



# KENDALL COUNTY

2026–2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for  
Governmental Studies**

*Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development*

**APPROVED FEBRUARY 2026**

# INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning provides a structured, forward-looking approach to clarifying and confirming an organization's long-term vision. Through this process, the organization can define its purpose, establish direction, and align its work with the community's expectations. Strategic planning ensures that the organization remains focused, accountable, and prepared to meet future challenges and opportunities. To this end, in May 2025 Kendall County leadership engaged the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies ("NIU-CGS") to facilitate its strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process included collecting input from the County's internal and external stakeholders using an internal County Board and staff opinion survey, focus groups, interviews, and a working session. Themes and trends emerging from this feedback were shared at the County's strategic planning leadership workshop held in November 2025. The findings were used to assist leadership in making informed decisions related to affirming the County's vision for the future and establishing short- and long-term goals.

The **full report** provides a summary of the process and presents the consensus on strategic directions and goals for the County.

# VISIONING FOR THE FUTURE

During the strategic planning workshop, participants engaged in a visioning exercise to describe the desired future direction of the County by answering the 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 services, programs, improvements, or changes?"**

The word cloud summarizes their responses.



# 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. The County Board and all County employees were invited to share perspectives on the County's mission, vision, core values, and future direction through an internal stakeholder survey.

Using survey feedback as a starting point, Board and staff members worked in small groups to identify key words and phrases to guide their discussion and develop drafts. After reviewing the initial mission, vision, and values drafted during the workshop, NIU-CGS collaborated with County leadership to refine and finalize the drafts. The finalized mission, vision, and values are presented next. Raw data from the workshop exercise discussions can be found in the [full report](#).

## KENDALL COUNTY 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.

## KENDALL COUNTY 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.

## KENDALL COUNTY 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.

# STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITY AREAS

A series of environmental scanning discussions conducted at the workshop explored stakeholder feedback, the County's visions for the future, as well as current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. In addition, workshop participants were asked to think about short- and long-term goals and objectives that would guide the County over the next several years. Ultimately, leadership used the workshop discussions and exercises to develop nine short-term goals and eight long-term goals for the organization.

## HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGIC GOALS

Workshop participants were asked to delineate, via an online ranking exercise after the workshop, which goals should be given the highest priority. The goals were ranked within their respective time frame (short and long term) by leadership, resulting in a dashboard that highlights High, Medium, and Lower-ranked goals. Below is a snapshot of the top high-ranking goals in each time frame. The following highest-ranking goals are offered as a process "snapshot", representing the most important strategic goals for County leadership to address in the months and years ahead. To view the full list of goals developed and ranking methodology, please refer to the [full report](#).

### *Top-Ranking Short-Term Goals (1-3 Years)*

- 1 Conduct a County-wide staffing analysis to ensure staffing levels keep pace with growth and service expectations.
- 2 Articulate and standardize County-wide policies to ensure consistency, clarity, and operational alignment.
- 3 Develop and issue RFPs for the design and construction of priority facility improvements.

### *Top-Ranking Long-Term Goals (4-8+ Years)*

- 1 Continue long-term capital planning to ensure sustainable maintenance, replacement, and expansion of County facilities.
- 2 Coordinate with IDOT and regional partners to advance major road, bridge, and corridor improvements to accommodate population growth.
- 3 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.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Based on a comprehensive review of the full planning process, including stakeholder input, discussions and exercises conducted during the strategic planning workshop, and analysis of the goals developed, four high-level strategic priority areas were identified. The priority areas define where the County will focus its attention, resources, and effort over both the short and long term. Together, these priority areas reflect the most important opportunities and challenges facing the County and provide a clear framework for decision-making.

## 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.

# STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## KENDALL COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS

Matt Kellogg, *County Board Chairman, District #2*

Zach Bachmann, *District #2*

Brian Debolt, *District #1*

Elizabeth Flowers, *District #2*

Scott Gengler, *District #1*

Dan Koukol, *District #2*

Jason Peterson, *District #1*

Ruben Rodriguez, *District #1*

Brooke Shanely, *District #2*

Seth Wormley, *District #1*

## KENDALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

Christina Burns, *County Administrator*

Matt Asselmeier, *AICP, CFM, Director of Planning and Zoning*

Natalia Borowska, *Management Analyst*

Meagan Briganti, *Director of Geographic Information Systems*

Latreese Caldwell, *Deputy County Administrator*

Taylor Cosgrove, *Director of Animal Control*

Leslie Johnson, *Director of Human Resources*

Matt Kinsey, *Director of Technology Services*

Fran Klaas, *County Engineer*

Dan Polvere, *Director of Facilities*

Todd Volker, *Economic Development Coordinator*

## 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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