

2024-2029

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Washington County

 **Strategic  
Plan**



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## **Washington County Board of Commissioners**

Fran Miron, Stan Karwoski, Gary Kriesel, Karla Bigham, Michelle Clasen



## Letter from the Administrator

### *Introducing the new Countywide Strategic Plan: Our organization's North Star*

I am excited to share Washington County's newly developed Countywide Strategic Plan. This comprehensive roadmap outlines our organization's vision, mission, values, and goals for the future, and it reflects the collective efforts of our dedicated team.

To succeed in our mission, we must align ourselves internally. Our departments, divisions, and teams are interconnected, and collaboration is key. By fostering open communication, sharing knowledge, and breaking down silos, we can meet community needs with greater efficiency and effectiveness. With this plan as our North Star, we will continue to serve our communities and enhance the quality of life in Washington County.

We will engage with residents, listen to their concerns, and tailor our services to meet their needs. Whether it's enhancing public safety, improving infrastructure, or promoting health and well-being, our strategic plan guides us toward impactful outcomes.

I extend my thanks to all employees who participated in shaping this plan. Your insights, dedication, and commitment have been invaluable. Additionally, we incorporated feedback from our residents through the Resident Survey — a vital source of community input. This plan reflects our shared aspirations.

Our strategic plan is not static; it is a living document. As we begin implementing our initiatives, we will adapt, learn, and refine our approach. Our County Board will receive regular updates and progress reports to keep us accountable, transparent, and in alignment with our stated goals.

Let us embrace this exciting journey toward a stronger, more vibrant county. Together, we will build a bright future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin J. Corbid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Kevin Corbid**

County Administrator



## Letter from the Board Chair

### *Unveiling our vision for the future*

As elected representatives of this vibrant county, the Washington County Board of Commissioners is delighted to unveil our newly updated Countywide Strategic Plan. This plan is not just a document; it's a guide pointing toward our shared vision. It outlines our priorities, initiatives, and milestones, whether it's parks and library services, property and taxpayer services, or social services.

We recognize that planning is essential for progress. It ensures that we allocate resources wisely, anticipate challenges, and seize opportunities. Our community deserves nothing less than thoughtful, intentional planning. As stewards of your trust, we pledge to uphold this responsibility.

Our commitment extends beyond mere planning. We aspire to be an organization that constantly improves. By listening to your feedback, engaging with our employees, and learning from best practices, we will continue to evolve. Our goal is to enhance services, streamline processes, and elevate the quality of life for all.

Rest assured that your perspectives matter. We connected with community members and employees throughout this process, incorporating their insights, hopes, and concerns. We are confident that it reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of our county.

The County Board is excited about the possibilities, the impact, and the journey ahead. We invite you to join us. Your support, feedback, and active participation are invaluable. Let us work together to create a county we can all be proud of — a place where every resident thrives.

With great anticipation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stanley D. Karwoski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

**Stan Karwoski**

County Board Chair

# Our Mission, Vision, and Values

The county’s strategic plan is a living document that creates a framework and the steps needed to meet and exceed our community’s needs over the next several years.

The Mission tells us “what” the county does. It describes our purpose for being and keeps our elected officials and staff focused on the tasks to be done. The Vision tells us “where” we are going. It keeps us focused on the destination and the shared future we are trying to create. The Values tell us “how” to do what we’re doing. They remind us of the way we intend to serve the people and communities of Washington County and set expectations for decision-making and service delivery.



## Mission

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We strive to provide exceptional services that enhance quality of life and promote a safe, healthy, and welcoming community for all.



## Vision

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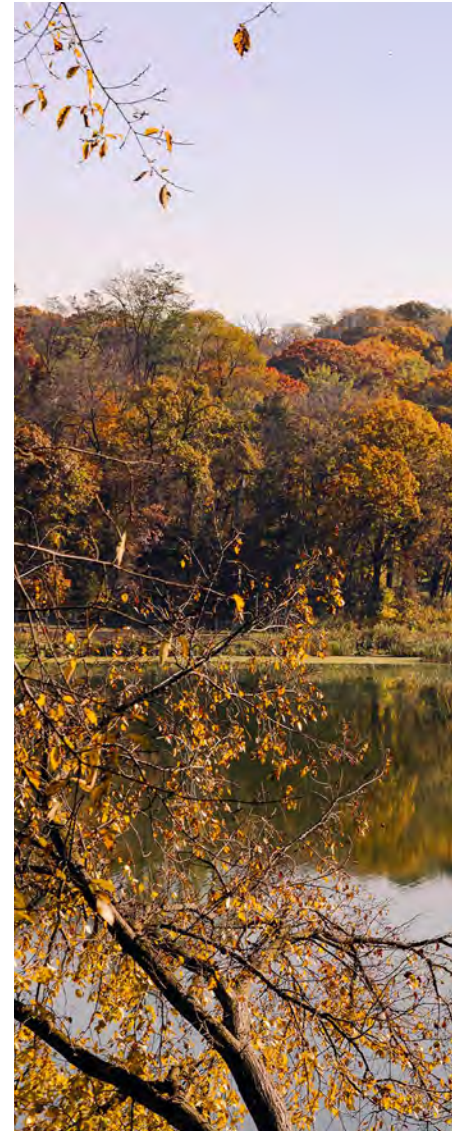
A vibrant county embracing the diversity of its communities, advancing equitable access to resources and opportunities, and prioritizing the sustainability of its natural environment.



