



Washington County Wood Recovery and Utilization Program

Washington County requests **\$4 million in state funds and policy support** to enable the effective implementation of mandated wood waste management strategies.

Issue At-A-Glance

- Minnesota’s Metro Solid Waste Policy Plan requires counties to respond to rapidly increasing amounts of wood waste from diseased trees and severe weather. However, regional wood product markets are underdeveloped, landfilling of wood waste is not allowed, and spontaneous combustion of stagnant wood chip piles has become a serious risk for local tree care companies.
- Tree service costs have been steadily increasing and are expected to continue to rise. Those in search of affordable solutions may choose unsafe tree work or disposal by dumping or burning, which threatens both public health and the environment.
- Processing tree material into usable products helps protect residents from volatile tree care fees and smoky air. By converting tree material into wood and carbon products, Washington County will capture and store carbon in accordance with Minnesota’s Climate Action Framework and benefit the entire region by establishing a sustainable system for material recovery and utilization.
- State funds will enable the county to develop the sites needed to convert surplus tree material into lumber and carbon products that can improve soil and water quality, thereby expanding access to these products throughout the region and creating sustainable material supply chains for manufacturers to scale up processing.

Support

- Washington Conservation District
- Partnership on Waste and Energy
- Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Department
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Previous Considerations

This project was submitted for consideration in 2025.

No Action

If the state funds are not provided, residents in the region will continue to face rising tree service costs, experience polluted air due to accidental and intentional burning of wood waste piles, and miss an opportunity to capture the economic value from local trees needing removal.

Financial Implications

- Washington County: \$5 million
- **State of Minnesota: \$4 million**

Total estimated project cost: \$9 million



East Metro PFAS Biomonitoring



Washington County requests a **\$1.1 million** appropriation to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to conduct an updated biomonitoring study of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in East Metro residents.

Issue At-A-Glance

- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are chemicals that have been used for many years to make products that resist stains, grease, water, and heat. PFAS have been found in East Metro drinking water supplies, including several Washington County communities, since the early 2000s.
- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), directed by the Minnesota Legislature, has completed three studies testing PFAS blood levels in people who live in the East Metro since 2008. The last study was conducted in 2014. Results indicated progress in reducing PFAS levels, but residents still showed higher levels of PFAS compared to national data sets at that time.
- An updated PFAS biomonitoring study will help MDH, Washington County, and municipalities understand the prevalence of PFAS in our communities and how public health interventions continue to impact those levels.
- An updated PFAS biomonitoring study is also supported by Washington County's newly adopted Groundwater Plan, which includes a strategy to monitor and advocate for research and studies (e.g. biomonitoring, additional surveillance) on health effects from PFAS and other contaminants.

No Action

Without additional funding, an updated PFAS biomonitoring study would not be conducted.

Financial Implications

State of Minnesota: \$1.1 million appropriation to Minnesota Department of Health



County Highway 10, 17, and 17B Intersection Improvements



Washington County requests **\$2 million in state funds** to design and construct improvements at the intersection of County Highway 10, County Highway 17, and County Road 17B.

Issue At-A-Glance

- Washington County, in partnership with the City of Lake Elmo, is planning an improvement project for the intersection of County Highway 10 (10th Street North), County Highway 17 (Lake Elmo Avenue North), and County Road 17B (Lake Elmo Avenue North).
- The construction of a new elementary school in the northwest quadrant of the intersection will result in a significant land use change. The school's anticipated traffic volumes require the county transportation system to be improved.
- A temporary traffic signal is being installed at the intersection as part of school construction, but is a stop gap measure and further investment is needed to meet the long-term needs of the community.
- This project will focus on new pedestrian and bike paths near the intersection to connect the new elementary school to surrounding neighborhoods, including Cimarron Park, a highly diverse manufactured home community. There are multiple nearby destinations, including Lake Elmo Park Reserve, a regional park with over 530,000 annual visitors, and Oak-Land Middle School. This project will include analysis for future connections to these destinations. Proper infrastructure is key to ensuring pedestrian safety, including the safety of children walking to school.
- Washington County is leading preliminary design on this project and has invested \$365,000 to date.

Support

- City of Lake Elmo
- Stillwater Area Public Schools

Previous Considerations

No previous consideration.

No Action

If state funds are not provided, the county will be limited in what improvements can be made to pedestrian connectivity and safety outside of the intersection itself.

