



LAKE COUNTY

FY2022 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



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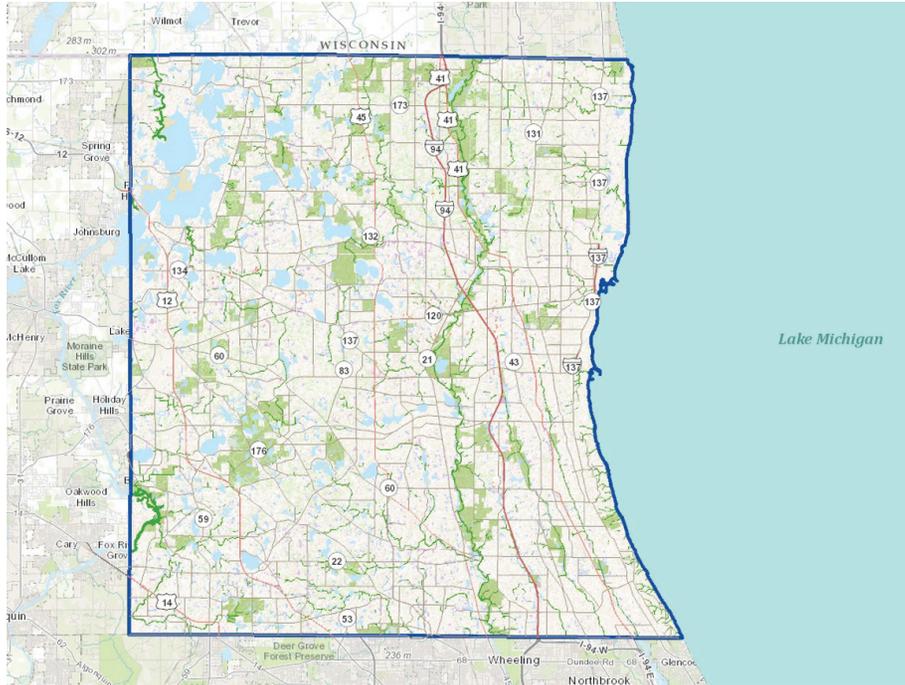
About Lake County



POPULATION

- Population: 714,342 (2020)
- Third largest county in Illinois

Source: census.gov



- **Land Area: 448 square miles**
- **Halfway between Chicago and Milwaukee**
- **Easy access to Chicago on four Metra commuter rail lines and 32 train stations**
- **Major waterways—Lake Michigan, Fox River, Chain O'Lakes**



HOUSING

- Housing units (2019): 265,507
- Median value of owner-occupied housing units (2014-2019): \$265,507
- Homeownership rate (2014-2019): 70.0%
- Households (2013-2018): 244,672



HEALTH AND RECREATION

- 50,000+ acres of land, offering educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities for all ages
- 40 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline
- 100+ beaches*
- 550 miles of trails and bikeway connections
- 200+ lakes and rivers
- Ranked #2 in Illinois for physical activity and #4 for access to places to be active and healthy

*Source: Lakecountypartners.com,

Source for other statistics: Lake Co., IL Convention & Visitors Bureau



ECONOMICS

- Median household income: \$89,427
- Per capita money income: \$45,766
- Unemployment in Lake County: 5.5%* Illinois: 7.1% (not seasonally adjusted)* U.S.: 5.4% (not seasonally adjusted)*
- 30,000+ businesses (11 Fortune 500 companies)
- 89.8% of residents age 25+ have graduated high school, and 43.7% have a bachelor's degree or higher (2012-2016)

*Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

Source for other statistics: census.gov

INTRODUCTION

Lake County government strives toward fiscally stable, efficient, and transparent operations amidst uncertain political and economic climates. Maintaining strong partnerships with legislators ensures that Lake County residents continue to receive valuable, efficient, and cost-effective services.

As always, the Lake County Board appreciates the opportunity to meet with our legislators to discuss challenges we face as a County. To best address such challenges, Lake County must govern free from the restrictions of various statutes and public acts which slow down the process to ensure a high quality of life for its residents.

Lake County government is cognizant of the current financial environment at all government levels and has prepared the FY2022 Legislative Agenda in that context. As such, this year's Legislative Agenda includes both comprehensive, aspirational items with potential regional or statewide effects as well as specific technical changes that make Lake County government – and in some cases all local governments – more efficient.

The guiding tenets of Lake County's Legislative Agenda are to:

1. Support legislation that grants additional permissive authorities for counties.
2. Support legislation that allows counties to expand non-property tax revenue sources.
3. Support legislation that promotes transparency at all levels of government.
4. Support legislation that encourages cost-effective government consolidation.
5. Support legislation that mitigates inefficiency.
6. Oppose unfunded mandates imposed by the state or federal government.
7. Oppose legislation that would reduce the existing authority of county government.
8. Oppose legislation that erodes existing state-appropriated County revenues.
9. Oppose legislation that weakens the County's ability to consolidate local governmental units and circumvents an existing appeals process.

