COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 22, 2022

12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016

SPECIAL MEETING - 8:00 A.M.

MALL OF AMERICA EXECUTIVE CENTER, 410 EAST BROADWAY (LEVEL 4, EAST), BLOOMINGTON, MN 55425

1 CALL TO ORDER

2 ROLL CALL

3 AGENDA ITEM

- A Meeting Schedule
- B Welcome and Introductions
- C Progress Report
- D Community Survey Discussion
- E The Escape Game
- F Debt Management Policy Discussion
- G Team Development and Collaboration
- H Reimagining Recreational Amenities
- I Five Year Staffing Reports
- J Key Takeaways

4 ADJOURNMENT

City Council Action Request

3A

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Meeting Schedule
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A
Attachments	Meeting Schedule.tif 384.83KB

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE
Strategic Planning Meeting Schedule

8:00am	Continental Breakfast
8:30am	Welcome and Introduction (Item 3B)
	Mayor Myron Bailey
	Facilitator Chad Weinstein, Ethical Leaders In Action
9:00am	Progress Report (Item 3C)
	City Administrator Jennifer Levitt
9:30am	Community Survey Discussion (Item 3D)
	Facilitator Chad Weinstein
10:30am	Mayor and City Council members to The Escape Game (Item 3E)
	City Staff –Address Outcomes of Survey Community Survey Discussion
	Facilitator Chad Weinstein
12:00pm	Working Lunch – Debt Policy Discussion (Item 3F)
	Facilitator Chad Weinstein
12:30pm	City Staff to The Escape Game
	Mayor and City Council members – Team Development and Collaboration (Item 3G)
2:00pm	Reimagining Recreational Amenities (Item 3H)
	Facilitator Chad Weinstein
3:00pm	Five Year Staffing Reports (Item 3I)
	Facilitator Chad Weinstein and City Staff
4:30pm	Key Takeaways (Item 3J)
5:00pm	Adjournment (Item 4)

City Council Action Request

3B

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Welcome and Introductions
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A
Attachments	

City Council Action Request

3C

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Progress Report
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A
Attachments	

City Council Action Request

3D

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Community Survey Discussion
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A

Attachments

4.1a 2021 Community Survey Memo.tif	2.32MB
4.1b Community Survey Results Overview.tif	2.68MB
4.1c Community Survey Comments Department Breakdown.tif	85.29MB
4.1d Housing Comments.tif	3.98MB
4.1e Community Survey Form Final.tif	1.81MB
4.1f 2012_cg_Survey.tif	3.72MB
4.1g 2008_cg_Survey.tif	19.37KB

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator

DATE: January 10, 2022

RE: Community Survey Results

Background

Community Surveys provide the City an opportunity to show its commitment to hearing from residents on areas of broadening recreational opportunities, enhancing community connections, expanding full-spectrum housing, fostering a positive business environment, and maintaining fiscal stewardship. The feedback received from the 2021 Community Survey will do just that for the City of Cottage Grove, its elected leaders, department directors, and staff. The 2021 Community Survey was conducted via online form and physical mailed copies. Residents were asked to share their opinions relating to city services and amenities. The data found from the survey can be used to determine how the City of Cottage Grove can better meet the needs of its residents, prioritize funding and determine where resources need to be allocated.

Prior to the 2021 Community Survey, the most recent surveys were conducted in 2008 and 2012. Both surveys were conducted in partnership with Decision Resources Ltd. of Minneapolis and included 50 questions regarding safety, City services and amenities, and property taxes. While the data on how many residents were surveyed was not readily available in 2012, in 2008, 400 randomly selected residents were surveyed.

In December of 2020, staff provided Council with price quotes from the National Research Center (NRC) and the Morris Leatherman Company (formerly Decision Resources) on what their partnership on a community survey in Cottage Grove would currently cost. Staff were informed that a survey would costs upwards of $20,000 if it were to be outsourced.

At the city's annual strategy retreat on January 9, 2021, Council expressed support for a staff driven, brief and simple survey, that could serve as a steady barometer for citizen attitudes, preferences, and concerns.

After researching survey implementation methods, drafting questions for a survey, and devising a preliminary plan of action, staff presented their findings at a Council Workshop on May 27, 2021.

The survey focused on the following key areas:
1. Quality of life
2. Parks and Recreation
3. Public Safety
4. Public Works
5. Housing and Development Projects

During the workshop, Council advised staff on changes to survey questions, and instructed them to send out the survey to residents after Labor Day.

Discussion

Implementation:
The final Community Survey included 31 satisfactory ranking questions, 2 importance ranking questions, 2 multiple choice questions, and an open answer comment section. In order to receive maximum response rate, residents were notified that if they gave their personal information, they would be entered into a drawing for one of six gift cards to a either Cub, Aldi or Hy-Vee.

Prior to the opening of the survey, residents were made aware in the October Cottage Grove Reports that the survey would soon be sent out. Initial implementation of the survey was enacted on October 18. The survey was posted to the City's Facebook and mailed to residents' mailboxes with a prepaid return envelope. A total of 13,613 surveys were printed and mailed with a return envelope. Residents were given one month to complete their survey online or to return their survey in the mail. Reminders to fill out the survey online were posted to the City's Facebook on October 26, November 8 and November 15. The final date to complete the survey online or return in the mail was November 15. Despite this completion date, surveys were accepted in the mail until December 8.

The online option for responses saw 812 submissions from residents. In order to combine the data from online and mail surveys, staff inputted all paper copies of mailed surveys into the online database. A total of 1791 paper copies of surveys were returned by mail, and each required recording all responses into the database and scanning them into our records, taking an average of 10 minutes per survey. Eight staff members, representing almost every department of the city, assisted with recording and scanning surveys so that Council and the community would be provided with the results as fast as possible. It took 161.25 hours to input all the mailed back surveys into the online platform.

Between the online submissions and mailed submissions, a total of 2,603 residents completed the survey.

Cost:
While staff time for preparing the survey, recording the results, and analyzing the results was to be expected with an in-house survey, the actual staff time that was required was much higher than anticipated, requiring a total of 341.25 hours in payroll, from start to finish. Costs for getting the surveys to the mailboxes of residents was another added cost. The breakdown of the total cost of survey preparation, implementation, and review is outlined below.

Preparation and Analysis	$8,130.50
Printing	$2,709.00
Envelopes	$609.00
Fulfillment	$1,471.00
Mailing Cost	$2,304.96
Return Postage	$2,663.00
Recording Results	$5,244.59
Gift Cards	$600.00
Total	**$23,732.05**

The preparation stage of the survey included researching common and effective survey questions, researching survey implementation methods, devising a plan of action, creating both the online and paper survey forms and working with the printing company and postal service to send out the surveys. Notably, 11,930 of these surveys were not returned by mail, costing a total of $6,168.44 in printing, envelopes, postage, and fulfilment costs.

Results:
In order to achieve an accurate analysis of the survey results, staff spent many hours inputting the paper copies into an online form to be compiled with the surveys filled out online. Once all responses were compiled, staff sorted and reviewed the 99 pages of general comments and saw numerous trends in the comments. One thing to note is that no demographic information, such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, income, education, employment, etc., was collected with the survey. Therefore, there is no basis for comparison on what demographic profile accompanies each comment or types of comments for review. The overview of the results including comment trends is included in the attached results.

Action

As you review the quantitative data and comments, please consider the following questions, and prepare to discuss the survey results in our upcoming strategic planning meeting on January 22, 2022.

1. What pleased you with respect to these survey results?
2. What, if anything, concerns you, and why?
3. What does this survey tell us with respect to our strategic priorities as we grow as a city?
4. What does this survey tell us with respect to our day-to-day operations and services?

Attachments

Community survey
Overview of results
Housing comments
General comments

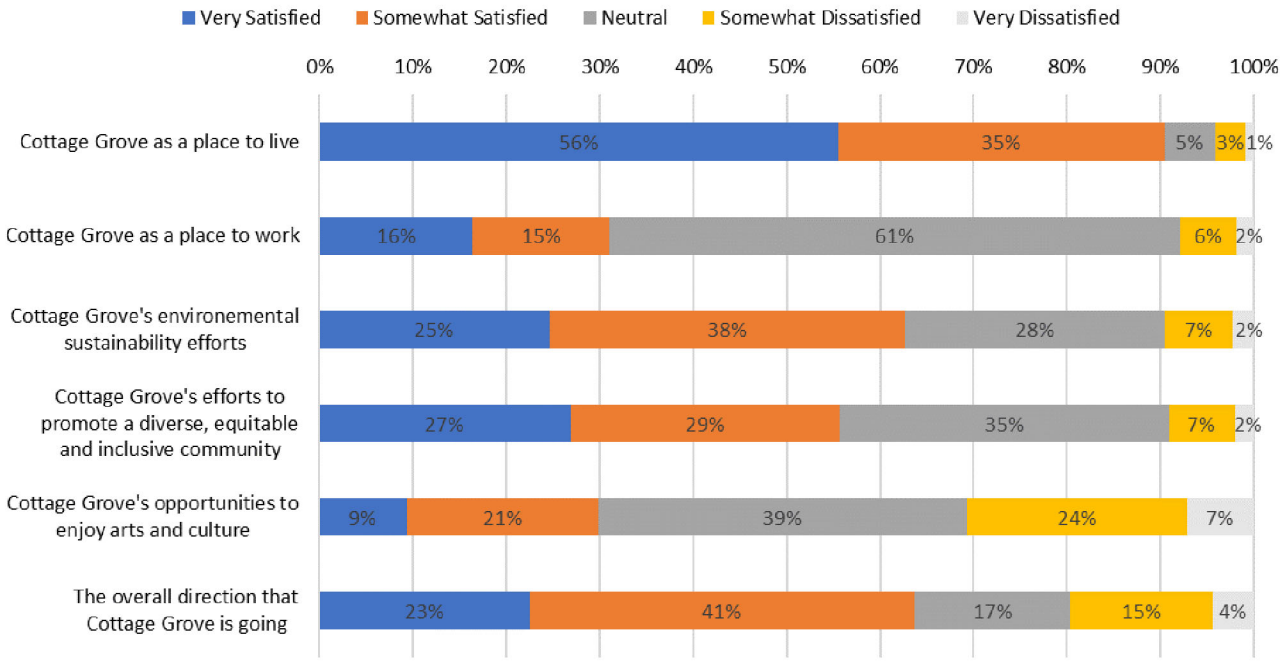
COTTAGE GROVE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

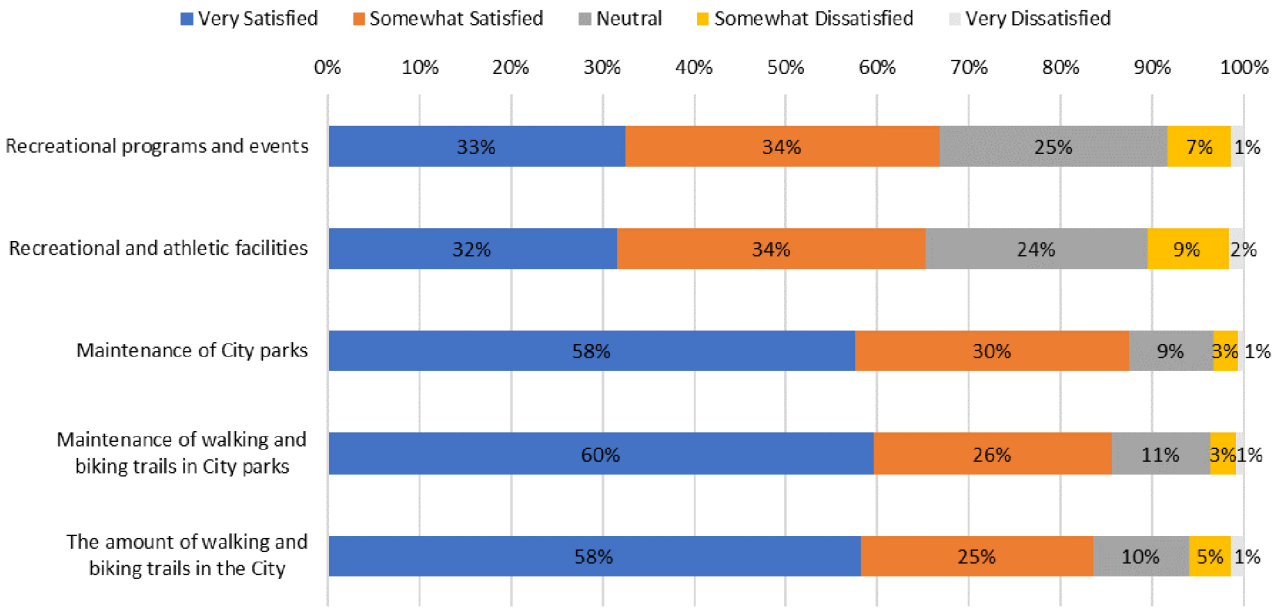
2603
Respondents

1261
Comments

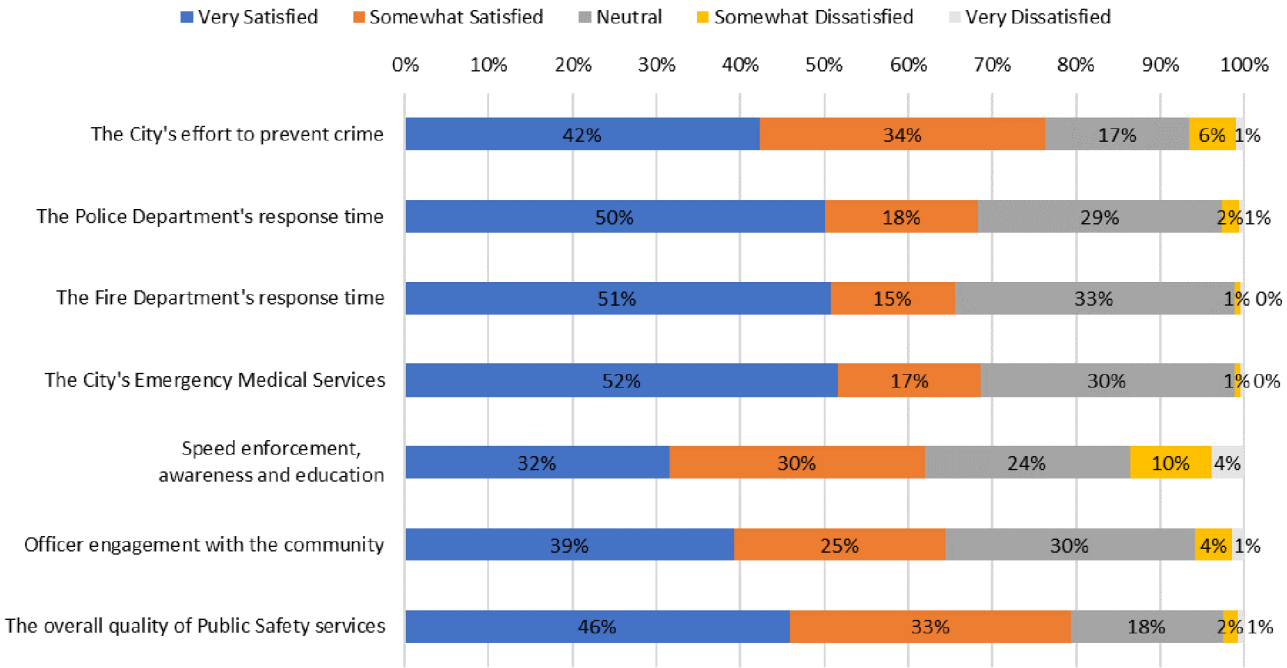
PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN COTTAGE GROVE.



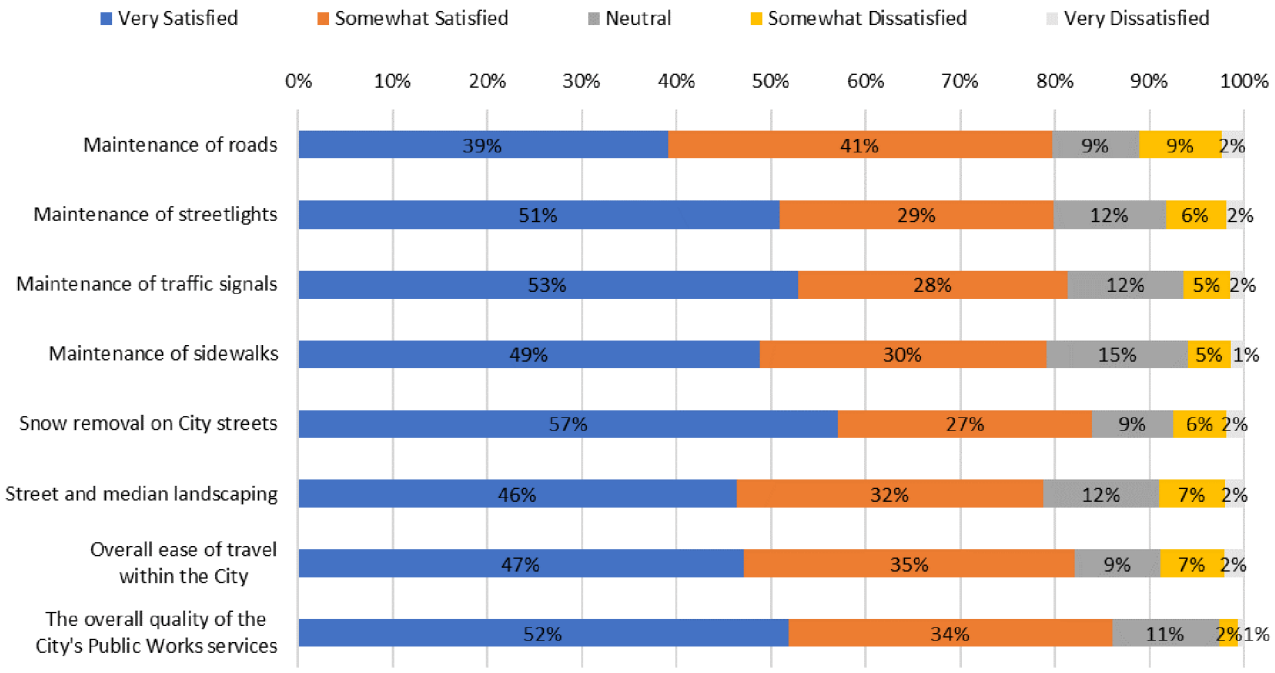
PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE FOLLOWING SERVICES PROVIDED BY COTTAGE GROVE PARKS AND RECREATION.



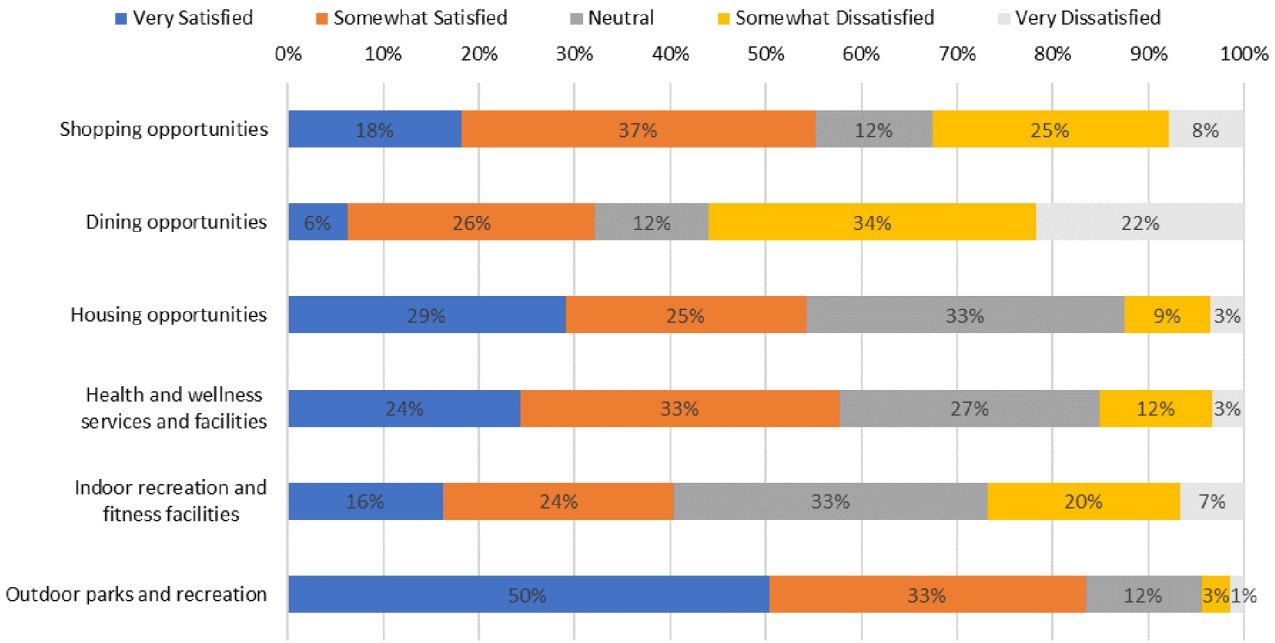
PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE FOLLOWING SERVICES PROVIDED BY COTTAGE GROVE PUBLIC SAFETY.



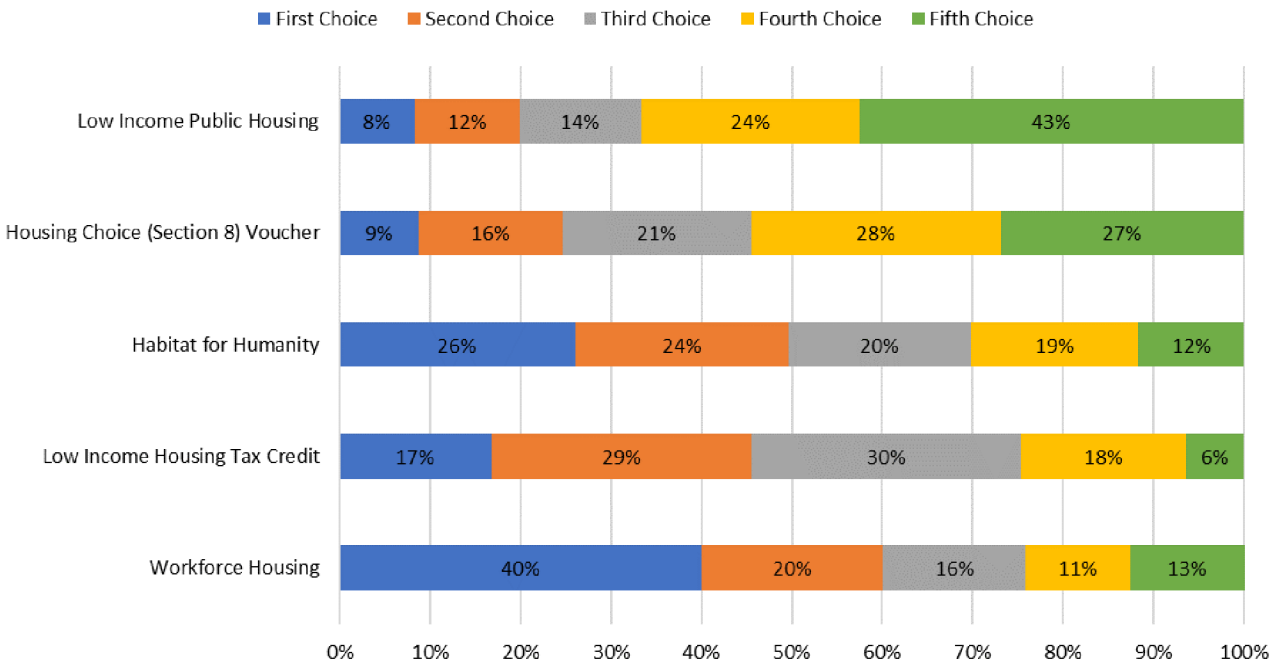
PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE FOLLOWING SERVICES PROVIDED BY COTTAGE GROVE PUBLIC WORKS.



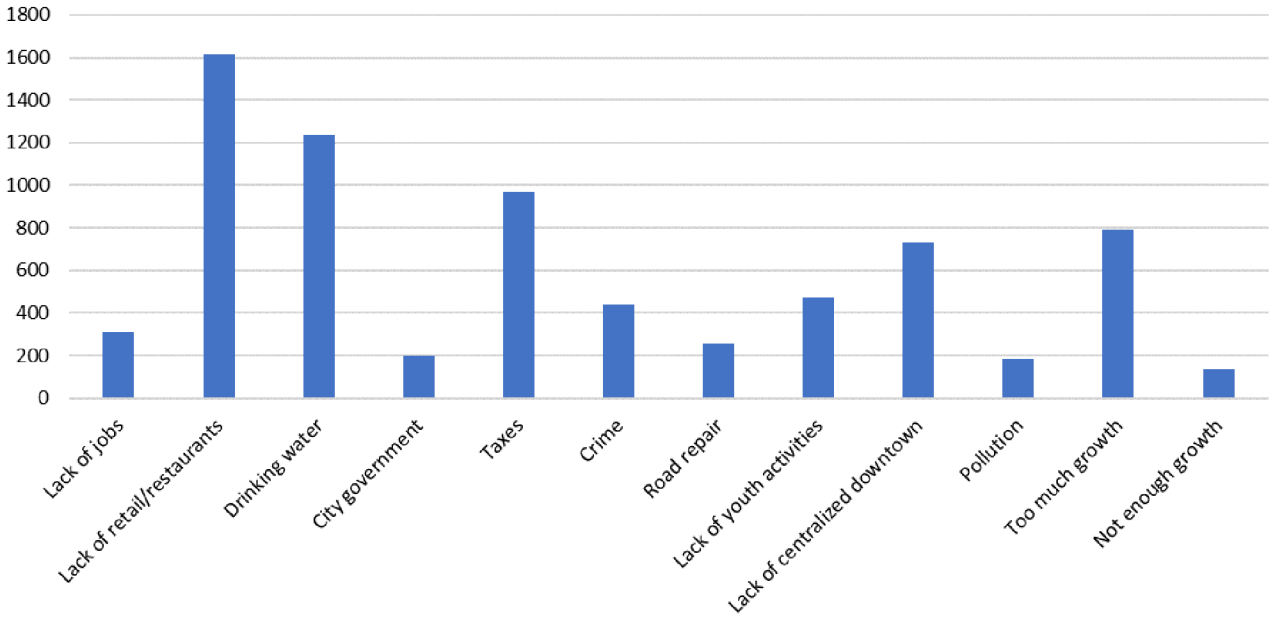
PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE FOLLOWING HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN COTTAGE GROVE.



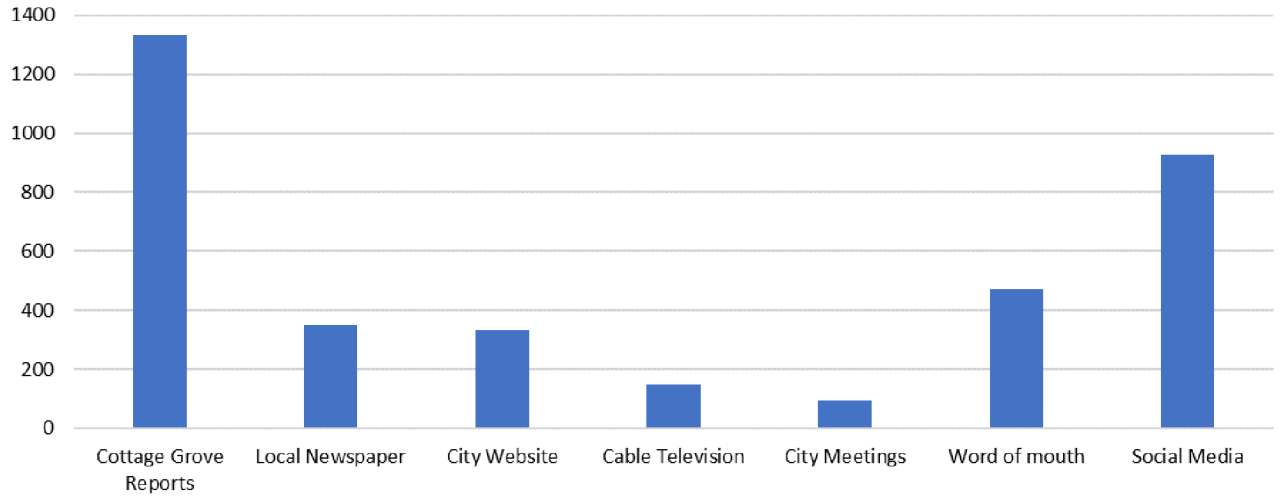
PLEASE RANK, IN ORDER, THE FOLLOWING HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES BY IMPORTANCE TO YOU, 1 BEING "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT" AND 5 BEING "NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT."



WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST SERIOUS ISSUES FACING COTTAGE GROVE TODAY?



WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY?



TOP 30 TRENDS
COMMUNITY COMMENTS

REQUESTS

1. More restaurants with diverse options
2. More retail shopping options
3. Centralized downtown
4. Higher-paying, white-collar jobs in the city
5. Expanded communications from the city
6. More green space
7. Lower-cost housing
8. More residential code enforcement
9. Lower property taxes
10. Allowance of chickens on all residential properties
11. More diverse community events
12. Prioritization of the environment
13. More senior activities
14. More youth activities
15. More pickleball courts
16. Increased speed enforcement
17. Increased noise ordinance enforcement
18. More sidewalks, especially in older residential neighborhoods
19. Improved pedestrian safety and more crosswalks
20. Beautification and upkeep of public areas

CONCERNS

21. Belief in an increase in crime in the community
22. Water quality
23. Section 8 housing
24. Losing the city's small-town feel; becoming identical to neighboring communities
25. Too much development
26. Infrastructure and school capacity keeping pace with development

COMPLIMENTS

27. Parks and trails
28. Public Safety
29. Plowing efforts
30. City services, staff, elected officials, and volunteers

City Council Comments

Mayor Bailey and Council Member do an excellent job. They are open to listening and also getting input to the questions and concerns. Thank you for all that you do for the citizens.

Continue to pray for God's wisdom and guidance as you work on complex projects and problems for the people you serve. Thank you!

I believe priorities of our Mayor and city council are not in our best interest (Steve Dennis is GOOD)

Lack of long term planning, Mendota Heights has the same problem since 1955.

Original charter had not long term development forecast.

When you establish your comp plan - stick with it! Plan amendments only serve the developers- not the community.

Lack of frequent local gov. issues in timely manner , & truthfulness.

It is very disingenuous to invite residents to meetings to discuss development of a piece of land and then tell us that, dispite our valid objections, the town council has already made up its mind before we have the opportunity to speak up about a proposal. This has happened twice to the residents of the Pine Arbor residents. Once when the bar and restaurant when in on 70th & Hinton & then with the housing development on Hinton & 68th.

Happy to live in CG and with all our elected officials. The Hirte's.

We have lived in Cottage Grove for 27 years. This is a good town and has been a wonderful place to raise our family. It does not need to be a want to be community. It has it's own charm. A big thank you to the talented and caring staff from the city administrative staff! To all of the city workers. That includes city support folks, police, snow plow drivers, etc.

LOVE CG? Mayor Myron is doing a good job.

My name is Jacqueline Lourar and I have lived here since 1995. A lot of these issues (Dining, good paying jobs and affordable housing) have been problems for decades. I know that the City and especially Myron Bailey are working on these issues.

Overall I am very happy with living here & excited about all the changes the mayor is making!

Am 74 yrs old - Have lived in CG since 1981 (a townhouse) moved 1991 to my current address 8298 Hemingway Ave S. Many changes over 40 yrs!! Always appreciate Mayor Bailey answering phone calls and spending time visiting with me. Plan on staying in CG until I pass away. Enjoy "small town" feeling and feel comfortable here. Drive to West St Paul to attend church but always love coming back to my home. Thanks for the opportunity to add to this survey. J Wieler

A council member 's spouse should not have a job with City Government . Total Conflict of interest!

3 City council and Mayor need to follow their own rules and stop giving variances to their pet projects to fit their own needs. Follow the ordinances that they have made.

Government - tood much long term people

1) Get rid of Mayor Bailey - his total lack of any interest in input from his constituents is unneeded.. Pretending to hear the concerns of the public and then doing what he wants anyway is not leadership. The guy is a self - absorbed a**hole with his own agenda for how he things the city should be run. You've never gotten my vote and will never get it. I'v more respect for dumps i've taken. You know the mayor is garbage when the only lawn on his street with a political sign for his is in his yard.

3) Did I mention the mayor is a colossal douchebag.

Cottage Grove Citizens and City Officials spend numerous hours planning a comprehensive plan for what to have the Planning Commission change it. Zoning is not upheld and changed to meet developer needs to make more money. The City Council has changed zoning everything a developer request it becase they see tax dollars. If they don't want to be in a rural city move to Woodbury and you can become the fastest growing city.

Mayor is doing a great job!

3. I was very sad when the mayor didn't show up, I wanted to talk to him.

Lets clean up our City. Do we need new city leaders?

Believe Mayor Bailey and City Council Members are on the right track.

City Council Comments

City government representatives should be visible, come in contact with residents.

Mayor Bailey is doing an excellent job

I also love how the mayor gives updates on the city's new stuff coming along on facebook.

I have the honor to work with city leaders and have had a great experience. They address issues when they arise and are proactive with others. I appreciate that they are accessible and available to the public.

Term limits on city positions

My wife and I moved to CG in July 2021 from north-eastern Kentucky. We watch the city council meetings on youtube, and are completely satisfied with the directions the city is taking, and with the depth of passion and caring the council has for both residents and local business. Best wishes

Outstanding city, outstanding Public Works, outstanding leadership by Mayor and City Government.

It's a disgrace that you opposed residents in favor of more apartment buildings on Hardwood. I would hope that public officials would do what is in the citizens' best interest of the city and the environment. In this case the Mayor & City Council chose their pocket books. Sad!

#2 Comments: last question...mostly due to pandemic and partly due to not having CG long term new residents that can be part of City Council meeting as adjunct voters.

I think the city fathers (mayor, etc) are trying to impress someone with major improvements (i.e. Hero Center, City Center, Sports Facilities, education facilities and programs for low income, etc) and they are bleeding the tax payer dry.

The city council could also do a better job of responding to individual requests.

- Arts council doesn't seem to be interested in performing arts such as the community theatre and community band. The City Council, Mayor and others don't show up for performances, even when given personal invitations

I am upset about the Mississippi Dunes situation an the Mayor not responding to public input. It seems to me that the Mayor and City Council hold public hearings and then do exactly what they planned to do all along. I would like a way on the city website to address my concerns to the council and Mayor. If there is a way to do so, it's not easy to find. I like Cottage Grove because it is not Woodbury and I don't wan the city to lose its serene atmosphere.

It's time for serious change here in Cottage Grove. The City Council and our Mayor do not focus on what is important for growth. Residents now are looking for a reason to stay but not much keeping them here.

Lack of responsiveness to public input on the proposed redevelopment of the Mississippi Dunes Golf Course.

City Council Comments

It’s hard liking the public … a public you once wanted to serve for whatever idealistic (or other) reason … when they are always bitching about something. That’s true --- they are bitching --- and that’s what its about. It’s part of the job. Hopefully, you knew that when you signed on. The developers and the land owners will bend over backwards being nice to Staff, Advisory Commissions and City Council Members because they want something FROM you. It puts Staff, Advisory Commissions, and City Council Members is an awkward position. It’s easy to forget (and I’m really, really sure you would like to forget) the bitchy, unappreciative Cottage Grove residents that YOU represent. You signed on to serve ad represent the RESIDENTS of Cottage Grove, You wanted to be OUR voice. Please step up. You are the STEWARDS that were elected to lead us now as well as help protect our resources for future generations.
How do Cottage Grove City Council boundary expansions affect the residents and taxpayers of Cottage Grove? Why the attitude that “it’s no big deal.” So, I am thinking it is a big deal. Residents just don’t have the information.
Provide the residents with the information needed to understand the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW on these big issues and decisions that are going to have a lasting impact on this community. Inform your constituents. There have been way too many times where it seems like the City Council is trying to “get something by” the residents or that by the time plans are presented for public review, the decisions have already been made and all that’s desired is another rubber stamp.
I have more examples on my list of Cottage Grove’s needed improvements. Unfortunately, it has been very discouraging to watch and/or attend recent EDA, Planning Commission and/or City Council meetings which were no more than rubber stamps for whatever was put before them. There were no findings of fact. There were no hard questions asked. So no answers were given. Sorry. Not acceptable. We need more from our city of Cottage Grove STEWARDS … our city of Cottage Grove PROTECTORS! This Community is being put at risk with some of these decisions.
There was more discussion at a recent food truck workshop than at other public discussions about far more serious matters affecting this community. Come on. Step it up.

Mayor council and staff do an excellent job.

This city does not seem to care about its residents only about more money in governments pockets! Add business that get tax credits to move in but raise residential taxes!

I would like better city official

Citizen input should be done prior to development for the city. The feedback from the citizens who makeup the city should be continually solicited so the the city is making choices the majority of its citizens actually want.

I applaud the mayors activity on the social sites.

Would like CG to engage with public for feedback in planning stage.

The City council and Mayor also need to keep their spending in check. We should be focused on lowering taxes, not raising them for more pet projects. Rather than building a community center or the Hero center, Cottage Grove residents would like to see their taxes lowered. It's not your job to spend our money. I also hate the fact that any school funding increases are usually set for off year elections because less people turn out to vote those years. Tax increase issues should only be allowed in presidential election years.

Mayor is doing a good job.

The City council and Mayor also need to keep their spending in check. We should be focused on lowering taxes, not raising them for more pet projects. Rather than building a community center or the Hero center, Cottage Grove residents would like to see their taxes lowered. It's not your job to spend our money. I also hate the fact that any school funding increases are usually set for off year elections because less people turn out to vote those years. Tax increase issues should only be allowed in presidential election years.

Areas all over the community are being developed. When we and our neighbors participate in planning commission and city council meetings our voices are not being heard. It appears as though the city is more concerned with appeasing developers than it's current residents.

I would also like to see council members thoughts on city issues added to the Cottage Grove Reports.

City Council Comments

The council saying that expanding the tax base to lower taxes has been a giant lie. The community center is absolutely excessive and is just another shrine to the mayor. You don't deserve my money.

I am not at all happy with the current city government or the current mayor. Seriously, seems like they have no clue what the issues are in Cottage Grove. A gun range, shiny new government buildings, cut down park average for those shiny new government buildings. Streets being redone that were just done a few years ago, badly so repairs didn't last and getting rid of things like a Drive in for a Wallmart and building a community center/library on the edge of town where ever kid who is vulnerable can't get without someone driving him or here there. Clueless city government who has no imagination and only excuses for why or why not something can or can't be done. Oh and given the changing demographic over the last 10 years, has even one person of color been chosen to serve on the council, because I've had several good qualified people come to my door canvasing so where is that voice in you all white government? Do I seem angry? I am and have been for a long time and if you want to know why we don't just move....a question I ask myself often, I say "Why should I?" You serve us so do better!

Lack of diversity in City council

Overall the city is above the threshold that forces my family to move away; however, with the current leadership the trajectory of my satisfaction is quickly approaching the point where I am forced to move. Bad policies from people who don't know what they are doing will drive the town into shambles.

The city government needs to be more transparent and take public input into consideration when making decisions.

Council Member Olsen is very condescending and is allowed too much time to speak at meetings.

Really appreciate how everything is very transparent as far as growth and changes coming up. I feel in the loop - especially because of the Mayor's Facebook page, but also social media, etc. Thank you or everything you do! We love living here.

City Council does not hear citizen concerns. Decisions are predetermined.

Administration Comments

I moved here many years ago when there was very many places to eat shop and teen ages and kids had skate time-team dances-drive in movie theater, indoor movie theater. All of this has been eliminated.

There is a real lack of overall planning for the citys future growth. No centralized business area. It is all willy-nilly. Think. Plan. Anticipate.

- consider low-impact development solutions congruent with conservative storm water mitigation design

We could really use a shopping center and restaurants that would prevent the need to drive to Woodbury.

Destroying the beautiful dunes with industrial/manufacturing/commercial property is a horrible idea. The remainder of that area should be preserved as a park and outdoor family friendly recreational area.

1. Need more Restaurants and Stores - Balance these - Not all in a cluster by hy-vee

Plenty of bar/restaurants. No restaurant without a bar, i.e. family restaurant

It would be great if CG can have more businesses as well.

We need a super target. Thank you

We need more businesses and to slow down on building. We are turning into Woodbury without the restaurants or businesses to help. I go to Woodbury to eat at least 3 times a month. That is money this community is losing.

Too many strip malls - they open up and then are closed. We don't need anymore health clubs and surely no pool!

I would like to see more shopping opportunities in CG. Now, I automatically go to Woodbury when I need anything other than groceries. I find that very sad.

Bring more restaurants in town

Need more decent restaurants - breakfast place

I would also like to see more variety in food restaurants. Panera, Perkins, Cottage Grove Tap etc. Something other than pizza, chow mien, hamburgers, Subway.

We need a YMCA in Cottage Grove.

We need a Panera Bread, BOOK stores, a few more hotels to bring people to CG, so they spend $ & stay overnight, We have 1 hotel!

No more grocery stores. We need people to come to CG and spend $ so taxes are not put on single family homes so much,

1. Cottage Grove needs a few more hotel choices

2. More restaurants, maybe Olive Garden, TGIF, a fresh "to go" salads, bagels shop, steakhouse

4. Car dealership like , ford, or similar size

5. More vet clinics, the ones here can't support our community. Too busy & pets suffer

Entertainment and late night food options are severely lacking! This town is known socially as very "sleepy" and a "pass-through" town to more engaging cities near by.

Re #9: lack of restaurants (breakfast especially) would love a café or bakery

Lack of jobs that pay a living wage. A good community should encourage business to want to have people live where they work, therefore, pay a wage to afford living in a good community.

We need to focus on getting this city more attractive to businesses & not making it difficult with insane requirements (i.e. signage etc). Need to get a more welcoming tax base so the city's infrastructure can be fixed, replaced, built as needed

Question? Why is there a coffee shop at the corner of 80th Street & Hinton, did a traffic report point out he excess to this building? Report on Crestview School and walking students? Who did the traffic report? Why? Results? People this is a accident waiting to happen, especially with students. I don't understand how this passed the city council.

To many fast foods not good for your health.

We usually go to Woodbury for our shopping and dining as they have more options, such as Costco, Super Target, Chick-fil-A, and several more local options. Cottage Grove is definitely lacking in that area. As someone in a new development, I would love some businesses where we live.

Administration Comments

need more help promoting local businesses before they close up!

There isn't a lot of shopping or dining in town.

-need more "nightlife" - not even thinking about drinking as I don't but places for adults to go & meet ppl @ night/evening. Ex. classes, restaurants, bowling, arcade, ax throwing, rock climbing, etc. More activities for 25-55 year olds!! :)

We feel with all the housing going up NE of town - we need more retail & restaurants in this area. There are no coffee shops or good eats around us. I feel there are not enough fine dinning either. We always do out of CG for "good" restaurants. More healthy options! Less fast food & pizza, more salad shops. Trader Joes etc. Let's build a HEALTHY community!!

It would be nice to have restaurants that families could go for breakfast/dinners (similar to Perkins-like). Also fine dining restaurants.

Need more restaurants and entertainment. We go spend our money in Hastings or Woodbury because they have shopping and restaurants.

More sit down places to eat.

Could use more shopping selections and different restaurants.

We could use a movie theater or a play house for plays. Entertainment isn't available.

There needs to be more options for shopping and dining. We would prefer to stay in Cottage Grove for these, but there are not enough options and the variety isn't there.

Lack of retail/restaurants does not mean more stupid coffee shops, or pizza shops or Subways. Get some VARIETY. Allow for bars & liquor licensing.

The Cottage Grove flyer comes out and all the events have already passed

Where are some nice restaurants...all this town is filled with is fast food

Where are the nice workout facilities, that have basketball, racketball, pool.... All this town has is smalltime facilities.

I am a senior and do not have internet access. Overall I believe (CG) is a good community. I have lived in CG since 1975. CG needs a "downtown" area or strip - main road. CG used to be known (and maybe still is) as a business to open and be out of business in less than 2 yrs. We need business stability. To hell with all the pizza parlors and fast food style. How about something upper middle class style - Texas Roadhouse/Red Lobster. What keeps me to shop in CG? There is no nightlife - family restaurant and a movie, dancing.

Big lack of Retail/Restaurants

I am concerned that the city is focusing, or will be, on something mentioned on page 1's question, namely: promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. On the surface, objecting to that sounds crazy. After all, I want everyone to succeed. But it seems that the city - with our tax dollars - should not be in the business of picking winners and losers. It is up to us citizens, armed with virtue and a desire to do right, to help welcome others and to be good to them. I moved from St. Paul. Mayor Carter, with wrong emphasis, has really lowered the standard of living. Rather than raising the down-trodden up, he has brought everyone down, something I don't want to see happen here in Cottage Grove. Thank you.

We need a new library - a downtown, a community center

We miss Perkins Restaurant. Need a restaurant like Perkins, Baker's Square, or Denny's.

Would love to see more shopping/retail and restaurants

Please give us some decent restaurants! Tired of going to Hastings/Woodbury areas for good food! Thanks!

Many new people and few new restaurants, stores, etc.

More Sports Bars or something like a "dive"/Cheers type bar :) Where everybody knows your name. We both don't work in town and find it hard to get to know people.

We generally go to Hastings or Woodbury to go out for entertainment. There isn't anything much that would be considered interesting here.

Administration Comments

Our family just moved here last year. We do wish there were more dine in, non-fast food restaurants & a movie theater. We find ourselves driving to Woodbury for these kind of things. Same with retail.

2. Our community is surrounded by industrial/manufacturing leading to higher safety risks to land, water and humans.

1. Too many burger places. Would like to see a Chik-fil-A or nice sit down restaurant (not applbees)

Some type of centralized entertainment district would be awesome!

Too many fast food restaurants

Not enough sit down restaurants without sports bars.

Family type restaurants for family with children.

We need more restaurants and shops like Stillwater! Huge attraction.

Suggestions: CG needs "handiman" services for people like me (reasonable charges but competent)

Senior citizens need FREE things. They are on limited income. Bus rides to store - places to gather and play games for FREE!

Considering the population of Cottage Grove it's embarrassing we have so little choices for retail & family dining

Need a restaurant for breakfast.

A drive-in would be nice

A Papa Johns would be nice

More bar/restaurants

Breakfast/diner

Seems there was not enough consideration of traffic when building the drive thru coffee place at 80 & Hinton and school traffic. Dangerous! Also the drive in/out of the new apartment complex on 80th, very sharp turn for in/out.

We need more family restaurants especially ones that serve breakfast.

CG only needs one more "nice" restaurant and not too much retail. The city is losing its charm.

It would be great if Cottage Grove built a cineplex movie theatre.

I wish that we had a movie theater and a band shell. Also, I'd like a place for the arts.

We need more schools, especially another high school or a bigger new one. We could also use more retail and more sit down (quality) dining.

Why no Pizza Ranch yet?

Why another pizza place?

How about a nice sit down resteraunt w/o competing w/sports & bar activities

Movie theatre

MORE FOOD!

I question the logic of the Council/Mayor not providing more business opportunities on the north side of CG. Ex: 65th & Hinton, we received a letter regarding the area wasn't sustainable for a coffee house - yet another Coffee (Caribou) is built on 80th & Hinton. There is already 3 coffee rest off of 80th - this makes 4. Really? What about the resident on the north side? Not sure of the logic. The north side would draw Woodbury residents. We had far more restaurant options when I was very young - growing up in this City. We are going backwards. Lacking in drawing Bs to this area. Need more forward thinking.

