medical Center; Investment Committee, Arch to Park
- **Peter Hoffman** – Managing Attorney for Neighborhood Advocacy, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
- **Pastor Andre Alexander** – President, Tabernacle Community Development Corporation

Mayor's office liaison: Emily Thenhaus

Facilitated/staffed by: Joni Wickham, Rich Lamb, Mayor Sly James, Kyle Wilkens

INTRODUCTION AND FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Neighborhood Transformation committee offers four guidestar recommendations to achieve the intended mission. Within each of those recommendations, the committee proposes short, medium and long term solutions to advance the recommendations.

Each of the short, medium, and long-term solutions will indicate by parenthetical note which guidestar recommendation it sets out to advance. The committee's four guidestar recommendations are:

1. INCREASE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS & THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTOR
(COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY)

2. STREAMLINE THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES
(DEVELOPMENT PROCESS)

3. ENHANCE CITY DATA INFRASTRUCTURE
(DATA INFRASTRUCTURE)

4. INCREASE DEPARTMENTAL FOCUS ON NEIGHBORHOODS
(DEPARTMENTAL FOCUS)

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (0-12 MONTHS)

1. (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY) MAKES FUNDS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO CDCS TO SUPPORT DISASTER RELIEF

2. (DEVELOPMENT PROCESS) PILOT EXPEDITED DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESSES, EXPAND BUILDING DIVISION STAFFING/REVIEW CAPACITY, AND REVIEW CITY FORM CONTRACTS FOR CONSISTENCY AND SIMPLIFICATION

3. (DATA INFRASTRUCTURE) DEDICATE FUNDING TO ENHANCE DATA COORDINATION AND BEGIN IDENTIFYING ALL CITY DATA SOURCES AND BEST PRACTICES

4. (DEPARTMENTAL FOCUS) ESTABLISH BOTH AN OFFICE OF RECOVERY & A NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION OFFICER

THE “WHY”

Each of the four guidestar recommendations have action items that can be taken in the near term. Funding is needed for the City's Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in the immediate sense to provide the ongoing boots on the ground support in the disaster relief context. The City can begin piloting expedited development review processes and re-orienting city departments towards a neighborhood focus in the context of disaster relief with a goal of adopting successful pilot initiatives on a more

permanent basis. A dedicated Office of Recovery and a cabinet-level position focused on the needs of the city's neighborhoods sends a strong message about the Mayor's vision for every corner of the community.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-3 YEARS)

- 1. (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY) WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTOR TO ESTABLISH CLEAR STANDARDS OF OPERATION AND GEOGRAPHIC AND SUBSTANTIVE FOCUS AREAS WITH THE GOAL OF INCREASING CDC CAPACITY TO LEAD DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES (I.E. STRENGTHEN CDC ECOSYSTEM).**
- 2. (DEVELOPMENT PROCESS) DEDICATE PROCESS COORDINATORS TO SUPPORT PROJECTS NAVIGATING THE DEVELOPMENT ENTITLEMENTS AND APPROVALS PROCESS.**
- 3. (DEVELOPMENT PROCESS) PERFECT DEVELOPMENT TRACKING AND REPORTING SYSTEM AND INCORPORATE A PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMPONENT.**
- 4. (DEVELOPMENT PROCESS) RE-EVALUATE PRESERVATION REVIEW PROCESSES.**
- 5. (DATA INFRASTRUCTURE) ESTABLISH A DATA WAREHOUSE AND INTEGRATE CITY DATA SETS FOR INCREASED INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION/EFFICIENCY, AND PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY.**
- 6. (DEPARTMENTAL FOCUS) INCORPORATE MORE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK INTO THE BUDGETING PROCESS, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.**
- 7. (DEPARTMENTAL FOCUS) ESTABLISH CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION TEAMS TO COORDINATE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT.**

THE “WHY”

The short-term disaster response should ultimately give way to a more structured

community development framework with expanded funding and fewer administrative and bureaucratic barriers. This streamlined and structured framework should also take place within various city agencies to make development more approachable, predictable, and transparent. The City should rely on integrated data systems to better streamline services across departments, reduce redundancies, and ameliorate systemic inequities.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY) PRIORITIZE AND COORDINATE PUBLIC FUNDING FOR CDCS, AND CONVENE CONVERSATIONS AROUND CORPORATE/PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING AND EARNED REVENUE MODELS FOR CDCS.

2. (DEVELOPMENT PROCESS) CONSIDER ADOPTING “BY RIGHT” DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

3. (DATA INFRASTRUCTURE) LAUNCH MODERNIZED CENTRAL DATA SYSTEM & INCORPORATE INTO “PRIORITY-BASED” BUDGETING PROCESS

4. (DEPARTMENTAL FOCUS) REIMAGINE STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED DEPARTMENTS

THE “WHY”

Scattershot funding and prioritization does not lead to tangible outcomes that positively impact neighborhoods. A more holistic approach is necessary in order to address systemic challenges and unequal access to resources. Consider frameworks that make informed and impactful funding allocations, and leverage public funding for additional support. Once the City’s rezoning process is complete, consider implementing “by-right” development to minimize superfluous processes. Lastly, maximize the city’s full potential by restructuring systems and processes while the city rebuilds.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND REBUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DON’T MISS THE MOMENT TO RESHAPE WHAT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LOOKS LIKE THROUGH STRONGER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS.

SUMMARY

St. Louis is rich with diverse neighborhoods that represent the past, present, and future of the city. However, not all neighborhoods have experienced the same investment, opportunities, and vibrancy. This committee began its work on a mission to center resident-driven transformation strategies to achieve equitable outcomes for all St. Louis neighborhoods. The natural disaster of May 16th made this goal even more acute.

These recommendations embody the committee's shared values of equity, action, and community. When it comes to neighborhood transformation, the city must work with a sense of urgency while also deliberately unraveling decades of stagnation and exclusionary practices. This work will need to combine pragmatism and visionary thinking, a respect for lived experience and a desire for innovation, in addition to collective problem solving and individualized attention. A new level of collaboration is needed in St. Louis for the neighborhood transformation vision established here to be realized.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES (BOTH PEOPLE AND MATERIALS)

- [Rental Improvement Fund – SERVING PHILADELPHIA SINCE 1965](#)
- [Tool Library](#)
- [About - Live Baltimore](#)
- [Developing a Shared Vision and Strategies to Address Vacancy and Abandonment in the City of St. Louis | Center for Community Progress](#)
- [Daugherty CityofSTLProposal - Final.pdf](#)
- [St. Louis Community Foundation](#)
- [Invest STL](#)
- [Vacancy Collaborative](#)
- [Real Estate Tax Assistance Fund \(RETAF\)](#)
- [Community Builders Network](#)
- [Legal Services of Eastern Missouri - Neighborhood Advocacy](#)
- [SLACO](#)
- [James S. McDonnell Foundation](#)
- [St. Louis Community Credit Union](#)
- [IFF.org](#)
- [Rise](#)
- [Justine Petersen](#)
- [Center for Community Progress](#)
- [unCommon Construction](#)



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COMMERCIAL TRANSFORMATION

COMMERCIAL TRANSFORMATION — OVERVIEW

PROJECT PILLAR

Drive economic transformation.

MISSION STATEMENT

To advance St. Louis as a thriving hub for business, career opportunities, and innovation through economic transformation.

OBJECTIVES:

- Revitalize downtown and other commercial districts to attract businesses, residents, commuters, and visitors.
- Strengthen public transit infrastructure, including MetroLink expansion and improved connectivity.
- Enhance airport infrastructure and regional transportation access.
- Foster private-public partnerships to drive commercial investment.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increase the critical mass of commercial development in the downtown and central district, which catalyzes additional development.
- Retain and attract more businesses, business opportunities, and jobs.

