Comprehensive planning has been a continuous function of Kane County government for over 50 years. Planning-related activities began when Kane County adopted a zoning ordinance in 1937 and a building ordinance in 1954. Formal county planning began in 1958 when the County Board of Supervisors created the Kane County Regional Planning Commission and a Planning Division in what was then called the Building and Zoning Department.

Today, comprehensive planning, building, zoning and subdivision review remain important functions of the County Development and Community Services Department. The department’s planning responsibilities are primarily twofold: (1) preparing and maintaining a long-range county land resource management plan; and (2) providing planning and resource management assistance to communities and individuals. In addition, the department provides staff services to the Kane County Regional Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Commission, the Economic Development Advisory Board and the Farmland Protection Commission. Another important role for the department is planning coordination with: (1) the Kane County Division of Transportation regarding the fundamental importance of the relationship between land use and transportation, the 2040 Transportation Plan, and opportunities to expand transit systems, improve walkability, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and improve energy efficiency and conservation; (2) the Kane County Health Department regarding the Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities project – Making Kane County Fit For Kids, the effort to make the health of children and adults a key factor in all phases of County planning and actions, and to implement the strategies of the Fit Kids 2020 Plan; and (3) the Kane County Facilities, Subdivision and Environmental Resource Department regarding the Kane County Water Supply Report (2009), the Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Supply/Demand Plan (2010) and water resource-driven land use decisions.

Since 1958, the Regional Planning Commission responsibilities have been defined as:

1. To cooperate in the preparation of a comprehensive plan for the county and to make recommendations to the County Board with respect to the plan.
2. To cooperate in the preparation of plans for specific improvements in accordance with the adopted comprehensive plan and make recommendations to the County Board with respect to the improvements.
3. To give aid to the municipal and county offices with the direction of projects for improvements embraced within the comprehensive plan, to further the development of these projects and generally to promote the realization of the comprehensive plan.
4. To report to the County Board on the status of the comprehensive plan and on the effectiveness of county ordinances and regulations as they relate to the comprehensive plan.
5. To transmit to the County Board reports on the important problems, conditions, and proposals pertinent to the future development of the county.

In April 1967, the Regional Planning Commission recommended a five-point general development policy, which was adopted by the County Board. This five-point general development policy statement indicated development goals to be used as a basis for countywide planning. The five adopted development goals addressed employment, people, housing, the environment, and natural resources and have been reflected in every subsequent planning report and land resource management plan leading to this 2040 Plan.

In 1970, a five-year work program was developed to provide direction to county planning efforts. These efforts resulted in the 1976 adoption of the Generalized Land Use Plan and Planning and Development Policies. The 1976 Comprehensive Plan (1976 Plan) spelled out goals and policies for future development within the Urban Corridor along the Fox River and adjacent to the outlying municipalities. It also called for a countywide open space system to protect and preserve natural areas and connect existing public land with future acquisitions.

During the next few years, the Planning Commission and County Board determined that two additional issues – the protection of farmland and guidelines for managing rural development – needed to be addressed by the county plan. In 1980, the County Board amended the 1976 Plan, stating as a matter of public policy that the best farmland should be conserved and protected from premature development. The amendment also recognized that the development of rural land could no longer be ignored and deemed that unguided rural development:

- Propagates the irreversible loss of prime farmland;
- Creates conflicts between agricultural and residential land uses; and
- Impacts the cost of providing educational, public safety, and road maintenance services.

The 1980 plan amendment encouraged new rural subdivisions on vacant parcels near existing residential developments and discouraged new subdivisions where they would be detrimental to the goal of preserving prime agricultural land. It noted that Kane County’s challenge was to balance additional rural residential development with environmental, conservation, and energy goals, as well as to guide new subdivisions into areas consistent with the county’s adopted development goals.

In 1982, these plan amendments were reinforced when the Regional Planning Commission recommended and the Kane County Board adopted the Kane County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 1982-2000 (1982 Land Use Plan). The major purpose of the 1982 Land Use Plan was to provide comprehensive planning and development
policies with a detailed plan map to guide balanced growth in the county. The 1982 Land Use Plan recognized that development pressures would intensify in coming decades and, if uncontrolled, would be detrimental to the quality of life in Kane County.

