

Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan

Conditions & Issues Volume



Recommended by Plan Commission and Adopted by Town Board: July 5, 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Before planning for the future of the Town of Cottage Grove recommences, the Town must first understand its history, conditions, and trends. Such exploration can help to identify and take advantage of the Town's assets and opportunities. It can also help prevent costly mistakes. This volume is the first of two parts of the *Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan*. This Conditions and Issues volume contains background information supporting the separate Vision and Directions volume. Appendix A includes the results of a 2021 community survey.

TOWN'S LOCATION AND CHARACTER

The Town of Cottage Grove is located in south-central Wisconsin, in eastern Dane County, about ten miles east of downtown Madison. The Town has a total area of 31.2 square miles. The Town is both a productive agricultural area and, as of the 2020 Census, home to a population of 3,791. Most residents' primary income is not derived from farming or agricultural-related business.

The Town is bisected by County Trunk Highway (CTH) N, which intersects with Interstate 90/94 to the north and Interstate 39/90 to the south. U.S. Highway (USH) 12/18 is a major east-west route used for travel to and from Madison, where many Town residents commute. USH 12/18 also connects with Interstate 39/90, meaning that the Town has excellent regional access and proximity to a major job center.

As shown in Map I, the Town more or less surrounds the Village of Cottage Grove, which is located near the Town's north edge. The Town also abuts the City of Madison and Village of McFarland on its west, and also abuts the towns of Blooming Grove, Sun Prairie, Deerfield, and Pleasant Springs. The Town of Cottage Grove includes the small unincorporated communities of Vilas, Door Creek, and Nora. Hoffman Corners is partially located in the Town; the other part is in the Town of Pleasant Springs.

While the Town is still predominantly agricultural, this character is challenged both by expansions of the Village of Cottage Grove, the City of Madison, and Village of McFarland. The urban service areas associated with the Village of Cottage Grove and the City of Madison, as shown in Map I, are areas within which sanitary sewer services from those places may be extended by law.

Most of the Town is in the extraterritorial jurisdictions of the Village of Cottage Grove, City of Madison, or Village of McFarland. Map I shows the extraterritorial jurisdictions as understood by the Village of Cottage Grove and City of Madison. Within their extraterritorial jurisdictions, cities and villages have certain powers under Wisconsin Statutes and case law to plan, prepare official maps for mapping future new and expanded roads, review subdivision plats and certified survey maps associated with land divisions, and zone lands in collaboration with the associated town. These extraterritorial jurisdictions therefore affect future land development potential in the Town of Cottage Grove.

The Town is divided within six different public school districts, with the bulk of the Town's population in the Monona Grove School District.

Map I: Jurisdictional Boundaries

CHAPTER TWO: DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROJECTIONS

This chapter gives an overview of demographic trends to understand changes taking place in the Town of Cottage Grove. It also includes projections of population, households, and employment. In recent years, the Town of Cottage Grove's population has been stable, its residents have aged, and its average household size has decreased. There are presently a relatively low number of households in child-bearing years. By 2040, the Town is projected to plateau at just under 4,000 persons and 1,600 households. These trends influence policies in the Vision and Directions volume of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

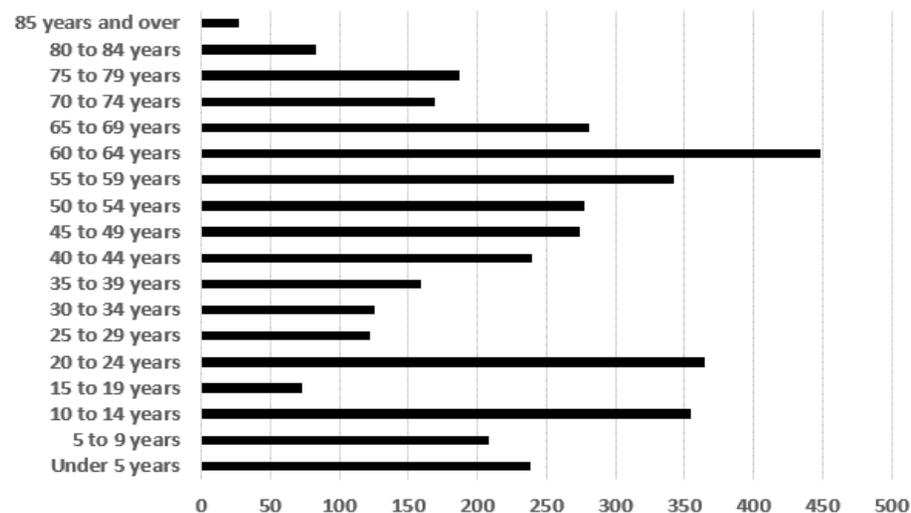
POPULATION

The Town's population in 2020 was 3,791 people, a decrease of 84 people from 3,875 in 2010. Figure 2-1 shows population by age group. The largest age groups in the Town were residents between 60-64, 20-24, and 10-14 years old. The distribution of population across age groups in the Town reflects an older overall population than the County and State, and a modest number of Town residents in child-bearing years.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Educational attainment in the Town has been increasing. Per the decennial U.S. Census, in 1990 about 80% of residents over age 25 had at least a high school diploma, which had increased to approximately 90% by 2000. Per the 2020 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, 97.4% are now high school graduates or higher. Furthermore, about a third (31.4%) of the population aged 18-24 are enrolled in college or graduate school. Residents are taking advantage of the educational opportunities in the Madison area.

Figure 2-1: Population by Age Group, Town of Cottage Grove, 2020



Source: 2020 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Figure 2-2 compares the age and sex distribution of the population in 2020 to Dane County and the State of Wisconsin. Trends in age distribution factor into future demand for housing, schools, park and recreational facilities and the provision of social services.

Figure 2-2: Age and Gender Statistics, 2020

	Town	County	State
Median Age	46.7	35.2	39.6
% under 18	21.3%	20.4%	21.9%
% over 65	18.8%	13.7%	16.9%
% female	49.5%	50.3%	50.2%

Source: 2020 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

The Town of Cottage Grove’s median age was 46.7 years old, several years older than the State and County’s median ages. The percentage of the Town’s population aged 18 and under was comparable to that of the County and the State. The percentage of the Town’s population that was aged 65 and older was much higher than that for the County, but only slightly higher than the State. Combined, these statistics suggest a large Town population of empty-nesters.

Nationwide trends show an aging population. Following this trend, the average age of the Town’s population has increased in the past twenty years. Over the past 20 years, the median age in the Town of Cottage Grove rose from 23.3 in 1970, to 38.1 in 2000, and to 46.7 in 2020. With prolonged life expectancy and declining birth rates, the median age will likely continue to rise.

Though 93% of the Town’s residents identify as white, the Town is becoming somewhat more ethnically and racially diverse. Between 2010 and 2020, Census information shows that more people of color have become Town residents. The Hispanic and American Indian populations almost doubled over the past decade, while the number of residents of African American or Asian descent remained stable.

Figure 2-3: Demographic Change, 1970-2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	1970 to 2020	2010 to 2020
Total Population							Change	
Town of Cottage Grove	1,818	2,952	3,525	3,839	3,875	3,791	108.5%	-2.2 %
Dane County	290,272	323,545	367,085	426,526	488,073	561,504	93.4%	15.0%
Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	33.4%	3.6%
Total Households							Change	
Town of Cottage Grove	491	930	1,134	1,338	1,463	1,477	200.8%	0.9%
Dane County	88,574	120,601	142,786	173,484	203,750	248,795	180.9%	22.1%
Wisconsin	1,414,105	1,652,261	1,822,118	2,084,544	2,279,768	2,727,726	92.9%	19.6%
Average Household Size							Change	
Town of Cottage Grove	3.76	3.28	3.11	2.87	2.65	2.85	-24.2%	7.5%
Dane County	3.09	2.56	2.46	2.37	2.33	2.33	-24.6%	0.0%
Wisconsin	3.2	2.77	2.61	2.5	2.43	2.38	-25.6%	-2.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1970-2010; 2020 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

As shown in Figure 2-4, median household income for residents was higher than either Dane County or the State in 2020. In addition to a higher median income, the Town of Cottage Grove has a larger proportion of those making \$150,000-\$199,999 and those making \$200,000 or more per year, and much fewer of those making under \$10,000 than the rest of the County and State. This suggests that there are numerous upper middle class residents and a much small number of impoverished households.

Figure 2-4: Household Income Levels, 2020

	Town of Cottage Grove		Dane County	Wisconsin
Income Level	Number	Percentage of Total Households in Unit of		
Less than \$10,000	21	1.4	4.2	4.6
\$10,000 - \$14,999	0	0.0	2.9	4.1
\$15,000 - \$24,999	24	1.6	6.2	8.6
\$25,000 - \$34,999	43	2.9	7.3	9.0
\$35,000 - \$49,999	188	12.7	11.5	13.0
\$50,000 - \$74,999	400	27.1	17.7	18.9
\$75,000 - \$99,999	242	16.4	14.0	14.1
\$100,000 - \$149,000	244	16.5	18.9	16.3
\$150,000 - \$199,999	183	12.4	8.3	6.1
\$200,000 or More	133	9.0	8.9	5.2
Total Households	1,477	100	100	100
Median Household		\$81,842	\$75,179	\$63,293

Source: 2020 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

PROJECTIONS

Population, household, and employment projections are used to shape the Town of Cottage Grove’s policies and initiatives, included in the Vision and Directions volume.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has made population and household projections for the Town and County through 2040 (see Figures 2-5 and 2-6). DOA projects the Town population to increase by 40 people by 2040. In contrast, DOA projects that Dane County will have the greatest population growth of any Wisconsin county through 2040. DOA projections have been reasonably accurate up to now, slightly over-projecting the Town’s actual 2020 population while under-projecting the County’s actual 2020 population.

Figure 2-5: Population Estimates and Projections, 2010-2040

	2010 Census	2020 DOA Projection	2020 Census	2025	2030	2035	2040
Town of Cottage Grove	3,875	3,935	3,791	3,980	4,010	4,000	3,975
Dane County	488,073	530,620	561,504	555,100	577,300	593,440	606,620

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Administration; 2020 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Figure 2-6 shows household projections in the Town. In 2013, the DOA projected 1,531 households in the Town by 2020, when there were in fact 1,477 households in the Town reported in the 2020 Census. By 2040, DOA projects the number of households in the Town of Cottage Grove to approach 1,600—123 more households than in 2020. Actual households formed in the Town will depend on a number of factors, including market conditions, demographic shifts, senior housing needs, zoning regulations, and attitudes towards growth. The number of households that will form will be very close to the number of housing units that get built.

Figure 2-6: Household Projections, 2010-2040

	2010 Census	2020 Census	2025	2030	2035	2040
Town of Cottage Grove	1,463	1,477	1,564	1,590	1,601	1,600
Dane County	203,750	248,795	240,920	252,479	261,392	268,335

Sources: Wisconsin Department of Administration; 2020 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) collects and projects non-farm employment, but only available at the County level. Figure 2-7 lists 2018 employment statistics by industry for Dane County. Dane County’s top employers are in the following industries: Educational and Health, Trade, Transportation, Utilities, Professional and Business Services, and Leisure and Hospitality. The lowest paying jobs in the region were in the Leisure and Hospitality industry, paying an estimated annual wage of \$18,161. The highest paying jobs were in the Information industry (\$97,099), which experienced a 33% increase in average yearly income per worker since 2013 (\$72,887). The Financial Activity industry is also high-paying with an average annual income of \$75,905—a per 19 increase since 2013, and Professional and Business Services (69,452), which experienced a 40% increase since 2013.

Figure 2-7: Employment by Industry in Dane County, 2018

Industry	Annual average	5-year change	Total Annual Payroll	Average Yearly Income Per Worker
Natural Resources	2,229	486	\$102,711,880	\$46,080
Construction	16,274	4,876	\$1,103,660,457	\$67,817
Manufacturing	24,500	1,213	\$1,470,238,201	\$60,010
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	53,958	3,829	\$2,365,055,357	\$43,831
Information	15,988	3,921	\$1,552,422,466	\$97,099
Financial Activity	21,975	-2,959	\$1,646,038,909	\$75,905
Professional and Business Services	49,551	9,273	\$3,441,398,216	\$69,452
Education and Health	85,347	6,871	\$4,956,769,994	\$58,078
Leisure and Hospitality	33,649	5,123	\$611,115,032	\$18,161
Other Services	11,338	303	\$450,495,310	\$39,733
Public Administration	21,420	-1,789	\$1,257,222,194	\$58,694

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, QCEW, June 2019

DWD has prepared 10-year employment projections for the South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area—a six county area comprised of Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Marquette, and Sauk Counties. Projected increases reflect a workforce necessary to provide day-to-day services for a growing and aging population and also reflect recent growth trends. The largest anticipated increases in employment are in the Education and Health, Professional and Business Services, and Leisure and Hospitality industries, shown below in Figure 2-8.

Figure 2-8: Projected Employment for the South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area

Industry	2016 Annual Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Increase
Natural Resources	6,164	6,765	601
Construction	19,831	21,696	1,865
Manufacturing	54,932	55,502	570
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	78,285	81,950	3,665
Information	17,035	19,265	2,230
Financial Activity	26,652	28,368	1,716
Professional and Business Services	55,945	65,839	9,894
Education and Health	113,033	124,652	11,619
Leisure and Hospitality	48,336	55,904	7,568
Other Services (except Government)	28,291	30,199	1,908
Public Administration	39,044	39,819	775
Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	23,617	25,922	2,375

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, QCEW, June 2019

CHAPTER THREE: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Chapter Three provides background information on agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in the Town of Cottage Grove. Cottage Grove is dominated by agricultural lands, glacial features (particularly wooded drumlins and wetlands), and soils underlain by sand and gravel deposits. These three elements provide the physical, social, and economic background that reflects the beginnings of the Town and much of its current character. This chapter helps guide associated goals, objectives, policies, and initiatives in the Vision and Directions volume.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY AND BACKGROUND

The heritage of the Town is centered on farming. Farming is also a way of life for many Town residents. Agriculture is a dominant feature of the landscape and enhances Cottage Grove's rural character. Many land use policies in the Town are designed to protect farmland; understanding who its farmers are and the economic reality they face is important for a successful farmland preservation program.

Character of Farming

The Census of Agriculture provides a county-wide assessment of agricultural trends. The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years with records reaching back to the 1960s.

Between 2007 and 2017, the number of farms, the number of acres in farmland, and the number of acres in cropland declined, continuing a decades-long trend. In 2017, the average acreage of a farm in Dane County was 197 acres, an 8% increase in size from 2012. The Census also reported 2,566 farm operators in 2017, a 7% decrease from 2012.

Dane County led the State in the market value of agricultural products sold, with an average of \$198,392 of products sold per farm in 2017, an 16% increase from 2012. Farming-related expenses per farm average about \$169,341, up 16% from 2012. Given that the average size of a farm has increased, an increase in both market value of agricultural products and production costs stands to reason. The average Dane County farm receives \$7,806 in government subsidies, which has risen 11% since 2012. Once totaled, the average net cash farm income earned by the average Dane County



farmer was \$42,704, up 5% since 2012, and reversing or at least stabilizing the downward trend from 2007 and 2012. Still, the prices of many farm commodities have been challenging in the years since 2017.

Given the economics of farming, an increasing number of farm operators must rely on income earned off the farm to help keep the farming operation viable. In 2017, 53% of Dane County farm operators had off-farm employment that supplemented their agricultural endeavors. Farming is also an aging occupation. In 2017, over 30% of farmers in Dane County were 65 and older compared to 12.3% of residents in Dane County and 16% of residents in the Town. Fewer young people are entering farming, suggesting that the Town will continue to witness the trend of larger farms and continued pressure to convert farmland to housing and other non-farm uses.

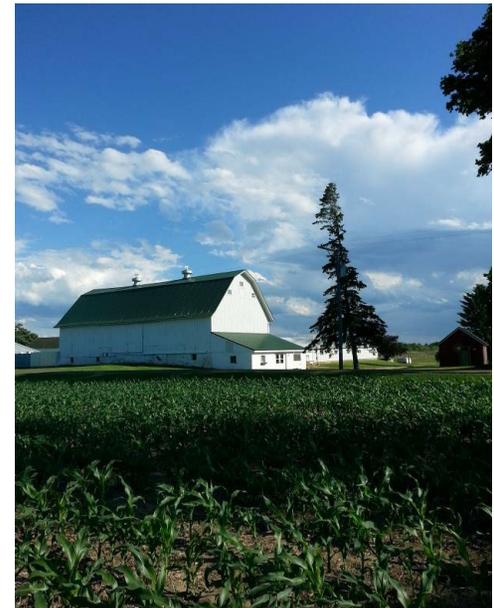
Soil Suitability for Agriculture

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) groups soils based on their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. These capability classifications are based on numerous criteria that include, but are not limited to, the soil's salinity; capacity to hold moisture; potential for erosion; depth, texture, and structure; as well as local climatic limitations (e.g., temperature and rainfall). Under this system of classification, soils are separated into eight classes or groups. The locations of soil groups I, II, III, and IV-VIII are indicated on Map 2.

The majority of the Town is underlain by group I and II soils, with concentrations in the southeast part of the Town. These soils are the best suited for the cultivation of crops. Group I soils have few limitations that restrict their use for cropland, can sustain a wide variety of plants, and are well suited for crops, pasture, and trees. Group II soils have moderate limitations that restrict the types of plants that can be grown or that require simple conservation practices or soil management techniques to prevent deterioration over time. However, these practices are generally easy to apply, and, therefore, these soils are still able to sustain cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands.

