



KENDALL COUNTY

2026–2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

FULL REPORT



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for
Governmental Studies**

Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development

APPROVED FEBRUARY 2026

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KENDALL COUNTY COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

Kendall County would also like to thank all who participated in the stakeholder feedback phase of the process. An effective strategic plan includes feedback from key stakeholders to ensure that organizational needs and expectations are clearly communicated and understood by leadership.



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KENDALL COUNTY BACKGROUND

Kendall County has long been the fastest-growing county in Illinois. Located approximately 40 miles southwest of Chicago, its population is estimated at more than 143,000. The County includes suburban, rural, and agricultural areas, with larger population centers in Oswego, Yorkville, Plano, and Montgomery. Established in 1841 and named for Amos Kendall, a former U.S. Postmaster General, the County has transitioned over time from a primarily agricultural area to one experiencing steady residential and economic growth alongside efforts to preserve open space.

The County operates under a board-administrator form of government, with a ten-member elected County Board and an appointed County Administrator. Several independently elected officials oversee key functions, including the Sheriff, County Clerk, Treasurer, and State's Attorney. County services include public safety, transportation and roadway maintenance, land use planning, public and environmental health, economic development, and community support programs. These services are delivered through departments such as Health and Human Services; Planning, Building and Zoning; Facilities Management; Technology Services and Kendall Area Transit (KAT).

Kendall County works with a range of regional partners, including municipalities, school districts, fire protection districts, forest preserve leadership, and regional planning organizations. The County is a member of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and participates in regional initiatives related to transportation planning, emergency management, and economic development.

To learn more about Kendall County, visit their website at <https://www.kendallcountyil.gov/>

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is an effective way for an organization to identify and confirm their future vision and clarify purpose and direction. Kendall County ("County") engaged the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies ("NIU-CGS") in May 2025 to facilitate its strategic planning process (Figure 1). The value of such processes continues to be recognized by policy-making boards, councils, and executive staff in both private and public organizations.

From July to October 2025, the NIU-CGS team gathered input from the County's internal and external stakeholders that was shared at the strategic planning leadership workshop held in November 2025. The workshop offered the County's leadership an opportunity to explore the organization's vision for the future, engage and listen to its stakeholders, and ultimately establish short- and long-term goals and priority areas. The workshop also provided a positive atmosphere where leadership could discuss the best ways to serve the organization and the broader community in the coming years.

It is important to keep in mind that the judicious use of the organization's limited resources, including financial resources and professional staff time, is key to achieving good results. Only a limited number of goals and objectives can be managed and implemented effectively at any given time. In a very realistic sense, clear and stable priorities must be maintained if the organization desires to stretch its resources as far as they can go.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning Model

Strategic Planning Process Model



PRE-WORKSHOP

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The County's leadership recognizes the importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of their organization and the broader community they serve by gathering input from various stakeholders. Collecting stakeholder feedback is essential to the strategic planning process because effective planning starts with listening. During the environmental scanning phase of the strategic planning process, the NIU-CGS team employed a comprehensive engagement approach. Findings from the stakeholder input phase were presented in thematic form at the strategic planning leadership workshop, providing valuable insights to guide discussion.

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Incorporating external perspectives into Kendall County's strategic plan is important for capturing the diverse needs and aspirations of its community, businesses, and partners, ensuring the plan is responsive to their concerns. This approach fosters greater trust and engagement, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes. To that end, NIU-CGS conducted four in-person external stakeholder focus groups.

- **Focus groups** are designed to be a highly interactive approach, allowing for robust and informative conversation with and between participants. In August 2025, focus groups were conducted in person with several of Kendall County's partners and external stakeholders. The number of participants in each group ranged from six to 13.
 - » *Civic and Intergovernmental Institutions (e.g., secular community, non-profits, school, township, library, etc.)*
 - » *Business Community (cross-section of varying size, industry, tenure, etc.)*
 - » *Community Services (e.g., 708 Board, Juvenile Justice Council, KenCom, Health Department, other nonprofit social service organizations)*
 - » *County Constitutional Officers*

INTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Gathering internal perspectives when developing the County's strategic plan is also crucial, ensuring the plan is informed by the insights and experiences of those who understand the organization's unique operations, challenges, and opportunities. To collect these internal perspectives, the NIU-CGS team conducted interviews with the County Board members and administrative leadership, facilitated a department head working session, and distributed an online Board and employee opinion survey.

- **Interviews** result in highly personalized participation and the in-depth sharing of ideas. The focus of the interview sessions is to gain an initial perspective by building a balanced and informed view of the County from each stakeholder's unique vantage point. In September and October, a series of virtual and in-person interviews and working sessions were conducted with Board members and senior leadership.
- **Online Surveys** collect broad input and ideas from across the organization. This survey included questions designed to identify the County's strengths, challenges, priorities, and, ultimately, its future direction. The survey also included questions related to the mission, vision, and core values and was distributed to the County Board and employees.

Findings from the stakeholder input phase were synthesized into key themes and shared at the strategic planning leadership workshop to inform and guide discussion. A brief overview and key highlights of all stakeholder priorities are provided below. For detailed summaries of stakeholder feedback, including focus group methodology, see [Appendix A](#).

WHAT WE HEARD: STAKEHOLDER PRIORITY THEMES

Stakeholder input underscored Kendall County's identity as a safe, family-oriented community with strong schools, quality public services, and staff who are highly committed to serving residents. At the same time, participants emphasized the need for the County to proactively manage rapid growth, modernize aging facilities, and strengthen communication across departments and with the public.

Feedback highlighted priorities including balancing farmland preservation with residential and commercial development, diversifying the local economy to reduce reliance on property taxes, expanding healthcare access, enhancing transportation options, and increasing affordable housing options. Internally, staff and Board members stressed the importance of competitive compensation, addressing staffing needs in relation to growth, improved collaboration, updated technology, and facility improvements to ensure operations keep pace with rising community needs. Concerns about high property taxes reinforced the importance of long-term financial planning, transparent budgeting, and exploring new revenue sources. Stakeholders also emphasized the need to build trust through clearer governance roles, transparent decision-making, and proactive engagement with residents and partner organizations. Overall, stakeholders expressed a shared vision for investing in people, strengthening infrastructure and service capacity, supporting balanced growth, and aligning organizational culture and communication to meet the evolving needs of a rapidly growing community.