More info thru social media about city govt happenings

We moved to CG to retire. One of the draws to the area were the walking trails and the parks. We picked the Mississippi Dunes area because of the rural area. We are very disappointed with the traffic in our area, which is increasing everyday. Now there will be 1800 plus cars going past our home with the new developments and warehouses. We will have to leave, we do not see that we can stay. I knew taxes were considerably higher here than Andover, now I see they are going up again between the Community Center & school. With all the building we will need more schools.

Need sit down - not fast food

CG really needs a hospital as centrally located as possible.

Administration Comments

CG needs a veterinarian emergency hospital & clinic opened 24 hrs/7 days a week.

Please no more fast food places. It would be nice to bring in additional business so I dont have to spend my money in Woodbury. Overall - CG is a great place to live.

Need more family restaurants

More dining

Also we are saturated with retail jobs and a desperately lacking quality tech jobs. You can do a much better job enticing quality tech companies to CG. Come on Mayor and City Council... Get with the program! Bring in more/better high paying jobs!

We need restaurants, hotels and city center in CG. These important amenities are lacking here for a city of this size.

I realize it is hard to compete with Woodbury, Hastings, etc for dining/entertainment, but continue to prioritize what would provide value to the community.

*Another source of info - handwritten "Myron's Facebook updates".

We need a weekly newspaper or letter informing us of events and general news in CG. Events at churches and community events. We need more retail stores and family restaurants - not sports bars. Keep in mind not all senior citizens use computers that's why we need an informative newspaper. The C G Journal is nice but doesnt list events or enough info pertaining to CG.

I would like to see more restaurants, we often need to travel to Woodbury for a variety of restaurants.

There has been so much growth in homes and dwelling expanding over the City. Need to keep restaurants and shops growing also.

Would love to see more shopping and restaurants come too!

Overall we enjoy living in CG. However, we feel the city could use more retail and restaurants.

Family style sit down restaurants

Need a restaurant that serves breakfast (not fast food) would love to see ZE's diner in CG.

Overall - a good place to live. Would be great to have a locally owned breakfast place. Don't want us to become like Woodbury. - way to busy!

Shopping: What possibly is the difference between any store or restaurant in CG and any other store in Woodbury, Hastings or St Paul - adding Walmart, Olive Garden, TJ Maxx or any establishment provides nothing of value to the citizens of CG - more traffic/more noise/more bad air.

Need more options for restaurants/shopping.

there is a lack of quality jobs in the city. young Adults must go elsewhere to find a good job. Job training (of some kind) would help - even at a high school level. Thanks!

We need a family restaurant that serves Breakfast. Needed to help seniors socialize outside their homes. Not much offered for seniors in CG

Diversity shops/restaurants would be great, but not too much. Thanks for all you do.

Need to have better paying jobs.

unsure of public transportation to mpls and is it working well. We need a lot more retail and especially restaurants. we go to Woodbury or Robert Street

The City has never had a 10-20-30 year commercial growth plan. We have 3 different commercial areas competing for the same customers.

80th Street is the City Center, develop it with that in mind.

More restaurants of non fast food type.

- Q#9 Lack of retail/restaurants: Emphasis was placed on Restaurants

We need better restaurants. No more Asian or Pizza. Local bakery would be nice.

* Please, no more public storage facilities along Hwy 61

- High number of seniors in community - Provide effective way to inform senior citizens of services available to them.

Administration Comments

I think Cottage Grove has forgotten the seniors of the community. Makes people of senior really struggling. We need more recreational outside stuff. We need more Senior Gatherings and more restaurants family friendly

Would be nice to have a Kwik Trip , Italian Restaurant or Texas Roadhouse steak house.

Need more retail/shopping

1 Need a White Castle here! Much agreement Here on this!

Where is pizza Ranch? Would like veggies , chicken, and mashed potatoes and gravy.

1. In addition to the Cottage Grove reports, information and opinions of the city are gained from being in life long Cottage Grove Resident.

I cannot believe the woods are being cleared on Hardwood. I walk that path almose every day. Instead of zoning for new business, how about cleaning up the existing rundown businesses on the Frontage roads?

The Type of shopping and restaurants is inadequate. That's why everyone goes to Woodbury to shop. Cottage Grove is still a "bedroom" town after all these years. The shopping in Cottage Grove is always in congested areas. Not easy to get to . Congested intersections. Too Much housing developments , not enough schools or retail .

Would be nice to have another sit down restaurant with comfort food.

Would love to see the city grow in shopping, restaurant and business industry.

- Q#13 Local Newspaper = Cottage Grove Journal

Business Adverse- Why is it so hard to let business in and help our tax base grow? (Woodbury is thriving!!)

Variety of businesses is poor- we have over abundant Sr. Homes , storage places

Lack of diverse dining opportunities and shopping for our city population

Cottage Grove Needs More Restaurants

We need more retail/restaurants. I would like to stop in my own community but end up driving to Woodbury at least 2-3 times a week for what I want and need.

We need more good sit down restaurants.

- Q#6 Dining opportunities: Need more

We need more decent bars and restaurants we also need public transport to work more than just Express bus M-F.

New coffee shop - bad spot...

We have no entertainment (movie theaters play/theater houses, pinball (arcade)

Need a Kentucky Fried Chicken

More young doctors - general family doctors

Lack of people who want to work so everything can be fully open.

We would like to see a few more large scale restaurants and stores such as a Kwik Trip, However we do not want to be the next Woodbury. We like the calm of Cottage Grove with Woodbury near by.

*more restaurants and breweries (especially downtown area)

- Need more unique neighborhood bar/restaurant choices - no more chains or pizza places.

- Do more to support the small business owner - like the food truck guy.

- Outdoors stores. Example: Bass Pro Shop/Mills fleet Farm

Please focus on family restaurants and opportunities for youth activities.

4. More sit down dining options that invite friends to gather, visit, and eat (not a bar) Like a Panera or a Keys café or a Ze's diner

- Need more diverse restaurants. I have travel to Woodbury for good food.

Need more sit down restaurants available.

I feel there is a lack of good healthy restaurants.

Lots of fast food already.

Lots of pizza places already.

We need a movie theater/

We need more sit down restaurants. There is not a good place for Sunday brunch in CG (or actually any other day of the week)

Administration Comments

Dining opportunities are non-existent in Cottage Grove. Families spend their money in Hudson, Prescott, Woodbury, St. Paul & suberbs in Minneapolis.

Our biggest disappointment with CG is the lack of interesting, multiethnic and non-chain restaurant options in the city. The only restaurant we eat at in CG is Las Margaritas. I'd love to have more diverse and GOOD quality restaurant options in CG so I could spend the money here in this city rather than going to St. Paul or Minneapolis every time I want to dine out. But overall, love living in CG!

We do need more activities for our youth - movie theatre game rooms, indoor water park etc...

We also need more dining options. sit down/bar options

Maurices clothing store

- Require businesses to tear down structures that have not been sold in certain time period. Make it part of the business permit

Concerns about crime & growth. As we grow I don't think the city is prepared for the growth. Including police department, local workforce

We have enough pizza places and nail salons. Please bring in something else.

We love Hy-Vee! Life changer! No need to go to Woodbury!

We are still traveling outside of Cottage Grove for resources such as hospitals, stores and recreation. Would like to see more options in Cottage Grove.

While getting info about the city is getting better, an easier way to find it would be nice.

Seriously, there needs to be more non-chain shopping choices.

We also need independent restaurants and better retail Lowes/Home Depot. Total Wine or Haskells.

Need family style restaurants that serve breakfasts, preferably locally owned and operated (not chain restaurants)

Please please get some decent restaurants/sports bars. Literally go to Prescott, Hastings or Woodbury for every meal out. Try attracting independent non-chain restaurants.

We need a breakfast spot - like Original PanCake House. We have enough bar/pub places with burgers/sandwiches/wings.

A bakery would be amazing - especially with a coffee shop/Panera vibe but a small business, not a chain.

Woodbury seems to attract more (restaurants, kids activities, shopping etc.)

*Not enough dining/entertainment. Most of our dining opportunities are fast food or sports bars. Lack of variety

The best thing was Home Goods we need a Hallmark again not more coffe shops.

The outdoor waterpark idea is a good start, but make it indoor and attach a hotel. Make it a destination and return the ability to use tear round to the table. See Shoreview for an example of DONE RIGHT! in addition, bring back the drive in theater...heck make it by the pool for "dive in"...we need to give people a reason to come into Cottage Grove...to live and to visit/shop/spend!

Retail has improved but more can be done. More sit down restaurants would be nice, but the pandemic is making that difficult everywhere.

Where is our Kwip trip? Really mostly Holiday gas stations.

I was disappointed to see Hy Vee shut down Market Grille. The restaurant filled a niche, especially for breakfast. With on-line shopping and retail outlets in Woodbury, I'm, not expecting much more retail in Cottage Grove.

- Restaurants besides fast food or pizza? nope.....

- Corporate offices for business? nope.....

Choices of restaurants - bigger variety

- Q#9 Lack of retail/restaurants: Emphasis made on restaurants

My comment on lack of jobs pertains to professional jobs. 40 hour-Monday thru Friday, 8-5 jobs.

For a city the population of Cottage Grove to not have some kind of a large medical center with an ER is rather pathetic. Why do we only have clinics? We shouldn't have to drive to Hastings or Saint Paul to find an ER. Most cities of Cottage Groves size have an ER do they not?

- Additional 1 or 2 "chain" sit down restaurants

Administration Comments

- A movie theater
- A retail cluster like Tamarack in Woodbury

We lost a wonderful Sunday morning meeting place, when Perkins closed. Please help us lure a restaurant like Perkins, so people can enjoy eating breakfast here and not having to venture to Hastings, Woodbury, and beyond to eat.

Need stores that Carry clothing.

Miss Fashion Bug!

I'd like to see a greater variety of locally owned businesses such as restaurants and stores. There is not a single book store!

A movie theater would be nice

We need more fine dining and a newspaper

There are literally no non-fast food or pizza options for dining such as Panera etc. that allow for a little healthier options .

Sustain or increase commercial development.

Cottage Grove Reports waste of Money

Too many houses going up and not enough retail/dining

Cottage Grove is growing too fast in the aspect of too many homes and not enough opportunities to go out and have experiences.

Burger King can go

It's a shame as a Cottage Grove resident that we have to go to Woodbury to shop for most items and to be able to have choices to eat out.

CG needs to loosen the reigns a bit on the qualifications to open bars and restaurants in our city.

Darts bus 7 days a week

We need a good sit down restaurant that serves breakfast as well as lunch and dinner.

Not enough liveable wage places to work. Walmart didn't help our City AT ALL brings more crime. I know we don't have a lunch crowd to support rest. and shopping. You are making a great attempt at development.

Not enough retail & restaurants.

We need more shopping and dining. Our restaurants are lacking. Have to go to Woodbury for a nicer restaurant.

You need more shopping and restaurants in this community. Selection is poor and I find I go to out of the community to eat and shop most of the time.

We need more dining opportunities. Better restaurants.

- Caribou Cabin - Terrible location.

- Lack of dining choices - family and upscale dining

Can we please get a Panera?

We need restaurants however Cottage Grove is considered a bedroom community, where people will live here and work outside of the city - How can we keep a restaurant like Texas Road house is the question.

Also, it would be nice if Cottage Grove had a LFC and a book store (Barnes and Noble or Half Price Books).

On the new "secret" development on Ideal and 100th they need ot put up either a berm or noise barrier around the whole development

a few more fast food places would be good... canes would do really well in Cottage Grove. :)

Restaurants & Shopping NEEDS to improve.

Who is going to analyze the info reported? To reach what predetermined conclusion? Share the info gathered with the taxpayers or just somebodies slant to prove the city fathers are doing great? Who devised the survey questions? What are we paying for this survey and to what company? Open the phone lines to all of our city executives. They work for us.

I would like to see the city work on getting more retail business and more seat down restaurants.

- When are we getting a Pizza Ranch?

Administration Comments

- Lack of food variety options - need a children joint

No shoe store, no furniture store, no descent restaurants but fast food.

I have lived in Cottage Grove since 1991. The city has improved significantly over the past 30 years. Improved retail and dining opportunities have made the city a better place to live. The strong planning and economic development is paying dividends.

Would love to see more dining options as well as breweries. Would also love more dog friendly places :-) There is not a lot to do in CG. Always find ourselves going elsewhere.

Centralized downtown- Who cares anymore, You've had over 60 years to figure it out!

We need a restaurant that serves three meals and we don't need more drive thru.

Where are the Restaurants???

- Focus on creating a centralized downtown

Need more quick stop order/go food options, restaurants and cafe style outlets.

-Not enough options for garbage services. Why only Tennis and Waste Management?

-Not enough options for cable, why only X-Finity and Century Link? Monopolies cause high pricing with little choice.

Need more professional/salaried jobs

Bus that goes around Cottage Grove for teenagers and elderly people

Need art galleries or gift shops

- Q#9 Lack of retail/restaurants: Emphasis was placed on restaurants.

City is not the same as it was in past. Movies? Dancing? Events? I can't wait to sell and move to another city that has things to do.

Lack of restaurants - not chains - more like Junction 70

Add a raising Canes!

*"Downtown" stop trying to social engineer by bastardizing language. We don' t have a "downtown" morons.

Bring in industry where most of the tax base is paid by Business

+ local, small businesses/shops

- Q#2 Cottage Grove's efforts to promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive community: Could always do more

I just moved here a little over a year ago and overall really enjoy it here! However I do wish there was more stores here - we have plenty of food places! For example, I still have to go to Woodbury for UPS, Khols clothes shopping, ets. Especially because our Target stock is very limited. Having a facility (like a YMCA) here that offers youth sports AND child care/camp options would also be great. Instead of driving 20+ minutes to a surrounding city YMCA location

Develop business parks like to house large shipping warehouses like Amazon that can create lots of jobs

We need some good food restaurants as opposed to Applebee's and Las Margaritas. It's not that we need anymore chain restaurant's.

- Primary source of information about the city: Facebook - Mayor's reports

- A downtown may be a good way to get more restaurants and local culture/art into Cottage Grove

We would love to see some options for gluten free dining. A food co-op would also be wonderful (Partner with Mississippi Market?). Great jog dealing with the ongoing water situation!

The # of businesses for a community this size is lacking but I hear the city makes it very difficult to get started in town. And why doesn't a city of this size have any bars?

If recreation & shopping is all pulled over to CR 19, how will young people get there? More is needed near dense & low income areas of housing.

You should have let the YMCA utilize the Home Depot space when it was available!!! The YMCA offers activities for all ages in a community.

not enough shopping or restaurants

no jobs for teens

Administration Comments

- Dining Opportunities: Need more
- Health & Wellness Serices/Facilities: It's the system, not CG. Need more privat clinics
- Lack of retail/restaurants - Breakfast
More sit down dining options, allow food trucks to operate here
Additional serious issue from #9 - Single Internet option (Cable)
Xfinity's monopoly on CG internet offerings needs to break.
- More places to dine - not Pizza & Sandwiches
- Family fun. Movies and entertainment. don't want to go to Woodbury to have fun with family
Lack of jobs - white collar
Lack of retail/restaurants - Healthy restaurants, mom&pop, neighborhood establishments
Lack of youth activities - Businesses/recreation
There is a huge lack of live music, theatre, art fairs, etc.
Very few dining options that are not fast food or chain restaurants. No place for a family to sit and enjoy breakfast.
More dining places.
A movie theater would be great!
Lack of central commercial area and restaurants.
Need more restaurants. Love the new Caribou
I get 2-3 Cottage Grove reports that I do not need. I have got 3 surveys. How much does that cost? I have spoke with city hall about this. Nothing has changed. It is a Joke.
We would like family restaurants that are eat-in but that do not sell liquor.
Very unhappy that we are allowing tabacco / vape shop to open! We do not want the trouble that this will bring to our part of town.
we could use a larger local newspaper to find out what is going on. There are few places to meet people. We Need more of that.

We need fine dining and beautiful outdoor patios. No more nail salons, no more pizza or fast food. A natural store like whole foods, more unique small business retail. A party hall like the Prom center or privately owned coffee shop.
A movie theater would be nice!
We need upscale restaurant - IE Ruby Tuesdays or Better , a non Sports Bar Restaurant
Would prefer better alternative of information.
Although Cottage Grove has a plethora of chain restaurants and development stores, there is a n overall lack of small businesses / local options. Because of this , unless those nearby want to shop at HYvee , theres no real reason for non-residents to visit.

It would be nice to get commercial or more aesthetic buildings along the west side of 61 south .... very unappealing.
1/ We need more non-chain restaurants . we pay over 8k / year in taxes and have to go to Woodbury or Stillwater to eat 9/10 times . This needs to changed

5/ Please allow food trucks here with less hassle with Limited dining and rising populations, we need more options.
Not chain Restaurants- e.g. Italian ,home cooking breakfast

Would love a great breakfast or brunch spot. Something similar to the Copperfield in Mendota Heights maybe. High quality ingredients and a modern setting. Everything here is "franchise". Bring Back your community elaborations also.
- Q#2 Cottage Grove as a place to work: Everyone commutes as ther are very few well paying jobs in CG
- Q#9 Lack of jobs: CG jobs are mostly low income, hence most people have to commute.
- Love the Library AND it's CURRENT location
No more chains! Food is junk; stuff sold is junk.

Administration Comments

Promote small, locally focused business

We need more sitting restaurant options and more shopping.

I believe cottage grove needs a large gym like Woodbury LA Fitness!! They need a chicken place like Chick Fil A or KFC. Better paying full time jobs to keep MN peoples kids near home and family.

Also more restaurants are needed.

More sit down establishments

Less large chains retailers and restaurants.

We need a movie theater and a sports bar

Please consider additional upscale restaurants.

CG continues to build large houses and new developments. But fail to bring in businesses to supporth the growth. Everyone goes to Woodbury, Prescott or even Hastings to grab dinner and a drink. Allow more restaurants and taverns to build businesses in CG. Stop limiting liquor licenses and keep the residents from leaving the city for a night out with friends.

question 6 - need more restaurants like Junction 70

Need more restaurants please.

I am satisfied living in CG because I can go to Woodbury for medical, shopping & dining. CG has NOTHING for restaurants so people go elsewhere. We have NOTHING to promote arts & theater. Promoting Arts & Boutiques can draw people to a town.

- Q#6 Health and wellness services/facilities: In Woodbury

- Q#9 Lack of retail/restaurants: Emphasis placed on Restaurants. People go elsewhere

Most of my spending goes to other city because there is not enough retail or places to eat with the growth of our city we need to keep our money here.

In the 40 years that I have lived here, the city has yet to address the lack of dining, recreation, retail opportunities. We live in Cottage Grove but spend our income and free time in Woodbury.

Cottage Grove Reports are mailed mid-month. Over the years you missed half the events, if this is the only source of information, a monthly new source should be mailed end of month prior.

- Q#9 Lack of Retail/Restaurants: Emphasis placed on restaurants.

- Arcade/child/teen friendly place of entertainment

- Movie Theater (Similar to New Hope Cinima Grill)

- Bars/clubs

- Urban sprawl is a growing problem. Having government offices away from people continues to be a barrier

We need something for young adults and teenagers to do in this town so riff raff minimizes

A breakfast restaurant. Something like "The Park" restaurant in St. Paul Park.

- Have family type restaurant

- Breakfast restaurant

Need more restaurants and dining options. Could use more gas station options East of Hinton and North now with Oltman and development around.

- MORE restaurants - i.e. Italian, Jersey Mikes, fine dining

- Sit down restaurants....Please

WOuld like to see more "mom & pop" type restaurants.

We need more retail/restaurant/fast food chains.

- Would love a variety of restaurants that are not chain. We have Junction 70 but find ourselves going to Woodbury or Hastings for fariety.

add a zoo

renovate library

The City website should be more user friendly to providing citizen input

Great work on the central downtown area. I feel those are the correct things to work on

Administration Comments

I would like to see more professional jobs become available.

We would like a Kwik Trip gas station. Not a fan of Holiday.

- Q#10 Local Newspaper: sometimes

- Q#10 Social Media: Neighborhood page

- Racism is STILL a big problem. Growing but still needs work.

Need a decent restaurant that serves real meals. Not the high salt, high fat garbage that we have in CG.

Please no more: fast food, low-quality dining, I.E buffet or low-end restaurants

Washington County in general has limited mental health services that are accessible for chronic mentally ill. I would love to see more business for mental health case management etc.

- Use the Cottage Grove Journal – the local paper – to inform the community. It's $35 for an annual subscription. How many people can afford the Pioneer Press?

Congestion in Retail Areas - Too many shared parking lots within retail

The Retail/Restaurant options have been consistently improving. I know there is long term growth plans with include both commercial and residential expansion. Keep up the good work. You are making Cottage Grove a little better every year. Thank you!

I would like to see a more stretgic site picture of where this community is going. What is the overall plan for housing development, retail and restaurant growth, attracting various industries with tax breaks, and overall efforts to ensure community is kept safe from encroaching crime of inner-ring cities.

Property taxes increases too much with no decent restaurants or decent stores to shop - only fast food.

Plan an art fair showcasing different artists in the area. Add another dog park to the jcommunity. Have a 24/7 Post Office kiosk available. Have more availablity to an urgent care facility.

Wondering when strip mall shopping area is coming to area behind Walmart, that was a selling point for taking out drive in? Could still have drive in. Same old city C.S. Some of us don't forget. Also quit running food trucks out of town. I'd prefer their food over the corporate poison in town. They can't even get employees. Food trucks have good food operations that want to work and put out quality food. I'll spend my money in cities that allow food trucks don't expect this to be heard just letting you know the people don't forget.

Also - is Pizza Ranch still coming to town?

We moved here 4 months ago to be in the school system. We wish there were more restaurants/activity centers/entertainment options in Cottage Grove.

I wish there were more professional jobs.

Also, not many private owned restaurants which leads for not enough options for dining. I often leave the city for dining which is taking tax dollars out of the city.

Be more about city business. DO NOT discourage business from coming to CG.

If there was a way to stop people from spreading misinformation on social media that would be great. We both know that is hard to stop, but if only there was a way.

We could really use some nice restaurants and indoor places to spend time in. People want to spend time out of the house during the winter months so the MOA ends up with all of our money.

Would love a couple more healthy quick food options like they have in Woodbury such as Panera, Cafe Zupa, Aloha Poke etc.

I would love to see a centralized downtown!!

Along with housing we need more retail or dining as well.

More restaurants! Non chain and corporate business. Support local.

I believe the city does a very good job on getting important information out to the citizens. I like it when I get the mailings in the mail when important information needs to be shared. It gives the local citizens no reason or excuses to complain when we all know it was shared with everyone this way.

We are new to the area and appreciate how safe it is for our kids and the good schools. We would like more diverse restaurant choices.

Administration Comments

I have been a resident for over 20 years. We moved from North Dakota where my husband was last stationed in the Air Force. I worry about disenfranchisement of the lower income residents of this city by focusing on affluent districts. I have not been super involved, but I am not sure what efforts are in place to help those who may need additional guidance or help in obtaining prosperity. I also worry that prosperity has come only to mean the financial aspects and less about community involvement. Yet, as I say that myself, by the time I work 45+ hours a week, and take care of family and the few activities I am currently involved in, I have little time to pursue strong community connections myself. I had a hard time finding employment outside of fast food, factory, or low paying retail jobs. I worked outside of this community for a while. I happen to work in this community now. My husband, who is the main wage earner has always worked outside this community. There are not enough well paying jobs to raise a family of 6 here in my opinion. Cottage Grove, when we researched the area as we chose to move here, was described as a "sleeper community" so we knew a little about what we were getting into when we chose to move here. We knew there was somewhat of a lack of diversity in the tax base, that has changed for the positive over time I believe. We knew that larger corporations were not here. Except for 3M. What is reality and what is fantasy in what I expect from a city, from a community. That may be a very good question.

Also Please bring a Panera.

I'm embarrassed my primary source of info is social media however I am diligent in looking at sources etc.

Get a movie theater back in town. We went from two, down to none! We need a Marcus theater here so I don't have to drive so far in the winter.

Moved to Cottage Grove in January, so relatively new. What I've noticed is the city is growing a LOT in terms of population. MANY housing developments all over town. However, the amount of retail/restaurants/etc. has stayed the same, or even decreased. Would be nice to see more sit-down, family type restaurants. Or "play" type places like Dave & Busters. I realize Woodbury is close and has plenty, but not everyone wants to drive to Woodbury. Personally, I like to spend my dollars locally. That also means people have to be willing to open a locally-owned restaurant and there probably isn't a lot of that happening these days.

On numerous social media sites, I've noticed people asking for similar things, like mini-golf, driving range, batting cages, etc. Maybe a place like TopGolf (Brooklyn Center) might be a good addition. Seems to be room along West Point Douglas Rd. I realize you can't just snap your fingers and they come, but maybe putting out feelers for some indoor-outdoor recreation type businesses would be good (was sorry to see the driving range and go-cart track go out many years ago when the highway was redone, but that happens.) Other activity type places would be Can Can Wonderland in St. Paul, Big Thrill Factory, Pirate's Cove (Brainerd), Pro Kart Indoors (Maple Grove), ProKart Indoor Racing (Burnsville), etc. It's always been in the back of my mind to open some kind of activity place where people could come and have fun, and also be able to give back to the community whether it be sponsoring local teams, or what have you. Just never came to fruition.

Please, please, please work to bring in non-chain nice restaurants to the city.

We need some good restaurants here!

It is difficult to find news related to Cottage Grove. We have enough Chinese, Pizza, Subway, coffee and fast food businesses. We need an UPPER MIDDLE CLASS sit down restaurant for adults. Also a cafe, like Jerry's was, is needed. The addition of a Caribou Coffee Drive Thru on the corner by Crestview was a poor decision The safety of the children should have come first!

souse of information is a problem now that we no longer have the Bulletin. the new litttle newspaper tries but the news is usually old. the pioneer press is hit or miss.

Due to the influx of growth as a resident of CG i would like to see more restauraunt options. I know it may be difficult to lure businesses with the cities so close but more diverse food options would be a positive for the community. Otherwise residents will just have to make the trip out to the cities or Woodbury and our cash is spent out of town.

More diverse restaurant's not more shopping per se but Better shopping. Vegetarian options!!!

Administration Comments

We don't want to be Woodbury. Enough storage facilities. No More Holiday gas stations. QuikTrip needs to be a priority.We need a drive-in movie theater or a movie theater in general. We used to have both.

The Retail/Restaurant options have been consistently improving. I know there is long term growth plans with include both commercial and residential expansion. Keep up the good work. You are making Cottage Grove a little better every year. Thank you!

City doesn't seem to have a good 5,000 ft or long term good plan. Feels like it's a patchwork quilt. Like adding a super sized 24-hour warehouse with residential developments within earshot. Does that sound like it was a good plan? Destroying too many open areas to build for property tax dollars. No thought of keeping open spaces. No thought of ramifications of putting a swimming pool where it's planned - i.e. WHO is your target demographics? Families with stay at home parents (because kids of single parents won't be able to get there easily)? Non-CG people (then why even build it there build it in Woodbury and tax them). The approach the City is taking is destroying what made Cottage Grove great - small town feel close to the city.

WE NEED A YMCA! (where kids get to easily) IT WOULD BENEFIT ALL AGES!

Demand more solar, more geothermal, more environmentally-conscious planning procedures and processes especially around water, the electrical grid and finding ways to mitigate all of the impervious surfaces being produced due to uncontrolled growth*. Ask for more now! Stop saying "it meets the minimum requirements". The "minimum requirements" are not going to cut it anymore. Hone your negotiating skills or bring someone in with that skill set. You are offering a finite resource to developers.

We need more apartments, retail and jobs. Not more Recreation or parks

#9 - Not enough retail/restaurants

Need a quik trip and more restaurants. Need more retail stores.

There seems to be too much housing growth and not enough business growth.

Like how we keep getting business/manufacturing. Would be nice to get a nice sit down restaurant...but don't know if this town would support it?

We need to accomodate young families through seniors and be forward thinking, healthier food, recreational activities for all ages, affordable housing options renewable/green spaces/tech/white collar companies, small business/food truck/block party style establishments.

We love it here but find shopping very frustrating. Many strip malls are hidden from main roads and it's tough to see what shops are where without gps. We need better signage from main roads to see what's available.

The CIty of Cottage Grove do not have any bus transportation route. It is hard to go around the city withoug a car. More information about transportation will be a great benefit. I need an affordable gym membership with a SAUNA. Please invest in an electronic, manual & mist sauna. They all have different benefit.

We have lived in Cottage Grove since 1975. We have seen it's growth and changes. We need more places to shop, eat and a Community Center would be greatly appreciated.

I love this city. It is a great place to live and raise a family. I'm voting for community center as I hope it goes thru. This will help with activities. Just wish there were a little more things to do.

Tons of home developments being added, no restaurants being added. Especially family friendly ones. Want to go out to dinner, head to Woodbury.

CG is still #1 for family living, but need more indoor play options, movie theater, sit down family restaurants and unique shopping options.

I feel we need more privately owned places to eat, esp. for breakfast. no More Chain restaurants.

I love the business retail and restaurant growth. Focus on Safety and new high income job growth. Thank you for all you do!

Growing up we went to Woodbury for most of everything, CG, while growing , needs to keep up with shops, restaurants because traffic is bad enough in Woodbury.

I do drive to Woodbury regularily to shop since there isn't much here in C.G.

should have more dining choices and shopping opportunities

Administration Comments

More restaurants (besides bar restaurants) and retail stores could help our CG community instead of supporting Woodbury stores, restaurants. We also have empty buildings that have sat empty for yrs that we could use to support our community but the rent is to high.

Its is very sad to see so much farmland and open spaces being used for housing and businesses. Woodbury provides abundant shopping opportunities for Cottage Grove Residents.

STOP BUILDING!!! Example - Why build a Caraboo Coffee across the street from Crestview School?? - Too much traffic and we already have too many coffee places. Leave the open land alone around Military and other land. Let the wildlife have their open space.

More efficient bus/van service. There will be a time when we "seniors" have to give up our vehicles, right now it is hard to get to medical appointments and shopping. Would like to have my Entira clinic closer.

Be more rstarsunt and business friendly

If we attracted more expensive homes on larger lots we would not only get more money in taxes but would attract the type of resident that may in turn attract better stores and restaurants. More diverse and better stores and restaurants are not coming to a city without the type of population that can support them. That is part of the reason why we only have a "C" volume Target (Woodbury has a Target Greatland and a Super Target) and a Kohl's that is not as nice as Woodbury's in terms of stock. It is not just because Woodbury is bigger. If you drive around you will see there are more high end homes, better manicured road medians, more expensive cars, etc. in Woodbury. Having lived in Cottage Grove for over 50 years I don't want to move but would like Cottage Grove to upgrade.

We need more ma and pa restaurants, less chains.

Movie theater

Arcade/Bowling Alley

Outdoor gun range

CrossFit

New restaurants and retail

Now big thing nobody wants to work to keep restaurants open

Not enough growth, people shopping in Woodbury and medical facility are not enough here.

Chain restaurants only in CG-GROSS!

We need a Whole Foods store a a Co-Op.

Where is the place for our Seniors 50+?

Senior Center is destroyed.

The only decent place to shop is Menards. There is no place for women to shop for everything she needs. Places to eat as a family with out liquor is just not available. Like Dennys is a really nice place. You can get breakfast lunch and dinner. We had Jerrys, Demories, Perkins and Woodys.. We can go to Woodbury and do our Christmas shopping in one day with all they got to choose from. Its really sad!! We would love to support Cottage Grove but there is no place to shop for kids teenager mom & dads. Get with it Cottage Grove.

I miss good sit down restaurants. A place to meet family and friends. I miss quality clothing stores. Yes I know about online shopping.

It is very disappointing that the city will allow North Point Development to construct buildings south of 100th st.,along Ideal Ave. and allow all the traffic to block our only access to River Acres. We were told by the city that Industrial Park would never be south of 100th st. So what will this do to our water pressure which we have no water pressure since we had to have city water put in. (It was hooked up to city water in June???)

We need a restaurant to serve breakfest other than fast food

Administration Comments

We need more variety in retail and restaurants to compete with neighboring cities. Enough of Subway or sandwich shops, pizza places, and coffee shops. We need more restaurants and gift shops, a different fast food options with drive through and CVS in Target needs a drive though option. Better city friendly policies toward food trucks. We shouldn't lose business to neighbor cities. The new water park and shopping area should absolutely not include any businesses we already have in CG. Don't let a current business move there. Should be all new businesses! Enough with the same.

The city needs more sit down restaurants. Cottage Grove needs more employers that pay higher wages.

I feel we are building to many houses and not having enough shopping/restaurants to support the community.

Would like more gyms, fitness studios closer to my home near Woodbury border. Would like CG to engage with public for feedback in planning stage.

Please try to get a "Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen" restaurant.

Communication is inconsistent from the City. The Community Center went from a meeting center, coffee shop, children's indoor playground to (new plan!) a Disney-type waterpark with lazy river, Sports Dome/athletic facility, arts & culture (?) center. Sounds like trying to be everything to everyone. What happened in that planning process? This is not FREE, but taxpayer's money, This is the same way that the City Hall was replaced. Someone needs to REIN IN. I don't think we need to keep with Woodbury....or Edina! Taxpayers should be kept informed all along the way, especially regarding the COST.

I would also like to see council members thoughts on city issues added to the Cottage Grove Reports.

When you have a project, let's participate from the planning. Don't come to us with the final proposal. Engage us in every issues. Please use a reliable communications method that can address the majority of us.

Would like to see more white collar job opportunities in technology, banking, etc.

We live here b/c housing was cheaper than Woodbury. Like the low crime. More shopping and dining would keep us from going to Woodbury.

Please post the cottage Grove reports online, Facebook maybe, but probably better to not have comments on. An official news location online would be handy.

I like the idea of new, healthier, and more variety of restaurants and a centralized downtown, I get concerned over the environmental impact and loosing natural space and the pocket community charm.

2)Please bring in some home town restaurants (cafe, bar and grill etc).

I would like to see more dining opportunities in Cottage Grove. We have nothing to offer. I find myself always heading to Hastings or Woodbury.

I think a hotel could bring a lot of revenue plus new jobs. We should be building more shops and restaurants off 61 by the dmv and storage units

Please allow for additional retail, bars/restaurants, and fine dining options.

There is a lack of sit down restaurants in town. I am not talking about ones that have bars and numerous tv's. There is too much of that type of bars (sport restaurants). Would like to be able to go to a restaurant that doesn't have loud music or sports. Quiet relaxing restaurant like golf club has.

The lack of a local newspaper has diminished our knowledge of what is going on in the community. It would be beneficial to support a local newspaper like the Bulletin.

I would like to see more choices in restaurants.

We have no news about cottage grove. No we're to report what's going on.

This city lacks anywhere to dine out for breakfast. You can't even buy a bagel here. At one time there was word of bringing in Kwik trip. Not sure why that has not happened as we sure could use one.

We are in desperate need of a couple family restaurants.

Administration Comments

Remove old buildings that become eye sores in the city example Majestic Ballroom. No more bars and grills but more sit down comfort food style restuarants or at least an Denny's or Ihop so you can have a sit down breakfast in town. Surprisingly there is not one restuarant in Cottage Grove that serves breakfast. Not everyone does social media. Around town information on the city web site such as road repairs, upcoming events in the city, future commission meeting information.

I would like to see more business development; particularly in businesses with both white collar and blue collar labor. This growth would not only diversify the community but also add to the tax base.

Frustrated every time I want to go shopping or dining I need to go to Woodbury, Saint Paul, and Inver grove.

Please bring more restaurants (nice restaurants, not fast food) to Cottage Grove.

A good covered shopping mall with walking space

We need more retail and restaurants

I find myself going to Woodbury for many stores and events.

. Retail/Restaurants - The city, unquestionably, needs more options. Every time you crave for something out of the ordinary, you have to seek it out in the surrounding areas.

Monthly news letters and whats happening in CG videos a good source of info.

Very disappointed with recent decisions of the city to permit a extremely loud North Star Sheets factory sharing a boundary with what used to be a beautiful, quiet Hamlet park. The noise of this factory has not allowed me to enjoy my own backyard, have my back windows open or enjoy the public space at Hamlet park for at least the last three years. The city needs to urgently address the potentially dangerous levels of noise generated by this factory especially with the new baseball fields just completed. Additionally the city should show they value their existing residents. The city bends over backwards to accommodate any and all development requests even if they will negatively impact the existing residents. Some growth is actually bad. Instead of always plowing ahead new proposals must be carefully considered for how they will impact the existing residents rather than just rubber stamping everything that comes through. One way to show value is to actively engage residents and not just if they happen to catch a public notice in newspapers that no one subscribes to. With the example of North Star Sheets send out notices to everyone that can hear the noise pollution it will be much further than the 50 some feet you currently use. Post notices in Hamlet park of pending decisions which will obviously impact the park. Stop hiding development proposals and actually be open to resident feedback!

More concern should be given to the west side of highway 61. Seniors in the Norris square complex should have walking access to small scale shopping.

Restaurant choices are few. We go to st paul Park, hastings, woodbury, Oakdale and w. St paul. No breakfast options.

We need better restaurants, I'd rather eat out in CG than drive to Woodbury, STP, Stillwater

we need, white castles, chick-fil-a, Dunkin donuts, Texas Roadhouse, in and out burgers

It baffles me that a city of over 36,000 people struggles so much to offer a variety of restaurants. I wish we would loosen some of the red tape required to operate a business here in town. Perhaps we would find more people willing to open locally owned, non-chain, bars, restaurants and cafes here. We seem to try so hard to be like Woodbury but we are our own unique community and we should embrace that.

Plz stop with the storage units, enough already! When did CG become the garage for the twin cities?

More highly rated restaurants (Chick Fil A, Taco Johns, Panda Express, Texas Roadhouse, and/or Jersey Mikes)

More companies with jobs for the college educated demographic to encourage the 18-30 demographic to continue living in Cottage Grove (Financial Services, Accounting, Management, Marketing, etc)

We are in desperate need of restaurants. A nice steakhouse, fast food such as Panera. Also retail stores. One more (emergency aftercare)

Administration Comments

I moved here in 1991 and there are less sit-down restaurants now than there were when I moved in. Hastings, a much smaller city, has more restaurants, bakeries, etc. than Cottage Grove. Instead of working on building a complex with a swimming pool and dome, work on getting restaurants and retailers in here. Everyone would benefit instead of the few getting benefits from a pool and dome.

More viable restaurants need to be brought into the city. There are very few sit down restaurants worth going to.

Restaurants and shopping is subpar. We have to drive to other cities. Restaurants dirty. Racism is widely acceptable.

Return the Cottage Grove Reports to the water bill mailing.

The neutral responses might better be taken as no comment or not applicable. Cottage Grove might be a fine place to work, but I don't work here, there isn't a job I'm suited for.

More restaurants and maybe places with breakfast! :)

Bring in locally owned restaurants and bars, not franchises. Unique additions to the city along with big business development in the business park.

Would like to see a breakfast restaurant and a bagel shop like Panera or bruegals. Also someplace with good chicken. And a chick-fila! We have enough coffee shops! But no additional activity centers or restaurants until our current businesses can open and stay open!

Wishing Cottage Grove would promote non chain, healthy dining options. Support family owned unique dining options.

Our rental options and dining options are the worst! We have no variety of food and limited rental options. 9 out of 10 times I eat out I have to go to Woodbury or another surrounding city to get anything good. We have no breakfast places that are any good. A decent bar in CG would also be nice. Why should we have to leave the city to spend a couple hours out with friends on a Saturday night.

We need more options for dining. It's sad we always have to drive to Woodbury or other cities.

Need some ETHNIC type restaurants!

We only have 1 real hotel. If teams come in for tournaments or people for events/weddings, they go to Woodbury to stay, eat and shop. We need more business opportunities. We are southernmost East suburb, we should be more like Maple Grove and be a destination that people seek.

We need to make it easier for new businesses to be a part of our community. Antiquated rules/laws inhibit things such as great be food trucks from joining us.

Cottage grove needs more zoning shopping and entertainment including restaurants. The Maple Grove Arbor Lakes is amazing.

Publish city environmental protection actions/plans on the city website and through social media. Enable city meetings for remote dial-in. Promote (email social media notice) when meeting minutes are published.

There is no nightlife in the city, probably due to there being no real city center or 'downtown' area. Children are stuck at home or wandering the streets because there is no venue for them to spend their time at other than those two places.

Also let's get some restaurants! Food trucks included!!!

Quit trying to turn cottage grove into Woodbury, let's focus on things they don't have… arcades, pool halls, let's get a movie theatre back in town for kids to go, we don't need housing everywhere and it taking 20-30 minutes to drive across town. We can get business tax revenue in creative ways by having what surrounding cities do not.

Need more shopping

Cottage Grove does not need any more fast food restaurants, liquor stores or pizza places as well. We would love to patronize sit down restaurants in Cottage Grove instead of going to other surrounding cities.

Administration Comments

Additionally the city should show they value their existing residents. The city bends over backwards to accommodate any and all development requests even if they will negatively impact the existing residents. Some growth is actually bad. Instead of always plowing ahead new proposals must be carefully considered for how they will impact the existing residents rather than just rubber stamping everything that comes through. One way to show value is to actively engage residents and not just if they happen to catch a public notice in newspapers that no one subscribes to. With the example of North Star Sheets send out notices to everyone that can hear the noise pollution it will be much further than the 50 some feet you currently use. Post notices in Hamlet park of pending decisions which will obviously impact the park. Stop hiding development proposals and actually be open to resident feedback!

Community Development Comments

No thought given to traffic flow and access to all these new housing developments. It is all willy-nilly. Think. Plan. Anticipate.

More homes Less Apartments People are going to move. More affordable homes, less apartments.

low-income properties, low-income landlords who are not local, bring with them the potential for a lot of negative impacts on the city.

Housing & Equitable question. I have a daughter who is a double amputee & handicapped. It has been impossible for her to find affordable housing in Cottage Grove. The Section 8 housing will not even accept people on their waiting list.

I'm pleased to see the housing development of Cottage Grove.

I would love to see affordable housing to single millennials such as myself

While housing growth is important, the development at any cost is flawed!

No more Little Chicago and senior housing

I think we have plenty of housing choices. By the way, I have lived in my home for 52 years.

Too many houses being built causing too much traffic. Too many strip malls - they open up and then are closed. We don't need anymore health clubs and surely no pool!

Overbuilding. All the farmland is gone. Just because we had space doesn't mean it all needs housing on it! I moved from 80th street to 65th streat 12 years ago for more open space. Now between the two schools that is all gone. Looks crappy and overbuilt. I am moving to Lake Elmo

We have enough section 8 housing in the city so far.

Too many housing developments in the 70th & Hinton area. Hinton is becoming LOUD & really busy.

Looks bad - Get people to clean up there yard/house.

CG needs more affordable housing options for renters and first time home buyers!!

- few houses available and what is available is extremely over inflated & unaffordable $300,00 +

Affordable housing in this area remains too be seen. If 300,000-500,000+ is affordable housing to most of the city's residents according to the city think again.

Need to share code (building) info and enforce it.

We have to many homes being built for are main traffic

Could you please consider mandating all commercial parking spaces made 8" wider. If exceptions are needed from Wash Co or St of MN please seek some. Had this in FL w/ same pop (40k) as here but mandated when city was much smaller but it saves on door dings.

Too much growth just refers to all the new construction and seeming end to natural areas. Hard to support growth as Grey Cloud Elementary is already crowded and we probably need another elementary school and eventual high school. Also I realize I am a total hypocrite living in a new development.

We need to take care of our open space and stop trying to develop all areas (example: Hardwood Ave, Mississippi Dunes)

We would like more enforcement around people storing boats, RVs, campers, etc. in their driveways and streets after summer is over. Thanks :)

It is very disingenuous to invite residents to meetings to discuss development of a piece of land and then tell us that, dispite our valid objections, the town council has already made up its mind before we have the opportunity to speak up about a proposal. This has happened twice to the residents of the Pine Arbor residents. Once when the bar and restaurant when in on 70th & Hinton & then with the housing development on Hinton & 68th.

I would like to see more affordable housing for seniors less expensive

Two much housing going on in my area. 1 level Senior living homes would be nice with them not attached to another.

Stop building 500k+ homes and build some AFFORDABLE new homes

Senior housing with no pets or senior townhomes.

Community Development Comments

Cutting down trees, destroying nature to put up giant buildings, pathetic. Continue to destroy this town with every decision made.

Outdoor code enforcement is non existant (ie, lawns, garbage cans, cars on lawns, balling down building, driveways)

Too many housing developments before school development occurs

We are concerned about the amount of new housing going up & the population growth. We don't want to become like Woodbury - too crowded.

I had trouble finding 1 level living (affordable) for my mother. The Legends was too big and hard for her to navigate the hallways. More of townhome like "the Cottages" would be great. Other 1 level townhomes are purchase vs rent & expensive.

Please! Plant more trees!! And stop cutting them DOWN! Enough already with more housing! Let Woodbury destroy themselves. Don't be them!

So many new homes make school boundary changes happen too frequently.

Limit section 8 housing

Make residents accountable for keeping up the appearance of homes. Own/& rent

more ordinance control

Cottage Grove needs to crack down on residents of Jamaica Ave that don't maintain their property past fencing. Instead they enable their irresponsibility by the city cutting lawn. Wow - my tax $ at work!

Seems there was not enough consideration of traffic when building the drive thru coffee place at 80 & Hinton and school traffic. Dangerous!

Constant destruction of wooded wildlife areas for housing.

Contracts with developers are very detailed yet city enforcement is less than professional.

Continue to be intentional about housing/growth and how neighborhoods tie to trials/parks and each other.

I have a problem with the City enforcing codes a) Not parking on streets overnight 2-6am 11/1-3/31 b) too many cars parked at one address c) cars being parked in a yard all winter d) trash cans not out of sight

Our city has good rules and regulations but I feel they are not being enforced. For instance, on my street there is a so called (Prairie Garden) which looks horrible in front yard. I feel it devaluates my property. Also garbage cans left in the front yard. Please do something about this. Thanks for your considerations.

I hope we don't end up like Woodbury and have every available field turned into expensive home developments. Encourage more 1100 SF homes and less restrictive building codes. How to combat poorly maintained homes and messy back yards? No answer for "junk homes". Too many low or no usage playgrounds & athletic fields to maintain.

STOP BUILDING HOUSES! NO APARTMENTS!

Law enforcement to enforce city codes more stringently.

I think it is important for the city to maintain processions of or restore any historical buildings and areas within the City. These places such as Cedarhurst mansion should not be over shadowed by housing developments.

Housing opportunities are great for purchasing homes. I have a son on disability very very hard to find an affordable apt on SSD. Washington Co program public assist always closed. Improve social service programs. "This area is a great place to live."

Why is it when code violations are reported, nothing happens?

I think it is important to keep tabs on City code compliance in the neighborhoods. Some homes look like they are holding a flea market in their driveways. Also garbage containers are left outside in front of peoples homes. Woodbury does a better job of not tolerating violations and keeping the city looking better.

Parking of oversized trailers/campers/# of pets

Vision - is Cottage Grove just a blue collar bedroom community? A low income habitat? Services are spreading to new housing areas, leaving older parts of the city forgotten.

Community Development Comments

I believe CG is growing too fast, its rapidly losing the qualities that attracted us here in the first place some 22 yrs ago. Too much green space is being gobbled up in what I believe is a desire to increase the tax base & political power base; soon, I fear, we'll be just another little big city with absolutely no character or charm. Rick & Bernadette Evenson

My husband and I downsized from our home June 2020. We looked all over for the right townhouse to buy. Wisconsin, Wdby, Hugo, Rosemount, etc. We are so happy and fortunate that we found just the right one here in CG. :)

Under Met Council #8. Handwritten comment without ranking numbers - "I don't know the difference between these categories. We ought to have the same % of housing as compared to the # of people in the low income category in CG. My hope is that no one here is homeless.

