

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

**Date:** Feb. 11, 2020  
**Contact:** Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager  
**Phone:** 651-430-6026, after hours 952-807-3723  
**E-mail:** yvonne.klinnert@co.washington.mn.us

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Feb. 11, 2020, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

### **County Board approves jail pharmaceutical contract**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Contracted Pharmacy Services (CPS) Feb. 11 for pharmacy services in the Jail Medical Unit.

CPS has been the pharmacy vendor since 2011. All non-urgent/emergency medications are ordered through and provided by CPS.

CPS worked collaboratively to ensure the medical unit transitioned to electronic medication ordering, and to an electronic medication administration record.

CPS provides detailed quarterly reports on medication use, costs, and trends. Pharmacy costs rose in 2019 to \$105,595. This is an increase over past years, attributed to multiple factors, including increased inmate census, increased number of inmates on more medications, an increase in the number of prescriptions for mental health medications, and the increased costs for insulin.

**Contact: Jill Timm, Public Health Program Manager, 651-275-7286**

### **County Board requests further consideration of Metro Transit service in county**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners requested Feb. 11 that Metro Transit expand its consideration of bus service improvements in the county.

Metro Transit, as part of its Network Next Initiative, conducted a pop-up engagement event at the Woodbury Theater Park and Ride to gather comment from the public. The county is requesting that Metro Transit consider comments gathered from four pop-up events that it conducted at the Forest

A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow

Lake Transit Center and Hardwood Creek Library, the county Government Center in Stillwater, the Cottage Grove Park and Ride, and Century College, all between Jan. 9 and Jan. 15. County staff visited with people who came through the facilities, and collected survey responses.

The summarized responses found respondents would take transit if it became more accessible to them, and a high priority for improvements include span of service, coverage, and augmenting commuter routes. County staff also gathered comments from major employers in the county to better understand their transportation needs.

The suggestions that the county will send to Metro Transit are to expand service in key corridors, such as Highway 36, Interstate 94, Highway 120 (Century Avenue), and the Red Rock corridor along Highway 61 from St. Paul to Newport, and the Rush Line Corridor from St. Paul to Forest Lake.

**Contact: Jan Lucke, Public Works Planning Director, 651-430-4316**

### **County Board offers appreciation to Forest Lake Area Partnership for Families**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners extended its appreciation Feb. 11 to the Forest Lake Area Partnership for Families.

The Forest Lake Area Partnership for Families (FLAPF) has been addressing health and well-being of youth and families since its early formation as a networking group in 1988. For the past three decades, the Forest Lake Area Partnership for Families and the county have worked collaboratively on numerous projects.

Much of the work of the partnership has been embedded in schools and other community institutions.

The members of the partnership plan to reorganize to continue on a renewed community health mission. This is a celebratory milestone for the coalition.

Due to its success and the county's history of partnership and collaboration with this group, the County Board recognized the partnership and celebrates its contributions to the community.

**Contact: Caitlin, Suginaka, Public Health Program Supervisor, 651-430-6786**



**Yohanis Shitta, FLAPF representative, Commissioner Lisa Weik, District 5, Nancy Carlson, FLAPF Representative, Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1, Caitlin Suginaka, Washington County program supervisor, Cathy Mackiewicz, county senior community health specialist and FLAPF representative, Kathy Bystrom, FLAPF representative, Laurie Drolson, FLAPF representative, Commissioner Wayne Johnson, District 4, Carolyn Carr Latady, FLAPF representative, Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2.**

### **County Board opens public hearing on updating transportation sales tax**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners opened a public hearing Feb. 11 to consider updating the county's transportation sales tax from 0.25% to 0.5% to fund transportation and transit projects and transit-related operating costs.

Washington County has unmet road and bridge needs ranging between \$7 million to \$10 million every year. To meet these infrastructure needs, the County Board will consider options to increase the transportation sales tax to a rate up to 0.5%, and an update to the list of projects eligible to use revenue from this tax.

The public hearing will be continued at an evening meeting March 17 to allow additional public testimony. The board plans to consider any changes at its meeting March 24, after continued opportunity for residents to comment on the plan. This process will allow time for residents to learn about the transportation needs of the county, hear about the different funding options that are available, and provide input to the County Board.

The second public hearing will be conducted after 6 p.m. March 17 in the County Board room in the Government Center, 14949 62<sup>nd</sup> St. N. in Stillwater.