## Values

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- **Caring:** We serve all with dignity, respect, and understanding.
- **Collaborative:** We connect with each other and our community to make intentional decisions.
- **Equitable:** We are committed to fostering an inclusive community and delivering accessible services to achieve equitable outcomes.
- **Ethical:** We act with integrity and make transparent decisions to build public trust.
- **Fiscally Responsible:** We support current and future generations through prudent financial decisions that respect public investments and advance the long-term interest of the community.
- **Responsive:** We anticipate evolving community needs and embrace innovative approaches to solve problems and promote positive change.
- **Sustainable:** We recognize the significance of our natural environment and are proactive in protecting our resources.



# Introduction

## *About Washington County*

Washington County, established in 1849 as one of Minnesota’s nine original counties, is located on the eastern edge of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It is the fifth largest county by population in the State of Minnesota, housing 4% of the state’s population and 8% of the Twin Cities region’s population. Washington County’s eastern border is defined by the scenic St. Croix River, which separates the State of Minnesota from Wisconsin.

The county employs approximately 1,400 employees and offers a full range of services, including property tax administration, law enforcement, corrections, public works, human services, parks, solid waste management, libraries, community health, and general administration.

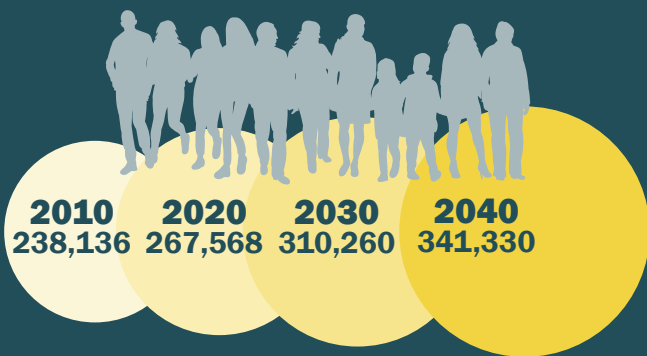
Washington County serves an estimated population of 280,325 (2023).<sup>1</sup> The county’s population has been steadily growing over the past several decades and is projected to grow by an additional 27% by 2040.<sup>2</sup> The county must plan to meet the needs of our growing community and continue to provide quality services for all.

Additionally, the county’s population is getting older and more racially and ethnically diverse. The population of people 65 and older is projected to grow by nearly 50% between 2020 and 2030, and the proportions of our population identifying as Black, Asian, Hispanic, and two or more races have all increased over the last decade.<sup>3</sup> Planning for the changing housing, transportation, and health care needs of an aging population, along with addressing racial disparities, is key to promoting a high quality of life for Washington County residents in the coming years.

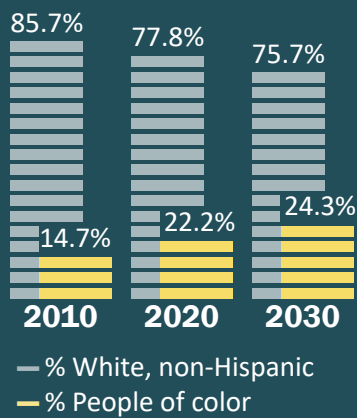
<sup>1</sup>Metropolitan Council Annual Population Estimates for 2023. <sup>2</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, Metropolitan Council and New Commissioner Guide 2022. <sup>3</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, Minnesota State Demographic Center.



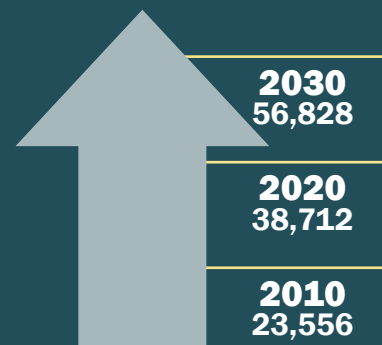
### Population + Projected Increase



### Population Diversity



### Population Age 65 and Over



Sources: All past and current populations - U.S. Census Bureau, population projected increase - Metropolitan Council, Diversity and Age 65+ projections - Minnesota State Demographic Center.



The Strategic plan provides a “North Star” for the organization that keeps us on track and working together to fulfill the county’s mission and reach our desired destination.

### *What is a Strategic Plan?*

A strategic plan helps us identify a shared vision for the future and align our resources around a set of clearly defined priorities, goals, and objectives with clear measures for tracking progress and accountability.

### *Putting the Plan into Action*

The Countywide Strategic Plan’s five-year timeline allows for thoughtful sequencing of initiatives to support positive outcomes for the Washington County community.