The destruction of animal habitats & deforestation along with the buyouts of local farmers to turn that land into apartments, section 8 housing & huge townhouse complexes is make the choice to move my family out of CG much easier.

Too many houses going up and not enough natural/open spaces being preserved.

Code Enforcement dept needs improvement. ie,Too many single family homes w/junked autos and neglected lawns/appearance. If a complaint is filed excuses are returned with no resolutions.

The City is biased in favor of overdevelopment. Recent handling of the Mississippi Dunes property -TIF district expansion (come on in developers! The door is wide open) - Questionable zoning decisions (5 story buildings in an area of 1-2 story structures) - Grandiose development proposals present so as necessary to "SAVE" Cedarhurst. -Staggering amounts of open land consumed for new housing developments over the last ten years. *Many do not share the City's vision & would prefer a more stable, quiet place to live. I will be reading candidates biographics more carefully in future elections & will support those more in line with my philosophy.

Please slow the housing developments. They are taking over the peacefullness I moved here for.

I think we live in a very desirable city that is actively promoting growth and quality of living. Housing is mixed from affordable to high income.

No Section 8 or low income housing

Realizing that City growth is a necessary thing, please be more cognizant of rural areas lost to urban sprawl. You can't get those areas back, AKA loss of City character and citizen pride!! There are groups willing to help the City acquire more land at Mississippi Dunes. Don't blow them off! We only have one chance here!

CG has been overall a great place to raise a family. As we have aged and need to down size there are no real options that are affordable when looking for a smaller house or yard. Those that are fortunate enough to be in good health and would like to stay in their homes are faced with staying in a bigger home that gets too difficult to maintain or trying to find a smaller, affordable one level home with low maintenance. It would be nice to have smaller homes that are affordable to the average Seniors to purchase and a program that oversees that these homes are available to Seniors first.

We have enough senior housing for now!

Too much growth too fast. We understand that if a community doesn't grow, that it could die. However, we chose Cottage Grove because it had tat "bedroom community" feel to it. We have been here 4 years and still don't know anyone but our immediate neighbors. We are presently looking to relocate to a community with a more rural or small town feel to it. Thank you for asking our input :).

We need more single level living options - NOT apartments - homes/villas/neighborhoods with pools/amenities (playgrounds, parks)

Cottage Grove is trying too hard to measure up to Woodbury :(most live here because we DON'T want to live in a city like Woodbury. It's VERY disappointing to see the farmland bought by builders and more and more homes being build.

stop so much high density housing.

Community Development Comments

We have concerns why city ordinances are not being enforced to make our city looking good. From 70th St and Innsdale to 72nd St to Irvin and 70th St and all courts in between there are 41 houses with trash cans visible or in front of their garage.

You keep on building buildings and apartments. It's ruining the landscape as in some forest areas that have trees. Enough! Too much business for apartment houses

- Q#8 Workforce housing: Don't know what this is

Please stop tearing down natural spaces for developers! SAVE THE NATURE! The best part of CG is the greenery.

It's a horrible idea to build a privated gated community in the woodland area of Mississippi Dunes area. Just bringing more rich snobs to the area. That wildlife should be for all to enjoy not just rich people. The Mayor should be ashamed if he lets money blind him. But, it will happen cause money talks.

- Q#7 Single Family Homes: cost too much

- Q#7 Senior Housing: Without income restrictions

- Q#8: We have enough housing for the riff-raff. We don't need to encourage more to move here. Let them stay in the city and keep their violence there.

I have lived here my whole life and don't want more growth.

Stop the housing developments already!!

6.My adult children want to own places with space and privacy on incomes of 160,000.

7 I HATE the latest developments for narrow streets and siding colors that make then indistinguishable.

8. What" workforce housing"?

Stupid place to put new apartments (old police station)

-Stop Building

-Too many housing developments and not the infrastructure to support it

I cannot believe the woods are being cleared on Hardwood. I walk that path almose every day.

Too Much housing developments , not enough schools or retail .

More Rules or city ordnances regarding fencing along city roads, and Jamaica Ave in particular, LOOKS TRASHY

Rules and or ordinances that deal with multiple families living in single family homes and not just how many vehicles are allowed per household.

Residential inspection and how inspections are in hast or rushed is a concern

We moved within the city, and I don't understand why the city would make us have an association for some cul-de-sac circles. The majority of the money doesn't go to that. It is to pay for management fees. What a waste! The builder said the city required it because of the cul-de-sacs.

Please Read " variety "section of star tribune Sat. Oct 23 regarding city's Urban Miracle"- decades of lack of vision. What do we want for our city- not just more hauling, more parks (although they need to be in the mix) just another suburb where we have to go some where else for entertainment, excellent, dining an array of retail, outdoor attraction. Mississippi Dunes is a once in a lifetime opportunity to attract people to Cottage Grove. Believe in it - sell it - let us help you.

Issues facing Cottage Grove - Lack of we would love a suburban Miracle

We need affordable apartments for young adults who are just starting out-so not yet eligible for public assistant...plus sec. 8 already here and gets a bad rep. CG has a variety of people and it seems it cares more to cater to young families... it should have opportunities for ALL ages But we do not need an more 55+ complexes!!

Why have housing #s exploded so much. How many new schools will be needed in nxt 5 yrs.

Build $250,000-$300,000 Ramblers

Ramblers, not mega houses!

One level townhomes ($200,000-$300,000)

Change code to allow 1 boat or trailer on side or back of houses

Don't want social problems to increase for the city from Section 8 housing

Very happy overall, just wish housing would be more affordable for single people

Community Development Comments

We don't want to be overpopulated or see traffic congestion. Too many new houses coming - leave some of the beautiful trails and nature that we love here. We like the calm of Cottage Grove with Woodbury near by.

I'm very concerned about all the housing developments and the negative impact on the environment and classroom sizes in schools.

The city seems to be infatuated with filling every available space with townhouses and apartments. This puts extream pressure on our roads and infrastruction. The Development of the Mississippi Dunes Golf Course is a prime example. More park space, fewer homes.

Please stop Building so house that no can afford.

2. We need more single level living for our seniors - to own and rent.

3. Better quality apartment options

The house at 7079 Irvin has had roofing materials stached in the front yard for over 4 months 11-6-1

Great opportunity for Cottage Grove to put CG on the map is to make Mississippi Dunes into a high-end housing development to provide diverse housing options. Diverse should not mean low-income only. Turn it over to Custom-One to develop.

- Parks should be established in new developments before say 10% of housing is complete. It took NINE years after we moved into our new home for the promised park to be built. By then, our son was a teenager.

I have nothing against Low income housing however it seems these areas tend to have the most crime unfortunately.

I would like to see ordinances enforced - trash can placement during the week

Building more homes is making it hard to exit my driveway at times on 70th. Traffic should be monitored better on 70th.

CG has way too much growth

Concerns about crime & growth. As we grow I don't think the city is prepared for the growth. Including police department, local workforce

Building new housing developments that use existing roadways that weren't designed for the new traffic is a problem. Existing areas tend to ignore the safety of pedestrians. New developments are doing better.

No more "affordable" housing units!

The complex on 80th is an isore!

Code inforcement for upkeep of property rules and regulation.

I like CG to be more nature and less development. I am unhappy with all the continued housing projects.

Be careful about section 8 and low income housing - brings more crime!

Cottage Grove needs townhomes/apartments for seniors that aren't at poverty Level. I personally know 5 other single women in our early 60s that are having trouble maintaining our homes but can't move somewhere else within the city (such as a townhome or apartment) because we all make more than $40-$45,000 a year. It's ridiculous we are stuck in in our homes, being punished because we aren't poverty level. But yet, all the people who live off the government and are fully capable of fulltime work but are too lazy to do so have all kinds of opportunities to live for low rent. And the new apts on 80th are ridiculously expenses.

I like to take pride on where we live. My concern is how city ordinances are never addressed to properties that are in violation. The neighbor to our north is in such disrepair and has been for the last three years! Where are the inspectors? I know people have called, is this a budget issue or laziness? 7880 Janero Ave is where we reside!

We are making progress, but we have work to do. Instead of building $400K housing, ramblers would be more reasonable and a family could grow old in them. Young people can't afford $400K houses & retired won't like the 2-3 sets of stairs.

We moved to Cottage Grove 20+ years ago with the attraction being vast farm land, low crime, small/quaint neighborhoods. With over population, schools full to the brim, no snowmobile access to open land we are now considering a move as are many long-time neighbors. Stop building houses, apartments, town homes, villas, etc. It's gotten too over crowded!

Community Development Comments

Please stop putting houses up everywhere. You are pushing people out of their home because you can build a bunch of houses on the property.

- Too much of the same builder - no more D.R. Horton!

There is was too much housing squashed into small areas. This looks terrible. It seems as if more importance is placed on their HOA's than the people living in the homes.

- More enforcement on rundown houses

It is disappointing to see every farm field being developed into high density housing. The increase in this especially on the north side has negatively affected the laid back feel of our city. Noise, traffic and non stop home building has made Cottage Grove les desirable to raise a family in my opinion. We purposefully did not move to Woodbury because of those issues that are now prevalent here. Also, I worry about the stress on our infrastructure and services.

I don't believe it is right to destroy the habitat of the wildlife we have here in CG, just to put up more homes and apartments. I don't want CG to turn into Woodbury. Please stopped tearing down the woods in CG.

We built our lives in Cottage Grove because it felt like we lived in the country. Surrounded by farms. A small town feeling. Now we are surrounded by houses. The schools overcrowded & referendums to increase taxes for more schools etc. We never asked for this.

Its great CG is growing so much but our schools cannot keep up - what is the best solution? Kids need more activities or open safe spaces to go to.

Growth affects over crowding in Schools,

- Need more schools with all this growth

*- Overcrowding in schools - especially Elementary

I would be interested in learning about conversations between the city and school district. The City approves all the new construction but doesn't seem to "back" the district and many schools are over crowded.

The city is growing at an exponential rate with the new development everywhere. Taxes are going up, while there's more people flicking in. The highway and roads should be overlooked for traffic control. It is ridiculous with the growing rate that the population is heading towards.

Why are apartment/Seniors put in the AMI single housing TAX BASE? I have to pay the same taxes on a S.S. income only? Washington County needs to change this for seniors and all low income residents...disappointed & new to C.G.

Too many houses going up and not enough retail/dining

Cottage Grove is growing too fast in the aspect of too many homes and not enough opportunities to go out and have experiences.

2. Growth is inevitable & good - but lets make sure infrastructure is in place BEFORE adding thousand of homes.

I hear about more low income housing coming in with that crime goes up.

Slow down the building of houses to determine if public safety and schools can meet the increased population.

It would be nice to just plain have sidewalks in the neighborhoods for walking safely. Terrible problem with weeding and around schools. You are making a great attempt at development and housing opportunities.

Too many houses.

- Too much building of single family homes

- Many are poor quality *Settlers Bluff! Bad!

- 80th St is already so busy now a big apt complex

*- High expectation of purposeful use of Cedarhurst Mansion. Not pleased with high density housing on 70th & Keats. Please maintain historic value of Cedarhurst - it is a unique spot in Cottage Grove - would serve as a wonderful place for private, corporate events, etc.

-Too much section 8/rentals on west side. Very rich on east side where you have moved - out of touch?

Why build a new apartment building on 80th Street then have no low income availability. All high end. Says a lot for Cottage Grove.

Community Development Comments

1. City ordinance requires garbage cans to not be stored outside- There are numerous residences where they permanently store their garbage cans outside in front of their garage stall. Put the cans in the garage!

- Too much growth without roads to handle the increased traffic

Please slow down the growth that Big Apt on Hinton & 80th is almost on the street ugly!

I saw in a city report the announcement of new affordable housing with the new apt. complex being one example. These apartments are NOT affordable. The other examples were new single family homes starting, I think, at $350,000. This is NOT affordable. I will need to move out of town as there are no longer affordable living options for single adults.

Huge plans of residential and industrial growth but no road infrastructure. Can't barely get through the round abouts in an appropriate time and wait a couple lights in town on Point Douglas and Jaimaica due to increased traffic

Concern for housing growth vs. school growth. Thank you for all your hard work.

We need senior housing by income.

Income based affordable housing for seniors - townhomes.

I would like to see the ordinances more strictly enforced. There are some yards that look so bad that it brings down the value of nearby homes. Prairie gardens don't belong in a front yard. Backyards are more appropriate for such things. Also, garbage cans should be out of sight unless it is out for pick up.

I have lived in Cottage Grove since 1991. The city has improved significantly over the past 30 years. Broadening of housing types have made the city a better place to live. The strong planning and economic development is paying dividends.

I think too many housing developments can take away from the dynamic of the city but understand having some .

Decrease Housing

Most interested in the numbers of affordable housing options, not necessarily the type.

- Fine or make people get rid of abandoned cars that are junk and not used that are in driveways, sides of houses...Same applies to boats and excess junk in people's yards. The city is turning into a shit hole

- Don't let builders build houses so close together

- Need bigger 3 car garage townhomes built

We loved moving to a townhome with corn fields out back. Now there is so many new homes taking over the farm land, I feel we may move when our field is turned into housing. It's beautiful out here.

I'm happy living here. I wish there wasn't so many houses going up. The farm land/openness is what attracted us to this area 20 years ago.

-Way too many housing developments are making it a crowded community

-Too much senior housing - need more low income senior housing

- Q#7: People of all incomes should be able to live here

I'm concerned with all the new housing and loss of habitat for local wildlife

More enforcement around parking in lawns, broken fences and barking dogs. This is a continual issue in my neighborhood.

I'm tired of all the storage of cars. boats, recreational vehicles parked on lawns. I don't think throwing a few pebbles means additional driveway space. This brings down the value of our houses.

Ordinance enforcement is lacking. Individual property owners leave trash cans, trailers, boats, etc. in full view from streets. It looks "trashy" and is a nuisance. Property value goes down when the neighborhood looks unkept and cluttered.

*New home owners / renters need to be notified of ordinances.

How come rent goes up every 3 years? This isn't fair to low income families with only one income and like living where they are today.

- Q#8 Workforce Housing: ? What is this

Slow growth - housing

Community Development Comments

- Q#8 Habitat for Humanity: Only way we could buy a house was becaus of Habitat's help. We are very thankful it brought us to CG.

- More affordable housing opportunities in the form of single family homes and apartments are desperately needed.

Agricultural areas being used for housing

*The Met Council is an unelected bureaucracy. They failed their original mission-go ahead read it. And now they social engineer by racial quotas on housing?! Stop. taking. their. $ (which is my $) you are staling from me!

You need to include up-scale housing

I am concerned about the amount of park land/trees/farm fields being taken down for new development. I am sad to see the established tree area on Hardwood being demolished for apartment buildings. We have great wildlife in Cottage Grove who's habitat is ever shrinking

Please stop putting low income housing. It seems to be increasing our crime rates. We are building too much and taking away our farm lands

I wish the city would enforce people who store LARGE campers, boats & junk cars visible to the street. There are several homes in Cottage Grove that people need to be asked to clean up around their properties. The image they project of the city. Several of these homes are on Pt. Douglas along Hwy 61 - those driving by may thing Cottage Grove is not a place they would want to live - yet - Cottage Grove is & can be very nice.

- Too much growth: Going too fast

Question 8 did not need to be included. Metro Council is something we could do without. I think we have plenty of affordable housing in Cottage Grove.

I know CG needs to join up with the Metro city. With that plus not affordable housing (our Cottage of Cottage grove sold to new owner who to 24 sec and will be market value so mos on fixed income need to move out) and losing small community it's time to move on. Family is leaving the state sadly. Been here since 1860 but minnesota going wrong directions. I wish you well and hope MN can return to who we really are.

What is happening to Cedarhurst Mansion?

Too many townhomes

Too much growth - lack of planning from schools for the amount of growth

Quite a few questions (Section 8 housing & such) I really had no opinion

- Affordable Homes under $350K

- please stop allowing low quality builder in the city

#7 Comments: allowing affordable mother-in-law apartments, tiny home etc... Need affordable senior housing so aging families can stay close to their families.

#8 comments: can use trailers/tiny houses at designated park location

#5 Comments: Need more property inspectors to enforce codes!! We lived in Cottage Grove for 40 years. My neighborhood is looking BAD! Junk, etc in front yards or side. Hire some part time retirees.

Forced removing green space with high occupancy building.

*Allowing to much of land development and over priced large homes. I am a senior citizen on disability and some of the improvements with large housing development cause property taxes to increase. One day I may not be able to afford to live here.

Would like to see better maintenance of retail landscaping. Every business in town looks like a dump. Business should be forced to upkeep similar to Woodbury businesses. Most places are rundown and overgrown.

- We need the Senior housing to have more walkable options for services. No plan except cars.

We don't want to be Woodbury. We liked having farm fields and Farms we don't like having giant neighborhoods everywhere and the roads that we used to use everyday closed down and cut up. Last but not least district 833 is out of control and I do think that that will be my main reason for leaving this area is because the district just keep spending my money. And I don't even have kids.

Community Development Comments

Too much growth without thought of infrastructure or the environment. I have seen too many mature tress taken down for new construction. We need to learn how to build new construction around natural habitat without destroying it. The city needs to reduce costs for builders to preserve natural habitat.

DO NOT WANT TO TURN INTO A CONGESTED WOODBURY.

We have enough senior housing.

Do not want any affordable housing.

Too Much Growth - not well planned (housing on Hardwood Ave & a Caribou drive thru by a school?)

Please do NOT destroy our forested lands for housing. There are enough open areas to develop where you should not have to wreak havoc on our environment.

Marked "5' on all affordable housing options

Marked "5" to both sections of housing questions - only Single Family Homes got a 1

It's unfortunate to see all the green spaces being consumed by houses. I moved to CG to avoid the Woodbury feel.

Too many new houses, loss of farm land.

more growth = more crime

entered "5" on all public housing options

Too many new houses!

Don't put any more 4 storie building on the street. Have them set back! It's very ugly!

I know its a difficult issue , however the isolated areas of " Low Income" housing is disturbing . It makes those fellow Cottage Grovians feel like they don't belong to the community. I know that many of my neighbor's would rather not low income housing available at all. I wish things could be spread out more for low income families.

Stop Cutting down trees and Farms to build apartment and houses.

I do feel like too many houses are being built at a time. I love strolling by friends on walks . Now its all houses that look the same and less farmers.

Is there truly a need for all the new housing?? all the new construction is disheartening.

It used to feel rural and now it feels like Woodbury. Why does it have to keep getting Larger? Were divers enough. We don't need to become St. Paul. Quietness is nice.

The CIty still has empty retail spaces but yet builds new businesses before filling the empty ones. Housing is growing but only for those that can't afford $500,000 homes. .

A family of 2 - single mother & son - cannot afford $1200-$1500 a month for a 2 bedroom apartment! And even if she could, there are very few apartments and NO houses for rent even at 1200, much less at $1,000 or les (which is where rent needs to be for our daughter). And she commutes to Minneapolis for work. If she could get a good paying job in CG, she would. this is NOT a "booming" job market for someone who needs to make more than $12 per hour and can't work nights because they have a child. People give lip-service to mothers and the well-being children in general, but they "talk the talk" and don't "walk the walk".

- Q#7 Apartment Complexes: But ONLY if they are affordable!! Our daughter is a single mother, and cannot afford an apartment on her own.

When approving new housing developments, City needs to stop making exceptions on minimum lot sizes. New developments have houses stacked on each other. Fine to support growth, but maintain lot sizes.

Too much new housing. Disappointing to see so much open land taken over by housing. One reason we came to CG was the size and pace (8 Yrs ago). Not excited about that changing.

Leave some area NATURAL, e.g. the Dunes. Feels like there is way too much development and higher density housing going in than desireable.

Too much housing growth and not enough restaurants/retail to support it.

Expansion! (Growing too Fast!)

Crowded Schools

Community Development Comments

I would like to see more mixed development actually be developed and more mixed housing to include affordable housing to single/couples making under $75000. I would like to see the city use Low Impact Development as a rule for developers to keep more and better quality nature throughout development. I would like less big development so quickly and more community input into the designs of developments. Please keep more 'natural' nature for better health and well being.

*We don't need more apartments/Section 8 housing

Affordable Housing - marked all 5's - Not important to me. I didn't buy a brand new over a half million dollar home to be concerned with low income housing.

There is WAY to much growth planned for the city! And, stop cutting down all the trees!!!

Housing developments with no associations. They are a waste of money for residents.

City needs open communication at the START of project planning, not the end of it. Hearing a city leader say "We've been planning this for years" means there is little opportunity left for citizen feedback.

Answered "5" on all housing questions

I do have several concerns in regards to the amount of destruction of our forests to build several new housing developments that most low & mid income families cannot afford. How can you strive for greener living and sustainability when you are destroying what makes our city beautiful?!

Sorry to come off as uncaring or not compassionate but for question 8, I moved from somewhere I spent most of my life and loved living there because low income section 8 housing moved in a 1/4 mile away. Crime skyrocketed, my car was broken into multiple times as well as my neighbors. My shed was broken into as well. Eventually I said enough is enough and I took my business to a city I thought would be better to raise a family. Please be cautious about bringing in Section 8.

- Residential housing I going to surpass the schooling and seems completely out of balance.

Please be cautious about bringing in Section 8.

question 2 - You are building too many houses, getting like Woodbury, very dissatisfied

housing too built up.

Please quit building houses - It use to be so beautiful in Cottage Grove, all the fields and trees and farmland. Now all we see is houses - very depressing -

Alternate housing such as Condos to OWN rather than Norris Square would be a help to healthy Seniors. Lastly, please don't build another 4 story like Grove 80 on top of a hill. Eyesore!

- Q#9 Too much growth: With no amenities to support it. Also starting to look like Woodbury. Losing too much natural space

I can't believe the amount of wooded areas that have been raised for yet more developments! Then you'll wonder about air quality!

Please stop developing outer boundaries of Cottage Grove. All of the lovely landscapes of our river valley are disappearing into developments and ruining the beauty of our bedroom community. If anything, provide more commercial opportunity for the families here so we don't have to drive to Woodbury! We do not want to be Woodbury. Give us back our country drives.

The primary benefit to Cottage Grove is affordability of housing. Other than that, it is merely the last stop on a dead end road.

- Q#7 There's way tooo much of all of this going up

- Q#8 These are all equally important

- Q#10 Mixture

Price of lots are skyrocketing! Price of homes are skyrocketing (450,000-500,000 for three bedroom house with no finished lower level??

I support the building of housing is affordable to loc and moderate income families in any capacity.

Education is our main concern due to pandemic, funding, staff shortage, etc. We do realize this is more of a school board issue but that is where our focus is right now.

Community Development Comments

I like to see more friendly people at the city hall permits.

I would appreciate that the city demands (homeowners) to adhere to City policies including the upkeep of their properties. So very tired of seeing trash cans in full view, and bag-sters left on boulevards for months and even years. This is very disheartening to homeowners that take care of their properties. Thank you.

I moved here because of the small town feel. I don't want to lose that. I worry about the growth of Cottage Grove getting out of control

I think we are growing too fast. This will have unforeseen consequences. Slow down, take it easy.

Not a fan of Section 8 in my new development across the road coming in 2022

- Q#7 Don't care for all of the new mega houses. Hinton is now a freeway in my backyard

- Q#8 Habitat for humanity: Great program!

No more Section 8 Housing - keep it as a "bedroom" community which it was originally designed to be.

Save some trees and not so much construction - Starting to not be a very pretty city anymore!

The woods along Hardwood between 70th and 80th are some of the most dense remaining in the surrounding neighborhoods, very disappointed with the plan to mow all this down.

The single family homes being built on sold farmlands, the houses are too big to be that close together. Make the property footprints a little larger. Also, Apartment complexes being built need to be considered for WHERE thery are being built. Who's willing to pay rent for the same price as a mortgage.

Please stop building so many houses! We're big enough and it keeps adding to traffic on HWY 61 and elsewhere. Quality of life here is deteriorating.

City is being over developed. I moved her because it was close to the cities but had a country feel.. The country feel is fading quickly as more and more houses and apartments are being squeezed in like sardines and ruining the natural landscape. Every one of my neighbors feels the same way. Please preserve the landscape by being more thoughtful with housing developments and approvals. Even my 7 & 8 year olds kids have noticed the changes and keep asking they "they" are destroying the city. (Their words)

- Q#8 I honestly don't know enough about this to really rank

Enough housing development for now.

- Q#8: NO

Concerned about the number of kids in a classroom. Too many kids in a given school and the continued growth of housing is making it worse.

- Q#7: Too many houses going up!

Don't become the next Woodbury, keep some space and fields. Keep the small town feel.

More open space and habitat for native animals should be a priority in this era of endangered species and global warming.

Shame on Cottage Grove to allow all the beautiful trees to be destroyed along Hardwood just to build a housing project (I whought the city would be more interested in the natural landscape). I hope these types of situations have more consideration than the Hardwood project in the future.

Action to decrease climate change, fostering habits (and restoring) tree planting(Ecology Commission) Be a leader in Minnesota in this regard. Preserve and protect the Mississippi Dunes area. Don't add to the climate problem by more housing.

- Q#6 Housing Opportunities: Too much

- Q#7 Other: Too many Developments

Continued concern about whether schools will be able to react to the growing # of kids in all of the new developments.

Oh and the new plaes they put up on 80th that are over 2,000 a month, what a laugh

- Q#7 Need more low income housing. Single parents with the need for help

Rent for Seniors, maybe all off the SS they get. Rent is to high. I though to Cottages my Animal Shelter were fixed on income. 2 friends (couples) moved to Wisconsin because of that rent kept going up.

Community Development Comments

- Q#7 Senior Housing: is too high

Tired of developer plans that “meet the minimum”, Cottage Grove Planning Department, Planning Commission, and City Council must expect and ask for more from the developers.
-Tired of PUDs that just let the developer ultimately do whatever they want even though it is the best interest of the ultimate consumer or the residents of Cottage Grove. Please STOP IT!
Start getting serious about moving climate change into the planning process. It is no longer something that can be fixed; we are into mitigation. Everyone needs to stop making it worse. Start LEADING! Start preparing Cottage Grove for the future NOW! Learn about what’s coming our way and step up to meet the challenge. DEMAND more from developers for access to finite resources.
The helter skelter building and on-going development in Cottage Grove is exhausting for residents. We have been living through a pandemic for the last 1.5 plus years. Yet, there is the insistence and striving for more and more growth at all costs. Again, it begs the question why? Why stress the community and its residents at such a challenging time. Again, I come to a crossroads in interpreting why that might be happening.
I would like to see “the” tree list --- a list of all the trees that have been removed with all of this development AND a list of where the replacement trees were planted. I really want to see that list.
Residential neighborhoods are being built knowingly in industrial areas. Is the plan to use these homes for the workers in the industrial site? Apartment complexes are being built in residential areas. A drive-thru coffee shop has been built on one of the busiest intersections in the city where children are present. Let’s add some more traffic at that intersection. Really? It’s all a patchwork, piecemeal blob.
Mississippi Dunes – a once in a lifetime opportunity to save a place that gives future generations a glimpse of what it was once like. A place for the backwaters of the Mississippi River, migratory birds, bees, trees, flora and fauna just to exist in a natural state. We are destroying ourselves as a species because we choose not to exist alongside that which brings us life. One little plot of land that some feel needs to be destroyed for more houses. Really? Think about it. Please, think about it. Use your brain. So foolish. So macabre.

Once concern is the city's desire to develop so much of the remaining rural land. Is it necessary?

Terrible putting apt right off 80th.

Too many houses ruining the wide open spaces we moved to CG for.

We are adding houses by the hundreds, yet taxes continue to rise. It's nearly impossible to find a lot larger than a postage stamp and anything that is large enough, the city has decided it needs to force the owner out and put more housing there, despite the protest of several HUNDRED people. People moved here and live here because it isn't Woodbury - stop trying to be. We don't want the traffic, we don't want the lack of trees and green space, we don't want the crime and we certainly don't want the egos that come with these million-dollar homes. Take a step back and stop trying to develop every inch of our city. It's sad to see so much destruction. Stop trying to impress/attract new residents and start taking care of the ones that have been here for years.

Only concerned with all the home taking away from the beauty of the farm land and the country small town feel.

To much traffic from all the new developments

Too many 4 & 6 plex houses being built so close together in my neighborhood - this will create so much more traffic & unsafe road crossings for all of us daily walkers.

I am concerned the city is growing too fast. We are losing natural area so fast (Settlers Ridge, the warehouses going in on 100th St., redevelopment of Mississippi Dunes golf course). When will it stop??

Please do not develop the land along Hardwood between 80th and 70th. We need to maintain natural green spaces.

I worry we are building too much. Do we have space when we need more school? Along with housing we need more retail or dining as well.

We must not allow housing on the Dunes property. Work out a plan with the owner.

Don't develop the Dunes and keep taking away our open spaces

Community Development Comments

I am concerned about the volume of new construction housing being built and what is will do for traffic issues on Hwy 61 when people are no longer working from home. Reduction in green space and country landscape is terrible as that is one of the reasons we loved Cottage Grove. Additionally, it is alarming that anything related to low income and section 8 housing is so prevalent in this poll - we need less crime and taxes and that is a drain on both.

Also in major need of AFFORDABLE housing for all; single parent households, seniors, etc. Definetly has became unaffordable to live here, and getting worse. Its starting to feel like gentrification is the motive here. Not fair to some of the middle class thats lived here for decades like myself and also alot of widowed and single income seniors are suffering to get by !!! Also PLEASE save some of our nature pastures and land. Too much developments all over, we love the nature we have here, its getting scarce. Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts..

I hope all these housing projects will pay for themselves, as in enough taxes to cover the cost of road/sewer/water building and maintenance, police and fire, etc., etc. Not to mention destruction of the environment that long term residents have enjoyed for a lifetime.

Please keep more nature parks. Houses don't need to be everywhere. We do need to hold onto to beautiful land, make a walking park, etc.

Public Access to the Mississippi River and it's backwaters is important.

Lastly too much construction. Bulldozing every hill and valley is heart breaking to see.

I understand that housing and expansion is necessary however I don't think it is necessary to cut down what little tree space we have left in this town besides Ravine park. I do not agree with developing Hardwood ave south of 70th or other wooded areas. There are plenty of corn fields if you need space to build.

I'm very disappointed with the direction of the Cedarhearst mansion property to include apartments and townhomes. Let say growth is good but it is under control?

Stop building more developments without addressing the school needs. If residents don't want to pay for more schools, no more developments, stop cramming more kids into our already overflowing schools. Do not put that apartment complex on Hardwood, traffic is already horrendous, at least make them go out on Harkness.

Stop building houses on every open piece of land

Get rid of section 8, and the crime/people that come with section 8. keep that in woodbury or the surrounding city. Just get rid of all low housing project, etc,

Stop the insanity! The number of houses being constructed is ridiculous!

What we enjoyed most about cottage grove is the scenery of local farms which seem to be rapidly turned into overpopulated housing areas. Also a concern would be overly increasing the amount of low-income housing. I grew up in East Saint Paul and when I was little the middle working class it was quickly turned into almost entirely low income housing, increased crime and a disproportionate work ethic within the community. Like many of my peers in the area as a kid our home was burglarized, I had siblings who where assaulted, etc. My parents purchased our home in 1991 in East Saint Paul and the area originally was very pleasant, safe and peaceful. By the early 2000s and now it is a very different story. I would hope to see Cottage Grove maintain its community including many who say they've lived here for years and not change too much too quick and end up somewhere locals flee from and the working middle class does not want to live. Thank you for taking the time to gather input from the community.

Stop building habitat for humanity homes. Stop giving away free housing. Get rid of the section eight homes. It just brings Crime to our city. Our taxes go up because we pay for the dumb ass free loaders. And stop trying to compete with Woodbury. People have moved here to get away from dumb ass Woodbury building growth. Keep the fields and farms.

We need more apartments, retail and jobs. Not more Recreation or parks

too many townhomes/apts (bringing value down)

Townhomes and apt building bring down property values.

Community Development Comments

As a new resident, of about 5 months, I see the schools (Grey Cloud Elem) facing major problems due to tremendous growth resulting from new development. There seems to be too much housing growth and not enough business growth.

We need affordable housing, affordable work for home repairs (through the city) A Cottage Grove list that promotes CG work talent. Electricity and social services in CG if we could use Cottage Grove coupons for home repairs.

We need to accomodate young families through seniors and be forward thinking, healthier food, recreational activities for all ages, affordable housing options renewable/green spaces/tech/white collar companies, small business/food truck/block party style establishments.

- I think the city has done an outstanding wob w/: 1. The pace & diverse growth 2. Roads & roundabouts to handle the growth 3. Landscaping & trails

3. I am not a big fan of these huge apartment buildings being built on 80th St behind Kohl's. They are eyesores to the city. There is plenty of land east of Jamaica, put the buildings there. What kind of people do they attract?

Tons of home developments being added

Too many houses being built.

I personally prefer to see more single family homes rather than apartments going in. Thank you for all you do!

Most don't want low income housing because of increase in crime associated with it. We don't need SJWS, riots here too when perpetual victims don't get their way.

We support more sense, multi-family housing.

I am concerned about the number of new developments and our capacity in schools.

Housing could be reasonable prices.

The amount of housing projects and selling price points are way too much for the average Med. income family of 4.

Its is very sad to see so much farmland and open spaces being used for housing and businesses. One of the things I have enjoyed about living in Cottage Grove was easy access to roads that I could see farm fields and countryside. Those views are rapidly turning into housing developments.

Housing- what are these? I don't make half that. Keep Met council out!

Too much housing growth. Keep Cottage Grove a small suburb.

Forty four years ago I purchased a new home in Cottage Grove and as it turned out, it was one of the best decisions I ever made. From a great school system, great decisions made by city for how, where and when to increase development, and the parks and overall upkeep of the city, I couldn't be happier. I can only hope as I age there will be some type of Senior Living condos available so I can stay in Cottage Grove. Overall, I think most residents keep up their property, and as in life, there is always a handful that do not. I think the code enforcement employees do a great job, giving the poor enforcement procedures they have to deal with. It is usually the same people who keep doing the same thing over and over without consequence. I would suggest a 5 strike rule. An owner of the property would only get 5 chances in the LIFETIME of their ownership regarding the same reoccuring offense and at that point the fines would start and increase each time that offense occurs again. I will assure you they will comply, which will free up the code enforcement employees to be more efficient. Thank you for all that you do. It shows and is appreciated.....Jane Coy

Also, Why build a big apartment complex on 80th?? Leave the open land alone around Military and other land. Let the wildlife have their open space.

This city is so concerned about keeping up with the "Jones" they have lost sight of how these taxes are going to affect the senior Community and new family homes the ends of the spectrum will be impacted the most "noce to haves" vs "needs". Also this going green consistently is going to cost you! Nature has its way of correcting human intervention !

I would also like to see more affordable housing options for lower income to middle class families in our community.

Community Development Comments

WHY- Is NO CODE for Residential Antenna ?? There is a CODE for TRASH containers (nuisance) . Cottage Grove code Enforcement officer Is "Clueless" Does not know of any "says" Looking into-WEEKS later- "ooh "there is No Code-Told him HAZARD-Electrical wires on GROUND -laying onto of grass- Currently neighbor has Antenna EXTENDING on top Fence (Encroaching) my Property and (Nuisance /Eye soar) Looking out at my driveway window from my Living room @ it, Plus Every day when I drive up/down- my drive way..

ASAP a Residential Code- Antenna- Not Allowed on Fence- nor near Property lines- and out of Site neighbors- No Extensions.... AND COVERAGE OF ELECTRICAL WIRES EXPOSED.....

I moved from Woodbury to Cottage Grove to have lower taxes and a better life style. I have now a thru st with 3 roundabouts., I made a big mistake moving to C.G. I bought at the high time. No decent Senior Living or one level affordable living for Seniors to buy who live on S.S. alone.

NO MORE DEVELOPING OUR BEAUTIFUL UNTOUCHED LANDS. The city is ruining our beautiful spaces!

Our stock of older Orrin Thompson homes are all very affordable with the majority costing well under $300,000. They also have larger yards than new construction and usually have finished basements. In spite of this the city planners seem to place their emphasis on "affordable" housing and starter homes. I wonder why our current stock of Orrin Thompson homes are not considered to be suitable starter homes especially as they have larger yards? They are definitely less expensive due to most new construction of starter single family homes being well over $300,000.00 without finished basement, etc. We should seek to upgrade the housing stock in Cottage Grove. We have enough lower end dwellings.

#7-The housing developments are great if there is a need but we could use more “starter” homes. How is $400,000 house a starter home? Give some blue collar folks a chance.

Let’s continue to have open spaces. Too much growth in apartments and housing. What is happening on Hardwood-This was a beautiful source of nature and open spaces. Too much is being developed so quickly. This was one of the reasons Cottage Grove was so attractive.

Please preserve what little wildlife areas/forest/green spaces.

Disheartened to see Hardwood Corridor being deforested.

Plus the extra danger to the people on the walking path now due to the new apartment entrance along Hardwood.

I indicated too much growth as an issue only because I am concerned with too many cars, buildings, traffic and we will lose the laid back, relaxed feel we have now. I don’t want Cottage Grove to become Woodbury.

I don't particularly like the plans for more apartments being built. High density housing interferes with the "charm" of the city as well as congestion.

I’d like the city to stop building so many nw homes without considering existing homes and the traffic nightmares they create. Only so may people can get out of a development a a time. The speed limits are not enforced either. The round about on 70th and Hinton is a nightmare! Drivers think its the Indy 500. Put speed limit signs on the same posts as the yield signs to inform drivers better! Put a traffic camera in the middle and look at the driving patterns. Also stop crowding the wildlife out of their homes. Soon coyotes my take more than small dogs from their backyards!

Stop mass-killing natural veg. W strong herbicide to plant a lawn. Need natural spaces for wildlife. Would like CG to engage with public for feedback in planning stage.

Some of the new housing going in off of 95th are not allowed to have sheds...this restriction is unfair to the new home buyers who may have a lot of kids and needs the extra space to store bikes and outdoor equipment for the winter. One thing I love about Cottage Grove is they let their citizens who, pay property taxes, live on their property without so many restrictions. Please rethink allowing sheds to be built on new housing and don’t enforce a snobby rule on large families. Otherwise, “I Love CG”

The community does not want a large housing development at Mississippi Dunes and the council has disregarded all of the feedback they have been given and are not pursuing all options to give full consideration for what could take place on the property. The city holds all the power in zoning here and they are not being transparent and honest about this.

Community Development Comments

Overall concerned about the rapid rate of growth and change, especially in regards to affect on infrastructure and increased traffic as well as the threat to natural areas like the dunes.

What we are concerned about is that our city is headed toward becoming a low income housing drop off. Cottage Grove does not need any more section 8 housing.

I really think that there is too much housing growth. We moved to old cottage grove because of spacing in housing. It had a country feel. It doesn't anymore. There are houses going up everywhere. I personally don't like it.

No more apartments complexes just to fill any open space. We use to be a tree city. Did not know that there was talk about appartments going up along Hardwood Ave until just recently. There goes the deer and wild turkeys and another lost to open space and a terrible location for appartments. That is enough for now

I don't think Cottage Grove needs any new housing developments, but if I am wrong, we shall probably be needing more schools to be built as families move into those houses. Not something I approve of, but something that will be needed for the future generations.

Too crowded with way to many houses getting rid of our farmland and wooded areas. Loosing what makes cottage grove cottage grove

Please no low income housing/ housing developments.

Would like to know the steps the city takes when a resident calls the city with a concern about another resident that is not following city ordinances. For example, lots of junk in the yard or not mowing their lawn.

Also why does almost every house in cottage grove have a shed? I've never seen so many sheds and ugly fences. I think we should update all the fencing to the nice black fences not chain link. There are areas of cg that you can tell no one has updated their house in 20 years and it shows is there a way to help rejuvenate these neighborhoods?

Turn Mississippi Dunes property into a natural area without housing development.

Inspectors need to be on alert. Our once beautiful area is now like a red neck commune and I have a neighbor with rampant drug activity. Now I know why people are moving out of CG.

Stop destroying Cottage Grove by building so many houses and businesses! Preserve our city as it was intended by keeping farms, wild life, and a small community. I've lived in this town for 34 years (my whole life) and now I want to move. Your agenda is destructive and should stop. Nobody is asking for a warehouse, no one is asking for the farms to be destroyed, no one is asking for Grey Cloud to be impacted.

Grey Cloud Island and the Mississippi Dunes are the city's greatest natural and cultural asset and should be preserved as a large natural space as a state or county park. Any other use, especially for housing or man-made infrastructure, would be a travesty. A Grey Cloud State or County Park including the island and Mississippi Dunes properties would be, by far, our greatest asset.

Stop developing every inch of land. We do not need more housing!! It is disgusting that the city would even entertain the idea of developing the Mississippi Dunes gold course into housing. Anyone with any commom sense can see that housing in that area doesnt fit! It's a pristine nature area! Why would anyone think seeing rooflines and roads going through that area be a good idea. The city has tunnel vision of dollar signs. They sure were quick to change the zoning. And why not even speak with state / DNR about the possibility of a state park so everyone can enjoy the area. We know the DNR has offered to buy it. Yet the city wont even entertain talking with them. Disgusting. NO ONE in this area wants it!!! So why help push it through!? Excuses about not being able to do anything because its privately owned is a scape goat. The city cure isnt doing anything to guide the development in a different direction. Why? Because the city has its own agenda and wants houses built.

Mississippi Dunes deserves to be a natural park. The current ideas to transform it into a high and medium density housing area are dispicable. There is NO REASON to allow more housing there and the city council's leadership on this issue has been insultingly poor.

We moved to CG 6 years ago because we loved the small town feel, corn fields; but close shopping, we fear that the rapid destruction of farms for housing developments will ruin the charm of CG and just turn us into another overpopulated Woodbury.

Community Development Comments

I love the amount of walking/biking trails that are being added as part of new housing developments, however, I am saddened by the shear number of new housing developments. I was extremely saddened to see a large number of mature trees cleared to make way for a new housing development off of 65th. Transitioning farmland to housing is a little easier to swallow, but clearing mature forest land to make way for housing is tougher.

Very supportive of the direction of the city. Good mix of growth to continue a sense of community.

I hate that the city is tearing down trees and disrupting the wildlife for more apartments. One of the best reasons to live here is the wildlife. More apartment buildings are not what this city needs.

One problem not addressed is residences in clear violation of codes. One neighbor was cited for having 2 tires on the grass with 2 wheels on the driveway for an extended period while we have 2 other neighbors with cars parked in their backyards on the grass for the years we've lived here. Typically 5 or more cars in the driveway and suspect the renter or owner is subleasing to more than one party. That neighbor does not appear to have garbage collection so they burn it. On the days they burn we all notice a stampede of mice in our yards. Normally if I was aware someone needed financial help due to not being able to work, I would help them however something else seems to be going on with cars stopping by and picking up brown paper bags. Could it be lunch I wonder?

Overall I think the City does a great job! Thank you! However, more focus needs to be put back into existing neighborhoods (ie:code enforcement). Ordinances need to be enforced-number of vehicles, junk, firewood storage, vehicles parked in yards, too many vehicles at residences and parking in the streets due to too many vehicles/trailers etc. Running auto repair shops and landscaping/plowing businesses out of residential garages at all hours of the day should also be enforced.

Market Rate Apartments with amenities that will appeal more to single, middle class income. Some examples of what type of apartments to have are complexes similar to Grove 80, Salem Green in IGH, Thomas Lake Pointe in IGH, and Blackberry Pointe in IGH. There should be more land zoned for multi family housing.

Please quick taking away the charm of Cottage Grove. The changes happening make me want to move away. I live here and have because I loved our small town feel. Now housing is being built on top of housing.

Code enforcement - Trailers and boats left parked on the streets (not hooked up to any vehicles). Streets should not be used as a storage location during non winter months.

I love living on Cottage Grove. I miss some of things were losing fast and furious, our natural habitat. Way too many houses going up. I would like to stay in CG but will need to move if due to expansion crime increases. Thanks for reading.

Would like to see better code enforcement in our neighborhoods. Have been noticing a lot of neglected properties, cars and trailers parked in yards, households exceeding the vehicle limit on a nightly basis, hampering street cleaning and snow removal. Don't want to sound like a get off my lawn guy, but it does effect property values and the impression visitors have to our town and neighborhoods. Thank you for asking for our thoughts on Cottage Grove.

The roads we have cannot handle this government's growth ambitions. City planning commission is a joke, which is clearly evident by the construction of the caribou on hinton. The desire to develop every 'empty' acre is sad, and the rate it is happening is shocking.

Unhappy with development of Apts on Harkness. This was a beautiful area for walking and driving to observe wildlife and nature. Prefer our city preserved our nature . There are many other areas that we could put an apartment complex thst would not have displaced the wildlife.

New apartments are not affordable for 1 income households that need 2 bedrooms and the other options are apartments that are old and have management that doesn't care. Private rentals are limited and go so fast you can't get anything.

Please quit building the the cheap, no basement, too close together houses like the ones going up in Settlers Bluff. They will be the slums of Cottage Grove in 30 years.

lack of rental homes that are affordable.

Do not put housing development on the river.

Community Development Comments

city growth activities seem to be well managed although notification about development in particular areas should be more targeted to those affected.

STOP TRYING TO EXPAND OUR NICE LITTLE TOWN

While growth is a good thing, the last few years have seen too much of an increase in housing developments. We were attracted to the area because of the green space and trees. Slowing of future housing development would be welcomed.

I understand private property can be used at the owner's discretion, but zoning should have a say when that use involves removing every standing tree and shrub. Why do we need fit a giant building on a postage stamp size area of forest? CG should not be in a contest to match Woodbury, being a small community is what people love about this area. Leave the trees, some farm fields, and let nature stay here too.

Please listen to ALL of the residents, stop picking and choosing those that align with your beliefs. We need open air, farms and green space. You are only focused on building more and more houses. Residents don't want that. This peaceful small community has now turned into a mini Woodbury. If we wanted to live in Woodbury, we would. That's not what we want.

I’m disappointed in how much single family and high density housing is being developed without keeping the same pace for senior and affordable housing.

STOP taking open spaces away. Enough construction.

stop building houses in all the farm land

Are neighbor's hood Are being too look like sums No one cares about the speeding or anything else over inThomson grove area at all. the city or police I have called both about how how it looks and the speeding and not a thing ever has been done. Two of my neighbors have moved because of this. I just wish I could.

I also wonder with the amount of growth, what that will do to our school capacities. I am grateful for the quality of education in south washington county, and don't want to see that suffer for the sake of "growth".

With the housing market exploding in the next couple of years we are going to need our school district (833) to become more efficient. There needs to be more help for the level 3 kids and a facility specifically for the level 4 kids.

Finance Comments

I'm low income and DON'T WANT TO pay for facilities I CANNOT USE - schools, sports, fancy blds i.e. libraries, government blds. This is a waste of taxpayer money. Let those who want the extras, fancy, luxury items etc pay for them. We don't need all these tax increases.

less taxes

New housing should decrease taxes. Taxes continue to go up despite all the new developments

Would like property taxes to go down

2. We moved here because CG is not Woodbury - i.e.: lower taxes but similar opportunities. This city is a great middle-ground city, but I've seen a push towards more & higher taxes. With the influx of new residents, tax revenue is going up anyway; there should not be a need to raise taxes too, in order to pay for new things (especially with the onset of an inflationary period right now)

Lower taxes for seniors.

I feel we are being taxed out of our house!

I have lived here 28 years & my taxes continually have gone up, especially property tax.

Trying to push thru 3 tax increases at one time with a total of close to $400 a year per household

Taxes are getting higher and higher but nothing done for me & my bracket.