Key Highlights from All Stakeholder Feedback:

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE



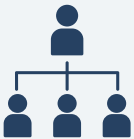
Stakeholders discussed managing Kendall County's rapid growth by balancing farmland preservation with residential and commercial development, while ensuring infrastructure, schools, facilities, and information technology systems keep pace. Transportation investments such as commuter rail, expanded transit, sidewalks, and multi-use paths, along with facility planning for public safety, animal control, and courts, were highlighted as critical.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



There was strong emphasis on diversifying the economy, reducing reliance on property taxes, and attracting higher-paying jobs to keep residents living and working locally. Priorities included expanding healthcare access, supporting small businesses, supporting job creation in the trades, and increasing affordable housing to sustain the County's workforce and community vitality.

WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY



Employees and leaders consistently stressed that staff are one of the County's greatest strength, but turnover and limited compensation can jeopardize service delivery. Key needs include competitive compensation, facility and staffing evaluation, modernized technology, and stronger investment in training and professional development across all departments.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP



High property taxes remain one of the most consistent concerns across stakeholder groups. Stakeholders urged exploring alternative revenue sources such as sales tax, broadband, and industrial development while ensuring long-term financial planning, transparent budgeting, and resource allocation align with future service needs.

GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY



Stronger communication, transparency, and collaboration were viewed as essential for effective governance. Recommendations included centralized communication tools, proactive public outreach, clear role alignment between Board and staff, and improved intergovernmental partnerships. Building trust across diverse resident groups and ensuring open, accountable decision-making were emphasized as priorities for sustaining credibility.

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

OUTLINE OF EXERCISES AND DISCUSSION SESSIONS

All discussion sessions at the strategic planning leadership workshop, held in November 2025, employed highly participative and interactive approaches. The workshop facilitators utilized a group discussion approach that assures each participant an equal opportunity to speak and share opinions with the larger group. Participants were also able to weigh alternatives and refine their thinking through dialogue in small-group activities at the workshop. As ideas were shared and debated, the group worked steadily toward a consensus regarding the organization’s mission, future direction, goals, and priorities.

INTRODUCTIONS AND VISIONING FOR THE FUTURE EXERCISE

Participants were asked to introduce themselves and share how long they have been serving in their current position or role with the County. Next, they engaged in a visioning exercise. In this exercise, workshop participants selected an item from the “garage sale” table that described the desired future direction of the County by answering the following question: “If you left the community and didn’t return for 5–10 years, what do you think you will see or what do you hope you will see when you return in terms of development, services, programs, improvements, or changes?” This was a brainstorming exercise, and no evaluative or judgmental debate was permitted during this session. Next is a list of those answers (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Visioning for the Future—Hope or think you will see in 5–10 years

An asterisk () indicates that others expressed agreement with the statement.*

GARAGE SALE ITEM	VISION FOR THE FUTURE
Splitter	County fiber optics are installed underground and fully implemented.
Construction Hat	Route 47 continues to grow with strong economic activity; infrastructure and expansion are thoughtfully managed.
Outlet	Affordable internet access expands, including exploring fixed or reduced rates for low-income households.
Brick	Industrial development increases and helps reduce the tax burden on residents.
GI Joe	Greater collaboration and shared services, both internally and externally, to increase efficiency and streamline policies and procedures.
Carabiner	Technology strengthens Countywide collaboration and keeps departments connected.
Rope	The County remains unified and collaborative, sharing services across departments to improve efficiency.
Train	Kendall County secures a commuter rail stop.
Screwdriver	The County expands its “toolbox,” particularly in economic development and construction-related efforts.
Construction Hat	Growth in residential and commercial broadband, along with continued development and construction.
Fly Swatter	Kendall County becomes a recreational destination, with expanded outdoor offerings such as canoeing, parks, and other activities.
Expandable Pet Dish	Services for both people and animals expand to meet growing demand.
Paint Brush	The County evolves like a developing mural, continuously adding to its vision as it grows.
Rubber Duck	The County maintains its ability to create enjoyable, community-building experiences, both internally and externally.
Coin	Kendall County remains fiscally responsible, supports local businesses, strengthens economic development, and maintains sustainable budgeting.
Candle	The County moves forward with clarity and transparency, communicating effectively and building strong relationships with municipalities, industries, residents, and townships.
Clorox Wipes	A clean and safe environment is maintained through proactive approaches to safety and security.
Squad Car	Infrastructure, public safety, and police services keep pace with growth to support quality of life.
Back Scratcher	Staff and elected officials work cooperatively to support the community and each other.
Button	The County remains a steady, reliable organization that holds things together for future generations and remains simple, classic, and easy for the public to understand.



A FRESH LOOK AT THE COUNTY’S MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

County leadership indicated that the organization’s mission, vision, and core values should be developed as a part of this process. To achieve this, NIU-CGS created and distributed an internal stakeholder survey from July 14th to July 31st, 2025. The County Board and staff across all County departments were invited to share perspectives on the County’s future direction. A total of 160 responses were collected. The following offers an overview of how survey participants described Kendall County’s mission, vision, and core values.

The survey highlighted that Kendall County is defined by a strong sense of community, a commitment to public service, and a desire to balance growth with preservation of its rural character. Key priorities include maintaining fiscal responsibility and transparency, ensuring accountability in resource allocation, and modernizing systems to improve efficiency and service delivery. As the County plans for the future, the importance of strengthening infrastructure, expanding access to essential services such as health and safety, and fostering collaboration across departments and the wider community. Together, these values point toward a vision of sustainable growth, responsible stewardship, and a government that is responsive, transparent, and community-centered.

Employees view service excellence, fiscal stewardship, and sustainability as core to fulfilling the County’s community-focused mission. Specific highlights related to the mission, vision, and core values include:

- 73% of respondents rated County services as “good” or “excellent,” reflecting pride in Kendall County’s role as an essential community institution.
- Over half (52%) of employees emphasized fiscal accountability and transparency as critical, underscoring the County’s responsibility to act as a trusted steward of public resources.
- 39% identified long-term thinking as a key value, urging leadership to plan for sustainable growth and future generations.
- Feedback highlighted the need to balance development with preservation, maintaining Kendall County’s rural character, affordability, and quality of life.
- Survey feedback highlighted pride in public service and a strong commitment to serving the community.