- Improved transit access and infrastructure for residents, commuters, visitors, and businesses.
- Higher foot traffic and economic activity in business districts.
- Reverse population decline by attracting and retaining residents through improved quality of life, economic opportunity, and targeted incentives.
- Positive narrative about the City/City pride

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – COMMERCIAL TRANSFORMATION

- **Steve Smith (Chair)** – Founder & CEO, New + Found
- **Brad Dean** – President & CEO, Explore St. Louis
- **Robert Holmes** – Chairman & CEO, Commerce Bank of St. Louis
- **Julie Murphy** – Managing Principal, JFM Strategies, LLC
- **Tamara Sheffield** – SVP and Chief Financial Officer, Forest Park Forever
- **Jayvn Solomon** – Founding Director and Creative Strategist, Lotus Labs & Loutopia

Mayor's office liaison: Julian Nicks

Facilitated/staffed by Mindy Mazur and Kyle Wilkens

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (0-12 MONTHS)

1. LAUNCH A DOWNTOWN ACTIVATION CAMPAIGN TO BOOST MORALE AND VISIBILITY

THE "WHY"

St. Louis needs visible, high-impact efforts that reenergize the downtown core and change the prevailing narrative. There is a need for a bold "wow" moment—such as a high-profile event—paired with vibrant, creative placemaking efforts like art installations and lighting. These visible wins can uplift morale, attract foot traffic, and affirm that the city is committed to creative and inclusive revitalization. This could also spur similar initiatives in other commercial districts.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Activate public spaces and storefronts through art, pop-ups, and cultural programming.
- Coordinate lighting enhancements on key buildings and corridors to improve safety and vibrancy.
- Promote these efforts widely to reinforce a refreshed image of downtown St. Louis.

- Collaborate with residents and neighbors.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Attendance numbers and media impressions for signature event(s).
- Number of storefronts or spaces activated through creative programming.
- Increased foot traffic, especially in key downtown corridors.
- Positive sentiment analysis from surveys, social media and press coverage.

2. MAP AND PUBLICIZE KEY CITYWIDE INITIATIVES, ASSETS, AND STAKEHOLDERS

THE “WHY”

Major projects, recovery efforts, and initiatives are happening in silos—with little shared awareness or coordination. A centralized, transparent map of who is doing what, where, and with what resources would improve communication, reduce duplication, and help identify gaps. This is especially urgent in the wake of the tornado, when effective recovery and long-term planning depend on shared knowledge.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Develop a living digital map of active initiatives, city-owned assets, and resources.
- Include key stakeholders, their roles, and geographic/project focus.
- Host the map on a centralized, publicly accessible city platform.
- Include mechanisms for ongoing updates and community submissions.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Map publicly launched within 6 months.
- Number of active projects, organizations, and city assets catalogued.
- Number of page visits, resource downloads, and partner engagement.
- Feedback from stakeholders on improved coordination and visibility, and barriers to progress.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-3 YEARS)

1. LAUNCH A NEIGHBORHOOD-CENTERED COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

THE “WHY”

St. Louis neighborhoods each face unique challenges and opportunities. A one-size-fits-all approach to economic development fails to address the hyperlocal context that drives or hinders growth. It is important to develop tailored strategies that lift each

business district and support inclusive, long-term commercial activity—especially in underinvested areas.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Work with key neighborhood and district stakeholders to create district-level strategic plans for commercial revitalization across St. Louis neighborhoods, co-designed with residents, local business owners, and community organizations.
- Identify short-, mid-, and long-range economic development goals specific to each area.
- Establish clear benchmarks for success tied to business growth, employment, vacancy reduction, and community engagement.
- Ensure alignment with other major economic efforts such as downtown redevelopment and industrial site readiness.
- Identify and address transit and transportation access issues.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of neighborhood-specific revitalization plans created and publicly shared.
- Increase in small business openings and commercial occupancy rates by neighborhood.
- Engagement levels from community stakeholders in planning and implementation to be documented through online surveys, photo/video, etc.
- Growth in job creation and local investment in targeted districts.

2. COORDINATE & ALIGN DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

THE “WHY”

Multiple organizations are currently working to improve downtown, but efforts are fragmented, resulting in missed opportunities and mixed messaging. The Mayor and her office can help coordinate and champion downtown development—by serving as a trusted convener and public-facing voice for the city’s core.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Coordinate conversations around downtown efforts across public, private, and nonprofit sectors.
- Facilitate reflection of past efforts and assess current landscape.
- Identify central point of contact for major redevelopment projects (e.g., Railway Exchange), tactical urbanism, business attraction, and public realm activation.
- Advance accountability, transparency, and clarity of aligned vision.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Increased coordination across stakeholders and reduction in overlapping efforts.
- Growth in downtown foot traffic, commercial leasing, and cultural activation.
- Successful advancement of high-priority redevelopment sites.

| LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CONVENE AN INCLUSIVE REGIONAL GOVERNANCE EXPLORATION PROCESS

THE “WHY”

St. Louis City and County continuing to operate in silos has hampered the region's economic competitiveness and ability to address shared challenges like public safety, population loss, and infrastructure investment. While past merger efforts have stalled, a collaborative, trust-based exploration of governance modernization is essential for long-term success—whether through shared services, charter reform, or more formal regional integration.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Establish a neutral, multi-sector task force to explore structural reforms that support stronger City-County alignment and regional cooperation.
- Assess and review previous merger efforts and plans that were not ultimately successful to determine what can be learned for the future.
- Engage residents, civic leaders, and national governance experts in co-designing options with transparency and accountability.
- Study and model successful peer city approaches to regional governance.
- Focus initial efforts on shared service delivery (e.g., planning, permitting, public safety) as early wins.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Formation and operation of an inclusive regional governance task force.
- Completion of a strategic roadmap outlining viable reform scenarios.
- Number of interlocal service agreements or pilot programs launched.
- Increased public awareness and engagement on regional governance issues.

2. ADVANCE CITYWIDE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND A BOLD VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

THE “WHY”

Revitalizing St. Louis requires a dual strategy: investing boldly in the heart of the city—downtown—while also incentivizing sustainable, creative, and community-centered

development across neighborhoods. A more vibrant downtown boosts regional pride and economic competitiveness, but success will depend on modern infrastructure, a larger residential base, and intentional design. At the same time, applying these standards citywide ensures equitable growth, neighborhood uplift, and long-term climate resilience.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Develop a "Downtown 2040" vision focused on doubling the residential population, expanding cultural and green infrastructure, and reconnecting the city's core.
- Leverage existing and create new development incentives (e.g., tax abatements, grants, expedited permitting) for projects citywide that:
- Dedicate at least 10% of the exterior facade to public art created by local artists.
- Incorporate green roofs and strive toward LEED or equivalent certification.
- Prioritize walkability, climate resilience, and ground-floor activation.
- Align with key private sector interests with access to capital.
- Ensure these incentives are both accessible and user-friendly in historically disinvested neighborhoods as well as the central corridor.
- Partner with local artists, fabricators, developers, and sustainability experts to guide implementation and ensure community benefits.
- Develop incentives that attract and retain new residents, such as partnerships to offer free or low-cost community college, workforce training, or homeownership assistance for individuals who live in the city for a minimum number of years. Explore models from other cities (e.g., Milwaukee) and align with regional workforce needs.
- Integrate major transit infrastructure improvements—such as MetroLink expansion, bus corridor upgrades, and pedestrian access—into the city's commercial revitalization plans.
- Leverage the ongoing modernization of St. Louis Lambert International Airport as part of the broader "Downtown 2040" and regional economic strategy.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Increase in downtown's year-round residential population and housing unit count.
- Completion of key infrastructure investments.
- Number and distribution of new developments across the city that meet sustainability and arts benchmarks.
- Square footage of green roofs and public art incorporated into new construction.
- Engagement levels of local artists, small developers, and minority-owned firms in revitalization efforts.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND REBUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PRIORITIZE REDEVELOPMENT IN STORM-AFFECTED COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

THE “WHY”