A lot of waste in schools - TAXES are climbing even with more housing added!!!

Pay high taxes

2. Taxes are getting high again - bring them down

We don't have to be like Woodbury! Try to keep taxes at level to be able to afford our home. Not everyone has high level incomes.

Taxes are too high. It seems like the city wants to force out the old people on fixed incomes. Cottage Grove is not Woodbury and never will be. Wealthier people choose Woodbury for better living and status symbol.

Balance between growth & taxes

Being a senior citizen, taxes are very important. Fixed incomes are very important seeing our city is more at a younger age. We should be allowed a break. I have paid taxes in Cottage Grove for fifty years. We get a cost of living raise and all of it goes to taxes and health care.

Taxes are increasing very quickly due to the increased from the School District. I have a fixed income. I would appreciate a bill pay drop box near the library again. Both are on the other side of town from me.

Taxes are too high.

Quit wasting money by billing water and sewer bills weekly and go to 2 or 3 month billing.

I'm being taxed out of my home

Ben responsible with tax (hard work) dollars!

No new taxes!

Taxes are too high!

At the rate that the city is growing at, I have seen reports about how taxes won't be going up due to the growth in population size. While that is good news, it would be great to see taxes drop if we keep seeing the population growth continue. I could invest even more in the town if I had more money in my pockets.

The taxes are getting too high for services we receive. Since I built my house 14 years ago, my taxes have gone up $1800 and now you want to raise them again. You are forcing people like me to move. Coming out of a pandemic is not the time to raise taxes up again.

Taxes are way to high!!

- Q9 Taxes: Very high property tax

Please stop taxing the $#!% out of residents every single year.

Stop asking residents to vote on referendums that include tax increases

* Find a different way of financing special projects like the community center. Instead of basing costs on property values, base it on per household format or maybe on AGI. Higher valued homes end up bearing too much of the tax burden.

Finance Comments

Quit taxing us seniors for all the new school houses

Tax the home builders!

The taxes for $39 Million community center is absolutely crazy! It will be paid back in 12 years. Then do my taxes go back down?

3 Too many taxes for everything on our bills! Some sound like the same taxes just stated differently!

Regarding number 9, We're seeing the great growth but we're not seeing the reduction in taxes for our property. I've seen documents from the City that talks about the tax base growth and how it should eventually lower the property taxes, 3-5 years down the road? or will our property taxes just rise $100 every year like they have been over the course of several years?

We wonder how, if CG continues to grow in population, property taxes continue to increase. The operating budget has stayed the same with the increase in population.

Reduce by 50% house taxes for seniors over 65 years old.

Property Taxes are TOO high and city plus schools keep asking for more. The city and schools need to re-evaluate Taxes,

- provide tax breaks for senior citizens; perhaps have an incentive for seniors to volunteer for the city

It would be nice to see a "significant reduction" in property taxes, the tax base growing rapidly with all the new development so tax revenue has expanded enormously. There is no need to be raising anyones taxes

Lower taxes

Freeze - Senior Citizen Taxes

Gouging Seniors for all improvements

It feels like you want to move - seniors from their homes - being taxed to death!

Lower property taxes rather than continually raise them.

CG could do better (lower taxes)

Property Taxes too high. and the water shed fee.

- Low taxes? Nope....

-Lower Taxes!

Please do not drive seniors out of the community. Have lived her 37 years. Cannot afford tax increases every year while on social security.

Lower property taxes

- Please help keep taxes low

I love Cottage Grove. My family was 1 of the 1st that moved here in 1958. The only thing to make us move is taxes. As a retired couple I think we should be exempt from school tax.

Financially unsustainable.

Bring in industry where most of the tax base is paid by Business

I grew up here, left, and came back to raise my boys because it is safe, and taxes are reasonable.

The taxes in CG are too high for what we get. Not sure how the taxes are so high. Lower the taxes on smaller homes. Greater than 2500 sq ft. homes are popping up all over. Help us lower 833 tax as well.

The city seems to have the attitude no money is to much to spend of city government building but no money is the right amount for the residence.

If that much money is left over, lower taxes.

We need to find other ways to raise money for things on a referendum! Why do we have to raise taxes for all this=that is the easy way!

Ease up on property taxes for us seniors. We seem to be the Bill Payers !

I am concerned about our lack of commercial taxes that go back into 833 vs other cities (Hastings)

*Taxes are too high

With promises of lower taxes? New houses and businesses should bring lower taxes, but I seen them continuing to rise.

Finance Comments

I'm wearing very thin on all of the levies & tax increases. I can't afford my property taxes already & work 3 jobs.

Our income has not increased in years and to keep increasing our taxes is not good! We pay more than enough in taxes!

Taxes - Taxes - Stop TIF

My only concern right now is "Senior Citizens" on a fixed income I believe, the taxes are way high & don't understand why the neighbors' are lower than mine

Why are taxes so high: I live in CG with no swer-no water-and no street lights - no curb and gutter: and my taxes keep going up-up

How do TiF financing districts affect the residents/taxpayers of Cottage Grove, the school districts and the surrounding communities?

Spending surprisingly out of control. Many of us are struggling out of the pandemic yet we are spending and talking about more spending. School levy, community center, and road assessment is going to cost me over 500.00 next year that I cannot afford. There are wants and needs. Just like a household or a business, a city should live within its means.

Taxes are too high, I don't want to pay for a water park that I'll never use. My Taxes have gone up over $1000 year from home valuation and City/County/School district tax increases. When will it be enough?

Taxes are High But our schools are wasting money and failing to plan for all the growth in population. We need to reduce taxes and get out of the Met Council.

That said.. Taxes here have gotten absolutely out of control. In 11 years mine has almost doubled to $4k. Now they want to take more for a pool that will be used a quarter of the year and more for schools (didn't we just pass one of these 2 years ago?... and 2 years before that? At some point the schools need to learn to balance a budget

Taxes are too high

Stop raising taxes every year!!!

People are fed up with the irresponsible spending by city

I do t want my takes to go up. Your building habitat for humanity houses and I'm struggling and hope my taxes don't go up. I have no problem driving to woodbury or other cities to use their facilities.

I'm paying $400/month in property taxes and the city and school district want to raise it at least $27 (on a $300,000 house). I'm nearing retirement and feel that I'm being taxed for service that I don't want. More development has not helped my tax burden. It goes up almost every year. A broader tax base was supposed to spread out the tax burden not increase it. Very dissatisfied.

We moved here from Forest Lake, MN 2 1/2 years ago. We built in Calarosa and own a villa. The taxes are much higher for us here, but we do own a new home.

taxes too high

Taxes need to be lower

I am worried about the CONTINUED INCREASE in taxes. CG wins over Woodbury because of our taxes. I fear we are losing our competitive edge w/all the tax increases.

Taxes keep going up.

Middle income people need LOWER TAXES!!

Property tax increase

There is a building boom in C.G. there will be much tax money comMing in in up comming years why cant you reduce or even hold the line on property tax's ALLWAYS NEED MORE! :(

Taxes are getting up there between the schools and city tax, I understand everything goes up but I think we should cap this for seniors or people on a fixed income.

Finance Comments

We pay too much taxes in Cottage Grove, especially to the schools. Those funds have been used poorly since the building of East Ridge. I will NEVER vote for another referendum. With all the new houses being built, there should be an abundance of tax dollars coming in, there should not be a need to keep hiking them up for the rest of us. We have pulled our daughter out of public school after the disaster last year, and plan to move out of the city when she graduates.

Property taxes are too high

There needs to be some way to control raising property taxes. They are extremely high and if all three issues on the ballot are approved, will increase our taxes close to another $100/month. That is a huge impact on retirees on a fixed income.

Please keep this city great. New businesses should add to tax base, but yet our taxes still go up!

LOWER PROPERTY TAXES

Please try to find a way to help us with our taxes, they are much higher than they should be. Stop taking on debt. This community center is the most disgusting form of spending and not in line with the average resident's priorities, I don't need a lazy river I need my city's leaders to invest in efficiencies to reduce our future operating expenses, not take on a perpetual drain on my hard earned tax dollars.

If taxes go up because we don't have as many houses and businesses, that's fine. What's not fine is putting taxes on new programs and development which no one is asking.

More focus on managing money, not constantly raising taxes.

I also wonder with the amount of growth, what that will do to our taxes. One would hope with the additional tax revenue from the new homes that it would not require additional tax levies for education, but I fear that is not the case.

Very supportive of the direction of the city. Good mix of growth while keeping taxes responsible for all the great services

Cottage grove is not Woodbury and should not try to be. People live here for lower costs. Trying to raise taxes to pay for things not everyone uses goes against your purpose.

Residents were promised that when the city built up the industrial section our taxes would go down or remain stable. That has not happened. My taxes go up every year.

Length on the bond for the referendum on Community Center is unclear. Raises questions on how transparent city government is on this issue.

Too high of taxes

The taxes have risen so fast that our family might not be able to stay.

Parks & Rec Comments

The ice rink is great. Kingston is nice, would like another like it.

We need more walking paths. We need more parks with better playgrounds and full basketball & tennis courts.

Destroying the beautiful dunes with industrial/manufacturing/commercial property is a horrible idea. The remainder of that area should be preserved as a park and outdoor family friendly recreational area.

Parks, Paths, et. During COVID - I averaged 5-6 miles of walking a day (all seasons). I have discovered new trails, loved Hamlet Parks walk, overall all I would say Super Job on these.

My husband and I have wanted a Community Center for years. It would provide areas for youth activities in the winter and areas for gatherings and exercise for seniors. Fingers are crossed for November, although we think Cottage Grove has always been conservative when it comes to spending more and increasing our taxes.

The city told us one thing and then changed course without imput. We should have a covered indoor pool with moderate warmth of water for senior exercise. Now you are asking for millions of dollars for something that is unusable for 8 months of the year and the wasted water is not acceptable.

I really enjoy the Ravine Park

I DO NOT think we should get involved in sports facilities-city pools-water parks etc. Only a small portion of folks use it & we all have to pay for it.

Fix the ice rink parking lot

I also would like to see more opportunities for children 15 & up to be able to play community sports. Hockey and baseball specifically. They may not make the high school teams, but they'd still like to play locally. Not traveling teams.

* The COMMUNITY CENTER is LONG OVERDUE!! Very glad we are moving forward. I'm happy to pay taxes towards this.

Raising taxes for swimming complexes (39 mil) is a bit much along with ever growing school budgets and referendums.

Parks & Rec are great. Youth athletics is strong.

Love Park & Rec Department - very happy!

As a senior I would like to see more opportunities for indoor swimming and indoor activities. I believe we need a YMCA with a warm pool. Yoga, meditation, book clubs, etc.

Bike path expansion is always slow to meet the need

We need a YMCA in Cottage Grove.

I live near Highland park, I noticed the wildlife is effected when they mow the tall grass too early in the summer. Thistle and milkweed do not grow back fast enough to sustain the birds & butterflies, perhaps they take that into consideration when they decide to mow prarie grass.

I like the fact that a recreation center is being planned and voted on very soon.

* We have pools at our schools. Let the public use them. It is good for mental health and wellbeing

Hoping for a community center. It's insane to me that a town this size doesn't have a pool!

Please add at least 4 indoor pickleball courts to the proposed new city center. We have over 140 (50+) tax paying adults who play regularly. We have to go to other cities in the fall and winter to play. Very sad. Also get the new outdoor courts constructed sooner!!!! WE PAY THE TAXES!

6. "Strawberry Fest" that is better tailored to all residence. More advertising for event. Along with city "funding allowance" to promote Cottage Grove.

Love the parks

Re #3: We've seen quite a few instances of vandalism in parks (mainly graffiti).

1. Allowing or partnering w/ private organizations for athletic/community type centers & activities is the way to go, not for the city to build/maintain such facilities. This leaves the risk (and opportunity/rewards) upon those organizations and not the tax payers. Time and again I've seen such community centers have serious issues & major costs 10 years down the road if maintained by the city.

Parks & Rec Comments

The community building up for referendum does not need an outdoor waterpark! If the building is approved, build a tunnel under county 19 to connect to the Ravine.

Provide activities for retired/seniors and allow then to age in place.

Connect all walking paths in the city.

I love the fact you want a Comm. Center. Not excited about no/not much "indoor" activities.

MN has 3 mos a year to enjoy an outdoor pool..... We need "indoor". I am a member of the Inver Grove C.C. Veterans Indoor Pools, saunas, hot tubs, etc. It's cold 9 mos a year here :(

Rating on the snow removal reflects that I live on a cul-de-sac which requires an experienced person if it is to be cleared to within 1 foot of the curb.

We are not seniors and dislike new referendums being past, We have many great parks, trails, no more needed. This pool/community building is over the top. Seems to me we got rid of 2 pools already. All or most restaurants are fast food others have failed over the years. We go elsewhere for better service - sorry to say.

some of the city's children program are getting very costly to enroll in!

I love the parks and trails.

-I will be voting yes for the proposed community center as it promotes growth. family - lifestyle & brings others into town.

The Hidden Valley Park is awful and doesn't at any attention. We have many little kids that could use it but it full of weeds. The other developments that have parks have well maintained areas.

In the winter time like to see them take better care of the path go past the Legends & the White Pines Retirement Center.

There should be a "dome" for youth activities, an outdoor pool, etc.

Activities that are inclusive for all abilities. Community center that has imput from disabilitys community needs

As someone who grew up here there is a lack of indoor community events for kids, teens, and adults. Now as an adult with my own kids I do want to say the community center is a great idea but we live in MN. I would be 100% instead of 70% for it if the waterpark was indoors (like IGH) so it could be used year round.

I live by West Draw Park of Meadowgrass and wish that park could be updated as most kids think it's boring. Since the bike park is close by, it would be nice to update that park. Also, get more parking for the bike park

We need a community center, we need to maintain walking trails during the winter

Would like a walking path close to our home.

Would like to see more activities for people with disabilities in our town and area.

Map of where to park to use trail systems

A sports complex/dome/pool/community center is not the answer.

Our family just moved here last year. The walking paths & parks are AMAZING.

1. Mississippi Dunes needs to be preserved for the well being of the environment as well as shared by the most people. 3. The City needs a much better communication system. FACEBOOK is not a mode of communication. Very poor communication when there are short notice changes. ie, cancellation of pop up splash pad this summer. I called Park & Rec and they were not aware of cancellation - told me to check Facebook - Nothing on the city website either. 4. Would like to see some sort of City park clean up. A lot of mowed trash as well as general trash at parks. 5. Need "Smart" traffic lights - especially on 80th Street.

3. CGAA needs to be flushed out. Too many parents think they control who makes special teams in cuts. I would like to see a board of people put together for each sport (independent people) to make fair decisions on who make advanced teams vs. based on family ties & sponsors.

Wish you could make Washington County park have trail going around lake.

No Community Center - keep taxes reasonable.

Homes that backup to city parks, need to be trimmed by the city, we have fencing that is maintained on my home side of the fence, however, the city never trims on the park side of the fence.

I would like more opportunities for figure skates at the icerink as well

Parks & Rec Comments

Park entrances can be a serious bottle neck & safety issue. How could the games be scheduled to manage parking capacities?

Senior citizens need FREE things. They are on limited income. Bus rides to store - places to gather and play games for FREE!

We are very proud of CG. parks and trails!

Like to see better pickleball facilitys indoor and outdoor. Outdoor 8-10 courts parking - restroom, water, shade, wind block Indoor 8 courts Look up pickleball see how its growing it is HUGE in the sienor community these are people who have paid more than any other.

Pickleball courts with lights away from houses and wind

Wish we could have more parks or wooded areas incorporated.

- I love our outdoor parks; however the bathroom facilities are almost always closed. This is really inconvenient for families with small children.

Park areas left uncut create trash magnets. Not safe to step off pathways & sidewalks.

The Ravine Park should be free!

Why an outdoor pool that can only be used 4 months out of the year. Need an indoor pool.

I really hope the community center referrendum passes in November. "I appreciate the effort and planning that has some info this amenity for the community" (?). This is a needed opportunity for our citizens.

Very excited for the new community center. Will be a great asset to the community.

Park and trails and green space is important as well.

Would love more walking paths. Woodridge Park inclusive playground is fabulous.

City needs to be transparent. Really, how much operational cost will it cost tax payers for this community center?

Allow those who pay property tax to use the community building free.

SAVE THE GREEN SPACE!!

disappointed to have to pay to use Ravine Regional Park

Please keep the trails, especially the paved trails, clean of snow so we may use them all winter long. IT would be nice if some of our trails were shaded.

Shout out to maintenance for both CG Parks & Rec and CG Public Works.

Great Parks!

We are new to CG (moved in Aug 2020). Seems like a great community and we are happy to be here! One thing I think that this area is lacking is swimming pool/community center. I'm very excited to see it on the ballot and I truly hope it passes! Not only would it benefit CG but the surrounding communities as well. I've never heard of a community regretting building an outdoor pool/aquatic center either.

Community Center should have a youth director or similar position to create and operate youth events/opportunities.

Community Center should have close connection to Park HS and local churches.

Our parks so all can go to - not stay away becauase of drugs and bullying.

We like the new pool center. I hope it goes through with the votes!

Too many residents/dog owners are not leashing their dogs when walking on our trails. I suggest better enforcement and signs that remind them of the city policy. The signs could be added to existing signs posted on the entrances or city trash cans. I would estimate 50% do not leash when they see someone coming.

The trail and park systems are fantastic.

YOU PUT A PICKLE BALL COURT RIGHT BY MY HOUSE. WAY TOO MUCH NOISE. VERY DISSAPONTED WITH THAT. VERY INCONSIDERET TO THE HOME OWNER'S.

Would like more pickle ball courts.

Consider mountain bike trails in the Ravine Park

Consider mountain bike trails along the power line right-of-way between Kingston Park and West Draw Park.

We need a community center for all youth and seniors NOT an outdoor pool

Parks & Rec Comments

I love the idea of a Community Center that has a pool area. However, we live in Minnesota so why have "outdoor" pool area that can be used for only a few months a year instead of an indoor pool area that can be used year round. It would create so much more revenue and provide and outlet for the community in Winter time.

- Q#9 Lack of Youth Activities: (affordable)

Also, we need Senior programs!

Update playground equipment in city parks to be user friendly for children of all ages.

Provide more information to families for activity availability for children under age 5 years.

Recreational activities are unsatisfied. No one can get any knowledge about them. The parks facilities are not as good as they need to be. There should be proper communication needed for recreational activities for children.

Need to do something about parking at Hamlet Park. You keep adding more athletics fields which is ok, but you don't add more parking lots. When you have sports going on, a person who wants to use the park for other things cannot find a place to park if you can ever can get in. People park on both sides of the road going in, stop in the middle to unload, staff locking things up.

I think Cottage Grove has forgotten the seniors of the community. We need more recreational outside stuff.

2 Dome for sports practices on a scheduled "rotation"

Thank you for clearing out invasive species around the paths

Due to age, Mr. Sullivan and Wife do not use too many of the parks, walking trails, etc.

Need more nature DNR paths

We need more free places for kids - to gather and play sports and games etc. Also the new pool should be covered to use year round, alot of people can't afford sports - so many kids are left out.

More sattelite bathrooms on walking trails - great to have walking paths but need bathrooms.

- Q#2 The overall direction that Cottage Grove is going: Love idea of Commnity Center

- Q#3 Recreational and athletic facilities: Need a Dome for winter practice

- Q#6 Indoor recreation and fitness facilities: Need Community Center

- Q#6 Outdoor parks and recreation: Water park or slide area would be nice - splash pad only for very young.

Put pickleball in neighborhood parks, more amenities in neighborhoods. The new proposed rec area is too centralized. Doesn't encourage neighborhood bonding, safety

The walking path between Granada ave and Burr Oaks Ave seems to be falling into disrepair. Numerous Pavement Cracks (not filled/sealed) and I can't remember when it was last seal coated. Also, it is nice to have plowed, but often times it is icy. Also, why is a "no motor vehicles" posted on one end of that path (and not both ends)

I wish the city would consider the senior population in its decision making. Seems the focus is all on youth. Love the Ravine Park! More natural spaces should be preserved... too much zoning changes. Please consider adding pickle ball courts.

There is no need for C.G. to make a swimming Rec because other cities have it. We need to keep our taxes low to insure people can afford living in their homes.

Hold off on the city pool complex - fix the school and busing problems first.

Upgrade the design of the water park to have an indoor pool.

Voting for the community Center.

*more adult rec league sports

- The city park near us had a large amt. of broken glass under a tree for 3 yrs. - never addressed.

- Produce streams in Cottage Grove for trout Fishing Activities.

I was very disappointed in the proposed Community Center. Too many outdoor pools and no indoor pool. In Mn that lg of outdoor aquatic is not a good plan. I would have liked to see indoor pool, gym area, meeting rooms.

More park space, fewer homes. Building an outdoor "lazy river" that will only be usable for 3 months of the year is a Foolish idea. We don't feel heard.

Please focus on family restaurants and opportunities for youth activities. The community center should have been built lot years ago.

Parks & Rec Comments

Add nice concrete skateboard ramp.

1. We could really benefit from a community center. A place families, teens and seniors can gather for age appropriate activities

- Need more regional Parks!!

I would like to see the walking trail across from St. Rita's paved on both sides of the pond. Also create more walking paths in the big field by the archery range. Also a walking path behind the fire station on 80th street that would connect the other walking paths.

I love the bike paths/trails but don't feel safe on the ones that are more secluded (by Ravine Parkway)

Should have had a community center 20-30 yrs ago - not now.

- All parks should have outhouse available

- Parks should be established in new developments before say 10% of housing is complete. It took NINE years after we moved into our new home for the promised park to be built. By then, our son was a teenager.

Also, can 80th be repaired soon? The road is in awful shape.

We do need more activities for our youth - movie theatre game rooms, indoor water park etc...

Ravine Park - I'm afraid to park my car there. Too may friends have been broken onto. Please do something before the Nordic ski season. I don't feel safe there.

I would like to see progress on developing Cottage Grove's Connection to the Mississippi River. We are Blessed with this wonderful Natural resource and, currently, residents have limited access.

A much-needed recreational amenity would be a public boat launch dedicated for kayaks and canoes. Perhaps this launch could have access to a fresh water spigot for cleaning off kayak hulls and decks - following a relaxing and scenic paddle on the beautiful - but muddy - Mississippi River..!

We don't need a new complex. I think the new complex is going to be a waste of money especially when people dont work. Plenty of work bust give money out. If I could move from this city I would.

More activities like WB Parks & Rec for young children.

We were very sorry to find out the plans for the community center. We have waited for one for years. Now this very expensive facility will have a huge water park which made the whole plan extremely expensive and a very large tax burden. But the saddest part is no indoor pool. Water aerobics keep seniors moving. I saw a huge difference it made for my mother in Chaska when arthritis threatened her mobility. Unfortunately, I never considered that we would have a community center without some kind of indoor pool!

More opportunity for community activities for children. Having to go to Woodbury to find a variety of classes/sports defetes the community feel when its not OUR community. We want to support and be apart of the community in which we live.

We desperately need the sports complex with an outdoor pool and indoor soccer and softball fields. We are always driving to other cities for practices, games, meet, and tournaments. CG is losing out on $ by not having facilities!

I see a few parks that have Tennis Courts that are not being used. Many communities have put in pickleball courts. I know you say the new Community Center may have Courts but I think you could convert the tennis cts to PB courts.

I love the parks and bile trails - keep it a family community!

Community center is somewhat necessary. But no where as grandiose as is pursued - Being built in wrong place!

The outdoor waterpark idea is a good start, but make it indoor and attach a hotel. Make it a destination and return the ability to use tear round to the table. See Shoreview for an example of DONE RIGHT! in addition, bring back the drive in theater...heck make it by the pool for "dive in"...we need to give people a reason to come into Cottage Grove...to live and to visit/shop/spend!

Lower green fee's at River Oaks for residents - it's not a 50-60 dollar golf course. A lot of people go to Wisconsin to golf because of prices. You are losing a lot of money $$$

Parks & Rec Comments

We are impressed with the maintenance of the parks and trails. Can't wait for the community center, fingers crossed.

Outdoor parks and recreation are great when they are available for use by other people, not just sports groups. Trees are being cut down all over the city - especially for park improvements. How does this improve parks? Thank you for allowing this input.

Also need the Community Rec Center and outdoor waterpark approved, it should have a hotel close for access to shoppes at Cottage Grove and Rec Center and Ravine Parks would make it a great place to stay or birthday parties.

It woudl be nice for residents to not have a fee or only a minimal membership fee for the proposed community center. If our taxes increase and then we have to pay to enter every time at the center vs having monthly fee (or free), we may not be able to even use it. It would be hard to swallow if that was the case considering our mortgage payments are already at the top of our budget.

I would love to see another disc golf course in the city.

- Need more trash cans on walking trails

- Need of more biking trails

- An indoor/outdoor waterpark (Cascade Bay in Eagan?)

I am retired but will vote for the Cottage Grove Community Center. It will be good for the city

Love the idea of an aquatic/community center, hate the location. It is inaccessible for low income kids w/out bikes and situated next to a gem of a wildlife park and highway. Find a location closer to our lower income families so it will be accessible safely for their children

The new facility is a bad idea. Too many of us have waited 20 years for teen and preteen rec centers/movie theaters. etc. Only good for the rich and close to end of town.

*- More parks, open space & exploration areas - Mississippi Dunes

I think the pool should be inside where it can be used all year long. Could be used indoor to use for water excercise and Sr yoga.

-More recreation programs and events for kids on West side.

-Indoor recreation and fitness facilities not needed.

Don't need Community Center

With the growing community, I really think we need more things for kids (and adults) to do such as a pool/water park or an indoor gym/activity center, etc. (we will be coting YES for the outdoor water park!)

We filled this out because we would like to see the community center built.

The parks and Rec are excellent. We Continue to find new parks all around town to try out. The city is clean and peaceful. Keep up the good work.!

Trail Access in my neighborhood is dangerous

There is nothing here for older lads to do.

They have to find activities in Woodbury or other places.

We need a safe recreation area for teens & preteens. Not a place that is at the edge of town, expensive and only usable 3 mos out of the year!

- Cottage Grove needs more open space. Not all of its land needs to be developed.

River Oaks Golf Course is a great buy for a public course & well kept up.

- Cannot wait for the city fitness complex, move up the time & construction ect

There should be more garbage cans for bags of dog poop on trails. TY

My wife and I moved to CG in July 2021 from north-eastern Kentucky. We are VERY impressed with all the city has to offer. The parks and green areas are beautiful and well maintained. Whole senior services is an issue, we full support the proposed community center and know it'll be a treasure to the entire city.

Save Mississippi Dunes as a park and acknowledge the MRC as a national park

I have lived in Cottage Grove since 1991. The city has improved significantly over the past 30 years. Dramatic improvements to City parks and trails have improved the quality of life.

Parks & Rec Comments

We need more activities for Youth and Young Adults. More pickleball courts and events/activities to unite a community

I really hope the community center is built. I think that will be great for families

More trash cans in public spaces throughout trails! Dog poop bag stands!

We live in MN - A summer pool is a poor plan - learn from the past. we got rid of it for a reason. When creating a youth gathering place/community center make sure youth can bike to the facility safely and have 2 year degree human service degree be required for youth staff. Also - indoor pool better yt, use one of the area school pools that is not in operation.

Need an outdoor pool

It would be nice to get the area next to Oltman Middle School finished with soccer fields, ball fields, a walking path. That was the plan. How about an outdoor pool? There is a lot of homes in this area and having one place off Jamaica isn't easy to walk or bike to. Maybe add a covered pavilion like Oakdale has by their police/city hall complex. It is used all the time.

I will be voting no for the community center.

Thank you for sending this survey, outstanding maintenance of City Parks and walking trails,

Perhaps if the city and schools could collaborate to bring back the Community pool at the old Oltman? It's a huge lack for our City. If we can't get a YMCA, at least on affordable and warm pool would be nice.

It would be very nice to have an indoor pool. Hastings and Woodbury and Inver Grove and most others do.

We Need more drinking fountains and park potties by trails. Thanks

Looking Forward to future large outdoor pool or water park like Cascade Bay in Eagan.

More pickleball courts

- Indoor recreation and fitness facilities: Want indoor walking track. Miss Curves

- The amount of walking and biking trails in the city: Wish there were more by our house and connecting to the other main ones.

Community Center.....Really.....Drawing of hand with middle finger raised

We need a community center - glad it's on the ballot

- Lack of youth activities: teens

- We do not need to have a Community Center

- Maintenance of walking & Biking trails in city parks: Winter maintenance is sometimes very poor

no ymca or indoor gym with childcare

no outdoor pool BOOOO!!!

need more pickball courts outside & inside

We would like to see biking or walking trails connect CG to Woodbury so we can safely get to WB without braveling CR19 or Radio Drive.

- Trail plowing isn't good the last few years

- need track/fitness facilities are fine

We would like to have better and more accessible river access

* To much distance between 'Rest Areas' along walking trails

* We have nice parks, however there is nothing for handicap or disabled persons. The parking lots are too far from fields for people with walking issues or wheelchairs. No where to sit as it is often difficult to carry chairs when using walkers or canes or crutches.

I'd like more than one pickle ball court.

We would love to see an even bigger emphasis on native plantings and wild spaces on public land. Connect the bike and walking trails better.

Would love to see more programming in evening/weekends for families. We have 2 working parents in our family and can rarely participate. (things like the library, parks, etc.)

Sad about no community center

Parks & Rec Comments

I'm vehemently opposed to the proposed rec center, which will raise property taxes that are already too high, and serve as a dumping ground for irresponsible parents that expect the city to serve as free daycare for these future convicts. The rec center will create liability for the city of Cottage Grove. Swimming pools = drownings and injury. There are swimming pools at the Hastings and Woodbury YMCA. We don't need a pool IN Cottage Grove. The YMCA bends over backwards for low income kids. yet honest, hard=working adults cannot afford to belong to the YMCA.

Shout out to our city Forester, Gavin! and my favorite park Maintenance guys! We need those kinds of people in all areas. of govt.

The New recreation center is an excellent addition and asset to the community . It also adds a positive image .

4/ We love the supervised playground program,. Its such an asset to our city.

Upgrade Lamar Park Fields to match Hamlet Park Upgrades.

I am not thrilled about outdoor water park plan. I think an indoor pool is much better switch given the climate.

Making a pool for the community center outside when Minnesotans can't use it 8 months of the year is silly.

Get the Community Center built

We think the timing of the $39.2M referendum to build a community center is terrible. OUr society is still digging out of the COVID Pandemic. We have businesses in our area struggling to stay open because they are unable to find help. Not to mention the ridiculous pricetag to build and operate the proposed community center. Let's learn to live within our means. If this is such a "needed" facility, maybe look to outside sponsors before bringing it to a vote. This, plus the school referendum is taxing people out of their homes.

- Love the trails!

- Can mowing/trimming in parks be timed so that it doesn't interfere w/nesting/breeding season?

We were sad the community center did not pass

Unused tennis courts that could be converted to pickleball courts to support the rapidly growing sport. Need indoor pickleball courts and an understanding of this social sport (more than 1 or 2 courts together)

We live on border of the Frisbee Golf Course - there is no peace and we listed to 'F__k' all weekend as long as several of the baskets are near the homes. So enriching for us actual residents . Folk come from all over the metro to use the park - glad it works for them...

landscape by business - Goodwill what an eye sore

More community events - Art/Music in the parks, Movie in the Park

We need community center for kids and seniors

Would really love the community center to be passed. We need a space for the community to gather. I would love more river access along with trails an ampitheater like those in Hastings and Hudson. I'd love to see more bike trails.

Youth athletic opportunities - including Rugby

Need for nature center/arboretum - walkway

Wasteful spending: Rec center

*We don't need a community center

Street and median landscaping - Was not impressed on how often they mowed and/or trim the boulevards.

My vote is build the rec center.. Even though I probable wound not use.

More youth activities available on nights/weekends for working parents.

More activities for families - pool, waterpark, sledding, skiing, etc.

City youth need opportunities that do not involve organized sports. Art, music, theater, are all important too.

City landscape areas should be cleaned up.

Wish all school facilities (health/exercise) spaces could be used by taxpayers with no fee. Perhaps a sign in system for safety but should not be charged $

- Parks are great but Dont become Woodbury and overpopulate with no green spaces.

Do not need that 39,000,000 recreational facility!!!

Parks & Rec Comments

Question 3 - wonderful walking/biking trails

question 5 - very nice street and median landscaping

Also it is not a goodtime to building a community center with everything from heat to gas to groceries and taxes going sky high.

I see a lack of opportunities & programs for seniors - other than Bunco at the Senior Center. Could have used a YMCA. I voted for Community Center but it lacked emphasis for Seniors.

- Q#3 Recreational programs & Events: Need more for Seniors

- Q#3 Recreational & athletic facilities: N/A

PLEASE make safe walking trails a priority! I live next to Cottage Grove Elementary and cannot walk my child to school because there are no sidewalks or trails leading to the elementary school!

Please try putting the recreational space referendum on the ballot again

- Q#6 Indoor recreation and fitness facilities: Hard to judge right now

$40 million dollar community center??

Put more trees in medians

There is too much building going on/we should not build the community center yet if it's part of a 50 year plan. It will be worn out before that and we will just have to build a new one again.

- Take advantage of this one time opportunity to make Mississippi Dunes a City or County park.

Don't understand why the removal of basketball courts at Highland Park.

- Lights on walking trails

I am against the outdoor pool they are planning. Spend more and cover it tso it can be used year around - especially for us Seniors.

I have not visited the city parks. This is why they are marked neutral.

The 20+ years I've lived in Cottage Grove. I don't support the indoor pool/rec. facility during a pandemic & all of the rising costs to just to live right now. High gas, high food, everyday supplies, and we just passed 3 schoool levies last term.

- Q#3: Awesome job!

We were so lucky to have the Cottage Grove pool for our whole family to learn to swim and go for family time. It was a super place for children and family to go in the summer. Disappointed the swimming area didn't pass. I wish we had a YMCA here!!

We need more trash cans around park trails for "doggie bag" disposal.

I really feel that the Cottage Grove new community center plans should include an indoor pool. It can eliminate some or one of the outdoor pools to accommodate that. We live in MN! It makes little sense to have an amazing waterpark that we can only use 3 months out of the year.

We oppose the community center! The idea to add that waterpark as lovely as it looks makes no sense at all in our climate to run it if lucky 3 months out of the year! Ridiculous!

Please leave garbage buckets up along the trails in the winter for poop disposal.

- Think the Community Center is a great idea!

- Parks could be gigger or updated. Many playgrounds are small.

increase kid programs

I think paying millions on Rec is OUTRAGEOUS when the streets are a disaster.

Love the fact that the new CG Activity center is suppose to be built. My kids are all grown, but maybe my grandkids can enjoy it, if it gets built.

Love all the parks!

The objective of a recreational area for vote in November is ridiculous. It's complete overkill and is un-needed. What a terrible location!!!!

- All city parks need garbage and recycling bins (Pine Hill has no garbage)

I would like to see an indoor safe pickleball facility and a couple more outdoor courts.

Parks & Rec Comments

We've always appreciated the public works and parks/Rec departments especially snow removal, tree maintenance, all the trails and park upkeep.

Please build the public waterpark, sports facility...this would be a fabulous addition to the city!

I would like to see more open spaces for the wildlife

We're very excited to vote yes on the new community center and hope there are more opportunities for this in our new town.

We need more green space!!

I am hoping the community center is passed in the November election.

That big recreation center that's in the works by Ravine is a great, great idea.

The amount of parks, sidewalks, and trails is phenomenal.

Garbage cans on walking trails

While recovering from breast cancer I was told to swim. I had zero options in cottage grove to do that. Could not drive to Woodbury or Hastings to do that.

Build the Community Center. Find more ways to support Park HS as a community source of activity and importance. Develop a connection between Community Center and Park HS.

And finally a large scale Community Center even being discussed right when people are stressed financially and over taxed makes me question the leadership in the city.

Please no community or swimming pool. There is no reason to spend money we don't have. I understand how great those opportunities are but with everything going on, we should not be spending money at the moment.

More pre-school aged activities and sport offerings that are affordable for all would be beneficial to the community.

I think Cottage Grove is a fantastic place to live. The trials, parks and rec have some great community activities

32 billion referendum is too costly

I am very supportive of the city's efforts with the community center. We need activities and places for families and youth that have outgrown the splash pad and aren't into organized sports.

Parks, walking/bike paths-need to be maintained better. Grass is always long, and looks unpleasant.

More natural parks for wildlife and hiking is important.

Include more bike hike paths that are not along a busy roads. Skip the gardens in the roundabouts. After three years they are no longer well maintained.

Cottage Grove needs an INDOOR pool option, open year round, and open to the public so that disabled people who need physical therapy don't have to spend a fortune trying to get exercise that doesn't make their condition worse.

I really hope we pass the community center!!

Release ALL of the information available about the upcoming Community Center vote.

I like all the parks the city has and how they are maintained. We live across from one of the newest ones - Strawberry Fields Park. Was surprised to see a sprinkling system installed. We lived in the North St. Paul/Maplewood area for a little over 30 years and while they each had decent park systems, I don't recall parks with sprinkling systems - even some that had ball fields. And all the trails in and around Cottage Grove are wonderful as well.

Great place to live. We need something that draws people to visit our city. The river is an untapped area. Would love it if our trail system connected to Hastings and even into St. Paul. We need this rev facility referendum to pass also.

Leave more green spaces

Parks & Rec Comments

I love walking Hamlet Park. I wonder why so much of the vegetation and trees have been mowed down. I also worry with so much development, wildlife doesn't have a natural habitat. I see a fox family in our neighborhood. I see coyote scat and also deer in Hamlet Park. I have seen a huge snapping turtle and of course the muskrats, ducks and geese in the pond. I want them to have a place to live in our community. I fear there is too much development that takes away their natural habitat.

VERY frustrated with how long (+20 yrs) there has been talk about a community center with ZERO serious action. The recent proposal falls very short with no indoor water/pool facility. Other communities have found a way. Indoor pool would be beneficial for youth (lessons, water park), Seniors water exercise. We are in MN outdoor only water facility will have too many limits based on season. Please build this correctly, or not at all.

I am concerned with the restroom facilities at Kingston-bathrooms were completely locked during spring soccer and are damaged or not maintained. Kingston should be monitored more closely.

I'm not convinced we need a shiney new complex. Admit you missed the boat Both of the comparable neighboring cities have complexes. Partner with the schools to create more opportunity in existing space. That is what schools were built for.

We moved here from Forest Lake, MN 2 1/2 years ago. We built in Calarosa and own a villa. We really like the parks, walking trails, and location of Cottage Grove. The taxes are much higher for us here, but we do own a new home. We love our neighborhood and all the walking paths. We hope as more developments happen that lots of open spaces will be left for wild life. More ponds would be wonderful.

I don't know where to find information about local organizations (youth activities, church groups, etc.) Everything is so decentralized. I have major concerns about putting in a swimming pool because it cannot be used for long and I came from Orland Park IL. The city had to charge an exorbitant fee for entry. While I agree that we need indoor facilities, cost for admission should be a concern and how will it be staffed. It seems Cottage Grove could benefit from more community engagement. The community center could be great for that. I'm excited about this project.

Love the bike trails, the upkeep is really good.

We need more activities for the pre-teens and teens.

We don't attract young families by having a central downtown and a City Center for athletics, seniors, classes and family recreation.

The community center marketing is misleading, and not representative of how our city has openly communicated items in the past.

We need to accomodate young families through seniors and be forward thinking, healthier food, recreational activities for all ages, affordable housing options renewable/green spaces/tech/white collar companies, small business/food truck/block party style establishments.

I am so excited for the new pool coming soon in 2023-2024 (Cottage Grove Community Center).

We have lived in Cottage Grove since 1975. We have seen it's growth and changes. We need more places to shop, eat and a Community Center would be greatly appreciated.

I love this city. It is a great place to live and raise a family. I'm voting for community center as I hope it goes thru. This will help with activities. Just wish there were a little more things to do.

Understand cost of indoor pool for proposed community center, but in MN in comparison with other communities why not an indoor pool option for year round swimming in CG for Membership option? I'd be glad to be a member, but summer outdoor swimming options already exist.

Do not need a recreation center, esp. in the are proposed. No more walking trails. I live near Kingston, and very seldom see many on the already existing trails.

I'm not a fan of the community center. I have no kids and would never use it and don't want higher property taxes. Thank you for all you do!

We also support the planned community center

Parks & Rec Comments

I have been following the community center developments.I appreciate the city upgrading our neighborhood parks.

A recreation center for youths and our community would be beneficial.

We need more walking paths that are accessible for everyone. Smooth, well maintained paths that don't have hills and that go through beautiful woods.

I hope the city will continue to pursue the idea of a community center. We are newer to the city of cottage grove and feel this really is one thing the city is lacking. A community center- indoor or outdoor Aquatic center really would benefit this city and surrounding cities. Don't give up. It can keep people in the city and help attract new growth too.

Would love to figure out a way to get our city a community center…and access to the river.

The is no adaptive floor hockey for after high school graduation. There is a huge need for it. 18/19 yo and up. There is only Olympics which a lot of the kids don't fit into because it is too slow for them. We need an adult-adapted floor hockey team. There is nowhere to go after Thunderbolts. Please Please Please start something up through the city.

I loved the idea of a community center. (Growing up in CG, the Country Club was the best!!) However, I believe the issue, as it was put forth to voters this month, was too ambitious. That could be the ultimate plan but taken in increments. It was a tough sell with school funding also on the ballot.

The city needs more pickle ball courts. Currently have 3. Many tennis courts can have lines drawn for pickle ball to make them usable by both sports.

More youth activities ages 11-18 yrs old!

Straighten fence posts at Kingston Lot.

I would like an indoor pool with that proposed community center.

Cottage Grove maintains its streets and parks nicely. Better than anywhere I have lived.

The youth and seniors need more indoor activities like pools.

Great trail systems!

I know it didn't pass but a pool and indoor place for kids and families to play is desperately needed

This community center is the most disgusting form of spending and not in line with the average resident's priorities, I don't need a lazy river I need my city's leaders to invest in efficiencies to reduce our future operating expenses, not take on a perpetual drain on my hard earned tax dollars.

1)Please leave the trees on your park trails…. Enjoy the nature, that is why I like to walk in them.

4) It concerns me, If the water center or water park comes to Cottage Grove, why would they put in so much water pools and it can not be used year around. Some of the water park should be inside for year around center. I think smaller and put something inside for year around use for all!

More parks!

Poor timing of referendum on a community center and the ISD 833 Levy requests. I don't think all will pass at the same time.

I am very excited about the up coming community center.

Just like cg has a bike park, establishing an area for a RC park would be a huge benefit to the community in many forms, including but not limited to income in form of pay to play, but also monies collected from the foot traffic that would be driven to local business and places to eat! Please contact me at bfcoe27@gmail.com and I'd love to spear head the effort.

The number of parks, green space, and open space is terrific. I live in a beautiful and safe community.

Bike trails are good but sometimes lack connection to nearby trails without putting bikers into higher traffic areas.

I would like to see deeper discounts for CG residents at the city golf course and other public venues that attract customers from outside the city.

I would like outdoor athletic facilities to be improved and expanded so that youth tournaments could be more easily held at a single site; including adding lighting as appropriate.

Parks & Rec Comments

Now is not time for Cottage Grove to build a new Community Center and propose new Operating and Capital Project levies due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 and our shaky economy. And it RAISES taxes again! Also, the Community Center looks more like a glorified outdoor/indoor sports center that everyone will have to pay to use. Sadly, I can see the new Community City becoming a money-losing, boondoggle in the future. The city of Cottage Grove and the South Washington School District needs to find ways to be more efficient and cost effective, with serious efforts to SAVE money, instead of operating as usual and continually telling us that they need MORE money.

It's interesting because Woodbury has beautiful landscape designers work on their roadways and parks and developments and cottage groves doesn't look nearly as well taken care of. Hire landscape designers to really make it look full and diverse and beautiful.

Hoping the community center passes as we need this

I would like the bike path to be extended south to river Oakes golf course

Nobody is asking for a Community Center

I like Cottage Grove's parks and trails

I love the amount of walking/biking trails that are being added as part of new housing developments, howeve the trails are primarily through neighborhoods and not much through wooded areas or other natural habitats.

Lived in many different cities, Cottage Grove has by far the best Parks Departments. Top notch! Don't mind paying a little bit more in taxes for exceptional service

100th Street needs a full walking path. It's extremely dangerous and seeing that it's also a MN biking trail, it's unacceptable to be so hazardous to walkers and bikers.

A Community Center is also desperately needed to serve all ages of our community. A movie theater or skate park for the kids to expel some energy.

I feel it's absolutely ridiculous to propose the construction of a community center where the most expensive part, the outdoor waterpark, is only useable for 3 months out of the year. Have you forgotten where we live? Then you expect the tax payers to pay more for something they can barely use. Why not make it indoor like IGH? Massive design failure.

Fitness center for the Community Center similar to the IGH Community Center. If no space for a community center gym, Corporate gym options with amenities such as Life Time or LA Fitness.

In general, more things that will benefit the young adult demographic in CG as that is a demographic that seems the most underrepresented.

Would like better trail maintenance in the winter.

Seniors on fixed incomes cannot afford their taxes increasing to build a pool and dome that they will never use.

NO Community Center! Sucks money and not needed!!!!!!!!!!

I hope the community center is voted yes!!

I would like to see the bike paths resurfaced along 95th St between Haley and Jamaica. I would also like to see a bike trail along 100th to Jamaica and from Jamaica to Ravine Regional Park.

Didn't feel like public input was gotten for community center design. I do think we should have a community center, but felt that aquatic center should have been year round indoors

We recently moved back to Cottage Grove from living in Eagan the past 15 years. We are impressed with the new trails and parks in the newer development areas of Cottage Grove. We really appreciate the green space.

Voted yes on the Community Center- wish it had passed.

I also feel the lack of neighborhood parks is disappointing. There is all these new neighborhoods being built with dozens, if not hundreds, of kids and nowhere for them to play that is within walking distance.

Lack of diversity relations/arts/activities for families. Other than that, great job on keeping our city clean, upkeeping, landscaping etc. And PLEASE put the Community Center referandum back in a upcoming voting!!!!

Parks suck. Oh did I mention the parks suck.

Parks & Rec Comments

Please think about the importance of natural areas - it would be a travesty to lose the beautiful natural areas throughout Cottage Grove. While CG Ravine Park is lovely, it is small. An additional park like this with a camping opportunity or water access would be a great draw.

The city is lacking an indoor walking track for exercise during the winter (and the schools have closed or strictly limited our ability to use theirs). The city should consult with naturalists regarding the timing of mowing/bush-hogging the park areas.

Great job on parks and trails

Parks are fine, but kids, especially older ones, need some type of energy releasing activity.

Would love to see dog park expanded.

Start maintaining all parks not just focusing on Kingston, let's get some new stuff in other parks around the city for the kids. Keep the city trucks off the paths, they are destroying them and they are not being repaired. Buy some scooters or something if the maintenance workers are unable to walk down a trail for 5-10 minutes to check on things. A 3inch asphalt sidewalk is not meant for and will not stand up to trucks driving on them and tearing them up.

I was happy to see that plans are being made for a recreational facility.

There are so many nice walking and biking trails in town, but it would be really nice to have at least one bike trail that connects Cottage Grove to Woodbury.

Sounds like if you split the community center from the school budget question people would have nothing bad to say about raising the budget.

I was disappointed that the community center didn't pass. I thought the city did a great job with the proposal, and it was really shocking and disappointing to see how many people in this town aren't interested in investing in their own community.

Need more stuff to do in cottage grove for youth

Public Safety Comments

Kudos also to the police and fire departments

EMT was free (Oct 22) 2017. 4 years ago my friend had a heart attack in my basement. The EMT arrived 25 minutes after the first call by neighbor. They did not use difibulation. No ambulance ride to the hospital, Left him laying on floor for us. I got a bill for $3,200. I still to this day am tramatized by lack of what I thought we paid for good response.