Group III soils in the Town often coincide with lower and wetter areas. Soils in Group III have limitations that, under natural circumstances, restrict the types of plants that can be grown, and/or that alter the timing of planting, tillage, and harvesting. However, with the application and careful management of special conservation practices, these soils may still be used for cultivated crops, pasture plants, woodlands, and range lands.

Soils in capability groups IV through VIII present increasingly severe limitations to the cultivation of crop. Soils in groups VI through VIII generally have limitations that entirely preclude their use for commercial plant production.



Map 2: Soil Suitability for Agriculture

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

The Town of Cottage Grove’s natural resources allow its residents to make their living, provide opportunities for recreation, enhance quality of life, and limit and direct future development. Understanding its natural resource base will help the Town achieve its vision, mitigate known environmental issues, and prevent mismanagement of its natural resource base. This prevents costly and difficult problems down the road.

Landforms and Topography

The surface geology and landforms in the region (and much of Wisconsin) were formed by the continental ice sheets that advanced and retreated from the region several times during the period of time known as the Pleistocene Epoch. Glaciated deposits are grouped into two categories depending on how the materials were moved. If the materials were transported by moving water, the resulting deposits are referred to as outwash deposits and are characterized by well-sorted materials and stratified layers. If the ice sheets physically moved or carried the materials, the deposits are unsorted and unstratified and are known as till deposits.

Glacial landforms in the Town of Cottage Grove are remarkable, varied, and widely dispersed. Drumlins oriented northeast to southwest are most prominent. Drumlins are small, uniform hills formed by glacial ice acting on underlying unconsolidated till or ground moraine, and are visible on Map 3 in the form of steep slopes.

Geology

The bedrock underlying the Town of Cottage Gove primarily consists of sandstone and limestone. Beneath these sedimentary rocks is the crystalline rock, which is impermeable to water. Rhyolite, granite, and basalt are common components.

The Pleistocene deposits generally cover the bedrock throughout the region in varying depths up to 400 feet. However, bedrock is near the surface in the southwest portion of the Town generally south of U.S. Highway 12/18. Isolated bedrock outcroppings are also located around Coyt Drive, near Jargo Road, Hope Road, and near the north end of the Village of Cottage Grove.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Resources

Much of the Town of Cottage Grove is underlain by sand and gravel. Map 2 indicates areas of potential sand deposits, based on NRCS data. Although most of the commercial sources of sand and gravel are generally associated with outwash



deposits, small, isolated pockets of sand and gravel can be found. The most promising hard rock resources are in the southern part of the Town.

Three sites in the Town have County permits for sand and gravel extraction (see Map 4 under “Mineral Extraction”). Page: 15
Two of the active quarries have a conditional use permit from the County. The first is the “Skaar Pit” at the northwest corner of Highways N and 12/18, operated by R.G. Huston Company. Its conditional use permit current extends to 2025. The second is the “Hellickson” pit at 2772 US Hwy 12 & 18, operated by Wade Cattell/Rocky Rights LLC. Its conditional use permit currently extends to 2028. The same site has a conditional use permit for a concrete batch plant, which was approved in July 2011 and extends for 25 years subject to review by the Town every 5 years. The “Gaston Quarry” at the corner of Gaston Road and Highway N, operated by R.G. Huston Company, is a non-conforming site. The Town has an ordinance regulating non-metallic mining that requires annual renewal of non-metallic mining permits.

The former “Nora Pit” off of Nora Road was operated by R.G. Huston Company from 1997 to 2009, but has since been reclaimed as farmland.

There are no metallic mineral deposits of economic value in or near the Town of Cottage Grove and no exploration has occurred.

Soil Types of Suitability for Development

Three predominant soil associations exist in the Town of Cottage Grove, as described in detail by a USDA soil survey of Dane County issued in 1978. Both soil associations feature landforms created by glacial activity in the Pleistocene (ice age) Epoch. Soil deposits tell the story of glacial activity here. Drumlins and moraines were formed thousands of years ago by the freezing and thawing of continental sheets of ice that dominated what is now Wisconsin.

The “Dodge – St. Charles – McHenry” soil association consists of deep silt loams (sand, silt and clay) that are generally well drained. It is a mostly sloping landscape with some areas of flat benches and depressions. Characterized on the surface by glacial drumlins, these mounds indicate the direction of the receding glacier.

The “Plano – Ringwood – Griswold” soil association is made up of gently sloping uplands, deep silt loams, draining in an irregular but south-westerly direction.

In addition, stream corridors in the Town are characterized by the “Batavia – Houghton – Dresden” soil association, which contains a mixture of silt loam and poorly drained muck soils that are underlain by silt, sand, and gravel.

Some soils within the Town pose limitations for development. Problems that limit development include slumping, poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes and high water tables. Hydric soils—those soils formed under wet conditions even if not technically wetland today—can be especially challenging for building. Hydric soils are shown in a beige color on Map 3, and are particularly prominent in the northeast part of the Town.

Groundwater

Groundwater in Dane County is contained in four geologically distinct aquifers. The lowest aquifer is composed primarily of sandstone and is the most productive aquifer. Aquifers closer to the surface tend to yield lesser amounts of water. Adequate supplies of groundwater for domestic, commercial, and agricultural uses are available.

Groundwater is plentiful throughout the Town. Although the groundwater quality is generally good it is susceptible to contamination from various point sources and non-point sources located within the Town of Cottage Grove and in the surrounding area. In 1987, the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey published a map of the State showing groundwater susceptibility, or the ease with which a contaminant can enter the groundwater, based on five features: depth to bedrock, bedrock type, depth to water table, soil characteristics, and surficial deposits. Although the map is not intended for site-specific use, it indicates that the region as a whole is quite susceptible.

Groundwater contamination from the nearby chemical plant, now owned by the Hydrite Chemical Company, prompted the Town to engage in a class-action lawsuit, finalized in 2004. The Town won their case, and as a result, the Hydrite Chemical Company was made to provide monetary compensation to replace contaminated well sites, as well as building a barrier control system to prevent contamination from happening in the future. This lawsuit also led to the Town receiving compensation for contamination, which was set aside in a separate account that acts solely as a fund for activities that directly stem from the damages created by contamination. The Town continues to closely monitor groundwater near this site.

The Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) maintains a database containing well information for many public and private wells in the State. There are a number of wells in the Town with elevated levels of nitrates and volatile organic compounds. Nitrates can commonly enter the groundwater from individual septic systems and from standard farming practices. The Town of Cottage Grove is located in an atrazine prohibition area as delineated by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Atrazine is a chemical used to grow corn and is found in groundwater in the region. Still, no wells in the Town are known to contain atrazine.

Surface Water

The Town of Cottage Grove is located in the Rock-Fox River Basin on a drainage divide between the Yahara River and Upper Koshkonong Creek watersheds.

Surface waters and drainageways are depicted on Map 3.

The principal streams are Koshkonong Creek to the east and Door Creek to the west. Koshkonong Creek is classified as a warm-water sport fishery, while Door Creek and Little Door Creek are classified as forage fisheries. Over the years, significant portions of each of these creeks

have been straightened to help drain the soil primarily for agricultural purposes. Numerous drainage ditches also empty into the unaltered reaches. The straightening and ditching has negatively affected water quality conditions and fish habitat.

Aside from two small ponds south of the Village, there are no significant open water bodies. Perennial and intermittent streams and drainage ditches drain much of the Town.

Wetlands

All known wetlands over five acres have been identified and mapped by WisDNR through its Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory, which was used to create the wetland layer on Map 3. These are general representations of wetlands, and do not reflect all wetlands within the Town. Most of the significant wetlands in the Town are associated with Door and Koshkonong Creeks and their tributaries. Building development and filling within wetlands is generally restricted.

Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates regional floodplain areas in the State. These are areas predicted to be inundated with flood waters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year). The State requires County, city, and village regulation of development in floodplains. Map 3 shows the boundaries of mapped floodplains in the Town of Cottage Grove, which are extensive around the Door and Koshkonong Creeks. The National Flood Insurance Program maps, produced by the FEMA, should be referenced for official delineation and elevations of floodplain boundaries. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains to prevent property damage and personal injury.

Map 3: Natural Resources and Building Limitations

Woodlands

Wood lots of varying sizes punctuate the generally agricultural and open landscape in the Town. Map 3 shows scattered areas of woodlands in solid green.

Steep Slopes

Areas of steep slopes, greater than 20% grade, are found in a distinctive pattern throughout the Town of Cottage Grove, as shown in red on Map 3. Glacial drumlins are the dominant feature forming the steeply sloped areas, and they are consistently in a northeast-southwest direction. The northwest corner of Town is the exception, where the land is more consistently flat.

Rare Species Occurrence and Protected Areas

Based on information contained in Wisconsin’s Natural Heritage Inventory there are one threatened animal specie and one rare plant specie within the Town (see Figure 3-1). There are no protected ecological landscapes within the Town. Protecting natural resources and open lands provides habitat and the likelihood of survival for these species and wildlife in general.

Figure 3-1: Rare and Threatened Species in Town of Cottage Grove

Scientific name	Common Name	State Status	Group Name
<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	Big Brown Bat	Threatened	Mammal
<i>Agastache nepetoides</i>	Giant Yellow Hyssop	Species of Concern	Plant

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Vegetation

Pre-settlement vegetation consisted primarily of prairies and oak savannas characterized by open grasslands with scattered bur and white oaks. Frequent wildfires kept intolerant trees and shrubs from gaining a foothold, thus sustaining largely a prairie environment. To a lesser extent, sedge meadows existed in the wetter parts of the prairie region.

Since European settlement, fires have largely been controlled resulting in a change in vegetation and many of the prairies have been converted to agricultural uses. Many of the areas not used for agricultural purposes have developed into dense, closed forest ecosystems. On dryer hillsides, forests of white, red and black oak dominate, while mesic forests of sugar maple, basswood, and elm are common on wetter sites.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Cottage Grove Area Historical Society maintains and encourages the preservation of the history and culture of the area for both the Village and Town of Cottage Grove. The headquarters is located in the historic Flynn Hall building, which served as an early Town and Village Hall. The Historical Society maintains historic documents for the area, writes a regular newsletter, and holds monthly meetings.

Cottage Grove Township was surveyed in 1834. It became a separate governmental township in 1849. It was originally settled by Yankees, Pennsylvania Dutch, Scottish-Irish, Irish, Norwegians, and Germans. A settlement grew up around Beecher stagecoach tavern at a junction of two main roads. Farming went from wheat to dairy to the cash crops seen today. Housing developments were first permitted in large numbers by around 1970. Farmland preservation efforts, beginning in the early 1980s, limited development in the Town.

The settlement of Cottage Grove was created when the railroad went through in 1881. This was a shipping center for farm goods until the advent of semi-trucks. The railroad tracks east of what became the Village later became the Glacial Drumlin bike trail. The Village was legally incorporated in 1924.

There are no historic sites in the Town of Cottage Grove that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the State Historical Society's Architecture & History Inventory (AHI), there are many structures with some historical significance. Some of these are located along U.S. Highway 12/18 and were identified during the highway improvement project. This inventory was last updated in 2012 and can be found within the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) U.S. 12 Corridor Study, completed in September 2014.

The Town has no program or incentives for the preservation or restoration of historic buildings, or for archaeological resources.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Based on archaeological evidence, the first inhabitants to what is now Wisconsin arrived over 10,000 years ago when the continental glaciers retreated northward. People living during the Woodland Period often built burial mounds. Although single mounds have been found, most occurred in groups, in some cases of 30 or more. The Town is in an area of the State where Indian mounds are most common.

No systematic archaeological survey has been conducted in or around the Town of Cottage Grove. Based on a review of records maintained by the State Historical Society, there are a number of known sites of archaeological significance. These sites include cemeteries/burial sites, effigy mounds, and campsites/villages. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not adversely affect archaeological sites on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Archaeological sites can be protected during the course of State agency activities if the sites have been recorded with the Office of the State Archaeologist. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from encroachment by any type of development. Consultation is required for many archeological and burial sites and at a minimum is requested by the State Historical Society for any of the other sites. Cemeteries and some burial sites have also been identified by field survey and the ASI database.

CHAPTER FOUR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The condition of the local economy directly influences local growth and development, and therefore is a central element of planning for a community's future. The Town's internal economy is driven largely by agriculture with mineral extraction and other small enterprises scattered throughout the Town. Most Town residents work in Madison or other suburbs. The Town has some strengths for attracting future non-farm economic development, including its good transportation access, abundance of land, and proximity to a major urban area and population center.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Agriculture is a significant part of the local economy and employment. Many of the Town's preferred types of businesses relate to agricultural production, processing, research, and support services. These are compatible with the Town's rural character and its desire to maintain the agricultural base. Other types of businesses may provide support services and products for residents of the Town. Commercial uses of a generally rural purpose (septic services, farm produce, landscaping, plant nursery, etc.) are distributed in small parcels, typically located at road intersections. Industrial uses are almost nonexistent, but there are a couple of storage enterprises located on the west side of Town and more emerging along North Star Road north of Highway 12/18.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town's strengths for economic development relate to its location—along major highways, and close to the City of Madison, the State capital, and the University of Wisconsin. The Town is able to exemplify rural values, while taking advantage of the metropolitan area's transportation network, education system, workforce reliability, and social environment. In particular, the Highway 12/18 corridor in general and the interchange area of Highway 12/18/N in particular provide an economic development focus for the Town. The abundance of prime farmland is a strength supporting agricultural businesses in this and other areas.

The Town's weaknesses for economic development relate to a wide range of issues, some of which are unique to the Town of Cottage Grove and others common to many towns in the region. New, non-farm businesses may be reluctant to locate in the Town because a lack of public water and sewer, a modest and low-density local population, competition with and annexation from nearby urban communities, zoning restrictions, and current lack of development incentives such as tax incremental financing (though new pathways may be opening based on Town growth). Additionally, volatile agricultural markets and the aging farming population are weaknesses of the Town for ag-based economic development.

EXISTING BUSINESSES AND LOCATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are several types of businesses currently located throughout the Town. A number of processing, contracting, wholesaling, and other related businesses are located southwest of the Coffeytown Road and County Highway N intersection. South of Highway 12/18, there is a bus company along Siggelkow Road and a landscaping company and construction company along Highway N, just north of the Town limits. In the western area of the Town, along Vilas Hope Road, are a swimming pool supply store, an excavation and paving company, and an auto repair shop. The east part of the Town includes a restaurant on Nora Road, a sports bar and bowling alley on Baxter Road, and an HVAC contractor on Cottage Grove Road. Newer rural business and storage uses have recently be located and proposed near the Highway 12/18/N interchange, including along North Star Road.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT DEMAND TRENDS

On average, approximately 11 acres per year in the Town are rezoned for commercial land uses—or about 100 acres per decade. Recent rezonings have generally been for storage, contractor, and similar uses.

The Town anticipates similar demand for commercial zoning and uses going forward. Much of this activity will be driven by nearby urban areas as they continue to grow. Businesses with outdoor activity and storage areas, minimal water or sewage disposal needs, potentially significant noise or odor impacts, desire to avoid stricter city or village design requirements, and/or connection to the agricultural economy will be particularly attracted to the Town.

The Projected Land Use Demand and Supply section in Chapter Five—Land Use contains more information and projections of commercial development land use needs for the Town.

CHAPTER FIVE: LAND USE

This chapter contains a compilation of background information about land use within the Town of Cottage Grove. The chapter includes a map that shows existing land uses and provides other related land use data and projections. The Town’s land use pattern is largely agricultural, though it also contains areas of non-farm development including rural residential subdivisions and businesses.

EXISTING LAND USE

An accurate depiction of the Town’s existing land use pattern is the first step in planning for a desired future land use pattern. As presented in Map 4 and Figure 5-1, a vast majority of the Town of Cottage Grove remains in open space uses—cropland, pasture, and woodlands.

Agricultural uses diminished by around 400 acres and woodlands by around 300 acres between 2010 and 2020. Most of the developed land use acreage in the Town did not change much over this same period. This suggests that most of the reduction in agricultural and woodland acreage is likely due to annexation of Town lands—mostly to the Village of Cottage Grove. There also may have been some measuring differences.

Within the Town, clusters of non-farm residential development are within historic crossroads communities, along County highways, or in newer subdivisions. Larger subdivisions are located in the northwest corner of the Town, due east of the Village along CTH BB, and south of the Village west of CTH N.

Non-farm commercial and industrial uses are relatively few in the Town. These are located directly south of the Village, near the U.S. Highway 12/18 and CTH N interchange, and near the Town’s southwest corner and City of Madison along CTH AB and U.S. Highway 12/18.

Figure 5-1: Existing Land Use, Town of Cottage Grove, 2010-2020

Land Use Category	2010 Acres	2015 Acres	2020 Acres
Agriculture	11,121	11,020	10,734
Commercial	91	87	73
Industrial	9	9	8
Institutional/Governmental	47	47	65
Mineral Extraction	121	69	98
Other Open Land	4,642	4,939	4,570
Recreation	215	214	234
Residential	1,466	1,423	1,506
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	1,078	1,071	1,037
Water	259	254	343
Woodlands	1,588	1,302	1,298
Total	20,637	20,436	19,966

Source: Capital Area Regional Planning Commission

Map 4: Existing Land Use, 2020

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL LAND USE CONFLICTS

Given the rural character of the Town of Cottage Grove and sizable residential population, there is potential for a range of conflicts. First, the dust, noise, and traffic of mineral extraction operations can negatively affect residential uses if situated too closely. Second, more intensive agricultural operations can also conflict with nearby residential uses and neighborhoods. Activities that make up the day-to-day operation of a farm—slow farm machinery on roads, farm odors associated with the stockpiling and spreading of manure, livestock noise—are sometimes considered nuisances by new, non-farming neighbors. Third, commercial and residential developments that are not in keeping with the Town’s rural form (e.g., geographic context; building scale, design, and materials; landscape features) can negatively impact visual character and residents’ quality of life.