The county’s implementation plan will translate the priorities, goals, and objectives of the strategic plan into action steps with assigned responsibilities and established timelines. This will allow county departments to collaborate to achieve desired results. A process for regular monitoring and evaluation will be established to ensure continuous improvement and ongoing alignment with the county’s overarching goals.

Washington County will consult the strategic plan as part of our annual budget process to allow for responsible fund allocation to priorities consistent with community needs and the county’s long-term goals. The values expressed in this plan, inspired by in-depth stakeholder engagement, will drive county decision-making and service delivery. And, because the strategic plan is a living document, we will adapt and revise the plan as necessary to account for emerging needs and opportunities.

### *Keeping Track of Progress*

The county will monitor progress toward strategic plan goals and objectives and report on performance measures, maintaining transparency for and accountability to the public. County staff will provide regular updates to county leadership and present an annual progress report to the Board of Commissioners, which will be published on the county website. Community members can expect to understand the county’s progress toward our strategic priorities and the impacts for our residents, cities, towns, businesses, and the community overall.







# Planning Approach

The strategic planning process is as important as the final document itself. Input was incorporated from across the organization, including county employees, leadership, and the Board of Commissioners, leading the strategic plan to not only be better aligned with our organization's needs and aspirations, but to generate the organizational support necessary for its successful implementation.

Utilizing feedback from Washington County cities and townships, as well as the biennial Resident Survey, the county was also able to incorporate community input to ensure we are being responsive to community priorities and needs.