Kids who drive erratically & dangerous in the morning on the way to Park High School on 80th. Ive worked in public safety for over 12 years, in large metro cities, IT IS A PROBLEM. More police officers. More training for police officers.

Unaware of any programs to prevent crime. Almost every day, I see someone run a red light.

Speed Enforcement - I think there have been efforts made by our Police Dept., but we live off Hinton. Cars speed dangerously fast sometimes and you really have to drive defensively along this road.

I rarely see the police in my neighborhood. I have lived here 15 years and I can count on one hand the times I have seen police or fire. Perhaps that is a good thing/sign.

Never had to use police/fire - so neutral

Safety.

Police need to be approachable and not standoffish

low crime :)

We have the utmost respect foe the police & law enforcement but everyday that I drive around the city many cars run red lights and 90% of the cars-people are on "there phones" - drove around in a unmarked car and stop this - everybody is texting and driving and we almost get hit everyday we drive (someone crosses over the center line) they are always looking down when this happens and it happens all over the STATE

Re #3: We've seen quite a few instances of vandalism in parks (mainly graffiti). We would love more sidewalks

Re #4: We haven't experienced it ourselves, but hear a lot about package thieves and car break-ins

could use local dispatching instead of county offices

As far as crime and police - I am not in the loop, crime is up everywhere and we are uninformed.

Great police & fire service, keep up the great work!!

I have lived at the same address for 48 years. I have never called the fire dept. I have used emergency services twice for my friend but not myself.

CG has a great police dept. Give the officers the funding/manpower/tools/and education-training to maintain high standards.

loud vehicle noise - cops don't care

dogs barking - no enforcement

great fire and police, and friendly and professional fire and police staff.

Sometimes speeding thru residential areas can cause issues with children present.

Please attract top police talent to reduce crime in the town. Having safe streets is a prerequisite to increasing foot traffic in town that could support expanding retail and restaurants.

Limit section 8 crime

More police presence in the neighborhoods

Noisy, racing of cars.

Speed control

Enforce cars, buses and handicap bus services on Hemingway Ave S where there have been a great increase in trucks and very large semis on street - which is severely breaking up the street surface and kids walking to Hillside Elementary are in danger.

One consistent issue over the 30 plus years has been managing speeding parents to their kids' games at the local parks.

Slow down traffic. Our road are race tracks.

Public Safety Comments

One problem I have encounter as resident is the speed that most drive. The speed limit in most areas is 50 mph, but I have experience others that drivers pushing you when you are trying to obey the law & drive the speed limit. I feel pushed when someone is upon me closer that I think they should be.

The speeding and complaints seem to not make a difference. The construction traffic and consistent speed makes even crossing 95th St S terrible.

Animal control is also needed.

Public safety (police/fire/EMS) is definitely as asset

Thankfully we haven't needed police, fire or emergency vehicles to respond. But one thing is speed enforcement. Numerous vehicles go too fast on Grenadier. People also blow through the stop sign on Grenadier and 85th St. Yesterday a guy in a black pick up didn't stop and pulled out right in front of a school bus.

The library is not a place for children to be left unattended by adults. Disrespectful & disruptive kids form nearby apts should be thrown out.

I have a problem with the City enforcing codes a) Not parking on streets overnight 2-6am 11/1-3/31 b) too many cars parked at one address c) cars being parked in a yard all winter d) trash cans not out of sight

Stop the speeding. Stop the storage of cars on all streets. Expired license plate are a thing. They need to be fined when they get there act to buy.(?) Your fault your not making stops. No stop at 4 way stops are mounting!

Law enforcement to enforce city codes more stringently.

Please do not defund the police. I appreciate law enforcement. On social media I am seeing a lot of crime to homeowners. Maybe more patroling at night. I also do like to see neighbors helping neighbors. Thank you!

Excellent Police Force - Very helpful

Crime/break ins are on the rise.

It is important to stay on top of crime and situations that put innocent people in danger.

Reckless speeding in residential areas, including ignoring stop signs and break ins of cars in driveways, are the main things that come to mind as things CG needs to strategically address. Ties to youth and culture.

Too many residents/dog owners are not leashing their dogs when walking on our trails. I suggest better enforcement and signs that remind them of the city policy. The signs could be added to existing signs posted on the entrances or city trash cans. I would estimate 50% do not leash when they see someone coming.

Policing is effective and public property well maintained.

Since the police were moved off 80th St - lots more speeding going on.

I have not used or witnessed any Emergency Services, yet. So, that is reflected in my choices on survey. I haven't heard anything from family either.

I salute the Public Safety Department after having utilized their services, especially the paramedics and police officers. They gave us a prompt, professional, knowledgeable, and respectful attention to our needs.

$2700 is a high price for ambulance service. Why do we pay taxes for these services and charged more when we use them?

As a person of color, I will like to give thanks and appreciation to the Cottage Grove Police Department for job well done to minority people. It's a great place to live. Keep up the (illegible) cops

We need more Law Enforcement :-)

Please start enforcing speed limits!! Someone will be killed!

4. I have not recently used the police of fire depts.

I hear more sirens than ever

2 Speed enforcement on City Streets needs to be increased

We appreciate the efforts by public safety to keep CG a safe , drug free small town feel.

I would like to see more law enforcement engagement on Jamaica between 90th street and Hillside. It seems there is more late night racing happening on this strip of roadway.

Public Safety Comments

I live on the southern part of Hyde Avenue South, closer to E Point Douglas. The amount of people that speed, and the speed itself at which they are doing it is unreasonable. People walk down Hyde with their kids and there is no reason anyone should be doing more than 30 mph down a residential street. Something needs to be done about this.

Need a sign showing direction to police station. Pretty cozy hide away back there. Need signage.

Review police and fire manpower needs.

I've lived in Cottage Grove for over 7 years and love it here. One thing I will say is I'd like to see more engagement by our officers towards the public. If you see someone waving, saluting to you stop and have a conversation with them. I've had great dealings with our officers but right now police have an image problem. The best way to combat that is to show you are engaged with the community you are protecting. Thank you!

Love a Police Dept! Love Diversity. Sad we have cars being broken into @ night.

P.S. we strongly support CG Police and EMS!

Hire more police.

As someone who lives near 80th, I see so much speeding and no enforcement. Where are police during morning & afternoon rush hours to monitor speeders and dangerous driving after school?

Traffic should be monitored better on 70th. Speed is way to fast. Dangerous to cross road to get on walking trail

more crime

Ravine Park - I'm afraid to park my car there. Too may friends have been broken onto. Please do something before the Nordic ski season. I don't feel safe there.

I am very pleased with the job of our city police Dept, Fire Dept, & City's Emrg. Medical Services! Keep up the Great Work!!!

CGPD Rocks! They have our full support! We feel very safe.

More tax money should be spent on police

Fast drivers on Hinton.

Not enough safety at Hinton & 80th corner by Crestview

Concerns about crime & growth. As we grow I don't think the city is prepared for the growth. Including police department, local workforce

70th St - Please enforce he noise ordinance. Too many cars w/loud mufflers. Help! It's so bad!

I would also like the city to consider noise (excessive) ordinance enforcement throughout the city. The motor cycles, trucks and cars get louder every year.

I'm very disappointed in how tolerant the city is regarding fireworks. Our neighborhood is a major problem every summer, all summer long. I upsets our dogs and I hate the "surprise" bursts. On July 4 I understand, all other days it's irritating.

Law inforcement for neighborhoods.

The north/south corridor road from 70th street (Hinton) to Valley Creek is becoming a race track for sports cars/motorcycles.

The Holiday Station is a catalyst for annoying driving behavior (loud and fast)

We would like someone to contact us about how we can get drivers to slow down on Innsdale (painted lines, stop sign, control device. etc) Drivers frequently FLY down our street & there are many children & dogs in the neighborhood. When we moved in 3+ years ago, neighbors had all great things to say about the neighborhood, but everyone stated how fast cars go, & I now understand.

We live on a busy intersection as it is, with not much police patrol, they Blow the stop sign all the time! Grange and Corendial.

SO THANKFUL for the times I needed EMS.

Thank you Cottage Grove - Thank you Police & Fire

I don't have any information to evaluate public safety. My neighborhood seems safe. Services are not visible.

More enforcement of running red lights, speeding and texting while driving. Enforce hands-free law.

Public Safety Comments

take a look at the rules around barking dogs! Curently make it to hard to submit a complaint. We are tired of living with constant barking dogs. They disturb the neighbors and anyone walking by even at nite! anytime!

Slow down traffic on Hwy 61

Slow down traffic on our street

Why aren't crackhouses being shutdown?

We are impressed with the law enforcement

Most of CG residents have not had to use all of the public safety options available (thankfully) I think that they do a terrific job.
- The police Department's response time: No Experience
- The Fire Department's response time: No Experience
- Officer engagement with the community: Nite to Unite

could we have a text alert system for tornadoes and other "alerts" as sometimes it takes awhile to find information.

I routinely walk on Hillside Tr and 90th. Perhaps a few speeding tickets might slow traffic down. 45mph seems to be quite common

Need more enforcement of auto's Running Stop signs, speeding in residential areas especially Summers Landing

Review security for all schools.

I have been disappointed in the CGPD lately. There seems to be an increased interest in speed enforcement for profit meanwhile more serious crimes aren't as important. Catalytic converter theft should be a major area of enforcement. Sex crimes should also be higher priority I have personally witnessed two times CGPD did not take the safety of the community serisaly in this area.

Crime is out of control and I'm sick and tired government shoving stuff on us - put criminals in jail, support the cops, quit calling people racist.

Control loud cars, trucks, bikes

Please continue to support our Police. They have an extremely difficult job and need to support through funding and also positive affirmation. What has happened to Minneapolis with negative rhetoric and group think has helped to destroy that cities police force.

Can we have a one time thing with fireworks. My 16 yr dog is scared of the and where I an living the people will set them off and he will hide and will not come out. Maybe just have the fireworks for only the 4th of July & New Years Eve only!

I would like to see more patrols manning the residential streets for speeding and running stop signs. Grange Blvd and the cross streets would be a good place to start (Grange & Green)

-More cops.

-More cops/prosecute the assholes - Especially cops in ALL schools

A lot of theft happening in City parks.

I would like to say Im very supportive and appeciated of the police force. Thank you for all your hard work!

I don't understand why we built a new cop shop on the outside of town. It should be close to everything and It would be nice to see more people police interaction.

I think my money given to you to use should be spent on Police and Fire Dept and EMT

More enforcement around parking in lawns, broken fences and barking dogs. This is a continual issue in my neighborhood.

I grew up here, left, and came back to raise my boys because it is safe, and taxes are reasonable.

- The Police Department's response time: N/A

- CG Police worry about speeding on main streets for as little as 3-5 miles an hour but residential streets are out of control. On Indian we have cars doing 45-60 at times like early am and late at night

2. Wish there could be a police office on 95th more often There is so much speeding, racing, breaking and more. Waiting for someone to get hurt or killed on this road, especially at night and weekends.

Public Safety Comments

- Patrol neighborhoods day and night. Stop and talk with people, please.

if and when there is an issue that arises and I need law enforcement there are times when there is too much police activity , to many cars and lights , more disclosure, privacy , need to be more discrete. Thanks! PS - just seems the whole force is in attendance perhaps more disclosure on my end.

Safety should be the #1 concern

My neutral rating for the fire department and police is due to lack of experience. Hopefully, I will never need to have the fire department to my house.

more growth = more crime

When police answer calls they fly down 80th at 80mph or more!

Open outlet police stations!

Low income housing near CG Library causes a cascade of problems. There are so many unaccompanied minors with behavior problems that library staff is overwhelmed. Little boys playing violent video games and yelling "kill Police". The library should be a safe place...not juvenile on library computers hall.

*These juveniles run and knock down older people at the library. They are put of control!

25 years ago you barely heard a police siren at the police station on 80th. Now it happens so much I feel like i live in the city not suburb.

We live behind county Rd 19 where the speed limit is set at 55mph currently. We would feel more safe if the speed limit was reduced to 45mph . Thank you for your consideration.

The Speeding on 65th by Oltman is out of Control! I never see any police or monitoring, and there are SO many speeders. There is also not a safe place to Cross 65th by the school , and I see kids running across the street to go to from school - while people are driving 60+mph. inconsistent traffic speeds. 35moh Hinton - a 45 mph street

More enforcement of speed limits in residential areas and more parking enforcement! People park in front of the fire hydrant near is all the time!

Try to set county to lower speed limit on Hinton between 70th and 65th . Lots of loud exhaust and speeding coming out of the 70th street round about when speed limit is set at 50mph. Dropping speed limit to 40 mph like between 70th and 80th street should hopefully cut down on hot rodding.

3/ Please patrol the speeds on Hadley /65th. It is a death trap waiting to happen.

outstanding Police response.

Cpt. McAllister is great and responsive!

Would like to see more police by stoplights and sings to get people to start following common road rules. Too many people run through red lights and do rolling stops

- People drive too fast on my street

Safety crossings for parks on busy streets!

Control speeding! and noise laws in C.C.!!

Park Patrols!?

How about more time on Grange for Speeding people. The speed keep picking up.

I live at the corner of 65th St and Hadley Ave S. The junction is very dangerous. The speed limit is 50 mph. There are many houses at the junction with small kids. 65th street is a county rd and the Hadley Ave S is at the bottom of the hill. Normally the vehicles are close to 70 mph. Already many accidents happened. Something has to be done at this junction. Either less than 30 mph or a roundabout, or stoplight. This is very urgent. And my son is autistic with Downs, very difficult to control him.

*More Police

There is not speed control. People have to put signs on their front yards begging people to slow down. These use to be nice quiet streets!

Also, please enforce speed limits and city ordinance (trash cans, yard maintenance, etc.) as houses who don't bring the value of those of us who take pride in our investments. Our city can do better.

Public Safety Comments

In reference to Section '4' regarding speed enforcement, at any point in time a BMW or other luxury car can fly by an officer at 15-20 mph over speed limit and not get pulled over, but if a beat up rusty old car drives by at 3mph over they instantly get pulled over. This my friends is discrimination and should be stopped immediately!! You are targeting low income people who prob can't even afford a ticket. But you let the rich folk break whatever driving laws they want...illegal left hand turns, not using blinkers, speeding and is everyone in this town allowed to use their phone while driving??? And can this town really afford the 10 undercover cop cars??

- Q#4 The City's Emergency Medical Services: Only time I used it for a friend, it was slow - had to come from Woodwinds.

Need more police if low income housing or section 8 continues to come in.

- Q#4 The Police Department's response time: Thankfully, I don't know response times

NOISE DISTURBANCES by neighborhood, has to be enforced with set times EXAMPLE: Dogs barking at all hours, reffing our car/truck engines, people shouting late at night, outside lights flashing on/off, garage parties outside, banging of car doors, all hours. Cottage Grove should establish QUIET TIME HOURS for the winter & summer months. They have this in other cities. Suggested: 11pm to 8am or a certain time after sunset to a reasonable morning time (8am).

Police & Fire continue to provide excellent service & need more support as the city continues to grow. Public Works is outstanding. They continue to provide excellent service.

I have never had to use the services of the Fire Department or EMS. This is why they are marked neutral.

- Q#4 Neutral answers: Haven't had to use

As a pet owner it is disgusting the amount of dog feces on the trails. There are poop bags available and people don't use them. I wish the community service officers would enforce the laws.

To many speeding vehicles on Hadley Ave S, it needs more enforcement before someone gets injured/killed by speed.

the speed keeps on as a problem through the neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, my daughter and her family life in the Hinton Heights area where people like to carry guns, kids, adults, etc, so my grandchildren are not allowed to play outside. There family has been threatened in the past and people have been taken away in handcuffs. There is nowhere to go when you can just barely. Spend money on security for the people get rid of the hoodlums.

Please address excessive speed on Hadley, 100th, 95th & heavy truck traffic on residential roads (speed, weight)

- Q#4 The Police Department's response time: Thank you LEO's

The Police & Fire Departments are wonderful folks - Enforce traffic noise ordinance on Jamaica Ave.

Jamaica Ave between 70th and 80th has turned into a racetrack. Cars try to accelerate as fast as they can and it's getting worse with all the new construction. Can this stretch be monitored for speed?

We need more patrol officers on the streets stopping people for speeding and especially for running stop signs and red lights. See this stuff everyday here. Tired of getting tailgated for driving on E. Pt. Douglas Road and Jamaica.

Please praise police and fire. I'd pay more in taxes for police and fire.

We have outstanding police/public safety/fire. Please ensure they remain a priority for Cottage Grove.

Speeding on east Point Douglas needs some attention

I think the public police in our neighborhood is a big issue.

We need to work on diversity in the Public Safety depts, School District, City/Recreation etc. It makes people of color feel unwelcome.

1.) we just moved off of Joliet Ave S off of 70th which is a primary road that leads to Grey cloud elementary and the middle school. The traffic speed is out of control. Living there for 8 years it was a constant concern and worry that a child would get hit. Coming off of 70th people are used to going at a higher speed and they continue to do so on a residential road. It's incredibly dangerous in both areas and we don't want the changes to occur following a tragedy.

Public Safety Comments

Can public safety keep pace with the rapid growth in housing and population?

Do something about cigarettes being tossed out at the corner of Jamaica and Military so the hay barn doesn't go up in flames for the 5th time!

Need patrolling of areas that are being targeted for catalytic converter theft.

I could only be neutral on public safety questions. I see very little of public safety individuals or services.

I moved here for my family to be safe it seems there is not a lot of police presence

How do we not have more police or firefighter's? I see that we have not added more public safety staff but we are growing so much? It doesn't make sense.

Instead of paramedics only, include medics in the community. The again would save money for the community due to the high cost of ambulance usage.

The turnaround by Kohl's seems like a great place to meet and sell drugs Have you ever noticed the many different cars that are there on a daily basis. Check it out.

I love living here. The low crime rate is great. Please keep it a great place to live.

The Police patrol 80th, Jamaica and 19 WAY too much. NEVER EVER see Patrol on my street.

Law & order leads to Peace & Justice.

I'm proud to say we live in Cottage Grove. I'm proud of our Police, Fire & EMS departments. I am so happy I don't hear anything about defunding our Emergency Services!

They raise down the hill especially in the summer. No police are ever it seems to give anyone a ticket or warning.

Police officer I made a report to in 2019? Was in a foul mood. I felt ignored by the office in general.

I would like to see enforcement of noise, unreasonable acceleration, and speeding infractions at the intersection of 80th Street and Jamaica Ave.

Something needs to be done to slow traffic on hiway 61. 80plus is not safe. Police presence would be a good start.

After 31 years of living in Cottage Grove, we have had outstanding Police

Are neighbor's hood Are being too look like slums No one cares about the speeding or anything else over inThomson grove area at all. the city or police I have called both about how how it looks and the speeding and not a thing ever has been done. Two of my neighbors have moved because of this. I just wish I could.

I do want to compliment the city public safety

Speeds need to be monitored for Hinton Ave. The speed limit from 70th. st to 80th st. is 35mph. Most cars are driving over 40mph. When I drive this road at the speed limit most cars drive by at 5mph or higher.

The highest priorities in Cottage Grove should be our public safety (Police, Fire and EMS)

We live on 65th street and with all of the new developments plus 2 schools off of this road the street has become dangerously busy. 55 mph and having to cross the street to get mail and back out of driveway onto 65th is extremely dangerous. I would love to see the speed limit reduced.

There is a growing number of people who do not stop for STOP signs and do not know what a speed limit sign is or do not care. I would like to think that Cottage Grove is a safe place to live. 40+ years ago when my family moved here I believe that it was safer then it is now. I would like it to go back to the "old" days. Thank you.

Thank you to our first responders

We should have two police officers in every car so that we could eliminate the need for backup to drive at excessive speeds across the city all the time.

I like on 70th and Hinton. So much traffic I can hardly sleep. Since the roundabouts. I don't like it. I see no policemen any more when they raise down the hill in the night to wake people up.

I do not feel as safe here any more at 63 yrs old.

People do not adhere to stopping at stop signs, especially at grenadier and 90th, plus any cross street at 85th.

Too many fireworks going off in our neighborhood the MONTH around July 4. (85th st and green/Greenway down to 90th).

Public Safety Comments

Police need to be patrolling residential areas more frequently. There are a ton of noise issues and speeding/racing in my neighborhood on Ideal Ave S between East Point Douglas and Hillside Trail S, near Hillside Elementary. Also, I requested the speed trailer in our neighborhood almost two years ago and it's never been placed in our neighborhood.

Speeding tickets may not make the city a lot of money but the speed on 71st and 70th need monitored severely.

Please continue to well fund the police department. I moved from Minneapolis for a safe community.

Please change the winter parking ordinance to be no parking after 2 inches of snow until roads have been plowed curb to curb. The blanket dates and times are just a money maker and takes officers off the streets while writing parking tickets.

Teen crime is “kids will be kids”

Keep up on crime

I appreciate that Cottage Grove takes pride in the city and that the police department is still able to do their jobs to keep the city clean and safe!

The neutral responses might better be taken as no comment or not applicable. For instance, with no experience with police or fire dept response time, I don’t can’t say good or bad.

lack of diversity in public safety

Would love a noise ordinance!

Would like to see more 'neighborhood watch' programs pushed from police as well as opportunities to meet them.

Police NEED to start enforcing speed limits on the city streets in residential areas the speeding is absolutely ridiculous, the police included NEED to obey the limits. I have lost count how many times with the cruise set on 70th, Jamaica, 80th, Hinton cars are tailgating or flying past and at times it’s the police doing it or sitting there “enforcing” and can’t put there phones away to see it or just don’t care. Doing 75-80 on 61 really doesn’t matter compared to 50 on 80th or the 40s through residential where kids will get hit.

Again though my biggest thing though is let’s make these streets SAFE for the kids, do something about the speeding!

Too many cops.

Public Works Comments

I would really like to see traffic lights at 80th ST S and Jamaica Ave. With emergency vehicles, buses, and heavy traffic and trying to bicycle across those streets something needs to be upgraded.

They repair roads that are not bad and leave others that need repair the most.

Round about at 80th & Hinton or change the god forsaken light once and for all. 80th & Hinton LIGHT

#5: The Jamaica & E. Pt. Douglas Rd intersection is THE WORST. So many people driving through cub parking lot as a shortcut to Jamaica (north)

I think median landscaping should be rethought,. Grass & Trees are going to struggle from salty snow being pushed on them. I think current efforts are quite unattractive.

It would be great to see sidewalks added to existing roads (e.g. 70th st)

I really would like to see the roads by Cub Foods and Taco Bell completely redone. It is a nightmare layout of roads.

There needs to be a traffic light at the Jamaica and 80th street intersection.

No roads that go north and south

Adjust stoplights or switch to smarter stoplights to reduce waiting time on 80th street

I do appreciate the snow plowing, but over the last few years there have been times our street was not plowed before I have to leave for work. It used to always be plowed

Fix the insanely hard water

My streets look horrible. The roads are all patched up like nobody cares how they look in our city (and neighborhood) very bad curb appeal.

80th/Hyde - I hate the intersection at Park High School.. There are so many times I have to wait where there is absolutely NO TRAFFIC - weekends, vacations, etc. And another thing, why is there not a 3 way stop sign on that corner?? Often my car will turn the light green, but people coming up Hyde get to go first and sometimes I miss the sign.

Road and sidewalk repair and expansion is always slow to meet the need - 19 expansion for example. This also applied to bike paths.

Clean up the fences on Jamaica, to many different styles. Looks bad

3. Street lights for safety at night (need more)

Trimming along Jamaica & 80th St should be improved

The sidewalks could also be edged to make them wider again

easy travel, and maintained public spaces

The new streetlights on 65th/Ravine Parkway are ridiculously bright-they bring so much light pollution to a peaceful, quiet neighborhood. Every time I pull into 65th from Ideal, I feel like I'm driving on an airplane runway. I hope the city fixes this to bring back a quieter lighted area for our neighborhood.

We would love more sidewalks

I think some of the lights around city (traffic ones) used to be timed good, but I think have gotten worse as the citi has grown. Especially the ones a Jamaica & East Point Douglas. The time is way too long between each change which causes long backups on all sides sometimes.

The street lighting around the sidewalk of the ballfields at Hillside Elementary are also really dark in most spots.

Mainly during the winter months being plugged up to a stand still during the winter travel especially hyway 61 and 494/694 morning/afternoon commutes

Could you please consider mandating all commercial parking spaces made 8" wider. If exceptions are needed from Wash Co or St of MN please seek some. Had this in FL w/ same pop (40k) as here but mandated when city was much smaller but it saves on door dings.

Also - the fences along Jamaica look SO trashy! It's very unappealing to the eye & makes C.G. look like low income.

We need bright street lights! To dark aroud hear

My home was connected to the city water system almost a year ago. My water has a VERY BAD SMELL! What can you do about the smell. Others in our neighborhood are also complaining about this!

Public Works Comments

I like to see more sidewalks & walking paths on this side of town

Fix the timing of the stoplights at Jamaica and Point Douglas

Roads: some get repaired and others in question don't get repaired. Overall, good roads. Indian Blvd - excellent snow removal.

Fix the streetlights!! No reason to have to sit for 5 min at a light when no cars are present.

* Also the new Caribou drive thru traffic congestion is going to be a nightmare and I pray no one gets hurt or killed once its open.

Pay for trash and recycling though property taxes and have City take over this topic. Pay for street lighting through property taxes and have City take over payments for this. This would be a first in MN; setting a new trend for the homeowner's in the City and to increase the quality of life.

Low cost transportation for senior citizens who can no longer drive.

Need a pedestrian crosswalk at 65th street s and Meadow Grass Ave S

city/county should not charge for compost dumping

Sweep the streets more than 2x year

5. Need "Smart" traffic lights - especially on 80th Street.

The city has so many street lights out throughout the city. City need to drive the streets at night and change bulbs.

Better maintenance of city ponds - smell lots of algae.

Roads are very inadequate for all the new housing. Hardly anyone stops for stop signs

The stop lights over by target/cub are horrible.

More signal lights, especially on 80th St to avoid crashes of high speed drivers, kids crossing anywhere on 80th.

Our suggestion would be: please please complete the walking/bike path from the corner of Hadley Ave S & 100th St S, extending it to join with the path near Anderson Windows. This area has no sidewalks, or trails and is very dangerous for children & adults alike. We've see kids riding their bikes on this road full of traffic. Thanks for considering. :)

The City water has a foul smell

I have a request. I live in Legends of Cottage Grove facing highway 61. Right in front of my window on the Cottage Grove property is a dead tree. I would so appreciate it being removed as its kind of a depressing sight. If you need to check with Legends office, number is 763-452-3169. Thank you Shirley Murray 651-769-1911

Do appreciate new surface on Jamaica.

I feel our arterial streets get in bad shape before being repaired. The street in front of Wells Fargo is like a rollercoaster in the winter. Jamaica from 80th st to Holiday Gas is terrible. I feel these streets with this amount of traffic, not left to deteriorate to this condition.

Snow removal peeve - 1. please clear all paths at Kingston during the winter, it is a great walking resource. 2. Jamaica snow removal is a broken ankle waiting to happen. Just terrible & treacherous!

The construction traffic and consistent speed makes even crossing 95th St S terrible.

- Our water turns black when hydrants are flushed. I've never seen this in any other city I resided in.

Garbage & recycling trucks create mess. Need better caging around top of trucks.

We need a street light at Ideal & 80th

What are we doing about the growth and traffic (I'm concerned about the increase in the Hinton/80th traffic w/caribou) and especially schools. Park High School isn't going to support the increase in students were seeing as CG neighborhoods are turning over younger families w/ school age children.

The construction traffic using Grenadier to get to the new building sites between 90th & beyond has gotten some better since some of us complained but some of the trucks still use this street. It makes me really nervous because we don't have sidewalks so the school bus kids have to walk or ride their bikes on the street.

Traffic issues are becoming a problem due to all the new housing in our area

The snowplows rip up my sod every year and public works does a poor job resolving the issue.

In our culdesac a pine tree died and was removed. I hope it gets replaced.

Public Works Comments

Please clear sidewalks of snow better and include stretch of CR 19 between 85th & 80th.

The City has really fallen down on the job of sweeping the city streets. Now that you "run off water" several times a month, our side of the street (since some rocket scientist determined it would only be released on one side of the street) there is constant sand near the curb that makes everything on our street side extremely dusty! It's awful. And no doubt, over a course of time, will errode away and weaken the cement on our side of the street. What a brilliant decision that was.

Roads on 80th Street are in need of repair

I live on the corner of Isleton & Isleton, when snowplow comes around the corner I get a whole lot of extra snow on end of my driveway! I am a senior and alone so I have to pay to get it cleaned out. I own a very small snow pup.

Streets need attention. Most are bumpy and the manhole covers are terrible. Is there any way to make that better? The trees planted on Hadley (?) need some care. The sprouts coming out need to be trimmed.

We end up filling our jugs at the grocery store because the tap water doesn't taste good.

When is the Jamaica/PT Douglas Target, Cub, gas station stoplight nightmare going to be fixed?

Plant more trees - especially when trees are removed for big housing projects. These should be replaced by the city.

Also, I think the citizens of Cottage Grove should be given rebate or tax credit to put in whole home water filtration systems.

- PFOA's are huge concern, but I appreciate the improvements

please plant prettier city trees. I have a wart tree planted on my property and its a city tree. It's not very appealing.

Please have Calarosa remove huge sign from walkway on Ravine Pkwy!

The Public Works Dept does a fantastic job! Snow removal is terrific.

I am extremely pleased with road maintenance and winter plowing.

Shout out to maintenance for both CG Parks & Rec and CG Public Works.

Use our correctional services to help keep our city clean - along road streets.

I think there are some small things that would benefit many citizens such as a leaf pick up several times in the fall. Maybe add an extra dollar a month on our utility bill could help with the cost?

New street lights that are brighter

Policing is effective and public property well maintained.

Travel: I have not yet seen enough traffic to arrant a 4 lane road - anywhere in CG - too much tar too much speed. Too much expense.

The day is coming when federal gov will require communities to operate "carbon neutral". Someone needs to get out ahead of this and plan accordingly - not establish programs and infrastructure that make that impossible or a burden on citizens.

The City should fix the terrible cluster at E Pt Douglas & Jamaica - by Cub and Holiday Station and Taco Bell. The intersection always backed up and difficult. Very poor planning!

Crossing at 90th St and Cty Rd 19 for walkers on the walking paths is very dangerous. Vehicles including semi's are traveling in excess of 50 mph on 19 and traffic is getting heavier. I know that 19 is a county road but this is dangerous crossing should be discussed with the county before someone is killed or maimed.

Do not understand why Jamaica was reduced to one lane.

Special thanks also to the customer service in the water dept.

This city is the best in the metro area for snow removal. Please expand the range of names used for streets. Whole neighborhoods with street names starting with "J", "H" or "I" are confusing for residents, and especially, for visitors. Thank you.

No more roundabouts.

The roundabouts & crosswalks are very unsafe for bikers & walkers. Drivers don't stop!

As a cyclist, there are very dangerous streets in C.G., especially Jamaica - both old and new. No shoulder!

Move FASTER on implementation of the 3M monies, administered by the MPCA.

Public Works Comments

Please fix the traffic patterns at the intersections of HyVee/Walgreens, Target shopping area/Cub. There is no reason why that one lane has to be cut off on the street between HyVee and the entrance to Walgreens area.

Put more 45mph signs on Jamaica ave from 70th street to Military Road

Water - Why is City watering in middle of day

The Street light where Hilo Lane and Hilo trail meet has been out for six months Now. Why do wee need to call all the time when they go out to get them fixed?

Need stoplight by crossroads Church.

Changed neighborhood speed limits to 20 mph like some other towns. Cities.

5. We have the BEST snow clearance of neighboring cities.

9. I bought in CG because the water was from wells. but nearly every original owner un my neighborhood (houses 1975-1977) has had cancer in their family!

Thank you for the new water filtration systems!

Would like to see less road salt used for minor snowfalls.

These guys are some of the best removing snow!

Thank you for clearing out invasive species around the paths

Not proud of history taking out Military Road. Heads to Fort Snelling Suply(?) from Afton Park.

The Pavement on 80th street has warped- feels like driving in shallow ruts.

Jamaica Ave should be connected to Pioneer Dr.

More Street City signs informing residents when street parking is ok and when street parking is NOT ok.

- Q #5- Maintenance of traffic signals: We need signal lights or a roundabout on corner of 80th and Jamaica. People stop but don't know when to go

Street median - Don't put plants there, cement is fine

We have pretty good roads and need to keep it up

Traffic Lights by Cub Foods are a mess

2) Get the plows out sooner when it snows instead of plowing after it stops snowing

Awesome job to all those that plow in the winter!

Why does the stoplight at Walgreens and Goodwill make me cringe every time?

Snow plowing cutting into sod and damaging sprinkler heads needs to reseed.

Drinking Water is always a concern with 3M Problem's

We recently moved and gave been disturbed to learn about PFAS from 3M and potentially dangerous drinking water. We get a Culligan filter , but don't feel like I know how to get water tested or what else to do .

We're not worried about water but we do appreciate the regular community updates.

Would Like a drop off for TVs , electronics and more. Not just a couple of times a year.

The lights at Pt. Douglas and Jamaica need more time to go thru - some cars are always stuck in the middle by Cub...VERY UNSAFE.

More sidewalks in older neighborhoods would be nice.

Look at Woodbury for landscaping - beautiful - the city should be proud of its presentation to residents and visitors. CG HAS NO BEAUTY.

Promote a cleaner city. To much litter on ramps coming into C.G. Show some hospitality - hanging flowers on street post. Other cities have gorgeous, welcoming plants hanging. Not happy with traffic movement around out city.

Consider a solution to the Patch work of Fences on Jamaica Ave between 90th St and 70th St.

Many burned out street lights.

Better timing of lights with traffic road sensors? 80thy and Pt. Douglas

Need more road maintenance

*begin construction for Glacier Regional Pane on Ravine Pkwy

Public Works Comments

What is the deal with the North End of Jamaica Avenue? it was 4 Lane, then they dropped it down to 2-lane, and hundreds of new homes were built right next to it. Is there a plan to make it 4 lane again? There is a LOT more traffic on it now!

2. I would like to get more benches on 6999 E Point Douglas Rd South. We love to walk, a bench would be nice.

- round about to replace stop signs on 80th and Jamica; just hear a lot of squeeling tires and engine racing noise

I'm disappointed in the decision to close Military Rd. It has historic significance and was a PERFECT road to connect with Woodbury.

Please change the 2 to 1 way road back on the unnamed road by Hy-Vee. I've seen several issues while driving there. The extra turn lane into Hy-Vee stops the flow of traffic.

Your street traffic lights are not synced very well. Hinton turns red for no reason when your on 80th no people no cars in the area and in the early morning hours. Same with to 90th st intersection on Jamaica.

Our street light has not worked for months, have called and advised but it is still not working.

The left turn lane on East Point Doulas and Jamaica is too short. When coming off Highway 61, you have to wait thru multiple light changes before you can turn.

Streetlights are old and not maintained well. The glass panes are never cleaned, so lights are not bright.

Can we have some rules on fence etiquette? Our city has a ton of crappy fences all over. Check out the entrance of Hardwood & Red Pine - Timber Ridge. Can something be done w/entrances into the neighborhood? Beautiful neighborhoods with shanty town entrances. Thanks!

The road crews after a snow storm are amazing! I works at a hospital and have no problem getting to work the night shift!

Better water

Public Works does an excellent job keeping the roads repaired and beautifying the city.

The choice of street lights on Ravine are blinding for drivers on Hinton/Radio.

I live in a neighborhood where snow removal is late and sometimes absent (Jordan, Jonathan)

We need to think about traffic changes and roads not a strong point in Cottage Grove.

Summers Landing project has been a pain in my side since it started. I have called a few times to Bob @ city. The sign on Pt Douglas and 80th intersection - indicates workers/truckers to use Jamaica. Signage needs to be on Freeway, can't use Jamaica next exit, Like they are going to turn around.

Our roads are going to need replacement after all this heavy equipment turn on Grendian Ave to go there. Who is going to pay for that when they need repair down the line, Summers Landing hopefully, right. Fix 80th Street. Whole street in need of repair and the stop lights not timed right.

My other pain point is the intersection of 80th and Hinton. Traffic change - no right on red - do you know how the traffic will be with the new caribou by doing this change of no right turn.

Is there anything we can do to the entrance of the student parking lot on 80th? This intersection is very congested in the mornings and after school. With having a newer driver in the house I often worry about my child driving herself to and from school. I know that this has been a concern from parents of students who walk and drive to Park.

Our road in front of my house is terrible -

A flashing crossing light similar to the one on 90th street at Woodridge Park needs to be installed near Ashland Credit Union to allow crossing East Pt. Douglas Road. Curves limit visibility compared to almost unlimited visibility on 90th Street.

There is a street light out on Jewel Ave S. It's the 1st one on the right hand side coming from Indian Blvd. Please fix, it's very dark.

City water in and around my neighborhood. Water is very hard and plugs filtration faster than expected. Hope this is remedied.

The survey envelope I received was already glued shut. I tried to use the online survey and it said it wasn't available every time I tried to use the link. You may not be getting as strong of a response if the link doesn't work.

Public Works Comments

- City ponds need more maintenance - weed removal

Last winter I walked outdoors all season. The sidewalk on 95th St by the post office was never plowed. Had to cross the street to walk on a plowed sidewalk.

Bike trail along Keats Ave needs to be extended North ASAP as it is dangerous for adults and kids to be biking and walking on shoulder with traffic at those speeds and extra cars nor with development.

It's very difficult entering onto 80th St. now with the traffic from Hy-Vee, the new Grove Apts. & will get worse when Caribou Dr. thru opens.

the traffic light on East Point Douglas Road needs to be changed to a yield signal after 9 p.m. outta the Target Parking Lot.

If development along 19 continues to boom - more pedestrian/family friendly crossings are a must.

The roads in this town are far worse then town's next to us, Then I see roads being repaired that are in far better shape than roads not being repaired.

Smoother RxR crossings

More senior sidewalks/crosswalk signals

Better snow clearing at crosswalks for wheel chairs

Please no more roundabouts. The one under Highway 61 is extremely dangerous and I avoid it at all costs.

It would be nice to just plain have sidewalks in the neighborhoods for walking safely.

We need a flashing signal at 6995 80th Street so the residents of Norris Square can safely cross 80th street to go to the mini shopping center. The cars & trucks won't stop for us to cross.

We love Cottage Grove. I have dealt with the Public Works dept three times and they are kind, very responsive, professional, fast & extremely good at their job. I can't get over how wonderful the city responded after the last storm. Thank you Cottage Grove!

The lack of road improvement west of the high school. 80th is so nice to travel on once you pass the high school going east. We live on the west side of "61", no trails, no paved walking trails, but there is Beautiful trails once you go east past Jamaica. A lot of money spent on that side of town. Let's spread the improvements around the city

The operation of the signal lights by Cub Foods. There's got to be a better way to regulate the flow of traffic at Jamaica and E. Point Douglas. Many times I've seen traffic back up way past Cub Foods, while not much traffic on Jamaica. Thank you

-Maintenance of streetlights has not worked in 5+ years.

-What sidewalks?

-Vehicles parked on road in circles prevent good snow removal.

Fall street cleaning should be accomplist after all the leaves fall

Hate the trees by Park High School hard to see out to get on 80th

Explanation for a couple of answers - multiple stoplights to do not recognize motorcycles

-Plowing - do full width of streets on curved roads

- Too much growth without roads to handle the increased traffic

1) My neighborhood, specifically my Cul-de-sac has such bad road...don't know what's worse weeds growing in the street & along the sides of the road or the many divots & missing pavement. Is it going to get fixed? Neighborhood as a whole look similar...3rd world country. This C.G. is pretty good overall in all area except Public Works. They could do better. Please advise. Thanks Jason.

Public works appear to do a great job! Thank you!

Our city was doing good but it's so conjested on 80th & the stop lights on Pt. Douglas & 80th are scary with the yellow flashing arrows. Please leave left turn green arrows on longer. South & North leaving Hy-Vee there on forever. If emergency vehicles come your stuck for 5-7 min. Piling too much into one space. plows are awesome along with city maintness.

- The length of red light at the stop light Jamaica/Ept. Douglas - it's faster to turn & take the roundabout to the other side of the street. Sometimes only 3 vehicles get through before red!

Public Works Comments

80th & Jamaica needs a more controlled intersection - stop lights or a roundabout. Adults have difficulties with that 4 way stop & high school kids are even worse.

Huge plans of residential and industrial growth but no road infrastructure. Can't barely get through the round abouts in an appropriate time and wait a couple lights in town on Point Douglas and Jaimaica due to increased traffic

I have lived in Cottage Grove since 1991. The city has improved significantly over the past 30 years. Great pavement management program!

We have lived in Cottage Grove for 1 year now. Overall we are happy except for one thing. This is the worst drinking water in our 50 plus years of living, (smell is worst of all)

I cannot believe that you cut down blvd trees at 70th and Hardwood when they did not block traffic view or the side walk - but you cannot do a controlled burn to get control of the brush or the sink hole next to the water drain.

Parkway waters need watering. New trees dying.

Outstanding city, outstanding Public Works, outstanding leadership by Mayor and City Government.

- Q#5 Maintenance of MAIN roads: Somewhat satisfied - NEIGHBORHOOD/SIDE roads Very dissatisfied

- Fix 80th Street!!

I'd love to see more lines painted on city roads and in local shopping centers (service roads esp. outside HyVee Gas.

Easement restrictions

Water pressure

*Still using a matrix to determine road repair? Like ya did Hinton? UH...the chart "says it's time to 'repair' Jamaica. Guess we better do it eh?" You misapply valid budgeting scheme to an item (roads) that doesn't respond to schemes.

-80th Street lights need to be green when no one is at a cross street light

2. The City "out lots" are just a bunch of weeds and thistles- looks horrible!

Also, its not that we don't have more traffic going by Cottage Grove, as there are man many thousands of cars driving by Hwy 61 everyday, maybe driving to Woodbury.

*Streets need to be resurfaced and not just patched

- Maintenance of sidewalks: Wish we had a few more in our neighborhood

- Snow removal (speed) could improve!

- Overall ease of travel within the City: Conjestion Jamaica/Pt. Douglas

A traffic light is needed at the intersection of Jamaica and 80th

Side streets are terrible. As the amount of salt put on them. They are salted and then plowed 10 minutes later. Wasteful

If it weren't for the water, I would consider life in Cottage Grove forever

- Maintenance of traffic signals: Intersection by Target is aweful

- The fences along Jamaica from 90th to 70th are disgusting and gross. The city should put a fence the entire way or hold residents accountable to the upkeep of the eyesore

- The city changed the timing on the lights on 70th and Meadow Grass. Use the sensors and leave green lights on 70th sensors for side streets

- Maintenance of walking & Biking trails in city parks: Winter maintenance is sometimes very poor

- Maintenace of sidewalks: Winter maintenance is sometimes very poor

1. I would like to see this city use already growing trees in our fields to plant throughout the city. Many of the trees that were (probably bought) and planted on 95th St west side of Jamaica died. What a waste of taxpayer money. I have seen many other newly planted trees die as well. I don't like to waste money in my family, why should the city waste money on trees that don't grow?

- Snow removal on city streets: Ruins our lawn every year

I never know how to report street lighting repairs.

Public Works Comments

- Trail plowing isn't good the last few years
- Fix gaps in tar sidewalks, please
- stop pushing snow in islands
After a snowfall and the main roads are plowed it seems like CG neighborhoods are plowed in the same pattern which leaves some neighborhoods being plowed right away while others it takes hours to get to. It would be nice if you would change neighborhood plowing patterns so each time a different neighborhood would be done first :-)
We would love to see an even bigger emphasis on native plantings and wild spaces on public land. Connect the bike and walking trails better.
Please repair the existing roads that are being ruined with new construction. Highland Hills entrance looks horrible and was ruined with the adjacent house being built.
I am concerned about testing of drinking water for PFAS chemicals in the Cottage Grove water supply- How are the chemicals removed from the water (if they are) Is Cottage Grove Water Safe to drink?
Shout out to our city Forester, Gavin! and my favorite park Maintenance guys! We need those kinds of people in all areas. of govt.
Also, boulevard on Hadley is a mess. Please fix the landscaping
We've always appreciated the public works and parks/Rec departments especially snow removal, tree maintenance, all the trails and park upkeep.

Two feet of grass along boulevards and side walks is not green space. Don't Expect a tree to grow in these narrows spaces.
Continue to invest in the landscaping and appearance of cottage grove. Add trees, sculptures, ponds, gardens and ensure new construction areas are maintained.
Snow removal has been better in the past.
My main concern is water safety. I have installed several equipment's to purify my water and still it is not adequate. I have been spending much to work on I because I don't want to always rely on bottle water.
Wasteful spending: decorative s-swing on light posts.
Road repairs needed in Highland Hills
Parks are really nice but there's always lots of trash in the water.
New apartments and Caribou on 80th need a stoplight. So many Jay walkers - provide a cross walk from HInton Heights and now 80th,
too many stop signs, Restudy and execute as you did in the Highlands
I do wish the drinking water was safer
I'm also a proponent of the round-about or as many intersections as possible.
2/ Please extend the walking path from 65th , Hinton all the way up to 65thto Highland hills. It is so unsafe for kids and families to walk on the highway .
Continue the implementation of roundabouts and work better on timing of the remaining stoplights.
The Snow PLowing process is amazing! Great Job by Public Works! Thank YOU!
The drinking water here is a huge issue. It tastes and smells terrible. I feel bad even giving it to my cats. My 120 year old house in Minneapolis had better tap water!
I do not enjoy when 3M closes off one lane on highway 61 to check markings on the road. Always creates a back-up.

- Q#5 Snow removal on City streets: Snow plow CONSTANTLY goes up ofer the corner of our lot and tears up the yard.
- Like that I can drop food scraps @ Public Works now
The fact that drinking water is even on the list of issues is not ok!
traffic is getting to be too much.
As a former public works employee, public works could do a better job to responding to individual requests.
Drinking water need major improvement. Looking forward to changes ASAP with the money given to the city thru the 3M settlement.

Public Works Comments

More public works type events - Kids love it!

Road maintenance is junk. My road is terrible.. State has been for years. Road was replaced years ago and not touched since. When replaced it years ago, they said "lack of maintenance" was the reason. So they have not maintained it since it was replaced and now I found out I will be assessed for replacement again when they never maintained it. Garbage policy for road maintenance.

80th & Hemingway Ave S intersection should be evaluated - this is a death trap!!

- Consider gravel water filtration Due to 3M chemicals in aquifer.

#9 - I've been in my house for 22 years and will not drink water. My dog had it and died of cancer! The water is disgusting!!!, Its sad! It's such a safe and wonderful place to live, now if we could feel safe drinking our water that would be GREAT.

Question #2, do you drink the tap water?

The water is dirty - Help!!

several streetlights need to be green longer.

Our roads are narrow, twisty & windy with NO consideration for bicyclists, pedestrians, etc. I know you can't help how they were designed in the 60's, but if you want to change a bedroom community into a big city, then as a current advocate you should be working to create & fix a safe environment for ALL of us. Instead I see encouraged growth creating hazards Waaay beyond what's acceptable and complete blinders to it all. You've taken away all the nature and quiet streets and replaced it with things that now feel dangerous. If you insist on changing our city, make the appropriate changes (particularily with traffic) that keep us safe.

- Q#5 Maintenance of sidewalks: Wish I had one to maintain!