The next workshop exercise gave leadership an opportunity to begin developing the County’s first mission, vision, and core values statements. Using survey feedback as a starting point, Board and senior staff members worked in small groups to identify key words and phrases to guide their discussion. Each group then shared its ideas and draft statements with the larger group for further input and refinement. NIU-CGS used these initial drafts to present several potential options.

After reviewing the initial mission, vision, and values drafted during the workshop, NIU-CGS collaborated with County leadership to refine and finalize them. The final mission, vision, and values are presented next. Raw data from the workshop exercise discussions can be found in [Appendix B](#).

MISSION STATEMENT:

As trusted partners in public service, we deliver essential services with care, transparency, and accountability – protecting what makes our County special while supporting growth, innovation, and opportunity for all.

VISION STATEMENT:

Kendall County is a connected community of purpose, grounded in its rural character and guided by balanced growth. Through thoughtful development and strategic infrastructure investments, the County expands access to services, creates opportunity, and empowers every resident to thrive.

CORE VALUES:



Integrity and Transparency

We uphold the highest ethical standards in all decisions and actions, fostering trust through honesty, openness, and accountability in government.



Stewardship and Fiscal Responsibility

We are careful and responsible stewards of public resources, ensuring that every investment supports sustainable growth, long-term stability, and community benefit.



Service Excellence and Accessibility

We are dedicated to providing high-quality, responsive, and accessible services that meet the diverse needs of all residents and businesses.



Collaboration and Community Connection

We believe strong partnerships – with residents, municipalities, regional organizations, and one another – create shared success and a stronger sense of community.



Innovation and Sustainability

We embrace creativity, technology, and forward thinking to enhance infrastructure, protect natural resources, and continuously improve quality of life for future generations.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING – LARGE GROUP SWOC ANALYSIS

The next exercise at the strategic planning workshop allowed participants to further review and account for the internal and external factors present that could potentially influence the County, both negatively and positively. Workshop participants were asked to identify the County's **strengths (S)** and **weaknesses (W)**. In what areas does the organization regularly excel, and in what areas are there difficulties or shortcomings in terms of expertise, resources, or training? What **opportunities (O)** are on the horizon that can be used to the County's advantage? Conversely, what trends or **challenges (C)** lie ahead that would be obstacles or hindrances? These elements could include both internal and external factors, conditions, trends, regulations, agencies, and resources. The full list of responses to the exercise are provided in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Large Group SWOC Analysis

An asterisk (*) indicates that others expressed agreement with the statement.

STRENGTHS

- County has updated technology, software systems
- Strong retail base and commercial development
- County plans ahead, proactive - future land use planning
- Staff, constitutional officers know their job well, experts
- Lots of available land
- Central location – accessible to two airports
- Pulling water from Lake Michigan provides a sustainable, long-term water supply
- Strong infrastructure
- Well-kept County highways, strong Highway Department
- Cultural diversity
- Rich history and heritage
- Small town feel
- Strong County Board, accessible, smaller, responsive
- Intergovernmental relationships, very collaborative
- Creativity – County utilizes current resources, remains proactive, employees find new solutions
- Diversified funding sources, grants, etc.

WEAKNESSES

- High property taxes
- Some “always been done this way” mentality
- Communication platforms/modes are lacking, need to be better utilized
- Public awareness – unaware of what County does, reason for existence, etc.
- Lack of health care services and hospitals in Kendall County
- Change management – new technology, new policies – how to get everyone to adapt and use – facilitate change across departments or constitutional officers



OPPORTUNITIES

- Land availability – central location
 - » *Accessible by two major thoroughways*
- Population, commercial growth in the County
- Remaining open, transparent, and facilitating public education – fiscal transparency, projects going on, etc.
- Facilities upgrades, still some opportunity for improvement, expansion
- Broadband internet, fiber infrastructure – broadband network
- Creativity – the County does a lot with a little
 - » *Examine ways that growth will impact staffing, don't outpace – opportunity to support staff, expand staffing levels, balance staffing levels with growing demand of community*
- Aligning government priorities and plans across County
- Strengthen collaboration – share positive stories, increase communication
- Artificial intelligence – upgrading technology – increased efficiency – evolving technology
- Explore or enhance public transit and the Kendall Area Transit (KAT) program



CHALLENGES

- Location – no train or railway
- Maintaining infrastructure and planning for continued future growth
- Balancing land availability with steady growth – don't want to become landlocked, keep open spaces
- County's diverse population which has diverse needs and priorities, pleasing everyone
- County's heritage and history as farmland – some are resistant to change
- Lack of general knowledge or understanding of County government and operations
- Competitive nature amongst municipalities and representation of multiple municipalities (e.g. Costco coming to town, housing, etc.)
- Staff keeping up with growing demand of growing community
 - » *E.g., Animal control issues continue to grow and staffing levels have remained the same*
- Facilities – need more space
- Staff burnout – stretched thin
- Unfunded State mandates – e.g., new courthouse, new judge, etc.
- Adapting to change – differing priorities amongst municipalities – many governing bodies
- Property maintenance codes – balance residents' rights with code enforcement
- Keeping up with AI, technology – change management
- Public transportation needed – expand or enhance KAT Program
- Need water supplements, bring Lake Michigan Water to the County
- Right-sizing the County's departments means jurisdictional issues (HR Department, for example)
 - » *Need to streamline roles, processes, change management*
- County's past – not always a clear path forward
 - » *Unwind the past*



NOMINAL GROUP GOAL IDENTIFICATION

With the preceding discussion sessions and exercises acting as a sound foundation for goal setting, the next exercise provided time for a healthy group discussion and development of goals and objectives to achieve the future visions as expressed by workshop participants.

Participants convened in small groups for goal development. Each group was allotted time to develop, and then report out, important policy and program goals that they thought the County should accomplish. Groups were asked to create goals using two different time frames: short-term goals, which could be started or accomplished in the next one to three years, and long-term goals, which could be accomplished in a four- to eight-year time frame. Each small group then shared their goals with the larger group. Goals could be highly specific or general, but all goals pointed to important outcomes that leadership hopes to see in the years ahead.