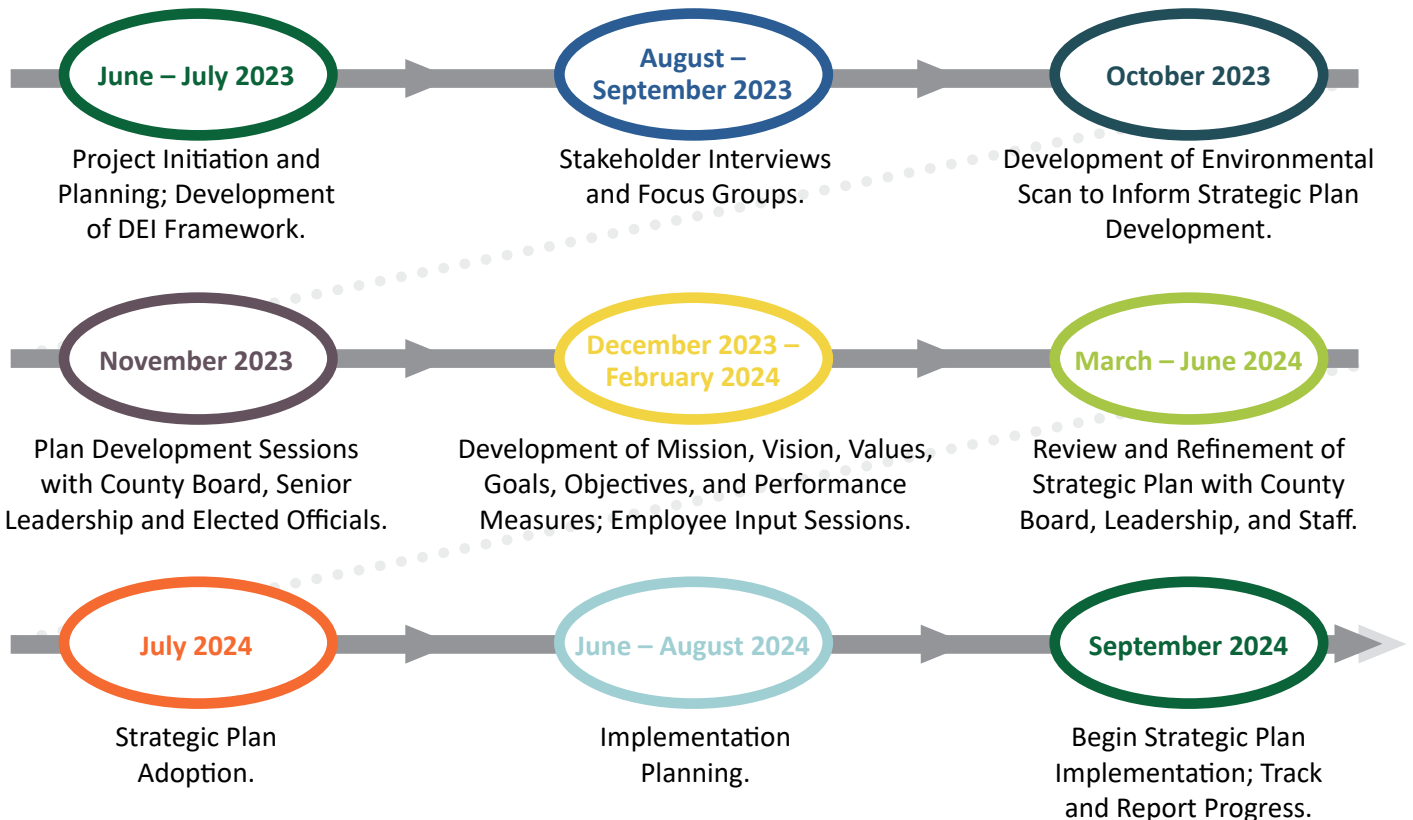


## Key Sources of Input

Stakeholders	Types of Engagement	Other Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Board</li> <li>• County Senior Leadership</li> <li>• Project Management Team</li> <li>• County Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Team</li> <li>• County Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)</li> <li>• County Department Head and Supervisors Group</li> <li>• County Employees</li> <li>• City and Township Administrators, Clerks, and Elected Officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual interviews</li> <li>• Focus Group Sessions</li> <li>• Survey and Ideas Wall</li> <li>• Strategic planning workshops</li> <li>• Facilitated Employee Input Sessions</li> <li>• Regular Updates</li> </ul>	<p><i>Include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident Survey (2022)</li> <li>• Employee Engagement Survey (2023)</li> <li>• Community Health Assessment (2019)</li> <li>• Maxfield Housing Needs Study (2022)</li> <li>• Washington County Operating and Capital Budget (2023)</li> <li>• Washington County Budget (2023-2024)</li> <li>• Washington County Interim Work Plan (2023)</li> <li>• Washington County Strategic Plan (2013)</li> <li>• Washington County 2040 Comprehensive Plan</li> </ul>

After the last strategic plan reached its sunset in 2020, the county wanted a fresh, sophisticated approach to strategic planning that accounts for the breadth and complexity of county services, reflects cultural shifts that impact the workplace and service delivery, and results in strategic priorities and actions that promote interdepartmental collaboration.

## Strategic Plan Timeline





# Commitment to DEI

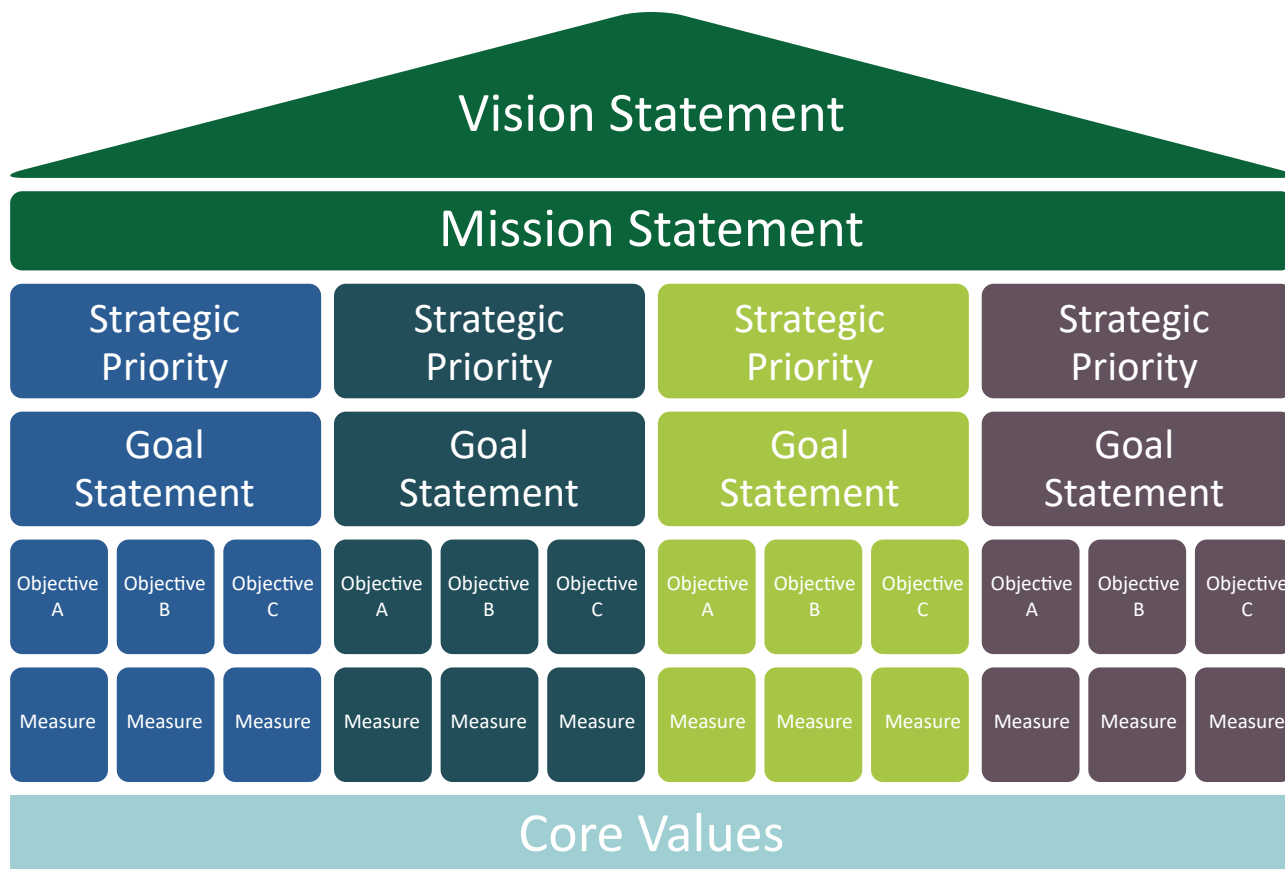
Washington County is committed to creating a vibrant workplace and community that practices engagement, representation, and service to all members inclusively and equitably with dignity and respect. We strive to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into all aspects of our work, and in this strategic plan it is deliberately woven into all our priorities, goals, and objectives.