- Local public transportation

- Lighted crosswalk is need at E Point Douglas & 90th. There is a Senior community there. My sister was killed at that intersection. She can't be the only person from that Senior community to wal to restaurants and shopping.

My biggest comlaint is the condition of our streets. We live on 88th Street South and it is in deplorable condition and I see no plans to pave it. This street has a lot of traffic on it.

We would do well having a water plant to treat the water, resulting in less to no salt going into our lakes and streams. For more information to to: water treatment plant in Ludington Michigan (Google Search)

I do worry about future busy 65th Street. With everything going on with new housing and Oltman.

- Safer crosswalks

- 80th Street between Jamaica and Ideal needs to be redone. Then 80th will be complete.

Very much appreciate the continued efforts to clean up after storms. Awesome!

I DO LOVE the snowplows her in CG - I used to live in St. Paul & CG has the best remove team I've ever seen. Happy to pay my taxes for tthe city street maintenance services. I'm a fan of the roundabouts.

- Q#5 Maintenance of traffic signals: too long at 70th and 61

When are you going to oust 3M from Cottage Grove. I have 2 different cancers since I moved here in 1992. Didn't have any health problems before that time.

Get another water tower so you can increase water pressure for residents of Cottage Grove.

City's snow removal is top notch!

Please add sidewalks to major streets: Hillside Trl, Hadley Ave, Indian Blvd, Hyde Ave. Children walk to school on these and drivers drive too fast on them.

We've noticed an increase in the traffic congestion in areas.

- Q#5 Snow removeal on City streets: n/a Just moved here

Put up a fence between 70th St and soccer field/splash pad park, the traffic is increasing, it will become a safely issue soon for kids

Public Works Comments

All the continued building and yet I don't see any new water towers going up. Mine as well as others. I've talked to in the area, agree that our water pressure continues to get weaker. It only makes sense that more and more developments tapping into the same water system would lower the pressure. Maybe this should be next build for Cottage Grove.

Too much traffic on Hadley Ave S. Also there is semi trucks that use Hadley Ave S, who is going to pay for the road when it needs repair from all this weight. Hopefully not the homeowners.

Great work on the community center.

I love how beautiful our city is, public works does an amazing job.

Continued concern about safety of water

- Q#5 Why does CG have black water periodically?

-Is there a way to get Tennis to start a food scraps program?

Please install crosswalks on Hadley. Many people cross this road to access trails and parks

- Q#5 Overall ease of travel within the City: N/A

Get more info out about the water in CG. Facebook is full of people saying "don't trust the water" and this is from people asking what CG residents like or dislike because they are thinking about moving to the Grove.

- Trying to get around in Cottage Grove has become very difficult. There aren't enough roads in the city to handle the traffic. They are not wide enough. Where is the plan? To continue to grow at the pace Cottage Grove is growing and not have the infrastructure in place is irresponsible. The focus is on doing all the new but you've got to go back and revisit the existing and upgrade it to handle all the new growth. And upgrading existing is a lot harder and a whole lot less fun than adding new.

Where is the public transportation? Multi-family townhomes are constructed with minimal parking with the ASSUMPTION that they will have one or two cars at most but there is no public transportation for them to get from their homes to any retail in Cottage Grove. You need to bring someone in who can help plan to make this a sustainable, environmentally friendly community.

*The privacy fences along Jamaica are an eyesore. This makes CG look unaesthetically displeasing being Jamaica is a main road to Cottage Grove

We've always appreciated the public works and parks/Rec departments especially snow removal, tree maintenance, all the trails and park upkeep.

. LED Street lights are tood bright and replace with a more natural color bulb.

My water pressure is TERRIBLE in Calarosa...Please do something! It's been two years of back and forth between Lennar and the City yet nothing has changed.

the target Mall and that whole area needs to be redeveloped it just doesn't work or maybe it's just the traffic signals in the area it's impossible to get through the area of Point Douglas andJamaica.

Fix the rest of the road along Jamaica, north of 61. Do something about all of the fences backing up to Jamaica. Some have completely fallen apart while others look awful. Homeowners along that stretch should be required to properly maintain their fences and landscaping. It's an eyesore and does not help property values.

Too many housing complexes being built without adjusting traffic flow on roads, particularly 19.

I'm frustrated right now. Living in the south end of Cottage Grove, we have dealt with 3M water contamination (years of personal impact and expectations to flex), train horns that never stop in a no blow zone, and now have an industrial zone in our half of the city with no input requested from us until after included in planning and a contract was in place. If they could send letters to us now, why not before it was in the city planning decisions/discussions?

Please have someone go around town at night to see what streetlights are out. There are a lot

I think the water is a big issue and the public police in our neighborhood.

I am concerned about the volume of new construction housing being built and what is will do for traffic issues on Hwy 61 when people are no longer working from home.

Public Works Comments

The stop light at 90th and Jamaica needs to be revised. If there are more than 3 cars turing left on to Jamaica and even if 1 car coming towards you, only a car or 2 can make the left turn. Adding even 30 more seconds to the 90th timing of the light would be a big improvement.

One area of concern is traffic in a few sections.

1.) we just moved off of Joliet Ave S off of 70th which is a primary road that leads to Grey cloud elementary and the middle school. There should be a crosswalk light for those kids who live in East ridge woods as many of them walk to school. I have called to get support for this and understand it is a county road but I believe since this county road is in our city our city staff should make this a priority. In addition to finding solutions to slowing down traffic on Joliet. It's incredibly dangerous in both areas and we don't want the changes to occur following a tragedy.

2.) the interchanges going into HyVee from the stop lights on the main road traffic signage and lanes make no sense and I never there several times a week. It's dangerous and should be reconfigured.

i feel the lights at intersection of 80th and Pt Douglas is so congested left turn lane for going to Kohls is not long enough. Blinking yellow arrows are sometimes dangerous traffic comming is so fast.

Plowing-they never plow up to the curb, which narrows our streets even more. I generally will go snowblow the rest, and sometimes it's 12 inches or so away from the curb.

UNDER ROAD passages/sidewalks for people to travel safely instead of crossing busy roads is needed.

I would like an additional street light placed on county road 19 - south/west (toward 61) of the district service center - it's very dark there - I hit a deer at that location and just about hit 2 at the same location last week - the deer will still cross there but if there was more light you could see them sooner

Stop with the awful roundabouts, or put cameras in and fine drivers or force them to take a class on how to use them. I'm tired of nearly getting creamed in the intersection because people don't know how to drive!

Put Jamaica back to two lanes between 70th and Military! There is way too much traffic for just one lane.

The research I've done on the water issue is horrifying. Stop all investments on the city until our drinking water is safe and clean! Who needs a community center when we have harmful chemicals in the cities water.

Also, have always felt that the way E. Point Douglas is designed around 80th Street and around Jamaica Street is very odd. It seems like there was little to no planning, and placement of businesses was an afterthought. Just seems hard to get around in those areas. I'm guessing there was a reason for the way that was configured, but not sure what that would be.

You need to make sidewalks a major priority especially on Hillside Trail. A lot of. Holden walk home from school on this road

I'm concerned about water quality. Why is 3M paying so much? Are we safe? I can't find information. I tried to buy a newspaper and can't find anything that really covers Cottage Grove.

we need clean, safe drinking water. No more lying about our water situation.

- I think the city has done an outstanding wob w/: 1. The pace & diverse growth 2. Roads & roundabouts to handle the growth 3. Landscaping & trails

I love living here. The snow plowing in the winter is top notch! Please keep it a great place to live.

less bottlenecks to get to shopping by Hyvee. I remember the turn lanes going to those areas off 80th.

Snow removal was great when I moved here vs 2002, after budget was cut, trucks start snow removal late in the mornings. I work by 3:30 AM. Trucks usually show up by 5:00 AM.

No more landscaping of roundabouts- just put in native grasses - Not bushes, flowers, that need constant care, and increase costs.

The drinking water is terrible

The poor quality of water is the biggest disappointment and I think has had the most negative impact on my health (and appliances).

We need sidewalks especially on hillside rd the cars go way to fast (no one does the 30 mph speed limit) and they come too fast around the curves someday (hopefully not) someone walking their dog or a child going to school is going to get hit

Public Works Comments

#5-The public works people are awesome! You see them working outside and they smile and wave or say “Hi”. Very friendly folks!

City water unsafe

Roads need to be fixed instead of adding new homes and roads

Cottage Grove maintains its streets and parks nicely. Better than anywhere I have lived.

The frontage road is horrible trying to dodge the sewer covers.

We need a safe way to cross 70th street to get to Kingston park between Jamaica and 19

Promote a welcoming feeling when you come into or drive around the city. Improve visual looks of our storm water ponds and aid fountains to the larger ones.

The city needs to do a better job at controlling the weeds next to the roadways. Every summer, it looks awful.

Landscaping on 80th Street also needs a tremendous facelift. It’s embarrassing that all of the landscape beds are full of weeds and trash. It is a main road where visitors see that as the image of Cottage Grove when they are here for school events, games, tournaments etc.

our city has a lot of areas that need to be improved from an aesthetic standpoint.

look into additional native plant plantings in place of some lawns around city buildings and in medians of the roads.

I drive all over the metro area for my job. Cottage Grove has HANDS DOWN the best winter road maintenance in the entire metro. By far. Our public works department is OUTSTANDING.

3)I am concerned about our water.

Water quality also is a very scary issue. We have made the move to Culligan two years ago now. It's not right.

Keep up to date on traffic lights that have poor timing, such as Hinton and 80th. The Jamaica and E Pt. Douglas lights are a source many wasted minutes causing more gas (and air pollution), time and loss of productivity. I know it's an area that has planning ongoing. The sooner the better.

After 31 years of living in Cottage Grove, we have had outstanding Public Works

There may not be much you can do now, but it would be so great if Cottage Grove could be more walkable, instead of needing a car to get most places. A lot of neighborhoods don't have sidewalks, and there could be more crosswalks.

A pedestrian bridge needs to installed over Highway 61 from the vacant lot that’s next door to MTZ Auto Sales to the Park ‘N Ride lot that’s on the other side of the Highway to provide increased access to public transportation.

I do want to compliment the city public works

I own an RV. I know there isn’t any kind of public demand for something like this, but personally, a dump-station for public use would be handy. It seems the Public Works Facility would have space and utility availability for something like this. It would be (in my opinion) a low cost and low maintenance installation and would provide a convenience, albeit for a very small portion of the populace. The city of Hastings has one in their Public Works area and I’ve considered using this if the situation arises, though they’ve got a pretty tight bend into and out of the service area. Thanks for your consideration.

I do wish that there were more sidewalks in residential neighborhoods as I mostly have to walk on the road, which is not great safety-wise with kids and not as pleasant.

Why is our water very hard and we always need a water softener?

Also the individual that plows our street in the winter is about 2 feet from the curb. This makes me feel like I have to plow the street along with my neighbors.

the stop light on Jamaica and 90th going north and south does not last long enough for vehicles to go through. This has been an issue for over 6 years

The highest priorities in Cottage Grove should be maintaining and improving our roads and infrastructure (Public Works).

Hamlet Lane South has NO STREETNIGHTS at all. Please install some street lights here.

Is there a way to consider putting a roundabout in at Jamaica and 80th street?

Public Works Comments

. Street/Road Maintenance - (Uncountable) potholes and recessed manhole covers take a toll on vehicles; . Streetlights - It feels like you're walking, driving through pitch-dark places, neighborhoods;

Some of the timing of stoplights does not help getting from one place to another in a timely fashion. It is quite frustrating. Specifically: 80th/Hinton, 80th/point Douglas, Jamaica/point Douglas. Additionally, when waiting at the stoplight on Hardwood to cross 80th over to Point Douglas, it's easy to become disoriented on lane alignment, specifically in a small car. The right hand lane to go straight, lines up with the left lane on the other side of 80th. Some lane markings would be helpful in the intersection so that cars stay in the correct lane.

Lived in many different cities, Cottage Grove has by far the best Public Works Department. Top notch! Don't mind paying a little bit more in taxes for exceptional service

And last, but not least, the water treatment facilities need improved filtration systems in place because of the severity of toxicity due to 3M dumping their poisons into our drinking water. My family has lived here for approximately 15 years and we would really like to stop buying bottled water and ice from the stores.

Permanently fix our water and pollution issue, and stop bringing in corporations that are destroying our community.

Connect older neighborhoods with sidewalks for safe access to the trails.

I live on Homestead ave s and there is no where to walk but the frontage road. My daughter in newer area has much better walking areas.

Support dark sky initiatives and stop putting up those dual lights with no tops. Can't see any stars since they have been put up on ravine Parkway.

Would like to see more roundabouts at city intersections

I believe that a crosswalk should be at Idsen & 70th for the families and many children cross to the park. Many times a week car horns are honking. Also many pass on the right when someone is trying to make a left hand turn at the same intersection. The dollars spent on the great park on 70th needs to be enjoyed by everyone and not make parents have to drive their kids to the splash pad because of the unsafe crossing of 70th St.

Replacement of the completely faded no parking signs along the east side of Ideal Ave S across from the high school football field.

Please change the winter parking ordinance to be no parking after 2 inches of snow until roads have been plowed curb to curb. The blanket dates and times are just a money maker and takes officers off the streets while writing parking tickets.

The Street light at the corner of upper 81st St. and Janero was replaced about a year ago, It has a harsh glare, is too bright, and makes it harder to see, particularly when exiting my house. In a neighborhood with split entry homes, it also shines directly into living rooms necessitating curtains being shut at night. As I am a fresh air ,open window type of person who rarely uses AC, this is an issue with me.

Been staring at the same burnt out street light for 6 months.

I have waited over 1.5 years to get my street light fixed. I gave up and installed a solar light to my mailbox post in order to see my driveway at night.

80th street shopping area is a snarly mess to drive due to lanes being so short and not enough signage giving drivers advanced info about required turn only lanes

Who's idea is it that places manhole covers in wheel tracks? Put them on skip stripes or center of the road, and for the money spent refurbishing some of these roads how hard is it to get the manholes level with the roadway so it's not a pothole on a freshly repaired roadway.

Also the hodge podge street repairs are AWFUL. Looks like low income

Not enough sidewalks.

Light pollution is typically not addressed for new construction or city lighting.

Other Comments

People should be allowed to own a few chickens if they want them.

- consider an environmental commission

- more public engagement - Thanks for the Survey!

2. Keep an eye on 3M

3. Keep us INFORMED on water issues

Arts & Culture - We support high school productions but there just isn't any "ARTS" or places to go in Cottage Grove for this.

Not aware of any arts & culture here.

Try and get fibre internet connections for all of Cottage Grove

This survey was a very thoughtful idea, thank you!

I've owned a home here for 9 years and have never received or been asked to take a survey. Hopefully you get a lot of feedback and then are able to make small/large changes where needed.

Cottage Grove is becoming a community older than ever before. A lot of us are moving into retirement and will be living on fixed incomes. We may not be able to afford to live here much longer.

Need Bulletin back

Less school referendums in off years tax ELDERLY out of their homes

Overall Cottage Grove is a pretty town. Not pretentious, just a nice small semi rural city. KEEP IT THAT WAY!

I have been apart of this community since 2013 and love living here

We recently moved to Cottage Grove, so we are still getting familiar with the area. So far we have really enjoyed our time here & look forward to our child growing up in Cottage Grove.

I am new to town so not sure how valid my comments are.

Thank you!

- pollution from Ashland & coke & 3M facilities.

3. Education is key! and especially having "diverse" ability to send kids to different public or private schools in the area. CG has done a pretty good job here, though I would like to see a greater focus on good pay for quality teachers and less focus on the latest & greatest classroom technology (a great teacher w/ a white board beats a mediocre teacher w/ a smart board any day.)

4. side note: many of these questions if someone puts down that they are dissatisfied, doesn't tell you if you need more or less of it.

We are new to the community

Annex the school district from District 833 & Woodbury.

How about getting resident input on major plans rather than a few leaders attempting to implement their desires under the table.

My wife and I are both retired and have enjoyed living in Cottage Grove for the past 50 years. Thank you and keep up the good work

Items marked neutral indicate that I have not participated in or observed item listed in the last 5+ years.

I have lived in Cottage Grove for 47 years and recently moved from one home in Cottage Grove to another less than 1 mile from the previous one. I really do feel that CG is a good place to live.

Promote conservative values - law enforcement, education standards, maintain respect to neighbors, police, and community officials.

No racoons, no chickens! No rabbits & squriels Barking dogs.

Thank you. Keep up the great work.

Cottage Grove is a great place to live!

You guys are doing a fine job.

Excellent Job

Overall, Cottage Grove is a nice town to live.

-still viewed as the "little brother" to Woodbury. Ppl love here but shop/rec in Woodbury

Other Comments

Thanks for the survey, GREAT idea. :)

City continues to grow in all areas. Keep up the great work.

Only 3 housed occupied here in 1958 when we came - lots of changes - mostly good.

Great place to live!

I think your lying about the gift cards

Great, safe, clean place to live and raise a family. Think CG is heading in a great direction!

Cottage Grove is an embarrassing shithole. The centerpiece high on the hill.....Goodwill

Its a shame what CG does for its Seniors!

There is no sense in filling this out...you people do what you want anyhow!! - Waste of time and resources for the city!!!!

We have lived in Cottage Grove for 27 years. This is a good town and has been a wonderful place to raise our family. It does not need to be a want to be community. It has it's own charm. A big thank you to the talented and caring staff from the city administrative staff! To all of the city workers. That includes city support folks, police, snow plow drivers, etc.

Great city services, city hall

Overall, great place to live and raise a family.

Thank you for doing this survey and giving us a voice in future decisions

I enjoy our city and look forward to the future and what is to come to our town.

I did this survey but though living here 2 years know very little about the city. We are in our mid 70s so not utilizing a lot of city. do like where we live we feel free and safe.

Do not forget the residents on west side of 61.

Thank you for your time!

3. The City needs a much better communication system. FACEBOOK is not a mode of communication. Very poor communication when there are short notice changes

Overall, I feel the city is pretty well organized. Keep up the good work.

I am old & retired & live in my single home...I don't go out much. Only usually eat at Burger King in Newport once per week. Have bad legs so I don't use the parks & services as I should. Think Cottage Grove is doing fine though. Don't like that Cottage Grove is a dumping ground for foreigners & minorities.. Whats with the houses with 5-10 cars in the driveways. are you building a slum?

Diverse, equitable and inclusive community: This sounds like CRT! Arts and culture: No such thing! Most things on this survey not important for every day life.

love the Christimas decor

Decent city to live, in these trying times.

:) thanks!!

CG has made great improvement over the years.

In general we are very satisfied with living in CG

A poorly constructed survey. No option for not applicable, or don't know. For example, police response - never call them for an emergency.

Keep the LGBTQ - whatever out. They bring judgement for sin.

I love living in Cottage Grove!

Overall I am proud of this community!

Moving forward in right direction

Most of my responses were neutral, due to length of time as resident here in Cottage Grove. My overall impression of the city of Cottage Grove is good.

- Questions 7 & 8 were confusing. Do we answer as they pertain to us personally or the community as a whole?

After living in Cottage Grove for 53 years, I think out city has been excellent in raising a family.

Also wonder why there are so many cancer cases (including me) in the area.

Other Comments

Overall we are very happy living in CG and enjoy living in a place that values the feedback of residents.

I do love my city though!

Overall a great place to live.

Thank you for what the city does for the residents.

District 833 schools are also a big asset.

Things have gotten better in "downtown" CG. We are planning on moving out soon because of all the new developments. Just becoming like every other suburb in the twin cities.

As a resident since 1962, I have seen many changes. I'm very happy here, but there are a few things that bother me.

We love CG! Cannot wait to build our family here. Will these results be posted? We are very interested to see what the rest of the city thinks!

Thank you for your efforts!

What is your primary source of information about City? *Myself as a long time resident.

- Stop trying to grow and be like Woodbury. People move(d) here for the small town/rural feel which has disintegrated over the last few years. (The entire survey was blank except the back page)

I have lived in CG since 1968 in 3 different locations. I like the peaceful, safe environment of the city.

*Additional comments 11. Neutral responses from me is because I don't know or haven't used services. I'm happy living here. It's not perfect, but our leaders work hard to make this a good community, and we're lucky they do! You can rarely please all of the people all of the time. Some people will rarely be pleased.

We have a fantastic public library! City employees have been very helpful when I have called with questions, etc.

Great City staff!

Great citizens in CG!

I love the City. I would like to see more ordinances for disturbing the peace. Too many illegal loud trucks and illegal fireworks. It happens at all hours of the night and sometimes wakes up my small children.

I love Cg and all you do for me. Respectfully, Bob Kolnik

"you all suck"

What sort of plan is "Let's become another Woodbury" Yuck!

Clean up the school system - bullying - need a new School Board.

Keep our schools free from CRT! (?)

I have grown up in Cottage Grove and I absolutely love it!

There is no other area I would want to be as I raise my own children here.

This is a great city!

Being a resident of C.G. for 46 years is proof enough to say that I chose a close to perfect place to live. C.G. is a good place to raise a family being a small city - big town picture of a clean and peaceful atmosphere. I'm thankful we were directed to this City to live an enjoyable life.

The only thing I want to say is I hope we keep the small town feel here and never end up like our neighboring city!

NONE OF THIS MATTERS BECAUSE OUR SCHOOLS ARE TRASH. QUIT TEACHING CRT!!! NO MORE CRT FIRE THE TEACHERS FIRE SCHOOL BOARD DUMP CRT

Would like better follow up on surveys.

BUILD FAMILY DINING "COMPLEX" INSTEAD OF COMMUNITY CENTER

In general, I think you folks do a very good job - thanks and keep up the good work!

I want to see the library rebuilt in the current location. It is accessable to everyone in CG, St. Paul Park and Newport.

I have lived in Cottage Grove over 40 years and truly enjoy this community. Please continue to build & grow with Intentionality.

I love Cottage Grove. I moved from Maple Grove. I thought I was getting away from the snobby people.

NOTE: I wish there had been another choice between "very satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied". That just said "satisfied". I think our answers would have looked more positive.

Other Comments

- Q#7: Don't know enough to give a meaningful answer
- Q#8: Not knowledgeable enough to answer
I will be figuring out how to become a community board member.
I have lived in Cottage Grove Since I was in first Grade I'm still here and I'm 35 years young! and now have a 14 year old there and somethings that have gotten better but a whole lot that has gotten worse.
Nothing additional I like where I live, Thanks!
* I'm a supporter of strong schools but tired of voting on levy referendums every couple of years
Thank you for all you are doing to upgrade our community and keeping us safe.
FYI This is called collusion, this should be unanimous
4 I don't want the library moved to the empty end of town. (Walmart. Ravine pkwy etc.) The Library should be walkable since none of the shopping is or will be.
We Love Cottage Grove!
Love all the Green Spaces!
Have lived in Cottage Grove for last 30 years and love the area. Few improvements will take the city to new heights
We dont have a local paper anymore, we need one!
City satisfaction, Not when Karla Bigham leads a BLM protest
Overall, somewhat satisfied with Cottage Grove.
Overall, i am happy with the city . My concerns are probably things the city doesn't control
Lack of diversity. Lack of community "on the ground"
Do NOT make bikes as important as cars, miserable to drive arond or near mpls.
We love Cottage Grove as a whole and love living in this city.
Cottage Grove is more of a bedroom community for St Paul than a real town of its own. It Lacks a sense of community. Most people leave CG for the day to work, come home and close their garage door- and thats it for the day. It would be great to have a central location for shared community events or a shared events, like strawberry fest days but better. Overall, people seem to keep to themselves.
For survey, needs to have a choice of "N/A" Not applicable
The home depot site could have become a YMCA, Too bad that opportunity was missed
fix the school and busing problems
Federal and state government talk out of both sides of their mouths on the AMI figure! Get a realistic figure for all of our social and civil programs!!!
Bus all students to school between the months of October - to - April 15. (Winter months in MN). Use National Guard LOCALLY BASED TROOPS id necessary.

Lobby the MN legislators to free up more money for the ABIOYT CIE, Lotto's, Scratch Offs, nd increase sales tax by 1/2%
No issues
We love it here!
If anything, more cultural activities and ethnic opportunities (food, performances, etc)

I have single family home. Never moving. Love living in CG! Completely satisfied w/ amount of growth. Love Diversity.

We have lived here for 26 years, love Cottage Grove, raised 2 kids - great school system. Please do not become Woodbury.
- Find ways to spruce up older neighborhoods
Thank you!
1. Why is my rent going up, they said we are classified with the single homes. We are retired.
4. What does the metropolitan Council say is the amount for 1 person? They said about a family of 4
Your rating scale is missing two levels
unknown

Other Comments

never used or experienced
Ordinance 4-2-15.
Please note - this is the opinion of 2 of 3 members of this household - so an accurate all full survey of opinions may not be represented.
Stick to the Basic's that you are doing extremely well
No arts & entertainment in town.
My young kids love the big truck open house in the fall.
Appreciate all you do for us behind the scenes!
Farmers are being over taxed & chased out - so sad to loose the country
- Keep CG rural; stop trying to be Woodbury
Proud to say " I live in Cottage Grove!"
I miss not having a local newspaper for community updates and information.
I chose things due to this being a survey but all in all I love living here! It's a small town with big suburb ammenaties. Thank you!
There are so many campers, motorhomes and boats parked along side driveways - rather tacky.
I would really like to see neater neighborhoods.
Could make it easier to get on a low income for rent. Takes too long to get on the list.
let single family homes have chickens chens only 1 and ducks! If CG is going to continue to eliminate house that have 2.5+ acres then smaller yards should be allowed hens and ducks.
There are many people in Cottage Grove that would like chickens including myself. The city council & mayor should reconsider the ordinances to allow chickens
Benefits of chickens: organic eggs, pest control, hens are quiet, education for kids, waste reduction - chickens eat food scraps, & fertilizer
My sister has chickens & they are great. Cottage Grove should follow suit with the other cities in MN
more pollution
less wildlife
Doesn't seem to be any point
Thanks!
No CRT
No mask mandates
We do love living here!
VERY happy with chosing CG as a place to live.
Things are moving, but slowly
Great city to live in and raise families.
We just move to CG so we don't have much to weigh in on. So far so good.
I have enjoyed living here and raising my family.
Schools are important.
It has been a great city for my kids to get a job. For high level pay great place to commute from.
Cottage Grove is a great place to live and raise a family - I have been living in CG for 60 years
Need more 'draws' for C.G. - Why would someone want to live here?
Keep up the good job :)
Need more information on getting to and from surgery. I am not on public assistance.
The property of the pool should of been sold - loss of tax revenue
Thank you all so much for what you do for our city!
- Be more creative with street names
- Maintain natural history of Cottage Grove
Lack of transportation after evening hour for people who don't drive.

Other Comments

Love Cottage Grove!!

If I ran my household like the government does I'd be broke in no time

We need a local newspaper or a monthly newsletter

Your service is priceless.

Also, race relations still need a ton of work!

We moved to Cottage Grove in late Summer, 2019, from Chicago. We LOVE it! The location is ideal. Close to the highways and the Cities. Very friendly people.

To be clear I enjoy C.G. - Just always room for improvement.

My family moved here three years ago and so far we love it. The city has all of what we need. Woodbury is to big and busy and that's why we love Cottage Grove. Big enough for us offering what we need. Overall we love this city and plan to grow our family here. Keep up the good work Cottage Grove! :)

- I enjoy living in Cottage Grove greatly, I feel safe here, and enjoy the services that are provided.

My wife and I just moved here but we absolutly love it here. It is very quiet and peaceful compared to where we last lived. We can't wait to raise a family in this community.

Overall nice work. This is a good place to live, work, raise a family. Good Job.

I hate that there isn't a Bulletin anymore.

Doing a pretty good job. Terrible problem with weeding and around schools. Be more open minded about the chicken issue.

Thank you for doing such a great job!

My #1 concern wasn't an option, and that's TRANSPORTATION! We need so much more for people without cars. Thanks!

Your survey didn't have data asking age and current status of employment, unemployment, etc. I'm retired and will have a different perspective of someone raising a family and working.

The city is pretty well run!

It would be nice to have a local fair/crafts and food in the spring. Maybe have information on carious apartments and projects going on in Cottage Grove.

It's a good place to call home!

I have always felt very thankful that we found a storage unit in Cottage Grove when we moved here from California. A very kind realator found us our first home - a rental. Then she found us our first owned home in Cottage Grove. Cottage Grove is a beautiful community and I've always been thankful to live here.

I would like the city to provide composting opportunities for residents. Such as, composting of yard waste. I'm not happy with taking a few bags to the commercial places (Gertin's, etc) and have to pay a fee.

Thank you for all you do.

Taxes continue to increase with referendums but lack of detailed information is provided where the money is being used - e.g. school administrative/operating costs get voted down, but technology is voted in, who makes sure the school district doesn't takes the technology money for operating costs?

-Not your job to promote diversity, equity or inclusivity.

-Not your job to provide opportunities for arts and culture.

-Quit dividing the city into rich (East) and poor (West side of Jamaica)

Continue to grow! I love all the new housing options, community center and businesses! I also appreciate the honest and timely updates from the Mayor. Proud to live and raise my kids in Cottage Grove!

We've enjoyed the Strawberry festival/Parade and the Halloween Parade. It would be nice if those could continue in the future.

Build up to fast

Quit trying to keep up with woodbury

MY wife and I fell in love with Cottage Grove when we moved here from St. Cloud, 3 years ago.

I admire the overall growth of the city.

Other Comments

- Coyoted seen in AM walks w/my dogs in multiple parks

All other Cottage Grove is absolutely PERFECT.

Thank you

Life is to short lets make our city a place to come to all year round.

City leadership appear to do a great job! Thank you!

Not happy local paper cost way too much it used to be free I don't buy it. Most suburbs are free and although I don't have my home anymore the compost cost too much.

Keep up the good work!

Overall, Cottage Grove is a very nice place to live. It's handy to both St. Paul & Minneapolis, centrally located to the airport, crime seems to be in check foe now. My wife & I have be residents for 50+ years and have no intentions on leaving. Keep up the good work.

Stop doing away with farms and empty spaces We don't need every spot of land filled.

My family is new to Cottage Grove but overall we LOVE it.

You need another category in your rating system "unknown" or "not applicable". Many people use "neutral" incorrectly to mean "no opinion" or "unknown"

We moved here for the "country feel within a city" and it feels like all the farm fields are plowed down. We love the mix of city and country and would hate for that to go away

After living in a bigger city my whole life I love the small town feel of Cottage Grove and don't want to see that change.

- More events to bring the commuity together

- Stop cutting down trees to build - Save the green space

Outstanding city, outstanding Public Works, outstanding leadership by Mayor and City Government.

Part of the charm of Cottage Grove is our small town feel, but we are growing too quickly and forgetting who we are.

Thanks for this opportunity to express my opinion.

Too much Growth

+community events

Does Cottage Grove have specific employment website

Have only lived here 1&1/2 years so answering was difficult

allow backyard chickens!! Thanks :-)

We don't need to be another Woodbury, the goal to fill every last piece of land with houses or stores.

Lets be more aggressive

Increased traffic. We don't want to be Woodbury

- Cottage Grove's opportunities to enjoy arts and culture: (?)

- Cottage Grove's environmental sustainability effort & Cottage Grove's efforts to promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive community: Need to learn more

Our family of 3 really enjoys living in Cottage Grove. We moved here almost 4 years ago from California. Moving in the Winter we were unaware of all the parks & opportunities available to our young daughter. She started Kindergarten this year and we have been very happy raising her in Cottage Grove

Did not answer: Cottage Grove's efforts to promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive community - What does this mean?

There are more than three issues here and Cottage Grove MN. Overall Cottage Grove is doing a lot better than years ago.

CG in 1988 in our 2nd home now. Raised 2 children public schools both grown, married just my wife and I now. CG has been affordable, safe and a wonderful educational experience for us and our 2 kids. CG has met all of our needs all of these years.

Overall, we love living in Cottage Grove Thank you for all your efforts + work!

Other Comments

Keep up the good work

We need a city newspaper. The city and the school system do a poor job of keeping people informed. No local newspaper makes it hard to feel like a TRUE community, In the city motto the term "pride" is used. Please inform me of all the things I should be proud of. A local newspaper could do that.

*"...equitable..."??!! My very dissatisfied answers do not mean do more of it. they mean stop! Why are you so anti-opportunity? Why do you discriminate, those who chase opportunity?

Allow the Keeping of Hens on residential properties!- Single family , no lot size restrictions

I would like to see a return of a printed newspaper for the city.

Library - and last but definitely not least. The residents of Cottage Grove were promised an updated Library. If ever there was a community center, it is the Library. I am disappointed that our elected officials seem unable to grasp that concept. Very short-sighted. A Library is free. Open to all. Doesn't distinguish on race, color, creed, income, religion, gender … you name it. It is the one true free place in this country. It is where we ALL rub shoulders with each other. And this City Council has worked very hard at destroying our Library and access to our Library. Our Library is a space where each of us can be safe, find peace and have the ability and freedom to go anywhere or learn about anything that our imaginations will take us. Has the opportunity to give us the ability to learn and experiment with different options like maker rooms with 3-D printers and sewing machines and tool checkouts and all the ways to help us learn to be more resourceful, resilient, useful human beings. Now that library will probably need to be relocated. If that library is relocated to a place where the children that need it the most are unable to access it, shame on this city.

Homophobia in all churches must be eliminated. Suicides are common when this is happening.

Question #8-These terms should be defined in a survey like this. You have to be pretty "dialed in" to understand these options

Social Media - Cottage Grove Hwy 61 Neighbors on Facebook

The city has done well in all areas.

40 some years of living here

I miss the days of decades ago when this was a nice little city.

Social Media - Next Door App

I do have a PHD (Park High diploma) #77

A-Lot of Waste

No Body Care's

There are too many handouts for bad people while good people pay exorbitant property taxes.

N/A Doing Great ! I love it Here !

More uniqueness.

I love it hear and have lived in Cottage Grove almost my whole life

Please add a "does not apply / unknown " column to survey

Cottage Grover is a very lovely city. I appreciate the current amenities and continue to be amazed by its size. Great job!

Great People All

Can the city set up a program residents can pick up firewood from downed trees for free?

City Attorney, Joe Taylor, is unethical and should be investigated for not submitting obviously "chargeable" criminal cases, especially when they are domestic assault related.

- Q#8: ? Not sure what the difference is with all of these.

City Satisfaction - Wish I knew! Would like more information on where city is headed.

Been here since June, really like Cottage Grove and all my neighbors Great place to live. However not lived here long enough to experience most of the questions. I answered neutral if I have no experience with it yet. Keep the city looking good! Love new Home!

Resources for family get togethers

Other Comments

Maintain and make what we already have great. We don't need to compete with Woodbury.

As a resident who was born and raised in Cottage Grove, I'm happy to say to take pride in saying I live here. I like the direction we are going, but believe you should consider my comments above because I am choosing to raise a family in CG, not Woodbury

Cottage Grove seems to be a great place to raise a family. I don't have children, so I don't have first hand knowledge. However City/School Offerings are why we came and why we'll stay.

- Q#8: Not enough knowledge to answer.

I do love Cottage Grove

I am mostly confined to my apt. so most of these questions do not appear to me. Thank you.

On many of the topics in this survey, I am ill informed and that is on me. My bad! Hoever, I have lived & worked in city for 20+ years (retired now).

I wonder what changes will be made to school zones as certain areas grow and many children will be joining schools....thinking Pine Hill Elementary

Overall a quiet, sleepy, suburb to raise a family.

- Q#2 Cottage Grove as a place to work: N/A

Some of these questions I would have answered with 'not applicable' for example, I've never called for fire or EMS. I wonder what the experience for immigrant, refugee and BIPOC people would be in comparison to the majority population?

- Survey should have had demographics

Overall, I love it here. Thank you :-)

Thanks for taking time to send a survey

- Q#10 Cable Television: no

- Q#10 City Meetings not useful

Overall we're satisfied and happy living here in Cottage Grove. A place that you can recommend to live in.

Bonnie Matter Additional Comments: 4 pages total: Little history … I've been a resident of Cottage Grove for 42 years. I've appreciated having a home in a town where I could get away from the hustle and bustle, the noise and the traffic of the metro area. Cottage Grove had the necessities: grocery stores, some great family dining places with good food to eat-in like the American Sports Bar and Ruby Tuesday. Cottage Grove also had a library. Every community requires a good library. A person can go anywhere in a Library … options are limitless, opportunities abound. I don't need a downtown. St. Paul and Minneapolis were always easily accessible for a night out at the theater or a day at the museums, art gallery or dinner with friends who live in different parts of the metro area. It was a special treat once in a while … didn't want to do it all the time. I've lived in the Cities. I've been robbed in the Cities. Easy access to nature was right up there as a reason too. Everything in this town seemed to change with the move from the 2030 to the 2040 comprehensive plan. What happened? Seems like things fell off a cliff. I cannot tell you how EXHAUSTING it has become to live in this community. Even the people who were part of the planning process for the 2040 comprehensive plan seem to be confused when they see what actually starts getting implemented. Who is really driving this train? What's happening is not good for current or future residents of Cottage Grove. And the City Council doesn't seem to care. Since I believe the City Council members do care about their community and its residents, I've come to believe that there must be something that is not being shared with the public. Otherwise, my thoughts would have to go elsewhere and I prefer not to go there. So, when you ASK QUESTIONS with your survey, you get ANSWERS. So random thoughts…

Other Comments

- And is our community a good neighbor? What impact do our future industrial growth plans have on neighboring communities like St. Paul Park, Newport, Hastings and Prescott. Where do they fit in the planning process? Are you aware of future plans being made now by surrounding communities that would be adversely impacted by the increased semi and vehicle traffic? Is the State going to upgrade Highway 61 to handle all the additional semi, truck and auto traffic and by when? Is Washington County going to upgrade the County roads in Cottage Grove to handle all the added semi, truck and auto traffic? What about the pollution? What is the plan? If they are 5 years out, then stop building until the community can handle the growth.

So, bottom line, YOU ASKED what I think and I'VE ANSWERED. I would like to year what YOU – Staff, Advisory Commissions and City Council – want this community to be. What's YOUR vision for the future? What is YOUR mission statement. How do YOU add value to who we are as a community. What do YOU want Cottage Grove to be? Because, quite frankly, your NEW vision might not appeal to me at all. I can go wherever I want. I don't need Cottage Grove. And you, apparently, don't get that and don't care, Convince me that I should believe differently. Maybe that 2040 comprehensive plan needs a re-look.

I want to thank the Cottage Grove city employees. They do a great job taking care of the city. Staff always gives me answers when I know the right question to ask. I am grateful for those who serve as volunteers on the various commissions and for the City Council members. But I really think that the City of Cottage Grove is being put at risk and this community is headed for a very hard fall.

*https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/impervious-surfaces-and-flooding?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects

https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/impervious-areas-affect-rainfall-runoff-flooding-and-water-quality

Fireworks on the 4th are great too. We'd love to see Strawberry Fest make a big return

We want chickens as a source of food and pets. Being a veteran, chickens are a great pet for veterans suffering with PTSD, chronic pain and alcoholism. The narrow mindedness of the city council disturbs us when we live in the land the free.

- WE WANT CHICKENS. Absolutely ridiculous that we cannot have them

Allow chickens to be raised in backyard cage.

Please allow backyard poultry. In addition to a food source it is a beneficial way to teach children about animal care and where food comes from

I have been a resident of So. Wash. County 82 years. Do not try to be something we are not inspite of our neighbors. Before you try to take care of everybody else take care of who we are.

Taxes on a new community center and also school levies are going to take this once affordable, beautiful town…under. Land areas are being destroyed as well. CG will soon be a place people move out of because you're making it impossible for good families to live here.

I feel like Cottage Grove is trying to be Woodbury. Losing small town feel and character. Dislike the urban sprawl and endless franchises.

Promote bee habitats, more required green spaces in new neighborhood, native prairie restoration, be progressive about urban agriculture!!

I think the city is doing a good job. When questions are asked, they are very responsive.

City does a great job!

Thanks for everything you all do.

We just moved here two years ago and have absolutely loved the trails near our home. We feel welcome and safe. We are thankful how close we live to amenities.

I generally love the city and we plan to be here for a very long time. Love the elementary schools!

i paid alot for my house to get good community it seems also that there no accountability for city workers do there job correctly or the people that the contract for the work the homeowner ass occur there mistakes and part for it

Other Comments

Cottage Grove has potential to become great city like Woodbury, I want to thank all the employees of the city who are working day and night to make it best place to live.

I love Cottage Grove!! ♡

If we are going to continue to build more neighborhoods and apartments, then we need to build more schools to ensure maintainable class sizes!

I love Cottage Grove, its people, and feel the city does a great job in all public services.

Nice place to live and raise a family and I'm generally pretty happy.

Thank you for all you do!

Come sit on my deck and listen to the beautiful sound of semis backing up, the clanging of truck tailgates opening and the roar of semi tires. I've lived in Cottage Grove all my live and preparing to move.

I think Cottage Grove is a fantastic place to live. The trials, parks and rec have some great community activities. I would love to see this continue and to grow. I feel safe in our community and love the connections our community members make.

Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback! And for creating and supporting a great community that our family is proud to be apart of and raise our children in.

Can city services keep pace with the rapid growth in housing and population?

City needs to look into solar programs and electric vehicles. The faster we convert the city the better off we'll be going forward keeping the air quality good. With the 3M plant and city expansion we could be hurting pretty bad for air quality if we don't take action now. We need a city wide plan, not individuals trying to make a difference.

Regarding a number of my answers where I indicated "Neutral" - that's mainly because I haven't experienced, or made use of, those services. Yet.

We have a shortage of charter and private school options in cottage Grove. I would love to see the city reach out to some of these schools about coming here to help our children's education.

We need to define who we are....other than PROUD AND PROPEROUS. Not very humble for a small town

We don't need to increase the taxes. And get new board members that are not all idiots looking for a big payout. How about giving back to the community, especially the ones that have lived here the longest. Let's go Brandon!

I wouldnt have thought about living in Cottage Grove if my employer wasnt here, but now that I live here I cant imagine living anywhere else around the cities. The town is definitely growing and there is an influx of a newer generation of residents. Coming from the newer generation i see a lot of projects being geared toward all generations like the proposed community center which is a huge plus. This signals to me that the city government is looking to strike a balanced approach to appeal to all residents. Proud to be a CG Resident.

Use food from stores and restaurants in a program for food shelf rather than this food being thrown away. Ban plastic bags used for shopping etc. Start being "green". The placement of City hall-way out of Central C.G. was extremely disappointing - at least try to maintain a Central C.G. like it used to be. I won't vote for Com. Center because of location. Where do you want C.G. to be located!!

We need affordable work for home repairs (through the city) A Cottage Grove list that promotes CG work talent. Electricity and social services in CG if we could use Cottage Grove coupons for home repairs.

We need to ban Air BNBs which bring high number of people into neighborhoods and potential crime.

Community events that embrace our diverse neighborhoods.

Also our schools must resist going the politically correct route & focus on excellent education for all math, science, reading, languages - we must get back to basics. We are falling woefully behind internationally with the separation of church & state, our federal government mandated that moral/religious issues should NOT be taught in schools. These are the things to be taught in churches, mosques, temples & at home!

Buy some better Christmas lights. Put more effort in Strawberry Days.

I wish we had a bigger library.

No nothing about CRT in our schools or not; would like to have seen this community survey address this issue.

Add more art and creative activities for residents.

Other Comments

There's no C.G. "pride" in the city like you see in Stillwater (downtown) or even Woodbury. A downtown could boost "small town charm".

I would like backyard hens and chickens to be considered again. While I don't plan to have them personally, I fully support an ordinance that would allow them.

You should have an "N/A" or "I don't know" option for your satisfaction questions. I just moved here so don't know about a lot of the categories yet and don't want to sway your answers to neutral, but that's what I marked.

After living in St.Paul for 20 years (which I loved) I decided to move to Cottage Grove because I found a great townhome that still seemed connected to nature and wildlife and birdlife... I hope that continues in Cottage Grove. The nature here is a resource and hopefully we don't cut it all down.

Thank you for the work that you have done to help our community continue to grow!

Thank you for taking the time to listen! We love Cottage Grove, especially Old Cottage Grove! We are hoping for a future little town feel.

We are new to CG as of January, 2021, and are still getting to know the environs and the services of the city. Overall, we have been impressed and are enjoying life here. In particular, I have appreciated the access to city employees either via telephone or email and their responsiveness. Far less bureaucracy that what we have previously lived with.

I know many residents, myself included would love the opportunity to have backyard poultry!

I'd like to see diversity and ethnic events

I would not live here if I was dissatisfied with what we have.

Leave the woke questions out. Just do the work. I don't care what you look like or what you believe politically.

Promotion of a more diverse community would be my most important focus area.

I have lived in CG since 1959 so I have seen its growth.

I would love to see an ordinance pass that allows backyard chickens within city limits. There are several pros for having backyard chickens and many, many of the cities/towns around us have adopted laws allowing this.

-self sufficient food source

-pest control

-free fertilizer

-organic recycling

We just moved here after 17 years in Minneapolis. We love this new community, and are excited to be part of it!

The only thing missing is backyard chickens!

We are very interested in the results of this survey. We hope you post the results for the citizens of Cottage Grove.

Wish we still had a local newspaper.

More of a community news paper increase in frequency.

Public Library really needs improvement compared to other facilities in nearby cities.

We love Cottage Grove! We have been residents for over 11 years and enjoy that our kids are growing up in such a wonderful community, filled with great schools and opportunities.

We were really excited to start a family here with great schooling, but we're shocked by the recent cuts to music education in So Wash Co schools. So much so, it likely will affect our choice in remaining here or sending our kids to school in 833. Otherwise, we do enjoy Cottage Grove overall.

I like the direction Cottage Grove is moving and appreciate the efforts being made.

Bring back small town living before you lose all value. You can't save us, we are already leaving, but you can prevent another failed Woodbury!

**On a whole Cottage Grove does very good and we are happy to live here. Thanks for asking!

We're definitely no Woodbury. Our city is great, we just need more to offer. Let's keep our money locally.

CG is a wonderful place to live!

I think the city is doing good. I really don't have any complaints. (I like a small town feel)

Other Comments

We need more positive energy in this city, doesn't always feel like a community. Where I used to live the community would try to meet up and have a gathering so the new members could meet everyone.

My husband and I love living in cottage grove and we are now starting a family and this is a perfect place to raise a family!

I do want to compliment the city staff departments and employees that keep our city going around the clock. Keep up the great work and I do love living in Cottage Grove.

Cottage Grove is a wonderful place to live because we farmlands and single homes and it's not developed/ overcrowded like Woodbury.

More help for disabled seniors and disabled veterans homeowners yard, decluttering, help with broken washing machines etc…

New resident, have worked here in the past

The items I marked as neutral meant I had no need to use the services to this day.

We've lived in Cottage Grove for the past 10+ years and are happy to call the city our home. We have an awesome neighborhood with a park centrally located in our development, are close to the highway, and enjoy many of the city's shopping and dining options (Target, Culver's, Noodles, to name a few). Thanks for making this a great place to live!

Overall Cottage Grove is a wonderful community. I feel it's important to keep up with other areas around us to promote growth

We've lived in Cottage Grove for 25 years and have seen remarkable positive developments in the city. We hope the city continues to consider open spaces and public river access as priorities.

Allow Cottage Grove residents to own egg laying poultry inside the city limits

Thank you to our public servants for all you do.

Overall satisfied

Please consider allowing backyard chickens.

I grew up here. Raised my own family here. My Dad (Yunker) started with the fire dept in 60's. I do not like how it lost its SUBURB FEEL. I do not like WALMART, GOODWILL.

We really like Cottage Grove. Great location and plenty to do nearby. We live by nice people and that can make all the difference.

