



# McHenry County

2025-2028

Strategic Plan

*Strategic Plan Goals  
and Action Items*

*Adopted 07/15/25*

# INTRODUCTION

As an organization, McHenry County has long held that strategic planning is essential to good, responsible governance and has regularly engaged in strategic planning exercises to establish goals for the County government, organization, and services. Adopted in 2021 and with this proposed 2025 amendment, this Strategic Plan outlines the County Board's key goals and priorities which will guide public policy, resource allocation and operational decisions through 2028 – and perhaps beyond. The McHenry County Strategic Plan is organized into the following six key strategic areas which frame the goals and strategic priorities:

## **LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

McHenry County is committed to the quality of life, economic betterment, and forward-thinking governance of the County on behalf of all its citizens. The County sees its position as a leader in the region, building collaborative relationships with municipalities and other local governments along with leading by example for property tax control. Leadership and Governance embodies the County Board's approach to the governance of the County and interaction with internal and external partners.

## **ORGANIZATION ADVANCEMENT**

To achieve McHenry County's mission of providing the highest quality services and its vision as a leader and innovator in local government, elected officials and staff should continuously seek methods for delivering quality services with the most effective approaches while emphasizing the judicious use of resources. Additionally, County leaders recognize the value of advancing the County's administrative and programmatic affairs via an organization comprised of highly qualified, competent and committed public servants and professionals. Innovation, stewardship, best practices and professional development should be the hallmarks of the County's administrative functions and service delivery approaches. Organizational Advancement reflects the actions and efforts to improve the organization, and how it can efficiently and effectively carry out the business of the County with this mission in mind.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STABILITY**

McHenry County's balance of rural and suburban areas sets it apart from many other counties in the state of Illinois. While population and commercial growth are economically beneficial, that growth must be sustainable and balanced with efforts to preserve open

space, agricultural land, agricultural production, and conserve the County's groundwater supply. Additionally, advances in alternative energy sources and 'green' technologies have opened the door for McHenry County to explore ways in which it can integrate sustainable alternatives into its operations. Environmental Sustainability establishes the County's priorities and commitments to ensure the preservation and protection of open space, natural resources, agricultural heritage, water supplies, air quality, and energy conservation.

## **ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Successful economic development is the key to achieving the County's vision of a diversified tax base and strong financial position which is necessary to ease the property tax burden of County residents. New commercial developments provide greater employment opportunities in the County, increase the overall value of property, lessen the burden of property taxes, and broaden the diversity of government revenues allowing for better service provision. Workforce development efforts promote the availability of a skilled workforce to ensure that the human resources in the County adequately meet the needs of both new and existing businesses. Economic and Workforce Development articulates the strategies identified to advance McHenry County's economic opportunities and attend to the needs of its workforce.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

A healthy population and a robust system of social services to meet the needs of the people are the cornerstone of a successful community. McHenry County recognizes how critically important it is to understand the needs of our residents and ensure those needs are met through a variety of public, private and nonprofit service providers. Ranging from public health, mental health, long-term nursing care and a variety of support services and assistance programs to meet the needs of specific populations, McHenry County is committed to strategically addressing the Health and Social Services needs of the community.

## **QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

High quality infrastructure promotes economic development, ensures the functionality of the community and services, and enables residents and businesses to conduct their daily lives in a reliable and efficient manner. As used in this plan, quality infrastructure is a broad term that extends beyond the roads and transportation system and contemplates the physical systems, appurtenances, amenities, utilities, and facilities essential to support

the community needs and quality of life in McHenry County. This includes high speed internet access, recreation, multi-modal transportation systems and county facilities. Quality Infrastructure captures McHenry County's key strategic priorities for the advancement of economic, transportation and livability goals to accommodate the needs of County businesses and residents.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL REVIEW PERSPECTIVE**

### **Short and Long-term | Complex and Routine**

Identified goals can be viewed through various lenses by an organization. One perspective is to view strategic goals via a matrix of time and complexity. Here goals can be identified as short- and long-term based on the amount of time necessary to complete the goal and whether the goals are complex or routine and the amount of resources and external expertise, cooperation or input that might be needed. The definition of short- and long-term and complex and routine are defined below:

1. Short-term goals are one to three years (1 – 3) years and long-term goals are four to eight plus (4 – 8+) years; and,
2. Complex goals are accomplished through the collaboration of outside partners and the use of extraordinary resources; and routine goals are accomplished through internal efforts and the use of current resources

Each goal identified within the McHenry County Strategic Plan has been classified as short- or long-term and complex or routine. New goals and their classification have been completed.