Short-term goals are those goals or objectives that could or should be completed or substantially underway in the next one to three years.

Long-term goals are those goals or objectives that could or should be completed or substantially underway within a four- to eight-year time frame.

Open Group Discussion and Consolidation of Goals and Objectives

This final phase of the goals discussion served as a forum for workshop participants to refine and compare the ideas and goals offered by each participant. Participants gave their opinions and further explained the alignment, ideas, and policy outcomes expressed in the goals and discussed if additional goals or details were needed.

POST-WORKSHOP GOAL PRIORITIZATION AND RANKING EXERCISE

Following the workshop, NIU-CGS worked with the County's leadership to refine strategic goals, ensuring they aligned with the direction set by leadership, clarified intent, and eliminated redundancies. In total, nine short-term goals and eight long-term strategic goals were created. All workshop participants were asked to delineate, via a post-workshop online ranking exercise, which goals should be given the highest priority. Each participant was provided with an online ranking tool, where they ranked each goal within its respective category in order of importance, using a "forced ranking" method. For example, participants were asked to rank all short-term goals against each other, and all long-term goals against each other.

The overall ranking of each goal is calculated using the average of the rankings given by all workshop participants. For example, if a goal was given scores of 2, 5, 6, 6, 1, 2, and 3, the average total would be 3.66. The lower the score, the higher the priority.

The results of County's goal-ranking exercise, including its assigned priority level (High, Medium, or Lower) within each category, are presented in Figure 4. This visual provides a clear dashboard summarizing the strategic goals, objectives, and action items for the County's leadership to focus on in the months and years ahead.

Figure 4. Prioritized Goal Dashboards

SHORT-TERM GOALS (1-3 YEARS)	Priority Level
Conduct a County-wide staffing analysis to ensure staffing levels keep pace with growth and service expectations.	High
Articulate and standardize County-wide policies to ensure consistency, clarity, and operational alignment.	High
Develop and issue RFPs for the design and construction of priority facility improvements.	High
Improve internal systems, cybersecurity, and digital service delivery by launching a comprehensive technology and communications services assessment.	Medium
Develop a County-wide economic development strategy using shared services and collaboration to focus on business attraction, investment, and job growth.	Medium
Initiate construction of the County-wide broadband network.	Medium
Build and implement a County-wide workforce development and succession plan.	Lower
Expand and enhance the Kendall Area Transit (KAT) program to improve accessibility and increase service availability.	Lower
Pursue the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to reinforce transparency and fiscal excellence.	Lower
LONG-TERM GOALS (4-8 YEARS)	Priority Level
Continue long-term capital planning to ensure sustainable maintenance, replacement, and expansion of County facilities.	High
Coordinate with IDOT and regional partners to advance major road, bridge, and corridor improvements to accommodate population growth.	High
Develop a long-term financial plan that prioritizes the use of retiring debt capacity and anticipated revenue growth to support sustainable, strategic investments for the County.	High
Work collaboratively with regional municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, and business partners to attract and retain employers and expand job-creating industries across the County.	Medium
Finalize the County-wide broadband network project and establish a sustainable long-term management model.	Medium
Support development to foster growth in key southern corridors and diversify the County's tax base.	Medium
Encourage adoption and expansion of green and emerging technologies where feasible.	Medium
Strengthen community engagement and increase resident awareness, input, and participation in County initiatives.	Lower

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Based on an evaluation of the entirety of the process, including the interviews, focus groups, online Board and staff survey, discussions at the workshop, and goals developed, four high-level strategic priority areas emerged. These priority areas represent larger themes that encompass all the strategic goals and highlight the activities and initiatives that the County will focus on in both the short and long term. The strategic priority areas identified as a result of the strategic planning process are shared and fully defined next (in no particular order). For goal and stakeholder feedback alignment related to each priority area, see [Appendix C](#).

MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUTURE-READY FACILITIES



Kendall County continues to invest in modern, reliable infrastructure to support growth and ensure accessible, high-quality services. This includes advancing major road and corridor improvements with regional partners, completing facility upgrades to maintain safe and functional County operations, and finalizing construction of the County-wide broadband network. Through coordinated capital planning and strategic investment, the County will strengthen connectivity, expand service capacity, and prepare facilities and systems to meet current and future community needs.

RESILIENT, DIVERSE, AND GROWING ECONOMY



The County is committed to fostering long-term economic growth and innovation through collaboration, strategic investment, and sustainability. By strengthening regional partnerships, supporting industrial expansion and corridor redevelopment, and focusing on attracting and retaining employers, the County seeks to create a vibrant and resilient local economy. Efforts will also focus on advancing green industries and emerging technologies to position the County as a forward-thinking leader in sustainable development. At the same time, exploring diverse and innovative revenue sources will help reduce reliance on property taxes while ensuring continued investment in infrastructure, public services, and a high quality of life for all residents.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY



Building organizational capacity and excellence is a central priority for County leadership, reflecting a commitment to strengthening government operations and service delivery. The County aims to enhance digital access, modernize systems, and standardize policies to improve efficiency, transparency, and consistency across departments. Investing in a skilled and supported workforce will sustain high performance and foster innovation.

EQUITABLE AND RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Supporting vulnerable residents while broadening community engagement will help ensure that programs and services remain equitable, responsive, and inclusive. This priority focuses on identifying and reducing barriers that prevent residents from fully accessing community resources – whether related to language, income, mobility, or awareness. Strengthening outreach efforts, offering more accessible communication tools, and engaging underrepresented groups in decision-making will deepen trust and strengthen connections between the community and local government.



Kendall County
ILLINOIS

CONCLUSION

The value of this strategic planning effort will be realized through the active use of this report as a practical guide for County leadership. It captures key discussions from the planning process and provides a foundation for developing implementation plans focused on the County's highest-priority goals.

The County's operating environment will continue to change due to shifts in demographics, community needs, technology, and industry practices. As a result, adaptability will remain essential. This strategic plan is intended to function as a flexible roadmap that can evolve over time. To ensure it remains relevant, the County should periodically review the plan, its goals, and the implementation timeline—whether on a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual basis—and make adjustments as needed. A full refresh of the strategic planning process every three years is also recommended.

