

JULY 2023 | VOL. 9

# OUR GREAT COMMUNITY

*Quarterly newsletter of Washington County, Wisconsin*  
**DISCOVER. CONNECT. PROSPER.**



**COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
JOSH SCHOEMANN**



## State Shared Revenue Reform, Next Up: Local Shared Services and Revenue

Dear Fellow Citizens,

For the better part of the past generation, local government funding in Wisconsin has been a broken system. Fortunately, just over a decade ago, Scott Walker's Act 10 provided local leaders the tools necessary to redirect needed resources to their most important priorities while providing property taxpayers relief. Twelve years later, those tools have been largely exhausted by most local governments, and the need for additional reform is urgent. In fact, many local governments are on the verge of a fiscal cliff, desperate for solutions. It's time for another major reform.

This past year, I was honored to be tapped as part of a group of statewide leaders in search of that major reform. In my role as President of the Wisconsin County Executives and Administrators Association, two years ago I formed a task force to work with leaders in the state capitol to develop a funding plan that could be a win both for the taxpayer, and the state and local governments - in that order. We have been working directly with state legislative leaders on comprehensive local government revenue reform, commonly referred to as shared revenue. As of this writing, I am pleased to report that the state legislature recently passed, and Governor Evers signed, a bi-partisan shared revenue reform plan, which is expected to be implemented in the state budget by the time you are reading this.

This is the largest revenue injection to your local services in a generation, and your municipal and county property taxes are not affected. This is a major achievement and should be celebrated for the bipartisan success that it is.

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Many local governments in Washington County tried to address the funding problem by garnering support of a non-binding referendum that appeared on our April ballot. Unfortunately, the confusing, advisory referendum pointed to the county as the root of the problem, inferring there is an abundance of sales tax that ought to be shared. This couldn't be further from the truth. No unit of government in Washington County has an abundance of revenue, in other words, no unit is overtaxing for existing services. Thankfully, the statewide shared revenue solution delivers 115% of what this advisory referendum was seeking. The advisory referendum proposed to send \$3 million to the municipalities, whereas the state legislature plan sends nearly \$3.5 million with annual growth. This is a tremendous win for local governments and taxpayers.

That said, there is a lot more work to be done. Town, village and city roads are in desperate need of repair, local fire and EMS companies need more financial support, and the effects of an economy on the verge of recession with spiking inflation are impacting governments, just like your households are feeling the pinch. However, simply throwing even more taxpayer money at these challenges is not the answer. Instead, as we look to develop solutions to these additional challenges, we will start by working toward streamlining duplicative government programs which result in over taxation. Secondly, we will come together to find ways to share services and revenue to live within our existing means. To be clear, these efforts are already in place. In the past year, the chief elected officials of your local and county governments have met three times, and are committed to meet regularly. To make real progress, all of us must work together.

It is misleading to suggest county funds appear from a source other than our hard-working citizens or that there is "free" money that can be shared without consequence. The county budgets the anticipated sales tax revenues to fund a portion of operating and capital budgets. While taxes are a necessary evil, in the past decade the county sales tax has been used by Washington County to achieve a \$4 million ongoing cut to county property tax collections, with the top priority of returning money to taxpayers. In fact, property taxes have been cut five times in the last ten years. This is living within our means in action.

Rather than solutions that simply steal money from one of your pockets as a taxpayer, and slide it over to the other pocket, we need to look for a bigger solution at a higher level. The passage of the state revenue reform package is a step in the right direction. As we continue the work to fully fund public safety and fix the local roads, I pledge to find ways to work together, to ensure your tax dollars are getting the biggest bang for the buck. Instead of a zero-sum game where one unit of government wins and another loses, we will find a win-win-win for the taxpayer, the county, and your town, village or city. After all, we are all in this together.

See the chart below to see the sizable increase the local cities, villages and towns will receive in **additional** shared revenue from the state revenue reform bill as compared to what local municipalities would have received per the advisory referendum.



Josh Schoemann  
County Executive

Municipality	Advisory Sales Tax		Shared Revenue	
	Referendum (1)		Increase (2)	
T Addison	\$	71,476	\$	87,863
T Barton	\$	62,631	\$	76,910
T Erin	\$	100,727	\$	94,440
T Farmington	\$	81,743	\$	91,428
T Germantown	\$	5,169	\$	34,068
T Hartford	\$	76,915	\$	86,724
T Jackson	\$	87,761	\$	98,154
T Kewaskum	\$	25,733	\$	49,052
T Polk	\$	111,855	\$	97,167
T Trenton	\$	103,107	\$	106,649
T Wayne	\$	48,487	\$	67,474
T West Bend	\$	139,375	\$	104,024
V Germantown	\$	482,666	\$	498,014
V Jackson	\$	159,455	\$	203,502
V Kewaskum	\$	78,571	\$	103,289
V Newburg	\$	18,910	\$	49,220
V Richfield	\$	297,981	\$	293,878
V Slinger	\$	132,569	\$	170,947
C Hartford	\$	301,255	\$	381,869
C West Bend	\$	618,299	\$	771,619
Total (municipalities)	\$	3,004,683	\$	3,466,291

(1) From "Share the Sales Tax" by  
Mid-Moraine Municipal Association:  
<https://town.farmington.wi.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Share-the-Sales-Tax-combined.pdf>  
(2) From May 17, 2023 Legislative Fiscal  
Bureau memo on Assembly Amendment 2 to  
Assembly Bill 245:  
<https://www.wicounties.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/17-WILeg-BL.pdf>



## Certified Copies of Birth, Marriage Certificates at Register of Deeds Office



Washington County Register of Deeds Sharon Martin reminds citizens that certified copies of birth and marriage certificates can be purchased from any county Register of Deeds office for Wisconsin records.