Specifically, with respect to legislative policy numbers six and eight, Lake County vehemently opposes any action that will divert, redirect, or reduce any funds owed and/or due to units of local government (e.g., sales tax, income tax, and Personal Property Replacement Tax).

Additionally, Lake County's Legislative Agenda is guided by the following values adopted within the County Board's Strategic Plan:

- i. Leadership
- ii. Fiscal Responsibility
- iii. Exceptional Service
- iv. Operational Excellence
- v. Environmental Stewardship

PURPOSE

The intent of Lake County's Fiscal Year 2022 Legislative Agenda is to formalize the County's positions on legislation both anticipated and sought to be considered. Our elected officials may use the Agenda as a guide when considering legislation that would impact Lake County.

This Agenda describes the County's proposed initiatives and/or underlying interest in specific issues. With coordination between the Lake County Board, the County Administrator's Office, the County's legislative consultants, and the Lake County legislative delegation, the agenda explains County initiatives and informs County positions taken on specific bills once the legislative session begins. During session, the County Board may also consider amendments to the Legislative Agenda and adjust its position on bills.

In addition to the Legislative Agenda, Lake County attempts to influence policy through other avenues, such as submitting comments on administrative rulemakings and making direct appeals to administrative officials. While the Legislative Agenda is not intended to direct such action, it serves as a resource to inform important County efforts.

THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA AS A "NIMBLE TOOL"

Members of the Lake County Board agree that the issues described within this Legislative Agenda represent their collective endorsements. The Lake County Board recognizes that many other unforeseen issues will become known throughout the legislative year. While it is important to have approval from the Lake County Board for additional endorsements before any position becomes official, it is also important for the Legislative Agenda to be a "nimble tool" that appropriately supports an ever-changing landscape during the legislative process. As such, the manner in which the Legislative Agenda may be used to adjust and/or react to the fast-paced legislative process is outlined below.

PROCESS TO AMEND LAKE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The County Board may revisit the Legislative Agenda at any point as a body, or through its Legislative Committee. The Legislative Committee may be convened on an as-needed basis with the County's legislative consultants and County staff when the following circumstances present themselves:

Legislative action is expected that would significantly impact a County policy and/or operation, which the County Board has previously provided general direction, but which the County Board had not provided specific direction. (This might occur via the Legislative Agenda or other approved policies.) As such, time-constraints may preclude the County Board from having an opportunity to provide the needed direction. In these situations, the County Board Chair, the County's legislative consultant, and County staff may turn to the Legislative Committee for direction on such legislation so that the County can advocate accordingly. The County Board will be informed whenever such Legislative Committee direction has been provided and may choose to revisit such direction at a future meeting.

Amendments to the Legislative Agenda should be adopted with the goal, such that modifications require consistency, when applicable, with the criteria outlined below:

- A. Uniformity with the County Board's Strategic Plan;
- B. Expected relevance in the upcoming or present legislative sessions;
- C. Uniqueness of issue or impact to Lake County;
- D. Viability or likelihood of achieving a goal;
- E. Opportunity for providing or preserving funding for Lake County; and
- F. High probability of metrics of success to allow the position to be removed from future legislative agendas, if achieved.

These criteria, which provide important guidance and direction, are not intended to prohibit departures in unique circumstances as determined by the County Board and/or Legislative Committee, such as when adoption of a County position is important to support its regional partners, even when the legislation is otherwise of limited consequence to the County.

In addition, to accommodate any requests that may arise after approval of the Legislative Agenda, the County Board Chair and County Administrator, or their designee, may periodically provide legislative testimony and/or letters of support or opposition based upon any perceived benefit or detriment to Lake County. In doing so, such testimony and/or letters will be guided by the principles and values stated herein.

To summarize, the process for requesting an amendment to the County's adopted Legislative Agenda is provided below:

Amend the formal Legislative Agenda: The approved County Legislative Agenda may be amended at any point through the Legislative Committee and County Board based on consistency with articulated criteria.

County Position on Specific Legislative Bill(s): The County may take a position on a specific bill through action by Legislative Committee based on significant impact to County policy or operation; County Board is to be informed on such direction, and County Board may revisit thereafter.

How does a member of the Board or standing committee seek a County position on specific legislative bills?

1. attend the Legislative Committee and request that it take a position on a bill; or
2. ask the standing committee, for which the bill's subject is pertinent, to request, on behalf of the Committee, that the Legislative Committee take a position on a bill.

