



STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS 2021

APPROVED FEBRUARY 20, 2021





COUNTY OF WILL

WILL COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING • 302 N. CHICAGO STREET • JOLIET, ILLINOIS 60432

Dear Legislators:

We are pleased to present you Will County's 2021 State Legislative Agenda for your review. After a difficult year of dealing with COVID and the related challenges, we look forward to working with you to address the work ahead for all of our communities. We are optimistic about the future of the State of Illinois and the County of Will.

Will County remains an evolving county that has a rich diversity among our many communities and unincorporated areas. We remain the fourth largest county in the state and one of the faster growing counties in the nation. As we continue our economic development efforts, we are also working to balance this growth with the quality of life for our residents.

We appreciated the support of the State of Illinois and IDOT in funding our recent infrastructure studies that will assist in planning for the future of our region. Working with all the stakeholders is key to this collaborative success.

Will County's priorities this year are focused on the practical matters coming out of this past year in dealing with COVID. We ask your support in protecting our revenue streams so that we can continue to effectively manage our County budget, ensure our residents have access to quality healthcare, and protect our natural environment so that families have a great place to live and grow.

Will County recognizes and appreciates the efforts made by the Governor and the General Assembly to fund critical projects and we hope that you will work with us to ensure these projects are completed in a timely manner.

Most importantly, we welcome your ideas and suggestions on ways we can work together going forward to address the common challenges that all our communities face.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
Will County Executive

Mimi Cowan
Speaker, Will County Board

Will County, Illinois

2021 Legislative Agenda

Will County is the fourth largest county in the State of Illinois and has seen rapid growth over the past several decades. With this growth comes many challenges in balancing new development while maintaining a high quality of life for our residents.

This legislative agenda is the result of a partnership between the Will County Board, the County Executive, and other elected officials. The County Board Legislative Committee and the Executive's office has worked with local stakeholders to create this agenda which articulates the County's priorities and illuminates specific projects that are highly relevant to our region.

This agenda is the foundation of our requests, but is not intended to be all-inclusive. As the General Assembly proceeds with the spring session, the Will County Legislative Committee, County Board leadership, and the County Executive will continue to monitor developing legislation and offer opinions on those issues that have more relevance for our communities and residents.

Will County requests the Governor and all legislators to adhere to the following principles:

- **Oppose unfunded mandates that create hardships for local governments**
- **Fund programs as mandated by state law**
- **Oppose legislation that reduces our existing authority**
- **Oppose legislation that erodes our existing revenue base**
- **Honor all of the state's historic financial obligations**
- **Increase funding for infrastructure that improves economic development**
- **Support efforts to balance quality of life issues with future development**

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FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY

FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Financial & Budgetary Issues

Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF)

Request: Will County opposes any attempts by the state to further reduce our taxpayer's fair share of the income tax proceeds.

Counties have suffered the same economic hardships as the state over the last year and have been forced to make difficult choices to pass balanced budgets and provide critical services. Monies allocated under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) are not a state "grant" but rather a small share of the state income taxes paid by taxpayers from Will County, which are used to support critical local services.

Will County opposes a recent proposal presented by the Pritzker Administration that would reduce the LGDF allocation to local governments by 10% in FY 2022 which equates to approximately \$1.2 million in lost revenue. Any reductions in this long-standing revenue sharing agreement will force counties to diminish basic services to the residents, impacting senior citizens, mental health services, non-profit agencies, and public safety functions.

Sales Tax Administrative Fee

Request: Will County supports legislation to reduce or eliminate the Sales Tax Administrative Fee. The elimination of this fee will reduce the burden that local taxpayers now pay to dis-proportionally support IDOR at the expense of local services.

As part of the State's efforts to balance previous budgets, the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) in 2018 imposed a new 2% administrative fee (surcharge) on the collection of fourteen locally imposed sales taxes, prior to the distribution of the tax revenues to local governments. After intense lobbying efforts by counties and municipalities across Illinois, the General Assembly in 2019 reduced the fee to 1.5%. While there may be a small cost associated with the collection of locally imposed sales taxes, IDOR already collects state sales taxes. IDOR has not provided any justification for, or evidence to support, a 1.5% administrative fee. Since this tax was implemented, Will County has lost over \$1.3 million in revenue due to this fee.

FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Automatic Appropriation Authority for Local Funds

Request: Will County supports legislation that would require several local revenue sources that are collected and distributed by the state to become continuing appropriations so that funds are automatically distributed to local governments and not dependent on the budget process.

Annual appropriation authority is required for Motor Fuel Tax (MFT), video/casino gaming, Use Tax and 9-1-1 revenues to be distributed to municipalities. An annual appropriation requirement can prevent these funds from being distributed despite the fact that they are non-General Revenue funds that do not affect state operations.

The General Assembly should require several local revenue sources (MFT, video/casino gaming, Use Tax and emergency 9-1-1 system funds) that are collected and distributed by the state to become continuing appropriations so that funds are automatically distributed to local governments and not dependent on the state budget process.

Probation Funding

Request: Will County supports legislation for alternative funding mechanisms for probation services and we urge the General Assembly to fully fund probation services without diminishing other county revenues. In FY 2019, Will County saw a reduction of 17% or approximately \$811,000 in actual dollars.

Adequate funding for Probation and Detention services throughout the State of Illinois remains a critical issue. The continuation of the support for Probation and Detention funding is essential to maintain safer communities by insuring offender accountability. A reduction in funding will only serve to diminish the capability of Court Services Departments to accomplish the mission of creating safer communities and insuring offender accountability.

FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Extend the Emergency Telephone System Act

Request: Will County supports legislation that extends the Emergency Telephone System Act to ensure the seamless functioning of these critical services to local residents.

Will County supports the extension of the Emergency Telephone System Act to ensure the continuation of the uniform monthly surcharge past the sunset date of the Act (December 1, 2021) that supports local emergency response operations, the implementation of a statewide network, and to prepare local 9-1-1 systems for Next Generation (NG) 9-1-1.

911 Surcharge Sweeps

Request: Will County supports legislation at the state level that requires critical 911 surcharge funds collected from the 911 surcharge be used exclusively for emergency response purposes and not be swept or diverted for any other purposes.

The purpose of the 911 surcharge is to raise funds for maintenance and improvement of emergency systems. Some states, including Illinois, divert a large portion of fees to non-emergency system related programs. Currently, there is no law that prevents states from doing this. The Federal Communications Commission estimates that since 2009, \$1 billion in surcharge fees have been diverted by states to other purposes.

Diverting funds means emergency responders do not have the funds to maintain, improve, repair, and respond to key emergency services. Emergency systems are not getting the full funds they are entitled to under the surcharge, which means the surcharge is more likely to be higher to help bridge the gap. If the surcharge funds were required to be used for its original purpose, fee hikes would most likely not be necessary.

FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Property Tax Exemptions

Request: Will County encourages the General Assembly to strongly consider the impacts of granting new property tax exemptions that pushes more of the tax burden onto the remaining taxpayers. Will County also supports a comprehensive analysis of all property tax exemptions and their corresponding impacts.

Property tax exemptions for certain properties by their very nature raise property tax rates and increase the property tax burden on all other properties. Each legislative session includes bills to create new exemptions or to increase the amount of existing exemptions. These bills are offered without a comprehensive analysis of all exemptions and the potential impacts.

Before creating new exemptions, or expanding current property tax exemptions, Will County will support a legislature-led effort to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the history of all property tax exemptions and their corresponding impacts. In addition, Will County is asking that the General Assembly consider the impact of new, or expansion of existing, exemptions on other types of properties.

Increase the Efficiency of Local Government

Request: Will County supports efforts to improve the efficient and effective operations of local government through greater autonomy, more tools to support collaboration across existing boundaries, and support for a local government technical assistance program.

According to the Comptroller's Office, Illinois has 8,529 units of local government, more than any other state in the nation. The tax dollars required to support this large bureaucracy have not resulted in higher level of services being delivered to citizens but rather an inefficient, redundant, and costly system of overlapping government agencies that often lacks accountability and wastes resources.