Two of the greatest accomplishments of the 1982 Land Use Plan were the preservation of agriculture and the management of conventional suburban sprawl in the western and central parts of Kane County. Prime agricultural lands outside of the Urban Corridor were indentified and development was discouraged in those areas. Medium and high density land uses were concentrated in the eastern portion of Kane County. The plan stressed the need to preserve remaining natural areas, to provide connections between open spaces, and to ensure a full range of recreational opportunities in a county wide open space system.

In 1988, the Kane County Board unanimously adopted the Historic Preservation Ordinance as an amendment to the 1982 Land Use Plan. It was the state’s first county preservation ordinance and was soon followed by the adoption of the Kane County Historic Preservation Plan in 1989. That Plan continues to this day to serve as a guide to public improvement and land use decisions as they relate to historic preservation.

Between 1982 and 1994, the county initiated a substantial number of land use planning and resource management related documents listed in Appendix A. At least half of these documents addressed resource and environmental topics such as watersheds, wildlife, and natural areas. Other publications include village land use plans and historic preservation reports.

On September 23, 1985, Illinois adopted the Local Land Resource Management Planning Act, Illinois State Statutes, Chapter 50 ILCS 805. This important legislative initiative added strength to the ability of counties and municipalities to engage in intergovernmental planning activities and to develop joint land resource management plans that address critical land and water resource issues. The Land Resource Management Planning Act states: “It is the purpose of this Act to encourage municipalities and counties to protect the land, air, water, natural resources and environment of the State and to encourage the use of such resources in a manner which is socially and economically desirable through the adoption of joint or compatible Local Land Resource Management Plans.”

As Kane County entered the 1990’s, growth pressures increased and agricultural preservation, open space acquisition, growth management, environmental protection, and intergovernmental cooperation continued to be viewed as critical issues. As a result, the County Board recognized the need to review the 1982 Land Use Plan and directed the Planning Commission to address the challenges of the future by utilizing the Land Resource Management Plan Act authority.

In February of 1994, the County Board adopted by unanimous vote a Conceptual Land Use Strategy for Kane County recommended by the Planning Commission. With the adoption of the 2020 Strategy, the County Board took an important step to address
growth challenges by utilizing the Land Resource Management Planning Act authority. The strategy served as a basic policy guide to the Regional Planning Commission and Development Department staff in working towards the completion of the 2020 Land Resource Management Plan. The strategy findings were as follows:

1. For the purpose of comprehensive planning, Kane County is comprised of three distinct land use strategy areas: the Urban Corridor, the Critical Growth Area, and the Agricultural/Rural Village Area.
2. Different intensities and types of development are appropriate for each area.
3. Open space protection and water resource management must be the foundation of land use planning.
4. Balanced development should be encouraged.
5. Agriculture must continue to be a desired land use.
6. A strong relationship must exist between land use and transportation planning.
7. Eight Partnership Planning Areas (PPAs) should be established to facilitate cooperative planning and project review with the municipalities.

On June 11, 1996, the Kane County Board unanimously adopted the Kane County 2020 Land Resource Management Plan (2020 Plan) as recommended by the Commission. The 2020 Plan went beyond conventional land use planning by aggressively addressing the issues of quality of life, water resource management, open space preservation, and environmental protection. Based on the adopted 2020 Strategy, the 2020 Plan established a strong link between county and municipal land use planning. Subsequent planning successes stemming from the 2020 Plan include the Stormwater Management Plan, the Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Program, the Rustic Roads program, and the Economic Development program.

A major implementation component of the 2020 Plan was the establishment of eight Planning Partnership Areas (PPAs). Recognizing that the majority of land use decisions were made by the municipalities, the PPAs were used to develop a more effective working relationship between the county and the municipalities. Over the years, the county’s Regional Planning Commission hosted several joint planning commission meetings in each PPA. The purpose of the meetings was to share information, to identify common goals, and to develop a shared vision for cooperatively managing land resources in a growing and developing Kane County.

