
Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

Date: Sept. 11, 2018
Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager
Phone: 651-430-6026, after hours 952-807-3723
E-mail: yvonne.klinnert@co.washington.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Sept. 11, 2018, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves comments on draft comprehensive plan for City of Oak Park Heights

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved comments Sept. 11 prepared following review of the draft comprehensive plan for the City of Oak Park Heights.

All local governments within the seven-county metropolitan region must prepare a comprehensive plan and update that plan every 10 years. The Metropolitan Council is charged with reviewing local comprehensive plans.

Before formally submitting local comprehensive plan updates to the Met Council, local governments must provide adjacent and affected jurisdictions the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan during a mandatory six-month review period. Comprehensive plans must be submitted to the Met Council by Dec. 31.

The county's comments stated support for the city's goal of modeling energy conservation at city facilities, and its goal of encouraging recycling programs and solid waste reduction. The county stated its support for the city's effort to provide a variety of housing types and values that are attractive to all age groups, and to have multifamily developments serve as a life-cycle housing alternative to detached single-family homes. The county also stated its appreciation for the city's commitment to protect, preserve, and improve environmentally-sensitive areas and natural resources in all parks and trail corridor areas as part of its parks and trails goals and policies.

A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow

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

Morse appointed to Mental Health Advisory Committee

Shana Haraldson Morse, Woodbury, was appointed to the Washington County Mental Health Advisory Committee by the County Board Sept. 11.

Morse will be the District 5 representative, serving a partial term ending Dec. 31, 2018.

The advisory committee is established by state law. It reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations regarding the local mental health system; annually arranges for input from the regional treatment center review board regarding coordination of care between the regional treatment center and community-based services; annually arranges for input from the local system of care providers regarding coordination of care between services; and identifies for the County Board the individuals, providers, agencies, and associations to receive information on predictors and symptoms of emotional disturbances, where mental health services are available in the county, and how to access the services.

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

WorkForce Center will provide services for workers ages 55 and older

The Washington County WorkForce Center will participate in a program to provide services to assist low-income individuals age 55 and older find meaningful and retainable employment after the County Board approved a grant agreement with the state Sept. 11.

The state's Department of Employment and Economic Developing (DEED) is implementing a pilot program called "Legacy Career Force," and plans to work with four Workforce Development Areas for the project, including the Washington County WorkForce Center. The WorkForce Center will receive \$135,000 to administer the program.

The project will focus on targeted services and employer engagement to improve and expand the capacity of the state's public workforce system, using career navigators to provide intensive one-on-one case management and support. Career navigators create customized plans based on the unique needs of each person.

The grant runs from July 1 to Oct. 22, 2020.

Contact: Rick Roy, Workforce Division Manager, 651-275-8660

Portion of Valley Creek Road will become county road

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement Sept. 11 that turns almost two miles of Valley Creek Road in Woodbury over to the county's jurisdiction.

The County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan identified the 1.99-mile segment of Valley Creek Road, east of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 19 (Woodbury Drive) and west of Highway 95 (Manning Avenue) as a candidate for jurisdictional transfer from the City of Woodbury to Washington County.

This segment of highway shares many characteristics with a county highway:

- It carries significant traffic (more than 14,000 vehicles per day on one segment).
- It is generally designed using county design standards.
- It serves as a regional east-west connection in the area.
- It is well spaced to complement the other east-west county highway routes in the area, such as CSAH 10, and CSAH 18.

The roadway will retain its name. The county will accept the road in its current condition, and the city will pay the county \$6 million to maintain the roadway. The city will also add a paved trail on the north side of the road next year.

The agreement was approved by the Woodbury City Council July 26.

Contact: Wayne Sandberg, County Engineer and Deputy Public Works Director, 651-430-4339

SRF will do planning, design work on Woodbury Drive project

SRF Consulting, Inc., will do planning and design work on the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 19, or Woodbury Drive, mobility and safety improvement project, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to a \$362,880 contract with the company Sept. 11.