A recent analysis by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) examined local government capacity and how other states encourage government consolidation and efficiency through state funded grant programs. Increased coordination and partnership across local government boundaries would make communities more resilient, improve capacity, result in greater efficiencies, enhance the quality of services provided and reduce costs. Providing a small investment of funds upfront and offering technical assistance could support local efforts, establish best practices, and provide the expertise necessary to expand shared services models and provide a roadmap for the consolidation of functions. The CMAP study concluded that "a state-led program would help encourage these partnerships by providing resources to initiate studies and pursue implementation."

Taxpayers could realize additional savings if the General Assembly would provide units of local government with greater autonomy, more tools to support collaboration across existing boundaries, and support a local government technical assistance program.

PUBLIC HEALTH

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Support County Public Health Departments

Request: Will County requests additional state (and continued federal support) of county health departments.

County health departments have been on the front lines 24/7 combating the COVID-19 pandemic for over a year; providing education, contact tracing, testing, vaccine deployment, and other critical support services to residents and businesses. Although significant federal dollars have been made available to the state, funds distributed to local health departments have been insufficient.

Prior to the pandemic, the General Assembly appropriated only \$18 million annually to support the state's 97 county health departments. This historic lack of investment in our public health system has strained local resources. Although significant federal funding has been allocated to the states, monies distributed to local health departments have been insufficient and to date, have not been disbursed on a per capita (population) basis.

Clean Construction or Demolition Debris (CCDD) & Uncontaminated Soil

Request: Will County continues to support legislation that actively pursues efforts both legislatively and legally that requires Clean Construction or Demolition Debris (CCDD) and Uncontaminated Soil Sites (USF) operations to conduct ground water testing and monitoring.

Will County has more CCDD and USF operations than any other county in the State of Illinois. The County is concerned that the lack of ground water monitoring requirements at such sites will compromise the safety of the citizens of Will County. Will County will continue to actively pursue efforts both legislatively and legally that requires CCDD and USF operations to conduct ground water testing and monitoring.

COUNTY & REGIONAL ISSUES

COUNTY & REGIONAL ISSUES

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Extend the County reapportionment deadline

Request: Will County supports legislation that extends the statutory deadline for counties to produce a reapportionment map in accordance with revised census timelines and the Election Code.

The U.S. Census Bureau has announced that largely due to COVID-19, it missed its statutory deadline of December 31, 2020 to deliver population counts used for apportionment to the President. It is also expected that the Census will not meet its April 1, 2021 timeline for sending redistricting counts to the states.

Absent this information, that is required to redraw congressional, legislative, and county board district boundaries, county boards will likely be unable to meet the state statutory deadline of July 1 to adopt a reapportionment map.

Will County, in collaboration with other counties, will work with the General Assembly to develop a more workable time-frame for the development of reapportionment maps, recognizing that maps must be drafted in time for candidates to file for office later this year.

Voting and Elections

Request: Will County supports legislation that expands voter participation options, strengthens the integrity and security of the voting process, and allows counties to efficiently deliver voter services.

The Will County Clerk is the County's Election authority. Over the years numerous changes have occurred as a result of new mandates and law changes. Will County supports changes that make it easier for residents to vote in a cost-effective manner.

Will County opposes any legislation that makes it more difficult to register to vote or participate in the voting process or increases costs without a dedicated funding mechanism.

COUNTY & REGIONAL ISSUES

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Water Supply Planning and Management

Request: Will County is requesting the state take a more detailed approach to supporting Water Supply Planning and Management efforts to ensure that communities across our county have a long-term sustainable water supply that supports families and future economic developments.

As a fast-growing county, our communities face a significant threat due to the lack of a long-term sustainable source of drinking water for many of our residents. Regional planning efforts have called for better management of the region's water resources.

The state does not have a dedicated revenue stream for a water supply planning and management program. With an identified funding source, the state could formalize water planning within Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), support regional planning groups, and dedicate a portion to the further work being completed by the Illinois State Water Survey.

DuPage River Study

Request: Will County is seeking state assistance to assist with further mitigation efforts along the DuPage River which spans many communities in the northwestern and western portions of Will County. Will and DuPage Counties have partnered on this effort despite the state's failure to fund its share of this study.