There are three ways to obtain vital records: in person at the Register of Deeds Office at 432 E. Washington St., Room 2084, West Bend; complete the application form from the website ([washcowisconsin.gov/ROD](http://washcowisconsin.gov/ROD)) and mail it with the fee; or order online with credit card through a secure county partner ([vitalchek.com](http://vitalchek.com)).

The Register of Deeds Office receives many inquiries asking how long parents have to wait to buy a newborn's birth certificate. Statewide issuance of vital birth records are available in our Washington County office and can be purchased within 5-7 days after the child is born.

Please contact the Register of Deeds Office at 262-335-4320 with any questions.

*Please note that the County Clerk, Register of Deeds, and County Treasurer's offices' hours of operation pilot program began in April. These offices are open Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and are closed on Fridays.*

## Support Local Businesses During Construction



Construction on Main Street in West Bend from Walnut Street to Hwy 33 is on track to conclude in October 2023. This road reconstruction project is in tandem with the Downtown Riverwalk project. While Main Street is closed to vehicles, they remain Open For Business! Construction and detours on Highway 60 in Jackson are also impacting businesses there. Please continue to support our local establishments as they experience fewer customers during the street construction projects!

For up-to-date information on the reconstruction of Main Street, visit the Downtown West Bend Association website at <https://www.downtownwestbend.com/>



Do you want the opportunity to win fun and exciting prizes every week? All you have to do is shop downtown! Downtown West Bend's "Summer Bingo Bonanza" participants have the chance to win a \$25.00 gift card from a downtown business, and \$25.00 in "Downtown Dollars" that can be spent at participating locations. Each month they will release up to four new bingo cards until October, which can be found online or in stores. The more places you visit and tasks you complete, the better your chances are of winning. Good luck and happy shopping!



Snap a photo of the QR code for full rules & contest info



## Glacier Hills County Park Lakefront Cabin Rentals



**Calling All Adventure Seekers!**

Rustic lakefront cabins are available to rent in the heart of Glacier Hills County Park, just a few miles from Holy Hill along Friess Lake. Come enjoy breathtaking views, wooded trails, and serene lakes and ponds. Still looking for more? Jump on the Ice Age Trail and adventure around the scenic Holy Hill. You won't be disappointed!

For more information, please contact Sam Murray at 262.808.7470 or scan the QR Code with your phone to view our page on Airbnb.



WASHINGTON COUNTY  
  
PARKS & TRAILS

## July 25-30 Summer Fun at the Washington County Fair!



**TUESDAY** FIREWORKS  
**WEDNESDAY** MILITARY DAY  
& HORSE PULL  
**THURSDAY** RODNEY ATKINS  
& MARK WILLS  
**FRIDAY** CHEVELLE  
**SATURDAY** BROTHERS OSBORNE  
**SUNDAY** TRUCK & TRACTOR PULL

**CARNIVAL SPECIALS ALL WEEK!**

**RIDE THE SHUTTLE FRIDAY AND SATURDAY  
AND EARN A FREE DRINK COUPON!**

**North Pick-up at West Bend High School | South Pick-up at Cabela's**

Full Schedule of Events online [wcfairpark.com/fair](https://wcfairpark.com/fair)  



# Highway Department Multi-jurisdictional Collaboration on Roundabout

## CTH Q and Hillside Road Roundabout Completed Ahead of Schedule

Through collaboration with the Village of Richfield, Village of Lisbon, Waukesha County, and WisDOT, Washington County strove to improve safety at the intersection of County Trunk Highway (CTH) Q and Hillside Road along the southern border of the Village of Richfield and Washington County. The intersection experienced a total of 30 crashes between 2014 and 2018 with 50% of them involving injuries. The intersection was formerly under two-way stop-control with stop signs on Hillside Road and traffic free-flowing on CTH Q. The intersection has been converted to a single-lane modern roundabout in effort to address the type of crashes that have been occurring as well as their severity. The project was funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) which involves a 90% federal/state and 10% local/municipal funding split.



The intersection of CTH Q and Hillside Road shown before and after roundabout construction.

Washington County would like to thank all parties involved for their collaboration to make this project a success and an improvement to safety for the traveling public. Washington County would also like to recognize Vinton Construction and Washington County Project Engineer Brad Abraham on their diligence to complete the project five weeks ahead of schedule and under budget.



The CTH Q and Hillside Road roundabout was opened to traffic on June 2, 2023.  
The project was completed five weeks ahead of schedule and under budget.



