

Our Mission: We strive to provide exceptional services that enhance quality of life and promote a safe, healthy, and welcoming community for all.

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## County Board begins review of 2026 budget recommendations

The Washington County Board of Commissioners began its review of the county's recommended 2026 budget in livestreamed and recorded workshops July 29.

At the July 29 workshops, the County Board reviewed the recommended 2026 countywide budget, the Washington County Community Development Agency budget, and the budgets for the departments of Accounting and Finance, the Office of Administration, Human Resources, and Information Technology, as well as the Board of Commissioners budget.

The board will hear recommended budget presentations from county departments on the following dates:

- Aug. 5: Public Works, Metro Transit Gold Line, and the Regional Rail Authority.
- Aug. 12: Community Corrections, Community Services, and Public Health and Environment/the University of Minnesota Extension.
- Aug. 19: Property Records and Taxpayer Services and Library/Law Library.
- Aug. 26: Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Office.

After the department budget presentations, the board will follow a budget process from September through early December, which will include:

- Sept. 23: Setting a preliminary levy.
- Dec. 2: Conducting a public meeting on the proposed 2026 budget and levy.
- Dec. 16: Adopting a budget and property tax levy for 2026, and the capital improvement plan.

The countywide budget recommendation is for a 6.9% levy increase to \$148.8 million. If the recommended levy is adopted, the owner of a median-valued home that had a median increase in value in the county would see a \$50 increase in the county portion of property taxes for 2026, or a 5.1% increase from 2025. The county has the second-lowest tax rate and the third-lowest property tax levy per capita in the seven-county metro area.

The recommended 2026 budget prioritizes the county's current obligations to the public and employees. It does not fund any new programs and includes only a limited number of new employee positions focused on addressing service backlogs, reducing waitlists for community members awaiting services, and supporting county infrastructure and maintenance projects. The budget maintains the historical ratio of five employees per 1,000 residents.

One-time funding is included for electric vehicle charging stations, elections administration and equipment, a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) migration, Library extended access planning, the 2026 employee engagement survey, and wayfinding signage updates at two county buildings.

The budget includes \$9.1 million for several long-term capital investments for facilities, including the Central Yard Waste site and Park Grove Library construction, among other county facility improvements. It allocates \$115.5 million for the road and bridge program, including funding for the Highway 36 and County State Aid Highway 17 (Lake Elmo Avenue) intersection project, planning and design for the Public Works South Shop, and general pavement preservation and road reconstruction projects. It also includes \$2.6 million in park investments for projects such as the Hardwood Creek Trail extension and minor park facility improvements.

The County Board will review the recommended budgets for Public Works, Gold Line, and the Regional Rail Authority in a workshop following the Aug. 5 board meeting.

All budget presentations will be found on the county website. Archived livestreamed meetings may be found on the county website at [WashingtonCountyMN.gov/CountyBoard](https://WashingtonCountyMN.gov/CountyBoard). Budget documents presented at the workshops may be found at [WashingtonCountyMN.gov/Budget](https://WashingtonCountyMN.gov/Budget).