The recent tornado caused significant damage to commercial areas, many of which were already under-resourced. Prioritizing these corridors for redevelopment sends a clear signal of commitment to equitable recovery and supports small businesses as engines of economic resilience. This also builds on ongoing efforts—such as The Cultural Boulevard in The Ville—that were already gaining momentum before the storm.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Identify and assess the most affected commercial corridors using damage assessments and community input.
- Rebuild with purpose by using recovery as a catalyst to strengthen neighborhoods beyond pre-disaster conditions—prioritizing resilience, equity, and long-term economic opportunity.
- Integrate recovery priorities into existing redevelopment plans, such as North St. Louis revitalization and neighborhood plans and commercial strategies.
- Provide city backing—technical, financial, or public messaging—for grassroots-led initiatives like the Cultural Boulevard.
- Coordinate across city departments - and in close partnership with alders and neighborhood organizations - to fast-track infrastructure repairs, permitting, and small business assistance, while embedding resilience strategies and community-driven solutions into long-term recovery and redevelopment.
- Prioritize communications that keep community members informed on progress and issues, and provide transparency in budgeting/spending.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of storm-affected corridors receiving targeted recovery resources.
- Progress metrics for specific initiatives (e.g., Cultural Boulevard milestones).
- Reduction in commercial vacancy rates in prioritized areas within 6–12 months.
- Community satisfaction based on listening sessions or post-recovery surveys.
- Integration of resilient design and mitigation strategies in recovery projects, aligned with federal disaster funding requirements.

2. CAPTURE AND SHARE THE STORY OF COMMUNITY RECOVERY

THE “WHY”

Documenting the recovery process is a powerful way to build civic pride, preserve lessons learned, and communicate the strength of St. Louis communities. Storytelling helps inspire continued investment—internally and externally—by spotlighting the grit,

compassion, and innovation demonstrated during crisis response and rebuilding efforts.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Survey and assess documentation efforts already underway.
- Partner with these local storytellers, videographers, journalists, and historians to amplify their work and capture real-time stories from residents, business owners, and first responders.
- Focus on diverse neighborhoods and elevate voices that are often overlooked.
- Identify staff and/or partners to integrate storytelling into city communications, including social media, public art, and public meetings.
- Create an accessible digital archive for future use in planning, fundraising, and memorializing.
- Capturing notes and project plans to aid in rapid response to future disasters.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of stories or media pieces produced within the first year.
- Reach and engagement via city communication platforms and local media.
- Inclusion of recovery narratives in public presentations, grant applications, or external reports.
- Feedback from featured community members on authenticity and impact.

SUMMARY

“Progress only happens at the rate of trust.”

But in St. Louis, trust has been strained by fragmentation, inaction, and inconsistent follow-through. If we revert to old habits, we risk repeating the same cycles of stalled progress and public skepticism. This report section—focused on Commercial Transformation—is a call to break that cycle.

To rebuild trust, we must act decisively and visibly. That means:

- Standing up dedicated city staff teams and/or identifying consultants with the expertise to help lead and coordinate this work;
- Aligning strategies with current budget realities and identifying where public, private, and philanthropic investments are most needed; and
- Getting to work immediately, with urgency, transparency, and shared accountability.

The report outlines immediate, mid-range, and long-term strategies—from launching a Downtown Activation Campaign to supporting neighborhood-level commercial revitalization and exploring regional governance solutions. It also incorporates disaster

recovery recommendations, emphasizing visible, equitable rebuilding in storm-affected areas.

Success won't just be measured in plans written—it must be tracked through real, tangible outcomes: more activated storefronts, increased foot traffic, better job access, stronger local investment, and improved public perception of downtown and neighborhood business districts.

The people of St. Louis are watching. Follow-through is essential. While the City has a vital role to play—empowering staff, convening partners, advocating for resources, and keeping the public informed—progress will require shared leadership across sectors. These recommendations are not exhaustive, but they offer intentional starting points for achieving the commercial transformation St. Louis deserves.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES (BOTH PEOPLE AND MATERIALS)

- ["Where we want to live" by Ryan Gravel](#)
- [STL 2030 Jobs Plan](#)
- [ULI Report, 2024](#)
- [SLUP](#)
- [Tactical Urbanism](#)
- [Brickline Greenway](#)
- [The Cultural Blvd -- 4thville](#)
- [The Monarch on MLK – SLDC](#)
- [Greater St. Louis, Inc.](#)
- [PGAV Planners](#)
- Tactical urbanism: [Greater St. Louis Inc](#) & the downtown events steering committee, [PGAV Planners](#) / Destinations, Trailnet, STLCP2, Relevant CIDs, [Pocket Parks](#), Loutopia, [4TheVille](#), [HOK](#), [Cannon Design](#), [AIGA St. Louis](#), [AIA](#), [STL Design Week](#), [Explore St. Louis](#), [KAF](#), [RAC](#), [Forest Releaf](#), etc.
- [Samantha Smugala](#), creator of [Pocket Parks](#), is also ED of the [Delmar East Loop CID](#)
- [Catherine Hamacher](#), [Lindsey Evans](#), & [Andrew Struckhoff](#)
- [What one state learned after a decade of free community college](#)
- [Is free college a good idea? Increasingly, evidence says yes](#)
- [Business Retention and Expansion \(BRE\) Programs: Why Existing Businesses Are Important](#)
- [FE652/FE652: Business Retention and Expansion \(BRE\) Programs: Approaches to BRE Programs](#)

- [SLDC Scorecard](#)
- [General Administration - Better Together Saint Louis](#)
- [Page 35 SLDC Plan](#)
- [ABOUT | PlanSTL](#)
- [ConnectingStLouis_FinalSpreads.pdf](#)
- [Connecting St. Louis - Trailnet](#)
- [Emerging Trends in Real Estate® United States and Canada 2025 | ULI Knowledge Finder](#)
- [Economic Development Incentives – SLDC, St. Louis Development Corporation](#)
- [City Resilience Framework](#)



CHANGE *for* **STL**
Building a Better St. Louis Together

PUBLIC SAFETY & JUSTICE

PUBLIC SAFETY & JUSTICE — OVERVIEW

PROJECT PILLAR

Pursue Public Safety & Justice particularly with emphasis on under-resourced neighborhoods with high levels of crime. Reform and reimagine systems that ensure public safety while fostering community trust and engagement, reducing violent and non-violent crime, reckless and unlicensed driving, while implementing equitable justice practices.

MISSION STATEMENT

To deliver actionable recommendations that advance safety, fairness, and accountability in St. Louis through just, community-informed policies and systems. The Committee is committed to ensuring equity, legitimacy, and coordinated service delivery across all public safety institutions.

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce all levels of crime, violence and improve homicide clearance rates.
- Reduce incidents of non-violent and property crime.
- Rebuild community trust in police and the broader justice system.
- Eliminate or reduce incidents of “side shows” and reckless driving.
- Align behavioral health, reentry, and court services across agencies.
- Promote prevention and reduce non-police crisis interventions.

- Invest in youth safety and proven intervention programs.
- Modernize data, governance, and crisis response infrastructure.
- Increase recruitment/retention of police.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Improved crime prevention and resolution capabilities.
- Reduction in reckless driving and pedestrian fatalities.
- Youth diversion and reduced recidivism rates.
- Reformed public safety governance and staffing models.
- Reduce long-term police engagement in mental health issues.
- Cross-agency coordination for mental health and reentry services.
- Measurable community confidence in justice systems.
- Disaster Relief Coordinator.
- Increased sense of security.
- Data-driven, transparent budgeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – PUBLIC SAFETY & JUSTICE

- **Adella Jones (Co-Chair)** – Chief of Staff, Office of the Chancellor, University of Missouri - St. Louis
- **Dr. Alexander Garza, MD, MPH (Co-Chair)** – Chief Community Health Officer, SSM Health
- **Michael Wolff** – Former Judge and Chief Justice, Missouri Supreme Court; Professor and Dean Emeritus, Saint Louis University Law School
- **Tori Schafer** – Director of Policy and Campaigns, ACLU of Missouri
- **James Clark** – Vice-President of Division of Public Safety & Community Response, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis
- **Jessica Hicklin** – Co-Founder & Co-Executive Director, Unlocked Labs

Mayor's office liaison: Jonathan Strong

Facilitated/staffed by Mayor Sly James, Kim Lynk

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (0-12 MONTHS)

1. REACTIVATE INTERSECTION TRAFFIC CAMERA ENFORCEMENT

Mayor Tishaura Jones signed Ordinance 71821 (Automated Camera Enforcement Act) authorizing automated traffic control systems at key intersections. The City should continue/confirm the partner vendor process implementation. Design pedestrian-first walkable districts especially in downtown commercial areas with high residential density to encourage pedestrian and “street-life.” Designate one traffic lane to taxis, bicycles, public transit and emergency vehicles.