# Strategic Plan

## *Priorities, Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures*

The County identified four **Strategic Priorities** or focus areas. These priorities and their supporting goals, objectives, and performance measures drive the county toward meaningful outcomes and big steps forward on the road to reaching our collective long-term vision. The **Goals** define the long-term outcome for each priority. The **Objectives** on the following pages define the actions the county will take to achieve the goals. And the **Performance Measures** define how we will track and report our progress within each priority.



### Strategic Priorities Overview

#### Organizational Excellence



**Goal:** Develop and sustain an environment where employees and the organization are equipped and supported to deliver outstanding service to everyone in Washington County.

#### Safe Communities and Thriving People



**Goal:** Ensure that everyone in Washington County has access to services that address inequities, foster well-being, and promote safety.

#### Strong and Sustainable Environment



**Goal:** Enhance and maintain investments in the built and natural environment to encourage responsible growth, accessibility, and resilient communities.

#### Financial Health and Capacity



**Goal:** Sustain strong financial policies and practices to provide and improve valued public services and make progress towards the county's five-year vision.



# Organizational Excellence

**GOAL:** Develop and sustain an environment where employees and the organization are equipped and supported to deliver outstanding service to everyone in Washington County.

## *Objective A*

Regularly evaluate employee compensation and strategically communicate the evaluation process so employees are appropriately and competitively compensated and understand the process behind setting salary and benefits.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Regularly review approved regional market surveys for salary and competitiveness.
2. Regularly review county benefit packages for competitiveness.
3. Create and distribute a yearly total compensation statement augmented by a WashNet article to employees.
4. Improve the Employee Engagement Survey pay and benefits score by 5% in 2026.

## *Objective B*

Evaluate and improve recruitment and retention practices to support qualified and high-performing employees and cultivate a vibrant, diverse, and knowledgeable workforce.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Reduction of annual turnover to seven county average or less.
2. Annual reduction in turnover of underrepresented employees.
3. Annual reduction in turnover of employees with less than two years of county service.
4. Track total number of ERG participants.
5. Track percentage of under represented population in workforce as compared to county demographics (End of year workforce data (disability, gender, black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC))
  - Track Employees and Leadership/Supervisors.
6. Track and regularly report on BIPOC demographic data with respect to those hired versus who applied.

### Objective C

Improve internal communication and augment existing efforts to ensure employees are highly engaged to increase employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity.

#### Performance Measures

1. Maintain Employee Engagement Survey (EES) participation above 80%.
2. Maintain EES Engagement Index above 70%.
3. Increase EES Communication score by 3% in 2026.
4. Improve EES score on countywide focus areas by 5% in 2026.
5. Develop action plan to address EES focus areas in 2026.
6. Identify employee-focused improvements to implement annually.
7. Increase BIPOC employees EES Engagement Index score by 5% in 2026.

### Objective D

Invest in employee development resources to assist employees in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to deliver exceptional service and grow in their careers.

#### Performance Measures

1. Track total number of employees who participate in employee Tuition Reimbursement program.
2. Annually increase percentage of county supervisors who have completed the Supervisor Academy.
3. Identify additional internal professional development opportunities by 2025.
4. Annually increase percentage of employees who have participated in DEI Foundational Training.



## Objective E

Leverage employee and departmental collaboration to continuously improve service delivery.

### Performance Measures

1. Improve “Teamwork between departments” metric in EES by 2% in 2026.
2. Every department completes a Department Strategic or Operational Plan by 2026.
3. Increased completion rate and timeliness of employee Performance Evaluations.
4. Track number of interdepartmental teams and workgroups.
5. Review and update organizational policies using DEI Framework by 2025.
6. Complete 2050 Comprehensive Plan by 2028.
7. Complete countywide continuous improvement plan by 2026.

## Objective G

Embed a DEI lens in county services, programming, policies, and practices to deliver equitable outcomes and foster an inclusive environment.