Submission of a witness slip on the County's behalf regarding a specific legislative bill

The County Board Chair, County Administrator, or their designee, County legislative consultant may submit a witness slip on the County's behalf on specific legislation when the County's Legislative Agenda is clear about what the County's position is or following specific action by the County Board or Legislative Committee on a specific bill. Nothing herein prohibits an individual member of the Lake County Board to submit a witness slip on a specific bill in their individual personal capacity.

POSITIONS

1. **Sponsor:** Lake County sponsored initiatives.
2. **Support:** Seek to support partner organizations in their sponsorship of the initiative. These proposals are broad based with impacts that extend beyond Lake County. It is most appropriate for a coalition or statewide organization to lead these initiatives, and Lake County will support their efforts as well as the proposals.

Topic: Regulation Providing for Design-Build Procurement Authority for all Illinois Counties

Issue: The Illinois Compiled Statute, Finance Design-Build Procurement Act does not currently enable Counties authority to utilize Design-Build as a construction source selection method. Design-Build is a proven procurement process utilized across the United States at all levels of government and the private sector. This procurement method places total accountability on a single contractor, removing the procurement agency from being the arbitrator between the design and construction agents. As a result, Counties face unnecessary duplication of effort and excessive overhead costs associated with multiple procurements.

Recommendation: Sponsor an amendment to Illinois Compiled Statute, Finance, (30 ILCS 537) Design-Build Procurement Act to allow Lake County (or all IL Counties) to use design-build delivery method for public projects if it is shown to be in the County's best interest for that particular project.

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Grants additional permissive authorities

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Operational Excellence

Topic: Carpet Stewardship Act

Issue: In Illinois, there is currently Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation for electronics. EPR allows for an eco-fee on the purchase of items that will be used to subsidize the processing and end use of recycled items. This legislation does not exist for carpet currently. Carpet facing and backing are made of plastic, with calcium carbonate added to give the carpet weight so that it lies flat.

California is the only state that has enacted EPR legislation for carpet. California has proven the business model for Illinois and has achieved over a 15 percent recycling rate for carpet vs. around one percent in Illinois.

Recommendation: Support legislation that creates EPR for carpet products, or bills with similar intent.

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Mitigates Inefficiency

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Environmental Stewardship

Topic: Property Tax Exemption to Spouses in Receipt of Dependents Indemnity Compensation

Issue: Currently, the Illinois Property Exemption for Disabled Veterans provides that veterans, who are deemed service-connected, due to injuries or diseases sustained while on active duty, at: the 30 percent or 40 percent level see a reduction in the equalized assessed value of their real property by \$2,500; the 50 percent or 60 percent level see a reduction in the equalized assessed value of their real property by \$5,000; and, the 70 percent or above levels are exempt from paying property taxes in the State of Illinois.

Further, the law provides whatever exemption held by the veteran will be passed onto the spouse at the time of the veteran's death. In many instances, especially for our Vietnam veterans, many will not file for service connection during their lifetime; however, many of them, especially our Vietnam veterans, will and have died because of diseases sustained by their exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam. Their spouses, under federal law and regulations, are eligible and in receipt of Dependents Indemnity Compensation. The drafters of 35 ILCS 200/15-169 did not take this into account at the time of signing.

Recommendation: Support an amendment to the Property Tax Exemption Code (35 ILCS 200/15-169) that states that spouses in receipt of Dependents Indemnity Compensation are exempt from property taxes in the State of Illinois.

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Mitigates Inefficiency

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Exceptional Service
- Leadership

Topic: Amendments to the Illinois Property Exemption for Disabled Veterans

Issue: Currently, the Illinois Property Exemption for Disabled Veterans provides that veterans, who are deemed service-connected, due to injuries or diseases sustained while on active duty, at: the 30 percent or 40 percent level see a reduction in the equalized assessed value of their real property by \$2,500; the 50 percent or 60 percent level see a reduction in the equalized assessed value of their real property by \$5,000; and, the 70 percent or above levels are exempt from paying property taxes in the State of Illinois.

Further, the law provides that a veteran in receipt of one of these exemptions would have to refile each year for recertification. However, certain veterans are rated as Permanent and Total by the Department of Veterans Affairs, meaning that their percentage of service-connection will never change, absent a finding of fraud by the Department of Veterans Affairs. County government resources are inefficiently caught up in recertifying these veterans.

Recommendation: Support an amendment to the Property Tax Exemption Code (35 ILCS 200/15-169) that states that veterans who have been deemed Permanent and Total from the Department of Veterans Affairs and are exempt from property taxes in the State of Illinois will not have to refile annually once said designation has been rendered by the Department of Veterans Affairs unless a finding of fraud is made against said veteran.

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Mitigates Inefficiency
- Encourages cost-effective government

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Exceptional Service
- Leadership
- Fiscal Responsibility

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Lake County, Illinois