The overall objective of the project is to increase the capacity and safety of CSAH 19 from 1,300 feet south of CSAH 18 (Bailey Road) to 1,000 feet south of Dale Road. CSAH 19 is a north-south minor arterial serving regional traffic in south Woodbury and northern Cottage Grove. Land development in the area continues, including requests for new access onto CSAH 19.

Improvements will include:

- expansion from a two-lane undivided to a four-lane divided highway;
- construction of trails on both east and west side of the highway;
- drainage improvements including stormwater treatment facilities; and
- intersection control improvement at CSAH 19 and Dale Road.

Preliminary design along with public engagement will determine the final project scope, right-of-way acquisition required, and cost estimates.

SRF will provide project coordination, traffic analysis, preliminary engineering, public and agency involvement, and environmental documentation. Construction is anticipated to be in 2021.

Contact: Frank Ticknor, Design Engineer, 651-430-4319

County Board continues review of 2019 budget

The Washington County Board of Commissioners continued review of the 2019 budget Sept. 11, reviewing budgets for the Department of Public Works and the Washington County Regional Rail Authority.

The board began work on the 2019 budget Aug. 14. Commissioners will review the proposed budget of separate departments through August and September, and set a preliminary property tax levy Sept. 18. Once the preliminary levy is set, it may be lowered, but cannot be raised in the final budget vote. The recommended net property tax levy would increase 5.47 percent over the 2018 levy, and would result in a drop of the county's tax rate by 1.5 percent. If approved, it would be the fifth year in the last six that the county's tax rate decreased. Should the recommended levy be approved, the impact on the owner of the median valued home in the county, which is \$273,200, would be an increase of \$36 a year in county taxes, offset by a \$1 reduction in the county's Regional Rail Authority levy.

That is based on the average home's value increasing 5.7 percent during the past year.

The increase in the levy is spurred in part by service demands from a population that grew 1.5 percent during the last year, and inflationary costs of goods and services that is currently close to 3 percent annually.

The proposed 2019 budget for the Public Works Department was reviewed Sept. 11. The department has three challenges:

- maintaining past investments to maximize service life;

- strategically building new infrastructure to meet growth needs; and
- continuing quality improvement efforts in day-to-day operations to effectively use resources.

In the county's parks, future challenges will be to attend to deferred maintenance, maintain a robust natural resources management plan, and create a county bicycle trail plan. Part of the Parks Division revenue will be \$925,000 in vehicle permits in 2019.

The Public Works Department is also responsible for planning for responsible use of all county buildings. The department will oversee 50 projects between 2019 and 2023 valued at \$70 million.

The department is requesting the addition of a project manager to work on the projects.

The county's 2019 highway projects will be paid for with \$4.9 million in state aid maintenance, and \$4.18 million in county levy proceeds.

The department's budget includes updating the county fleet for road maintenance, including purchase of three dump trucks in 2019.

Key capital projects planned for 2019, to be paid for with bond issue proceeds, are improvements at the Park Grove and Wildwood libraries, Lake Elmo Regional Park improvements, improvements on Woodbury Drive in Woodbury, and work on the Hadley/Highway 36 interchange in Oakdale. County program aid from the state will also be used to improve Valley Branch Library in Lakeland.

More than a dozen road and bridge projects budgeted at \$8.27 million will be in the work plan for 2019, paid for with state and federal grants, wheelage tax proceeds, state aid and county program aid, and by partner cities. Proceeds from the wheelage tax will also pay for \$4.4 million in county pavement preservation programs.

Discussion of the Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA) budget noted progress on the Metro Gold Line bus rapid transit project (BRT) that will bring BRT from downtown St. Paul to Washington County. It is projected to open in 2024. The county's transportation sales tax is being used to pay for the county's portion of the Gold Line, and will partially pay for the operation of the county's transit stations.

The county's WCRRA levy will be reduced by 15 percent for 2019, from \$776,800 to \$660,000.

A public hearing on the county's budget will be conducted Dec. 4, and the final budget will be adopted Dec. 11.

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