Financial Implications

- Washington County: \$1.75 million
- City of Lake Elmo: \$400,000
- **State of Minnesota: \$2 million**

Total estimated project cost: \$4.15 million



County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18 (Bailey Road) and CSAH 19 (Woodbury Drive) Intersection Improvements



Washington County requests **\$500,000 in state funds** for intersection improvements at CSAH 18 (Bailey Road) and CSAH 19 (Woodbury Drive).

Issue At-A-Glance

- The intersection of Bailey Road and Woodbury Drive is located in the City of Woodbury, one of Minnesota’s fastest growing and most populated cities. The area in which this intersection is located is developing especially rapidly, with growth expected to continue, increasing strain on the transportation system.
- This intersection is near three public and private schools and a regional destination, M Health Fairview Sports Center. It experiences backups, especially during overlapping school start and end times and during the numerous large events at the Sports Center that occur year-round.
- This intersection improvement project will increase roadway capacity to better meet the transportation needs of this rapidly growing area.

Support

- City of Woodbury

Previous Considerations

No previous considerations.

No Action

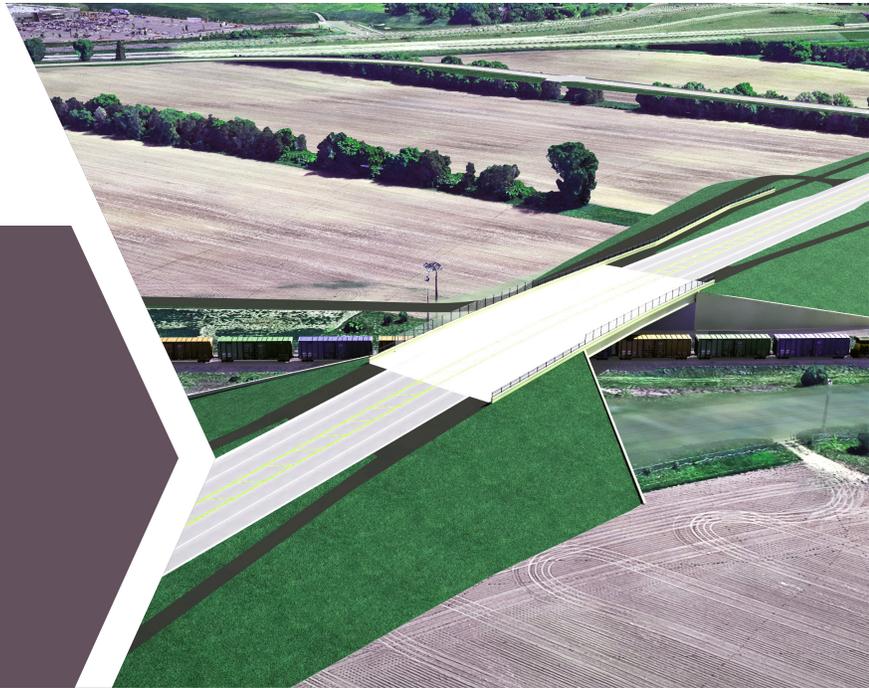
Without state support, Washington County may need to divert funding from other important public services in order to complete the improvements to this intersection.

Financial Implications

- Washington County: \$500,000
- **State of Minnesota: \$500,000**

Total estimated project cost: \$1 million





County Road 19A and 100th Street Realignment Project

Washington County and the City of Cottage Grove request **\$22.5 million in state funds** to construct the County Road 19A and 100th Street Realignment Project.

Issue At-A-Glance

- A new arterial route is needed to support 500 acres of planned development and to help balance the regional traffic patterns on U.S. Highway 61.
- A new railway grade separation included in the project will efficiently accommodate growth in freight traffic associated with the rapidly growing industrial area.
- The project will be transformative for the southeast metro as it improves safety and mobility and creates economic opportunity in the area.
- Washington County and the City of Cottage Grove have invested more than \$1,400,000 in project engineering to date.
- The project has received \$13.6 million in federal funding for construction which will begin expiring in 2028. **If the remaining funding gap is not filled, the county and city may need to return their awards.**



Support

- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- City of Cottage Grove
- 3M
- Renewal By Andersen

Previous Considerations

This project was submitted for consideration in 2024 and 2025.

No Action

If the state funds are not provided, the county and city may have to return \$13.6 million in awarded federal funds, and the project will be delayed.

Financial Implications

- Federal Grants: \$13.6 million
- City of Cottage Grove: \$6.8 million
- Washington County: \$4.0 million
- **State of Minnesota: \$22.5 million**

Total estimated project cost: \$46.9 million



CSAH 5 (Stonebridge Trail) and Brown's Creek State Trail Connection Project



Washington County requests **\$3 million in state funds** to construct a trailhead and trail connection(s) from County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 5 to the Brown's Creek State Trail.

