



DUPAGE COUNTY

DUPAGE ACT INITIATIVE

Overview

The DuPage ACT Initiative (Accountability/Consolidation/Transparency) is a comprehensive County reform program designed to improve efficiency, reduce duplication, and encourage resource sharing across County government and its independently administered agencies. In 2011, Chairman Dan Cronin and the County Board undertook an examination of its appointed agencies, which provide a variety of important public services to residents. This examination highlighted challenges and pinpointed areas for optimization and intergovernmental cooperation.

Once the examination was complete, the County launched the ACT Initiative to begin working with two dozen appointed agencies to improve transparency, reform ethics and procurement policies and explore shared services, intergovernmental partnerships and consolidation where appropriate. The County has expanded its initiative beyond the appointed agencies and is working with a variety of local partners on the municipal and regional level to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. Reforms made under the ACT Initiative are **projected to save taxpayers more than \$100 million.**



Key Accomplishments

Transparency Portal

The County created an Appointed Agencies Transparency Portal hosted on its website to publicize organizational and financial information pertaining to each County-appointed agency. Each personalized agency page provides the public with access to board membership and terms of service, financial reports, district boundary maps, websites, qualifications for service, meeting agenda/minute postings and other pertinent information.

Ethics Reform

The County Board approved significant revisions to the County's Ethics Ordinance to allow County-appointed agencies to adopt the policy and enter into an intergovernmental agreement for shared use of the County's Ethics Adviser, Ethics Commission and Investigator General. These reforms have reduced duplication of ethics administration, streamlined the investigative process and improved the compatibility of the policy to other units of government. The County further established an online ethics training program to aid in compliance with the policy.

Employee Benefit Reforms

The County Board took action to restructure costly employee benefits in 2011, making significant changes to sick and vacation accrual policies and payouts that are **estimated to save taxpayers \$20 million over 20 years.**

Youth Home Shared Services

The County initiated a shared services agreement with Kane County in 2011, closing the DuPage County Juvenile Detention Facility, which has **saved \$2.6 million per year** since inception.

Cooperative Purchasing/Shared Services

Road Salt: The County expanded its road salt cooperative purchasing agreement to now include all nine townships and most municipalities in the County, saving thousands of dollars based on low unit pricing.

Forest Preserve District: The County partnered with the Forest Preserve District to share an Adobe Enterprise Agreement, saving \$75,000

over the three-year contract period; joint-bid crushed stone, gravel, sand, riprap and other aggregate materials, saving the Forest Preserve \$29,300; cooperatively purchase fuel; and share GIS staff and services, **saving \$126,421 annually.**

Lisle GIS: The County and the Village of Lisle formalized an agreement to share Information Technology Resources, which allows the County to perform GIS function on behalf of the village. The agreement is estimated to **save \$60,000 annually.**

Pictometry Online Cloud Sharing: The County is sharing its Pictometry Online Cloud-based web service with taxing bodies that now receive Oblique Imagery through a GIS viewer at no cost. Each entity saves approximately \$32,000 in imagery costs and \$2,000 annually for Pictometry Online service costs, for a **total savings of \$578,000.**

Consolidation

Consolidation of the Century Hill Street Lighting District: The County dissolved the district and consolidated its services into its Division of Transportation (DuDOT) in 2016. The district maintained street lights in unincorporated Naperville. The consolidation provides lighting services through DuDOT to leverage efficiencies and control annual service costs.

Dissolution of the Fair and Exposition Authority: The County sought and won approval of legislation to dissolve the DuPage Fair and Exposition Authority in 2015, which eliminated the need for a duplicative entity to oversee the annual County Fair. This dissolution eliminated professional services costs to maintain the entity, providing more resources for facility maintenance and upgrades at the fairgrounds.

Dissolution of the Fairview Fire Protection District: The County partnered with the Village of Downers Grove and the Fairview Fire Protection District residents in 2014 to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of its fire and EMS services by establishing a municipal Special Service Area (SSA). Once the SSA was operational, the County dissolved the Fairview Fire Protection District, forgave **\$107,000 in past due subsidies** and eliminated administrative overhead.



DUPAGE ACT INITIATIVE *(Continued)*

Dissolution of the Timberlake Estates Sanitary District: The County succeeded in dissolving the Timberlake Estates Sanitary District in 2013 through a majority petition signed by registered voters who reside within its boundaries and a subsequent court order. This action eliminated a defunct agency and provided justification for future legislation to ease consolidation.