All traffic enforcement camera systems must operate in strict accordance with due process rights and applicable Missouri law. Any data collected through the traffic enforcement cameras must be deleted in a timely manner and must not be retained beyond the specific purpose for which it was collected. In the absence of a probable cause warrant, such data will not be shared with any other government agencies or entities. Any surveillance technologies should be narrowly tailored to their original purpose, and any expansion of use must be subject to additional community review and approval.

THE “WHY”

Reckless driving and red-light violations have surged. Enforcing existing infrastructure would immediately deter dangerous behavior.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Prioritize enforcement at high-fatality intersections.
- Public education on rationale and implementation.
- Deploy/sustain Downtown cruising detail.
- Seek Police Foundation funding.
- Partner with STL CID.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Monthly crash reports at enforced intersections.
- Volume of citations issued.
- Resident feedback on traffic safety.
- Confirmed partnerships and collaborations.
- Increased economic activity in walkable districts.

2. DEPLOY ADDITIONAL MOBILE SKYCOP UNITS

Recognizing the potential intrusive nature of such tactics and the limitations of current technology, this technology should be used only in full compliance with BB185, passed in 2024, known as the Community Control Over Police Surveillance (CCOPS) ordinance and the processes and procedures described therein.

THE “WHY”

Camera systems offer surveillance capacity where officer presence is stretched thin.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Cover all six districts.
- Use data to determine priority areas.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Incident reduction in monitored zones.
- Crime deterrence impact reports.
- Officer and public feedback.

3. EMERGENCY RECRUITMENT & RETENTION DRIVE

THE "WHY"

SLMPD is hundreds of officers below authorized strength. Staffing gaps affect 911 response, investigations, and patrol. These deficiencies disproportionately impact under-resourced communities.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Recruit 200 officers and 30 civilian dispatchers.
- Launch hiring incentives, retention bonuses, and community job fairs.
- Recognize importance of fielding a police force representative of the community-at-large.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Staffing vs. authorized capacity.
- Turnover rate.
- Recruit demographics.

4. EXPAND YOUTH VIOLENCE INTERVENTION: TEENS IN TRANSITION (TNT)

THE "WHY"

TNT in Kansas City succeeded in lowering risk among youth with prior exposure to violence. The program paid at-risk youth minimum wage to engage in art therapy with police officers embedded and engaged in the summer program. 66% of program graduates had no negative contacts with law enforcement in three years thereafter.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Serve youth aged 14-17 years.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Youth recidivism reduction.
- Program participation rates.

- Post-program educational/employment outcomes.

5. CREATE A PUBLIC SAFETY BOARD OR COMMISSION

THE "WHY"

Provide ongoing recommendations, monitor progress, collect relevant data.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Public Conduit.
- Sustainability, singularity of focus, quality control.
- Hybrid membership of public/private.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Effective evaluation of ongoing programs, flaws, goals, metrics, and achievements.

6. DOUBLE DOWN ON IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CITY JUSTICE CENTER

THE "WHY"

The St. Louis Justice Center, until recently, has been plagued with poor administration including health services. Several major disturbances including riots and uprisings and multiple deaths have occurred at the St. Louis City Justice Center in the recent past. Jail reform is critical in reducing recidivism and crime. Recent innovations, including the "Honor Dorm", job training, and veterans therapy, among others, show promise for achieving this objective.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- **Improving Living Conditions and Healthcare:** This includes addressing overcrowding, improving healthcare access, and providing educational resources.
- **Enhancing Security:** Implementing modern surveillance systems, contraband detection technologies, and biometric access control to ensure a safer environment for both inmates and staff.
- **Promoting Rehabilitation:** Expanding access to evidence-based programs, educational opportunities, and vocational training to prepare inmates for successful re-entry into society. Studies show that individuals who participate in correctional education programs have lower odds of returning to prison.
- **Utilizing Technology:** Employing smart technology, advanced data systems, and innovations like telemedicine, virtual visitation, and virtual reality training to optimize operations, improve inmate care, and support rehabilitation efforts.
- **Reducing Recidivism:** Implementing reforms that address the underlying causes of crime, such as substance abuse and lack of education, with the goal of reducing the likelihood that individuals re-offend after release. Research suggests that participation

in correctional education programs can significantly reduce the odds of returning to prison.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Participation rates in program offered in the Justice Center.
- Number of programs offered in the Justice Center.
- Number of deaths at the Justice Center.
- Long term – reduction of recidivism and crime rates.
- Decrease in complaints.

7. IMPROVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

THE "WHY"

During the worst natural disaster in recent memory, the City Emergency Management system failed with the impending tornado. Improving emergency management is needed to protect the citizens from disasters in the future.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Hire a dedicated Emergency Management and staff appropriately.
- Invest in technology including an early warning system for impending tornadoes and bad weather.
- Develop and test Emergency Operations Plan: Create and regularly update detailed plans outlining procedures for various scenarios, and test them frequently through drills and exercises.
- Prioritize seamless communication: Establish clear and efficient communication systems to ensure effective information flow between stakeholders during an emergency.
- Business Continuity Planning: Develop plans for maintaining essential operations during and after a disaster, including identifying critical functions, resources, and alternative locations.
- Plan for vulnerable populations: Address the specific needs of individuals with access or functional needs who may require additional support during an emergency.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of and participation in disaster drills.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1–3 YEARS)

1. CO-RESPONDER EXPANSION: MENTAL HEALTH & CRISIS INTERVENTION

THE "WHY"

Embedding social workers with police reduces use-of-force incidents and inappropriate arrests. Further, use of social workers at the scene facilitates professional triage of those in need of care and establish a database of "frequent flyers." Such usage also allows police officers to more quickly return to more traditional police duties and emergency response.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Increase 24/7 coverage in all police districts.
- Strengthen crisis call diversion system.

MEASUREMENT TOOLS:

- Behavioral call resolution data.
- Clinician response volume.
- Arrest avoidance metrics.
- Decreased response time to go calls.
- Budgetary impact.

2. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY THROUGH STREET REDESIGN (VISION ZERO)

THE "WHY"

St. Louis ranks among the most dangerous cities for pedestrians. Infrastructure can be modified and policies can be instituted to increase pedestrian movement while simultaneously increasing pedestrian sense of safety and increase economic activity.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Reduce speed limits on key corridors.
- Improve crossings and traffic calming. A
- Add street lighting and signage.
- Expand equitable traffic enforcement.
- End plea bargains for major moving violations.
- Implement income-adjusted fine schedule.

MEASUREMENT TOOLS:

- Annual pedestrian injury/fatality reports.
- Corridor-specific safety audits.
- Community satisfaction.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (3+ YEARS)

1. REFORM SLMPD GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

THE "WHY"

State-controlled governance limits local accountability and consistency.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Pursue enabling legislation for local control.
- Establish civilian oversight body.
- Active and transparent mayoral participation in BOPC.
- Reform of elected Law Enforcement positions.
- Transition the Sheriff position from elected to appointed.
- Endorses SLMPD leadership continuity and strategies for post-transition accountability.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Legal transition milestones.
- Decrease in misconduct claims.
- Public engagement with oversight mechanisms.

