



## **Strategic Plan**

### **Beginning July 1, 2019 (FY 2020) and ending June 30, 2022 (FY 2022)**

#### **Introduction**

From its inception in 1999, the purpose of the McHenry County Conservation Foundation has been to lead efforts to encourage and solicit private gifts that develop, support, and enhance the District's conservation interests and programs. Today, incorporated as an Illinois nonprofit corporation and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt public charity, the McHenry County Conservation Foundation operates separately and distinctly from the McHenry County Conservation District, and is led by an executive director working in cooperation with the Foundation Board of Directors and the District staff.

#### **Vision**

McHenry County's public open space, natural resources, water, and wildlife are preserved and restored to benefit our way of life and that of future generations.

#### **Mission**

To support, sustain, and advance the public conservation, education, and recreation programs of the McHenry County Conservation District and its partners.

In order to further this mission, the Foundation receives gifts made in support of the McHenry County Conservation District, manages investments established to further the District's work, and ensures that gift funds are kept separate from county and state funds and used consistent with donor intent. In doing so, the Foundation strives to promote, nurture and expand the culture of support for the McHenry County Conservation District.

#### **Values**

The McHenry County Conservation Foundation is dedicated to consistently honoring its commitments to partners, donors, and the public. It strives to define itself and its action based on the following core values:

1. Commitment to Conservation
2. Fiscal Responsibility
3. Transparency
4. Donor Focus
5. Community Engagement
6. Flexibility

## McHenry County Conservation Foundation Strategic Plan

On June 11, 2019, the McHenry County Conservation Foundation Board of Directors approved the Foundation's three-year strategic plan, with implementation beginning July 1, 2019. By focusing on these four priorities through June 2022, the Foundation expects to accomplish its mission of generating increased philanthropic support to advance the work of the McHenry County Conservation District.

### Strategic Priority 1: Develop and Implement a Model that Enhances Fundraising Efforts

**Strategic Commitment:** The Foundation aims to increase contributions that support the overall goals and mission of the District and ensure that these commitments exceed the Foundation's annual operating budget.

#### Strategic Goals

- Grow Annual Giving by \$100,000: Develop and implement programs that increase annual gifts from current Foundation donors, current District donors, District volunteers, District and Foundation current and former board members, and new audiences. Transform annual givers to monthly givers and increase recurring gifts from first time donors.
- Grow Leadership Giving (\$1K or above) by 40%: Identify individuals who are already engaged with the District and Foundation who have the capacity to give at an increased level and steward them appropriately.
- Develop and Implement Planned Giving Program: Discover those supporters of the Foundation and the District who have already made a planned gift and encourage other supporters to do the same.
- Develop and Implement Tribute Giving Program: Create a program that allows donors to make meaningful tribute gifts at a variety of levels.
- Strategically Apply for Grant Funding: Work with the District to apply for grant funding opportunities that might otherwise go unrealized.
- Launch *Join the Journey* Endowment Campaign: Launch a campaign focused on building a \$1M stewardship endowment that will fund the establishment and maintenance of the District's natural areas in perpetuity.
- Identify and Connect with Prospective Donors: Work to expand the base of support by identifying and reaching out to new, prospective donors with a capacity to give at a leadership level.
- Honor Donor's Intended Gift Designations: Ensure that use of donor funds directly align with donor intent at all times. Provide appropriate stewardship for all gifts, individualized stewardship for gifts at a leadership level.

### Strategic Priority 2: Increase Public Perception and Awareness

**Strategic Commitment:** The Foundation's staff and Board of Directors will advocate on the behalf of the Foundation and the District by serving as representatives who reinforce and promote the mission, vision, and values of both entities at both District and appropriate external events.

#### Strategic Goals

- Enhance the Foundation's Image: Work with the District Marketing Department and/or an external marketing firm to create cohesive and comprehensive branding, marketing, and communications strategies critical to successful fundraising.

- Expand Participation in District Programs: Increase attendance of Foundation representatives at District engagements.
- Expand Participation in External Programs: Foundation employees and directors will serve as agents of the Foundation at functions hosted by external agencies, where attendance is appropriate.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Develop and Diversify the Board of Directors**

**Strategic Commitment:** Through board leadership, ensure continued and increased success by maintaining a highly skilled, diverse, engaged, and committed Board of Directors.

#### **Strategic Goals**

- Recruit Directors who can Accomplish Primary Fundraising Goal: The Board of Directors—with the help of Foundation staff, District staff, and District trustees—will recruit conservation-minded individuals who have demonstrated understanding of and commitment to philanthropy and/or have ties to individuals who have the capacity to make or generate significant gifts.
- Increase Board Diversity: The recruitment and selection of new directors will reflect the priority to consider diversity in all forms and selected individuals should bring a broad range of perspective, experiences, and skill sets to the board.
- Set Expectation of Director Giving: Directors are expected to demonstrate fundraising leadership through investing their personal philanthropy in the Foundation while recognizing that individual circumstances which affect giving levels vary widely.
- Increase Board Education Opportunities: In order to ensure that the Board of Directors continues to implement board best practices and hone their technical skills, the board will be encouraged to participate in trainings that support them in their critical roles.

### **Strategic Priority 4: Strengthen and Enhance Partnership with the District**

**Strategic Commitment:** The Foundation will work cooperatively with District employees and the Board of Trustees to ensure that both achieve their missions.

#### **Strategic Goals**

- Integrate Fundraising Efforts: Work with the District to ensure fundraising efforts continue to be coordinated and managed appropriately and donor intent is honored.
- Develop and Maintain Ongoing Project List: Work with the District to develop and maintain a list of projects that require alternative funding source to be realized.
- Integrate Public Engagement Efforts: Where appropriate, work with the District to co-brand public engagement opportunities.
- Integrate Marketing Efforts: Where appropriate, work with the District to co-brand marketing efforts and ensure that messaging is cohesive.

### **Foundation Strategic Plan Commitment**

The Foundation believes that by focusing on these strategic priorities it will be able to enhance and strengthen the work of the District and successfully support its efforts to preserve, restore, and manage natural areas and open spaces for their intrinsic value and for the benefits to present and future generations. The Executive Director of the Foundation and the Board of Directors will review progress on this strategic plan regularly and make appropriate revisions when necessary.