There are a number of potential conflicts between the development vision, plans, and actions of the Village of Cottage Grove and those of the Town near the shared municipal boundary. Past annexations of land from the Town to the Village have resulted in conflict and concern. The Village’s 2020 comprehensive plan update calls for publicly-sewered neighborhood development extending west of the Village to Vilas Road and east to Kennedy Road to the east of the Village. That same plan advises planned neighborhood development, single-family (sewered), and future development areas south of the Village. The presumption is that these planned developments would follow annexation of the land to the Village.

There is potential for similar conflicts resulting from annexation to the City of Madison (none has occurred to date) and Village of McFarland (recently annexed land in the southwest corner of the Town).

As shown in Figure 5-1, the Town lost approximately 670 acres, roughly 3% of the Town’s area, between 2010 and 2020 due to annexation. Most of this was to the Village of Cottage Grove, but some Town land was also annexed to the Village of McFarland. In total, this area is slightly larger than a section of land or one square mile. As a result, the Town’s land area decreased from 32.25 square miles in 2010 to 31.2 square miles in 2020.

COMPLIANCE WITH FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLANNING AND ZONING RULES

The Town of Cottage Grove participates in the State’s farmland preservation program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP). By administrative rule, DATCP generally requires that at least 80% of the area planned for agricultural preservation in each town be zoned within a certified farmland preservation zoning district. As of August 2021—and based on the December 2020 Future Land Use Map—Dane County estimates that the Town of Cottage Grove has 82.59% of its planned “Agricultural Preservation Area” zoned within a certified farmland preservation zoning district (e.g., FP-35). This percentage decreases each time any land in the “Agricultural Preservation Area” is rezoned, such as to enable new housing in such areas per the Town’s density policy. In its update to the Future Land Use map (Map 10) in the Visions and Directions volume, the Town worked to better match areas planned as “Agricultural Preservation Areas” with current land use and zoning. As suggested in Figure 5-2, there are a number of discrepancies.

AREAS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXISTING ZONING, EXISTING LAND USE, AND FUTURE LAND USE

Figure 5-2 highlights particular parts the Town with notable differences among existing land use (as shown on Map 4), existing zoning, and/or future land use based on current Town and County plans as of the date this Conditions and Issues volume was prepared (i.e., before Map 10 in the Vision and Directions volume was updated). These differences suggested areas of investigation for change to the Future Land Use map in the updated Vision and Directions volume.

Figure 5-2: Areas of Difference between Existing Land Use, Existing Zoning, and/or 2015-Planned Future Land Use

Area	Currently USED as...	Currently ZONED as...	PLANNED as...in 2015 Plan
Collection of 17 parcels southeast of the County Highway BB/Vilas Hope Road Intersection	Single-family homes A few commercial uses	SFR-08, RR-2, SFR-1, HC, LC,	Agricultural Preservation Area
Collection of 15 parcels around Vilas Hope Road, west of Door Creek Golf Course	Single-family homes One commercial parcel	SFR-08, TFR-08, HC	Agricultural Preservation Area
Collection of 9 parcels along Skarstinden Road	Single-family homes	SFR-1, RR-2	Agricultural Preservation Area
Collection of 10 parcels along Laundon Road, south of the intersection with Uphoff Road	Single-family homes A construction business	SFR-1, RR-1, RR-2	Agricultural Preservation Area
Collection of 12-14 parcels northwest of the Laundon Road and Uphoff Road intersection	Single-family homes Commercial uses	RR-2, SFR-08, SFR-1, RM-8, RR-8	Agricultural Preservation Area
Collection of 20 parcels along Sunset Ridge and Circle High	Northridge Park plat Single-family homes	SFR-1, RR-2, SFR-08	Agricultural Preservation Area
Collection of 13-15 parcels along West Jargo Road, south of the intersection with North Jargo Road	Single-family homes	RR-4, RR-2, SFR-08, RM-8, RR-2	Agricultural Preservation Area
Collection of 18-20 parcels along Baxter Road, north of the American Heritage subdivision	Single-family homes A banquet hall, sports bar, and bowling alley with baseball diamonds	RR-4, RR-2, RR-1, GC, TFR- 08, RM-16, SFR-08	Agricultural Preservation Area Neigh. Development Area Commercial Development Area

On the Future Land Use map within the Vision and Directions volume of the 2022 *Plan* update, the Town redesignated some to all parcels in the gold-shaded rows because they were close to other areas with similar future land use designation(s), in a subdivision plat, having little apparent relationship to agriculture or divisions allowed in the Agricultural Preservation Area, and/or where the change is unlikely to create unwanted impacts on nearby lands. This could include, for example, map changes that may create a potential “beachhead” for adjacent map changes that may not fit within the Town’s vision or intergovernmental relationships.

“SMART GROWTH” AREAS

The Town of Cottage Grove has attempted to maintain balance between preserving agriculture, maintaining the rural setting valued by its residents, and addressing pressure (and tax base growth) from housing and other development. The Town, through its plans, has identified certain areas within which it intends to accommodate housing demand. The Town has indicated an interest in limiting development in other areas, and even shifting limited development rights (residential density units) away from those areas. This system is described more completely in the Vision and Directions volume of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

Cottage Grove has limited areas that are appropriate for redevelopment. Extraction sites are subject to County-approved reclamation plans.

In general, the Town has identified its planned “Neighborhood Development Areas” on Map 10 (and use of transferred development rights to develop within them), its Highway 12/18/N interchange “Commercial Development Area”, and its limited redevelopment sites as “smart growth” development areas, as required by Wisconsin Statute.

LANDS WITH LEGAL DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS

Over the past few decades, the Town and County have applied deed restrictions to lands as part of rezoning and land division approvals. These deed restrictions sometimes limit future home building or divisions to aid in implementing the Town’s density policy. Other deed restrictions limit the range of future land uses, particularly in association with commercial rezonings, or address other concerns. Documenting the type and location of these deed restrictions will assist the Town and property owners and development interests with future planning decisions.

Map 5 shows the locations and type of development restrictions that have been applied through rezoning and land division approvals, based on Dane County zoning records. The types shown on the map are defined as follows:

- **Limit Land Use.** Limits the future use of land, generally to fewer uses than the zoning for the land would allow. Often used in association with rezoning for commercial purposes.
- **Prohibit Development.** Restricts future non-farm development, usually residential development, when a rezoning and/or land division proposal expires the number of Residential Density Units (RDUs) on a farm parcel, including a sending area for RDUs under the Town’s Transfer of Development Rights program.
- **Prohibit Land Division.** Restricts the future division of land, by certified survey map or subdivision plat, into smaller lots or parcels.
- **Transfer of Development Rights.** Receiving areas under the Town’s Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, where there has been a recorded notice.

- **Other:** Deed restrictions that do not fall into one of the above categories.

Map 5 is not exhaustive of all parcels which may have development restrictions in the Town. Other deed restrictions, conservation easements, and other land use restrictions have been applied to properties outside of such land division/rezoning approvals, which are not reflected on this map. Uncovering such restrictions would essentially require a title search on every parcel in the Town, which is beyond the scope of this *Comprehensive Plan* update.

Map 5: Deed Restrictions Applied through Rezoning and Land Division Processes

TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS IN LAND USE DEMAND

Recent Land Development Trends

From 2010 to 2020, 70 building permits were issued for new houses in the Town, an average of seven per year. Additionally, eight parcels encompassing 67 acres were rezoned for commercial land uses. Most land for new residential uses or new or expanded commercial uses was previously used for agriculture.

CARPC suggests through its land use inventories that the acreage in the Town devoted to commercial uses decreased by 20% (18 acres) between 2010 and 2020. This is a reversal of the trend from 2005 to 2010, in which the Town saw commercial uses increasing by 57.9 acres.

Projected Land Use Demand

Per requirements under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, this *Plan* includes projected demand through the year 2045 for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses. Projected demand is then compared to the potential supply of land to accommodate such demand, as presented in the Land Use chapter of the Vision and Directions volume of the *Plan*.

Projected rural residential land use demand in five-year increments is presented in Figure 5-3. This does not include residential development demand in the Cottage Grove area that will be served by public sanitary sewer and water facilities, which could far exceed the demand for rural residences/acreage in Figure 5-3. In preparing this figure, the Town’s consultant projected that 7 new single-family homes would be built each year and that each home would occupy a 1½ acre lot. The calculations in Figure 5-3 also include a flexibility factor, which doubles the number of acres required for these additional dwelling units.

Figure 5-3: Projected Rural Residential Land Use Demand, Town of Cottage Grove

	From 2020 to...				
	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Additional Dwelling Units Projected	35	70	105	140	175
Acres Required for Additional Dwelling Units	53	105	158	210	263
Acres Required with Flexibility Factor (2x)	105	210	315	420	525

Source: MDRoffers Consulting

Figure 5-3 suggests that the Town may wish to plan for 525 acres of undeveloped land for new housing development, in its update to the Future Land Use map and associated policies in the Vision and Directions volume of this *Plan*. This should include both undeveloped lands identified on

the Future Land Use map as “Neighborhood Development Areas,” where residential subdivisions would be focused, and lands planned as “Agricultural Preservation Areas” without development restrictions, where new homes are allowed at a maximum density of one home per 35 acres. To the extent the updated Future Land Use map is crafted using these guidelines, future development allowed under this *Comprehensive Plan* will provide enough capacity for the expected rural residential land use demand over the next 25 years.

Projected commercial land use demand in five-year increments is presented in Figure 5-4. This includes light industrial uses, but not institutional, governmental, or utility uses. This also does not include commercial and industrial development demand in the Cottage Grove area that will be served by public sanitary sewer and water facilities, which could far exceed the demand for “rural” commercial acreage in Figure 5-4.

Figure 5-4: Projected Rural Commercial Land Use Demand, Town of Cottage Grove

	From 2020 to...				
	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Acres Required for New or Expanded Commercial Uses	50	100	150	200	250
Acres Required with Flexibility Factor (2x)	100	200	300	400	500

Source: MDRoffers Consulting

The projections in Figure 5-4 are based on recent trends in the Town, the Town’s desire for some commercial development, the large land area needs of most rural commercial uses, and some attractive lands for non-residential development particularly near the Highway 12/18/N interchange. No intensive industrial (e.g., manufacturing) development demand is forecast for lands that will remain in the Town, given the public utilities these uses generally require.

In total, Figure 5-4 suggests that the Town may wish to plan for 500 acres of undeveloped land for new commercial development, as it updates the Future Land Use map and associated policies in the Vision and Directions volume of this *Plan*. Projected commercial development demand should generally be fulfilled on undeveloped lands identified on the Future Land Use map as “Commercial Development Areas”. Agribusiness development may also be appropriate in planned “Agricultural Preservation Areas” and smaller-scale business use may be appropriate in certain planned “Neighborhood Development Areas”. To the extent the updated Future Land Use map is crafted using these guidelines, future development allowed under this *Comprehensive Plan* will provide enough capacity for the projected rural commercial land use demand over the next 25 years.

Assuming that perhaps three-quarters of the projected demand for rural residential and rural commercial uses will occur on current agricultural land, the Town can expect that there will be approximately 385 fewer acres in agricultural use by 2045. This does not account for the flexibility factor in Figures 5-3 and 5-4, agricultural conversions that may result from annexation, or any landowner preferences to discontinue farming.

Available of Supply of Developable Land

Again, as reported in Figure 5-4, the Town anticipates demand for up to 525 additional acres of undeveloped land for new rural housing development and up to 500 additional acres of undeveloped land for new or expanded commercial development through 2045.

The December 2, 2020 version of the Future Land Use map—the version in place prior to adoption of this 2021-22 *Plan* update—had 616 acres of undeveloped but developable land planned for “neighborhood (mainly housing) development.” These are areas where residential subdivisions are most likely. Of the 616 undeveloped, developable acres planned for “neighborhood development”, upwards of 200 acres were directly adjacent to the Cottage Grove village limits, and may therefore ultimately not be available to serve projected rural development demand in the Town. This would bring the effective total down to perhaps 400 acres of undeveloped but developable land planned for “neighborhood development.” This is about 125 acres fewer than the projected demand through 2045, if one includes the demand flexibility factor described above. Still, rural residential development demand will also be partly accommodated in areas planned for “agricultural preservation”—albeit at densities no greater than one home per 35 acres owned. See the below analysis for an estimate of how many homes remain to be built in “agricultural preservation” areas under the Town’s density policy.

The December 2, 2020 version of the Future Land Use map also had 602 undeveloped but developable acres planned for “commercial development”. However, about 250 acres of undeveloped, developable land that the Town had planned for “commercial development” are adjacent to the City of Madison and Village of McFarland. Many of these 250 acres may not ultimately be available for commercial development in the Town, particularly resulting from a recent boundary agreement with Madison. If this proves correct, then the effective supply of undeveloped, developable land that the Town had planned for commercial use in the December 2020 version of the Future Land Use map may actually be 350 to 375 acres. This is up to 125 to 150 acres fewer than the projected demand through 2045, if one includes the demand flexibility factor described above.

Estimate of Residential Density Units Remaining

The Town entered the State and County farmland preservation program in the early 1980s. As part of that program, the Town generally allocated one “residential density unit (RDU)” for each 35 acres held in single ownership as of April 16, 1982. Generally speaking, the total number of dwelling units allowed is determined by dividing the total gross 1982 acreage in single ownership by 35. The Town’s exact calculation approach is described in the Land Use chapter of the Vision and Directions volume.

In July 2021, the Town’s consultant estimated the number of RDUs remaining in areas that the Town has planned for agricultural preservation. The consultant prepared this estimate by dividing the number of acres so-planned by 35, and then subtracting the estimated number of lots that have been divided in the “Agricultural Preservation Area” since 1982. Lots were considered a reasonable proxy—though certainly somewhat lower—than the number of dwelling units actually built in this period.

The consultant estimated that there were approximately 464 total RDUs allocated within planned “Agricultural Preservation Areas” as mapped in 2020. Of this total, the consultant estimates that up to 205 have been used, representing up to 44% of RDUs allocated. This means that more than 259 RDUs remain in planned “Agricultural Preservation Areas”. These may be multiplied by eight if and when transferred to planned “Neighborhood Development Areas” under the Town’s transfer of development rights program.

The above estimate appears generally in line with other Dane County towns that have performed more detailed, parcel-by-parcel analyses. For example, the same consultant found in 2020 that property owners in the Town of Springfield had utilized 32% of the allocated RDUs there.

CHAPTER SIX: TRANSPORTATION

This chapter inventories the existing transportation system within the Town. Because the Town is a mainly rural community, this inventory focuses on roads. The Town is well served by its highway network, including Interstate 94 at its north edge, Interstate 39-90 to its west and south, U.S. Highway (USH) 12/18 near its southern border, Country Trunk Highway (CTH) N (Main Street), and CTH BB (Cottage Grove Road). The Town is also affected by the plans of State, County, and regional agencies as they affect these highways in particular. Noteworthy are State plans for a new interchange at U.S. Highway 12/18 and CTH AB and access consolidation along USH 12/18.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Roadway Functional Classifications

Roadways serve two competing functions: access to individual properties and traffic mobility. As the number of property accesses increases along a route, traffic flow and capacity decreases. To help plan for future traffic conditions and access control, it is useful to categorize roads based on their primary function. Upgrades to higher classified roadways are also generally eligible for state and federal funding support.

A “principal arterial” is a highway that has significant traffic capacity and serves interstate and interregional trips, usually with no direct access for abutting land uses. Per the Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Interstate 94, USH 12/18, and the segment of CTH N north of Gaston Road are classified as principal arterials.

A “minor arterial” is a highway or roadway that serves longer intra-urban trips and traffic traveling through the urban area and has limited to no direct access for abutting land uses. The segment of CTH N from the Town Hall to the south and the segment of CTH BB west of CTH N are classified as minor arterials.

A “collector” is a public street or highway that collects and distributes internal traffic within large areas, providing access between local and arterial streets and limited access for abutting land uses. Collector streets in the Town of Cottage Grove include the segment of CTH BB east of CTH N, Gaston Road, Vilas Road, Highway AB, and Highway MN.

Within its Land Division and Planning Code, the Town also designates “neighborhood connector” streets. Neighborhood connector streets direct traffic from local streets within a land division, subdivision, or condominium development to the arterial and collector street network, and which provide connectivity between adjoining subdivisions, to neighborhood facilities such as parks and schools, and to neighborhood commercial and job centers. Within the Town, the following are neighborhood connector streets: Sandpiper Trail, Damascus Trail, American Way, Ridge Road, Nora Road, Jargo Road, Vilas Hope Road, Hope Road, Natvig Road, Coffeytown Road, Femrite Drive, and other roads and highways that may in the future be designated as neighborhood connector streets by the Town Board.

A “local street” provides access to abutting land uses, but generally is not designed for through traffic. All other public roadways in the Town are classified as local streets.

