

Washington County Historic Courthouse Restoration

Washington County supports \$2.5 million in state bonding for exterior building restoration and roof and dome replacement for the Washington County Historic Courthouse. This funding will be matched with \$2.5 million of Washington County funds.

Issue At-A Glance

- As the oldest standing courthouse in Minnesota, the Washington County Historic Courthouse conveys a sense of civic pride to residents and visitors from across the region.
- Washington County commissioned a complete building and site assessment for the Historic Courthouse. The resulting report concluded that, while the building has been well maintained, repairs to the exterior, roof, and dome are required.
- Repairs to the Historic Courthouse would ensure that the building will continue to serve as a historical touchstone, a tourism driver, and a state asset.

Needed Improvements

The exterior, roof, and dome of the Historic Courthouse is deteriorating due to its long service life.

- leaks in the roof require immediate replacement
- tuck pointing is required to address cracking and wear on the exterior walls
- complete restoration of the wooden dome at the peak of the roof



Washington County Courthouse Facts

- Oldest standing courthouse in Minnesota
- Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971
- Serves as a community gathering space, a history museum, and a tourist attraction
- Its rotating museum exhibits have highlighted history from all parts of Minnesota
- Draws almost 10,000 visitors per year

Contact

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Support

Local partners and agencies support this project. The general public has provided comments supporting the need for restoration and repairs to the Historic Courthouse.

Previous Consideration

Washington County included the Historic Courthouse restoration project in the 2021 legislative platform.

In 2019 and 2020, Washington County submitted the Historic Courthouse exterior restoration project to the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Program (Legacy Grants) and did not receive funding.

No Action

If funding is not allocated to Washington County, the proposed project will either be delayed, or scaled back significantly. Within five years, the deteriorating condition of the Historic Courthouse may force Washington County to close it.

Financial Implications

By replacing the roof and dome and restoring the brick and mortar, the county will extend the life of the building for almost a century, allowing residents and visitors to continue to enjoy it. Maintenance of the building, which the county is responsible for, would also be greatly reduced.