# Statewide Housing Bill Package

Excerpts from Legislative Housing Package Op-Ed by Rep. Rob Brooks



Housing that most families, seniors, and workers can afford is virtually nonexistent in Wisconsin due to a myriad of factors, posing a threat to the state's ability to attract and retain workers, students, businesses, and families.

Recently, five bills designed to address the state's workforce housing were released by the legislature. While I am not the principal author of these proposals, I serve as Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Housing and Real Estate and worked with stakeholders to draft these proposals. I appreciate County Executive Schoemann's efforts on the preparation of this housing package, and am proud of the final product and am confident these bills will increase housing access and affordability. The bills include:

- **LRB-2199** provides zero percent loans for the conversion and/or demolition of vacant commercial buildings to workforce housing and senior housing.
- **LRB-2771**, legislation passed and signed into law last session but was never funded, allocates funds to the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, to ensure qualified applications are awarded loans for the rehabilitation of residential properties.
- **LRB-1633** establishes a revolving loan fund to fund infrastructure (street, water, sewer, roads, sidewalks, etc.), for workforce and senior housing development.
- **LRB-2198**, the "Main Street Rehabilitation" bill provides no-interest loans for the rehabilitation of second and third story apartments over main level businesses.
- **LRB-0585** creates more certainty and predictability in the development-approval process by limiting the ability of "NIMBYs" ("Not in My Back Yard") to delay or terminate the housing development process.

Why should investing in housing initiatives and NIMBY reform be priorities for the state of Wisconsin?

Wisconsin employers are having difficulty recruiting to fill thousands of job openings due to a shortage of affordable housing options for workers. With housing inventory levels at historic lows, median home prices continuing to rise, and apartment rent increases outpacing wage growth, Wisconsin has a major workforce housing shortage problem.

New infrastructure financial tools will help increase this supply. Several of the bills in this package are part of a revolving loan fund. These properties remain on the tax roll and help fund schools, counties, cities, townships, etc., in the near-term. If the property were included in a TIF district, there would be no immediate value to the community as it would be removed from the tax rolls. By leveraging public funds with private investment, communities can increase the supply of workforce housing without relying solely on government funding.

One of the barriers to new home construction is opposition from existing residents or NIMBYs ("Not in My Back Yard"). Regardless of what development is being proposed, someone is bound to object. Why NIMBY reform is necessary:

**Uncertainty and unpredictability make housing less affordable.** Whether building a home, apartment project, or new subdivision, property owners spend a lot of time and money planning for a new construction or development project.

Because NIMBY opposition can impact the design, cost and the viability of the project, property owners need a predictable process that they can rely upon to obtain the necessary approvals.

**Waste of community investment in planning and zoning.** Communities often spend years and thousands of dollars on outside consultants, public hearings, and staff time to help develop a comprehensive plan to guide development, only to ignore the plan due to public opposition when a developer actually tries to build the type of housing specified in this plan.

**While developers are often the targets of NIMBYs, the victims of NIMBYism generally are those who would have occupied those new homes.** They include members of the community who are on fixed incomes, young families, educators, law enforcement officials, legislative staffers, and workers in the service industry who are looking to improve their lives by finding a better place to live and raise a family.

**By opposing development of new housing, NIMBYs limit the supply of housing necessary to meet demand, causing prices to escalate.** When people cannot afford to reside in the communities they work, they are forced to move further away, putting more vehicles on the road for longer commutes and creating more wear-and-tear on our roads.

A shortage of housing inventory, increased construction costs, and excessive government regulations are making it more difficult to attract and retain workers in Wisconsin and preventing more families from owning their own home. Regulations (federal, state, and local) add a colossal \$88,500 to the average cost of each new built home.

The bills in this package are much-needed first steps toward making ownership—a dream of so many Wisconsinites—a reality, as it streamlines government regulations, and makes housing more accessible.



# SAVE THE DATE!

HOMESTEAD HOLLOW COUNTY PARK

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4TH • 4-8:30PM

Proceeds support the Washington County Humane Society

## HOPS & HOUNDS!



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## OUR GREAT COMMUNITY

Listening Sessions with County Executive Josh Schoemann



**Friday, September 8**

**9AM - Alma's Café**

751 Church Street  
Allenton

**10:30AM - Kaffeehaus**

W140 N10393 Fond Du Lac Ave.  
Germantown

**1:30 - Sawmill Inn**

1729 Wolf Road  
Richfield



**Saturday, September 9**

**9AM - Jack Russell Memorial Library**

100 Park Avenue  
Hartford

**11AM - West Bend Community Library**

630 Poplar Street  
West Bend



Please join County Executive Josh Schoemann to voice your concerns, ask questions, or just listen!  
Questions or need for special accommodations? Call 262-306-2200

For more details visit:

[www.washcowisco.gov/departments/county\\_executive/events](http://www.washcowisco.gov/departments/county_executive/events)



SCAN ME





HERBERT J. TENNIES GOVERNMENT  
CENTER 432 EAST WASHINGTON STREET  
WEST BEND, WI 53095



DISCOVER. CONNECT. PROSPER.



The Oaks of Jackson  
Next Generation Housing is Underway!

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