Roadway Traffic Volumes

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) monitors traffic volumes at selected locations on three-year cycles. Figure 6-1 shows the counts of major roads in or near the Town of Cottage Grove. Traffic on USH 12/18 is the highest in the Town, followed by CTH BB and CTH N. Traffic volumes on USH 12/18 west of CTH N, heading towards Madison, have been increasing. This is probably correlated to growth in the Village and commuters from the Village and Town traveling to Madison for work. Traffic volumes on most other roads have been stable. It is unclear how the shift in remote working associated with the pandemic will affect volumes going forward.

Figure 6-1: Average Daily Traffic Counts in the Town of Cottage Grove

Road Name	Road Segment	Average Daily Traffic (ADT)		
		2009	2012	2018
USH 12/18 On-Ramp from CTH N	Eastbound	700	760	710
USH 12/18 Off-Ramp to CTH N	Eastbound	1,900	1,900	2,100
USH 12/18 On-Ramp from CTH N	Westbound	1,700	1,800	2,900
USH 12/18 Off-Ramp to CTH N	Westbound	660	730	710
USH 12/18	East of CTH N	10,050	13,300	11,700
USH 12/18	West of CTH N	14,200	15,000	16,300
CTH N	USH 12/18 to Town line	4,600	4,800	3,800
CTH N	USH 12/18 to CTH BB	5,300	5,100	5,200
Vilas Road	Between Clark St and Coffeytown Rd	-	1,200	-
Vilas Road	Between Clark St and CTH BB	-	1,800	-
Vilas Road	North of CTH BB	-	1,000	-
CTH BB	Between CTH N and Vilas Rd	10,500	7,600	7,700
CTH BB	West of Vilas Rd	-	8,000	7,800

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Rustic Roads

Nora Road in the eastern part of Town of Cottage Grove, from CTH N to USH 12/18, is designated as a Rustic Road. The Wisconsin Rustic Roads program help citizens and local units of government preserve what remains of Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads. Unique brown and yellow signs mark the routes of all officially designated Rustic Roads. These routes provide bikers, hikers, and motorists an opportunity to leisurely travel through some of Wisconsin's scenic countryside. As a Rustic Road, Nora Road remains under Town control. There is some expectation but no requirement for land use controls to keep the roadway corridor rural.

Airports

There are two airports near the Town of Cottage Grove. Blackhawk Airfield is a private airfield located in the Village of Cottage Grove between Interstate 94 and CTH BB off of Kennedy Road. It is open to public use and is part of the State Airport System. The airfield contains two asphalt runways, one at 2,814 feet long and another at 2,203 feet, both of which accommodate most classes of general aviation aircraft. The airfield has a number of private hangars. Dane County Regional Airport is the closest airport with full commercial service and general aviation facilities. Numerous national and regional passenger carriers serve the airport with connections to major hub and destination airports. Air express and freight services are also available.

Rail

There are a number of freight railroads operating in the region. Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Company operates a line between the Village of Cottage Grove and Madison that connects into a number of other routes. Rail traffic has increased in recent years due to the increased shipping of Alcivia (formerly Landmark Services Cooperative) and Hydrite Chemical Company. Amtrak provides passenger service between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Milwaukee and points beyond. The two closest Amtrak Stations are located in Columbus and Portage. In April 2021, Amtrak released a plan called Vision 2035, which envisions new and enhanced Amtrak services across the country. The Plan includes a new Amtrak station in Madison. If this new Amtrak service comes to fruition, the line would likely travel through the Town or immediately north of the Town.

Bicycles and Pedestrian Facilities

The Glacial Drumlin State Trail is located in the Town of Cottage Grove and is part of a statewide network of trails being developed by the Department of Natural Resources and other collaborators. The trailhead is located in the Village and the trail extends east into Waukesha County. This trail accommodates a wide range of activities including biking, hiking, pleasure walking and snowmobile use. Plans to link the trailhead in Cottage Grove to the Capital City Trail in the City of Madison are described in the review of State and regional transportation plans below.

Besides this trail, there are no other existing sidewalks or trails within the Town of Cottage Grove. Traffic volumes and road widths on many of the Town of Cottage Grove's streets allow bicycle traffic. However, as traffic volumes continue to climb, opportunities for bicycle use may decrease, especially for families with children.

Transit and Specialized Transportation Services

The Town of Cottage Grove is not served by public transit. The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) offers transportation service for older adults for personal and medical needs. In addition, the Dane County Department of Human Services administers a transportation program to provide nutrition, shopping, and adult day care group trips for seniors and people with disabilities.

Trucking and Water Transportation

Trucking occurs along arterial and collector roadways within the Town. There is no water transportation in or serving the Town.

REVIEW OF STATE AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

This section reviews regional, county, and State transportation plans and studies relevant to Cottage Grove. WisDOT's Southwest Region office is primarily responsible for the Interstate and U.S. highways in Cottage Grove. The western part of the Town plus lands around the Village of Cottage Grove are within the planning jurisdiction of the Greater Madison MPO. Except where otherwise indicated below, there are no known conflicts between the policies and recommendations set forth in this *Comprehensive Plan* and those of these regional, county, and State transportation plans.

U.S. Highway 12/18 Freeway Conversion Study

WisDOT's 2016 U.S. Highway 12/18 Freeway Conversion Study covers the 3.5-mile segment of USH 12 from Interstate 39/90 to CTH N, with approximately 2.5 miles located in the Town of Cottage Grove. The study identifies the preferred alternative for converting USH 12/18 from a 4-lane expressway with some direct access, to a 4-lane freeway where direct access would be allowed only at interchanges, with overpasses and frontage roads to provide alternate connections for local traffic and to direct vehicles to interchanges. A significant portion of this project consists of improving the USH 12/18 and CTH AB intersection to a full interchange (see Map 6). This improvement would reduce the overall number and severity of crashes at this intersection, decrease travel time delays, expand bicycle/pedestrian access, and support community cohesion and economic development. Construction on the CTH AB intersection is expected to be completed by 2023.

Freeway conversion for the 2.5-mile segment of USH 12 from CTHs AB to N was not programmed for design or construction at time of writing, but such conversion is part of an officially adopted WisDOT plan (see Map 7). At time of writing, WisDOT projected the conversion to be constructed by 2030. The end result would be interchanges at CTHs AB and N, overpasses at Femrite Drive and Vilas Road, and a new system of local roads to connect to these highways and roads.

Map 6: U.S. Highway 12/18 and County Highway AB Interchange

Map 7: Recommended Improvements for U.S. Highway 12/18 between County Highways AB and N

Map 8: Proposed Access Adjustments, U.S. Highway 12/18 East of County Highway N (Sheet 1)

Map 9: Proposed Access Adjustments, U.S. Highway 12/18 East of County Highway N (Sheet 2)

Map 10: Proposed Access Adjustments, U.S. Highway 12/18 East of County Highway N (Sheet 3)

U.S. Highway 12 Corridor Study (County Highway N to Wisconsin Highway 26)

WisDOT's U.S. Highway 12 Corridor Study, completed in September 2014, seeks to lessen traffic incidents and improve safety along U.S. Highway 12/18 east of CTH N. Recommendations are indicated in Maps 8, 9, and 10 and include consolidation and relocation of access in areas where driveways with direct access to the highway create dangerous patterns of slow moving vehicles. Additionally, the North Star Road intersection does not meet current intersection design standards; through the Study, WisDOT advises that it be improved to the current standard for a Type B1 intersection when safety warrants are met. At time of writing, it is unknown when WisDOT plans to implement of these access improvements east of CTH N.

MPO 2050 Regional Transportation Plan Update

The MPO's Regional Transportation Plan is a multimodal system plan that provides the overall framework for transportation planning and investment decision making in the future. It identifies transportation projects and strategies or actions to be implemented. That plan is further refined and detailed through area or corridor studies, mode-specific plans such the bicycle transportation plan and transit development plan, and other short- to mid-range planning efforts such as a new congestion management process. The 2050 Regional Transportation Plan includes two major projects in the Town of Cottage Grove. The first is the freeway conversion of USH 12/18 from Interstate 39/90 to CTH N including a new interchange at CTH AB. The second is an expansion of CTH AB both north and south from that new USH 12/18 interchange.

MPO Transportation Improvement Program 2021-2025

Each year, the MPO updates its Transportation Improvement Program, outlining priority transportation projects for the next five-year period. Programmed improvements affecting the Town of Cottage Grove include the USH 12/18 freeway conversion to CTH AB with a new interchange with ped/bike facilities and a frontage road, continued study for freeway conversion of USH 12 to the CTH N interchange, and construction of a section of the Capital City Trail to extend east to connect with the Glacial Drumlin Trail.

Programmed Dane County Highway Projects

Dane County Highway Department's short-term plans include resurfacing 2 miles of CTH BB between Sprecher Road and Buss Road in 2022. Approximately ½ of this project is located in the Town of Cottage Grove. This pavement will be milled and a new cold mix asphalt pavement will be placed. Additionally, bicycle facilities will be added at several intersections, including at Vilas Road in the Town. At time of writing, the Highway Department was in the process of updating its highway improvement plan.

Coordinated Public Services - Human Services Transportation Plan

This 2019 MPO report provides resources for rural Dane County residents who may be unable to arrange their own transportation. The report lists several programs with targeted audiences, many of whom could be Town of Cottage Grove residents. The Rural Senior Group

Transportation Service (RSG), Rural Access for Transportation Service (RU), Older Adult Transportation Assistance Program (OATAP), Supplemental Medical Transportation Assistance Program (SMTAP), Retired Senior and Volunteer Driver Program (RSVP), RideLine Service, and YW Transit are all daily transportation services that could be utilized by otherwise homebound Town residents.

Bicycle Transportation Plan for the Madison Urban Area and Dane County

The MPO completed this plan in 2015, which is an update to a previous plan of the same name. The new plan's primary goals involve increasing usability of the area's existing system and reducing accidents. The 2050 Regional Transportation Plan Update, approved in 2017, also includes an updated map for planned bicycle facilities. As it affects the Town, the Vision and Directions volume includes a map showing future extension of the Capital City Trail to connect to the Glacial Drumlin Trail, extension of a trail along the south side of USH 12/18 between the Ho-Chunk Casino area and Vilas Road, and a north/south trail connecting these two trails and crossing USH 12 at Femrite Drive. This planned north-south trail follows the Door Creek corridor.

Connections 2030: Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan

Connections 2030, adopted by WisDOT in 2013, begins with a vision to create and maintain "an integrated multimodal transportation system that maximizes the safe and efficient movement of people and products throughout the state." The plan includes recommendations for highways, rail, air, port, and bike and pedestrian movement. The plan identifies trends and challenges, including aging transportation infrastructure, increased use, and declining revenues. The plan positions relatively general recommendations around seven themes: preserve and maintain Wisconsin's transportation system, promote transportation safety, foster Wisconsin's economic growth, provide mobility and transportation choice, promote transportation efficiencies, preserve Wisconsin's quality of life, and promote transportation security. Projects affecting the Town of Cottage Grove outlined in Connections 2030 include an updated corridor study of USH 12, which has been completed and is described earlier in this section. As of Spring 2022, a draft of this plan has been released called "Connect 2050". The final plan is expected to be released sometime in 2022.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

The Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 presents a blueprint for improving conditions for bicycling, clarifies the WisDOT's role in bicycle transportation, and establishes policies for further integrating bicycling into the current transportation system. The plan map shows existing state trails and future "priority corridors and key linkages" for bicycling along the highway system. In an effort to promote bicycling between communities, the plan analyzed the condition of all county trunk and state trunk highways in the state and produced maps showing the suitability of these roads for bicycle traffic. Suitability criteria were based primarily on road width and traffic volumes with secondary consideration given to pavement condition, passing opportunities and percent and volume of truck traffic.

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030

The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan – 2030 has a 20-year planning horizon and provides a framework for the preservation and enhancement of public-use airports that are part of the State Airport System. Based on coverage of existing airports and anticipated demand, the plan recommends that no new airports be brought into the system and that no existing airport be eliminated.

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030

The Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 is the statewide long-range rail transportation plan. It provides a vision for freight rail, intercity passenger rail, and commuter rail, and identifies priorities and strategies that will serve as a basis for Wisconsin rail investments. WisDOT adopted Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 in March 2014. By 2022, this plan will be replaced by the Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050. Near the Town, this plan envisions an intercity rail (likely Amtrak) connection between Milwaukee, Madison, and the Twin Cities.

CHAPTER SEVEN: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

People and communities demand community facilities and utilities to provide basic levels of health and safety, maintain a high quality of life, foster job creation, and create a sustainable economy. With the trend of privatization, some services that were historically provided by government are now offered by private-sector companies. As a mainly rural town, Cottage Grove offers a limited array of public facilities and services, and has no utility services. As the population of the community grows, it may be necessary improve facilities or consider providing new services.

Water Supply and Sanitary Waste Disposal Facilities

Each home and business in the Town of Cottage Grove is served by an individual, on-site well and on-site waste disposal system, with some shared wells within subdivisions. Given low development densities to date, construction of central water and/or sanitary sewer systems has not been economically warranted.

However, if a particular subdivision is encountering problems with failed systems or more intensive development is anticipated, the economics may change to warrant the creation of sanitary or utility district(s) to own and manage such systems. At present, the nearest sanitary sewer and water distribution systems are operated by the Village of Cottage Grove, which requires annexation in advance of connection. There is a Madison Metropolitan Sewer District line through the Town, connecting with the Village system.



Trash Collection, Recycling Services, and Solid Waste Disposal Sites

In 2013, the Town Board approved a new 10-year contract with Advanced Disposal. In 2021, that contract was taken over by Waste Management. The contract provides garbage and recycling pickup for the Town. The contract also provides for annual disposal of electronic waste for the Town. Recycling efforts reduce property taxes in the Town by providing revenue the form of recycling grant funding from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR). Solid waste disposal for the Town and County is provided at the Dane County Landfill, just beyond the southwest corner of the Town. Hazardous waste is handled at Cleansweep & Product Exchange at the Dane County Highway Garage in Madison.

At the time of *Plan* writing, the Dane County Landfill, located across County Road AB in the southwest corner of the Town, was experiencing capacity issues. To accommodate additional capacity, the County is proposing to expand landfill operations south of Highway 12/18 onto 230

acres of the current Yahara Hills Golf Course. The Town is concerned with impact on nearby property owners, particularly regarding odors. The Town should remain aware of the County's plans for the landfill.

Stormwater Management

The Town of Cottage Grove does not have any type of publicly-managed storm sewer or stormwater management system, nor does it anticipate such a public system. New development is required to construct and maintain private facilities necessary to accommodate the stormwater management needs of the project, in accordance with Dane County and State regulations.

Town Hall and Garage

The Town of Cottage Grove owns a handful of buildings. The municipal building (Town Hall) is located at 4058 CTH N. It includes administrative office space and meeting rooms. The Town's Department of Public Works also has a main garage, a salt shed, and a pole building for cold-weather storage. The Department's garage is the former fire department building, which the Town remodeled in 2000 for its current purpose. The former garage site is still owned by the Town, but is now leased out. The former Town Hall (116 W. Reynolds Street) is located in the Village and is used for special occasions.

Law Enforcement

For many years, the Town had jointly supported the Cottage Grove Police Department along with the Village of Cottage Grove. That joint department was established in December 1982 by an intergovernmental agreement. In late 2013, the Village conducted a study to examine the feasibility of creating a Village-only police department. That study resulted in the Village of Cottage Grove creating a Village-only police department.

Since January 1, 2015, police services in the Town of Cottage Grove have been provided by deputies contracted through the Dane County Sheriff's Office. The contracted deputies are based out of a station at 2560 Nora Road. The Town anticipates this arrangement to continue for the foreseeable future.

Fire Protection

The Cottage Grove Volunteer Fire Department serves the Town and Village of Cottage Grove and a portion of the Town of Pleasant Springs. The Fire Department building is located at 4030 CTH N on the south side of the Village, which it shares with the Deer-Grove EMS and Emergency Government Operations. The Department is staffed entirely by volunteers, with a current staff of 35 active fire fighters and 4 honorary members. A Chief and a Board are elected by the members to oversee administration of the Department. Both the Village and Town pay for the operating costs based on property valuation. The Town anticipates this arrangement to continue for the foreseeable future.

Emergency Medical Service

The Deer–Grove Emergency Medical Services (EMS) District, formed in 1978, serves over 13,000 people in the Town and Village of Cottage Grove, the Town and Village of Deerfield, and portions of the Town of Pleasant Springs. Deer-Grove EMS is a State of Wisconsin certified Paramedic Service that provides 911 emergency medical response 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, by a staff that includes both paid and volunteer professionals. Deer-Grove EMS provides EMT-Basic and Intermediate licensure, and now provides Paramedic level service. This is the highest licensed level of pre-hospital emergency care available in Wisconsin.

Healthcare Facilities

There are no clinics or hospitals within the Town of Cottage Grove. UW Health and Wildwood Family Clinic, S.C. operate clinics in the Village of Cottage Grove. The nearest emergency room and treatment facility is St. Mary’s Emergency Center in Sun Prairie. The City of Madison is home to five hospitals – St. Mary’s, Meriter, William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, UW Hospital, and UW Hospital at The American Center. Many of these hospitals also provide clinics throughout the greater Madison area.



Childcare Facilities

The number of children needing day care is a significant consideration for families and employers alike. There are several privately operated childcare providers operating within the Village, Town, and other nearby communities, including both professional centers and home-based services.