### Performance Measures

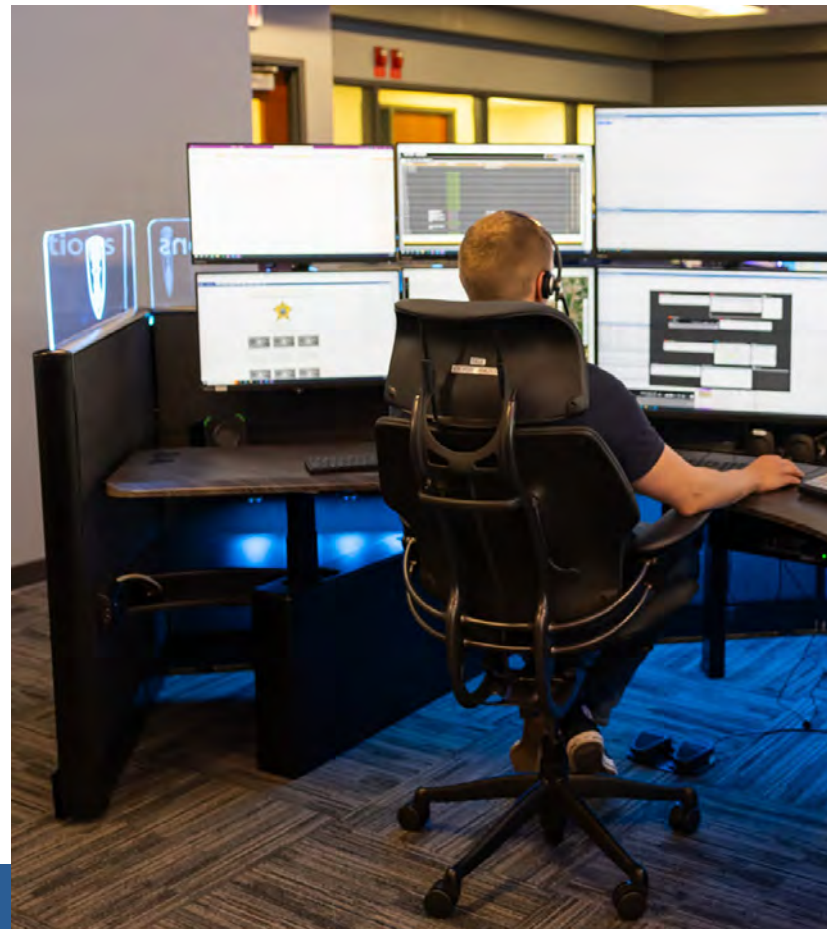
1. Develop countywide guidance on the use of Equity Toolkits in service delivery by 2026.
2. Develop training for the Equity Toolkit by 2025.
3. Track usage of DEI framework to inform policy and process changes.
4. Track total number of participants in ERGs and ERG activities.
5. Track percentage of employee participation in DEI training.
6. Improve EES DEI measures overall or by community by 5% in 2026.

## Objective F

Modernize and update the county’s technology and communication systems to improve user experience, create efficiencies, enhance data security, and better support county services.

### Performance Measures

1. Improve Evaluation Entry System rate of satisfaction with tools and technology by 5% in 2026.
2. Achieve Center for Internet Security (CIS) level 1 by December 2024 and level 2 by December 2025.
3. Integrate Power Business Intelligence into employee analytics by 2026.
4. Track annual percentage of employee participation in security training.
5. Migrate website domain to .gov in 2024.
6. Transition to SharePoint Online by December 2024.
7. Implementation of phone system by December 2024.
8. Implementation of secure printing solution by December 2025.
9. Track number of ways that residents can access services online.
10. Complete evaluation of current website in 2024.





## Objective H

Develop organizational capacity, understanding, and policies that support effective community engagement across diverse populations (BIPOC, seniors, people with disabilities, etc.)

### Performance Measures

1. Review existing policies around community engagement or external communication by 2025.
2. Develop baseline countywide understanding and guidance on the community engagement by 2025.
3. Board consideration of policy to compensate community members with lived experience for time and insight shared during engagement efforts by 2026.
4. Increase satisfaction with community “informing” and “listening” measures as measured through biennial Resident Survey.
5. Investigate opportunities for additional citizen advisory committees around key county initiatives.

## Objective I

Establish communication policies and strategies to better reach diverse populations (BIPOC, seniors, people with disabilities, non-native English speakers, etc.).

### Performance Measures

1. Develop policy for translating county communications into non-English languages based on best practices/county demographics by 2025.
2. Track percentage of identified documents translated by 2026.
3. Track people served annually by department with interpreter/translator county wide contracts.
4. Launch a county branding and marketing initiative including slogan development by year-end 2025.

## Objective J

Support and enhance strategies to support employee mental health and well-being.

### Performance Measures

1. Track participation levels in Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) (both Elevate and Sandcreek).
2. Increase annual participation in Employee Wellness programs.
3. Improve EES score regarding work/home balance by 5% in 2026.
4. Conduct demographic evaluation of EAP and wellness programs by 2026.





# Safe Communities & Thriving People

**GOAL:** Ensure that everyone in Washington County has access to services that address inequities, foster well-being, and promote safety.

## **Objective A**

Establish reliable and supportive housing options, including emergency housing, to provide shelter for “at-risk” individuals.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Increase number of single adult emergency housing beds for individuals to 30 by 2025.
2. Increase capacity of emergency family housing to 10-14 families by 2028.
3. Increase the number of county-sponsored supportive housing beds by 2028.
4. Reduction of eviction rates to pre-pandemic average by 2028.
5. Maintain level of 45% or more people exiting emergency housing into stable housing.
6. Reduce the average time a household is homeless (Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) measure).