The discussions and idea-sharing that occurred during the environmental scan and planning workshops demonstrated the County's commitment to stakeholder input and highlighted a forward thinking leadership team focused on thoughtful, long-term decision-making.

We wish you continued success in the important work ahead.

Handwritten signature of Melissa Henriksen in blue ink.

Handwritten signature of Alli Aiston in blue ink.

Handwritten signature of Jeanna Ballard in blue ink.

Melissa Henriksen, Alli Aiston, and Jeanna Ballard

NIU-CGS Project Coordinators and Facilitators



APPENDIX A

DETAILED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK OVERVIEW

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK GATHERING FRAMEWORK

One of the primary techniques used to analyze focus group notes is coding – a process in which analysts identify recurring words, phrases, and concepts that appear throughout stakeholder feedback. This requires multiple reviews of the data. The themes below summarize the NIU-CGS team's coding results, offering a snapshot of the most frequently mentioned topics and highlighting common themes raised by participants. By examining topics that appear across different groups and questions, the analysis reveals shared priorities and concerns that should inform the strategic planning process.

The same discussion questions were asked to each focus group and interviewee and are listed below:

1. How would you describe the County and the services it offers to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work in the area?
2. If you left and didn't return for 5–10 years, what services or programs do you think you would see the County offering or what do you hope you would see when you return?
3. What do you like best about the County? Related to that, what are the strengths or greatest assets of the County?
4. Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses or greatest needs for the County?
5. What are or should be the top priorities for the County over the next three to five years?
6. If you could change or initiate one key item or one goal for the County, what would it be?

What follows are the key themes and detailed summaries that emerged from the analysis of stakeholder feedback. This analysis provided County leadership with context and insights to support discussion at the strategic planning workshop.

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES | OVERALL SUMMARY

Kendall County's stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen the local economy, support residents, and manage growth responsibly through strategic investments in infrastructure, healthcare, workforce housing, and supporting job creation in the trades. They advocated for initiatives such as a County-wide Main Street program, expanded youth and family services, and improved transportation options – including commuter rail, transit, and safe pedestrian routes – to enhance business success and community connectivity. Stakeholders also underscored the importance of preserving green space, addressing homelessness, and scaling County staffing, IT, and facilities to meet future demand. Sustaining this progress will require competitive compensation, coordinated facility planning, and research into best practices, reinforced by transparent communication, proactive engagement, and improved service access. Collectively, these priorities reflect a shared vision of investing in people, infrastructure, and balanced growth to create vibrant, resilient, and family-friendly communities.

External Stakeholder Feedback Themes



Economic Development and Business Support



Sustainable Growth and Land Use



Organizational Development and Communication

Economic Development and Business Support

Stakeholders discussed Kendall County's ability to drive growth in economic development through targeted infrastructure enhancements, expanded healthcare access, and a County-wide Main Street program. Priorities include stronger business support via a central resource hub, marketing the Fox River as an asset, and expanding affordable workforce housing. Workforce development initiatives could focus on training partnerships with Waubensee, trades education, and local job creation to retain talent.

Key comments or suggestions from the stakeholder focus groups:

- Recruit medical services (hospital, dental, vision, etc.) to expand healthcare access.
- Continuation of the Made in Kendall Program.
- Develop County-wide incentives and programs to support growth (expansion of automation, etc.).
 - » *E.g., County-wide Main Street Program to support smaller communities with limited staff and resources*
- Improve communication of resources for start-ups and small businesses (central hub linking Chambers, Waubensee Community College, and other partners).
- Market the Fox River as a County asset.
- Expand Kendall Area Transit (KAT) services, pick-up points, and workforce connections.
 - » *Advance commuter rail service for regional access and improved mobility throughout the County*
- Expand affordable housing to sustain the County's workforce and community vitality.
- Partner with Waubensee Community College to deliver training that matches the community's needs (job prep, interviews, trades).
- Support the County's workforce with trades training and local job creation to keep residents living and working in the County.



Sustainable Growth and Land Use

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of prioritizing balanced growth by expanding riverfront access, preserving green space, and ensuring staffing and IT systems match demand. Key community investments could include enhancing public safety and adding family-friendly facilities and youth programming. Expanded health services, especially mental health, day care, and homelessness support, are seen as important, alongside stronger property maintenance enforcement and ordinance review.

Key comments or suggestions from the stakeholder focus groups:

- Collaborate with Forest Preserves to increase public riverfront access.
- Expand youth programming (Boys and Girls Club, sports, mental health services, truancy intervention).
- Ensure County staffing and IT systems keep pace with growth.
- Address homelessness through coordinated community efforts.
- Address school crowding impacts and clarify the County's role.
- Expand Health Department facilities and access to services.
- Balance industrial/commercial growth with green space.
- Improve access to mental health care and affordable day care.
- Increase free family-friendly facilities and infrastructure (parks, multi-use paths, playgrounds, safe sidewalks and passageways for schools).
- Strengthen property maintenance enforcement and conduct a review of County ordinances.

Organizational Development and Communication

Stakeholders emphasized the need to fully leverage funding tools to meet County needs, alongside strategic staffing investments to enhance retention and competitiveness. They recommended a space needs analysis to guide facility planning and consistent countywide policies and protocols to improve efficiency and reduce discrepancies, supported by more sustainable, eco-friendly initiatives. A comprehensive strategic plan, grounded in best practices, was viewed as essential for managing growth and aligning municipalities. Strengthening communication through a centralized strategy, dedicated coordinator, and proactive Board engagement – along with greater intergovernmental collaboration and potential satellite offices – will help build trust and improve service delivery.

Key comments or suggestions from the stakeholder focus groups:

- Fully utilize funding sources to finance County needs through bonds, cash.
 - » *Invest in staffing so that employee retention is high and County can compete with the public and private sectors in terms of pay and benefits*
- Incorporate and promote more eco-friendly initiatives.
- Conduct a space needs analysis to address facilities space and staffing needs – KenCom, Health Department space needs, Animal Control housing for pets running at large and owner surrenders and staffing to accommodate growth in the County.
- Collaborate to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that guides all municipalities within the County.
- Best practices research – learn from larger Counties how they addressed growth and development.
- Develop a Countywide Communication Plan with centralized information sharing.
 - » *Designate a communications coordinator for social media, announcements, and outreach*
- Increase proactive County Board engagement (coffee chats, open houses, Facebook Live streams).
- Enhance transparency and collaboration with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).
- Consider satellite County offices to improve service accessibility outside Yorkville.