Libraries

The Town of Cottage Grove is served by the Dane County Library Service, which serves those areas of Dane County that are not located within a service area of another public library. In the Cottage Grove area, the bookmobile stops every Wednesday at Dublin Park and also at Market Place (Piggly Wiggly). Its collection consists of over 65,000 items and includes books, magazines, books on tape, DVDs, and music and audio book CDs. The Dane County Library Service’s circulation total was 8,758,208 with 3,281,957 of that being children’s materials.

Dane County Library Service is part of the South Central Library System, which includes libraries in Adams, Dane, Columbia, Green, Portage, Sauk, and Wood Counties. Pinney Public Library, a branch of the Madison Public Library, is the closest full-service public library. It is located at 516 Cottage Grove Road. Library patrons can use their Dane County Library card at any of the libraries in the seven-county South Central Wisconsin Library System. The library and the United States Postal Service also provide free delivery for persons who are physically unable to visit the library.

Schools

Six different school districts provide educational facilities for students living in different parts of the Town of Cottage Grove (see Map 1). They include Deerfield Community, Marshall, McFarland, Monona Grove, Stoughton Area, and the Sun Prairie Area school districts.

Figure 7-1: School District Enrollment

District	2015-16	2020-21
Deerfield	775	726
Marshall	1,087	990
McFarland	4,266	6,091
Monona Grove	3,332	3,449

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Of the six districts providing education in the Town, the Monona Grove School District covers the greatest area and serves the most Town residents. It operates Cottage Grove Elementary School (470 North Main), Taylor Prairie Elementary School (900 N Park View), Glacial Drumlin School (801 Damascus Trail), and Granite Ridge School (4500 Buss Road). Monona Grove High School is located within the City of Monona. In 2017, the School District completed a long-range growth study forecasting how many students it could expect in upcoming years and what neighborhoods they might come from. That study is summarized in Chapter Nine: Intergovernmental Cooperation.

There are no private schools in the Town or Village of Cottage Grove.

Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Town of Cottage Grove owns and maintains 11 public parks totaling 22.72 acres. Most of the parks are relatively small and were dedicated when new residential subdivisions were platted. They primarily serve surrounding subdivisions and contain a varying mix of recreation equipment. Figure 7-2 contains a detailed inventory of existing Town parks.

Figure 7-2: Existing Town Parks and Amenities

Existing Park	Climbing Structure	Bouncy Animals	Tires	Swing Set	Slide	Bench	Picnic Table	Back-stop	Basket-ball Court
Sr. Airman Dan Johnson	X (2)	X	X (5)	X (4)	X (2)	X (3)	X (2)	X	X
Conestoga Trail	X (2)	X (2)		X (4)	X	X	X		
Meadow Grove		X		X (6)	X (2)	X (2)	X (2)	X	X
Rolling Wheels		X		X (4)		X			X
Bass	X	X		X (4)	X		X	X	X
Capitol View	X (2)			X (4)		X	X	X	X
Cedar Knolls	X (2)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Elmargo	X	X (2)		X	X	X (2)	X	X	X
Ravenwood	X			X	X (2)	X		X	X
Nondahl Heights North									
Nondahl Heights South	X (2)	X		X	X	X			X
Town Hall Soccer Field									

Figure 7-2: Existing Town Parks and Amenities (continued)

Park (continued)	Monkey Bars	Volleyball Court	Park Sign	Jungle Gym	Merry Go Round	Tetherball	Digger	Shelter	Zip Venture	Soccer Field
Sr. Airman Dan Johnson										
Conestoga Trail										
Meadow Grove	X	X	X							
Rolling Wheels				X	X	X	X			
Bass	X (2)		X	X	X		X	X		
Capitol View									X	
Cedar Knolls										
Elmargo							X			
Ravenwood										X
Nondahl Heights North										
Nondahl Heights South										
Town Hall Soccer Field										X

Beyond Town-owned parks, the Glacial Drumlin State Trail is located in the Town of Cottage Grove and is part of a statewide trail network. This trail accommodates a wide range of activities including biking, hiking, pleasure walking and snowmobile use. The trailhead is located in the Village and the trail bisects the Town and extends east into Waukesha County.

No State or County parks are located in the Town of Cottage Grove. However, McCarthy Youth & Conservation County Park is located immediately north of the Town in the Village of Cottage Grove and Town of Sun Prairie.

Through its Parks and Open Space Plan 2018-2023, Dane County identifies 174.7 acres, most of which is in the Town of Blooming Grove, as the Blooming Grove Drumlins Natural Resource Area. This project area seeks to protect the glacial drumlin features found throughout this region, as well as the associated wetlands that surround them, and County recommendations include the following:

- Partner with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Cottage Grove on the implementation of a connector trail between the Capital City Trail and the Glacial Drumlin State Trail.
- Partner with City of Madison to expand hiking/cross country ski trails into Door Creek Park.

- Consider a future joint planning effort by local units of government to identify unified resource and recreation management strategies for the entire project area.

Finally, the County Parks and Open Space Plan also identifies a new dog park as being desirable for the Cottage Grove area.

Churches and Cemeteries

There is one church in the Town of Cottage Grove, Hope Lutheran, located in the southwest corner of the Town at the intersection Femrite Drive and CTH AB.

There are five cemeteries in the Town of Cottage Grove, listed in Figure 7-3. Two are under private ownership and the Town owns and manages the remainder. The Town assumed ownership and care of Salem and Door Creek cemeteries when they were abandoned, and Liberty Prairie Cemetery when the Board of Directors could no longer provide care and management.

Figure 7-3: Town of Cottage Grove Cemeteries

Cemetery	Location
Hope Lutheran Church Cemetery	3702 CTH AB
Highland Memorial Gardens & Chapel	3054 CTH BB
Salem Cemetery	CTH BB
Liberty Prairie Cemetery	USH 12/18
Door Creek Cemetery	Ofsthun Road

Source: Town of Cottage Grove

Telecommunications Services

Frontier and AT&T provide hard-wire telephone service to Town residents and Spectrum Communications and TDS Telecom provide cable TV service. Frontier, Spectrum, TDS, and UPNetWI provide hard-wire and/or fiber internet services. Cellular phone service is offered by a number of companies.

Power Plants and Transmission Lines

Madison Gas & Electric, Alliant Energy and WE Energies provide electrical power and natural gas to customers in the Town of Cottage Grove. There are a number of electrical substations in the Town. In 2021, a 20-megawatt solar field was approved in the southwest corner of the Town, just east of the Dane County Sanitary Landfill. The approved solar field will occupy 178 acres on both sides of Femrite Drive. The solar field is expected to be operational by the end of 2022.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HOUSING

Local governmental units directly influence the provision of decent and affordable housing through the land use plans, regulations, and standards through the services and roads and utilities they do or don't provide. This chapter documents the Town's existing housing stock and programs. The Town's stock is divided between a limited number of scattered newer homes, coupled with housing in rural residential subdivisions developed before 2000.

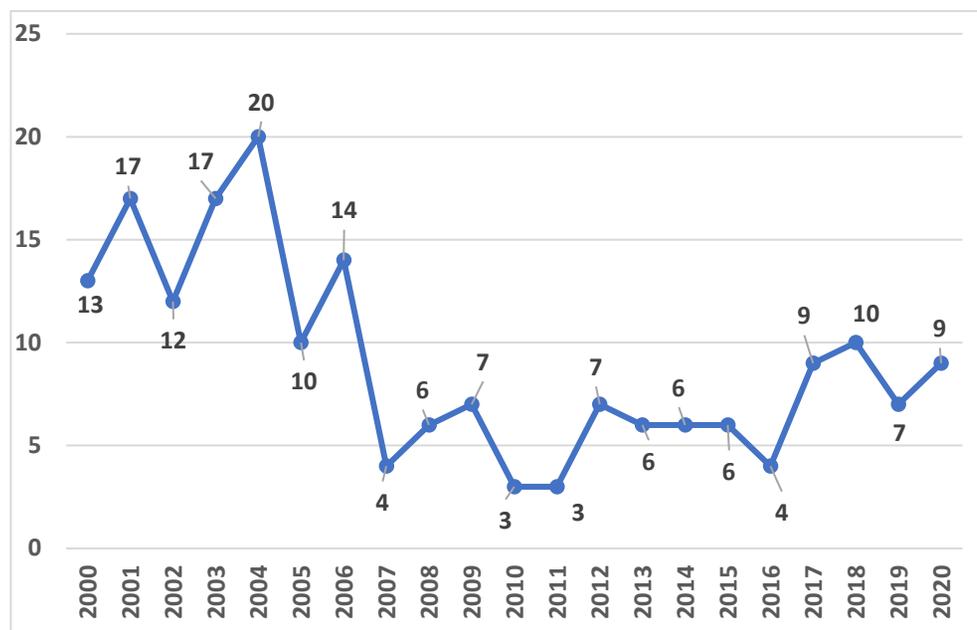
HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD INVENTORY

Household Stock Characteristics

The 2020 U.S. Census provides data on the Town's housing characteristics and reported that within the Town there are 1,477 housing units. Over 98% of housing units in the Town of Cottage Grove are single-family dwellings and 92% are owner occupied. Per the 2020 American Community Survey in Figure 2-3, the average household size in the Town was 2.85 in 2020.

Figure 8-1 indicates Town permits issued for new housing units since 2000. All of these have been for single-family residences. Prior to the "Great Recession" of the late 2000s, the Town issued between 10 and 20 permits per year. Since then, the Town has issued between 3 and 10 permits per year—most recently close to 10 each year.

Figure 8-1: Permits for New Houses, Town of Cottage Grove, 2000-2020



Source: Capital Area Regional Planning Commission, Town of Cottage Grove

Data from the South Central Wisconsin MLS reported that the median sale price for a home in Dane County has increased 69% over the past decade, from \$206,800 in 2011 to \$350,000 in 2021. The median sale price for a home in the Cottage Grove market, which consists of both the Town and Village of Cottage Grove, increased at a slightly lower rate than the County. That increase was 56% over the past decade, from \$219,000 in 2011 to \$341,500 in 2021.

Figure 8-2: Median Sale Price of Existing Single-Family Homes by Municipal Market

Municipal Market	2011	2015	2021	% Increase 2011-2021
Cottage Grove	\$219,000	\$257,000	\$341,500	56%
Deforest-Windsor	\$182,000	\$209,000	\$363,634	100%
Fitchburg	\$254,245	\$255,000	\$379,950	49%
McFarland	\$230,000	\$240,000	\$360,750	57%
Middleton	\$276,533	\$301,200	\$395,000	43%
Monona	\$193,000	\$234,980	\$333,500	73%
Oregon	\$200,000	\$234,000	\$372,865	86%
Stoughton	\$157,700	\$186,500	\$280,000	78%
Sun Prairie	\$188,000	\$217,500	\$340,000	81%
Verona	\$240,954	\$270,000	\$376,500	56%
Waunakee	\$312,900	\$362,950	\$462,000	48%
Dane County	\$206,800	\$230,000	\$350,000	69%

Source: South Central Wisconsin Multiple Listing Service Data compiled January 25, 2022. Data reported by area realtors; data for unincorporated towns is often combined with the adjacent city or village.

Land recently sold in the Town, or currently for sale in the Town, sold on average for \$15,000 an acre in 2021. This figure is significantly higher for improved residential lots in the Town, which had sold for more than \$100,000 for a half-acre lot. At the time of writing this *Plan*, there were a few subdivisions with lots for sale in the Town. In summer 2021, the Skyhigh subdivision contained 9 lots for sale, Rolling Wheels contained 1 lot, Nondahl Heights contained 6 lots, and Kennedy Hills contained 16 lots with 48 additional lots planned for future phases.

Housing Condition and Age

The age of the housing stock in a community is one measure of quality. Age of a building suggests that as a home gets older it may be necessary to spend more time and money on upkeep and maintenance, which may not be performed in all cases. The costs of maintenance can be especially burdensome on low-income households who may not have the necessary resources.

Figure 8-3 provides percentages of the time period when housing was built in the Town, with similar figures of housing throughout the County and State provided for comparison. Dane County had robust housing growth from 2000 to 2009 in comparison with the State and the Town. The bulk of housing in the Town was built between 1960 and 1979—the time period prior to farmland preservation efforts and the Town’s Transfer of Development Rights program.

Figure 8-3: Year of Housing Construction

Year Built	Town of Cottage Grove	Dane County	Wisconsin
2014 or later	36	2.6%	5.7%
2010 to 2013	118	8.5%	3.1%
2000 to 2009	63	4.5%	16.2%
1980 to 1999	361	25.9%	28.1%
1960 to 1979	508	36.4%	24.5%
1940 to 1959	155	11.1%	11.2%
1939 or earlier	155	11.1%	18.8%

Source: 2020 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

A January 2015 report, Housing Needs Assessment for Dane County and Municipalities, provided further details about the Town’s housing stock, with particular focus on low-income households. Of the Town’s rental housing stock, 24.8% of rental units were considered affordable if a household made 80% of the area’s median income. This is significantly lower than the County’s average of 71.3%. In November 2021, Dane County plans to perform an update to the Housing Needs Assessment.

There is no housing for aging or special need populations in the Town. Most nearby facilities are located in Madison, Sun Prairie, and Monona, with a few in the Village of Cottage Grove. While the Town has an overall high rate of home ownership, the overall population is aging. The special housing needs of the elderly must be an important part of a community’s commitment to provide appropriate housing options for all of its residents. The availability of special facilities is especially important to residents who want to stay in the community they are most familiar with and remain near family and friends.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Comprehensive planning legislation requires that a community provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, age groups, and special needs. The lack of public sewer and water services in the Town curtails the range and intensity of residential units that can be built in the Town. The Town has smaller lot sizes for rural residential development, which can reduce the overall costs for housing.

The Dane County Department of Health and Human Services administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the Home Opportunities (HOME) program. Dane County receives approximately \$1.7 million annually in CDBG and HOME funds. Funds are to be used for housing, economic development, and community service initiatives for people with low to moderate incomes. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis and are available to municipalities, as well as not-for-profit and for-profit entities. Eligible projects related to housing include rehabilitation; minor home repair; handicapped-accessibility modifications; down-payment assistance for first-time homebuyers; and housing education, training and counseling.

The Dane County Housing Authority administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Program, which provides eligible families and individuals the opportunity to rent housing of their choice on the private market. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is a major federal government program helping very-low-income families, the elderly, and disabled afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. The Dane County Housing Authority also manages a Conventional Public Housing Program for areas outside the City of Madison. There is no Section 8 Housing in the Town of Cottage Grove.

Other housing programs available to Cottage Grove residents include home mortgage and improvement loans from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Agency (WHEDA). WHEDA administers programs that offer tax credit programs for home ownership and multifamily rental housing construction by offering tax credit programs to interested parties.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides homeownership opportunities to rural Americans, and home renovation and repair programs. USDA also provides financing to elderly, disabled, or low-income rural residents in multi-unit housing complexes to ensure that they are able to make rent payments. Individuals and municipalities can apply to receive these grants and participate in loan programs.

CHAPTER NINE: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The following is a description of the plans of other jurisdictions operating within or adjacent to the Town. A summary of any potential conflicts with the *Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan* follows the description of each jurisdiction's plans. Where conflicts are apparent, a process to resolve them is also proposed. In general, the Town is significantly affected by the plans and studies of other units of government in the area.

City of Madison

Madison is a dominant force in the area. In some areas where the City has extraterritorial jurisdiction, through its future land use map the City has indicated a desire for neighborhood expansion with the Town of Cottage Grove (see Maps 11 and 12). These are areas where “urban development is recommended to begin in at least portions of the area within the 20-year planning period.” Before development in these areas, the City notes that neighborhood development plans will be prepared and adopted.

In 2017, the City of Madison prepared and adopted one of these plans - the Yahara Hills Neighborhood Plan. That neighborhood plan guides the future growth and development of a future neighborhood on Madison's southeast edge, mostly between Interstate 39/90 to the west and County Trunk Highway (CTH) AB to the east. Most of that plan covers lands currently in the Town of Blooming Grove, which by 2027 will be dissolved and become part of the City of Madison. After that, the City will abut the entirety of the Town of Cottage Grove's western border. However, a significant area of the Yahara Hills Neighborhood Plan extends into the Town of Cottage Grove, specifically land southeast of the Femrite Drive and CTH AB intersection (see Map 12 for that City plan's development plan map). This area is mostly planned for a future employment and business park with additional civic and institutional uses. Planned Neighborhood areas are also located in Town lands, mostly northwest of Femrite Drive, around Hope Road, and south of U.S. Highway (USH) 12/18. In total, the neighborhood may have 3,000 – 3,500 new housing units, with most of them located west of CTH AB.

In 2022, the Town of Cottage Grove and City of Madison entered into an intergovernmental agreement. The agreement establishes an area in the western and southwestern portion of the Town where Madison may potentially expand (annex) through the year 2061, based on landowner requests. This is Area A on Map 13. In Area A, prior to annexation to the City, the Town of Cottage Grove has generally agreed not to approve more than two new residential homes per contiguous ownership. East of Area A, the Town is not subject to any particular development restrictions and the City has agreed not to annex land nor to exercise its extraterritorial jurisdiction over the term. The parties have agreed that Madison will keep Area B on Map 13 in its long-term growth area, but the Town has no specific obligation regarding Area B. The agreement includes other provisions related to highways, open spaces, and relations/agreements with other municipalities.