## **Objective B**

Implement and scale solutions that respond to the growing needs and demand for services of aging populations to support their ability to continue living healthy and meaningful lives.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Track and increase number of senior-focused programs and activities throughout Washington County.
2. Increase number of outreach activities at senior buildings in Washington County (baseline of 40% of 64 senior buildings).
3. Improve Resident Survey measure on “Services provided to older adults” by 5% by 2027.
4. Maintain or increase American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Livability Index Score of 61 by 2028.
5. Track number of seniors accessing home and community-based services (Elderly Wavier and Alternative Care Grant).
6. Seek Board direction on increasing availability of locally sponsored, affordable transit options by 2029.

### Objective C

Consolidate and streamline county services at key access points to better respond to community members' needs in a holistic and efficient manner.

#### Performance Measures

1. Track staff referrals made for client assessment for services outside of initial presenting need/issue.
2. Annually increase the number of people served by cross-functional programs (referrals, etc.)
3. Increase percentage of services, programs, and access points that collaborate with each other by 2028.
4. Identify potential opportunities to connect information on shared clients across key access points by 2026.

### Objective D

Develop targeted prevention strategies for frequent users of services to improve outcomes and more effectively utilize resources.

#### Performance Measures

1. Define and identify people who frequently use our services by 2025.
2. Track number of individuals assigned intensive case management services.
3. Decrease number of touch-points for identified clients by 5% annually.

### Objective E

Expand upon existing service delivery options to better accommodate the needs and preferences of the people we serve.

#### Performance Measures

1. Examine current county service delivery approaches using DEI lens and conduct needs/gap analysis by 2026.
2. Improve Resident Survey measure on "Quality of County Services" by 2% in 2027.
3. Increase available community-based service accessibility options by 2027.

### Objective F

Proactively monitor and address emerging community needs to ensure effective service delivery focused on prevention, managing risk, and improving accessibility.

#### Performance Measures

1. Conduct a Community Health Assessment every three years.
2. Maintain or improve the percent of county residents that indicate their overall health is "very good" or "excellent."
3. Track community health and mortality rates.
4. Seek Board direction on conducting a new Transit Needs Assessment by 2027.

### Objective G

Identify and address priority areas to maintain a high level of public safety.

#### Performance Measures

1. Annual reduction in Group A and Group B crimes countywide.
2. Annual reduction in recidivism rates for probationers.
3. Annual reduction in criminal charging turnaround time.
4. Annual reduction in response times to 911 calls countywide.
5. Annual reduction in vehicular accidents resulting in fatalities or serious injuries.
6. Annual reduction in charges issued by Attorney's Office for identified priority areas.
7. Annual reduction in charges issued to juveniles.
8. Increase resident's perception of safety in selected priority areas in 2027.
9. Maintain absence of maltreatment recurrence rate above statewide performance average each year.





# Strong & Sustainable Environment

**GOAL:** Enhance and maintain investments in the built and natural environment to encourage growth, accessibility, and resilient communities.

## *Objective A*

Collaborate with the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) to promote an increase in affordable housing supply and provide a range of housing options.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Increased stock of affordable housing annually.  
2022 Total = 2,393, including 1,650 affordable rental units and 763 subsidized units.
  - Number of units that are at or below 30% area median income (AMI).
  - Number of units that are at or below 50% area median income (AMI).
2. CDA homeownership program helps 10 BIPOC households achieve homeownership by 2026.
3. Annual reduction in the homeownership gap in Washington County for BIPOC households.

## *Objective B*

Plan, build, and maintain spaces that promote livability such as parks, libraries, and open spaces to increase access and enhance community well-being.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Complete study exploring alternatives to park fees by 2026.
2. Miles of paved and turf trails built or maintained in parks annually.
3. Complete Park Grove and R.H. Stafford Library remodel projects by 2029.
4. Increase acres of parkland acquired annually as guided by county park master plans.
5. Increase acres of natural resources protected annually with Land and Water Legacy conservation easements.
6. Increase satisfaction level (or decrease dissatisfaction level) across measures in annual Parks Survey.
7. Audit all library spaces to ensure welcoming and accommodating by 2027.
8. Pilot increased hours of availability of library spaces by 2025.
9. Establish priorities for maintenance and stewardship of county parks and conservation easements through the development of a Natural Resource Protection and Stewardship System Framework.

## Objective C

Plan, build, and maintain county facilities that are accessible and adaptable to meet future demand and needs of the community.

### Performance Measures

1. Improve Facility Condition Index (FCI) annually.
2. Develop countywide signage and wayfinding plan by 2026.
3. Build five public-facing community service interview rooms by 2026.
4. Net reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GhG) emissions at county facilities by 30% (from 2018 baseline) by 2025.

## Objective D

Maintain, develop, and expand multimodal transportation options to improve ease of travel across the county.

