

# St. Louis County

## 2016 Strategic Plan Update

Adopted by the Board of Commissioners  
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# 1. Planning Process

This document outlines the results of a high level Strategic Planning process initiated by the St. Louis County Board. The process was designed to include both Commissioners and staff leadership in ways that support their respective organizational roles. Planning activities took place between February and June 2016, and included the following major steps:

Contextual Scan – County performance data was gathered along with substantial demographic, economic, and social indicator data to outline current conditions and trends in the county. Department Heads also completed a SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis survey.

Planning Retreats – An initial session was held with Department Heads to discuss the SWOT survey results, identify critical issues in the community, and generate a set of proposed organizational values. Next, a planning team consisting of the full County Board and administrative representatives participated in a day-long workshop. Topics covered in the workshop included the county’s role/mission, countywide goals, in-depth review and discussion of community indicator and county activity data, identification of critical issues, and feedback on the organizational values draft.

Action Planning – Smaller teams of staff leadership were formed to determine effective strategies for addressing each of the Critical Issues, and to outline detailed action plans for the first year of implementation.

The Strategic Plan can be used as a management and decision-making tool, to guide resource allocation, and to maintain focus on established priorities. Countywide Goals will be used as a guide for individual Department planning, budget development, and business improvement initiatives. In addition, specific action plans will be developed annually to address Critical Issues identified by the Board.

## 2. What We Found

The contextual scan revealed a mix of good news and some key findings:

### *The Good News:*

- Homelessness has been declining since 2009, contrary to the overall state trend.
- Efforts to reduce length of stay and overcrowding in the county jail are working.
- Progress is being made on blight removal and the sale of tax-forfeit properties.
- The transportation sales tax is making a positive impact on improving road conditions.
- Positive trends in the total number of jobs, new construction activity, and Estimated Market Value.

### ***Some Concerning Trends:***

- Near doubling of poverty in the past 15 years, within a total population figure that has remained about equal. Our youngest children (0-4 years) are experiencing the highest rate of poverty.
- Median household income is still low despite a peak number of jobs and high workforce participation.
- Increasing reports of child maltreatment and numbers in out-of-home care.
- Increasing drug use, particularly a steep increase in opiate use.
- Mental health issues are overlapping with homelessness, drug use, and incarceration.
- A majority of school districts in the county are not achieving the state's graduation goal of at least 90% of students graduating on time.
- A high proportion of renters are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs which is an indicator of potential risk for homelessness.
- Aged housing stock at risk of becoming distressed/blighted.
- The projected decline in population will have a negative impact at state and federal levels.

## **3. Key Statements**

### **Organizational Values**

**We serve the public in a manner that earns trust by incorporating these values:**

- **People Focused** – County interactions demonstrate caring and respect for our diverse community and workforce.
- **Stewardship** – County financial, human, and natural resources are used wisely to address the collective needs of the community.
- **Integrity** – County business is conducted in an open, ethical, and transparent manner that ensures accountability to our stakeholders and the citizens we serve.
- **Fairness** – County government policies and operations are administered consistently and fairly to ensure equal treatment for all our citizens.
- **Innovation** – County employees continuously strive to improve our services and anticipate community needs.

### **Mission Statement**

*The mission of St. Louis County is to promote health and safety, ensure sound infrastructure, embrace our natural resources, and support an environment where communities prosper.*

## **Countywide Goals & Critical Issues**

The following Goals are general statements of what St. Louis County is working to accomplish in the community. These goals have been utilized by the county for a number of years and after Commissioner review still define the roles of the county:

GOAL #1: Public Health and Safety

GOAL #2: Sound County Infrastructure

GOAL #3: Natural Resources Management

GOAL #4: Community Growth and Prosperity

Within these overall Goals, the St. Louis County Board has identified two Critical Issues upon which to focus additional efforts during the timeframe of this Strategic Plan. These Critical Issues are:

- ✓ **Economic Development**
- ✓ **Mental Health & Substance Abuse**