OVERALL BOARD AND EMPLOYEE SURVEY SUMMARY

Survey responses highlight a dedicated and engaged workforce that values public service and takes pride in Kendall County's mission and community role. Alongside this sense of pride, employees offered candid feedback on areas for improvement, frequently pointing to compensation, communication, and continued focus on organizational culture. They also expressed aspirations for strategic growth, stronger infrastructure, and continuing the trend towards responsive leadership. The key takeaways below capture the most common insights and priorities identified by survey participants.



Public Service and Employee Commitment



Organizational Collaboration and Communication



County Growth and Proactive Planning



Transparency and Fiscal Responsibility



Workplace Culture and Operations

Public Service and Employee Commitment

Respondents consistently identified one of Kendall County's greatest strengths as its people. Staff expressed pride in their work and their commitment to serving the public, often describing a strong sense of community and dedication to quality service. Board members and employees alike maintain a clear investment in the County's success.

Survey Feedback:

- People communicate well with each other and try to collaborate when they can.
- Dedicated and knowledgeable employees committed to serving the community with professionalism and care.
- Strong workforce across departments that are passionate and take pride in their work and in supporting residents.
- Supportive management fosters employee engagement and motivation.
- Focus on service excellence through sustainable practices that support staff well-being.
- Collaborative culture encourages open communication and teamwork.

Organizational Collaboration and Communication

While many employees reported positive working relationships within their departments, they also noted limited cross-department collaboration and communication. Feedback suggested continuous improvement in transparency and responsiveness in decision-making, operational planning, and addressing employee feedback.

Survey Feedback:

- Strengthen collaboration and teamwork across departments to enhance overall efficiency and impact.
- Improve communication and coordination through more consistent interdepartmental engagement.
- Foster trust in employees' capabilities and encourage autonomy in carrying out responsibilities.
- Promote openness to innovation and new approaches in daily operations.
- Emphasize transparency, accountability, and open communication in leadership practices.

County Growth and Proactive Planning

Respondents expressed both excitement and apprehension about the County's growth. Many emphasized the need to preserve Kendall County's rural character while proactively addressing infrastructure, transportation, and affordable housing. There was also strong support for expanded services in areas such as public health, mental health, senior support, and community safety.

Survey Feedback:

- Expand community resources to support mental health, housing stability, employment, family care, and access to essential services.
- Improve transportation options, including public transit and walkable connections.
- Develop initiatives that promote inclusiveness and address specialized community needs, such as dementia support and homelessness prevention.
- Strengthen staffing and programs that assist vulnerable populations and enhance social services.
- Plan and invest in infrastructure that keeps pace with population growth and community development.
- Focus on long-term, sustainable growth and the maintenance of existing assets.

Transparency and Fiscal Responsibility

Survey participants consistently referenced the County's high property taxes and rising cost of living as key areas of concern. Continued effort to maintain fiscal responsibility, and increasing transparent budgeting processes will continue to build trust with internal and external stakeholders.

Survey Feedback:

- Address the rising property tax burden to support long-term community affordability.
- Strengthen collaboration with state leaders to explore strategies for tax relief.
- Enhance communication and engagement with residents to better understand and meet community needs.
- Leverage employee experience and institutional knowledge to improve efficiency and decision-making.
- Maximize the effective use of tax revenue to deliver high-quality public services.
- Increase transparency and public access to County information through user-friendly digital tools for online searching and beyond.



Workplace Culture and Operations

Employees expressed pride in their work and described the culture as respectful and collaborative at the peer level but siloed at the organizational level. Concerns centered on compensation, benefits, and workload alignment, with rising healthcare costs and limited wage growth seen as barriers to retention. Staff also emphasized the need for modernized systems, stronger support for wellness and work-life balance, and more engaged, communicative leadership to promote transparency and equity.

Survey Feedback:

- Foster an open and approachable culture where employees can share ideas, feedback, and concerns.
- Increase visibility and engagement of executive leadership, particularly during times of transition.
- Address compensation and cost-of-living challenges to support employee retention and well-being.
- Promote fairness, equity, and consistent support for all employees across the organization.
- Explore flexible work options to enhance work-life balance (work from home options) and job satisfaction.
- Conduct an independent staffing analysis to ensure appropriate staffing levels and workload distribution.



Board Member Interview Themes



Growth Management and Economic Development



Staffing, Facilities, and Service Capacity



Financial Stewardship and Tax Relief



Governance, Communication, and Community Trust

OVERALL BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

County Board members consistently described Kendall County as a safe, family-friendly community with strong schools, talented staff, and unique positioning for future growth. While there is pride in the County's financial health, infrastructure improvements, and collaborative staff culture, leaders stressed that rapid growth, high taxes, and facility limitations pose ongoing challenges. Ensuring staff retention, expanding economic opportunities, and balancing development with preservation were central themes. Strengthening communication, transparency, and intergovernmental partnerships emerged as critical to sustaining trust and effectively managing change.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Board members widely acknowledged that Kendall County is experiencing significant population growth and must plan carefully to ensure infrastructure, services, and job opportunities keep pace. There was emphasis on diversifying the local economy, reducing reliance on property taxes, and attracting higher-paying jobs. Leaders expressed concern about data centers, industrial corridors, and the need for thoughtful development that balances farmland preservation with commercial and residential expansion.

STAFFING, FACILITIES, AND SERVICE CAPACITY



A recurring theme was the need to invest in County employees and facilities to keep up with growth. Leaders voiced concerns about staff turnover, competitive pay, and ensuring departments such as health and human services, animal control, and the courts have adequate space and resources. Several noted that while safety services are well funded, other departments feel overlooked. Conducting facility studies, modernizing IT, and addressing workforce needs were identified as pressing priorities.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP AND TAX RELIEF



While Kendall County is viewed as fiscally responsible and financially healthy, high property taxes remain a top concern. Leaders stressed the need to explore new revenue sources (e.g., sales tax, broadband, industrial development) to reduce reliance on property taxes. Many emphasized the importance of long-term financial planning and ensuring budget priorities align with the County's evolving service demands.

