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

**Date:** April 2, 2019  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the April 2, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

### **County Board approves new option for financing low-income housing**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution April 2 that will allow a third eligibility threshold for the Housing Tax Credit program that helps finance low-income housing in the county.

The Housing Tax Credit program was created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 to stimulate private capital investment in new construction, substantial rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable housing. In exchange for federal tax credits to be used over 10 years, a private company provides equity to help construct the project. Since the program's inception, housing tax credits have been used to construct or rehabilitate 2,166 affordable apartments in 35 developments across Washington County. During the next year, 420 more units will be available in Woodbury, Oak Park Heights, Forest Lake, and Hugo.

The change the County Board approved will allow the six workforce and senior housing apartments being built in Cottage Grove, Woodbury, Oak Park Heights, Forest Lake and Hugo the option of Income Averaging, provided they meet certain conditions.

The program is built on a public-private partnership in which the county and the Community Development Agency (CDA) allocate tax credits, which builds the county's tax base, and allows new residents to move to the county. Developers sell the credits, to raise funds to build affordable

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housing; investors purchase the credits, which are then used over the next 10 years to offset their tax obligations.

The CDA passes the federal tax credits through to the developers, following a qualified allocation plan. The new Income Averaging option for some housing tax credits will be applied to four senior housing buildings, and two workforce housing projects. That will allow market rents to be applied to some units in exchange for extremely low rents in other units.

The county's housing tax plan for 2020 calls for \$595,149 in tax credits. The change to the Income Averaging option will be carried forward into the CDA's 2020 plan. The plan also looks at the financial viability and efficiency of projects, the location and development type, and the population that will be served by the development. The projects given the highest priority are those that are requesting supplemental credit for the project, projects that will preserve affordability, and projects with the lowest rent restrictions.

**Contact: Melissa Taphorn, Community Development Agency Deputy Executive Director, 651-202-2821**

### **County Board agrees to sell a home in Stillwater after road project is done**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed April 2 to sell a home at 2002 Fairmeadows Road in Stillwater, after the completion of a roadway rehabilitation project in the neighborhood. The home was sold for \$260,000.

The home was purchased as part of the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 5, or Stillwater Boulevard, improvement program. The project included replacing curb and gutter, replacing a concrete retaining wall, and improving pedestrian operations. A portion of the home's yard was needed to replace the existing retaining wall, and to add to the pedestrian trail. At the time the project started, the home was for sale, and the owners approached the county to coordinate the sale with the county's acquisitions for the project. The county bought the home for \$179,163, and has since maintained the property, paid for utilities, and prepared the home for sale.

Now that road construction is complete, the county put the home on the market, and received seven offers, and accepted the offer for \$260,000.

**Contact: Sharon Price, Property Manager, 651-430-4391**

### **Kimley-Horn will do study on roadways in southwest part of county**

Kimley-Horn will do a study on roadway alignment in the southwestern portion of Washington County, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$398,125 contract with the company April 2.

The county has identified a need for a transportation study to assess traffic needs and identify a roadway alignment in the area, which includes Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, and Grey Cloud Island Township. The study will plan for transportation improvements associated with potential land use changes, growth, and existing business uses.

The area is home to established businesses such as 3M and Renewal by Anderson, residential development, areas identified by the City of Cottage Grove for future industrial development, and the former Mississippi Dunes Golf Course. Additionally, public assets such as the Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), and a future regional park on Lower Grey Cloud Island will benefit from the study.

It is anticipated that the study will be complete in early 2020.

**Contact: Kevin Peterson, Engineer II, 651-430-4330**

### **County Board declares state of emergency related to river flooding**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared a state of emergency in the county April 2 related to river flooding.

River levels on both the St. Croix River and the Mississippi River have exceeded flood stage. The St. Croix River is likely to exceed a Moderate Flood Stage and the Mississippi River is likely to exceed a Major Flood Stage. Communities and local governments throughout the county are responding to the floods. The flood conditions are likely to persist for many weeks presenting imminent danger to persons and property in the county.

With the declaration of a state of emergency, the county's emergency operations plan is activated. The declaration enables departments within the county to use appropriate resources for flood response. In addition, it allows the county to receive requests from local units of government for technical assistance and resources, and enables the county to begin coordination with the State of

Minnesota and/or the federal government for additional assistance as needed. The declaration also serves as documentation of the point in time at which local financial, human, and equipment resources are directed toward flood related operations.

The state of emergency will remain in effect for 30 days, or until the emergency no longer requires emergency response and recovery efforts.

**Contact: Doug Berglund, Emergency Services Manager, 651-430-7682**

### **County Board proclaims April National County Government Month**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed April as National County Government Month April 2, in appreciation of county government employees who provide services for residents of Washington County.

The National Association of Counties proclaimed April 2019 as National County Government Month, with the theme of “Connecting the Unconnected.”

The nearly 1,300 employees of Washington County provide core and mandated services of county government to more than 256,900 residents each day. County services range from public health and environmental services to law enforcement and prosecution, from probation to community services that support those with mental illness, disabilities, or the elderly, from elections to roads and parks, and from libraries to all the internal services needed to deliver any of the county services.

By adopting the proposed resolution, the County Board recognizes, congratulates, and thanks all Washington County employees who fulfill the county's mission by providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation, and the cooperation of dedicated people.

During April, county commissioners, members of county administration, and department leadership visit with county employees to personally thank them for their service.

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