



Office of the Will County Board

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County's Master Plan would save money, help maintain solid financial rating

Consolidating and improving efficiency of services is goal

JOLIET, IL – The Will County Board's capital improvements committee has begun the next phase of reviewing and discussing the implementation of the Master Plan for addressing the county's capital needs through 2030. The purpose of the plan is to provide a road map to consolidate operations, improve the efficiency of resources, and better deliver services to residents in highly populated areas. Over the long term, the plan is intended to save money and help the county maintain a solid financial rating.

"As we move forward, our objective should be to find ways to save money for the taxpayers while creating a more efficient and organized operation," said Chuck Maher (R-Naperville), chair of the capital improvements committee. "In the process, we will continue our efforts to put people back to work and provide the infrastructure to meet the demands of future generations."

Several years ago, the capital improvements committee recognized the need for a Master Plan in order to properly prepare the county for future growth. When Standard & Poor's gave high marks to Will County for its financial operations and planning, awarding an AA+ rating, they concurred with the committee that the county should draft a long term plan to assist in maintaining a solid financial standing. The first phase of the three year project was the creation of a mission and vision statement which established a basis for the board's future decision making. Last June, a comprehensive assessment of the county's facility needs was completed as part of the second phase. The data provided in that assessment was then essential in drafting the Master Plan.

Maher sees the plan as a roadmap to save dollars, pointing to the goal of moving departments that currently have to lease space into county owned buildings as one example.

"The Master Plan is a solid investment for the county, plain and simple," said Maher. "In the short term, we are working to maintain our fine credit rating with S&P and other rating agencies, and in the long term, we will save money by proactively addressing projected growth, consolidating and clearly organizing services, and increasing overall productivity."

To date, no dollars have been allocated or spent on any of the projects recommended in the plan. The capital improvements committee will now work with the finance committee to ensure any future spending on projects will not increase Will County's direct debt, which stands as the lowest in the six county region at \$3.35 per capita. The next lowest is Kane County at \$89.18.

"We are keeping a very watchful eye on how taxpayers' dollars are spent, and this plan is a fine example of how the board does not cut corners and carefully considers the best course of action for our residents," said board member Suzanne Hart (R-Naperville). "Many years of prudent planning have gotten us to this point, and as a result, the county has a solid financial rating and the lowest direct debt of all the collar counties."

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The plan highlights the need to consolidate county administrative and government functions into a single downtown Joliet location to make it easier for the public to access. Currently, departments are spread out in several different building locations. In addition, the plan recommends adding regional facilities in highly populated areas of the county, such as the northwest corridor that includes Naperville, Bolingbrook, Romeoville and Plainfield as well as the eastern corridor.

“Once we embark on the implementation of our master plan be assured each project will be reviewed for its merit, expense, and benefits for our citizens,” said Maher. “Through a solid implementation plan and good financial planning, we can begin the process required for success.”

The infrastructure addressed in the plan include the county office building, justice complex, sheriff's law enforcement facility, health department, River Valley juvenile facility, highway department, animal control, coroner facility, EMA field operations facility, Sunny Hill nursing home, and record management facility.

Details of the Master Plan are available on the Board's website at www.willcountyboard.com.

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