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Date: Jan. 10, 2017
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Jan. 10, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County will ask MnDOT to do speed studies on 9 county road segments

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will request that the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) perform a speed study on nine segments of county roadways to determine the reasonable and safe speed limit on the roadways.

The County Board approved the request Jan. 10.

According to state law, the authority to determine speed limits on a county highway resides with MnDOT. It is normal procedure to request a speed study after a roadway has undergone major changes, such as reconstruction, expansion, or significant changes to the roadside character or access.

Washington County will request traffic studies to determine the reasonable and safe speed limits on:

- County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 5, from Highway 96 to CSAH 11 in Stillwater Township;
- CSAH 10, from Highway 120 to Heron Avenue North in Oakdale;
- CSAH 12, from CSAH 15 to CSAH 5 in Stillwater and Stillwater Township;
- CSAH 13, from CSAH 10 to CSAH 6 in Lake Elmo;
- CSAH 15, from CSAH 12 to Highway 96 in Grant and Stillwater;
- CSAH 21, from CSAH 14 (North Junction) to Highway 95 in Bayport and Oak Park Heights;
- CSAH 23, from CSAH 21 to CSAH 24 in Oak Park Heights;
- CSAH 26, from CSAH 23 to CSAH 24 in Oak Park Heights; and

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- County Road 57, from CSAH 7 to north of 130th Street North in Hugo.

State law establishes several standard speed limits, such as 30 miles per hour (mph) in urban districts, 55 mph on highways, and 70 mph on rural interstate highways. To post a different limit requires the authorization of the Commissioner of MnDOT. Speed studies are typically requested when a roadway's character has changed, such as road widening, changes in sight lines, or changes in intersection spacing. Changing the posted speed limit has not been shown to change the prevailing speeds of drivers, but limits can affect the uniformity of speed and the number of conflicts between vehicles, such as passing, tailgating, and lane changing. A properly set speed limit maximizes the uniformity of traffic speeds and minimizes the number of traffic conflicts.

The MnDOT commissioner will determine the appropriate speed limits based on an "Engineering and Traffic Investigation" as required by state law, by reviewing the characteristics of the roadway and observing vehicle speeds under ideal conditions, such that the speed limit is the maximum appropriate speed for the roadway. State law requires that drivers never drive at a speed greater than is reasonable for the conditions, such as snow, nighttime, or heavy traffic, even if the maximum reasonable speed under those conditions is lower than the posted speed limit.

The results of the speed study can take up to a year to be completed and a new limit authorized. The county is required to abide by the results of the study and install any applicable signs.

Contact: Joe Gustafson, Traffic Engineer, 651-430-4351

Sheriff's Office receives gift from Afton Apple Orchard

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will receive a donation of \$5,649 from Afton Apple Orchard, after the County Board accepted the gift Jan. 10.

Afton Apple Orchard raised \$5,649 at its fall corn maze to donate to the Washington County Sheriff's Office. Family owners Cindy Femling and Sarah Parkos presented the gift. Parkos said that the orchard has been in business 28 years, and created the corn maze 15 years ago. The family is also very aware of the value of first responders in the county, and the care that they provide to the community. Afton Orchard has hosted public safety events at the orchard to promote the work of first responders in the community. In all, the orchard will donate about \$21,000 to local first responders this year.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office proceeds will go towards community engagement efforts, such as Coffee with a Cop, Fishing with a Cop, National Night Out, and other community outreach efforts.

Contact: Sheriff Bill Hutton, 651-430-430-7601

Cutline: The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted a gift from Afton Apple Orchard on behalf of the Sheriff's Office Jan. 10. The money will be used for community outreach. Accepting the gift were Deputy Sgt. Joel Legut, who organizes outreach for the Sheriff's Office, Commissioner Lisa Weik, District 5, Afton Apple Orchard representatives Cindy Femling and Sarah Parkos, commissioners Stan Karwoski, District 2, Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Karla Bigham, District 4, Sheriff Bill Hutton, and Chief Deputy Dan Starry.

SRF Consulting Group, Inc., will assist to develop county's 2040 comp plan, update traffic model

SRF Consulting Group, Inc., will assist to develop Washington County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and update the county traffic model after the County Board approved contracts with the company Jan. 10.

The cost of developing the comprehensive plan is not to exceed \$172,818, and the cost of updating the traffic model is not to exceed \$101,124.

State law requires a regional planning update after each decennial census. The law requires the Metropolitan Council and all local governments within the metropolitan region to plan for the orderly and economic development of the seven-county metropolitan region. The planning process was initiated by the 2010 census and the council's adoption of the Thrive MSP 2040 plan. The next step is for local governments to update their comprehensive plans to build upon the regional vision and plans. The county's plan elements will include land use, transportation, water resources, parks and trails, housing, economic competitiveness, resilience and sustainability, and implementation. Stakeholder engagement in the plan development will include the County Board, local governments, watershed management organizations, school districts, and county residents, in addition to the

county's Planning Advisory Commission, Parks and Open Space Commission, and Water Consortium.

Plans are due to the Met Council by Dec. 31, 2018.

Contact: Colin Kelly, Senior Planner, 651-430-6011