Public Safety Consolidation: The Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) has taken action to consolidate Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) dispatch centers in the County, reducing the total PSAP count from 22 down to three currently. These PSAP consolidations have **saved an estimated \$9.2 million annually** and additional consolidations are anticipated.

Dissolution of the Election Commission: The County Board took action to dissolve the DuPage Election Commission into the DuPage County Clerk's Office after successfully winning approval of legislation and through majority vote in a voter referendum. The Election Commission dissolution is expected to save County taxpayers **an estimated \$300,000 annually**.

Prior to the consolidation, the Election Commission strengthened its ethics and procurement policies, partnered with the County to identify service sharing opportunities and rebid its contracts to reduce operational costs. Among its various reforms, the Commission projects: 1) a savings of \$85,000 by rebidding the Commission's legal services contract; 2) a \$178,000 reduction in printing costs, or a savings of approximately \$1.1 million over the life of the contract; 3) a savings of \$146,000 over three years by integrating the Commission's website into the County website; 4) a savings of \$402,400 over three years eliminating an IT position and sharing services with the County; and 5) a savings of \$1.1 million through polling place consolidation. Collectively, the reforms implemented by the Election Commission have generated a **projected savings of nearly \$3 million**.

Dissolution of the Highland Hills Sanitary District: The County worked closely with the Highland Hills Sanitary District to conduct a study to examine the most optimal service delivery mechanisms. The County Public Works Committee and each district held a joint committee meeting in 2016 to review the findings and work towards implementing the recommendations. **Residents overwhelmingly supported a transfer to Lake Michigan water** and dissolution of the Highland Hills Sanitary District. The County and Highland Hills signed an agreement for the transfer, and Lake Michigan water began in mid-2018. Official dissolution came on July 15, 2019.

Dissolution of the North Westmont Fire Protection District: The County worked with the Village of Westmont and the leaders of the North Westmont Fire Protection District to identify an alternative funding mechanism for fire and EMS services. District trustees worked to engage residents in the decision, and a majority of residents supported a five-year phase-in of service costs. Westmont formed a Special Service Area in 2017 and the County initiated dissolution in April 2018. Official dissolution came on June 1, 2019. The dissolution **saves district residents \$300,000 over five years in funding shortfalls and \$11,000 annually in professional services**.

Legislation

SB 541 (P.A. 97-0084): The County achieved passage of legislation in 2011 to require independent taxing bodies to furnish financial and administrative information to the County. The DuPage County Board adopted an ordinance in 2011 requesting documentation from 24 appointed agencies, including external audits; audited financial statements; Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports; annual budgets; organizational charts; salary information and personnel policies; procurement and other financial policies; ethics policies and annual meeting schedules and bylaws.

SB 494 (P.A. 98-0126): The County achieved passage of landmark legislation in 2013, which for the first time allowed the DuPage County Board to thoughtfully consider dissolution of certain County-appointed agencies when it is determined to be in the best interest of taxpayers. Subsequent legislation has expanded this DuPage model statewide for all counties to use.

HB 5123 (P.A. 100-0628): The County achieved passage of legislation in 2018 which gave the ability of DuPage County to merge the functions of the DuPage Election Commission with the DuPage County Clerk's Office. The DuPage County Board adopted the official dissolution ordinance in January 2019, thereby saving County taxpayers an estimated \$300,000 annually.

Water Commission Reforms

County Board Chairman Cronin won approval of a legislative change effective June 1, 2016, which **eliminated a \$36.5 million annual sales tax**. This change requires the Commission to run as a water utility without a sales tax subsidy. Under the leadership of Water Commission Chairman Jim Zay, the Commission has instituted reforms to its ethics and procurement policies, while acting to reduce its headcount, control labor costs and reduce overtime and electrical charges. Additionally, the Commission paid off its debt early, **saving taxpayers nearly \$10 million in interest charges**.

Transform Illinois Coalition

To advance the principles of the ACT Initiative on the regional and statewide level, County Board Chairman Cronin convened a coalition of supporters in 2015 to form Transform Illinois. The organization is a collaboration of local elected officials, civic groups and research institutions dedicated to promoting and supporting local government efficiency efforts in Illinois and improving the delivery of public services. The coalition has built support and advanced legislation promoting shared services, eliminating redundancy and discouraging the creation of new, single-purpose governments. To learn more about Transform Illinois visit www.transformillinois.org.

