



2026 Board Priorities

(Draft including Board feedback and discussion on 12/05/2025 and General Government and Policy Committee on 01/06/2026)

Dakota County Strategic Plan Goals



A Great Place to Live
(for a lifetime)

Thriving People

Care for
vulnerable
populations

Create Access
to
Opportunities

Community
safety, health
and well-being

Healthy Environment with Quality Natural Resources

Protect and
maintain
Natural
Resources

Energy
efficiency /
sustainability

Successful Place for Business and Jobs

Prepared,
connected
workforce

Dependable
and Modern
infrastructure
and systems.

Responsible taxes
and
Sound stewardship of resources

Hire and retain
excellent staff.

Excellence in Public Service

Innovate and
Collaborate

Community
Engagement

Welcoming
and
Responsive
Service for all
People

2026 Initiatives: Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources



1. Develop 5-year financial plan that achieves the following goals:

- Eliminate the Structural Deficit.
- Increase reserves to be within the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) range (35% - 50%).
- Provide reliable funding for service and program priorities of the Board.
- Prepare for and implement state and federal funding cuts.

[Partial list of operational steps / tasks to achieve these goals:]

- Reduce reliance on CPA for operations.
- Create 5-year staffing plans using assessment of workload levels.
- Review and align purpose, policy, and practice for each Fund.
 - Include policy discussion of use of interest within each fund.
- Consider new revenue sources (e.g., wheelage tax, County environmental charge)
- Identify and secure reliable funding for parks, natural resources, environmental resources.
- Review and update Transportation Policy on cost share and advance funding.
- Consider further cuts and potential of 'giving back' services to the state.
- Consider process improvements and efficiencies such as AI for transactional work.
- Study potential efficiencies through partnering with neighboring counties.

2026 Initiatives: Create Access to Opportunities



1. Implement the Library Strategic Plan.

- Reach segments of the community less tied to library.
- Find opportunities and resources.

2. Advance the 'Arts Blueprint'.

3. Update Parks Operational Plans.

- Natural Resources Systems Plan
- Greenway Plan
- Parks Visitor Services Plan

4. Review Comprehensive Plan requirements and provide direction on scope and extent of Plan Update.

2026 Initiatives: Care for Vulnerable People



1. Deliver Public Assistance Benefits within State Required Timelines.
2. Complete MnChoices Assessment within State Required Timelines.
3. Develop More Youth Placement Options and alternatives to placement options (with metro collaboration).
4. Review and refine the housing business plan (HBP).
 - Measure and report on progress of the HBP.
 - Determine role of permanent supportive housing in the Housing Business Plan.
5. Pilot existing 0.5 Full-Time Employee (FTE) social worker stationed at Wentworth Library.

2026 Initiatives: Community safety, health and well-being



1. Facilitate development of Community Resource Center(s).
2. Investigate and pursue health care access for uninsured or under-insured residents.
3. Complete an assessment of healthcare model in the jail.
4. Improve safety at high crash rate locations based on the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation (MnDOT) Crash Rate Index.
5. Improve safety for pedestrian and bicyclists based on high and medium priority County Highway Pedestrian and Bicycle Gaps.

2026 Initiatives: Innovate and Collaborate



1. Partner well with Cities and Counties.

- Consider intersections among Dakota 911, Emergency Management, and Radio Services.

2. Collaborate with Community Development Agency (CDA) and partners on development.

- Review and present policies and practices within the purview of the County that are a hindrance or asset to economic development (as part of the Comprehensive Plan).
- Support coordinating strategic infrastructure and land development with CDA and the cities.

2026 Initiatives: Community Engagement



1. Design and implement new website.

2. Provide more online / self service options in our services using Artificial Intelligence.

3. Create more financial and budget engagement (ex. Interactive Budget Books, additional Budget Open House events).

2026 Initiatives:

Dependable and modern infrastructure and systems



1. Fair, efficient, and accurate 2026 elections.
2. Deliver 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects on time and in budget.
 - Renovation of Wentworth Library.
 - Recycling Zone Plus facility.
 - Renovation of Burnhaven Library.
 - Spring Lake Park Reserve improvements
 - MN River Greenway completion.
 - CR 32 (117th St.) completion.

2026 Initiatives:

Energy efficiency / sustainability



1. Complete Byllesby Dam Turbines.
2. Audit current energy and emission processes to determine opportunities.

2026 Initiatives:
Protect and Maintain Natural Resources



1. Implement new Solid Waste Management Plan.

1. Study new processing requirements at landfills.
2. Increase food waste prevention.
3. Increase reuse opportunities.

2. Implement 2050 Parks System Plan.

2026 Initiatives:
Hire and Retain Excellent Staff



1. Confirm current compensation strategy and desired outcomes.

2. Continue to assess and implement inclusion, diversity, equity and access (IDEA) strategies.

2026 Initiatives:

Welcoming and responsive services for all people



1. Identify program and services areas with highest disparities for study and potential future action.
 - Continue and maintain Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance program.
 - Prepare for implementation of the African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Act.

2026 Initiatives:

Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources



1. Maintain overall facilities rating at “fair” and plan to return to “good” based on the Facility Condition Index (FCI).
2. Collaborate with other counties to ensure interests are adequately represented.

Operational Requests from CB related to goals



	Request	Follow up plan
1	Educate Board on policy issues surrounding Data Center to include environmental issues, economic development issues, tax policy issues, etc.	Physical Development Committee (PDC) presentation in 2026 led by Environmental Resources and including Public Services & Revenue (PSR) expertise.
2	Explore what the County should/should not be doing to ensure safe and secure electricity supply in the future.	General Government & Policy Committee (GGP) presentation on emergency planning re: electrical supply led by Risk Management
3	County Board discussion of greenhouse gas emissions policy from the state vis-à-vis transportation projects and costs in the future. Modify the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) to reflect costs of the new policy.	PDC presentation in 2026 led by Transportation. Wait until MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT) guidance is received on this topic.
4	Provide monthly measure of the Crisis Center numbers of Dakota County clients and Total clients served.	Community Services add chart to monthly Directors' Report.
5	Provide monthly measure of average daily population in the Jail Integrative Health Unit (perhaps against total jail average daily population).	Sheriff's Office monthly measure to be included in the Central Operations Directors monthly report.
6	Provide an update on the outcomes of the Jail Integrative Health Unit.	General Government & Policy Committee update on Integrative Health Unit from Sheriff's Office in fall 2026.
7	Provide return on investment (ROI) analysis on embedded social worker model in the city police departments.	Community Services presentation of previous Office of Performance and Analysis (OPA) study on this topic.
8	Provide information on the effects of court decisions that have dramatically increased the cost of e-resources in the libraries.	Library to present information to the General Government & Policy Committee (GGP) prior to National Association of Counties policy meetings in March.
9	Provide analysis of Library's Self-Service Hours impact on services and resources.	GGP update on After Hours Model before budget 2027.
10	Provide analysis / evaluation of the SW in library pilot project.	GGP update on 2026 new pilot in Q1 2027.