GOVERNANCE, COMMUNICATION, AND COMMUNITY TRUST



Board dynamics were described as uneven, with some members noting strong collaboration while others pointed to exclusion, political divides, or lack of transparency. Leaders emphasized the need for clearer communication with residents about County responsibilities, greater transparency in decision-making, and stronger intergovernmental partnerships. Proactive outreach, community engagement, and bridging perspectives between newer and long-term residents were seen as essential for maintaining trust and shaping a shared vision for the County's future.

APPENDIX B

MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES STATEMENTS RAW DATA

Group #1

1. **Mission Statement:** Kendall County shall efficiently provide safety, services, and support to enhance the quality of life for our thriving community.
2. **Vision Statement:** Kendall County is an innovative blend of vibrant urban and serene rural landscapes that is committed to building pathways that join our heritage with our future.
3. **Core Values:**
 - Our people
 - Our land
 - Our resources
 - Stewardship
 - Value
 - Integrity
 - Safe schools

Group #3

1. **Mission Statement:**
 - Trusted steward of public resources
 - Collaboration
 - Preservation of the County's character
 - Forward thinking
 - Empowering
2. **Vision Statement:**
 - Balanced growth (business/rural)
 - Fiscally responsible
 - Open space and nature – river bluffs, forest preserves
 - Jobs – quality and quantity
3. **Core Values:**
 - Stewardship
 - Service excellence
 - Sustainable
 - Community focused

Group #2

1. **Mission Statement:** Kendall County's mission is to be a trusted community partner, providing access to high quality essential services to all community members with transparency and fiscal responsibility.
2. **Vision Statement:** Kendall County is a vibrant, fiscally responsible community partner that is data driven yet grounded in humanity to provide safe communities, strong infrastructure, and easily accessible services so all community members can thrive
3. **Core Values:**
 - Fiscal responsibility
 - Clear communication
 - Safety
 - Strong infrastructure*
 - Easily accessible services

Key phrases we love:

 - Ground in humanity
 - Rooted in data

Group #4

1. **Mission Statement:** A County organization dedicated to public service centered on our collective (collaboration, engaged connection) responsibility to our community, and its continued growth, innovation and affordability.
2. **Vision Statement:** Kendall County is a community focused and fiscally responsible, governing body that offers rural and suburban amenities, while embracing smart growth, innovation, improving infrastructure, and developing services to keep it a great place for everyone to live and play.
3. **Core Values:**
 - Transparency
 - Dedication
 - Service excellence
 - Quality of life
 - Innovation
 - Integrity
 - Collaboration and teamwork
 - Engaged
 - Fiscal responsibility

APPENDIX C:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA, GOAL, AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ALIGNMENT

MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUTURE-READY FACILITIES

Kendall County continues to invest in modern, reliable infrastructure to support growth and ensure accessible, high-quality services. This includes advancing major road and corridor improvements with regional partners, completing facility upgrades to maintain safe and functional County operations, and finalizing construction of the County-wide broadband network. Through coordinated capital planning and strategic investment, the County will strengthen connectivity, expand service capacity, and prepare facilities and systems to meet current and future community needs.

Modern Infrastructure and Future-Ready Facilities-Aligning Strategic Goals:

- Develop and issue RFPs for the design and construction of priority facility improvements.
- Prioritize facility improvements including: Animal Control facility, courtroom buildout, and the Public Safety/Community Building
- Initiate construction of the County-wide broadband network.
- Expand and enhance the Kendall Area Transit (KAT) program to improve accessibility and increase service availability.
- Coordinate with IDOT and regional partners to advance major road, bridge, and corridor improvements to accommodate population growth.
- Continue long-term capital planning to ensure sustainable maintenance, replacement, and expansion of County facilities.
- Advance facility expansion and space planning to ensure Animal Control, the Coroner's Office, the Highway Department, and other departments have adequate functional space
- Finalize the County-wide broadband network project and establish a sustainable long-term management model.

Modern Infrastructure and Future-Ready Facilities-Aligning Stakeholder Feedback:

- Ensure County staffing and IT systems keep pace with growth.
- Increase free family-friendly facilities and infrastructure (parks, multi-use paths, playgrounds, safe sidewalks and passageways for schools).
- Expand Health Department facilities and access to services.
- Expand Kendall Area Transit (KAT) services, pick-up points, and workforce connections.
 - » *Advance commuter rail service for regional access and improved mobility throughout the County*
- Ensure County staffing and IT systems keep pace with growth.
- Increase free family-friendly facilities and infrastructure (parks, multi-use paths, playgrounds, safe sidewalks and passageways for schools).
- Expand Health Department facilities and access to services.
- Conduct a space needs analysis to address facilities space and staffing needs – KenCom, Health Department space needs, Animal Control housing for pets running at large and owner surrenders and staffing to accommodate growth in the County.
- Consider satellite County offices to improve service accessibility outside Yorkville.
- Plan and invest in infrastructure that keeps pace with population growth and community development.
- Focus on long-term, sustainable growth and the maintenance of existing assets.

RESILIENT, DIVERSE, AND GROWING ECONOMY

The County is committed to fostering long-term economic growth and innovation through collaboration, strategic investment, and sustainability. By strengthening regional partnerships, supporting industrial expansion and corridor redevelopment, and focusing on attracting and retaining employers, the County seeks to create a vibrant and resilient local economy. Efforts will also focus on advancing green industries and emerging technologies to position the County as a forward-thinking leader in sustainable development. At the same time, exploring diverse and innovative revenue sources will help reduce reliance on property taxes while ensuring continued investment in infrastructure, public services, and a high quality of life for all residents.