Map 11: City of Madison Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map

Map 12: City of Madison Yahara Hills Neighborhood Plan Map

Map 13: City of Madison and Town of Cottage Grove Intergovernmental Agreement Map

Village of Cottage Grove

The Village of Cottage Grove significantly affects land use, development, and preservation efforts in the Town. Except where truncated by the City's boundary agreement with the Town, the Village's extraterritorial jurisdiction extends 1½ miles in all directions beyond the boundaries of the Village (see Map 1). In this area, the Village exercises land division review authority. The Village also annexes land from the Town, in areas that often coincide with existing or planned urban service area. Lands designated as urban service area are also shown on Map 1.



The Village of Cottage Grove last amended its comprehensive plan in 2020. Within much of its extraterritorial jurisdiction in the Town, the Village's plan recommends development only of a rural or agricultural nature at densities equal to or less than one dwelling unit per 35 acres. In the absence of a binding intergovernmental boundary agreement between the Village and Town, the Village's plan notes that Village will actively oppose other forms of development in the extraterritorial jurisdiction except in limited cases. The Village also intends to continue its policy to limit extension of its sanitary sewer service and public water service, except to parcels annexing into the Village.

The Village's and Town's future land use maps differ on what areas should be preserved for agriculture, particularly in the areas east and south of the Village (see Map 14). Perhaps more significantly, the two maps and the policies behind them may diverge on the likely jurisdiction and whether or not public sewer and water services will be provided to future development areas. Most of the lands planned for development in the Village's future land use map are planned for single-family residential (sewered), planned neighborhood, or future development area uses. Planned neighborhood uses encourage mostly single-family residential (at least 65%) with some component of two-family residential (at most 15%) and multi-family residential (at most 20%) along with community facility, parks, open space, and neighborhood business land uses. Future development areas are areas that may become ripe for development over the next 20 years, but generally are not expected to develop until other adjacent development occurs first.

The Village and Town's last boundary agreement expired in 2006. While there have been occasional discussions since that time about a new boundary agreement, none has been executed or is anticipated at time of writing. In late 2010, the Village and Town agreed to engage in a study to determine the potential costs and benefits of a merger of the two municipalities. In 2012, non-binding referendums in both the Village and the Town of Cottage Grove supported further investigation of the merger process. Despite this mutual interest, a merger does not appear likely in the near future.

Map 14: Village of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map

Village of McFarland

The Village of McFarland is located immediately southwest of the Town of Cottage Grove. In 2017, the Village adopted an update to its comprehensive plan. The future land use map within the 2017 Plan suggests future Village expansion east to Interstate 39/90, but not beyond. Similarly, the Village's 2008 East Side Neighborhood Growth Area Plan shows a development concept plan extending all the way to Interstate 39/90.



In 2019, the Village annexed approximately 120 acres in the Town immediately northeast of Interstate 39/90. This is the first time Town lands had been annexed by the Village of McFarland. This annexation was not anticipated in the Village's earlier plans. The annexed land includes a 9-acre parcel owned by the McFarland School District just east of the Siggelkow Road and CTH AB intersection and a 26-acre parcel immediately to its south owned by the Village of McFarland, intended for athletic field development.

Town of Blooming Grove

The Town of Blooming Grove is west of the Town of Cottage Grove. Blooming Grove is broken into remnants as a result of annexations to the Cities of Madison and Monona and the Village of McFarland. The Town's 2006 boundary agreement with the City details the timeline and course for dissolution of Blooming Grove. Remaining Blooming Grove lands adjacent to the Town of Cottage Grove will be annexed into the City of Madison by the year 2027. Land uses in the areas adjacent to Town of Cottage Grove boundary are largely agricultural or undeveloped. Future land uses for these are outlined in the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and Yahara Hills Neighborhood Plan.

Town of Deerfield

The Town of Deerfield is east of the Town of Cottage Grove. Deerfield adopted an amended comprehensive plan in 2020. The Town's future land use map indicates continued agricultural uses for lands adjacent to the Town of Cottage Grove. There are no inconsistencies between the plans of these two towns.

Town of Sun Prairie

The Town of Sun Prairie is located to the north. Sun Prairie adopted its comprehensive plan was adopted in 2003, and later amended it in 2009 and 2013. The two towns share only a small amount of border that is not within either the City of Madison or Village of Cottage Grove extraterritorial jurisdictions. There are no known inconsistencies between the plans of the two towns.

Town of Pleasant Springs

The Town of Pleasant Springs is to the south. Pleasant Springs last updated its comprehensive plan in 2006. Pleasant Spring's future land use map calls for agricultural land uses in the areas adjacent to Town of Cottage Grove borders. There are no known inconsistencies between the plans of the two towns.

Dane County

Dane County is contending with significant growth. The County's population is projected to increase from 561,504 in 2020 to 637,429 in 2050, which represents a 14% increase. Most of this growth pressure is generated by employment growth throughout the region.

In recognition of the stress that such growth places on both natural and human systems, the Dane County Comprehensive Plan was amended by the County in 2012. That plan advocates strong growth management, with a focus on concentrating non-farm developing in existing developed urban areas and in historic rural hamlet locations.

In 2013, the County adopted an updated Farmland Preservation Plan. That plan includes a farmland preservation plan map, which designates "agricultural preservation areas" in large parts of the Town (see Map 15). The County designated "non-farm planning areas" adjacent to already developed areas of the Village and the City of Madison, areas around the USH 12/18 and CTH N interchange, and "resource protection corridor overlay" areas mainly in floodplains and wetlands.

There are no known conflicts between the Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan and currently adopted Dane County plans.

Map 15: Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan Map

Capital Area Regional Planning Commission

The Town of Cottage Grove is located within the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission’s (CARPC) regional planning jurisdiction. Since 2007, CARPC has served as the regional planning and area-wide water quality management planning entity for the Dane County region, consistent with §66.0309, Wis. Stats. and Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 121. As a component of this function, CARPC was poised in 2022 to adopt a Regional Development Framework, which will guide local planning efforts and was consulted in the preparation of this *Comprehensive Plan*. There are no known conflicts.

CARPC also assesses and recommends requested expansions to urban service areas to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR). Urban service area boundaries at time of writing are presented in Map 1. CARPC also performs evaluations of the region’s natural resources.

In 2021, CARPC and the Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization moved into a shared office as part of their efforts to work more closely together. The two organizations seek to advance the region’s planning goals: to build stronger community connections, improve the region’s environmental health, enhance infrastructure, and further the health, safety, and well-being of all residents.

Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (formerly known as the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board) is responsible for transportation planning in the Madison metropolitan area. The eastern boundary of the MPO’s jurisdiction is CTH N and generally the Village of Cottage Grove extraterritorial jurisdiction boundary. MPO plans are described in Chapter Six.

Madison Regional Economic Partnership (MadREP)

MadREP (formerly Thrive) is the lead economic development agency for the eight-county Madison Region, including Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock, and Sauk Counties. Its vision is to create a dynamic environment where people and businesses thrive. MadREP writes a yearly “State of the Madison Region” report and others, recently a sector analysis of agricultural and food products.

Important State Agency Jurisdictions

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s (WisDOT) District I office (Madison) serves all of Dane County. WisDOT has jurisdiction over Interstates 94, 39, and 90 and USH 12/18 areas in and near the Town. Chapter Six includes WisDOT’s applicable plans.

WisDNR provides service to all of Dane County out of its South Central Wisconsin office in Fitchburg. WisDNR regulates water resources and sets standards for surface and groundwater quantity and quality, wetlands, floodplains, and shoreland management. WisDNR also manages

woodlands, wildlife protection initiatives, and other natural resources preservation and recreation strategies (including the Glacial Drumlin State Trail). WisDNR is also involved in the monitoring and remediation of environmentally contaminated sites. As stewards of the land, the Town shares WisDNR's commitment to resource protection.

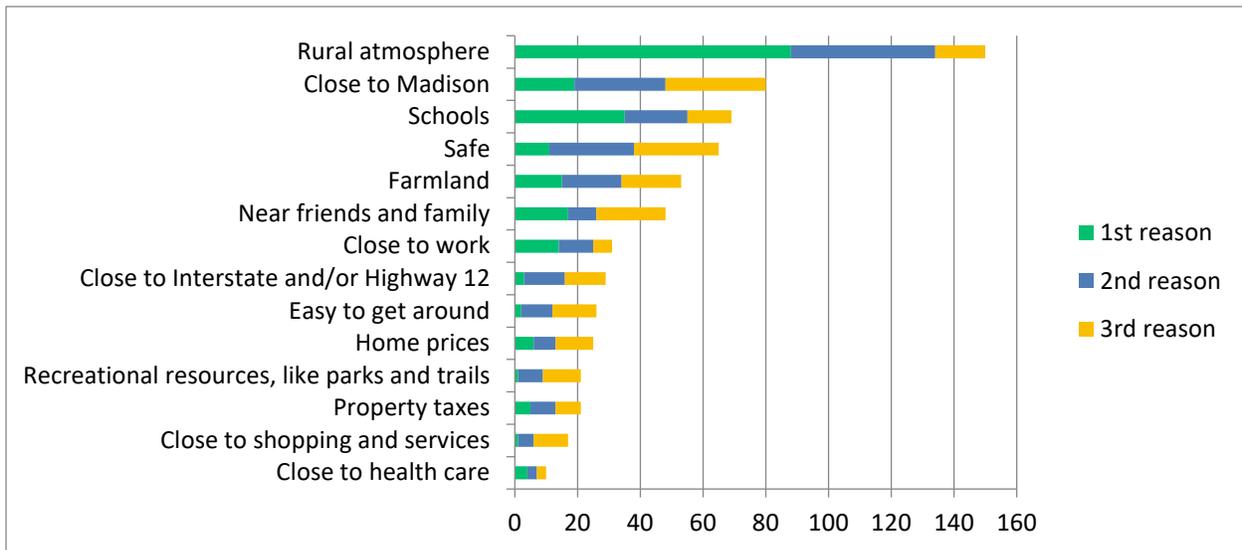
School Districts

School districts serving students in the Town sometimes perform long range planning studies. The Monona Grove School District in 2017 completed a study of future community, neighborhood, and enrollment growth. This study analyzed housing growth within the Town, utilizing the Town's prior comprehensive plan. That plan assumed 90% of new housing development in the Town would occur in a small number of sites designated in the Town's future land use map for housing growth. All of those areas are located within the Monona Grove School District. The study also provided an anticipated order of development of lands currently within the Town. This was based on a hierarchy of factors influencing probability, with the Study authors assuming that most of these areas would be annexed into the Village prior to development.

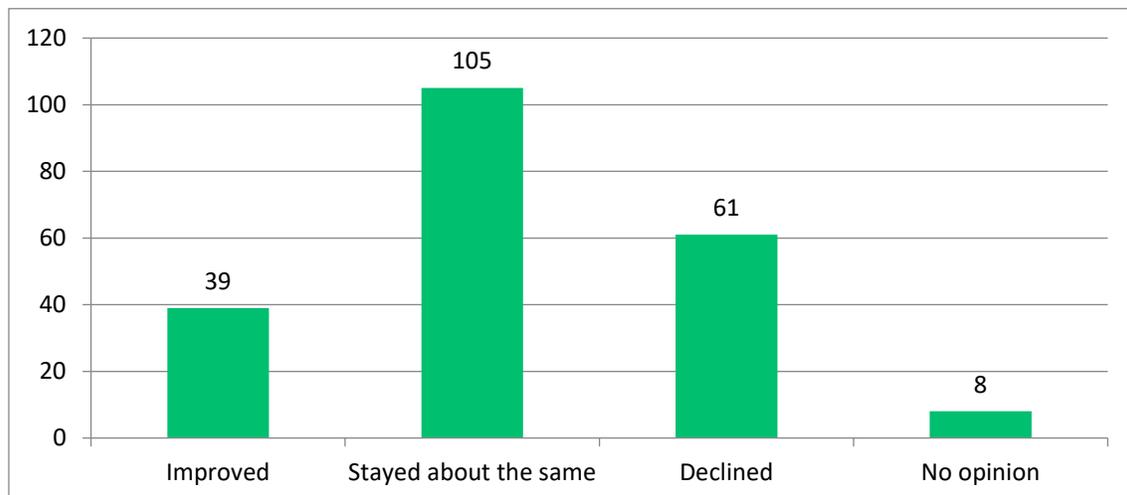
APPENDIX A: SPRING 2021 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

In March and April 2021, the Town of Cottage Grove conducted a community survey to gather residents' input on the vision for the future of the Town, community planning issues most relevant to the *Comprehensive Plan* update, and community priorities. The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey – an internet survey tool. The Town used various means of media to direct residents to the survey and received 213 responses. These responses have been aggregated into the charts and graphs below.

Question 1: From the choices below, please provide the top three reasons why you or your family chooses to live in the Town of Cottage Grove.



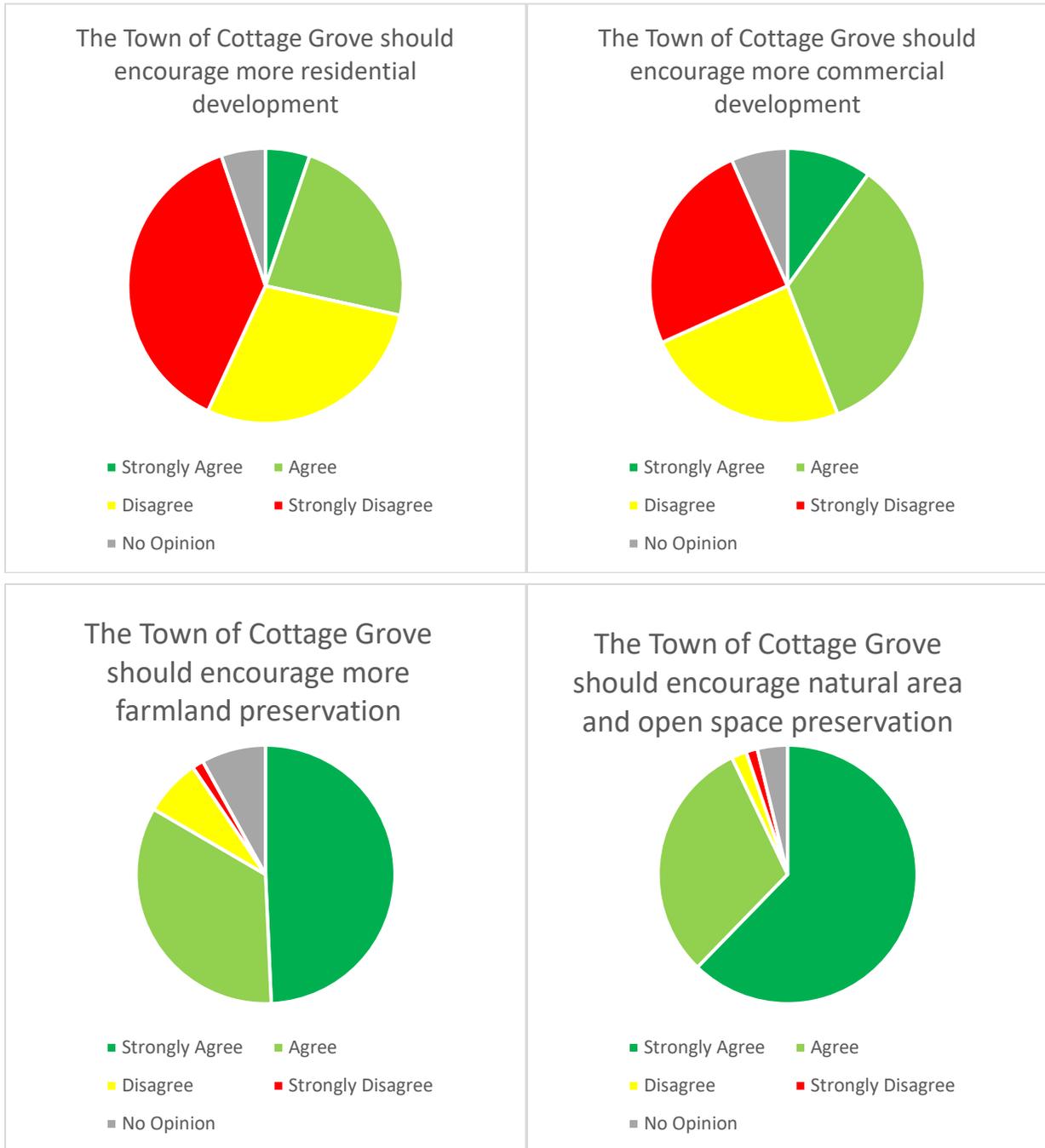
Question 2: Do you believe the overall experience living in the Town has improved, stayed about the same, or declined over the past ten years or so (or since you've lived here, if less)?