As part of the 2020 Planning Program, the county developed a five year series of "Making it Work" workshops. The purpose of each workshop was to provide the municipalities with detailed planning related material, as well as tools for managing growth and protecting natural resources. Including local and national speakers, the workshops addressed the topics of conservation design (1999), land use and transportation (2000), greenways and stormwater (2001), water supply (2002), and smart growth (2003).

In recognition of its merit and success, the 2020 Plan received a number of awards from a variety of groups including The Landmark Preservation Council of Illinois, the Illinois
Chapter of the American Planning Association, and the American Institute of Architects. More importantly, the 2020 Plan served as an effective statement of County Board policy and demonstrated how the county and municipalities could work together to achieve common goals.

Text Box:

**KANE COUNTY’S PLANNING BENCHMARKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Zoning Ordinance adopted</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Building Ordinance adopted</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Creation of the Regional Planning Commission and the Planning Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Five-point general development policy recommended by the Commission – addressed issues of employment, people, housing, the environment, and natural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td><em>Generalized Land Use Plan</em> and planning and development policies adopted – county’s first comprehensive plan called out goals and policies for future development within the Urban Corridor along the Fox River and adjacent to municipalities and called for a countywide open space system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1976 Plan Amendment – encouraged new rural subdivisions toward existing residential developments and discouraged new rural subdivisions where they would be detrimental to the goal of preserving prime agricultural land.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td><em>Kane County Comprehensive Plan 1982-2000</em> adopted – comprehensive plan/map and development policies were provided to guide balanced growth in the county</td>
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<td>1988/9</td>
<td>Historic Preservation Ordinance and Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2020 Conceptual Land Use Strategy adopted by the County Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td><em>2020 Land Resource Management Plan</em> – three distinct land use strategy areas were introduced</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>2030 Conceptual Land Use Strategy adopted by the County Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td><em>2030 Land Resource Management Plan</em> and <em>2030 Transportation Plan</em> – adopted concurrently; first time a county in IL addressed land use and transportation issues and challenges jointly.</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>2030 Plan Amendment – A <em>Protected Agriculture – Limited Development</em> land use category was added that allows for a unique conservation development in a working farm setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2040 Conceptual Land Use Strategy adopted by the County Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Adoption of 2040 Plan – emphasize Land Use, Transportation, Health partnership</td>
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Between 1996 and 2004, the county initiated additional land resource planning and growth management programs stemming from the 2020 Plan. Examples included developing village comprehensive plans, purchasing 1,400 acres in agricultural development rights, creating a new Land Evaluation and Site Assessment for Kane County, establishing a county CDBG program, initiating a new series of "Priority Places" workshops (2004), and designating the county's first Rustic Road.

As Kane County entered the 21st century, growth pressures increased and agricultural preservation, open space protections, growth management, traffic congestion, water resource planning and intergovernmental cooperation continued to be viewed as critical issues. Appropriately, the County Board recognized the need to review the 2020 Plan and initiate preparation of the 2030 Plan to address the challenges facing the county and municipalities.

On February 11, 2003, the Kane County Board unanimously approved the 2030 Conceptual Land Use Strategy as presented by the Regional Planning Commission. Building upon the principles of the 2020 Plan, land use policies were re-examined and fine-tuned in light of changing demographics, changes in state and federal policies, major infrastructure improvements, major shifts in the regional employment base, and local public policy and land use decisions. The 2030 Conceptual Land Use Strategy affirmed that for the purpose of comprehensive planning the county is comprised of three distinct land use strategy areas: the Urban Corridor Area, the Critical Growth Area, and the Agricultural/Rural Village Area. In addition, each land use strategy area was assigned a specific theme:

- Renaissance - Urban Corridor
- Refinement - Critical Growth
- Recommitment - Agricultural/Rural Village

The 2030 Conceptual Land Use Strategy further directed the Regional Planning Commission to: (1) complete a draft 2030 Land Resource Management Plan, and (2) prepare a process for public review of the draft plan. In May 2003, the Planning Commission released the report "Kane County Land Resource Management Plan, 2030, Planning for Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities". That report identified the need for a 2030 Plan, reviewed the plan strategy, identified the 10 recommendations for the 2030 Plan, and outlined a proposed public review process.

