



2026 Board Priorities – First Quarter Update

Board Goal	Initiative	Division or Office	Update	Status
Excellence in Public Service Innovate and Collaborate	Partner well with cities and counties. Consider intersections among Dakota 911, Emergency Management, and Radio Services.	Central Operations Division	County leadership was provided an overview of the 800Mhz system in place in Dakota County in February from Radio Services and Risk Management staff. Risk Management will meet with Dakota 911 leadership to review potential intersections of work, planning, budgeting and more in early second quarter of 2026.	Yellow
Excellence in Public Service Innovate and Collaborate	Collaborate with Community Development Agency (CDA) and partners on development.	Central Operations Division	The County continues to work with our city partners and the CDA on the County's role in development.	Yellow
Excellence in Public Service Community Engagement	Design and implement new website.	Communications	Artech, our development vendor, is almost code complete. This will allow project staff to start the migration phase of the project, moving all our current web content to the new platform.	Green

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Excellence in Public Service Community Engagement	Provide more online/self service options in our services using artificial intelligence.	Central Operations Division	A committee of staff from across the county drafted an artificial intelligence (AI) policy that will be presented to senior leadership in April 2026. Staff in IT have secured a server for proof of concept AI work. An update to the Board on Dakota County AI initiatives and the policy is being planned for later in 2026.	Yellow
Excellence in Public Service Community Engagement	Create more financial and budget engagement (ex. Interactive Budget Books, additional Budget Open House events).	Central Operations Division	The 2027 budget development process calendar includes four open houses spread across multiple locations around the county that will provide opportunities for members of the public to engage with staff and Board members on the County's budget and finances. Staff are exploring options within existing software solutions for creating a web-based budget book to increase accessibility.	Yellow
Excellence in Public Service Dependable and Modern Infrastructure	Fair, efficient, and accurate 2026 elections.	Public Services and Revenue Division	The Elections Department successfully conducted the March township elections on March 10, 2026. Will continue to work with the Office of the Secretary of State, cities and townships, and school districts to plan and prepare for the rest of the year's busy activities.	Green
Excellence in Public Service Hire and Retain Excellent Staff	Confirm current compensation strategy and desired outcomes.	Human Resources	Human Resources staff intends to meet with the Board in May in closed session to discuss labor bargaining strategy, which will include compensation and economic bargaining authority.	Yellow

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Excellence in Public Service Hire and Retain Excellent Staff	Continue to assess and implement IDEA strategies.	Human Resources	Continued work in support of the County's DEI goals, including: - Launching the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Network as an online communication forum for employees across the county to share updates, announcements, resources, and event information related to IDEA topics and initiatives within the county and the community. - Offering "Managing Bias in the Hiring Process" training. - Implementing changes to the hiring process to remove candidate's personally identifiable to reduce unconscious bias in the hiring process - Recognizing, celebrate and promote organizational awareness in conjunction with, among other things, Martin Luther King Day, Black History month and Women's History month	Green
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Maintain overall facilities rating at fair and plan to return to good based on Facility Condition Index (FCI)	Physical Development Division	Reviewed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects and released funds where available. Shifted available funding to the most critical items to maintain facility conditions. The 2026 - 2030 CIP projects were adopted to reflect the 5-year strategic plan to maintain Facility Condition Index of .25 (Fair). Several projects have started design in the first quarter. Continue to refine CIP process and project lists for 2027 Budget.	Green

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Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Collaborate with other counties to ensure interests are adequately represented.	Office of the County Manager	Collaborative activities through Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) District X and Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) continue to meet this goal in the first quarter of 2026.	Green
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Develop 5-year financial plan – eliminate the structural deficit.	Central Operations Division	The preliminary levy forecast for 2027 includes elimination of the County's structural deficit. The preliminary five-year forecast incorporates balancing the budget in 2027 and each year moving forward.	Yellow
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Develop 5-year financial plan – increase reserves to be within the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) range (35% - 50%).	Central Operations Division	The County will be out of compliance with the 20% fund balance policy as of December 31, 2025. The five-year financial management plan incorporates a budget approach that would require fully funding personnel costs, which if implemented, would see the County return to near 20% fund balance by the end of 2031. Moving into the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) recommended range will be achieved over a longer time horizon (5-10 years).	Yellow

