

Emergency Housing Services Building Project

Open houses - April 2024



Event Summary

In Person Open Houses: April 10, 11 & 16, 2024



52
attendees



9
survey
responses



3 open houses:
April 10 - Stillwater City Hall
April 11 - County Gov. Center
April 16 - Oak Park Heights

Visit the project website at:



Meeting Format

The meeting was conducted in an open house format. Staff utilized display boards and aerial maps of the location to communicate the project's purpose and design. Project staff facilitated discussion with open house attendees to help answer questions and collect feedback.

Common Questions

What sources are being used to fund the project?

- The project has been funded through a combination of federal and state grants and the Local Affordable Housing Aid. No county levy dollars are expected to be used for on-going operations.

Who will the program serve, how will individuals access the program, and how long can someone be in the program?

- The program will serve single adults over the age of 18 without minor children.
- Eligibility and acceptance into the program determined by Washington County and non-profit service provider.
- Anyone accepted to the program will have been physically present and unsheltered within the Washington County boundary the night before.
- The anticipated average length of stay is estimated at 90 days.

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What are the program requirements and what services are offered?

- A contracted service provider will be on-site 24 hours/365 days.
- Wraparound services may include employment, transportation, housing search, legal services, and case management.
- Individuals are required to sign an agreement, have a housing plan and be actively looking for stable housing if accepted into the program.

How will individuals access transportation resources?

- A budget for transportation services is included for car repair, ride-hailing service, or tickets for Metro Transit, TransitLink or MetroMobility. Additionally, the Stillwater Circulator is available at no cost to riders.

How many bedrooms? Will the building be accessible? What other spaces will be included?

- The building is two stories and will have 30 units. The rooms will be ADA accessible, with private bathrooms and an elevator.
- There will be congregate dining, a commercial kitchen and community spaces, as well as a computer room and storage for belongings.
- Residents can choose to stay with a partner. Pets will be allowed within program guidelines (details still to be determined).
- There will be a fenced outdoor space for pets and privacy for guests.

Will this project cause an increase in traffic, and will there be enough parking spaces for those served by the program?

- A traffic study was completed May 23, 2024.
- The current design plan has parking spaces to accommodate projected needs for residents and staff parking. There is additional parking available next to the building at the Government Center if needed for staff and visitors.

Will people will have access to neighborhoods via the walking path near the building?

- There are no plans to connect the walking path to the building.

Have other cities been considered for the project? How have Oak Park Heights and Stillwater been involved in approvals for the project?

- After an extensive year-long search for properties across Washington County we were unable to find other properties/sites that were feasible (due to price, zoning, location or size restrictions.) Therefore, no requests were made to other cities as no other viable sites were identified.
- The proposed site for the Emergency Housing Services Building is designated in Stillwater's jurisdiction, so the City of Stillwater approves any application/permits for the land use. Oak Park Heights approves utility access to the building.

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When and how has the project been communicated to residents? Some residents commented that the project was moving along quickly, and this is the first time they are hearing about it.

2020

July 14: Washington County Board of Commissioners Workshop

December 15: Washington County Board of Commissioners Workshop

2021

July 13: Washington County Board of Commissioners Workshop

2022

April: Staying in Touch article featuring Emergency Housing.

May 10: Washington County Board of Commissioners Workshop

Sept. 28: Presentation to County/City Administrators during meeting.

Dec. 20: County and CDA staff presented the project to Stillwater City Council.

2023

April 11: Washington County Board of Commissioners Workshop.

Sept. 5: Washington County Board of Commissioners Workshop.

Dec. 29: Emergency Housing Services Building website published.

2024

Jan. 2: County staff presented an update on the project to Stillwater City Council.

Jan. 23: Washington County Board of Commissioners Workshop.

Jan. 23: Program was featured in the Pioner Press.

Jan. 25: County staff presented design and program details at the PIT Stop event with local non-profit agencies and faith communities.

March 12: County staff presented the project to Oak Park Heights City Council.

March 25: Open house invites mailed to those 1/4 mile from the site.

April 3: Open house invite posted on Washington County Facebook page and website.

April 10: Public in-person open house held at Stillwater City Hall.

April 11: Public in-person open house held at the County Government Center, Stillwater.

April 16: Public in-person open house held at Oak Park Heights City Hall.

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Nine survey responses (written and SurveyMonkey) from residents of Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, and Lake Elmo.

What do you like most about this project?

- The supportive services, its proximity to services, and finally having a shelter in Washington County.
- I am overall impressed with the level of heartfelt caring among the leaders of this county project.
- This is very needed in this area and could be a sound & lasting help to those who do not have a place to call home.
- About time rich Washington County started to do something concrete and positive to address the dire need for low-income housing.
- It takes into account the actual issues homeless people are concerned about, and respects those it services.
- That it will provide emergency housing in Washington County – so desperately needed and lacking for far too long.
- The committed people behind each aspect of the project, the care and concern to help people.
- The knowledge that worker bees talked to homeless people (inadequately housed) to get their opinions.
- That we'll finally (soon!) not have zero Washington County beds.
- Well thought out, seems to address many of the problems that keep people from obtaining the help they need.
- The need is great. I love that it gives people a stable place to live while they seek help finding homes, jobs, etc. Including pets will be very important to many.

What are other concerns you have that weren't answered at the open house?

- Staff did a great job of fielding questions.
- We find that working with the homeless population requires long-term effort. People typically need time and treatment to overcome the mental health and physical addictions from which many suffer. I would strongly encourage you to try to add people of faith (chaplains) to your team of resources. I believe that understanding the difference between good and evil, and gaining positive spiritual growth are keys to living a life of sanity.
- Concerns that it could be a project that is not supported by this community.
- Public transportation at this site is needed.
- What is being done to increase public transportation opportunities for the residents of the EHSB so they can get to jobs they'll be helped to find? For all of Stillwater, for that matter.
- No concerns, keep up the good work.

Please let us know of any other questions or comments you may have.

- Thank you for dedicating services to those in need in Washington County.
- As a member of First Presbyterian Church, I am supportive of this plan. I understand that "someone" had said that the church did not support it. Not true. It's possible a church individual does not support it, but a large majority of the church members are excited to support the mission of the EHSB.
- Will there be volunteer opportunities?

EHSB Project Contact Information

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