2. CREATE A REGIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA CONSORTIUM

THE "WHY"

Fragmented data undermines evidence-based policy. Sharing data allows for more efficient use of resources and promotes innovative, cross-departmental collaborations and problem solving.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Cross-agency dashboards.
- Justice system metrics for courts, law enforcement, jails.
- Hire City-level Chief Data Officer for Justice.
- Collaborate/sustain Office of Violence Prevention.
- Create/sustain a Criminal Data Consortium.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Inter-agency data alignment.
- Public-facing dashboards produced.
- Utilization by City departments.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND REBUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTEGRATE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INTO PUBLIC SAFETY SYSTEMS

THE "WHY"

Recent tornado recovery showed gaps in response coordination.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Train all safety personnel in disaster protocols.
- Define coordination between SLMPD, Fire, Health, Courts.
- Recognize and address “responder fatigue.”

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Response times and drill reports.
- Post-event assessments.
- Resident recovery and stabilization support utilization.

BUDGET, TRANSPARENCY, AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Achieving the goals outlined in this report will require a thoughtful reassessment of how the City allocates and tracks its public safety investments. Several recommendations require new or reallocated funding. To build support and ensure accountability:

- Conduct a public safety budget audit.
- Establish clear, public-facing goals tied to major spending areas.
- Create baseline data for measuring program impact.
- Use performance metrics to guide future budgets.
- Publish an annual “State of Public Safety” report.

SUMMARY

St. Louis faces deep, intersecting public safety challenges. The City must modernize systems while building legitimacy and equity. Former Chief Justice Mike Wolff and Dr. Alexander Garza emphasize legitimacy and public health approaches. Public safety strategies must be insulated from political interference. Homicide data underscores the urgency of youth-focused, trauma-informed responses.

Finally, the future of downtown viability depends on prioritizing pedestrian centric

policies and equitable enforcement.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES (PEOPLE & MATERIALS)

- [Missouri Foundation for Health – Behavioral health mapping](#)
- [National Network for Safe Communities – Group Violence Intervention](#)
- [Cities United – Youth violence prevention strategies](#)
- [Urban Institute – Criminal justice performance tools](#)
- [St. Louis University – Public Health Institute and data support](#)
- [KCNOVA Archives – Teens in Transition model](#)



CHANGE *for* **STL**
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INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

| INCLUSIVE ECONOMY – OVERVIEW

PROJECT PILLAR

Inclusive Growth and Opportunity.

MISSION STATEMENT

To create an inclusive and thriving St. Louis where all residents, especially historically marginalized and vulnerable populations, have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

OBJECTIVES:

- Targeted and accessible housing solutions for diverse populations.
- Effective strategies to address homelessness as a distinct crisis.
- Initiatives that promote economic inclusion.
- Policies that ensure language access and protect the rights of all.
- Comprehensive public health solutions.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increased Population Growth & Retention.
- More Targeted and Sustainable Housing Solutions.
- Effective Reduction in Homelessness.
- Enhanced Economic Inclusion & Stability.

- Healthier individuals and communities.
- Improved Civic Morale & Hope.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

- **Bridget Flood (Co-Chair)** – Executive Director, Incarnate Word Foundation
- **Dr. Will Ross, MD, MPH (Co-Chair)** – Alumni Endowed Professor of Medicine and Principal Officer for Community Partnerships, Washington University School of Medicine
- **Anna Crosslin** – Retired President & CEO, International Institute of St. Louis
- **Tim Huffman, Ph.D.** – Associate Professor, St. Louis University; Founding Board Member, House Everyone STL
- **Laura Hughes** – Founder & CEO, Fleur De Lis Development Corporation
- **Kathy Connors** – Executive Director, Gateway180; Chairperson, St. Louis City Continuum of Care

Mayor's office liaison: Emily Thenhaus

Facilitated by Mindy Mazur and Kyle Wilkens

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (0-12 MONTHS)

1. HELP RESIDENTS TO BETTER UTILIZE CITY SERVICES THROUGH IMPROVED LANGUAGE ACCESS

THE "WHY"

Language access is a vital and achievable short-term supportive service that underpins most of our region's strategic initiatives, especially workforce development and public health. Making city services and job opportunities more accessible to foreign-born and limited-English-speaking residents will have a lasting positive impact on inclusivity and community well-being.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Translate key materials and provide interpreters at city events (e.g., job fairs, FEMA and related services, healthcare/vaccination sites).
- Create more community-based partnerships to expand outreach to immigrant and refugee communities.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of translated documents and multilingual service points established.

- Increase in immigrant/refugee participation at city events and programs.
- Resident satisfaction or accessibility feedback gathered through native language surveys and provider feedback.

2. FORMALIZE PARTNERSHIP FOR HOMELESS HUMAN SERVICES THROUGH MOU

THE "WHY"

Responding to homelessness requires more than emergency shelter—it involves a coordinated system of care that includes prevention, outreach, supportive services, and permanent housing. The St. Louis Continuum of Care (CoC) not only leads shelter strategies like the Winter Weather Code Blue Plan but also oversees significant housing development and placement efforts that help individuals transition out of homelessness. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Mayor's Administration and the CoC will establish a transparent, long-term partnership that aligns emergency response with permanent housing goals, shared accountability, and strategic funding.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Formalize MOU with the Mayor's Administration and the STL Continuum of Care.
- Support plan to increase year-round shelter beds.
- Support the CoC's Winter Weather Code Blue Plan.
- Develop a coordinated plan for addressing encampments based on established best practices for care, equity, and safety.
- Plan to assess and coordinate funds for emergency shelter beds.
- Lay the foundation for long-term housing and other supportive services for the future.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- MOU signed and implemented.
- Increase in the number of year-round shelter beds.
- Successful implementation of the Code Blue Plan.
- Execution of encampment plan based on established best practices for care, equity, and safety.
- Funds assessed and coordinated for emergency shelter beds, taking into account community input and HMIS data.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-3 YEARS)

1. STREAMLINE CITY PROCESSES AND REALIGNMENT OF AGENCIES FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

THE "WHY"

There are significant inefficiencies and redundancies within city departments, authorities, and commissions related to housing development, especially for low-income residents. Bureaucratic delays, unclear guidelines, and misaligned reporting requirements hinder progress. A comprehensive review and realignment of work, paperwork processes, and agencies like CDA, SLDC, and the Affordable Housing Commission are necessary to better coordinate and streamline workloads, clarify purpose, reduce redundancies and delays to facilitate more effective housing development.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Conduct a cross-agency review of all housing-related departments, task forces, commissions and the like.
- Clarify the purpose and reduce overlap in work and paperwork processes.
- Streamline timelines and contract reimbursement systems.
- Standardize reporting metrics across funding streams.
- Coordinate housing-related organizations (e.g., CDA, SLDC, AHC) to align funding and policies to develop housing that meets ongoing community needs of vulnerable populations, especially families and older adults.
- Prioritize housing solutions that meet the needs of older adults, including affordability and accessibility of senior housing, aging-in-place retrofits, and supportive housing options.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Reduce processing times for housing development approvals and reimbursements.
- Decrease in reported redundancies and paperwork burden by grantees and contractors.
- Substantive increase in the number of housing development projects for low-income and mixed income residents that are completed.
- Establish standardized reporting metrics and provide training to ensure successful implementation.