Issue At-A-Glance

- Accessing the Brown's Creek State Trail from surrounding neighborhoods requires users to take an uneven, unsafe, and unsanctioned footpath down a steep ravine. A new trail connection would make this link safe, accessible, and compliant with the American Disabilities Act (ADA).
- In 2025, Washington County added new trails and resurfaced existing trails along County Highway 5 in areas adjacent to the Brown's Creek State Trail. The bridge crossing over the trail was also replaced. However, the trail that would connect people directly to the Brown's Creek Trail was not included due to a lack of funds. The 2025 project was financed with local funds and cost approximately \$6 million.
- During 2025 construction, the county received reoccurring comments from the community expressing disappointment that the direct connection to Brown's Creek Trail was not included.
- State funds, if provided, will be used to construct a trailhead and trail connection(s) from County Highway 5 to the Brown's Creek State Trail.

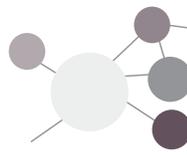
More about the Brown's Creek State Trail



More than
120,000 users
annually access the
Brown's Creek State Trail.



5.9 mile-trail
connects the City of Stillwater
and the City of Grant on a
former railroad bed.



Connects parks and
trail systems, including
the Gateway Trail, the
most used DNR trail in
Minnesota.

Support

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Stillwater Township
- City of Stillwater

Previous Considerations

This project was submitted for consideration in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

No Action

If the state funds are not provided, the connection will not be built, leaving only the steep, uneven, unsanctioned footpath to the Brown's Creek State Trail.

Financial Implications

Washington County expenses to date: Trail resurfacing and road improvements:

- Local funds: \$6 million

Trail connection

- **State of Minnesota: \$3 million**

Total estimated project cost: \$9 million





Protect County Transportation Funding

Washington County urges the Minnesota Legislature to protect the current formula for distributing Transportation Advancement Account (TAA) funds and Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax (RSUT).

Issue At-A-Glance

- The Transportation Advancement Account (TAA) and Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax (RSUT), established in 2023, are currently funded by sales taxes and delivery fees in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.
- The TAA and RSUT funding stream is essential to maintain and improve local transportation systems. It supports road rehabilitation, active transportation (walking and biking), transit, and climate-friendly projects. The formula was carefully negotiated and ensures that counties receive funding based on both population and financial need.
- This funding is critical for Washington County to keep up with growth, maintain aging infrastructure, and provide safe, accessible transportation options for all users. Counties are responsible for nearly one-third of Minnesota's roads and over 40% of its bridges. In Washington County, many of these roads are part of the state aid system and serve as major connectors for freight, transit, and daily travel.
- State law requires metropolitan counties to use TAA and RSUT funds as follows:
 - 41.5% for active transportation and transportation corridor safety studies.
 - 41.4% for repair, preservation and rehabilitation of transportation systems and roadway replacement without expansion.
 - 17% for transit, complete streets and greenhouse gas mitigation.
- Under the current funding structure, Washington County is expected to receive approximately \$7 to \$8 million annually.

Support

- Anoka County
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Hennepin County
- Ramsey County
- Scott County

Previous Considerations

No previous consideration.

No Action

Washington County plans to fund almost 30 separate transportation projects in the next five years with TAA and RSUT funds. If the formula to distribute transportation funds is changed, these critical safety, pedestrian, preservation, and capacity projects would be canceled or delayed.

Financial Implications

Changing the TAA formula would affect Washington County's ability to plan and fund important projects, shifting more costs to local taxpayers. The current system is inclusive, effective, and reflects the real responsibilities counties have to keep Minnesota moving. The Legislature should preserve the TAA formula and ensure that counties continue to receive the funding they need to invest in safe, reliable, and future-ready transportation solutions.





Sales Tax Exemption for 2027 Washington County Regional Public Facility Investments

Washington County requests special legislation granting a sales tax exemption under Minn. Stat. § 297A.75 for construction materials, supplies, and equipment for two major regional public facility projects scheduled for construction in 2027: R.H. Stafford Library and Public Works South Shop.

Issue At-A-Glance

- Under current law, local governments are exempt from sales tax. However, this exemption does not extend to construction materials purchased by contractors under lump-sum or guaranteed-maximum-price contracts. This bill would provide a sales tax exemption for materials, supplies, and equipment incorporated into upcoming county construction projects.
- In 2027, Washington County will begin two major public facility projects totaling more than \$57 million, addressing critical infrastructure needs identified through formal studies. A state sales tax exemption would reduce project costs, strengthen taxpayer value, and support on-time delivery of these essential improvements.