Question 3: Can you briefly tell us why you answered the last question the way you did? This question allowed open-ended responses, which were offered by 187 participants. The following is a summary of the responses:

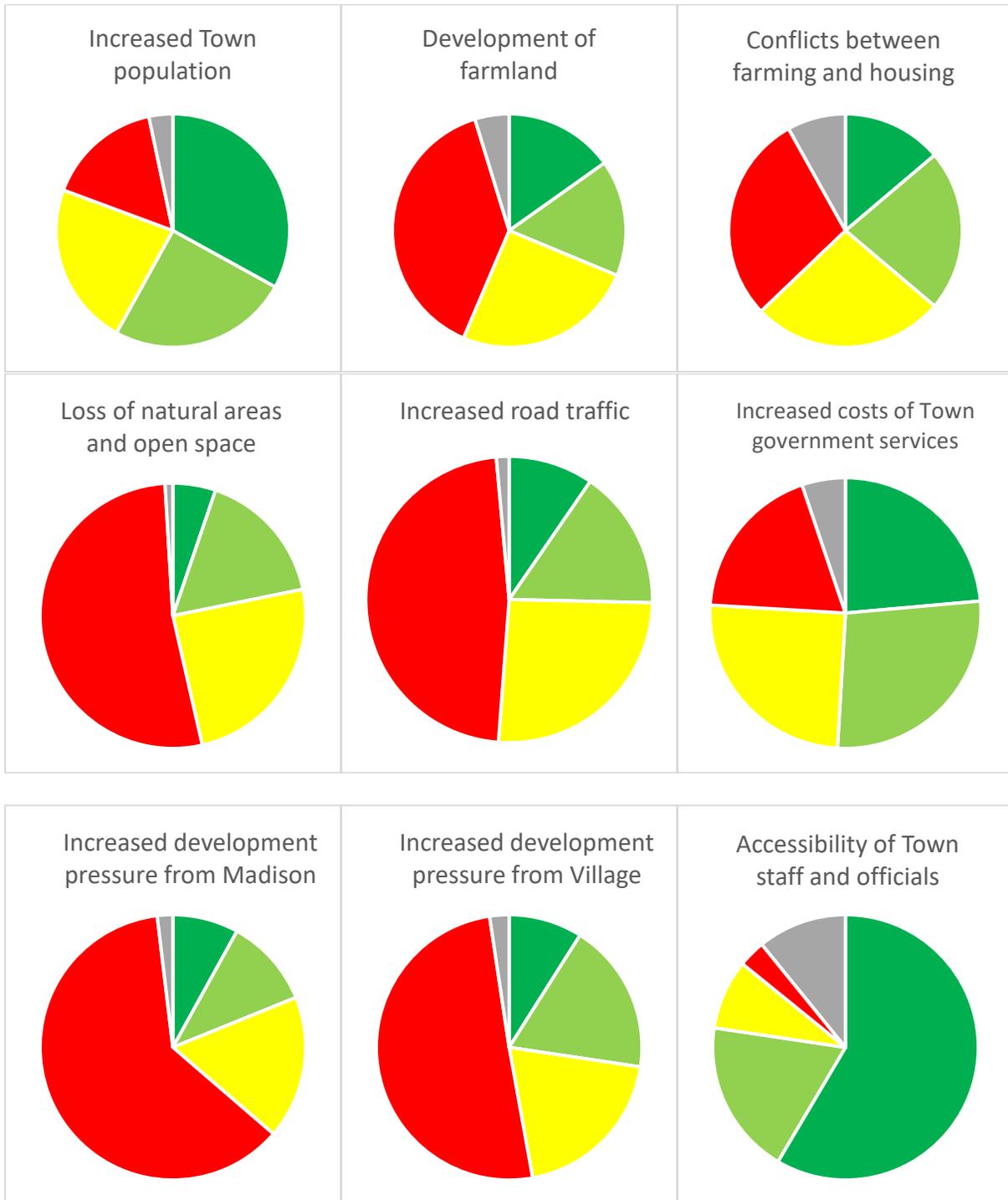
- Those who answered “improved” mentioned new restaurants, new schools, improved communication from Town officials and staff to residents, increasing home values, and increased business development while keeping taxes low as common reasons.
- Several of those who answered “stayed the same” said they have not seen much change in the Town over the past ten years, but expressed concern over increased development pressures from both the City of Madison and Village of Cottage Grove plus increased traffic and crime.
- The majority of respondents who answered “declined” mentioned issues related to greater levels of development, including more traffic, less of a rural atmosphere, crime, and agriculture and natural areas being consumed by new subdivisions.

Question 4: Over the past 10 years, there has been little change in the size of the Town’s population. An average of 7 new homes per year have been built, plus some new commercial development mostly near Highway 12/18. The Village of Cottage of Grove has grown more quickly. Looking forward to the next 10 years, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about future growth and preservation in the Town?

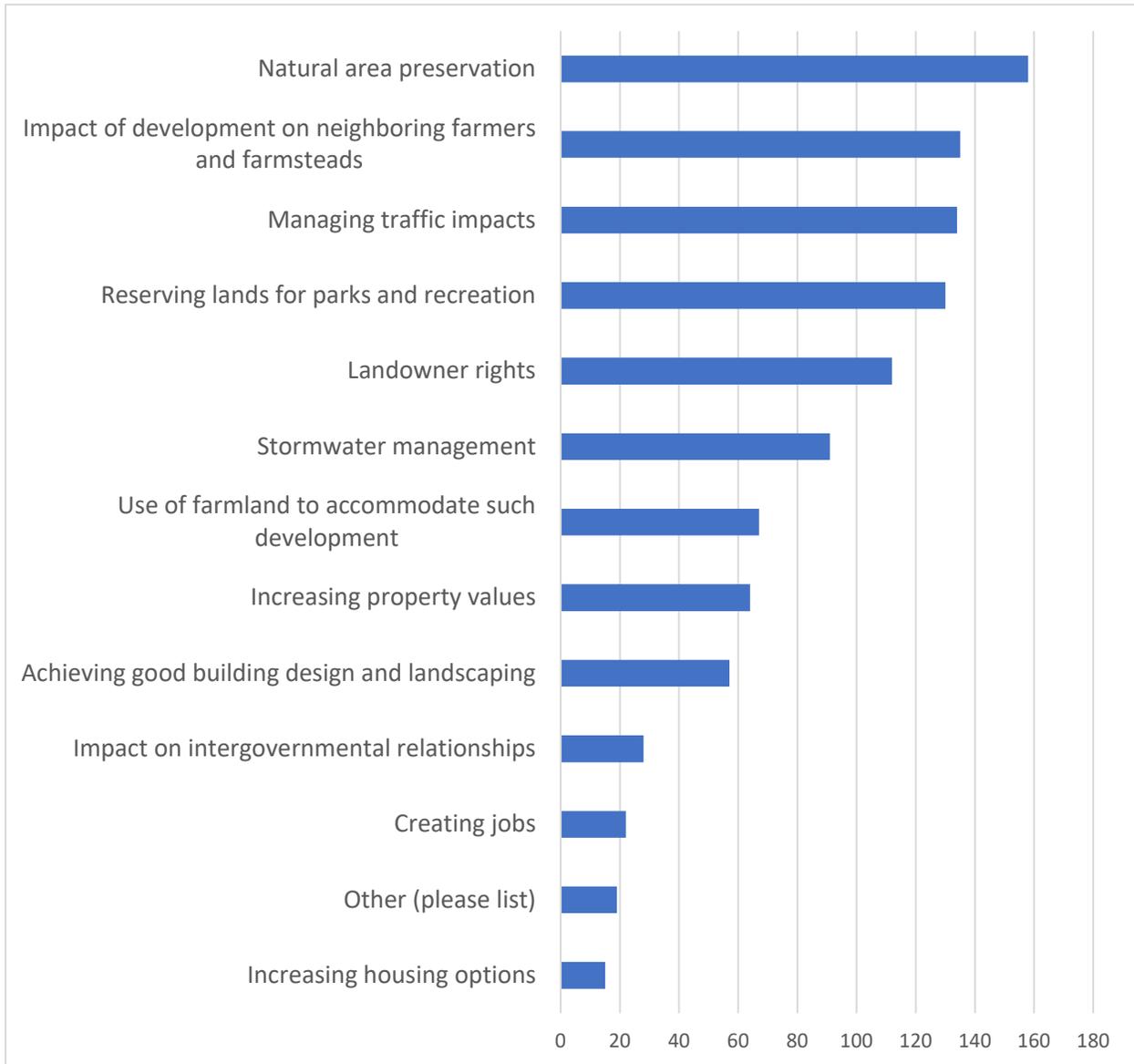


Question 5: Please indicate your level of concern with respect to the Town of Cottage Grove

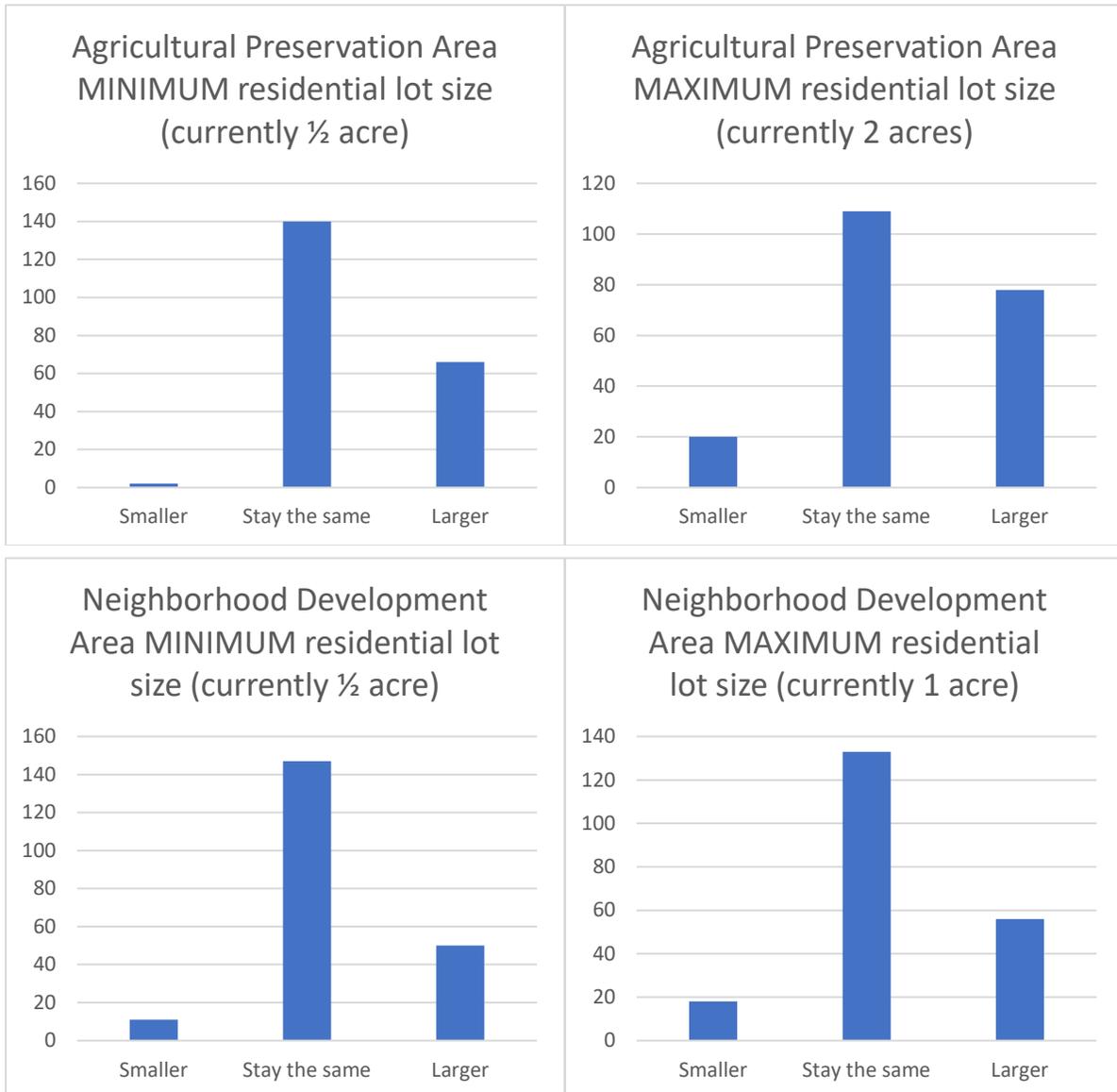
- Not Concerned ■ Slightly Concerned
- Concerned ■ Very Concerned
- No Opinion



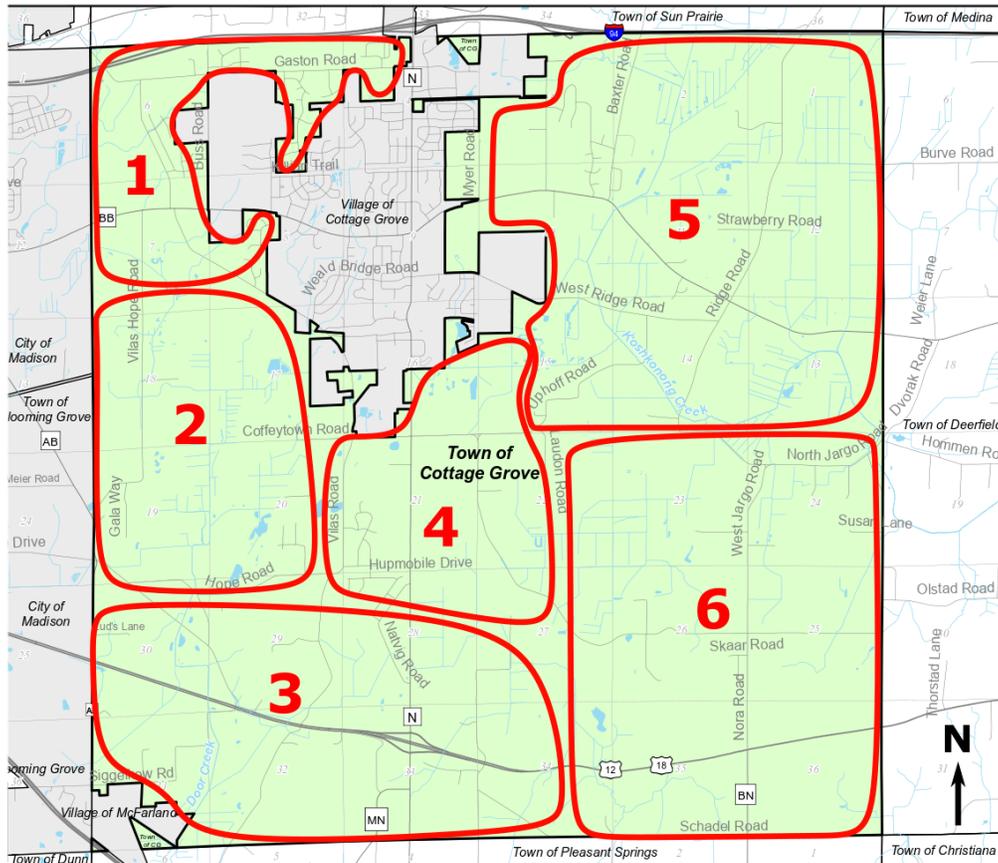
Question 6: As the Town considers future residential and commercial development proposals, what should its highest priorities be in evaluating such proposals? Please check all that apply.



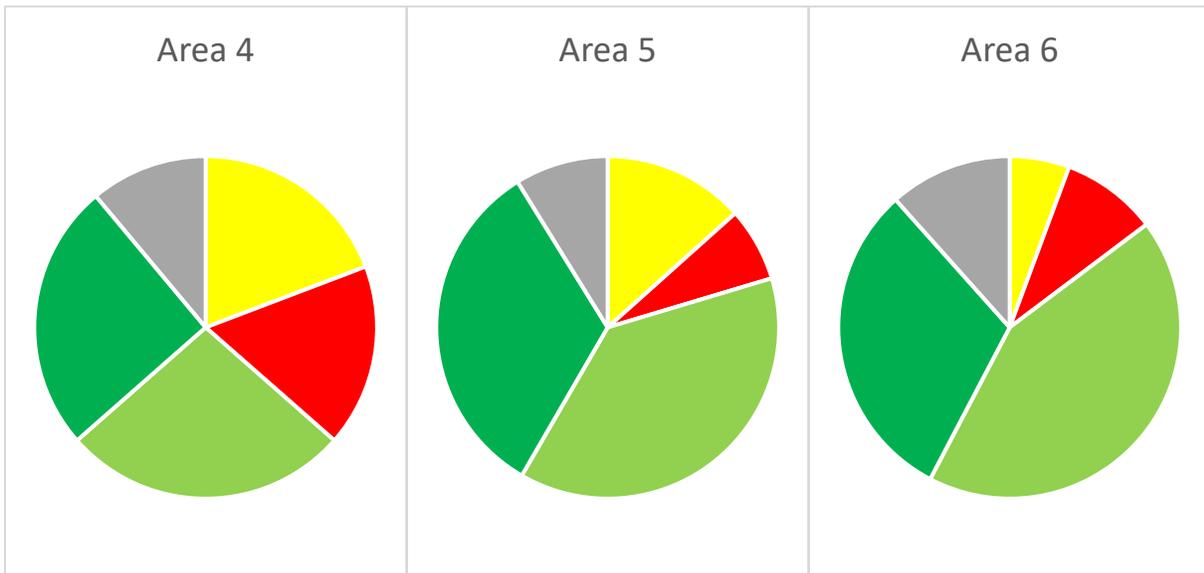
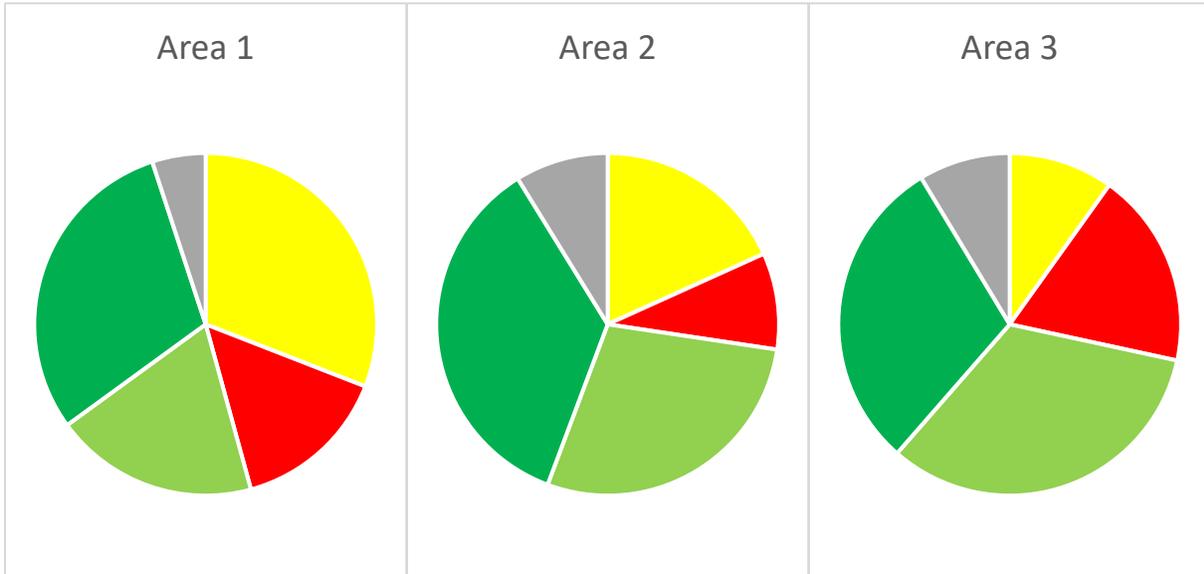
Question 7: New residential lot sizes in the Town vary based on whether the lot is in an area that the Town has planned for agricultural preservation or neighborhood (subdivision) development. In the Agricultural Preservation Area, minimum lot size is currently ½ acre and maximum lot size is 2 acres. In the Neighborhood Development Area, minimum lot size is currently ½ acre and maximum lot size is 1 acre. With this information do you think minimum and maximum lot sizes should be smaller, larger, or stay the same?



