

**2010
STATE LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA**



DuPage County, Illinois





**DuPage County
2010 Legislative Agenda**

County Board Chairman

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Legislative & Governmental Affairs Committee

- James D. Healy - Chairman
- Dirk Enger - Vice-Chairman
- Jerry "JR" McBride
- Michael F. McMahon
- Donald E. Puchalski
- Brien Sheahan

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Rita Gonzalez (D) Addison
Donald E. Puchalski (R) Addison

DISTRICT 2

Patrick J. O'Shea (R) Lombard
Jeff Redick (R) Elmhurst
Brien Sheahan (R) Elmhurst

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Downers Grove
John F. Curran (R) Woodridge
Michael F. McMahon (R) Hinsdale

DISTRICT 4

Grant Eckhoff (R) Wheaton
Jerry "JR" McBride (R) Glen
Ellyn Debra Olson (R) Wheaton

DISTRICT 5

James D. Healy (R) Naperville
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Naperville

DISTRICT 6

Dirk Enger (D) Winfield
Linda A. Kurzawa (R) Winfield
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Overview

DuPage County is the second largest county in Illinois, approaching one million residents, and is comprised of 33 municipalities and 9 townships. DuPage is a major employment center for northeastern Illinois, home to over 700,000 jobs as well as 16 colleges, 7 hospitals, 2 federal research facilities, 300 miles of bikeways and 24,000 acres of forest preserve property.

Core county government services include public safety (sheriff & state's attorney), court services (administration of the 18th judicial circuit), transportation, health department, stormwater management, convalescent center, community services and animal control.

Currently, the county is experiencing growth and population changes that are redefining DuPage. Few large tracts of land remain undeveloped, resulting in higher densities and redevelopment that are causing new demands on infrastructure, public safety, flood control facilities and transportation services. The population is becoming more diverse and a rapidly growing senior citizen population has increased the need for community services.

DuPage County has changed from a growing suburban county to a mature, urban environment. As a result, county sales tax revenues have slowed to little or no growth while the demand for county services continues to rise, particularly in the areas of health care, the courts, public safety, senior services and mental health care. Declining federal and state funding has also strained local resources, negatively impacting the delivery of services.

Maintaining a high quality of life for all DuPage residents remains the top priority of county government.



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Legislative Priorities

- ❖ **Prepayment of Property Taxes** – Situations have arisen where a taxpayer has requested to pay in advance (of receiving a property tax bill) the ensuing year's property taxes. As no specific provision currently exists in state statute, the County supports legislation that would authorize County Boards to permit County Treasurers to establish a fund to hold moneys as escrow for the payment of the ensuing year's property taxes. The legislation should also permit County Treasurers to establish terms and conditions for such escrow funds and direct any interest earned be paid to the County Treasurer to offset administrative costs.

- ❖ **Campaign Finance Reform** – In order to advance more ethical and transparent government and to set even higher ethical standards, DuPage County supports legislation to further regulate campaign finance, gifting, and donation reporting. The County supports legislation that would permit County Boards to adopt more restrictive provisions than currently allowed by state statute for both incumbents and candidates seeking county elected office.

Legislation would authorize non-home rule Counties to: limit or ban individual and bundled contributions from certain entities such as contractors, vendors and professional service providers; limit or ban gifts or food to County Elected Officials, candidates and county employees from entities seeking to do business with or currently holding contracts with the County; and expand the reporting of campaign donations beyond twice each year to require the Illinois State Board of Elections to develop an online real-time reporting of all donations in order to provide greater disclosure to the public of contributions.

- ❖ **Replanting on Recreational Trails** – The excessive trimming of trees along the Great Western Trail (far distances from high tension lines) and along the Illinois Prairie Path has resulted in the actual destruction of many trees



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(about 37 of the 51 miles of County paths have power lines on or adjacent to the trails). The County's trail maintenance policy does not allow for the removal of trees unless they are diseased or creating a hazard yet attempts to encourage public utilities to use best management practices to protect all trees and to trim as minimal as possible (in order to comply with federal regulations) have been unsuccessful to date.