## Leadership & Governance

Classification	Strategic Goals
Short-term Complex	1) Develop and implement a reporting mechanism for all County appointed Boards to report activities and initiatives to the County Board to promote accountability, enhance information sharing, and improve overall coordination and communication
Short-term Routine	2) Create standards to determine program effectiveness, efficiency, and potential cost-savings
Long-term Complex	3) Explore and implement strategies to enhance regional collaboration with the County's intergovernmental partners to leverage resources, share information, and work together to identify quality solutions to current and potential challenges (e.g., control taxes, reach economies of scale, mitigate unfunded state mandates)
Short-term Complex	4) Work to encourage Springfield to help mitigate unfunded mandates and secure Federal funding for identified local needs
Long-term Routine	5) Work to make the County welcoming and inclusive to all
Short-term Routine	6) Educate residents on County processes and how to become involved
Short-term Routine	7) Explore sustainable funding sources to reduce reliance on property taxes
Short-term Complex	8) Improve Resiliency to Emergencies and Disasters
Short-term Routine	9) Provide training and continuing education for County Board Members

## Organizational Advancement

Classification	Strategic Goals
Short-term Routine	1) Identify strategies to enhance integration, coordination, communication, and information-sharing between County-wide departments
Long-term Routine	2) Continue County-wide recruitment and retention efforts for qualified/skilled employees
Long-term Routine	3) Departments should collaborate on programs to maximize effectiveness and efficiency
Short-term Routine	4) Annually select and analyze the County's mandated versus nonmandated programs for financial sustainability
Short-term Routine	5) Create and maintain a living three-year financial model
Long-term Complex	6) Support the Sheriff's efforts to optimize the use of the corrections facility and enhance law enforcement across McHenry County

## Environmental Sustainability

Classification	Strategic Goals
Long-term Routine	1) Work to enhance and maintain long-term sustainability of the strong agriculture industry within the County  A) Evaluate and expand agritourism opportunities  B) Review land preservation strategies, e.g. farm/conservation easements
Long-term Routine	2) Remain aware of advancement in alternative energy sources. Develop and implement an environmental sustainability plan.
Long-term Complex	3) Consider the reactivation and consolidation of drainage districts whenever future area development presents the opportunity

<b>Long-term Complex</b>	<b>4) Explore opportunities to exercise local control of solar and wind farms</b>
<b>Long-term Complex</b>	<b>5) Advance awareness of the water supply and demand throughout the County</b>

## Economic and Workforce Development

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Strategic Goals</b>
<b>Short-term Complex</b>	<b>1) Identify strategies to attract and retain a younger demographic in McHenry County</b>
<b>Long-term Complex</b>	<b>2) Develop and implement strategies to match workforce skills with employer needs and maintain a strong working relationship with labor and trade groups, McHenry County College, and workforce development</b>
<b>Long-term Complex</b>	<b>3) Develop the Route 23/I-90 corridors to act as an economic engine for the County</b>
<b>Short-term Complex</b>	<b>4) Advocate for workforce housing availability in McHenry County through collaboration with municipalities</b>

## Health and Social Services

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Strategic Goals</b>
<b>Short-term Complex</b>	<b>1) Review the McHenry County Board of Health's 2026 Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan</b>
<b>Long-term Complex</b>	<b>2) Review the social services network in the County- continue to offer quality services, identify additional needed services, including those pertaining to homelessness, and work together for long-term operational and financial sustainability</b>
<b>Short-term Complex</b>	<b>3) Review and support of the Police Social Work Program and explore opportunities for continued funding</b>

# Quality Infrastructure

Classification	Strategic Goals
Long-term Complex	<p>1) Evaluate the County’s infrastructure system and identify strategies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Routinely maintain roads and bridges</li> <li>B) Work with the State of Illinois to improve Routes 23, 47, 31, 120, 176, and 173</li> <li>C) Develop “<i>Complete Streets</i>”(e.g., connectivity, multi-modal) on County roads</li> <li>D) Promote the expansion of transit service in McHenry County</li> <li>E) Implement a “<i>Vision Zero</i>” safety goal</li> </ul>
Long-term Complex	<p>2) Monitor and support ways to expand recreational opportunities for all demographics across the County</p>
Long-term Complex	<p>3) Investigate the need for a stand-alone public safety building</p>