Resilient, Diverse, and Growing Economy-Aligning Strategic Goals:

- Develop a County-wide economic development strategy using shared services and collaboration to focus on business attraction, investment, and job growth
 - » *Explore and pilot alternative revenue streams to reduce reliance on property taxes*
 - » *Explore establishing or partnering with a 501(c)(6) economic development organization*
 - » *Develop alternative revenue and relief mechanisms to help offset the impact of property taxes on seniors encouraging equitable support for aging residents.*
- Support development of the industrial park and Ridge Rd. and foster growth in key southern corridors.
- Work collaboratively with regional municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, and business partners to attract and retain employers and expand job-creating industries across the County.
- Encourage adoption and expansion of green and emerging technologies where feasible.
- Develop a long-term financial plan that prioritizes the use of retiring debt capacity and anticipated revenue growth to support sustainable, strategic investments for the County.

Resilient, Diverse, and Growing Economy-Aligning Stakeholder Feedback:

- Balance industrial/commercial growth with green space.
- Recruit medical services (hospital, dental, vision, etc.) to expand healthcare access.
- Continuation of the Made in Kendall Program.
- Develop County-wide incentives and programs to support growth (expansion of automation, etc.)
 - » *E.g., County-wide Main Street Program to support smaller communities with limited staff and resources*
- Improve communication of resources for start-ups and small businesses (central hub linking Chambers, Waubensee Community College, and other partners).
- Market the Fox River as a County asset.
- Expand affordable housing to sustain the County's workforce and community vitality.
- Partner with Waubensee Community College to deliver training that matches the community's needs (job prep, interviews, trades).
- Support the County's workforce with trades training and local job creation to keep residents living and working in the County.
- Fully utilize funding sources to finance County needs through bonds, cash.
 - » *Invest in staffing so that employee retention is high and County can compete with the public and private sectors in terms of pay and benefits*
- Incorporate and promote more eco-friendly initiatives.
- Address the rising property tax burden to support long-term community affordability.
- Strengthen collaboration with state leaders to explore strategies for tax relief.
- Maximize the effective use of tax revenue to deliver high-quality public services.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Building organizational capacity and excellence is a central priority for County leadership, reflecting a commitment to strengthening government operations and service delivery. The County aims to enhance digital access, modernize systems, and standardize policies to improve efficiency, transparency, and consistency across departments. Investing in a skilled and supported workforce will sustain high performance and foster innovation.

Operational Excellence and Organizational Capacity-Aligning Strategic Goals:

- Improve internal systems, cybersecurity, and digital service delivery by launching a comprehensive technology and communications services assessment.
 - » *Improve public-facing digital engagement tools, including website accessibility, navigation, and social media presence*
 - » *Complete the buildout and full implementation of the Tyler Munis ERP system*
- Conduct a County-wide staffing analysis to ensure staffing levels keep pace with growth and service expectations.
- Build and implement a County-wide workforce development and succession plan.
 - » *Ensure staff continuity, build leadership pathways, expand cross-training opportunities, and strengthen employee recruitment, retention, and workplace culture*
- Articulate and standardize County-wide policies to ensure consistency, clarity, and operational alignment.
 - » *Conduct research and develop policy guidance for managing data center tax caps*

Operational Excellence and Organizational Capacity-Aligning Stakeholder Feedback:

- Strengthen property maintenance enforcement and conduct a review of County ordinances.
- Address school crowding impacts and clarify the County's role.
- Collaborate to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that guides all municipalities within the County.
- Best practices research – learn from larger Counties how they addressed growth and development.
- Develop a Countywide Communication Plan with centralized information sharing.
 - » *Designate a communications coordinator for social media, announcements, and outreach.*
- People communicate well with each other and try to collaborate when they can.
- Dedicated and knowledgeable employees committed to serving the community with professionalism and care.
- Strong workforce across departments that are passionate and take pride in their work and in supporting residents.
- Supportive management that fosters employee engagement and motivation.
- Focus on service excellence through sustainable practices that support staff well-being.
- Collaborative culture that encourages open communication and teamwork.
- Strengthen collaboration and teamwork across departments to enhance overall efficiency and impact.
- Improve communication and coordination through more consistent interdepartmental engagement.
- Foster trust in employees' capabilities and encourage autonomy in carrying out responsibilities.
- Leverage employee experience and institutional knowledge to improve efficiency and decision-making.
- Promote openness to innovation and new approaches in daily operations.
- Emphasize transparency, accountability, and open communication in leadership practices.
- Foster an open and approachable culture where employees can share ideas, feedback, and concerns.
- Increase visibility and engagement of executive leadership, particularly during times of transition.
- Address compensation and cost-of-living challenges to support employee retention and well-being.
- Promote fairness, equity, and consistent support for all employees across the organization.
- Explore flexible work options to enhance work-life balance (work from home options) and job satisfaction.
- Conduct an independent staffing analysis to ensure appropriate staffing levels and workload distribution.

EQUITABLE AND RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Supporting vulnerable residents while broadening community engagement will help ensure that programs and services remain equitable, responsive, and inclusive. This priority focuses on identifying and reducing barriers that prevent residents from fully accessing community resources – whether related to language, income, mobility, or awareness. Strengthening outreach efforts, offering more accessible communication tools, and engaging underrepresented groups in decision-making will deepen trust and strengthen connections between the community and local government.

Equitable and Responsive Community Engagement-Aligning Strategic Goals:

- Pursue the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to reinforce transparency and fiscal excellence.
- Strengthen community engagement and increase resident awareness, input, and participation in County initiatives.
 - » *Expand accessible recreation, cultural, and entertainment opportunities*
 - » *Improve communication channels and connection between residents and County Board and staff*

Equitable and Responsive Community Engagement-Aligning Stakeholder Feedback:

- Collaborate with Forest Preserves to increase public riverfront access.
- Expand youth programming (Boys & Girls Club, sports, mental health services, truancy intervention).
- Address homelessness through coordinated community efforts.
- Improve access to mental health care and affordable day care.
 - » *Increase proactive County Board engagement (coffee chats, open houses, Facebook Live streams).*
 - » *Enhance transparency and collaboration with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).*
- Enhance communication and engagement with residents to better understand and meet community needs.
- Increase transparency and public access to County information through user-friendly digital tools for online searching and beyond.
- Expand community resources to support mental health, housing stability, employment, family care, and access to essential services.
- Improve transportation options, including public transit and walkable connections.
- Develop initiatives that promote inclusivity and address specialized community needs, such as dementia support and homelessness prevention.
- Strengthen staffing and programs that assist vulnerable populations and enhance social services.