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Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Develop 5-year financial plan – provide reliable funding for service and program priorities of the Board.	Central Operations Division	On March 10, Finance and Physical Development staff presented options to increase non-levy funding sources to support both operations and capital expenditures. The County is analyzing options for sustainable Parks funding by reviewing the cost recovery model. Additionally, County staff are performing a comprehensive review of the County's fee schedule to determine areas where the County can increase fees to support operations.	Yellow
Excellence in Public Service Responsible Taxes and Sound Stewardship of Resources	Develop 5-year financial plan – prepare for and implement state and federal funding cuts.	Central Operations Division	Finance staff are monitoring the situation at the state legislature to see if there will be any impacts on the County from the 2026 legislative session. Additionally, Finance staff are regularly reviewing federal government actions on County funding sources. Finance and department staff are regularly updating the levy forecast whenever new information arises concerning the cost impacts that are being shifted onto the County as a result of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The preliminary five-year levy forecast incorporates \$12 million of additional levy impacts in 2027-2029 from federal legislation.	Yellow
Heathy Environment with Quality Natural Resources Energy Efficiency/Sustainability	Complete Byllseby Dam Turbines.	Physical Development Division	Dry commissioning of the turbines and generators is complete as of February 12, 2026. Wet commissioning was also started and is expected to be complete in the second quarter.	Green

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Heathy Environment with Quality Natural Resources Energy Efficiency/Sustainability	Audit current energy and emission processes to determine opportunities.	Physical Development Division	Continued data collection for the three inventories (County operations emissions, County operations reductions and offsets, and countywide reductions and offsets) and performed data entry and reconciliation analysis on building energy data in the B3 benchmarking software. Initiated analysis, trend identification, and reporting on countywide emissions from 2005 to 2022 (last full year of data), using data collected and compiled by the Metropolitan Council. Data collection continues for planned August 18, 2026 presentation to the Physical Development Committee (PDC).	Green
Heathy Environment with Quality Natural Resources Protect and Maintain Natural Resources	Implement new Solid Waste Management Plan.	Physical Development Division	Discussed with city governments on January 23 plans to update county ordinance to require haulers provide organics collection to residential customers in suburban areas. Engaged city staff for input, conducted regional research for cities interested in BMP organics collection approaches.	Green
Heathy Environment with Quality Natural Resources Protect and Maintain Natural Resources	Implement 2050 Parks System Plan.	Physical Development Division	The Vision Plan implementation is underway, and the "next steps" section have a number of items that are moving forward and directly impacting the updates to all three Parks operational plans (Greenways Plan, Natural Systems Plan, and Visitor Services Plan).	Green

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Heathy Environment with Quality Natural Resources Create Access to Opportunities	Update Parks Operational Plans.	Physical Development Division	The Natural Systems Plan update is on schedule and is being done in-house with Dakota County Planning staff. Draft goals have been presented at both the Dakota County Planning Commission and Physical Development Committee (PDC). Staff returned to the Dakota County Planning Commission in March and presented to the Township Officers Meeting on Saturday, March 14.	Green
Successful Place for Business and Jobs Dependable and modern infrastructure and government systems	Deliver 2026 CIP projects on time and in budget.	Physical Development Division	a. The Wentworth Library will open on May 6, 2026 at 9 a.m. with an opening celebration that evening from 5:30-7:30 p.m. b. Recycling Zone Plus agreements continue to be signed. Excavating equipment is on site for spring construction start and the ground breaking is tentatively scheduled for late April. c. The Burnhaven Library closed for renovation on March 23, 2026. The temporary Burnhaven Library on the second floor of Burnsville Center will open on April 1, 2026. d. Spring Lake Park improvements continue with the ongoing construction of the Fischer Trailhead and the design of the Mississippi River Access projects.	Green

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Thriving People Care for Vulnerable People	Deliver public assistance benefits within State required timelines.	Community Services Division	Timeliness of all applications is in general improving. For cash, timeliness increased from 63% in July to 94% in October and regular SNAP applications also increased to 80%. Disruptions due to the federal shutdown as well as fewer working days in November have caused some volatility in these numbers. Also progressing on Medical Assistance (MA) renewals with a slight increase in backlog at the end of the year, which is typical to the seasonality of renewals. Finishing work with Clarity Solutions on improved workflows and efficient organizational structure.	Yellow
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable People	Complete MNChoices Assessment withing State required timelines.	Community Services Division	Process efficiencies, utilization of technology, and additional staffing has allowed the Community Living Services (CLS) MnCHOICES Intake queue to steadily decrease from 1,619 inquiries in the queue waiting from 7+ months to 815 inquiries, now waiting five months. The tracking of 300+ new inquiries each month and management of staff turnover and training will inform capacity moving forward.	Green
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable People	Develop more youth placement options and alternatives to placement options (with metro collaboration).	Community Services Division	Regional Steering Committee meeting quarterly. Three subgroups have been developed: Prevention, Placement, and Legislative. Scott County asking for bonding money for a new JAF located in Shakopee.	Green