The DuPage River and tributaries drain approximately 353 square miles in suburban Cook, DuPage and Will Counties in metropolitan Chicago. The study area has experienced rapid development over the past two decades, and currently includes 40 communities affecting approximately 4,300,000 people. Major storm events occurred in the basin in 1996, 2008, 2009, and most recently in April 2013, resulting in significant overbank flooding in over 20 communities and significant damage to residential and nonresidential structures and critical infrastructure and the closure of two major interstate highways (I-80 and I-55) for several days. Average annual flood damages are currently estimated at \$30 million.

COUNTY & REGIONAL ISSUES

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Greater Municipal Oversight for Small Wireless Facilities

Request: Will County supports legislation that will give counties more oversight over aspects of the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act.

The Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act (the Act), Public Act (P.A.) 100-0585, specifies how municipalities may regulate the location of small wireless facilities (small cell), which are telecommunication hardware that allow wireless carriers to enhance cellular transmissions. The Act, which took effect June 1, 2018, is set to expire or “sunset” on June 1, 2021. The General Assembly should ensure that any future iterations or extensions of this law enhance county authority to appropriately oversee the installation and operation of small wireless facilities.

Support Will County Capital Projects

Request: Will County urges the Governor to release capital projects in Will County that were part of the approved ReBuild Illinois (capital) program and to support new capital projects that improve Will County’s transportation infrastructure, improve the quality of life for local residents, and continue economic development in our region.

Will County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the state and nation over the past 25 years. With this rapid growth has come many challenges that cannot be addressed by local property taxes alone. The County is responsible for a large portion of the county’s infrastructure, especially in the roadway network that supports our massive transportation and logistics facilities.

In addition, the county runs the criminal justice system, the county jail and courthouse, Sunny Hill Nursing Home, animal control department, and health department and community health center, among other county facilities, plus the maintenance of 252 centerline miles or 620 lane miles of county highways.

Will County has compiled numerous lists of critical needs across our diverse county and was very appreciative of the critical projects that were approved funding in the ReBuild Illinois capital bill. We seek assistance from our local legislators, and the Governor, to see these projects through the process to get the actual funding to these much needed projects.

In addition to any new requests that may arise, Will County calls upon its delegation to work with the Governor’s Office to prioritize the release of the previously authorized Will County capital projects that were included as part of the 2019 ReBuild Illinois (capital) program.

COUNTY & REGIONAL ISSUES

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Protect the Environmental Health of our Residents

Request: Will County supports efforts to improve sustainability efforts across Illinois and encourages the General Assembly and Governor to continue to fund green efforts in Will County. This includes funding key infrastructure projects that balance development opportunities while preserving the quality of life.

Will County has been a leader on green sustainable practices for many years. We agree with our neighboring collar counties that government has no greater responsibility than to protect the public health and safety of its citizens by ensuring residents have cleaner air, land, and water.

Will County supports measures that decrease our carbon footprint, develop affordable clean energy and solar energy options, lessen vehicle miles traveled and reduce industrial emissions, among other environmental concerns. Our land and water resources could also benefit from an expansion of the current Rx Box disposal program and by ensuring sound floodplain management to protect open space.

Ongoing conservation of natural resources can be further supported by identifying new opportunities to recycle, increasing access to composting services, and supporting locally grown food.

Will County supports efforts to make a sustainable lifestyle more attainable for all Illinois residents.