2. ADVOCATE FOR COMPLETION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CITYWIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

THE "WHY"

Language access is a crucial factor in ensuring equity and inclusion for non-native English-speaking residents. Implementing a comprehensive, citywide language access plan will remove structural barriers to city services, employment opportunities, and housing, and make St. Louis more accessible and attractive to immigrant newcomers. A consistent approach across all departments is needed to prevent residents with language limitations from being excluded.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Work with key stakeholders to develop and implement a citywide Language Access Plan for all entities that report to the Mayor's office.
- Within 1 year of plan adoption, require such entities to develop plans to integrate language accommodations at all resident touchpoints.
- Ensure implementation no later than 3 years from plan adoption.
- Review and implement best practices, including models from comparable cities with established language equity practices.
- Include meaningful opening of city employment opportunities to non-native English speakers.
- Ensure language access is a baseline expectation, particularly in economic development, health and housing services.
- Develop a standardized baseline of service across all departments with modifications as required to meet the specific service areas.
- Coordinate with surrounding counties to lay the groundwork for expanding regionally.
- Address systemic language-based barriers in city hiring processes.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Number of foreign-born applicants hired into city roles or supported through revised HR processes.
- Development and public sharing of the Citywide Language Access Plan.
- Number of departments implementing required language accommodations.
- Number of customer touchpoints where language accommodations are successfully integrated.
- Increased accessibility and utilization of city services by non-native English-speaking residents (measured through surveys or data collection).
- Increase in non-native English-speaking individuals filling city jobs.
- Resident satisfaction and accessibility ratings captured through bilingual surveys.

| LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. MODERNIZE THE CITY CHARTER AND ADVANCE REGIONAL SHARED SERVICES SOLUTIONS

THE "WHY"

The long-standing structural issues stemming from the City of St. Louis' outdated charter and separation from St. Louis County create systemic inefficiencies, service duplications, and barriers to sustainable economic growth. A comprehensive, regional approach to reform and charter modernization is essential to overcome these challenges and ensure long-term growth and vitality for our region.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Support a transparent initiative to modernize the City Charter with community input to streamline services.
- Identify areas of current coordination and additional areas to enhance City-County regional relationships.
- Explore pathways for service-level integration or alignment with St. Louis County and regional entities, such as permitting, housing, and service delivery.
- Ensure broad representation from St. Louis County and an emphasis on equity and building public trust throughout the process.
- Assess and review previous plans to align services or modernize the charter that were not ultimately successful to determine what can be learned for the future.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Development and implementation of a revised City Charter that modernizes operations, service delivery, and language.
- Number of areas where City-County coordination is improved.
- Feasibility studies or plans for service-level integration or formal governance alignment completed.
- Representation and participation metrics for St. Louis County residents in the reform process.

2. ESTABLISH A WORKING CAPITAL FUND TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CDCS) AND DRIVE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

THE "WHY"

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) play a vital role in revitalizing neighborhoods and building housing, particularly in underinvested areas. However, CDCs often face financial challenges due to delayed reimbursements and difficulties bridging financing gaps. Establishing a sustainable funding model and enhancing the capacity of CDCs will enable them to effectively support community development and housing initiatives, especially for low-income residents.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Establish a revolving working capital fund offering low-interest loans or grants to CDCs awaiting reimbursement or tax credit allocations.
- Prioritize funding for CDCs serving high-need neighborhoods and small-to-mid-scale developers rooted in the community.
- Leverage public-private partnerships to establish and sustain the working capital fund.
- Align the fund with broader efforts to streamline the housing development process.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Amount of capital allocated to the working capital fund.
- Number of CDCs receiving loans or grants from the fund.
- Number of housing units or community development projects completed by funded CDCs.
- Amount of private sector investment leveraged through public-private partnerships.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND REBUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LAUNCH A STATEWIDE DISASTER RESILIENCE SUMMIT AND STRATEGIC POLICY PLANNING PROCESS

THE “WHY”

As climate-driven disasters grow in frequency and intensity—and with national signals that FEMA support may become less reliable—St. Louis and other Missouri cities must be prepared to lead their own coordinated, long-term recovery strategies. A Statewide Disaster Resilience Summit would initiate policy and funding collaboration among local leaders, with a focus on planning for future disasters while maximizing current relief funds for long-term community impact.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Convene a Missouri Disaster Resilience Summit—led by the City of St. Louis in partnership with the Governor’s Office—to bring together mayors, emergency managers, planners, and community-based organizations statewide.
- Launch a working group to explore scalable disaster funding tools, including pre-disaster financing mechanisms, local/state mutual aid agreements, and infrastructure resilience funds.
- Integrate long-term planning for relief funding into discussions—ensuring that dollars received today are aligned with housing, health, infrastructure, and workforce goals for tomorrow.
- Share and replicate best practices for equitable disaster response and recovery across urban and rural communities.
- Ensure disaster recovery and resilience planning accounts for older adults’ specific needs, including mobility limitations, health access, and emergency communication barriers. Coordinate with aging service providers to plan outreach and housing stability strategies post-disaster.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Summit held with documented participation and output.
- Working group established and roadmap created for resilient funding and

governance strategies.

- Inclusion of long-term relief funding strategy in planning documents.
- Adoption of recommendations by state or regional actors.

2. APPOINT A CITYWIDE DISASTER RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE COORDINATOR TO LEAD INTERAGENCY AND FUNDING ALIGNMENT

THE “WHY”

St. Louis needs a dedicated point person to lead its disaster recovery and resilience efforts—someone who can coordinate across departments, align funding with long-term impact, and maintain momentum between disasters. With multiple agencies (Fire, Police, Public Health, CDA, SLDC, Emergency Management) involved in disaster response, a single coordinator can streamline communications, surface gaps, and ensure that relief dollars are deployed strategically—not just reactively.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Build on the current Emergency Management system and appoint a Citywide Disaster Recovery and Resilience Coordinator with a mandate to:
 - Oversee disaster preparedness, response, and recovery planning.
 - Serve as the liaison across key departments and with community organizations.
 - Ensure relief funds – such as FEMA, CDBG-DR, and philanthropic dollars—are prioritized for long-term, equitable outcomes.
 - Integrate recovery planning into existing citywide strategies, including the Strategic Funding Assessment and CoC Gaps Analysis (e.g., STELLA M data).
- Develop an internal coordination framework for use during and after disasters to facilitate housing placement, shelter coordination, public health response, and data sharing.
- Work in partnership with state emergency agencies and advocate for more resilient, localized funding streams.
- Communicate with key stakeholders and the public, to ensure clarity and transparency on “who is doing what.”

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Appointment of a Disaster Recovery and Resilience Coordinator with defined responsibilities.
- Completion of an interagency disaster coordination protocol led by the coordinator.
- Number of relief funding streams incorporated into strategic planning efforts.
- Evidence of improved response and recovery timelines and alignment with long-term goals.

SUMMARY

This draft report outlines actionable, strategic recommendations to create an inclusive and thriving St. Louis, focusing on equitable growth and opportunity for all residents, especially marginalized populations. It presents a series of short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations designed to address housing instability, homelessness, workforce development, language access, and structural governance issues. The objectives include targeted housing solutions, reduced homelessness, enhanced economic inclusion, comprehensive public health solutions, and improved civic morale, with expected outcomes like population growth, sustainable housing, and increased resident satisfaction, all supported by a framework of strategic funding assessments, cross-agency coordination, and robust community partnerships.

While not exhaustive of every solution needed, this report offers focused, achievable steps that can catalyze broader inclusive economic transformation.

To move from vision to impact, the City must play a key role—convening partners, supporting implementation, and aligning efforts across departments—while also empowering and/or coordinating with community-led initiatives. We believe it's essential for efforts to be both resilient and adaptable as external dynamics change. These recommendations mark intentional steps toward building a more equitable and resilient St. Louis.

RESOURCES (BOTH PEOPLE AND MATERIALS)

- [Inclusive Economy STELLA M Action Items.docx](#)
- [STL 2030 Jobs Plan](#)
- [Strong Towns, Charles Marohn](#)
- [Escaping the Housing Trap, Charles Marohn](#)
- [St. Louis City Continuum of Care](#)
- [Built for Zero](#)
- [Mission St. Louis](#)
- [211](#)
- [Economic Justice Action Plan](#)
- [Blake Hamilton](#), President & CEO, [International Institute of St. Louis](#)
- [Diego Abente](#), Executive Director, [Casa de Salud](#)
- [Cynthia Duffe](#), Executive Director, [Gateway Housing First](#)
- [Suzanne Sierra](#), Executive Director, [St. Louis Mosaic Project](#)
- [Dr. Ness Sandoval](#), Department of Sociology & Anthropology, SLU

- [Jason Purnell, James S. McDonnell Foundation](#)
- [Otis Williams, SLDC](#)
- [Shanna Nieweg, Horizon Housing Development Company](#)
- [Jennifer Haggeman, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri](#)
- [Stephen Westbrook, IFF](#)
- [Samantha Stangl, House Everyone STL](#)
- [St. Louis Mosaic Project](#)
- [06_13_2025_St. Louis City PIT.pdf](#)



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EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – OVERVIEW

PROJECT PILLAR

Ensure inclusive growth.