During the summer of 2003, the Planning Commission presented that report in a series of public meetings in the Planning Partnership Areas (PPAs). The purpose of those meetings was to communicate to citizens and public officials the direction Kane County was taking towards preparation of a 2030 Plan. These public meetings were attended by hundreds of concerned citizens and officials, many voicing questions and concerns about the challenges and issues facing Kane County. For example:

- Traffic is already terrible, how can we handle more cars?
- How will new development impact my water well?
Our schools are already overcrowded; we need more impact fees.
There’s not enough open space; we need more soccer fields.
The flooding in my backyard keeps getting worse.
What can be done to preserve the character of our community?
We need housing for our retired parents so they can live closer to their grandchildren.

These public meetings confirmed the need for Kane County to proceed from the Conceptual Strategy to a more detailed Land Resource Management Plan replacing the highly effective, but out of date 2020 Plan.

The next step in the planning program was the completion of "Renaissance of the Urban Corridor", a report highlighting the importance of the historic Urban Corridor along the Fox River and the opportunities for downtown revitalization, neighborhood preservation, redevelopment and infill development. The publication spotlighted exemplary plans, projects and policies in the Urban Corridor that were at the forefront of the "renaissance", and how those plans and projects demonstrated the 10 Smart Growth Principles. The response to the report from the cities and villages affirmed the Renaissance theme and substantiated the infill, redevelopment and revitalization opportunities in the greenfields, greyfields, and brownfields along the Fox River and Randall Road.

After that, the planning process produced "Recommitment, Preserving Farmland and Agricultural in Kane County," a report completed early in 2004 and focusing on preserving farmland from premature conversion to other land uses. The theme of "recommitment" reflected a desire, a dedication to aggressively pursue farmland preservation and protection through land planning and zoning initiatives, the Kane County Farmland Preservation Program and the Illinois Farmland Preservation Act, and policy decisions regarding public infrastructure investments.

The "Recommitment" report introduced the slogan "50-50-50" for the conceptual land use strategy map. The “50-50-50” slogan reinforced the land use strategy for 2030: Kane County can preserve 50% of the total area in farmland and open space, but only if 50% of the projected population remains in the Urban Corridor and Critical Growth Area. Also reported was the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system for determining the quality and suitability of land for agricultural economic viability. In addition, the report presented the status of another important "recommitment", the Kane County Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and the Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.

The Renaissance and Recommitment Reports served as bookends for the final report in the planning series, "Refinement, Challenges for the Critical Growth Area". The "Refinement" report consisted: a review of the primary issues and challenges for the Critical Growth Area, the 50-50-50 Land Use Strategy endorsed by the Commission; and a recap of the opportunities for implementing the 10 Smart Growth Principles in the "Priority Places" of the Critical Growth Area. With the completion of that report the
Regional Planning Commission had prepared what would serve as a solid foundation for proceeding to finalize and recommend the **2030 Land Resource Management Plan**.

Adopted unanimously by the County Board in 2004, the **2030 Land Resource Management Plan, Planning for Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities (2030 Plan)** was a product of all of these preceding plans and efforts. The **2030 Plan** bolstered the county's commitment to water resource management, open space preservation, environmental protection, and intergovernmental cooperation. In addition, it recognized the fundamental importance of the relationship between land use and transportation and the opportunity to plan for expanded transit systems, improved walkability, reduced vehicle miles traveled and improved energy efficiency and conservation. The **2030 Plan** also introduced the three challenges: Transportation, Water Resources, and Health, to meet the changes of a growing county. Adopted concurrently, the **2030 Land Resource Management Plan** and the **2030 Transportation Plan (2030 Plans)** represented the first time in Illinois that a county addressed land use and transportation issues and challenges as a package.

Since adoption in 2004, the **2030 Plans** have proven to be an effective statement of Kane County public policy on issues related to community development, land and water resource management, open space protection, farmland preservation, transit improvements, highway and intersection investments, and expanded bicycling and improved walkability.