The County encourages the General Assembly to adopt legislation to require electric public utilities to develop a program that would remove tall growing species of trees directly under power lines and to replant instead tall growing shrubs and low growing trees on or adjacent to state, county, and municipally owned trails.

- ❖ **Foreclosed & Abandoned Properties** – Due to the increased number of foreclosures, counties and municipalities often struggle to locate responsible property owners and are sometimes left to assume costs associated with these abandoned properties.

Last session, municipalities were provided with several tools to help locate the owners of foreclosed residential properties and to recover costs spent securing or enclosing abandoned residential properties (Senate Bill 1894). DuPage County supports legislation that would provide counties with the same tools as provided to municipalities in order to address public safety concerns associated with foreclosed or abandoned properties.

- ❖ **Technology Parks** – Last year, the County supported legislation (SB 2109) that was adopted by the Senate, but stalled in the House, to spur economic development at the (7) Technology Parks located throughout the state (including the DuPage National Technology Park). The bill sought to accelerate the rate of technology commercialization and innovation at the Technology Parks by aligning the combined resources of educational institutions, national laboratories, financial institutions, private businesses,



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and business support associations through the establishment of innovation zones. Zones would focus on commercializing research and creating entrepreneurial opportunities and would offer such benefits as investment tax credits, job training funds, research and development credits, and sales tax exemptions for machinery. The state must continue the development of, and implement new measures to, create a vibrant technology-based economy in Illinois and the resultant high-skill, high-wage jobs that a technology-based economy will provide for Illinois' citizens.

Appropriations

- ❖ **Probation Funding** – The state requires counties to provide probation services as part of a mandated state court services program yet over the years, the state has steadily reduced reimbursement for probation, detention and pretrial services from 100% to less than 65% of allowable costs. In 2009, additional cuts were made, further eroding support for county probation departments to less than 40% of costs (DuPage County received an additional cut of \$1.9 million).

Several counties have taken the drastic step of laying-off probation officers, refusing to shift the financial burden of the cost of probation services onto county taxpayers. As one downstate county chairman stated, probation services are an integral part of public safety and are an extension of state government as defined under the Illinois Probation and Probation Officers Act. DuPage County supports a restoration of these dollars and an acknowledgement by the state of their responsibility to fund mandated court services.

- ❖ **Senior Services Budget** – The state continues to reduce funding for community services for many senior citizens struggling to remain in their own homes despite the fact that the number of seniors in Illinois continues



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to rise. It is far more cost effective to serve frail senior citizens in the community than in a nursing home, an estimated \$7,000 vs. \$45,000 per year respectively.

In 2009, the state reduced the Community Care program by 10% and the Circuit Breaker program by 50%. As a result, DuPage County will not fill 2 vacant Senior Case Manager positions and will eliminate printing of the annual DuPage County Senior Citizens Resource Directory. The impact of the vacant positions is already causing delays in the amount of time it takes for a case manager to complete a comprehensive assessment of a senior citizen to help prevent premature nursing home placement. If funding reductions continue next year, we can anticipate more staff reductions resulting in greater delays for older persons waiting for essential services.

- ❖ **State Highway Projects** - Traffic congestion remains a top concern among county residents. **Attached** is a list of proposed State Highway Safety and Congestion Relief Projects as well as a list of County Highway Projects. If completed, these projects would enhance safety on our roadways and offer significant congestion relief for the region.

Supported Items

- ❖ **Web Publication of Assessments** – With expanded use of the internet in recent years, County Assessors (and DuPage County) continue to support legislation to permit the publication of property tax assessments on an internet website in lieu of costly newspaper publication. During general assessment years, DuPage County spends \$400,000 to publish assessments yet since 2004, the county's website has contained the identical information.
- ❖ **Cell Phone Siting** – Lake County plans to sponsor legislation to provide counties with more discretion in the siting, height, and setbacks for cellular towers (similar to current municipal authority). Illinois law presently allows cellular towers by right in all unincorporated areas which has led to a



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proliferation of cellular towers in unincorporated areas. In addition, the legislation would require all new cellular towers to provide additional capacity for co-locating antennae.