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure every child has access to high quality, affordable education and pathways to career success, and make St. Louis a place where families want to stay, grow, and succeed.

OBJECTIVES:

- Expand access to quality birth – age 3, Pre-K, and early childhood education programs.
- Improve educational outcomes in K-12 schools through focused support of public schools within the city of St. Louis.
- Strengthen workforce development programs to connect students with career opportunities that align with the city's workforce needs.
- Foster partnerships and support between the SLPS Board, independent charter and parochial schools, universities, colleges, workforce development entities, and the City of St. Louis.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increase pre-K enrollment access, early literacy rates, and numeracy skills.

- Increase access to 0-3 quality childcare options.
- Increase high-quality school seat options for every student with high graduation rates and post-secondary readiness.
- Optimize strong summer program options for all youth.
- Facilitate more substantial alignment between education and workforce needs.
- Expand career pathways and help enable career stability in a dynamic economy through efforts such as reskilling and upskilling.

COMMITTEE DELIVERABLE

Synthesized report recommendation to the Transition Team of how the Mayor's Office and broader city government can drive and/or support these outcomes.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Dr. Stacy Gee Hollins, Ph.D. (Co-Chair)** – Associate Provost of Academic Affairs and Dean, Anheuser-Busch School of Business, Harris-Stowe State University
- **Haliday Douglas (Co-Chair)** – President & CEO, St. Louis Public Schools Foundation
- **Leslie Gill** – President & CEO, Rung for Women
- **Jake Hummel** – President, Missouri AFL-CIO
- **Jon-Pierre Mitchom** – Director of Equity and Inclusion, Saint Louis Priory School
- **Jeff Pittman, Ph.D.** – Chancellor, Saint Louis Community College
- **Dr. Cheryl Watkins, MBA** – President & CEO, YWCA Metro St. Louis
- **Stephen Westbrook** – Executive Director of Southern Region, IFF (CDFI)

Mayor's office liaison: Jonathan Strong

Facilitated/staffed by Mindy Mazur and Rich Lamb

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (0-12 MONTHS)

1. ESTABLISH A CITYWIDE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE ROUNDTABLE

THE "WHY"

The fragmentation of education and workforce systems in St. Louis creates siloed efforts, missed opportunities for collaboration, and inconsistent outcomes for learners across the city. There is a need for an inclusive and sustained mechanism for coordination. A Mayor's office-facilitated Education and Workforce Roundtable would create shared

ownership, streamline collaboration, and identify opportunities for immediate action across early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, and adult learning.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Convene representatives from organizations such as: SLPS, charter and parochial schools, early childhood providers, higher education institutions, and workforce development organizations.
- Organize the roundtable into functional subgroups (e.g., Early Childhood, K-12, Postsecondary, Adult Learning, etc.).
- Meet quarterly to identify shared priorities, coordinate efforts, and track aligned initiatives.
- Empower the roundtable to produce quick-win strategies (e.g., input into which metrics should be tracked for data dashboard, citywide summer learning campaign, cross-institutional career pathway programs).

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Roundtable membership established and initial meetings launched within 3–6 months.
- Number of workforce development organizations identified and participating in discussions.
- Number of collaborative initiatives implemented in the first year.
- Framework established that includes roles, responsibilities, and goals to ensure ongoing sustainability.

2. LAUNCH A CITYWIDE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DATA DASHBOARD

THE "WHY"

To define success and drive smart collaboration, the city must anchor its education and workforce strategy in clear, consistent data. A centralized data dashboard would establish shared indicators of progress across early childhood, K-12, postsecondary education, and workforce readiness. This tool would help the City of St. Louis and partners monitor trends, identify gaps, and evaluate the impact of cross-sector efforts—enabling better policy, investment, and accountability.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Lay the foundation for long-term housing and other supportive services for the future.
- Leverage Citywide Education and Workforce Roundtable to develop a shared set of success indicators with community input (e.g., kindergarten readiness, high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, employment rates).
- Partner with research institutions and data providers to build and maintain the dashboard beyond the launch.

- Ensure the dashboard is publicly accessible and updated regularly.
- Use the dashboard to inform roundtable discussions and guide decisions.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Identification of common data standards, metrics, design, and launch of initial dashboard prototype in 9-12 months.
- Number of indicators tracked across education and workforce stages.
- Frequency of data updates and public usage metrics.
- Volume of “traffic” by general public on dashboard landing page
- Use of dashboard data in shaping city programs, funding decisions, or policy changes.

MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-3 YEARS)

1. BUILD A CITYWIDE EDUCATION-TO-WORKFORCE PIPELINE HUB

THE “WHY”:

To create equitable access to family-sustaining careers, St. Louis must align its education and workforce systems into a seamless, coherent pipeline. Right now, the landscape is fragmented, and learners experience a lack of clarity, support, and real-world connection as they move from early education through high school, college, and into careers. A city-supported Talent Pathways Hub would coordinate across sectors to build aligned, industry-informed career pathways in key fields like healthcare, tech, skilled trades, and entrepreneurship.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Establish a formal cross-sector hub that brings together early childhood, K-12, higher ed, and workforce partners.
- Leverage the Citywide Education and Workforce Data Dashboard to inform cross-sector collaboration opportunities.
- Align curricula and credentialing with regional workforce needs.
- Encourage more paid internships, youth apprenticeships, and industry-led programming in high-opportunity fields.
- Support capacity-building of PreK-16 schools and adult training programs to better align with opportunities for gainful employment and a thriving wage throughout the St. Louis region.
- Develop visual tools and communication campaigns to help learners and families understand and utilize full pipeline opportunities for gainful employment and thriving wages.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Establish a common vocabulary for workforce pipelining (incl. Definitions for gainful employment, thriving wage, etc.).
- Number of cross-sector partnerships formalized and funded.
- Utilize the Citywide Education and Workforce Data Dashboard to track increase in youth and adults completing career pathway programs and/or stackable credentials.
- Employer participation in pathway design and internship/apprenticeship offerings.
- Increase in workforce readiness and gainful employment.

2. RAISE THE FLOOR AND ELEVATE THE PROFESSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

THE “WHY”

St. Louis continues to face a shortage of affordable, high-quality early childhood education (ECE) options, worsened by staffing shortages and provider burnout. One root cause is inadequate compensation for ECE professionals—who are entrusted with our youngest children yet remain among the lowest-paid workers. A local pilot of a proven model like WAGE\$ (which offers wage supplements tied to credentials) or Tri-Share (which shares child care costs across employers, employees, and government) could help stabilize staffing, professionalize the ECE field, and open more seats for families in need.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Advance and learn from current community organizations’ pilot with key stakeholders such as early childhood educational partners, local providers, employers, funders, and public sector partners.
- Collect data to identify target neighborhoods with the greatest ECE shortages or those most impacted by recent storms.
- Provide tiered wage supplements based on education/credentials (WAGE\$) and/or implement cost-sharing supports that relieve pressure on both families and providers (Tri-Share).
- Use the pilot to reinforce that ECE professionals are skilled, essential members of the workforce deserving of competitive compensation and career advancement.

HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Increase in average compensation and education attainment levels among participating ECE professionals.
- Reduction in turnover and staffing vacancies across pilot sites.
- Net increase in the number of operational, high-quality child care seats.
- Establish standard of quality to measure success, such as kindergarten-readiness.
- Long-term recommendations.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. REIMAGINE LEARNING THROUGH A ST. LOUIS EDUCATION MASTER PLAN

THE “WHY”

St. Louis’s population, workforce readiness, and economic competitiveness are directly tied to the strength and alignment of its learning ecosystem. Yet systemic challenges—declining enrollment, disinvestment, and lack of coherence across Pre-K to postsecondary—continue to limit outcomes for residents and the region. A citywide education master plan can unify early learning, K-12, higher education, and workforce partners around a shared vision of equity, innovation, and economic opportunity over the next decade.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Convene a cross-sector steering committee to co-create a 10-year P-20+ Education Master Plan tied to economic development and population growth.
- Inventory and synthesize existing research reports and coalition efforts.
- Align educational programs and curricula with future workforce needs and emerging industries (e.g. AI, green jobs, health care, tech).
- Integrate lived experience and community input into all phases, with a focus on racial and economic equity.
- Establish data-sharing protocols across sectors to track learner progress and institutional accountability.
- Ensure the plan survives political transitions through commitments from institutional and civic partners.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Plan adoption by citywide education and workforce institutions.
- Utilize the Citywide Education and Workforce Data Dashboard, and additional geospatial or data sources, to track equity and workforce alignment across the P-20+ pipeline.
- Implementation of new cross-sector programs or policy changes aligned to the plan.
- Increases in key indicators like postsecondary enrollment, credential completion, and career entry rates.

2. CREATE A CITYWIDE EDUCATION & WORKFORCE INNOVATION & INVESTMENT FUND

THE “WHY”

Sustainable and equitable transformation of St. Louis’s education ecosystem requires long-term, flexible investment. A dedicated public-private fund can unlock innovation,

stabilize effective programs, and build the infrastructure needed for bold ideas—like “classrooms without walls,” place-based learning, and educator housing—to scale and succeed. This fund positions the city as a national model for cross-sector collaboration, future-ready education, and inclusive economic growth.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Utilize Master Plan and Data Dashboard to guide the development and launch of a St. Louis Education & Workforce Innovation & Investment Fund seeded by city, philanthropic, and corporate partners.
- Identify an appropriate structure and ownership model—such as a public-private intermediary or partnership with a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)—to manage, deploy, and monitor capital aligned with community priorities.
- Prioritize initiatives like early childhood expansion, educator pipeline development, and experiential learning aligned with workforce needs.
- Fund innovative models like the “classrooms without walls” concept, blending industry partnerships, field experiences, and real-world learning.
- Support a local quality ratings and coaching system for early education providers.
- Explore “pay for success” financing tools and social impact bonds to attract additional investment.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Amount of capital raised and allocated annually.
- Number of students, educators, and schools served by funded initiatives.
- Utilize the Citywide Education and Workforce Data Dashboard and other identified tools to track long-term ROI indicators such as kindergarten readiness, teacher retention, and graduate job placement.
- Evaluation reports showing measurable impacts of pilot programs on student success and economic outcomes.

DISASTER RECOVERY AND REBUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LEVERAGE POST-TORNADO SCHOOL CLOSURES FOR LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY

THE “WHY”

The storm damaged many schools—and some may never reopen. While deeply disruptive, this moment also creates a rare opportunity: to align recovery efforts with long-needed changes in a district facing population decline and excess building capacity. Past attempts to right-size school facilities have faced political resistance and community mistrust. Now, with clear physical and financial realities, the City should work

with SLPS to transparently and compassionately consolidate, repurpose and reimagine school sites with the community's voice at the center while also supporting equitable neighborhood redevelopment efforts.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Prioritize stabilizing the school-going population.
- Work in partnership with SLPS, charter networks, early childhood providers, and neighborhood leaders, on citywide facilities assessments and plans.
- Assist SLPS in communicating openly about which storm-damaged schools are likely to remain closed and why—clarifying closures as part of a long-term vision.
- Participate in a community engagement process to determine how vacated school buildings can be repurposed to meet neighborhood needs—e.g., early child care centers, health, workforce training, housing, or arts space.
- Develop a clear, expedited path for redevelopment proposals from trusted CDCs, nonprofits, or public-private partnerships with community feedback in-hand.
- Use this moment to invest in educational equity by reinvesting cost savings into students, staff, and the highest-need schools that remain open.

HOW TO MEASURE:

- Completion of a joint facilities and enrollment assessment within 90 days.
- Number of repurposing proposals developed, approved, and funded within 12 months.
- Reinvestment totals and improvements in schools remaining open (e.g., upgrades, program expansion, staffing).
- Public trust metrics: satisfaction with transparency, inclusion, and alignment with neighborhood priorities.

2. PRIORITIZE TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES IN TORNADO RECOVERY FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND EDUCATORS

WHY THIS MATTERS

St. Louis students, educators, and families are navigating cumulative trauma—from the pandemic to a school shooting to the recent tornado. Without timely and sustained mental health support, academic and workforce recovery will stall. Embedding trauma-informed care into schools, early learning centers, and community hubs will help stabilize recovery, reduce burnout, and rebuild trust.

KEY ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Advocate for licensed trauma-informed mental health providers to affected schools and child care centers.

HOW TO MEASURE

- Number of schools and centers receiving trauma-informed mental health support.

- Number of educators trained in trauma-informed practices within 90 days.
- Utilization of counseling and grief support services.
- Student attendance, educator retention, and caregiver satisfaction metrics post-intervention.

SUMMARY

This draft report from the Education Systems & Workforce Transition Advisory Committee presents actionable recommendations to improve educational outcomes, strengthen workforce development, and foster strategic partnerships in St. Louis. Framed around the “bookends” of early childhood care and career advancement, the recommendations span the short-term (launching a citywide roundtable and education/workforce data dashboard), mid-term (enhancing early childhood education and building a workforce pipeline hub), long-term (developing a master plan and investment fund), and disaster recovery (addressing school closures and trauma-informed support).

While not comprehensive of everything that could or may need to be accomplished to transform St. Louis’s education and workforce ecosystem, the committee believes these recommendations are strong starting points. Success will require coordination, collaboration, and shared ownership across City departments, education and training institutions, employers, philanthropy, and community organizations.

To ensure progress, the Mayor’s office should assign dedicated staff who can help drive, support, and convene efforts across sectors—providing leadership where appropriate, aligning work with City priorities and resources, and tracking implementation efforts.

The long-term vision is that no family feels the need to leave St. Louis in search of better opportunities—and that young people are empowered and excited to build their lives and careers in the city they call home.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES (BOTH PEOPLE AND MATERIALS)

- [STL 2030 Jobs Plan | Greater St. Louis, Inc.](#)
- [Betty M. Wheeler • Founder of St. Louis’ Metro High School](#)
- [Zanshin: Learning the Art of Attention and Focus From a Legendary Samurai Archer](#)
- [K-12 Career Literacy Resources](#)
- [SRSN One-Pager RealWorldLearning.pdf](#)
- [Community Development Financial Institutions Fund](#)
- [EdPlus](#)
- [Harris-Stowe State University College of Education](#)

- [Parents as Teachers](#)
- [Du Bois Visionary Infographics](#)
- [Citywide Plan for Education.pdf](#)
- [SLDC EconomicJusticeActionPlan FINAL.pdf](#)
- [Successful Pathways® | YWCA Metro St. Louis](#)
- [WEPOWER St. Louis | The PLAYBOOK | Blueprint For a Better Tomorrow](#)
- [STL.works](#)
- [Regional Business Council](#)
- [State of Tennessee: Jobs and Education](#)
- [Gateway Early Childhood Alliance](#)
 - NOTE: Following year-long stakeholder convenings, Gateway Early Childhood Alliance will be launching a local ECE pilot in 2026 that will include a tri-share like model. This may be an opportunity for city alignment.
- [Missouri Works Initiative](#)
- [TechSTL](#)
- [MOCAN – Missouri College & Career Attainment Network](#)
- [The St. Louis Internship Program \(executive director Shanise Johnson\)](#)
- [Alandon Pitts, Senior Workforce Manager and Community Development, RBC](#)
- [Hank Webber, Urban Impact Advisors](#)
- [Bob Newmark, BCLP](#)
- [Jerry Schlichter, Schlichter Bogard](#)
- [Jason Purnell, James S. McDonnell Foundation](#)
- [St. Louis Community Foundation](#)
- [St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment](#)



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