Generally referred to as the Local Option Sales Tax, state law allows counties to impose a sales and use tax up to 0.5% and a vehicle excise tax up to \$20 per vehicle. Starting or increasing the tax requires a public hearing, and the County Board must enact a county board resolution. Of Minnesota's 87 counties, 49 have implemented the tax. Currently, Washington County imposes the tax at a rate of 0.25% for the sales and use tax and a \$20 vehicle excise tax.

The county is restricted in its use of the revenue from the tax. Proceeds must be used for specific projects or improvements, which must be spelled out during a public hearing and the County Board's resolution. The tax may be used for:

- payment of the capital cost of a specific transportation project or improvement;
- payment of the costs, which may include both capital and operating costs, of a specific transit project or improvement;
- payment of the capital costs of a safe routes to school program; and
- payment of transit operating costs.

Washington County has had the 0.25% sales and use tax and the \$20 per vehicle excise tax since 2008, when it collected the tax under the auspices of the County Transit Improvement Board. Later, when that organization was disbanded in 2017, the county continued to collect the taxes on its own. Since then, it applied the proceeds to the development of the Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit project and operating costs for the Forest Lake and Newport transit stations.

The additional tax revenue would be used for transportation projects in the county, and would reduce the reliance on county general property taxes to pay for the principal and interest costs on debt that otherwise would be necessary to fund certain projects.

If the County Board agrees to adopt the additional tax following the public hearings, it would be implemented July 1. The Minnesota Department of Revenue will collect the revenue and remit it to the county quarterly.

**Contact: Wayne Sandberg, Deputy Public Works Director/County Engineer, 651-430-4339**

### **JL Theis, Inc., will do ADA, signal improvements at I-694, County State Aid Highway 10 ramps**

JL Theis, Inc., will make sidewalk and trail improvements in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and revamp the signal system at the east and west ramps at Interstate 694 and County State Aid Highway 10, or 10<sup>th</sup> Street, in Oakdale, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$478,035 contract with the company Feb. 11.

The project will include signal revisions and upgrades, including adding Flashing Yellow Arrow at both ramp intersections, construction of a new shared-use trail in the southwest quadrant of the west ramp intersection, and the reconstruction of sidewalk and trail ramps in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Benefits of the project include improvements for pedestrians, particularly those with disabilities, and a trail connection to the Cub Foods parking lot, which will benefit non-motorists as well as adjacent businesses.

The county applied for Municipal Agreement Program (MAP) funding through the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and MnDOT selected the project for funding. More than two-thirds of the cost of the project will be funded by that program, with the remainder coming from the county's highway state aid funding.

Construction on the project is expected to begin in September, when the adjacent project at the intersection of interstates 94, 494, and 694 is expected to be completed.

**Contact: Mitch Bartelt, Engineer, 651-430-4349**

### **Meyer Contracting, Inc., will make improvements to Bailey Road**

Meyer Contracting, Inc., will make improvements to Bailey Road, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to a \$762,117 contract with the company Feb. 11.

The County Highway 18 (Bailey Road) Intersection Improvement project will improve the safety and capacity of the county roads 18 and 20 (Bailey and Military Road) intersection in Newport east of where Bailey Road, Highway 61 and Interstate 494 meet.

The roadway has 10,600 vehicles on it each day, with that number forecasted to grow to 22,200 in 2040. The roadway provides access to neighborhoods, schools, churches, and businesses, and connects traffic to the freeway system and several north/south routes. It is also used frequently by pedestrians and bicyclists.

A corridor study was completed in 2017 that identified current and projected deficiencies and identified three near-term projects along the corridor. Those projects started with the Bailey Road Access Management Project constructed in 2019, with this project and the remaining Management and Safety Project slated for construction in 2020.

There are safety concerns at intersections along the roadway, including Military Road, Sterling Street, and driveways, and the roadway faces congestion during rush hour. The project is an opportunity for trail crossing improvements and needed pavement improvements.

The project will install a traffic signal at the current all-way stop, provide a northbound turn lane at Sterling Street, rehabilitate the pavement in the project area, and restripe turn lanes to better accommodate the right and left turning traffic in the area.

The Bailey Road Intersection Improvement project is funded by county highway state aid.

Also Feb. 11, the County Board approved a cooperative maintenance agreement with the City of Newport, which sets out the long-term maintenance responsibilities for Bailey Road and related pedestrian facilities.

**Contact: Nathan Arnold, Engineer, 651-430-4384**