- ❖ **Court Fees & Fines** – current law (Illinois Supreme Court Rule 529a) provides that an individual charged with a minor traffic offense can enter a plea of guilty by mail and thereby forfeit his bond of \$75 as full payment of all fines and penalties associated with that offense. As a result, a significant number of offenders are avoiding the payment of many state prescribed court fees and fines that counties, municipalities and the state would otherwise be entitled to receive.

In 1963, the legislature granted the authority (to the Supreme Court) to establish this rule that today prohibits the General Assembly from changing the bond amount set by the court and also prohibits the collection of additional court fees and fines for specified minor traffic offenses paid by mail. Legislation may be introduced next session to address this issue and to restore the General Assembly's legal authority to set maximum fees and penalties in lieu of the courts.

- ❖ **Government Consolidation** – DuPage County supports legislation that would encourage or provide additional incentives to local governments to centralize or consolidate services delivered, thereby reducing over time the number of taxing districts in a region while also providing greater efficiencies. Illinois currently has 6,994 local governmental units, more than any other state. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) lists government consolidation as a major priority as part of the region's "GO TO 2040 Plan."
- ❖ **Prescription Drug Repository Program Act** – a DuPage County Health Department initiative last session that passed the House (HB 277) but not the Senate, the Prescription Drug Repository Program Act would have established a mechanism whereby long-term care facilities could donate



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unopened prescription drugs or related supplies (that often tend to be very costly, end-of life medications) to programs that benefit the uninsured (like Access DuPage). Similar programs have been adopted by nearly half of all the states.

The largest single cost for community health care programs that serve the uninsured like Access DuPage is the cost of pharmaceuticals. Adoption of a drug repository program as contained in this legislation would redistribute unopened drugs (after inspection by a licensed pharmacist) saving community programs millions of dollars in pharmaceutical costs.

Highway Improvements in DuPage County

November 2009 List

State Highway Safety and Congestion Relief Projects		
<u>DuPage County Priority</u>	<u>Scope of Work</u>	<u>Comments</u>
IL 19 at York Road	Grade separation	County requests construction and land acquisition funding in the IDOT MYP (\$56.2M).
IL 64, IL 59 to Kautz Road	Reconstruction and widening from 4 lanes to 6 lanes	County requests Phase 3 engineering, land acquisition and construction funding in FY11 (\$43.2M).
IL 56, Naperville to IL 59	Reconstruction and widening from 2 lanes to 4 lanes	County requests Phase 3 engineering and construction funding in FY11 (\$66.5M).
IL 38 @ County Farm Road	Intersection improvement	County requests project addition to IDOT multi-year program, estimated project cost of \$10M.
IL 83, I-55 to Ogden Avenue	Reconstruction and widening to complete 6 lanes	County requests project addition to IDOT multi-year program, estimated project cost of \$52M.
Finley Road at Ogden Avenue	Intersection Improvement	County requests project addition to IDOT multi-year program, estimated project cost TBD.
CREATE Program	Region-wide rail-highway grade separations	Funding included under SAFETY-LU, need to include in IDOT multi-year program.

Highway Improvements in DuPage County

November 2009 List

County Highway Safety and Congestion Relief Projects		
<u>DuPage County Priority</u>	<u>Scope of Work</u>	<u>Comments</u>
75th Street - Ogden to Washington	Add Lanes	\$50M for engineering, land acquisition and construction
75th Street - Washington to Janes	Add Lanes	\$50M for engineering, land acquisition and construction
75th Street - Woodward to Plainfield	Add Lanes	\$30M for engineering, land acquisition and construction
Eola Road - New York Street to IL 56	Add Lanes	\$35M for engineering, land acquisition and construction
Fabyan Parkway - Kane/DuPage Line to Route 38	Add Lanes	\$15M for engineering, land acquisition and construction