### Performance Measures

1. Increase use of multimodal transportation as reported in biennial Resident Survey.
2. Miles of dedicated trails built as envisioned in bike and pedestrian plan.
3. Increase satisfaction level (or decrease dissatisfaction level) on transportation measures in biennial Resident Survey.
4. Improve trail and highway Pavement Condition Index (PCI) annually.
5. Maintain and improve level of city/township satisfaction around engagement for capital improvement projects.
6. Seek Board direction on approach to increasing transit access by 2026.



## Objective E

Develop and implement climate change strategies and policies to improve community resiliency and sustainability of natural resources.

### Performance Measures

1. Develop and adopt a comprehensive climate action plan which connects to other relevant county environment plans (2018 Energy Plan, etc.) by 2026.
2. Increase rate of waste landfill diversion by 2028.
3. Annually increase overall county recycling rate.
4. Track Greenhouse Gas (GhG) emissions per capita.
5. Increase number of environmental stewardship promotional activities to enhance community education and engagement.
6. Track amount of wood waste diverted to higher use.
7. Seek Board direction on adoption of a sustainable purchasing policy.
8. Seek Board direction on electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at county facilities.
9. Continue to leverage and support the work of the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board.

## Objective F

Partner with state and local agencies as envisioned in One Watershed One Plan to lead or support efforts to provide clean surface and groundwater of adequate supply to support human health, community growth, and a thriving natural environment.

### Performance Measures

1. Update and adopt countywide groundwater plan by 2025.
2. Annual participation in review of relevant plan updates for partner organizations (e.g. watershed plans, watershed rules, environmental review, wellhead protection plans).
3. Adopt smart salting practices to reduce salt usage and environmental impacts related to snow and ice control by 2025.
4. Maintain or increase number of initiatives annually aimed at improving water efficiency and/or water quality.
5. Decrease in percentage of impaired water bodies in Washington County as measured by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) biannually.
6. 100% of PFAS impacted public and private drinking water wells have adequate treatment.
7. Identify the outcomes from the recommendations from 1999 Water Governance Study and develop continued efforts to improve governance and accountability.



# Financial Health & Capacity

**GOAL:** Sustain strong financial policies and practices to provide and improve valued public services and make progress toward the county’s five-year vision.

## *Objective A*

Balance a responsible tax impact to support affordability and growth while meeting the increasing demand for services as the county grows in population and diversity.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Maintain steady Cost of Government Index (tax divided by personal income, no more than 5% annual increase).
2. Tax levy per capita at or below the seven-county metro average.
3. Review performance measures on services delivery by 2026 to ensure the county meets state and federal requirements.

## *Objective B*

Maintain responsible debt management to meet the county’s financing needs and payment obligations at the lowest reasonable cost.

### *Performance Measures*

1. Maintain highest-possible bond rating of AAA.
2. Maintain a per capita debt ratio below state average.
3. Maintain an unrestricted fund balance that meets county policy and state auditor recommendations.
4. Maintain a debt-service levy less than 15% of total county gross levy.

### Objective C

Partner with CDA and local municipalities to encourage responsible growth and economic development.

#### Performance Measures

1. Increase in Washington County’s overall median wage.
2. Track number of jobs.
3. Track annual taxbase growth.
4. Track number of jobs in Washington County higher than median wage.
5. Track number of new parcels created annually through Property Records and Taxpayer Services (PRTS) data.
6. Track value of new residential and commercial construction in county.
7. Track city/township review and participation in capital planning process.
8. Provide technical assistance to 125 businesses per year.

### Objective D

Ensure public engagement and transparency around county financial decision-making so that funding priorities reflect community needs.

#### Performance Measures

1. Implement OpenGov public budget portal by 2026 and track traffic to the OpenGov site once implemented.
2. Publish Board financial policies and practices on county website.
3. Measure public satisfaction with the county’s decision making through biennial Resident Survey.

### Objective E

Ensure flexibility in budgeting for new initiatives so departments can be more responsive to emerging and changing community needs.

#### Performance Measures

1. Annually measure county departments’ level of satisfaction with budget flexibility.
2. Report on initiatives funded countywide and within departments using Mission Directed Budget (MDB).

### Objective F

Strategically maximize state and federal resources and other grant funding to grow and sustain the county’s ability to fund programming, services, and infrastructure.

#### Performance Measures

1. Develop criteria and strategy for seeking grant funding by 2026.
2. Percentage of inter-governmental funding in county budget.
3. Number of grants applied for annually.
4. Value of grants received annually.
5. Number of new grants received between 2024 and 2029.





# Acknowledgments

This strategic plan is the result of the combined efforts of our county's elected officials, employees, and community stakeholders. Washington County extends our sincere thanks to everyone who dedicated their knowledge, guidance, and time over the past several months to bring it to life. Your contributions are the bricks that build the foundation for our future.

## *County Board of Commissioners*

Fran Miron (District 1), Stan Karwoski (District 2), Gary Kriesel (District 3), Karla Bigham (District 4), Michelle Clasen (District 5).

## *County Leadership*

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## *Project Management Team*

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