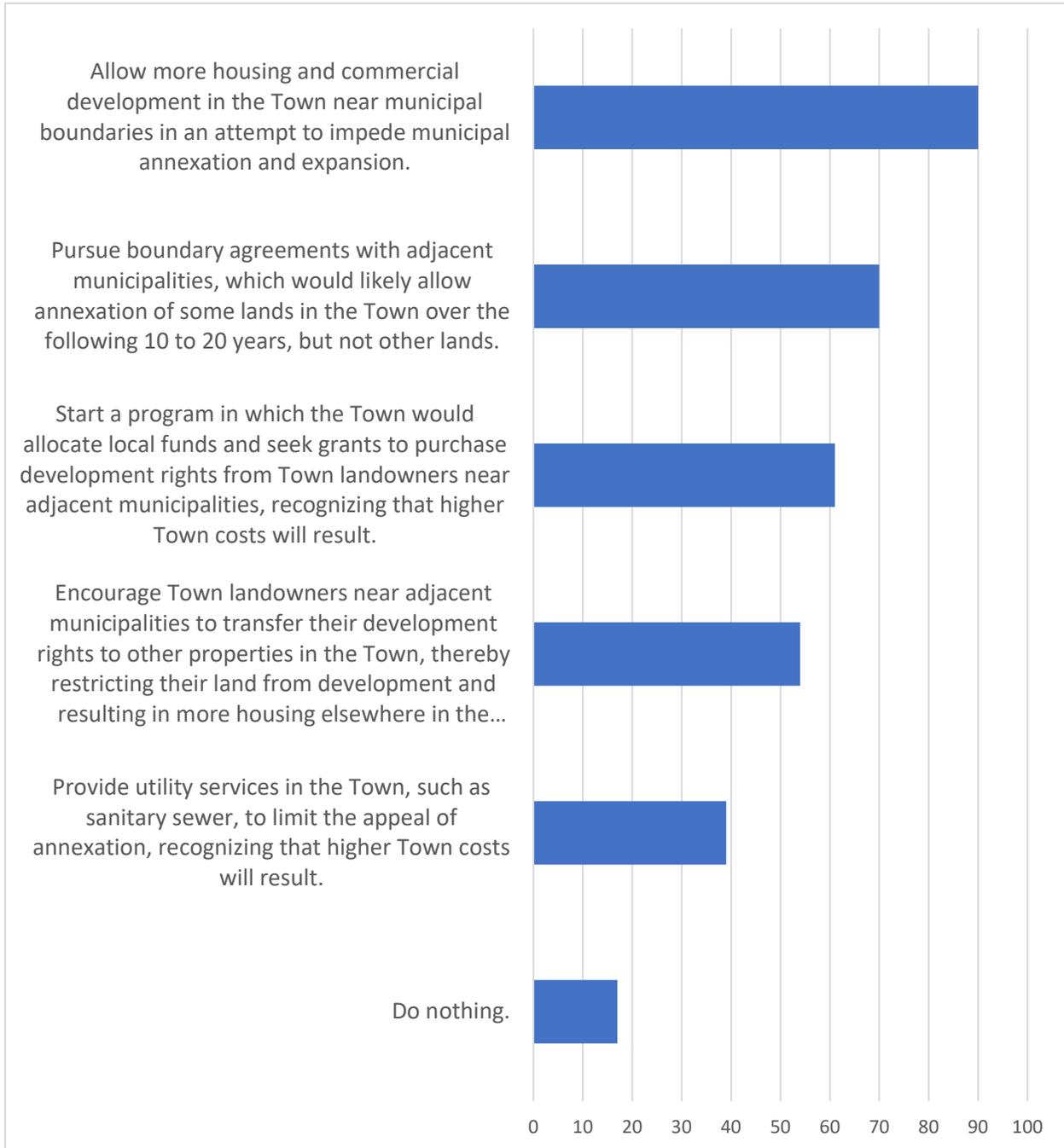
Question 8: The map below generally divides the Town of Cottage Grove into six different geographic areas. Over the next 10 years, which of the listed land uses in the table below the map do you think the Town should accommodate in each mapped area? You may select more than one use for each area.



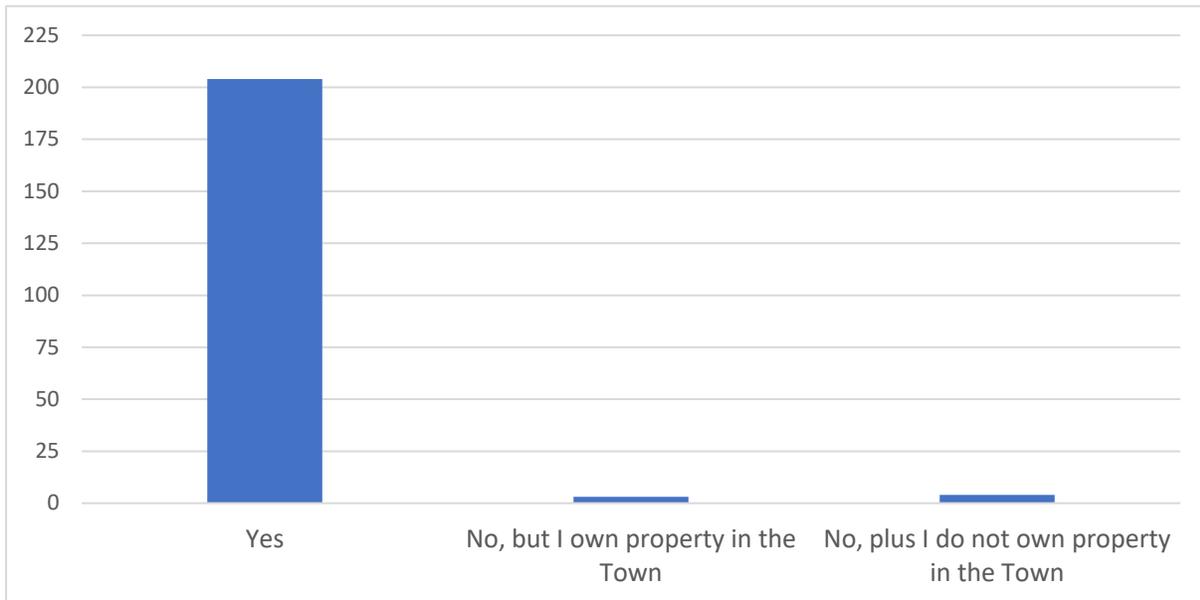
- Residential subdivisions ■ Commercial development
- Farmland with limited housing ■ Natural areas and open space
- No opinion



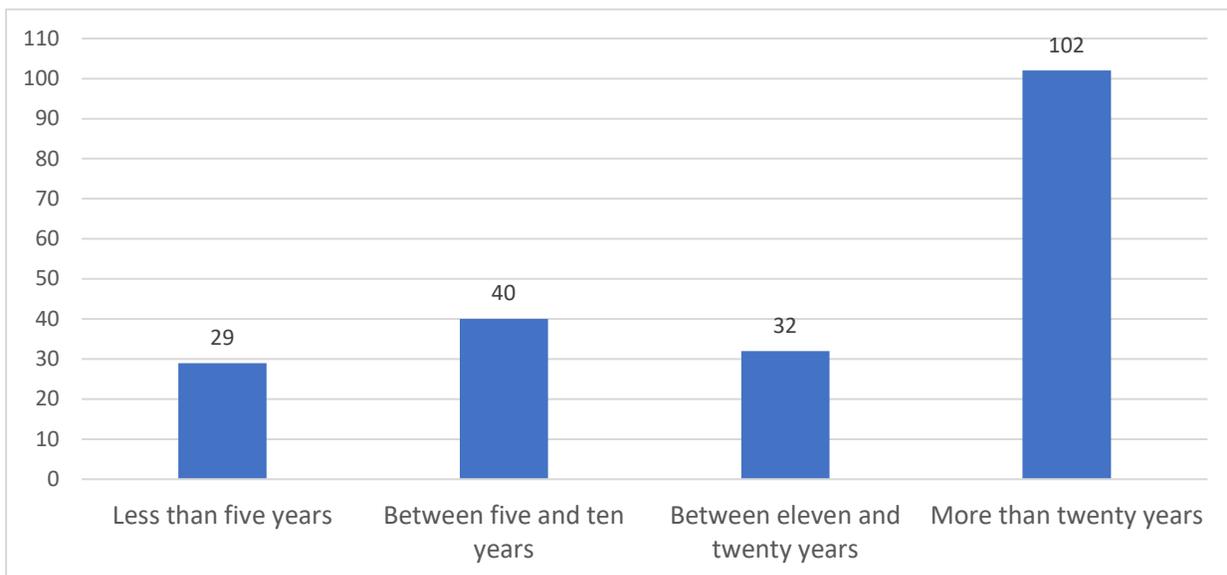
Question 9: Over the next decade, the Town will likely continue to have development pressure from, and annexations to, adjacent municipalities. Which approach or approaches do you think the Town should take to deal with this pressure? Check all that apply.



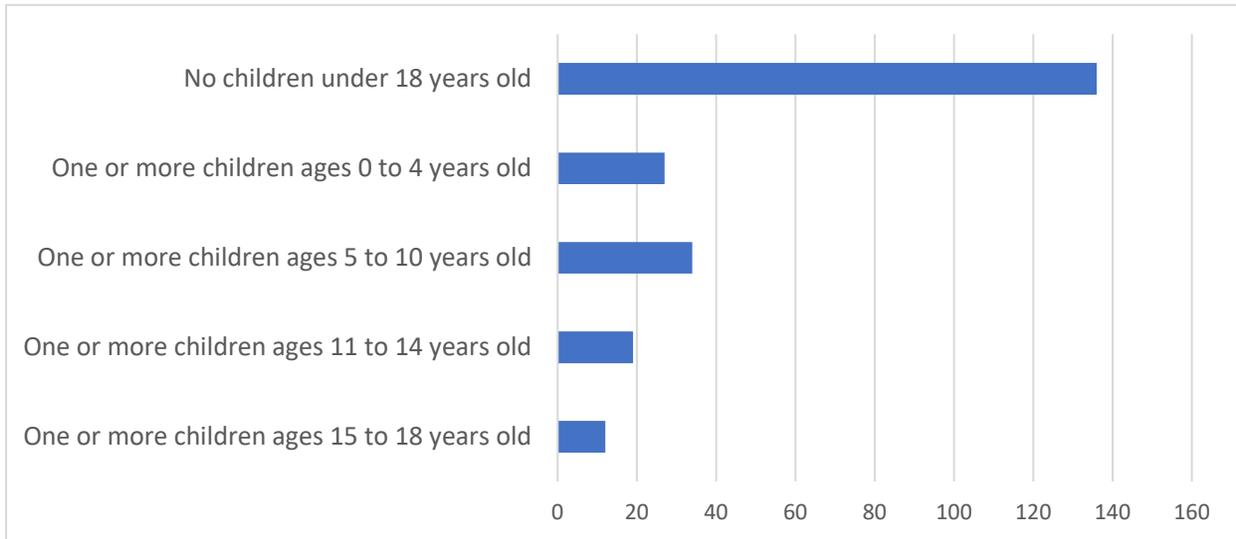
Question 10: Do you live in the Town of Cottage Grove?



Question 11: How long have you lived within the Town of Cottage Grove?

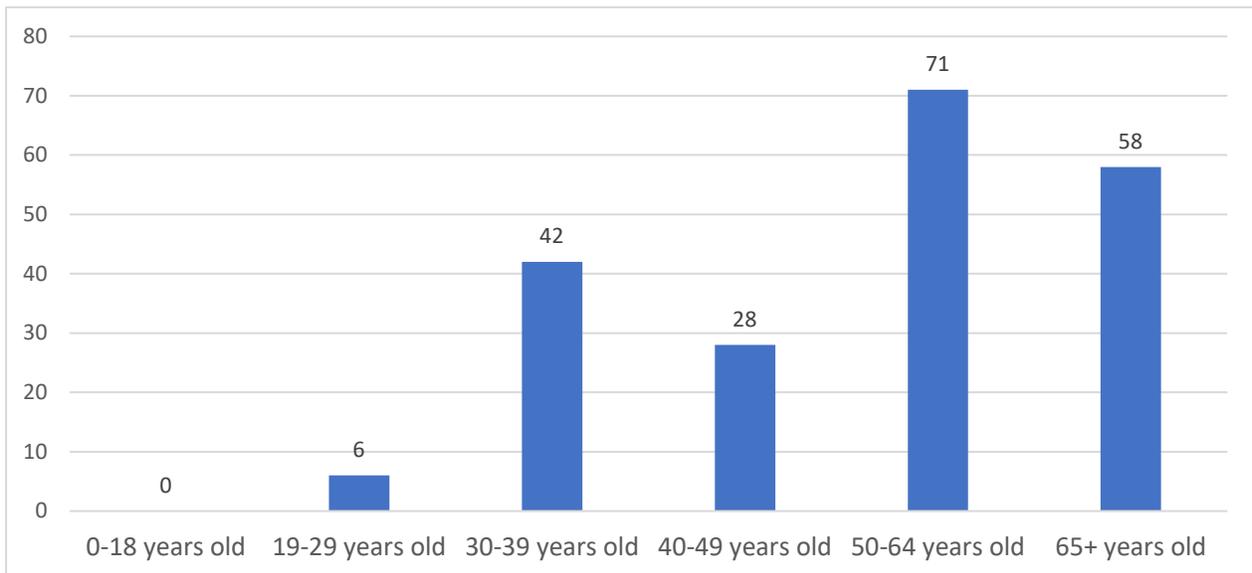


Question 12: If there are children living in your household, what are their ages? Check all that apply. Please include children who live with you part-time.



[Approximately 36% of respondents to the survey stated their household has children under 18 years old. This figure is higher than the 24% of households in the Town with children reported in the U. S. Census Bureau’s 2019 American Community Survey (ACS).]

Question 13: What is your age?



[The average age is 53.6 years old. This is higher than the median age of the Town according to the 2019 ACS, which was 47.4 years old. However, since survey respondents included no children, the ages of respondents were actually representative of adults in the Town.]

Question 14: Please share any other comments related to the future of the Town of Cottage Grove that you would like considered as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process. For example, are there things you would like to see more of or less of in the Town over the next 10 or so years? This question allowed open-ended responses, which 134 respondents offered. Common responses are summarized as follows:

- Many respondents desired to preserve as much agricultural, woodland, park space, and open space lands as possible. There was some interest in expanding the bike path system to the Village of Cottage Grove and City of Madison.
- Many respondents reiterated previous concerns about too much growth and development and that the Town is losing its rural atmosphere and feel.
- Many respondents stated that boundary agreements should be put in place with the City of Madison and Village of Cottage Grove to limit as much land as possible from being annexed into these two municipalities, especially the City.
- Many also expressed a realization that growth will likely happen, but with a common desire that the Town put plans in place to protect most of the rural areas of the Town while directing development to targeted areas.
- Some respondents recognized the benefits increased development brings to the Town, such as increased or new services, higher home values, more opportunities for recreation, restaurants, and shopping.
- Several respondents mentioned that if residential growth needs to happen, they preferred single-family homes in residential subdivisions with larger lot sizes (e.g., 3-5 acres), which they considered more in line with the rural aesthetic.