ELECTED OFFICIALS & KEY CONTACTS

ELECTED OFFICIALS

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
Will County Executive



Shawn Walsh
Will County Regional
Superintendent of Schools

Duffy Blackburn
Will County Auditor



Karen Stukel
Will County Recorder

Andrea Chasteen
Will County Circuit Clerk



Mike Kelley
Will County Sheriff

Lauren Staley Ferry
Will County Clerk



James Glasgow
Will County
States Attorney

Laurie Summers
Will County Coroner



Tim Brophy
Will County Treasurer

ELECTED OFFICIALS

WILL COUNTY STATE AGENDA

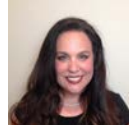
Meta Mueller
Majority Leader



Mike Fricilone
Minority Leader



Mimi Cowan
County Board Speaker



Denise E. Winfrey
Legislative Committee
Chair



Natalie Coleman
Legislative Committee
Vice-Chair



**County Board
District #1**
Sherry Newquist



**County Board
District #6**
Don Gould



**County Board
District #10**
Natalie Coleman



**County Board
District #1**
Judy Ogalla



**County Board
District #6**
Joe Van Duyne



**County Board
District #10**
Tyler Marcum



**County Board
District #2**
Amanda Koch



**County Board
District #7**
Steve Balich



**County Board
District #11**
Julie Berkowicz



**County Board
District #2**
Jim Moustis



**County Board
District #7**
Mike Fricilone



**County Board
District #11**
Mimi Cowan



**County Board
District #3**
Raquel M. Mitchell



**County Board
District #8**
Herbert Brooks, Jr.



**County Board
District #12**
Frankie Pretzel



**County Board
District #3**
Margaret Tyson



**County Board
District #8**
Denise E. Winfrey



**County Board
District #12**
Tom Weigel



**County Board
District #4**
Kenneth E. Harris



**County Board
District #9**
Annette Parker



**County Board
District #13**
Mica Freeman



**County Board
District #4**
Jacqueline Traynere



**County Board
District #9**
Rachel F. Ventura



**County Board
District #13**
Debbie Kraulidis



**County Board
District #5**
Gretchen Fritz



**County Board
District #5**
Meta Mueller

Will County Board

County Board District #1

Sherry Newquist	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee – Vice-Chair
Judy Ogalla Minority Whip	Executive Committee Finance Committee Land Use & Development Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee

County Board District #2

Amanda Koch	Land Use & Development Committee – Vice-Chair Legislative & Judicial Committee
Jim Moustis	Executive Committee Finance Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee

County Board District #3

Raquel M. Mitchell	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Public Health & Safety Committee
Margaret Tyson Majority Whip	Diversity & Inclusion Committee – Chair Executive Committee Finance Committee – Vice-Chair Public Health & Safety Committee

County Board District #4

Kenneth E. Harris	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Executive Committee Finance Committee – Chair Land Use & Development Committee
Jacqueline Traynere	Capital Improvements Committee Finance Committee Land Use & Development Committee

County Board District #5

Gretchen Fritz	Capital Improvements Committee Diversity & Inclusion Committee
Meta Mueller Majority Leader	Capital Improvements Committee Executive Committee – Vice-Chair Public Health & Safety Committee – Vice-Chair Ex-Officio Member of All Committees

Will County Board

County Board District #6

Don Gould	Capital Improvements Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
Joe Van Duyne	Capital Improvements Committee – Vice-Chair Executive Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee – Chair

County Board District #7

Steve Balich	Land Use & Development Committee
Mike Fricilone Minority Leader	Executive Committee Finance Committee Ex-Officio Member of All Committees

County Board District #8

Herbert Brooks, Jr.	Capital Improvements Committee – Chair Executive Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
Denise E. Winfrey	Diversity & Inclusion Committee – Vice-Chair Executive Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee – Chair Public Works & Transportation Committee

County Board District #9

Annette Parker	Capital Improvements Committee Executive Committee Public Health & Safety Committee
Rachel Ventura	Executive Committee Finance Committee Public Health & Safety Committee – Chair

County Board District #10

Natalie Coleman	Capital Improvements Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee – Vice-Chair
Tyler Marcum	Executive Committee Finance Committee Land Use & Development Committee – Chair Legislative & Judicial Committee

County Board District #11

Julie Berkowicz	Capital Improvements Committee Diversity & Inclusion Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee
Mimi Cowan Will County Board Speaker	Executive Committee – Chair

County Board District #12

Frankie Pretzel	Finance Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
Tom Weigel	Land Use & Development Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee

County Board District #13

Mica Freeman	Public Health & Safety Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
Debbie Kraulidis	Legislative & Judicial Committee Public Health & Safety Committee

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