R.H. Stafford Library

R.H. Stafford Library is a regional asset that requires modernization. It is the county's highest-use library and is one of the top five busiest libraries in Minnesota. The current layout is inefficient, finishes are worn, and mechanical and electrical systems are at the end of their service life. Upgrades will improve functionality, energy efficiency, and long-term operating costs.



Public Works South Shop

The Public Works South Shop is outdated and undersized. A 2013 study found the facility deteriorated, non-ADA compliant, and consuming twice the energy per square foot of a modern building. The space no longer supports current equipment or operational needs, limiting the county's ability to serve the growing southern region.

Previous Considerations

No previous consideration.

No Action

If a state sales tax exemption is not provided, Washington County will bear the full sales tax burden on construction materials for both projects, reducing the overall purchasing power of the allocated funds. This could result in reduced project scope, delayed timelines, or the need for additional local funding to achieve the same outcomes.

Financial Implications

Both projects rely significantly on bond proceeds, and reduced costs would enhance Washington County's ability to deliver these projects within budget and on time.

- R.H. Stafford Library: estimated sales tax is \$600,000.
- Public Works South Shop: estimated sales tax is \$1 million.



Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Trail Lighting



Trail lighting at Lake Elmo Park Reserve

Washington County requests **\$3 million in state funds** for trail lighting in Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

Issue At-A-Glance

- Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park is in the City of Cottage Grove and consists of over 500 acres of hills and forested ravines. The most popular park feature is the 12 miles of trails for walkers, hikers, bicyclists, skiers, snowshoers, and other park visitors. It is one of the fastest growing parks in Washington County and located in one of the fastest developing areas of the region.
- Lighting 5 kilometers of trail will expand the park's year-round use, improving visitor experience and safety. The shorter daylight hours in fall and winter limit the use of the park, which is especially limiting during cross-country ski season.
- There is strong support from the community for this project, especially from skiers, hikers, and trail runners. The park has the ideal terrain, elevation, and facilities to accommodate larger events, team practices, and high school meets.
- This trail lighting project would advance the vision for the trailhead and trail network at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park by leveraging over \$3 million in recent investments that Washington County has already made, including Ravine Landing — a multiuse facility and trailhead that has dramatically expanded the park's programming and event capacity for trail users, cross-country skiing, and more.



**150,000 - 180,000
annual visitors.**

Source: Washington County Parks estimate.

Support

- City of Cottage Grove
- Metropolitan Council

Previous Considerations

This project was submitted for consideration in 2024 and 2025.

No Action

If the state funds are not provided, Washington County will have to seek other funding sources, and the project may be delayed or not built.

Financial Implications

Washington County expenses to date: Ravine Landing facility and trailhead (completed 2021)

- Washington County: \$3.8 million

Trail lighting

- **State of Minnesota: \$3 million**

Total estimated project cost: \$6.8 million



State Bonding for Metropolitan Regional Park System



Washington County requests **\$20 million in state funds for capital projects** within the Metropolitan Regional Park System.

Issue At-A-Glance

- The Metropolitan Regional Parks System is a highly utilized resource, receiving approximately 65.7 million visitors in 2024.
- Washington County depends on state bonding to the regional parks system for ongoing capital improvements. This provides the funding for Washington County to address pertinent needs within the regional parks and trails system.
- Every \$3 of state bonding to the Metropolitan Council's regional park system leverages \$2 of additional Metropolitan Council funding up to \$10 million. Of that total, Washington County would receive 7% for its regional parks.
- Washington County has several proposed projects in 2026-2027 that rely on regional park system bonding for implementation, including improvements to Big Marine Park Reserve, Point Douglas Regional Trail, and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.

Support

- Metropolitan Council
- The 10 partnering regional park implementing agencies.

Previous Considerations

This is a biennial request necessary to fund our regional parks system. Metropolitan regional parks did not receive funding in 2024 or 2025.

No Action

If the requested state bonding is not provided, the proposed projects will either not proceed or will be scaled back significantly.

Financial Implications

- **State of Minnesota: \$20 million**
- Metropolitan Council Match (if funded): \$10 million

Total Requested Investment: \$30 million

Project Examples

Point Douglas Regional Trail



Updates to the existing trailhead and restroom facilities.

St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park



Campground upgrades.

