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**Date:** Oct. 22, 2019  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Oct. 22, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

#### **County Board approves comments on City of White Bear Lake comprehensive plan**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a comment letter for the City of White Bear Lake comprehensive plan Oct. 22.

All local government units 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 council, local government units must provide adjacent and affected jurisdictions the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan. The comments must be included with the formal plan update submittal. County staff reviewed the draft City of White Bear Lake Comprehensive Plan Update.

The county's comments stated that the county is encouraged by the city's proactive approach to water conservation, and asked the city to consider listing Washington County as a potential partner for future water conservation projects and practices. The comments also commended the city on its efforts to build a healthy community through promotion of access to physical activity, and its support for solar panels as an accessory use in the city.

**Contact: Emily Jorgensen, Planner II, 651-430-4338**

#### **County Board recognizes St. Andrew's Family Shelter's award of excellence**

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Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized St. Andrew's Family Shelter as the National Association of County Community and Economic Development Association's 2019 Award of Excellence in Homeless Coordination/Assistance recipient Oct. 22.

St. Andrew's Community Resource Center in Mahtomedi plays a vital role in ending homelessness in Washington County. Its objective is to provide a comprehensive approach to meet individuals' and families' basic needs, health and wellness, affordable housing, and gainful employment. It received the award Oct. 15.

Representatives from St. Andrew's who attended the County Board meeting are Jenny Mason, St. Andrew's Community Resource Center executive director, Harvey Taipale, St. Andrew's volunteer grant writer, Dave Engh, St. Andrew's Habitat crew leader, Debbie Larson, the resource center volunteer coordinator, Sandy Zarembinski, from Faith Lutheran in Forest Lake and president of the former Forest Lake Area Mission for Families, and Sarah Breckenridge, St. Andrew's senior executive pastor.

The award recognizes St. Andrew's Community Resource Center's efforts to provide emergency shelter and assist families experiencing homelessness. Between 2015 and 2017, the resource center received 588 calls for assistance, and was able to shelter only 115 families at Guardian Angels church in Oakdale. St. Andrew's worked with other area faith communities to find a location to serve the northern part of Washington County. The Church of St. Genevieve in Hugo offered its vacant rectory. Washington County provided \$240,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds, leveraged with private donations, to renovate the rectory into a homeless shelter, which serves three to five families, or approximately 15 people at a time. CDBG funds were used to pay professional contractors, and the other work was done by volunteers and with in-kind donations from congregation members from the Archdioceses of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The shelter receives on-going community support. Twelve churches provide volunteers for the shelter. With evening and overnight shifts of two volunteers each shift, it takes 1,352 hours of help to make this happen every week of the year. Together, the 12 churches fundraise to cover the annual operating budget of \$90,000, all from private individuals and organizations.

In addition to shelter, St. Andrew's provides resources to find transitional and permanent housing. In its first 14 months, St. Andrew's has sheltered 19 homeless families, with 58 individuals and 34

children. Of those 19 families, 13 have found permanent affordable housing, three went to other shelters or options, and three are currently in the shelter.

The Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) is a member of the National Association of County Community and Economic Development (NACCED). NACCED is an affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo), with a mission to develop the technical capacity of administrators of Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships programs. Each year, NACCED recognizes the achievements of its members giving Awards of Excellence program in the categories of community development, economic development, homeless coordination/assistance, affordable housing, HOME Investment Partnerships Program, planning/policy/program management, and innovation.

**Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager, 651-430-6026**



**Staff and volunteers from St. Andrew's Community Resource Center shared their 2019 Award of Excellence in Homeless Coordination/Assistance with the Washington County Board of Commissioners Oct. 22.**

**County will receive additional money to prevent, mitigate homelessness**

Washington County will receive an additional \$236,130 from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency to use through Sept. 30, 2021, to prevent or mitigate homelessness in the county, after the County Board approved an agreement with the agency Oct. 22.

The grant is in addition to Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program funds that the county received, bringing the grant total to \$573,459 for a two-year period.

The money will be used to:

- support Solid Ground, which provides rapid re-housing for families, which includes rent payment assistance and support services, \$183,007;
- support the YMCA, which provides rapid re-housing for youth, which includes rent payment assistance and support services, \$164,698;
- support Salvation Army Prevention for all populations, prioritizing single adults, \$113,504; and
- Washington County Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST), which is prevention for all populations who come through HOST's "Front Door," prioritizing single adults, \$59,904.

Also, \$52,346 will be used by Washington County for administration of the grant.

Organizations in the county are gearing up to provide shelter during the winter months. Last winter, a temporary shelter was created at St. Andrew's Community Resource Center in Mahtomedi when the temperature dropped to -24 degrees F. A community effort to establish a winter warming space and overnight shelter this year is in the planning stages. St. Andrew's Community Resource Center and Trinity Lutheran Church in Stillwater are committed to opening their doors and managing volunteer resources.

The county's HOST is also committed to providing services to those accessing the shelter.

**Contact: Dana Dumbacher, Community Services Policy Analyst, 651-430-8363**

## **County Board approves contract for final plans for CSAH 19 project**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$367,903 contract with SRF Consulting Group, Inc., Oct. 22 for engineering plans for County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 19, or Woodbury Drive, in Woodbury, between Bailey Road and Dale Road in Woodbury.

SRF has done the preliminary design and project coordination. The project involves roadway reconstruction and expansion, increased capacity and safety, and improving pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations.

There are churches in the area, and a few homes, but three new residential developments are planned in the area. During public involvement for the project, neighbors said the intersection at Dale and Woodbury Drive feels unsafe and hard to cross, and that the increased traffic from development is changing the area from a rural feel to more urban. Also, sight lines on Dale Road are bad, and residents would like to hook up to city water.

The project will:

- improve traffic operations;
- increase capacity with a four-lane divided design;
- improve safety at Dale Road;
- improve pedestrian accessibility and safety;
- improve drainage; and
- protect existing utilities.

The final design should be complete by spring 2021, with bid letting and construction planned for summer 2021.

**Contact: Morgan Abbott, Engineer II, 651-430-4359**