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Date: June 20, 2017
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the June 20, 2017, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves comments on downtown Stillwater redevelopment district

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a letter June 20 commenting on the creation of two tax increment financing districts in downtown Stillwater to facilitate redevelopment. By law, the city must provide a 30-day notice to the county and the county has the ability to provide comments to the city for the record of the public hearing regarding the plans.

Tax increment financing allows for the use of “captured” increased property taxes from increased property value due to redevelopment to assist in financing the redevelopment. One district is proposed to facilitate the redevelopment of the downtown area through the rehabilitation of the Water Street Inn and a new 22-unit addition. A second district is proposed to facilitate a mixed use development consisting of a 64-unit hotel, a restaurant, and a parking structure in the northern part of downtown Stillwater.

The County Board reviews proposals to understand the financial implications, their consistency with the county’s comprehensive plan for land use and transportation, the impact on the county’s tax base, and the proposal’s impact on redeveloping blighted areas and increasing housing opportunities within the county.

After reviewing the proposed new districts, the County Board expressed its support for the projects.

Contact: Kevin Corbid, Deputy Administrator, 651-430-6003

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Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action

County will receive money to prevent auto theft

Washington County will receive \$151,800 from the Minnesota Department of Commerce to help fight auto theft, after the County Board approved the grant June 20.

The money will be used for auto theft prevention through 2019. A portion of the money, \$33,100, will be shared with Anoka County as part of the agreement with the state.

The counties have been receiving this specific grant since 2005. The grant has increased by approximately \$3,000 over the previous grant.

Contact: Pete Orput, County Attorney, 651-430-6124

County Board reviews 2 temporary liquor licenses for Minnesota Food Association

The Washington County Board of Commissioners reviewed two temporary on-sale liquor licenses for the Minnesota Food Association June 20, for events in May Township.

One event will be July 18, and the other will be Oct. 15.

The licenses are for one day each. The Sheriff's Office has been notified of the events; all the requirements for issuing the licenses have been met; and the appropriate fees has been paid by the applicant.

Contact: Steve Gransee, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Division Manager, 651-430-8272

Park-and-ride lot for state fair will continue at Newport Transit Station

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a license agreement with the Metropolitan Council June 20 allowing the use of the Newport Transit Station for a park-and-ride lot during the state fair Aug. 25 through Sept. 4.

The lot has room for 400 vehicles.

Metro Transit, a service of the Metropolitan Council, operates expanded park-and-ride services throughout the Twin Cities to provide easier and more frequent public access to and from the Minnesota State Fair.

In 2016, Metro Transit used the Newport Transit Station for this service and it was a success.

Contact: Jan Lucke, Transit/Transportation Planning Manager, 651-430-4316

Washington County will provide library services to Lake Elmo

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with the City of Lake Elmo June 20 to provide library services to the community.

In January 2012, the City of Lake Elmo withdrew from the Washington County Library, and established a city library levy and public library for the city's residents. Earlier this year, the Lake Elmo City Council directed city staff to work with county staff to explore opportunities for the Lake Elmo Library to return to the Washington County Library. In May, the Lake Elmo Library Board recommended that the Lake Elmo City Council include the city in the county library tax and become an integral part of county's library system, and the City Council agreed.

The county agreed that the Lake Elmo Branch will be open a minimum of 40 hours, the current Lake Elmo Library staff will become county employees, and volunteers at the library will continue in a similar capacity.

When the Lake Elmo Library is part of the county library, the county will no longer charge Lake Elmo residents \$60 for a Washington County Library card.

The City of Lake Elmo will return to the Washington County Library Jan. 1, 2018.

Washington County will operate Lake Elmo Library at its current location, 3537 Lake Elmo Ave. N. in Lake Elmo. The city agreed to convey the library land and building to the county, and the city will pave the parking lot to the east of the Lake Elmo Library.

Contact: Keith Ryskoski, Library Director, 651-275-8501

Washington County elects to be enforcement jurisdiction for the Minnesota Buffer Law

The Washington County Board of Commissioners affirmed the county's jurisdiction June 20 to carry out compliance provisions regarding riparian vegetation buffers identified on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Buffer Protection Map.

Minnesota's Buffer Law establishes new perennial vegetation buffers of up to 50 feet along rivers, streams, and ditches that will help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment from water flowing into the water bodies.

In electing to enforce the buffer law, the county will receive \$40,000 in 2018 and \$50,000 in 2019 to enforce the law. With jurisdiction, the county shall enforce corrective actions on a parcel basis. The county will have jurisdiction over public waters, including public drainage ditches.

As of last fall, it was determined that in Washington County the Buffer Law would impact:

- 344 parcels with agricultural designation intersect buffers;
- an estimated 250 landowners; and
- of those, about 109 were estimated to need new or expanded buffers. The Washington Conservation District (WCD) further refined that number based on visual assessments and other means.

In November 2016, 85 letters were sent to landowners by the Washington Conservation District, generating calls to it and site visits from the conservation district.

The WCD was host for a landowner breakfast in April to provide landowners the opportunity to ask questions related to the Buffer Law and implications of proposed changes. The WCD has been conducting site visits through the spring to determine compliance, and to offer assistance to landowners.

Contact: Lowell Johnson, Public Health and Environment Director, 651-430-6725

County Board re-implements transportation sales tax

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed June 20 to re-implement a transportation sales tax to replace a current sales tax being collected.

The board opened a public hearing on the topic June 13, and continued it June 20.

Washington County is a member of the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) joint powers agreement, along with Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties. As a member of that organization, the county imposes a 0.25 percent sales tax to fund transit projects. The members of CTIB are considering options for the possible dissolution of that joint powers agreement. The

transportation sales tax may only be considered if CTIB is dissolved, and the tax would replace the existing sales tax that is being imposed.

Washington County's comprehensive plan calls for the county to promote the development and use of a transit system that meets existing and future travel needs of the public, and to develop and maintain a roadway system that accommodates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. That plan is in place partly to address a response to the 2015 Washington County Residential Survey, in which residents stated that the lack of access to public transit was the "most problematic issue" in the county.

With the re-implementation of the tax, the county transportation plan calls for:

- Capital and operating costs for transitways in CTIB Phase I and Phase 2 Program of Projects, which are:
 - Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit;
 - Red Rock Corridor Bus Rapid Transit;
 - Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit Extension; and the
 - Highway 36 Transitway; and
- operating costs for the Forest Lake and Newport transit stations.

The plan may be amended by future actions of the County Board.

Contact: Jan Lucke, Transit/Transportation Planner, 651-430-4316

County will continue participation in Performance Measurement Program

Washington County will continue to participate in the Performance Measurement Program and submit the report on the 11 standard measures created by the Council on Local Results and Innovation.

The County Board agreed to participation June 20. This is the seventh year that the county has participated.

In 2010, the Legislature created the Council on Local Results and Innovation, tasked with creating a standard set of 10 measures for cities and 10 measures for counties. The list of measures was reviewed by the council and revised in 2013 to allow additional options for counties and cities to use as part of its program.

Participation in the standard measures program is voluntary. A county that elects to participate in the standards measures program may be eligible for a reimbursement of 14 cents per capita in county program aid, not to exceed \$25,000.

Washington County has a longstanding commitment to performance measurement and quality improvement and is able to report the standard set of measures with little additional work.

The county will report the results of the 11 adopted measures to residents on the county website at www.co.washington.mn.us/performanceasures.

Contact: Amanda Hollis, Planner, 651-430-6021