The **2030 Plans** have been well received by the citizens of Kane County, have had strong County Board support, have been used effectively by the Planning Commission to articulate the need for cooperative planning initiatives, and have been recognized at regional, state, and national levels as effective county planning documents addressing sensible, managed growth. But with that success, there was also recognition by the Planning Commission and the County Board that the **2030 Plan** was a dynamic, not static, statement of public policy. There was a clear commitment that it be "reviewed every five years, with citizen input, in light of changing demographics, changing in local, state or federal policies, major infrastructure improvements, public policy decisions, and economic and employment activities" (2030 Plan, p. 157). The review and update process was initiated in November, 2008, which also marked the 50th anniversary of the Kane County Regional Planning Commission being created by the County Board, and five years after the Commission submitted to the Board the recommendations of the 2030 Conceptual Land Use Strategy and Map.

Two major factors in the Planning Commission's review of the **2030 Plan** and extending out another decade were the Census Bureau's 2010 estimates of population, households and employment; and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) 2040 projections of population, households, and employment. The challenge to the Commission was how best to plan, encourage, facilitate and design more compact, mixed use development for a 2040 Kane County with about 270,000 more people, approximately 95,000 additional households and an estimated 145,000 more jobs spread across 30 municipalities and the large unincorporated area (Figure 1).
Other review factors included municipal annexations and approved development plans, major open space acquisitions, new municipal incorporations, i.e., Villages of Campton Hills, Big Rock, and Kaneville, updates and revisions to municipal plans, the Route 47 Corridor Study, the Randall Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study, the Making Kane County Fit For Kids project and the current recession, housing foreclosures, record unemployment, the collapse of the housing boom and other changes and trends.

The Commission also reviewed the three strategy areas of the 2030 Plan and the themes assigned to each. They considered the Randall Road BRT Project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and other KDOT Transit initiatives. The Commission identified success of the Farmland Preservation Program and the adoption of the Protected Agriculture – Limited Development amendment to the 2030 Plan as important update factors. The Commission reviewed the citizen input since 2004 from the “Priority Places” workshop series. Especially important to the update was the input and information from the last in that series, the May 8, 2009 workshop entitled “Smart Growth is Healthy Living” which focused on bringing the planning, transportation and health communities together to focus on changing the built environment to support healthy eating and active living.
And finally, Commission members participated in the Fit for Kids Project launched April 7, 2008, and the Leadership Summit which provided participants with an in-depth briefing on the childhood obesity epidemic and called for a sustained, county-wide mobilization through implementation of the following strategic action principles:

1. Develop land use, planning and other public policies that foster and support physical activity for all our communities;
2. Assure that fresh fruits and vegetables are affordable and accessible to all families in our communities;
3. Support a culture of wellness and health promotion in our workplaces, schools, homes, communities and other institutions;
4. Provide parents and children with reliable, up-to-date information in multiple settings regarding healthy physical activity and eating habits.

After almost two years of reviewing and analyzing the 2030 Plan the Kane County Regional Planning Commission submitted to the County Board their report, “2040 Conceptual Land Use Strategy, Then (1840), Now (2010), and Tomorrow (2040), Two Hundred Years of Settlement, Development, Preservation and Planning for a Safe, Healthy and Livable Kane County”. On October 12, 2010, the Kane County Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 10-297, which adopted the above referenced report and directed the Kane County Regional Planning Commission to proceed with the preparation of a 2040 Land Resource Management Plan.

Two statements from that Commission report bear repeating. First, “The Commission is proud of its previous role in preparing and recommending both the 2020 and 2030 Plans to the County Board and now accepts the challenge and responsibility of expanding the county planning horizon another decade and completing the 2040 Plan”. And, “We anticipate recommending to the County Board a 2040 Plan that will likely be the first in Illinois to mold the three disciples, transportation, health and land use planning into a single master plan”.

This 2040 Plan is the product of a unique convergence of three planning processes: transportation, health, and land use, within a comprehensive, countywide planning program supported by the Kane County Board (Figure 2). It builds on the successes of the past to meet the challenges of the future and is a powerful public statement of planning for a safe, healthy, and livable Kane County.
Figure 2: