Future of Downtowns

St. Louis 2030 Edition

***** city group www.starcitygroup.us



Retail Transformation

From shopping districts to fulfillment zones.

#ecommerce #freight #employment

Free, fast shipping—boosted by automation will accelerate the hollowing out of entire retail categories, and enable the dispersal of what remains. As ghost restaurants and virtual shops take up new positions on the outskirts of high-rent downtowns, new kinds of cultural, community, and retailing will replace the vacant storefronts left behind.



Economic Evolution

From commerce to Alenabled creation.

#ai #jobs #openinnovation

Downtowns once thrived as centers for buying and selling, and the management of vast enterprises. Today, that work is being relocated to low-cost locations and automated at an accelerating rate. But as entire industries—from finance to design to tourism—put artificial intelligence to work, the greatest synergies will come when people and intelligent machines work together. The cities that appeal to firms in fast-growing new sectors will provide a pool of skilled talent, infrastructure for collaboration, and partners who are open to new ideas and new ways of working.

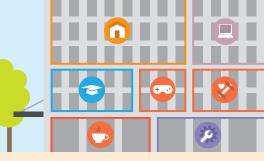


Demographic Divergence

From gentrification to multi-generational.

#housing #talent #healthcare

For a decade or more, American cities have seen rising investment in housing aimed at young professionals. As migration patterns of people in their 20s and 30s shift again, and older people seek access to part-time work, culture and entertainment, and other amenities, urban housing must serve a broader market of young, old and in-between. Increasingly, developers are targeting families with children, offering larger units with community facilities including new schools and child care.



Personalized Work

From workplace employment to portable livelihoods.

#commerce #office

As gig work, flexible schedules, and telecommuting all continue to grow, the nature of employment and the workplace will continue to fragment and recombine. Large employers will bring jobs in smaller numbers, and rely on more types of auxiliary workers to get the job done. At the same time, demand for mixed-use buildings that house entire clusters including private and shared workspace, support services, and housing—all with more flexible leasing—will grow.



Circular Cities

From carbon source to carbon sink.

#environment #construction #sustainability

As cities cash in on a triple payout of carbon-light materials, efficient infrastructure, and human-centered design, the goal of carbon-negative communities will be within reach. Businesses, families, and governments will leverage this platform to design ways of living, working, and delivering services that reuse waste, circular economies will further close the loop on material and energy flows, while generating new sources of shared wealth.



Governance By Design

From tradition to intention

#citizenship #participation #cityservices

As cities face an existential cluster of challenges from fiscal failures to climate change to racial discrimination, many are taking more radical steps to rethink rules, processes, and norms about how government works. Rather than working through or around ineffective institutions and norms, they are remaking and replacing them. Examples include liquid democracy, participatory budgeting, and open data. The most ambitious cities are undertaking nuts-to-bolts charter reform.



Neighborhoods That Nurture

From sparse monitoring to quantified well-being.

#health #publicsafety #amenities

Cities today often use imperfect measures of quality of life that don't track ongoing changes in conditions or accurately reflect the priorities of diverse populations. As governments and citizens alike gain access to better, broader real-time indicators of safety, public health, and sentiment, greater emphasis will fall on services and amenities that demonstrably improve overall well-being for entire neighborhoods.



New Mobility

From moving cars to moving people and goods.

#commuting #sustainability #manufacturing

The unfulfilled hype around automated cars will give way to a fast-growing variety of specialized automated vehicles (AVs) built for use in cities. Electric scooters, skateboards, and even shoes will give people new freedoms but detract from walkability. Small, low-speed conveyors will use sidewalks for time-sensitive delivery of small purchases and food. Larger mules will park at corners and provide unattended pickups and returns for items ordered online, eliminating noisy and dirty trucks.