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Thriving People Care for Vulnerable People	Review and refine the Housing Business Plan.	Community Services Division	Monthly reports going to County Board with shelter statistics. Quarterly report going to County Board with statistics from all Community Service housing programs. Role of Permanent Supportive Housing in the Housing Business Plan will be reviewed later in the year.	Green
Thriving People Care for Vulnerable People	Pilot existing .5 full-time employee (FTE) social worker stationed at Wentworth Library.	Public Services and Revenue Division	The Library and Social Services developed a job description for a Library Social Worker and determined the position would be a part of Social Services' Adult Intake team. Both departments signed an agreement outlining roles and responsibilities to support this new position. Human Resources is reviewing a request for current Library FTE to be reclassified as a .5 FTE Library Social Worker.	Green
Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-Being	Facilitate development of Community Resources Center(s).	Community Services Division	Implementation planning continues. The Advisory Council was recruited, selected, and oriented. They convened for the first time in January and continue to meet monthly. Community Resource Centers (CRCs) of Dakota County logo was adopted, and a website is in progress. Evaluation planning is underway, as are preparations to post Navigator positions.	Green
Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-Being	Investigate and pursue health care and access for uninsured or under-insured residents.	Community Services Division	In process of developing a workplan and committee to provide guidance for approach to meeting access needs in Dakota County. Included advocacy for healthcare access at the state level while meeting with local legislators during Local Public Health Association Day at the Capitol.	Green

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Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-Being	Complete an assessment of healthcare model in jail.	Central Operations Division and Sheriff's Office	Utilizing Enterprise Risk Management, staff analyzed the risks and benefits of the various means of delivering healthcare in the jail. Staff provided an update and suggested course of action for consideration at the March 3 General Government and Policy (GGP) Committee meeting. Staff moving ahead with evaluating the costs and capabilities of creating a County staffed health unit as recommended in the GGP update.	Yellow
-Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-Being	Improve safety at high crash rate locations based on the MN Dept of Transportation (MnDOT) Crash Rate Index.	Physical Development Division	Crash Rate Index Update conducted at March 10, 2026 Physical Development Committee (PDC) meeting.	Green
Thriving People Community Safety, Health and Well-Being	Improve safety for pedestrian and bicyclists based on high and medium priority County Highway Pedestrian and Bicycle Gaps.	Physical Development Division	Update on Priority Ped and Bike Gaps planned for June 16, 2026 Physical Development Committee (PDC) meeting. Maps being updated and information gathered for inclusion in future Capital Improvement Program (CIP) discussions.	Green

Board Goal	Initiative	Division or Office	Update	Status
Thriving People Welcoming and Responsive Services for All People	Identify program and services areas with the highest disparities for study and potential future action. a. Continue and maintain Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliance program. b. Prepare for implementation of the African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Act.	Physical Development Division and Community Services	Work is underway to identify and analyze Dakota County disparity data. a. Special focus placed on digital accessibility efforts with the upcoming April 24, 2026 digital accessibility requirements. This includes putting several tools in place, reviewing the website, third-party tools, and online documents, and training for staff. b. Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA) data workgroup developed and meeting monthly. Coordination with Hennepin and Ramsey counties planned and scheduled for second quarter to review system decision points and data tracking.	Green
Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Review Comprehensive Plan requirements and provide direction on scope and extent of plan update.	Physical Development Division	Guidance on scope of the Comprehensive Plan was sought at the March 10, 2026 Physical Development Committee (PDC) meeting.	Green

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Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Implement the Library Strategic Plan.	Public Services and Revenue Division	A goal in the library’s strategic plan is to “increase awareness about the library’s many offerings.” In collaboration with Communications, this quarter’s marketing efforts included a Beyond the Books feature article in the Dakota County Newsletter, a campaign on the library’s digital app, and promotion of other beyond books services across existing channels. The library responded to community needs during Operation Metro Surge. The library shared 400 books, activities, and resources with Neighbors, Inc., 360 Communities, The Open-Door Pantry, and Project Access to go to youth whose families are seeking assistance, many who were afraid to send their children to school during increased immigration enforcement. Library spaces also contributed to the effort as community members are using library meeting rooms and lobbies to coordinate food drives.	Green

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Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Advance the Arts Blueprint.	Public Services and Revenue Division	Drafted plan mission, vision, guiding principles and future opportunities with feedback from staff and Public Advisory Committee. Plan to seek Board feedback at the April 7 General Government and Policy Committee meeting (GGP). Tentative schedule and purpose for further Board presentations: June 9 (GGP) - Review and seek approval for draft release for public review. Public review from Mid-June through July. Sept 1 (GGP) - Consider adoption Sept 22 – Adoption (contingent on GGP)	Green
Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Update Parks Operations Plans – Greenways Plan.	Physical Development Division	The Greenways Project Manager issued a request for proposals (RFP) for consultant services and has completed interviews. The Board approved a contract on March 3.	Green
Thriving People Create Access to Opportunities	Update Parks Operations Plans – Parks Visitor Services Plan	Physical Development Division	Due to workload within the Planning Department on other plans for Parks, the request for proposals (RFP) for consultant services will be sent out later in the year. The planning process will still kick-off within the year.	Green