Overall, I like the direction that the city is going. However, I would caution to not become a Woodbury or Eagan. Development is great, but I feel like too much ruined both cities - they are miserable to visit because there is too much congestion. Additionally, we need to do more to provide outreach and/or events which are more welcoming to diverse populations (e.g., LGBTQ). If there are these types of events/support currently, they are not well-advertised or promoted, nor do I feel welcome at other events, contrary to our city's motto.

Some of these questions were very difficult to answer. For instance, I don't have personal knowledge of the fire department's response time, and I don't know the difference between the affordable housing opportunities listed.

We're still pretty new….so we do not have much experience with many of the services listed

We have enjoyes living in Cottage Grove for over 33 years. The city and city government do a very good job as far as we can see. Thank you!

You are ruining what I love about living in this city .

This city is well maintained and always looking to improve. I appreciate that Cottage Grove takes pride in the city and that the police department is still able to do their jobs to keep the city clean and safe!

I would really like to see an effort made on two issues. First, our city is not inviting to outsiders at all and there is minimal sense of community. I believe there is an opportunity to address both issues simultaneously. If the city can identify improvement opportunities/projects and recruit residents to volunteer, I believe getting people to come together and work alongside each other will help build a greater sense of comradery and community pride for our quiet and inconspicuous city.

Other Comments

Thank you for all you do and keep up the great work.

Thank you for all that you do for the city, including Public Works and Administration…as well as Police, Fire and all others. You are sincerely doing a fantastic job and it hasn't gone unnoticed.

Thanks for all you do for the community.

Aside from these issues, I find our city too be very well run by our employees and elected and volunteer officials.

It is Truly a pleasure too live here. Thank you for the opportunity too vent.

Additionally, the ban on chickens is an old way of thinking. Chickens can be a wonderful part of the community.

I would like to voice my support for locals being allowed to own chickens and ducks. I own two parrots who make more noise, more mess and much more damage then either chickens or ducks ever could. It seems our city council is very closed minded when it comes to this topic and that is not a positive for our city.

Allow citizens to be more self-sustainable! Gardens and chickens and other livestock for those who have the space. If you can own two dogs in the average home, chickens should be allowed as well.

The city needs to allow residents (other than those restricted by HOA regulations) to own a few chickens or domestic ducks on their own property, with reasonable set-back and nuisance policies in place. Otherwise, I love living and working here and am very happy.

There's a growing population of residents within our community which would love to have chickens! All the other cities surrounding our city have recently approved chickens. We're the only ones around which are not allowed to keep chickens. It's unfair that we live in a community which takes away joys such as this just because a few people don't like it. Shouldn't the majority outweigh the few? It makes me sad that the mayor repetitively says he wants more activities in our community, yet this gets taken away every time. Time to start thinking outside of the box and allow the simple pleasures back into our lives!

We are behind the times on allowing backyard chickens in town. Most other towns in the area allow it, and I believe Cottage Grove should at least listen to the community and consider it. I've been disappointed in how close minded the city is on the issue.

I participated in a very well supported and researched effort to get the city to allow backyard poultry. I felt our efforts were pushed aside by the city council that had already made their decision based off of their personal feelings and not any of the evidence that we presented. I'm very jealous of my friends in more progressive communities like Edina and Wayzata and Hastings who are all allowed to have backyard poultry while cottage Grove is one of the last few holdouts in the country. It negatively affects my opinion of where I live and quite frankly my thoughts on whether or not I want to stay here much longer.

Please allow ownership of chickens and ducks! Many cities have successfully allowed them, look to their rules for guidelines.

It's time to get with the times and allow our city to have hens!! As somebody who has personally had them and know what it's like. They are not loud, they are not disturbing. It's time to pass this! Our community will get so frustrated that they will just go ahead and get them eventually if this is not passed!! You need to put what the community wants over your wants first. We don't always agree with what you do but we don't have a say in that, so why would be any different the other way around?? It shouldn't!! Think about what the community wants!! Not your own personal opinion!

I would love for the allowance of back yard chickens!

I would love to have chickens. Every town around us can have them. There is no reason not to allow people not to have hens.

There is no valid reason to not allow backyard hens. The majority of surrounding communities allow it witj minimal complaint. Rather than being behind the times due to the unknown, why not catch up with our neighbors and be allowed the same things. Fear is not progress, and majority rules isn't either. There is a small select group requesting a small specific thing that could benefit the majority if allowed.

Thanks for asking for feedback.

There is no valid reason for why they have denied residential backyard hens.

Other Comments

Residence need the opportunity for food sovereignty (gardens, chickens, bees, etc.)

Would love to be able to have hens in my backyard. My children have been wanting them for years now. Please consider this.

Category 1, "Extremely Important"
Condo/Duplex
Sustainable housing
Affordable housing
Unattached homes for seniors
Leave our open spaces alone. No more developments. Leave farms alone
More green space, stop building
Condo
Park space
Disability housing (ADA housing) close to bus routes, etc.
Affordable Housing
"Tiny" homes
No more houses
Farmland
Villas
one level town homes
one level housing
Low cost 1 br. rentals not sec. 8, but for young adults just starting out.
Keeping current farmland
Affordable
less is more
Single level dwellings
Shelter for homeless
upscale housing
No more development
Affordable single family homes
no more development
Rambler type housing. NOT 3 story housing.
Single level homes (affordable)
limited income housing - affordable housing
Planned Communities
villas
Villas
Detached townhome/Villa homes (not low quality)
No more please don't build on the remaining farms. We moved out of Woodbury for that reason
Housing for Special Needs adults
Affordable Housing/rent caps
market rate homes
work force housing
Affordable Rental and Ownership
The city doesn't need any more housing developments. Stop taking open space and turning it into developments with overprices houses!! We are not Woodbury and who wants to be?
Coop - Senior living only, Housing (also) #5 - Detached Townhomes.
Affordable $200,000 single family homes
month to month temporary housing
Mixed Use

green spaces
Market rate Senior handicap housing with wide doorways and oversized attached garages- Town House
Affordable Senior Housing
Low cost housing, not $300,000+ homes
Housing affordable to lower and middle class families
Single family home with large lots (over an acre)
Affordable housing. Housing less than 300k
Affordable Housing
Affordable low income housing throughout the city.
Low income. (Not affordable which is too high for Seniors on fixed income my rent goes up every yr.)
Low income residential areas
Subsidized
Affordable.
Affordable single family houses
Maintaining local farms
Income based
Safe, quality housing for low-income folks
Larger lot properties
Affordable single family homes
Need smaller homes! Houses being built are huge!
Housing with Larger (1 acre or more) Lots
Stop destroying Cottage Grove by building so many houses! Preserve our city as it was intended by keeping farms, wild life, and a small community.

Too much new housing development without necessarily planning and development of ancillary
More affordable single family homes
Natural park spaces along the river - not man-made parks
NO MORE HOUSING ESPECIALLY AT MISSISSIPPI DUNES!!
Less Pizza fast food, better variety
Too much growth. Reduce houses and plan better for community areas and business
Affordable Housing
Stop building houses. We used to have a small community with plenty of farmers.
New Construction
Detached senior homes on large lots WITH BASEMENTS
Affordable housing, NOT $400,000+ homes
Shopping, food, sports and things for kids to do
single-level homes for aging adults who do not want/need to live in communal living but have mobility issues precluding use of stairs
Smaller Single level housing

We do not need anymore housing. We have enough already in place. You need to leave green space and farms. It's why a lot of us love cottage grove. We do NOT want to be a new Woodbury.
Restaurants are needed badly
Affordable housing
better fitness facilities
Low Income housing
Nice homes on large lots and protected rural spaces

There isn't anything like safe Fraser housing for those with High Functioning Autism that want to live on there own but need the support and reminders of an adult.

Category 2
Villa
affordable one level townhomes. New ones starting at $400,000 is not affordable to most seniors
own house
Affordable housing
Condominiums
Larger Senior Center - passage of referendum
Housing for special needs people
ADVs
Multi Family Homes
Twin Homes
affordable senior housing based on income
Villas
No buildings, just woods
Houses with land
Nursing home and transitional care
More affordable new homes.
affordable housing
Affordable Housing
Detached Townhomes
Reasonably Priced Senior Townhome
Tiny Houses Development
Starter homes/first time homeowner affordable options
Farms
Affordable housing
AFFORDABLE single family senior homes. Homes with no basement should not be priced in the $400,000 range.
Affordable housing, no matter if it's apartments or single family homes. $400k for a new starter home is outrageous.
Affordable Duplex affordable homes new construction are 400k plus
Beginner level homes. Not ones that start at $400k
Affordable safe housing
There are WAY too many new single family homes going in! That are also way too big and expensive- this is not Woodbury.
Anything but senior housing or low income apts/townhomes
Affordable housing that is not a townhome or an apartment.
Housing for adults with disabilities
People who need help finding places
nursing homes/assisted living
Affordable Housing
Place for homeless
Retirement community with detached housing.
Affordable Housing
First buyer houses

Anything but the below
Affordable housing
Housing affordability is through the roof.
Chicken coop
Homes w MIL apartments
Category 3
Farms
Land-open
housing - ramblers updated/multigenerational homes
Affordable
50 plus living
farms
condos
condo's
small, cheap, starter homes
duplex
Single level housing
Resort?
Low cost housing
affordable Rent
Communities like Highland Park - But traffic needs to be addressed - Put 61 & Innovations
limiting new opportunities
Single family houses for different sizes of families
Single patio homes, single family homes in affordable range $200-300,000
Larger acre (1+acre) lots - single family
Place for kids and adults to gather for fun year round. Like, arcade, community room etc
One level homes
Anything is better than more apartments and townhomes
Anything before more senior housing or apartments, alreany destroying the beautiful wooded area on Hardwood.
Condos
Villas
Condominiums
Other homes outside of single family are not of importance to me & I believe we have plenty of toenhomes, apts & senior living. I would like to see more luxury home developments so that people with larger budgets dont feel they need to move out of Cottage Grove to fit their needs.
Affordable housing
Camping
Affordable housing for Seniors not Section 8
Affordable entry level single family homes
Villas
Low income
Affordable housing
Villas

New housing that is under $300,000

villa homes

Affordable housing

Category 4

Section 8

Mother-in-law homes/mini trailers for them in the backyard or driveway

I don't want to see Cottage Grove being developed like Woodbury, with a new apartment building or other large density housing options popping up all over

Duplex

Small single family home developments

Rental houses

Mobile Homes, Small houses

Low income housing

Mobile Homes

Temporary Shelter

Nursing Homes

Rentals

Nothing written in space provided.

Hud housing

no more apt

Tiny house

Anything besides apartment complexes

Don’t want apartments

Mid level or hybrid housing that can give the best of single family and multi family.

Condos

Acerage

Anything besides 4-5 story apartment building right next to new single family homes. Apartments should be close to fitness centers, shopping, restaurants.

Twin homes or mother in law home or multi generational homes (grandma and grandpa living in a unit)

Condominium

Lot/land only

Senior housing does not matter to me at all so I placed it last

Rentals

Affordable housing for those who do not qualify for section 8. For an individual who makes $40K annually.

Condo

Bulk living quarters

Anything but apartment complexes built like the on one 80th which is an eyesore and in a stupid location.Multifamily dwellings should be invisible surrounded by lovely landscaping and amenities not plunked on top of a hill at the crest of the busiest, noisiest street in town....dorks!

We need affordable townhouse rentals and affordable apartment rentals. Not luxurious but not low income. The townhouses being built are the cost of houses. A better selection of newer townhouse options that are not high end would be nice

Housing developments with amenities

rental housing

Villa homes
No more apartments
Duplexes

They need to cap the amount of builders in the community. Large builders should controlled.

Category 5, "Not at all Important"
low income housing
low-income
Affordable rentals would be #1
Trailer Park
1 level condo's mid range
To much Chicago crime influence, if not why have "Little Chicago" Complexes!
Mobile homes
Low Rent
rental properties
complex
open & accepting voucher for wash co programs
Affordable housing
Section 8
Trailer Park
need affordable housing
new developments
Rentals ie: Air BnB
Affordable housing
Senior Housing. Housing for people who make more than $79,000.00 that do not cost $3,000.00 a month.
assisted living facilities that accept gov't services
open space
cookie cutter HOA developments
Affordable to someone on Soc. Sec. !
tinyhome community
low income/income based
Condos & Trailers
Assisted Living
One level townhomes. Did the referendum pass?
Mobile Homes
Parking for such
Affordable single family housing on decent sized lots with basements- Pricing is ridiculous
Affordable Housing
Duplex
Low Income
Trailer Park?
low income housing
Mobile homes
Rental
Place for seniors to learn about different programs for them not costly

We don't need anymore apartment complexes
Low income housing
Tailor
more land availability
Affordable Single Family
Low Rentals
Mixed neighborhoods
Single Level Townhomes
Low Income/Section 8 housing
Less than $350,000 homes and single level townhomes.
duplex
Affordable
Married family homes (affordable)
Subsidized housing
Affordable low income housing!
Any housing rental owned by a corporation
Stop building on hardwood area! It’s beautiful! Don’t destroy that peaceful place.
I think we need new, smaller, actually affordable single family homes. The half a million and up homes will not keep our recently graduated students living here
Government housing
Need more rural spaces not parks
Mobile homes
Assisted living
Low cost single family homes. Small homes.
Allow multi family living! Duplex, triplex, quad, side by sides
I believe we have enough low income housing. I would love more affordable single family homes. And less higher end homes.
I do not have an other
Trailer homes etc
From what I have observed all of the above are currently being developed
Low income housing
Enough housing people are being packed in like sardines and cottage grove is appealing because it had small town feel
Trailer park
Villas
Section 8
Very Satisfied to see that no "homeless encampments" exist in Cottage Grove.
I don’t want to be like woodbury
Condos
1 level townhomes 1 bedroom and den
Stand alone villas
We should have at least 1 hotel even motel
Housing for low income
No more section 8 housings
Affordable Senior housing; like HUD
Low income housing
motels
Hotels
Homeless shelters

Startet homes
Lake home
Student Hostel facility
Stop building…. We are full
House boats
Hotels
Trailer parks
section 8 apartments
any mass housing
Low income housing
Condos
Place for Seniors again for activities. It seems that Cottage Grove don't care anymore about their Seniors. Jut growth and raising taxes..
Affordable living for single person or single income families

They are all equally important in order to maintain a balanced and inclusive community.
Low income
Manufactured Housing
Conodos
Location
Hotels
Affordable Apartments for young adults
Macmansions - the expensive, space wasting edifices currently springing up around the established Cottage Grove.
Low Income housing
Low income housing / affordable housing
affordable renting options
Condos
Single level town homes
Multi Generational Living
Not liking all the McMansions
Don’t need anymore new anything in the area keep the city the way it is. Less is more.
Rental houses/townhouses
Mobile home park
Condominiums
The better the service, the better the service
Single affordable senior one level townhomes. Also a place for Seniors to get together. No place now for them in C. G. or anywhere.
Low cost rentals for single young adults (under $1000 per month)

No Category Indicated
Low income options
too much building of houses
mentally & physically challenged adult housing
Affordable Senior Housing
Low income, affordable
One story townhomes for seniors
stop building!

Twin or duplex units
Affordable housing
low income housing
Balanced approach
No need for More
McMansions
one level housing
Condo's
Need condos to OWN for independent living and more single level townhomes in price range such as Auburn Woods
They are ALL important. Just make sure there are green spaces and are built with the environment and climate change in mind.

Community Survey

The City of Cottage Grove's motto is "Where Pride and Prosperity Meet." As the City continues to thrive and grow, we need your input! We want to hear from you… how are we doing? We'd like to know what aspects of the City make you proud and happy to call Cottage Grove home and we want to hear about services, amenities or opportunities you feel we could improve upon.

The City portion of your taxpayer dollars are used to provide emergency and public safety services, transportation, water infrastructure, high-quality parks, trails and recreation services. Our development teams help secure businesses and employers within our community and ensure our homes, buildings and properties are safe, valuable and accessible!

Please take a few moments to complete the brief survey below. Your answers will help guide our future policy decisions and upcoming initiatives. By filling out the survey online (scan the QR Code above with your smartphone camera) or mailing back a complete hard copy, you will be entered into a drawing for one of six, $100 gift cards for a grocer right here in Cottage Grove. Be sure to provide an email or physical address in the space provided, and thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts and help us move Cottage Grove forward!

1. Resident Information (Required only if you wish to be included in the drawing)

   Full Name _____

   Address _____

2. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the quality of life in Cottage Grove.

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Cottage Grove as a place to live	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Cottage Grove as a place to work	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Cottage Grove's environmental sustainability efforts	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Cottage Grove's efforts to promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive community	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Cottage Grove's opportunities to enjoy arts and culture	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The overall direction that Cottage Grove is going	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

3. Please rate your satisfaction with the following services provided by Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation.

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Recreational programs and events	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Recreational and athletic facilities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Maintenance of City parks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Maintenance of walking and biking trails in City parks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The amount of walking and biking trails in the City	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

4. Please rate your satisfaction with the following services provided by Cottage Grove Public Safety.

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
The City's effort to prevent crime	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Police Department's response time	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Fire Department's response time	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The City's Emergency Medical Services	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Speed enforcement, awareness and education	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Officer engagement with the community	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The overall quality of Public Safety services	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

5. Please rate your satisfaction with the following services provided by Cottage Grove Public Works.

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Maintenance of roads	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Maintenance of streetlights	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Maintenance of traffic signals	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Maintenance of sidewalks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Snow removal on City streets	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Street and median landscaping	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall ease of travel within the City	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The overall quality of the City's Public Works services	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

6. Please rate your satisfaction with the following housing and development projects in Cottage Grove.

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Shopping opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Dining opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Housing opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Health and wellness services and facilities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Indoor recreation and fitness facilities	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Outdoor parks and recreation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. Please rank, in order, the following housing opportunities by importance to you, 1 being "extremely important" and 5 being "not at all important."

- ☐ Single Family Homes
- ☐ Townhomes
- ☐ Apartment Complexes
- ☐ Senior Housing
- ☐ Other _____

8. The Metropolitan Council defines affordable housing as housing that is affordable to low- and moderate- income families. To qualify for affordable housing, households must make at, or below, 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). In 2021, 80% of the AMI for a family of 4 in the Twin Cities area is $79,900. Please rank, in order, the following affordable housing opportunities by importance to you, 1 being "extremely important" and 5 being "not at all important."

- ☐ Workforce Housing
- ☐ Housing Choice (Section 8) Voucher
- ☐ Low Income Housing Tax Credit
- ☐ Habitat for Humanity
- ☐ Low Income Public Housing

9. What do you think are the most serious issues facing Cottage Grove today?

   Please choose the top three.

   - ◯ Lack of jobs
   - ◯ Lack of retail/restaurants
   - ◯ Drinking water
   - ◯ City government
   - ◯ Taxes
   - ◯ Crime
   - ◯ Road repair
   - ◯ Lack of youth activities
   - ◯ Lack of centralized downtown
   - ◯ Pollution
   - ◯ Too much growth
   - ◯ Not enough growth

10. What is your primary source of information about the City?

    - ◯ Cottage Grove Reports
    - ◯ Local Newspaper
    - ◯ City Website
    - ◯ Cable Television
    - ◯ City Meetings
    - ◯ Word of mouth
    - ◯ Social Media

11. If you would like to share any additional comments or suggestions for the City, please enter them below.

DECISION RESOURCES, LTD.
3128 Dean Court
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416

City of Cottage Grove
Residential Survey
FINAL JUNE 2012

Hello, I'm _____ of Decision Resources, Ltd., a polling firm located in Minneapolis. We have been retained by the City of Cottage Grove to speak with a random sample of residents about issues facing the community. This survey is being conducted because the City Council and City Staff are interested in your opinions and suggestions about current and future city needs. I want to assure you that all individual responses will be held strictly confidential; only summaries of the entire sample will be reported.

1. Approximately how many years have you lived in Cottage Grove?

LESS THAN TWO YEARS	4%
TWO TO FIVE YEARS	10%
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	19%
TEN TO TWENTY YEARS	27%
20 TO 30 YEARS	21%
OVER THIRTY YEARS	20%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

2. What do you like most about living in Cottage Grove?

DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%
LOCATION	12%
FRIENDLY PEOPLE	15%
QUIET/PEACEFUL	26%
SMALL TOWN FEEL	20%
RURAL/OPEN SPACE	5%
CLOSE FAMILY/FRIENDS	7%
PARKS/TRAILS	2%
HOUSING/NEIGHBORHOOD	9%
SCATTERED	4%

3. What do you think is the most serious issue facing Cottage Grove today?

DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%
NOTHING	15%
HIGH TAXES	16%
TOO MUCH GROWTH	8%
CRIME	4%
LACK OF JOBS	14%
HOME FORECLOSURES	5%
LACK OF RETAIL	14%
POLLUTION ISSUES	5%
NOTHING FOR YOUTH	9%
CITY GOVERNMENT	3%
SCATTERED	2%

4.	How would you rate the quality of life in Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?	EXCELLENT.....29% GOOD.....66% ONLY FAIR.....5% POOR.....1% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

Let's talk about city services for a moment...

5.	How would you rate the value you receive, when you consider the property taxes you pay and the services you receive -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?	EXCELLENT.....8% GOOD.....71% ONLY FAIR.....14% POOR.....3% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5%
6.	In comparison with neighboring areas, do you consider total property taxes in your community to be very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low?	VERY HIGH.....8% SOMEWHAT HIGH.....37% ABOUT AVERAGE.....48% SOMEWHAT LOW.....1% VERY LOW.....1% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5%

I would like to read you a list of a few city services. For each one, please tell me whether you would rate the quality of the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor? (ROTATE)

		EXCL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK/R
7.	Police protection?	46%	50%	4%	0%	1%
8.	Fire protection?	54%	40%	1%	0%	5%
9.	Park maintenance?	35%	54%	6%	1%	4%
10.	Trail maintenance?	31%	51%	7%	1%	10%
11.	City-sponsored recreation programs?	11%	52%	13%	6%	19%
12.	City street repair and maintenance?	5%	59%	31%	5%	0%

Thinking about another topic....

13.	Are there areas in the City of Cottage Grove where you do not feel safe?	YES.....11% NO.....89% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

IF "YES," ASK: (n=43)

14.	In which areas do you not feel safe?	PARKS.....9% TRAILS.....7% APARTMENTS.....12% LOW INCOME AREAS.....54% BY LIBRARY.....9% SCATTERED AREAS.....9%
15.	Do you feel safe in your immediate neighborhood walking alone at night?	YES.....84% NO .....16% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
16.	How would you rate the amount of police patrolling in your neighborhood -- too much, about the right amount or not enough?	TOO MUCH.....0% ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT....87% NOT ENOUGH.....12% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%
17.	How would you rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in your neighborhood -- too much, about right amount or not enough?	TOO MUCH.....1% ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT....86% NOT ENOUGH.....12% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

Continuing....

The Cottage Grove park system is composed of larger community parks and smaller neighborhood parks, trails, community ballfields and soccer fields, the Ice Arena and River Oaks Golf Course. Of these facilities, which have you or members of your household used during the past year? Then, for each one you have used, please tell me if you would rate the facility as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

		NOT	EXC	GOO	FAI	POO	DKR
18.	Larger community parks, such as Highlands Park or Woodridge Park?	33%	36%	29%	3%	0%	0%
19.	Smaller neighborhood parks?	34%	31%	32%	3%	0%	0%
20.	Trails?	31%	35%	28%	5%	1%	1%
21.	Community ballfields and soccer fields?	52%	18%	26%	4%	1%	0%
22.	The Ice Arena?	67%	11%	19%	2%	0%	0%
23.	River Oaks Golf Course?	62%	13%	20%	4%	0%	1%

The City may ask residents to vote on a bond referendum to develop and expand park system facilities. Although no decision has been made, I would like to read you a list of components which could be included in the proposal. For each one, please tell me if you would strongly support a property tax increase for that purpose, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose a property

tax increase for it. If you have no opinion, just say so.... (ROTATE)

	STS	SMS	SMO	STO	DKR
24. Construction of an outdoor aquatic facility, with zero-depth entry access, shallow play area for young children, play area for older children, slides, swimming lanes, picnic areas and lockers rooms?	29%	27%	24%	18%	3%
25. Completion of Hamlet Park, including an additional baseball field complex, large playground, trails, splash pads, new building shelters, additional parking lots and completion of 95th Street access route?	29%	28%	22%	19%	3%
26. Renovation of existing pool site as a youth play center with indoor playground equipment, outdoor play area, snack bar, and birthday party rental areas?	26%	30%	22%	19%	3%
27. Acquisition of land east of Lamar Park for future park expansion?	13%	30%	27%	22%	9%

Now, I would like to briefly re-read the list.

28. Please tell me which one, if any, of those components you would place as the top priority?

29. Of the remaining components, which one would you rank as the second priority?

30. Is there any one component you are most opposed to? (IF "YES," ASK:) Which one?

	TOP	SEC	OPP
CONSTRUCTION OF AN OUTDOOR AQUATIC FACILITY	37%	16%	13%
COMPLETION OF HAMLET PARK	21%	26%	3%
CONSTRUCTION OF YOUTH PLAY CENTER	16%	26%	7%
ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR FUTURE PARK EXPANSION	3%	4%	33%
ALL (VOL.)	0%	0%	15%
NONE (VOL.)	23%	27%	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%	2%	4%

Funding for the bond referendum would require a property tax increase.....

31. Which of these statements best describes your feelings?
    A) I would vote AGAINST almost any tax increase for park and recreation facilities,
    B) I would vote for a tax increase under some conditions; but against it under other conditions;
    C) I would vote FOR almost any tax increase for park and recreation facilities?

STATEMENT A	27%
STATEMENT B	61%
STATEMENT C	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Suppose the City of Cottage Grove proposed a parks and recreational facilities referendum which you considered to be a reasonable approach. The proposal would be placed on a referendum ballot for approval by the voters. In order to fund construction, residents would be asked to approve a property tax increase for a twenty year period.

32. How much would you be willing to see your property taxes increase to fund this construction? Let's say, would you be willing to see your monthly property taxes increase by $____? (CHOOSE RANDOM STARTING POINT; MOVE UP OR DOWN DEPENDING ON RESPONSE) How about $____ per month?

NOTHING	36%
$2.00	9%
$4.00	15%
$6.00	17%
$8.00	5%
$10.00	5%
$12.00	5%
DON'T KNOW	7%
REFUSED	1%

I would now like to ask your opinion of a specific parks and recreational facilities bond referendum proposal....

The proposal would include construction of an outdoor aquatic facility; completion of Hamlet Park; construction of youth play center at the existing pool site; and acquisition of land east of Lamar Park for future park expansion.

Residents would be asked to approve an $13 million dollar bond referendum to fund the construction. The bonds would be under-written through an increase of property taxes of about $5.75 per month or about $69.00 per year on a $200,000 home. Owners of a $400,000 would see an increase about $11.50 per month or about $138.00 per year.

33.	If the election were today, would you support or oppose this bond referendum? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?	STRONGLY SUPPORT.....16% SUPPORT.....38% OPPOSE.....18% STRONGLY OPPOSE.....22% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%

IF A RESPONSE IS GIVEN, ASK:

34.	Could you tell me one or two reasons for your decision?	NEED AMENITIES.....42% COST IS REASONABLE....10% NOT NEEDED.....8% TAXES ARE TOO HIGH....24% COST IS TOO HIGH.....4% MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES..6% GOOD FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES.....5% SCATTERED.....1%

Changing topics....

35.	Other than voting, do you feel that if you wanted to, you could have a say about the way the City of Cottage Grove runs things?	YES.....54% NO .....40% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%
36.	How much do you feel you know about the work of the Mayor and City Council -- a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or none at all?	A GREAT DEAL.....6% A FAIR AMOUNT.....52% VERY LITTLE.....32% NONE AT ALL.....10% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
37.	From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) And do you feel strongly that way?	STRONGLY APPROVE.....4% APPROVE.....65% DISAPPROVE.....15% STRONGLY DISAPPROVE....3% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....13%

38. How much first hand contact have you had with the Cottage Grove City staff -- quite a lot, some, very little, or none?

QUITE A LOT.....4%
SOME.....51%
VERY LITTLE.....33%
NONE.....12%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

39. From what you have heard or seen, how would you rate the job performance of the Cottage Grove City staff -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT.....5%
GOOD.....76%
ONLY FAIR.....12%
POOR.....1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....7%

Moving on.....

40. What is your principal source of information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%
NOTHING.....2%
CITY NEWSLETTER.....28%
LOCAL NEWSPAPER.....39%
CITY WEBSITE.....10%
CABLE TELEVISION.....8%
CITY MEETINGS.....4%
WORD OF MOUTH.....9%

41. In general, how well informed are you about the Cottage Grove Park system and its facilities -- are you very well informed, somewhat well informed, not too well informed, or not at all informed?

VERY WELL INFORMED....16%
SOMEWHAT WELL INFORM..59%
NOT TOO WELL INFORMED.19%
NOT AT ALL INFORMED....5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

42. Which of the following sources of information would you most rely on for information about a park bond referendum proposal from the City of Cottage Grove -- the city newsletter, articles in the local newspaper, local cable television, neighborhood meetings, city staff and elected officials, mailings from the City and voter groups, the city website, friends and neighbors, or something else? (IF "SOMETHING ELSE," ASK:) What would that be?

CITY NEWSLETTER.....25%
ARTICLES IN NEWSPAPER.34%
LOCAL CABLE TELEVISION.7%
NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS..4%
CITY STAFF/ELECTED OFF.2%
MAILINGS FROM CITY....10%
CITY WEBSITE.....11%
FRIENDS/NEIGHBORS.....6%
SOMETHING ELSE.....0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

Now, just a few more questions for demographic purposes....

As you may know, there are many types of elections. Some years we have Presidential elections, other years Gubernatorial elections.

In odd years, we also have some local and school district elections.

43.	In the past, have you voted in all elections, most elections, some elections or do you rarely vote?	ALL.....63% MOST.....24% SOME.....8% RARELY.....5% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
44.	On a scale of one to ten, where "one" means "not at all likely" and "ten" means "absolutely certain," how likely are you to vote in the upcoming November Presidential election?	ONE.....1% TWO.....0% THREE.....1% FOUR.....1% FIVE.....1% SIX.....2% SEVEN.....3% EIGHT.....6% NINE.....3% TEN.....80% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

Could you please tell me how many people in each of the following age groups live in your household.

45.	Persons 65 or over?	NONE.....83% ONE.....9% TWO OR MORE.....9%
46.	Adults under 65?	NONE.....10% ONE.....19% TWO.....60% THREE OR MORE.....11%
47.	School-aged children or preschoolers?	NONE.....55% ONE.....12% TWO.....24% THREE OR MORE.....10%
48.	Do you own or rent your present residence?	OWN.....89% RENT.....11% REFUSED.....0%
49.	What is your age, please? (READ CATEGORIES, IF NEEDED)	18-24.....2% 25-34.....16% 35-44.....24% 45-54.....23% 55-64.....22% 65 AND OVER.....13%

50. Gender (DO NOT ASK)	MALE.....49% FEMALE.....51%
51. PRECINCT	ONE.....4% TWO.....9% THREE.....10% FOUR.....10% FIVE.....8% SIX.....9% SEVEN.....8% EIGHT.....8% NINE.....8% TEN.....9% ELEVEN.....8% TWELVE.....10%

Decision Resources Ltd.

2008 City of Cottage Grove

Residential Survey

Volume One:
Frequencies, Analysis and Graphics

Decision Resources, Ltd.
May 2008

3128 Dean Court • Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416 • (612) 920-0337 • Fax (612)929-6166

Survey Overview

Decision Resources, Ltd., is pleased to present the results of this study to the City of Cottage Grove. This section provides a brief introduction to the specifications of the survey and a guide to the organization of the written analysis.

While the most statistically sound procedures have been used to collect and analyze the information presented herein, it must always be kept in mind that surveys are not predictions. They are designed to measure public opinion within identifiable limits of accuracy at *specific points in time*. This survey is in no way a prediction of opinions, perceptions, or actions at any future point in time. After all, in public policy analysis, the major task is to impact these revealed opinions in a constructive fashion.

The Principal Investigator for this study was Dr. William D. Morris; the Project Director overseeing all phases of the research and analysis was Ms. Diane Traxler.

Research Design

This study contains the results of a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected residents in the City of Cottage Grove. Survey responses were gathered by professional interviewers across the community between December 12th, 2007 and January 16th, 2008.

The average interview took 26 minutes.

All respondents interviewed in this study were part of a randomly generated sample of the city. In general, random samples such as this yield results projectable to their respective universe within ± 5.0 percent in 95 out of 100 cases.

Interviews were conducted by **Decision Resources, Ltd.**, trained personnel from telephone banks in St. Paul, Minnesota. Approximately twenty percent of all interviews were independently validated for procedure and content by a Decision Resources, Ltd., supervisor. Completed interviews were edited and coded at the company's headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Statistical analysis and cross-tabulations were produced by the company's CfMC Mentor Analysis System and SPSS 15.0 FOR WINDOWS.

Organization of the Study

The results of this study are presented in the following order:

The ***Analysis*** consists of a written report of the major findings. The results contained herein were also presented verbally to the client.

The ***Questionnaire*** reproduces the survey instrument as it was used in the interviewing process. This section also includes a response frequency distribution for each question.

Any further questions the reader may have about this study which are not answered in this report should be directed to either Dr. Morris or Ms. Traxler.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Residential Demographics 7
Residential Demographics 8
Residential Longevity 8
Household Composition 9
Marital Status 10
Home Ownership 11
Age of Respondent 11
Dog Owners 11
Household Income 12
Gender 12
Region of the City 12
Summary and Conclusions 13

Chapter Two: Quality of Life Issues 14
Quality of Life Issues 15
Like Most 15
Most Serious Issue 16
Quality of Life 17
Closest Connection 17
See Cottage Grove 18
Headed in the Right Direction 19
Summary and Conclusions 20

Chapter Three: Development Issues 21
Development Issues 22
Community Characteristics 22
Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater Site 31
Industrial Park 33
Senior Housing 34
East Ravine Master Plan 34
Summary and Conclusions 36

Chapter Four: City Taxes and Services 37
City Taxes and Services 38
Percentage of Property Tax 38
Tax Comparison 39
Tax Increase to Maintain 40
Tax Increase to Improve or Enhance 41
City Service Ratings 42
General Value of City Services 49
Quality of Drinking Water 50
Garbage Collection 51
Summary and Conclusions 52

Chapter Five: Public Safety 53
Public Safety 54
Not Feel Safe 54
Amount of Police Patrolling 56
Amount of Traffic Enforcement 56
Outlawing Certain Breeds 57
Summary and Conclusions 58

Chapter Six: Parks and Recreation 59
Parks and Recreation 60
Facility Usage 60
Facilities Meet the Needs of your Household 65
Participation in Recreation Programs 66
Leave the City for Parks and Recreation 68
Amount of Open Space 68
Park Improvements 69
Construction of a Community Center 71
Summary and Conclusions 73

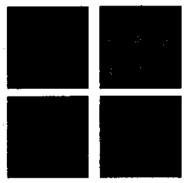
Chapter Seven: Transportation 75
Transportation 76
Commute to Work 76
Intra-City Travel 79
Use of Public Transportation 80
Red Rock Commuter Rail 82
"Round About" 83
Summary and Conclusions 85

Chapter Eight: City Government 86
City Government 87
Empowerment 87
Mayor and City Council 87
City Staff 90
Contact with City Hall 92
Summary and Conclusions 94

Chapter Nine: Strategic Goals 96
Strategic Goals 97
Importance of Strategic Goals 97
Rating of City on Strategic Goals 100
Summary and Conclusions 104

Chapter Ten: Communications 106
Communications 107
Principal Source 107
Preferred Source 107
Sources of Information 108
City Newsletter 114
Cable Television 115
Internet Access 116
On-line City Services and Information 119
High-Speed Wireless Internet 122
Summary and Conclusions 124

Chapter Eleven: Final Thoughts 125
Final Thoughts 126



Decision
Resources Ltd.

Analysis

Chapter One: Residential Demographics

Residential Demographics

Residents of the City of Cottage Grove were asked a series of questions about their demographic backgrounds. These questions were asked for two reasons: first, to validate this sample against the updated 2000 U.S. Census findings; and, second, to track any differences between subgroups and the rest of the population. There were no statistically significant differences between the findings of this survey and the census data. And, throughout the course of this study, subgroup differences will be discussed.

Residential Longevity

Respondents were asked:

> ***Approximately how many years have you lived in Cottage Grove?***

The typical resident lived in the community for 15.0 years:

LESS THAN FIVE YEARS	12%
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	25%
TEN TO TWENTY YEARS	28%
20 TO 30 YEARS	18%
OVER THIRTY YEARS	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-seven percent lived there for ten years or less, while 36%, for over 20 years.

"Two to five years" is reported more often by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"Five to ten years" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Ten to twenty years" is posted most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- households with children
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Twenty to thirty years" is cited at a higher rate by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

"Over thirty years" is stated most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Household Composition

Residents of Cottage Grove were asked:

Could you please tell me how many people in each of the following age groups live in your household.

Four age ranges were then read:

Persons 65 or over?

Seventeen percent of the city's households contain seniors:

NONE	83%
ONE	10%
TWO OR MORE	7%

Adults under 65?

Nine percent of the households are composed solely of senior citizens:

NONE	9%

ONE	13%
TWO	68%
THREE OR MORE	11%

A majority of households contain two adults.

School-aged children?

Forty-five percent of the Cottage Grove households contain school-aged children:

NONE	55%
ONE	18%
TWO	21%
THREE OR MORE	6%

Most households with school-aged children have more than one in residence.

Pre-schoolers?

Eighteen percent of the community's households contain pre-schoolers:

NONE	83%
ONE	14%
TWO OR MORE	4%

The community norm is a single pre-schooler in these households.

Marital Status

Residents were queried:

> ***Which of the following best describes your household:***
> ***A. Single, no other family at home.***
> ***B. Single parent with children at home.***
> ***C. Married or partnered, with children at home.***
> ***D. Married or partnered with no children or no children at home.***
> ***E. Something else.***

Nine percent are single or single parents:

SINGLE/NO OTHER FAMILY	7%
SINGLE PARENT	2%
MARRIED/PARTNERED/CHILDREN	51%
MARRIED/PARTNERED/NO CHILDREN	40%

SOMETHING ELSE 1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Forty percent are married or partnered empty-nesters, while 51% are married or partnered with children at home.

Home Ownership

Residents were asked:

Do you own or rent your present residence?

Ninety-one percent own their present residence:

OWN 91%
RENT 9%
REFUSED 0%

Only nine percent currently rent.

Age of Respondent

Residents were queried:

What is your age, please?

The typical adult resident is 45.9 years old:

18-24 ..... 2%
25-34 ..... 13%
35-44 ..... 32%
45-54 ..... 25%
55-64 ..... 20%
65 AND OVER 10%

Fifteen percent are under 35 years old, while ten percent are over 64 years old.

Dog Owners

Respondents were asked:

Do you own a dog?

Forty-four percent of the households in the community own a dog:

YES	44%
NO	56%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Household Income

Residents were asked:

> ***And now, for one final question, keeping in mind that your answers are held strictly confidential....***
>
> ***Is your pre-tax yearly household income over or under $75,000? Is it over $100,000? Is it over $125,000? Is it under $50,000?***

The median pre-tax household income is $82,000 per year:

UNDER $50,000	13%
$50,001-$75,000	23%
$75,001-$100,000	30%
$100,000-$125,000	14%
OVER $125,000	8%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	12%

Thirteen percent post incomes under $50,000, and eight percent indicate incomes over $125,000.

Gender

The gender of each respondent was noted:

MALE	49%
FEMALE	51%

Women outnumber men in the sample by two percent.

Region of the City

The precinct of residence of each respondent was also noted:

PRECINCT 1	5%

PRECINCT 2 ..... 10%
PRECINCT 3 ..... 9%
PRECINCT 4 ..... 6%
PRECINCT 5 ..... 8%
PRECINCT 6 ..... 10%
PRECINCT 7 ..... 9%
PRECINCT 8 ..... 8%
PRECINCT 9 ..... 9%
PRECINCT 10 ..... 10%
PRECINCT 11 ..... 8%
PRECINCT 12 ..... 10%

For further analysis purposes, the city was divided into four regions. Precincts 1-3 contain 24% of the households. Precincts 4-6 also contain 24% of the households in the city. Precincts 7-9 have 26% of the households, while Precincts 10-12 contain 28% of the city's households.

Summary and Conclusions

The typical adult resident lived in Cottage Grove for 15.0 years. Thirty-seven percent lived there for ten years or less, while 36% resided there for more than 20 years. The median adult age is 45.9 years old. Fifteen percent report ages under 35 years old, and ten percent post ages over 65 years old. Women outnumber men by two percent in the sample.

Seventeen percent report seniors in their households; nine percent of households are composed exclusively of senior citizens. Sixty-eight percent of the households contain two adults. Forty-five percent of the households have school-aged children, while 18% have pre-schoolers. Fifty-one percent of the households are married or partnered, with children at home; forty percent are married or partnered with no children or no children at home. Nine percent are single households, most without children. Forty-four percent own a dog.

Ninety-one percent own their present homes. The median pre-tax household income is $82,000.00 annually. Thirteen percent post incomes of under $50,000.00, and eight percent post incomes over $125,000.00. Twenty-four percent live in Precincts 1-2, and the same percentage reside in Precincts 4-6. Twenty-six percent live in Precincts 7-9, while 28% reside in Precincts 10-12.

Chapter Two: Quality of Life Issues

Quality of Life Issues

Cottage Grove residents were asked a short series of questions about their quality of life. First, the aspect of the city they like most and the aspect they think is the most serious issue facing the community were evaluated. Then, a general quality of life rating was solicited. The resident's strength of connectedness was discussed. The perception of the community, itself, was measured, followed by residents' feelings about the future.

Like Most

Respondents were asked:

What do you like most about living in Cottage Grove?

"Small town feel," at 17%, ranks first, followed by "quiet and peaceful" and "close to job," both at 12%:

QUIET/PEACEFUL	12%
CLOSE TO FAMILY	10%
CLOSE TO JOB	12%
SMALL TOWN FEEL	17%
SHOPPING	5%
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	4%
SAFE	5%
NEIGHBORHOOD	6%
SCHOOL	4%
FRIENDLY PEOPLE	9%
RURAL/OPEN SPACE	8%
LOCATION	7%
SCATTERED	3%

Ten percent like being "close to family," while nine percent cite "friendly people," eight percent appreciate "rural character and open space," and seven percent, "location."

"Small town feel" is key to:

- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers

"Quiet and peaceful" is reported more often by:

- city newsletter readers
- men

"Close to job" is stated more often by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Most Serious Issue

Cottage Grove residents were queried:

What do you think is the most serious issue facing Cottage Grove today?

Thirty-two percent bemoan "too much growth:"

UNSURE	10%
NOTHING	2%
HIGH TAXES	18%
LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING	6%
TOO MUCH GROWTH	32%
LACK OF RETAIL/RESTAURANTS	11%
DRINKING WATER ISSUE	5%
CITY GOVERNMENT	3%
RISING CRIME	2%
ROAD REPAIR	2%
LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES	6%
SCATTERED	4%

Eighteen percent point to "high taxes," and 11% cite "lack of retail shopping opportunities and restaurants."

"Too much growth" is indicated more often by:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"High taxes" troubled:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

"Lack of retail and restaurants" is a concern among:

- city newsletter readers

Quality of Life

Residents were asked:

How would you rate the quality of life in Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Ninety-five percent rate the quality of life as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	23%
GOOD	72%
ONLY FAIR	4%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Only five percent are more critical.

Ratings peak among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

Closest Connection

Residents were queried:

To which of the following do you feel a closer connection to:
A) The City of Cottage Grove as a whole,
B) Your neighborhood, or
C) Your school district?

A 56% majority feel closest to "their neighborhood:"

STATEMENT A	30%
STATEMENT B	56%
STATEMENT C	12%
NONE OF ABOVE	2%

DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Thirty percent point to "Cottage Grove as a whole," and 12% to their "school district:"

"Statement A" is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years

"Statement B" is posted at a higher rate by:

- empty nesters

"Statement C" is mentioned more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- over $100,000 annual income households

See Cottage Grove

Respondents were asked:

> ***When you think about Cottage Grove, do you see it as a suburb, a city or a small town?***

Seventy-one percent see Cottage Grove as a "suburb:"

SUBURB 71%
CITY 8%
SMALL TOWN 21%
MULTIPLE 1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Twenty-one percent view Cottage Grove as a "small town."

"Suburb" is reported most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- over $100,000 annual income households

Headed in the Right Direction

Respondents were queried:

> ***All in all, do you think things in Cottage Grove are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?***

Eight-one percent post "right direction:"

RIGHT DIRECTION	81%
WRONG TRACK	16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Sixteen percent think it is "off on the wrong track."

"Right direction" is stated most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

"Wrong track" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers

Residents seeing things as "off on the wrong track" were asked a follow-up question:

> ***Why do you think things are off on the wrong track?***

Sixty-two percent think there is "too much growth:"

LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING	2%
TOO MUCH GROWTH	62%
LACK OF RESTAURANT/RETAIL	14%
DRINKING WATER ISSUE	3%
CITY GOVERNMENT	15%
LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES	3%
SCATTERED	2%

Fifteen percent blame "city government," while 14% blame the "lack of retail shopping opportunities and restaurants."

"Too much growth" is a concern among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent

"City government" is stated more often by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

"Lack of restaurants and retail" troubled:

- residents feeling empowered

Summary and Conclusions

Residents of Cottage Grove most value its quiet and peacefulness, being close to family, being close to their jobs, and, most importantly, the small town feel of the community. But, the most serious issues facing the community are identified as rapid development and high taxes. A solid 95% rate their quality of life favorably; in fact, 23% rate it as "excellent."

Fifty-six percent report they feel the closest connection to their neighborhood. An unusually large 30% are most closely connected to the City of Cottage Grove as a whole, and 12% are tied most closely to the School District. Seventy-one percent see Cottage Grove as a "suburb," and 21% think of it as a "small town." Only eight percent view it as a "city."

Eighty-one percent think things in Cottage Grove are generally headed in the right direction. Only 16% feel things are off on the wrong track. Negative evaluations are primarily based upon perceptions of too rapid growth.

Chapter Three: Development Issues

Development Issues

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about development issues facing the community. First, their feelings about the current levels of several types of development were garnered. Then, development of the Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater site, an industrial park, and additional senior housing were discussed. Finally, the process for developing the Master Plan for the East Ravine Area was evaluated.

Community Characteristics

Residents were instructed:

> ***I would like to read you a list of characteristics of a community. For each one, please tell me if you think Cottage Grove currently has too many or too much, too few or too little, or about the right amount.***

A list of eighteen types of development was read:

> ***affordable housing, defined by the Metropolitan Council as a single family home costing less than $205,000?***

A 66% majority think there is "about the right amount" of affordable housing in the community:

TOO MUCH	5%
TOO LITTLE	23%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	66%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Twenty-three percent, though, see "too little."

"Too little" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"About the right amount" is indicated most frequently by:

- households with seniors
- over $100,000 annual income households

affordable rental units?

Fifty-four percent think there is "about the right amount" of affordable rental units" in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	4%
TOO FEW	13%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	54%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	29%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

luxury rental units?

Forty-four percent think there is "about the right amount" of luxury rental units in the city:

TOO MANY	4%
TOO FEW	10%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	44%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	43%

Forty-three percent, though, have no idea about the number.

"Too few" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- residents not feeling empowered

condominiums?

Sixty-one percent see "about the right amount" of condominiums in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	5%
TOO FEW	8%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	61%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	26%

"About the right amount" is selected more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

townhouses?

Sixty-eight percent think there is "about the right amount" of townhouses in the community:

TOO MANY	16%
TOO FEW	4%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	68%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	12%

"Too many" is posted most frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those unsure about the City Council
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is stated more frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

starter homes for young families?

Sixty percent see "about the right amount" of starter homes for young families:

TOO MANY	2%
TOO FEW	31%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	60%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Thirty-one percent report "too few."

"Too few" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- over forty-four year olds

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those who do not read the city newsletter

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"move up" housing?

Seventy-eight percent think there is "about the right amount" of "move up" housing in the community:

TOO MUCH	7%
TOO LITTLE	11%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	78%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

"Too little" is posted more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good

higher cost housing?

Sixty-five percent also think there is "about the right amount" of higher cost housing in Cottage Grove:

TOO MUCH	25%
TOO LITTLE	5%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	65%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Twenty-five percent feel there is "too much."

"Too much" is indicated more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

senior housing?

Forty-nine percent see "about the right amount" of senior housing in the community:

TOO MUCH	4%
TOO LITTLE	35%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	49%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	13%

But, 35% judge the current level as "too little."

"Too little" is cited more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- men
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is mentioned more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

parks and open spaces?

Seventy-four percent think there is "about the right amount" of parks and open spaces in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW/LITTLE	24%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Twenty-four percent, though, see "too little."

"Too little" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is selected more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

trails and bikeways?

Seventy-three percent thinks there is "about the right amount" of trails and bikeways in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	25%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	73%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-five percent sees "too few."

"Too few" is mentioned most often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children

"About the right amount" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households

service businesses?

Sixty-two percent thinks Cottage Grove has "about the right amount" of service businesses:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	36%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Thirty-six percent sees "too few."

"Too few" is posted more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"About the right amount" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

retail shopping opportunities?

Sixty-five percent sees "too few" retail shopping opportunities in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	3%
TOO FEW	65%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	32%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-two percent thinks there is "about the right amount."

"Too few" is indicated most frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is posted most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

entertainment establishments?

Seventy-five percent believe there are "too few" entertainment establishments in the city:

TOO MANY	0%
TOO FEW	75%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-four percent feel Cottage Grove as "about the right amount."

"Too few" is indicated more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

dining establishments?

Seventy percent see "too few" dining establishments in the community:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	70%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	27%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Twenty-seven percent believe there is "about the right amount."

"Too few" is stated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

"About the right amount" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

day care opportunities?

Forty percent see "about the right amount" of day care opportunities in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	2%
TOO FEW	14%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	40%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	45%

Forty-five percent, though, are unsure.

"Too few" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those unsure about the City Council
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"About the right amount" is indicated more often by:

- residents working in Cottage Grove
- city newsletter readers
- households with children

full-time job opportunities?

Sixty-seven percent see "too few" full-time job opportunities:

TOO MANY	0%
TOO FEW	67%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	15%

"Too few" is selected more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

job opportunities for students?

Fifty-one percent think there are "too few" job opportunities for students in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	51%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	29%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	19%

Twenty-nine percent believe there is "about the right amount."

"Too few" is posted most frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- men
- Precincts One, Two, Three, Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is cited at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater Site

Residents were told:

> ***As you may know, the Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater will be closing and there is a proposal to redevelop the site with a large shopping center.***

They were then asked:

> ***Do you favor or oppose the development of a shopping center on this site? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 64%-35% margin, residents favor the development of a shopping center on the site:

STRONGLY FAVOR	24%
FAVOR	40%
OPPOSE	14%

STRONGLY OPPOSE	21%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

But, intense support and intense opposition are at about the same levels.

Support is higher among:

- residents for less than ten years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- over forty-four year olds

Next, respondents were queried:

Assuming this site is developed as a shopping center, what retail establishments would you like to see included?

Eighteen percent urge a "Wal-Mart," and 11% want a "Macy's:"

UNSURE	7%
NOTHING	16%
OLD NAVY	4%
HERBERGERS	8%
WAL-MART	18%
DOLLAR STORE	3%
GANDER MOUNTAIN	2%
LOWES	3%
MACY'S	11%
JC PENNY	5%
SEARS	5%
COSTCO	2%
BEST BUY	2%
SAM'S CLUB	2%
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS	2%
BARNES AND NOBLE	2%
SCATTERED	8%

But, 16% want nothing on the site.

"Wal-Mart" is key to:

- those who do not read the city newsletter

- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Nothing" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- over forty-four year olds

Industrial Park

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

> ***In the past several years, the City has tried to expand the tax base by development of an industrial park.***
>
> ***Do you support or oppose the City developing an industrial park in Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 73%-22% margin, residents support the City developing an industrial park:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	19%
SUPPORT	54%
OPPOSE	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Intense support is double the level of intense opposition.

Supporters tend to be:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably

Opponents are typically:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Senior Housing

Respondents were queried:

> ***The City has established a priority to develop housing for senior citizens. As a result, the Norris Square and White Pines projects are being developed.***
>
> ***Would you favor or oppose continued efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 65%-29% margin, residents favor continued efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove:

STRONGLY FAVOR	17%
FAVOR	48%
OPPOSE	20%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Once again, intense support is almost double intense opposition.

Support increases among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

It decreases among:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those who do not read the city newsletter

East Ravine Master Plan

Residents were informed:

> ***As you may know, in 2004 and 2005 the City, using public input, developed a master plan for the development of the East Ravine area.***

They were then asked:

> ***Prior to this survey, were you aware of the development of the East Ravine master plan?***

A solid 58% report awareness of the development of the East Ravine master plan:

YES	58%
NO	39%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

"Yes" is cited more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"No" is mentioned more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- residents not feeling empowered
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Residents aware of the development of the master plan were asked a follow-up query:

> ***Do you favor or oppose the City using this type of process for future development in Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 76%-17% margin, respondents favor the City using this type of process for future development:

STRONGLY FAVOR	20%
FAVOR	56%
OPPOSE	12%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Intense support outdistances intense opposition by four-to-one.

"Favor" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably

"Oppose" is stated most frequently by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

Summary and Conclusions

In rating characteristics of the community, majorities of residents think the city lacks five types of development: retail shopping opportunities, entertainment establishments, dining establishments, full-time job opportunities, and job opportunities for students. About one-third of the respondents also feel there is too little senior housing, starter homes for young families, and service businesses. The only type of development which evidences some citizen push-back if higher cost housing.

By a 64%-35% margin, residents favor the development of a shopping center on the old Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater site. Respondents would like to see a Wal-Mart and a Macy's in the shopping center.

By a 73%-22% margin, residents also support developing an industrial park in Cottage Grove. Similarly, by a 65%-29% margin, residents support continuing efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove.

An unusually large 58% report awareness of the development of the East Ravine Master Plan for development. And, by a 76%-17% margin, those aware of the process and the plan favor the City using this type of process for future development in Cottage Grove.

Chapter Four: City Taxes and Services

City Taxes and Services

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about city taxes and services. Property taxes were examined in detail. Then, residents were asked for an evaluation of an array of city services. The value of city services was also discussed. Finally, drinking water and garbage collection was reviewed in greater detail.

Percentage of Property Tax

Respondents were initially asked:

> ***Property tax revenues are divided among the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, and your local public school district.***
>
> ***For each dollar of the property taxes you pay, about what percentage do you think goes to city government?***

The typical resident estimates the percentage as 17.7%:

TEN PERCENT OR LESS	10%
11 TO 20 PERCENT	45%
21 TO 30 PERCENT	24%
31 TO 40 PERCENT	4%
41 TO 50 PERCENT	0%
OVER 50 PERCENT	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	16%

This estimate is about one-half of the actual percentage. Only four percent were in the correct range.

"Ten percent or less" is stated more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

"Eleven to twenty percent" is selected more often by:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably

"Twenty-one to thirty percent" is posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents who have contacted City Hall

Tax Comparison

Residents were queried:

> ***Do you consider the city portion of your property taxes to be very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low in comparison with neighboring cities?***

Forty-seven percent consider their city property taxes to be "high:"

VERY HIGH	14%
SOMEWHAT HIGH	33%
ABOUT AVERAGE	43%
SOMEWHAT LOW	2%
VERY LOW	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

Forty-three percent think they are "about average." The property tax environment within Cottage Grove is generally benign.

"High" is selected most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About average" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

Tax Increase to Maintain

Residents were first asked:

> ***In 2007, the actual percentage of your property taxes going to the City of Cottage Grove was 31 percent.***
>
> ***Would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were needed to maintain city services at their current level?***

By a narrow 49%-45% margin, residents favor a property tax increase to maintain city services at their current level:

FAVOR	49%
OPPOSE	45%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Support is higher among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over $100,000 annual income households

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

Opponents of a property tax increase for this purpose were asked a follow-up question:

> ***What services would you be willing to see cut?***

Sixty-seven percent feel "no services need to be cut, only waste:"

UNSURE	11%
NOTHING/CUT WASTE	67%
ADMINISTRATION	2%
PARKS AND RECREATION	11%
COMMUNICATIONS	3%
GOLF	2%
SCATTERED	4%

Cuts in "parks and recreation" are suggested by 11%.

"Nothing/Cut waste" is indicated more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

"Parks and recreation" is posted more often by:

- residents for less than ten years

Tax Increase to Improve or Enhance

Residents were next asked a parallel question:

> ***And, would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were used to improve and enhance current city services?***

By a decisive 72%-20% margin, residents oppose an increase to improve and enhance current city services:

FAVOR	20%
OPPOSE	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

Support increases among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably

It decreases among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

Supporters of a property tax increase for this purpose were also asked a follow-up question:

> ***What services would you like to see improved or enhanced?***

Twenty-three percent point to "street maintenance," while 20% cite "police services:"

UNSURE	13%

STREET MAINTENANCE	23%
GARBAGE/RECYCLING	8%
COMMUNITY CENTER	3%
TRAILS	6%
POLICE	20%
PARKS AND RECREATION	13%
FIRE	4%
DRINKING WATER	4%
PUBLIC TRANSIT	4%
SCATTERED	3%

Thirteen percent would like to see improvement and enhancements of "parks and recreation."

"Police" is reported more often by:

- under $75,000 annual income households

"Parks and recreation" is cited at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track

City Service Ratings

Respondents were instructed:

> ***I would like to read you a list of a few city services. For each one, please tell me whether you would rate the quality of the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

A list of twelve city services was then read:

> ***Police protection?***

Eighty-four percent rate police protection highly:

EXCELLENT	25%
GOOD	59%
ONLY FAIR	14%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Sixteen percent are more critical.

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- women

They are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Fire protection?

Ninety-two percent rate fire protection favorably, while four percent rate it unfavorably:

EXCELLENT	28%
GOOD	64%
ONLY FAIR	3%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Ratings soar among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers

Recycling and brush pick-up?

Seventy-seven percent rate recycling and brush pick-up highly:

EXCELLENT	15%
GOOD	62%
ONLY FAIR	13%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Seventeen percent are more critical.

Ratings increase among:

- those rating the quality of life as good

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- women

They decrease among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- men

Storm drainage and flood control?

Seventy-six percent rate storm drainage and flood control as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	10%
GOOD	66%
ONLY FAIR	16%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Twenty percent see the services as "only fair" or "poor."

Favorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- over forty-four year olds

Unfavorable ratings are posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Park maintenance?

Eighty-three percent rate park maintenance highly:

EXCELLENT	13%
GOOD	70%
ONLY FAIR	9%

POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Eleven percent are more critical in their evaluations.

Ratings increase among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers

They decrease among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

Trail maintenance?

Seventy-nine percent rate trail maintenance highly:

EXCELLENT	14%
GOOD	65%
ONLY FAIR	10%
POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	12%

Ten percent are somewhat more critical in their evaluations.

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

They are lower among:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

City-sponsored recreation programs?

Sixty-five percent think city-sponsored recreation programs are either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	8%
GOOD	57%
ONLY FAIR	17%
POOR	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	14%

Twenty percent rate them as either "only fair" or "poor."

Favorable ratings are given more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- women

Unfavorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Animal control?

Seventy-eight percent rate animal control favorably:

EXCELLENT	8%
GOOD	70%
ONLY FAIR	16%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Eighteen percent rate it unfavorably.

Ratings are higher among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

- residents who have not contacted City Hall

They are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall

Code and property maintenance enforcement?

Sixty-four percent view code and property maintenance enforcement favorably:

EXCELLENT	7%
GOOD	57%
ONLY FAIR	22%
POOR	7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

But, 29% post unfavorable ratings.

Ratings increase among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

They decrease among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Residents were next instructed:

> ***Now, for the next three city services, please consider only their job on city-maintained streets and roads. That means excluding interstate highways, state and county roads that are taken care of by other levels of government. Hence, Interstate 494, Highway 61, and County Roads, such as Keats Avenue and 70th Street, should not be considered. How would you rate ....***

A shorter list of three services was then read:

City street repair and maintenance?

Seventy-five percent of residents rate city street repair as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	12%
GOOD	63%
ONLY FAIR	21%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-five percent rate it as "only fair" or "poor."

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Snow plowing?

Eighty-five percent rate snow plowing favorably:

EXCELLENT	20%
GOOD	65%
ONLY FAIR	14%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Fifteen percent rate it unfavorably.

Favorable ratings are stated more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent

Unfavorable ratings are posted more frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

Street lighting?

Seventy-eight percent express positive ratings about street lighting.

EXCELLENT	12%
GOOD	66%
ONLY FAIR	20%
POOR	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

But, 23% are more negative in their evaluations.

Ratings increase among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

They decrease among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

General Value of City Services

Respondents were asked:

> ***When you consider the property taxes you pay and the quality of city services you receive, would you rate the general value of city services as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

A solid 76% award city services a positive value rating:

EXCELLENT	5%
GOOD	71%
ONLY FAIR	18%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Twenty percent are more critical.

Ratings are higher among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over $100,000 annual income households

They are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- men

Quality of Drinking Water

Residents were asked:

> ***How would you rate the quality of drinking water in the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

While 48% rate the quality of drinking water highly, 50% rate the quality lower:

EXCELLENT	5%
GOOD	43%
ONLY FAIR	32%
POOR	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households

Unfavorable ratings are indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Critics were asked a follow-up question:

Why did you rate the drinking water as (only fair/poor)?

Forty percent cite "bad taste:"

TOO MUCH CHLORINE	11%
PARTICLES	7%
3M CONTAMINATION	23%
BAD ODOR	5%
BAD TASTE	40%
BROWN COLOR	2%
CHEMICALS	11%
HARD WATER	3%

Twenty-three percent mention "3M contamination," while 11% each indicate "too much chlorine" or "chemicals in the water."

"Bad taste" is a problem for:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"3M contamination" troubled:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with children

"Chemicals" is a concern among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Garbage Collection

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

Do you think you have too many choices, too few choices or about the right number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection?

An 82% majority think they have "about the right" number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection:

TOO MANY	3%
TOO FEW	10%

ABOUT RIGHT NUMBER 82%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 6%

"Too few" is posted at a higher rate by:

- over $100,000 annual income households

"About right number" is stated more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- over forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

Summary and Conclusions

The typical resident thinks 17.7% of his/her property taxes goes to city government. This estimate proves to be much lower than the actual share of 31%. Forty-seven percent think the city portion of their property taxes is comparatively high, while 43% see it as about average.

By a 49%-45% margin, residents narrowly support a property tax increase to maintain city services at their current levels. Opponents are most likely to feel that the need for a property tax increase can be mitigated through the elimination of existing waste. In contrast, a decisive 72%-20% margin opposes a property tax increase to improve and enhance current city services. If a tax increase were instituted, supporters would earmark the funds for street maintenance, parks and recreation services, and police services.

City service ratings are generally high in comparison with other communities. Ninety-two percent rate fire protection favorably. Between 80% and 89% post positive ratings for police protection, park maintenance, and snow plowing. Between 70% and 79% feel similarly about recycling and brush pick-up, storm drainage and flood control, trail maintenance, animal control, city street repair and maintenance, and street lighting. Only two services receive favorable ratings below 70%: city-sponsored recreation programs, at 65%, and code and property maintenance enforcement, at 64%.

By a 76%-20% judgment, residents consider the property taxes they pay and the quality of services to be a positive value. This almost four-to-one ratio places the community within the top quartile of suburbs across the Metropolitan Area.

Judgments about drinking water are mixed: 50% rate the quality negatively, while 48% post positive ratings. Negative ratings stem from concerns about the bad taste and 3M contamination.

A large majority of residents are satisfied with the number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection. Only 10% view the choice as limited.

Chapter Five: Public Safety

Public Safety

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about public safety issues in the community. First, they were asked about areas of the city where they feel unsafe. Their immediate neighborhood was considered, followed by a number of questions concerning neighborhood patrolling. Finally, an ordinance banning residents from owning certain breeds of dogs.

Not Feel Safe

Respondents were first asked:

Are there areas in the City of Cottage Grove where you do not feel safe?

Only 12% report there are areas in the City of Cottage Grove where they do not feel safe:

YES	12%
NO	88%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Yes" is cited more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those unsure about the City Council

"No" is mentioned more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as good

Next, residents feeling unsafe in certain parts of the community were asked a follow-up query:

In which areas do you not feel safe?

Twenty-nine percent cite the "area behind the Police Department," and 23% point to the area "by the library:"

BY LIBRARY	23%
SHOPPING PARKING LOTS	4%
BEHIND POLICE DEPARTMENT	29%
SCATTERED PARKS	15%
G-WILL LIQUOR	6%
EVERYWHERE	6%

SCATTERED APARTMENTS 17%

Fifteen percent mentioned various parks, while seventeen percent feel unsafe near various apartment buildings.

"Behind the Police Department" is indicated more often by:

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"By library" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters

"Scattered parks" is reported more often by:

- households with seniors

Next, the focus switched to their immediate neighborhoods:

Do you feel safe in your immediate neighborhood walking alone at night?

Eleven percent feel safe in their immediate neighborhood walking alone at night:

YES 89%
NO 11%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 1%

"Yes" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- men

"No" is stated more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

Amount of Police Patrolling

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

> ***How would you rate the amount of police patrolling in your neighborhood -- too much, about the right amount or not enough?***

Seventy-four percent think the amount of police patrolling in their neighborhood is "about right:"

TOO MUCH	3%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	74%
NOT ENOUGH	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-four percent feel the amount of police patrolling is "not enough."

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Not enough" is indicated more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Amount of Traffic Enforcement

Respondents were then asked:

> ***How would you rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in your neighborhood -- too much, about right amount or not enough?***

Seventy-five percent rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in their neighborhood as "about right:"

TOO MUCH	2%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	75%

NOT ENOUGH 23%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Twenty-three percent feel there is "not enough."

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Not enough" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents not feeling empowered
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Outlawing Certain Breeds

Residents were asked:

> ***Would you support or oppose a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 74%-23% margin, residents support a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs:

STRONGLY SUPPORT 37%
SUPPORT 37%
OPPOSE 13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE 10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 3%

Intense support outnumbers intense opposition by almost four-to-one.

Supporters tend to be:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

Opponents are typically:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

- those unsure about the City Council

Summary and Conclusions

Only 12% of the residents think there are areas in Cottage Grove where they do not feel safe. They point to the areas near the Library and behind the Police Department. Eighty-nine percent feel safe in their immediate neighborhood walking alone at night.

About three-quarters of the residents rate both the amount of police patrolling and the amount of traffic enforcement by police int their neighborhood satisfactorily. In each case, though, about one-quarter view it as insufficient.

By a decisive 73%-23% margin, residents support a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls. In fact, intense supporters outnumber intense opponents by nearly four-to-one.

Chapter Six: Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about parks and recreational opportunities. First, use and ratings of each component of the park system were gathered. Existing recreational facilities and programs were discussed. Leakage to other cities' facilities and programs was estimated. Open space and park improvements were focused on next. Finally, the construction of a Community Center was examined.

Facility Usage

Residents were instructed:

> ***The Cottage Grove park system is composed of larger community parks and smaller neighborhood parks, trails, community ballfields and soccer fields, the Ice Arena and River Oaks Golf Course. Of these facilities, which have you or members of your household used during the past year? Then, for each one you have used, please tell me if you would rate the facility as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

A list of six park system components was then read:

> ***Larger community parks, such as Highlands Park or Woodridge Park?***

Sixty-eight percent report using the city's larger community parks:

NOT USED	33%
USED/EXCELLENT	19%
USED/GOOD	46%
USED/ONLY FAIR	2%
USED/POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Sixty-five percent of the city residents rate larger community parks highly, while only three percent are less favorable.

"Not used" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

Smaller neighborhood parks?

Sixty-seven percent visit smaller neighborhood parks:

NOT USED	34%
USED/EXCELLENT	19%
USED/GOOD	44%
USED/ONLY FAIR	3%
USED/POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Sixty-three percent rate smaller neighborhood parks favorably, while four percent rate them unfavorably.

"Not used" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Favorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Trails?

Sixty-nine percent report using the city's trails:

NOT USED	30%
USED/EXCELLENT	17%
USED/GOOD	47%
USED/ONLY FAIR	5%
USED/POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Sixty-four percent rate trails highly, while five percent are more critical.

"Not used" is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Community ballfields and soccer fields?

Fifty-five percent report visiting community ballfields and soccer fields:

NOT USED	46%
USED/EXCELLENT	15%
USED/GOOD	36%
USED/ONLY FAIR	3%

USED/POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Fifty-one percent rate the community ballfields and soccer fields either "excellent" or "good," while only four percent rate them as "only fair" or "poor."

"Not used" is reported more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- men

The Ice Arena?

Thirty percent report household members use the Ice Arena:

NOT USED	69%
USED/EXCELLENT	6%
USED/GOOD	21%
USED/ONLY FAIR	3%
USED/POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-seven percent rate the Ice Arena highly, while three percent are more negative in their evaluations.

"Not used" is indicated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors

- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

Positive ratings are given more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- men
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

River Oaks Golf Course?

Twenty-seven percent report visiting the River Oaks Golf Course during the past year:

NOT USED	71%
USED/EXCELLENT	11%
USED/GOOD	16%
USED/ONLY FAIR	0%
USED/POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Twenty-seven percent rate the River Oaks Golf Course favorably and no one is critical in their evaluations.

"Not used" is cited more often by:

- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

Ratings peak among:

- households with children
- over $100,000 annual income households
- men

Facilities Meet the Needs of your Household

Respondents were asked:

> ***In general, do you feel that existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of you and members of your household?***

Ninety percent think that existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of their household:

YES	90%
NO	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Ten percent disagree.

Agreement is higher among:

- empty nesters

It is lower among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- city newsletter readers
- households with children

Residents feeling their household's needs were not being met were asked a follow-up query:

> ***What additional recreational facilities would you like to see the City offer its residents?***

Twenty-three percent each would like to see either a "fitness center" or a "second sheet of ice:"

FITNESS CENTER	23%
TEEN CENTER	10%
INDOOR WATER PARK	13%
COMMUNITY CENTER	21%
SECOND SHEET OF ICE	23%
TRAILS	10%

Twenty-one percent favor a "Community Center."

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Participation in Recreation Programs

Respondents were asked:

Have you or members of your household participated in any City park and recreation programs?

Thirty-eight percent report household members participated in City park and recreation programs:

YES	38%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Yes" is cited more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households

"No" is mentioned more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Participants were asked:

Which ones?

"Baseball/Softball," at 26%, and "soccer," at 25%, lead the list:

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL	26%
BASKETBALL	3%
MULTIPLE SPORTS	8%
HOCKEY	5%
GYMNASTICS	2%
SOCCER	25%
FOOTBALL	2%

GOLF	7%
SAFETY CAMP	5%
SKATING	3%
TENNIS	2%
SUMMER PROGRAMS	7%
DANCE	3%
SCATTERED	3%

"Baseball and softball" is reported more often by:

- retired and currently not working residents

"Soccer" is indicated more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- households with children

Next, they were asked:

Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your experience?

A nearly unanimous 97% report satisfaction with their experience:

SATISFIED	97%
DISSATISFIED	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Next, all residents were queried:

Does the current mix of City park and recreation programming meet the needs of your household?

Only two percent feel the current mix of City park and recreation programming meet the needs of their household:

YES	96%
NO	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Agreement peaks among:

- residents feeling empowered
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

The very small subsample of residents feeling their household's needs were unmet were asked:

What program(s) do you feel are lacking?

"Teen programs" and "senior programs" are the two unmet needs:

SENIOR PROGRAMS	33%
TEEN PROGRAMS	67%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Leave the City for Parks and Recreation

Respondents were asked:

> ***Do you or members of your household currently leave the city for park and recreation facilities or activities? What would that be?***

Seventy-six percent do not leave the city to recreate elsewhere:

NO	76%
ICE ARENA	2%
BOATING	3%
TRAILS	6%
SPORTS LEAGUES	2%
FITNESS CENTER	2%
GYMNASIUM	2%
CAMPING	2%
SCATTERED	5%

Six percent leave the city to use the "trails" in other communities.

"No" is reported more often by:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households

Amount of Open Space

Residents were asked:

> ***Do you think the City of Cottage Grove has too little, too***

much or about the right amount of open space and natural areas?

Seventy-two percent think Cottage Grove has "about the right amount" of open space and natural areas:

TOO LITTLE	27%
TOO MUCH	2%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-seven percent see "too little."

"Too little" is cited most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About right amount" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters

Park Improvements

Respondents were told:

As you may know, the city has been improving parks, such as Highlands, Pine Tree Pond and Hamlet over the past few years.

They were then asked:

Were you aware of these park improvements?

A large 75% are aware of these park improvements:

YES	75%
NO	25%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Awareness is higher among:

- residents feeling empowered

- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

It is lower among:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- under $75,000 annual income households

Next, residents were queried:

Do you support or oppose the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city? Do you feel strongly that way?

By an 80%-14% margin, residents support the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	22%
SUPPORT	58%
OPPOSE	8%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Intense support outnumbers intense opposition by almost four-to-one.

Supporters tend to be:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Opponents are typically:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors

- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Construction of a Community Center

Respondents were asked:

> ***The City could consider the construction of a Community Center that would provide a gathering space for recreation, programs and meetings.***
>
> ***Do you support or oppose the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 72%-22% margin, residents support the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	28%
SUPPORT	44%
OPPOSE	11%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	11%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Intense support outnumbers intense opposition by almost five-to-two.

Supporters are more apt to be:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- women

Opponents are more likely to be:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- men

Next, respondents were asked:

> ***Funding for construction of the Community Center may require a property tax increase. Suppose the City of Cottage Grove proposed a Community Center development which you considered to be a reasonable approach.***
>
> ***How much would you be willing to see your property taxes increase to fund this construction? Let's say, would you be willing to see your annual property taxes increase by $____? How about $____ per year?***

The typical respondent would support a property tax increase of $26.40 per year:

NOTHING	36%
$40.00	25%
$80.00	13%
$120.00	4%
$160.00	0%
$200.00	1%
$240.00	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	22%

But, a large 36% are unwilling to support any property tax increase for this purpose.

"Nothing" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- men

"$40.00" is selected more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers

"$80.00" is stated at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall

Summary and Conclusions

The table below arrays each component of the Cottage Grove Park system with its usage rate and its positive evaluation percentage by users:

Park System Component	*Household Usage*	*Positive Rating*
Larger community parks	68%	96%
Smaller neighborhood parks	67%	94%
Trails	69%	93%
Community ballfields and soccer fields	55%	93%
The Ice Arena	30%	90%
River Oaks Golf Course	27%	100%

In every case, positive evaluations are at or above 90%. This consistency is rarely found in Metropolitan Area suburbs.

Only ten percent feel existing recreational facilities offered by the City fail to meet the needs of their households. This small group would urge the City to consider the development of either a fitness center or a community center.

Thirty-eight percent report household members participate in City park and recreation programs. A nearly unanimous 97% are satisfied with their experiences. Baseball/Softball and soccer are the two most frequently reported activities. Similarly, a nearly unanimous 96% believe the current mix of City park and recreational programming meets the needs of their household.

A comparatively low 24% report they leave the City for park and recreation activities and facilities elsewhere. The use of trails in other cities is the major reason for leaving.

Seventy-two percent think the City of Cottage Grove has about the right amount of open space

and natural areas; but, 27% think there are too little currently in the city. On a related topic, 75% are aware of the park improvements taking place during the past few years. In fact, by an 80%-14% margin, residents support the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city.

By a 72%-22% judgment, residents support <u>in concept</u> the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove. Intense supporters outnumber intense opponents by a five-to-two margin. Additionally, the typical resident is willing to see their property taxes increase by $26.40 per year to fund this construction; one cautionary note: 36% of the respondents are unwilling to see their property taxes increased, by **any** amount, for a community center.

Chapter Seven: Transportation

Transportation

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about transportation issues. First, commuter patterns were examined. Then, the ease of going from place to place was discussed. Public transportation was focused on, followed by reactions to the new "round about."

Commute to Work

Respondents were asked:

> ***Do you leave the City of Cottage Grove on a regular or daily basis to go to work?***

Fifty-seven percent leave the city on a regular or daily basis to go to work:

YES	57%
NO	24%
NOT EMPLOYED/RETIRED	19%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-four percent do not leave the city, while 19% are not employed or retired.

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- men

"No" is posted more frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those unsure about the City Council
- women

"Not employed/Retired" is indicated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Those leaving Cottage Grove regularly for work were asked a follow-up query:

In what city is your job located?

Twenty-seven percent report their job is located in "Saint Paul:"

MINNEAPOLIS	14%
SAINT PAUL	27%
BLOOMINGTON	9%
VARIES	3%
ROSEMOUNT	2%
WOODBURY	15%
WASHINGTON COUNTY	5%
DAKOTA COUNTY	8%
EAGAN	6%
RAMSEY COUNTY	4%
HENNEPIN COUNTY	5%
REST OF METRO	2%

Fourteen percent commute to "Minneapolis," while 15% work in "Woodbury."

"Saint Paul" is stated more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably

"Woodbury" is cited more frequently by:

- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

"Minneapolis" is reported more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years

Next, commuters were queried:

How many minutes does it take you to get to work?

The typical commute from Cottage Grove to work is 21.1 minutes:

FIVE MINUTES OR LESS	0%
SIX TO TEN MINUTES	5%
11 TO 15 MINUTES	21%
16 TO 20 MINUTES	18%
21 TO 25 MINUTES	16%
26 TO 30 MINUTES	11%

OVER 30 MINUTES	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-six percent post commute times of 15 minutes or less, while 28% have commute times of over 30 minutes.

"Eleven to fifteen minutes" is stated more often by:

- residents for less than ten years

"Sixteen to twenty minutes" is posted more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good

"Twenty-one to twenty-five minutes" is selected at a higher rate by:

- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Twenty-six to thirty minutes" is posted most frequently by:

- over $100,000 annual income households

Next, commuters were asked:

How would you rate the ease of getting to and from work -- excellent, good, only fair or poor?

Sixty-seven percent rate the ease of getting to and from work as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	20%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	30%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-four percent rate it as either "only fair" or "poor."

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for less than ten years

They are lower among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years

Commuters were finally asked:

Have delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affected your commute?

Thirty-seven percent report delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affected their commute:

YES	37%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- over $100,000 annual income households

Intra-City Travel

Residents were first asked:

How would you rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Ninety-three percent rate the ease of getting from place to place within the city as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	19%
GOOD	74%
ONLY FAIR	6%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Eight percent rate the ease lower.

Ratings peak among:

- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Next, the small subsample of critics were asked a follow-up query:

What road, street or intersection in Cottage Grove is the most congested?

Three locations are cited most often: "80th and Point Douglas," "80th and Highway 61," and "all along 80th Street:"

80TH AND POINT DOUGLAS	17%
GRANGE	10%
80TH AND HADLEY	7%
80TH AND HIGHWAY 61	17%
ALL ALONG 80TH	17%
HIGHWAY 61	10%
MANNING TRAIL	3%
JAMAICA	7%
SCATTERED STREETS	12%

"80th and Highway 61" is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Use of Public Transportation

Respondents were asked:

Have you used public transportation, such as Metro Transit, during the past two years?

A comparative large 30% used public transportation during the past two years:

YES	30%
NO	70%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Use increases among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

It decreases among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- retired and currently not working residents
- over $100,000 annual income households

Public transportation users were asked a follow-up query:

How would you rate your experience -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Ninety-one percent rate their experience as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	18%
GOOD	73%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Nine percent rate it as either "only fair" or "poor."

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Non-users were also asked a follow-up question:

Were you aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis?

Eighty-eight percent are aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis:

YES	88%
NO	13%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Awareness is higher among:

- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

It is lower among:

- residents for less than ten years
- those unsure about the City Council
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Non-users were also asked:

Why haven't you used public transportation?

Twenty-seven percent say they have "no need," while 25% say they "need a car" at work:

NEED CAR	25%
DON'T LIKE BUSES	8%
PREFER TO DRIVE	19%
NO NEED	27%

DOESN'T GO WHERE NEEDED 21%

Twenty-one percent report public transportation "doesn't go where they need it," and 19% just "prefer to drive."

"No need" is reported more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

"Need car" is stated more frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Doesn't go where needed" is selected at a higher rate by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably

Red Rock Commuter Rail

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

> ***Suppose the State of Minnesota prioritized the construction of the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor connecting Cottage Grove with Downtown Saint Paul and then to Downtown Minneapolis....***
>
> ***How likely would you or members of your household be to regularly use this service -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?***

Forty-eight percent are either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to use the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor:

VERY LIKELY 20%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY 28%
NOT TOO LIKELY 27%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY 25%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 1%

Using standard market projection techniques, 17% of the households in Cottage Grove could be expected to ultimately use the rail corridor.

Greater likelihood is indicated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Less likelihood is mentioned more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Round About"

Residents were queried:

> ***The City recently completed construction of a "round about" on Jamaica Avenue and Highway 61.***
>
> ***Have you used this "round about?" How often do you use it -- daily, weekly, or less often?***

Ninety-five percent of the respondents report using the "round about:"

NO	6%
YES/DAILY	28%
YES/WEEKLY	45%
YES/LESS OFTEN	22%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

The typical driver uses the "round about" on a weekly basis.

"Yes/Daily" is stated more often by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

- over $100,000 annual income households
- men

"Yes/Weekly" is selected more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- women
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

"Yes/Less often" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Round about" users were asked a follow-up query:

Do you think the "round about" is easy or difficult to navigate?

Sixty-seven percent think the "round about" is "easy" to use:

EASY	67%
DIFFICULT	33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-three percent consider it to be "difficult."

"Easy" is cited more often by:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Difficult" is stated more often by:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Summary and Conclusions

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents leave the City of Cottage Grove on a regular or daily basis to go to work. Nineteen percent are either not employed or retired. Twenty-four percent do not leave the city to work. Most commuters work in Saint Paul, Woodbury, and Minneapolis. The median commute time is 21.1 minutes; twenty-six percent post commute times of 15 minutes or less, while 28% report commute times over 30 minutes. While 67% rate the ease of their commutes favorably, 34% are far more critical. And, 37% think the delays in completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affects their commute. In contrast, the vast majority, 93%, highly rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Cottage Grove.

A comparative large 30% used public transportation during the past two years. Among users, 91% rate their experience favorably. Eighty-eight percent of public transit non-users report they are aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis. They also explain they have not used public transportation because they have no need, need their car at work, service does not exist to their destination, and just prefer to drive. Forty-eight percent report household members are at least somewhat likely to use the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor connecting Cottage Grove with Downtown Saint Paul and then to Downtown Minneapolis.

Ninety-five percent used the "round about" on Jamaica Avenue and Highway 61; most residents use the "round about" weekly. Sixty-seven percent of these drivers think the "round about" is easy to navigate; thirty-three percent disagree.

Chapter Eight: City Government

City Government

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about City Government. Their sense of empowerment was assessed, followed by the discussion of their perceptions of City Government and City Staff. Then, contacts with City Hall were evaluated in terms of the customer service provided.

Empowerment

Residents were asked:

> ***Other than voting, do you feel that if you wanted to, you could have a say about the way the City of Cottage Grove runs things?***

Fifty-five percent feel they could have a say if they wanted to:

YES	55%
NO	43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Forty-three percent feel less empowered.

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers

"No" is selected more frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

Mayor and City Council

Respondents were initially asked:

> ***How much do you feel you know about the work of the Mayor and City Council -- a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or none at all?***

A very large 55% think they know at least "a fair amount" about the work of the Mayor and City Council:

A GREAT DEAL	5%
A FAIR AMOUNT	50%
VERY LITTLE	36%
NONE AT ALL	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"A lot" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Not a lot" is posted more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Next, residents were asked:

> ***From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing? And do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 55%-32% margin, residents approve of the job of the Mayor and City Council:

STRONGLY APPROVE	8%
APPROVE	47%
DISAPPROVE	26%
STRONGLY DISAPPROVE	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	15%

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

They are lower among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- households with seniors
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Respondents offering judgments were asked a follow-up question:

Could you tell me why you feel that way?

"Good job," "lack of problems," and "listen to residents" are the main reasons for positive evaluations:

GOOD JOB	26%
LISTEN	8%
DON'T LISTEN	8%
NO PROBLEMS	19%
GOOD DEVELOPMENT	8%
POOR SPENDING	9%
TOO MUCH GROWTH	7%
GOOD SPENDING	2%
DON'T LIKE ROUND-ABOUT	6%
COULD IMPROVE	5%
SCATTERED	3%

"Poor spending," "lack of listening," and "too much growth" are the key reasons for negative ratings.

"Good job" is key to:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"No problems" is cited more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

City Staff

Respondents were initially asked:

> ***How much first hand contact have you had with the Cottage Grove City Staff -- quite a lot, some, very little, or none?***

An average 24% report "quite a lot" or "some contact" with the Cottage Grove City Staff:

QUITE A LOT	2%
SOME	22%
VERY LITTLE	40%
NONE	36%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Contact increases among:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

It decreases among:

- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- under $75,000 annual income households

Next, residents were queried:

> ***From what you have heard or seen, how would you rate the job performance of the Cottage Grove City Staff -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

Fifty-four percent rate the City Staff highly:

EXCELLENT	7%

GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	38%

Only nine percent are more critical.

Ratings peak among:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- men

Respondents posting judgements about the City Staff were asked a follow-up question:

Could you tell me why you feel that way?

"Helpful," "friendly," and "good job" are the main reasons for positive evaluations:

GOOD JOB	20%
HELPFUL	47%
FRIENDLY	21%
POOR JOB	6%
DON'T LISTEN	2%
COULD IMPROVE	4%

"Poor job" and "room for improvement" lead the list of negative causes.

"Helpful" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Friendly" is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters

"Good job" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Contact with City Hall

Residents were asked:

> ***During the past year, have you contacted Cottage Grove City Hall?***

A typical 26% report contacting Cottage Grove City Hall during the past year:

YES	26%
NO	74%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"No" is selected at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- under $75,000 annual income households

Residents contacting City Hall were asked:

> ***On your last telephone call or visit, which Department did you contact -- the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, Ice Center, Utility Billing, Park and Recreation, Building Inspections, Engineering, Planning, Administration, the Finance Department, or the General Information Desk?***

"Building Inspections" proved the most frequently contacted department:

POLICE DEPARTMENT	10%
FIRE DEPARTMENT	2%
PUBLIC WORKS	16%
ICE CENTER	0%
UTILITY BILLING	7%
PARKS AND RECREATION	9%
BUILDING INSPECTIONS	24%
ENGINEERING	5%

PLANNING	5%
ADMINISTRATION	4%
FINANCE DEPARTMENT	2%
GENERAL INFORMATION	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

"Public Works," "General Information," and the "Police Department" follow on the list.

"Public works" is stated more often by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- over $100,000 annual income households

"Building inspections" is posted more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

"General information" is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents working in Cottage Grove

Those contacting City Hall were then instructed:

> ***Thinking about your last contact with the City, for each of the following characteristics, please rate the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor....***

A list of three quality customer service dimensions was then read:

Waiting time for the receptionist to help you?

Ninety-five percent favorably rate their waiting time for the receptionist to help them:

EXCELLENT	38%
GOOD	57%
ONLY FAIR	4%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Courtesy of city staff?

Ninety-three percent positively rate the courtesy of city staff:

EXCELLENT	39%
GOOD	54%
ONLY FAIR	7%
POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Ratings peak among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

Ease of obtaining the service you needed?

Eighty-six percent favorably rate the ease of obtaining the service they needed:

EXCELLENT	39%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	9%
POOR	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Fourteen percent posted unfavorable ratings.

Ratings increase among:

- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

They decrease among:

- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

On all three quality customer service dimensions, Cottage Grove City Hall Staff exceeds the 80% threshold of high quality in the public sector.

Summary and Conclusions

While 55% feel, if they wanted to, they could have a say about the way the City of Cottage Grove runs things; 43% think they could not. As a side note, though, 22% of the community does not want to have a say, relying on the election to make their wishes known.

Fifty-five percent think they know a great deal or a fair amount about the work of the Mayor and City Council. By a 55%-32% margin, residents approve of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing. Unlike many suburban communities, the Mayor and City Council enjoy majority

approval ratings. Higher ratings are based on perceptions of a good job, lack of problems in the community, and listens to residents. Lower ratings are based on perceptions of poor spending, lack of listening to residents, and opposition to the "round about."

Twenty-two percent report at least some first-hand contact with the Cottage Grove City Staff. By a 54%-9% margin, residents rate the City Staff favorably. Higher ratings are based on perceptions of a good job, helpfulness, and friendliness. Lower ratings stem from perceptions of a poor job.

Twenty-six percent contacted Cottage Grove City Hall during the past year. The major reasons for contact include inquiries to building inspection services, public works questions and comments, requests for general information, and police department services. In evaluating their last contact, 95% rate the waiting time for the receptionist to help favorably, while 93% similarly evaluate the courtesy of city staff. Eighty-six percent positively rate the ease of obtaining the service they needed. In each case, the threshold of high quality customer service in the public sector, 80%, is exceeded.

Chapter Nine: Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about current city goals. First, the importance of each goal was estimated. Then, the current achievement of the City in reaching each goal was measured.

Importance of Strategic Goals

Residents were instructed:

> ***The City is examining its strategic goals and would like to know if and how much you value them. I am going to read you a list of the city's current goals. First tell me how important each goal is to you on a scale of "one" to "five," where "one" means "not at all important" and "five" stands for "extremely important."***

They were then read six goals:

> ***Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.***

The mean rating of this goal is 4.59, indicating great importance:

1	1%
2	1%
3	8%
4	19%
5	71%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Important" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

- women
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.

The mean rating of this goal is 4.62, also indicating great importance:

1	0%
2	1%
3	8%
4	21%
5	70%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Important" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents feeling empowered

Differences from the mean are cited more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.

The mean rating of 4.39 indicates a higher level of importance:

1	1%
2	2%
3	13%
4	28%
5	57%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Differences from the mean are stated more often by:

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Work to improve transportation and transit.

The mean rating of 4.06 indicates a high level of importance:

1	2%
2	7%
3	22%

4	22%
5	47%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Average" is stated most often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"Important" is posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

Differences from the mean are cited more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.

The mean rating of this goal is 4.17, also indicating a high level of importance:

1	1%
2	4%
3	18%
4	30%
5	47%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Important" is stated more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.

The mean rating of 4.27 indicates a higher level of importance:

1	1%
2	4%
3	16%
4	25%
5	54%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Average" is cited more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"Important" is mentioned more often by:

- residents who have not contacted City Hall

Differences from the mean are encountered among:

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Rating of City on Strategic Goals

Next, respondents were instructed:

> ***Now, for each of these goals, please rate how well the City is doing to achieve it. Again, let's use a "one" to "five" scale, where "one" means "poor" and "five" stands for "excellent."***

The same list of six goals was re-read:

> ***Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.***

The mean rating of 3.83 means the City is doing a good job in achieving this goal:

1	1%
2	3%
3	23%
4	60%
5	13%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Average" is posted at a higher rate by:

- city newsletter readers
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

Favorable ratings are given more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Differences from the mean are given most frequently by:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.

The mean rating of 3.56 means the City is also doing a good job in accomplishing this goal:

1	1%
2	7%
3	33%
4	50%
5	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

"Average" is posted more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- women

Favorable ratings are posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably

Differences from the mean are stated more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably
- those unsure about the City Council

Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.

The mean rating of 3.27 means the City is doing an above average job of achieving this goal:

1	2%
2	14%
3	42%
4	39%
5	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Ratings are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- city newsletter readers

They are average among:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters

They are higher among:

- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those unsure about the City Council
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Work to improve transportation and transit.

The mean rating of 3.46 also means the City is doing an above average job in achieving this objective:

1	1%
2	5%
3	41%
4	44%
5	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

"Average" is reported more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Favorable ratings are reported more frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Differences from the mean are reported more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.

The mean rating of 3.73 means the City is perceived as doing a good job on achieving this goal:

1	1%
2	3%
3	29%
4	56%
5	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

"Average" is stated more often by:

- those unsure about the City Council

Ratings peak among:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.

The mean rating of 3.57 also means the city is doing a good job on accomplishing the goal:

1	2%
2	5%
3	33%
4	52%

5 ..... 5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 3%

"Average" is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents feeling empowered
- city newsletter readers

Favorable ratings are given most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Summary and Conclusions

Residents were asked to review the importance of each of six strategic goals adopted by the City of Cottage Grove on a one-to-five ascending scale. Then, residents were asked to rate how well the City is doing to achieve it, again on a one-to-five ascending scale. The table below arrays each goal with the mean rating of importance of each goal, the mean achievement score of each goal, and the difference between the two scores.

Goal	*Importance*	*Achievement*	*Difference*
Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment	4.59	3.83	-0.76
Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base	4.62	3.56	-1.06
Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development	4.39	3.27	-1.12
Work to improve transportation and transit	4.06	3.46	-0.60
Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities	4.17	3.73	-0.44

Goal	*Importance*	*Achievement*	*Difference*
Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process	4.27	3.57	-0.70

Residents classify all of the City's goals as highly important; in fact, the range between the highest ranked and lowest rank goal is only 0.56. The range of achievement scores is also limited, at an identical 0.56. On only one goal, "provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities," is the importance of the goal and the City's progress almost equivalent. On two goals, however, there is a moderately large deficit of achievement commiserate with their importance: "place an emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development" and "operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base."

Chapter Ten: Communications

Communications

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about communications from the City. First, their principal and preferred sources of information were identified. Then, the effectiveness of specific communications channels were evaluated. "Cottage Grove Reports" was examined in some detail, as well City Council Meeting Cablecasts and the City's website. Potential e-commerce services were reviewed for interest levels. And, finally, the City offering high-speed wireless Internet access was tested.

Principal Source

Respondents were queried:

What is your principal source of information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

Sixty-three percent regard the "Cottage Grove Bulletin" as their principal source of information:

CITY NEWSLETTER	16%
BULLETIN	63%
WEBSITE	5%
CABLE TELEVISION	8%
WORD OF MOUTH	4%
PIONEER PRESS	2%
SCATTERED	3%

Sixteen percent point to the "city newsletter," while eight percent cite "cable television."

"Bulletin" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Preferred Source

Residents were asked:

How would you prefer to receive information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

Fifty-seven percent prefer to receive information through the "Cottage Grove Bulletin:"

CITY NEWSLETTER	16%

BULLETIN	57%
WEBSITE	11%
CABLE TELEVISION	7%
MAILINGS	3%
WORD OF MOUTH	2%
SCATTERED	4%

Sixteen percent point to the "city newsletter," and 11% cite the "website."

"Bulletin" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

"City newsletter" is key to:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council

"Website" is important to:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children

Sources of Information

Residents were instructed:

> ***For each of the following, please tell me whether you consider it to be a major source of information for news about the city, a minor source, or not a source at all.***

A list of eight sources of information was read:

The City newsletter, "Cottage Grove Reports?"

Forty percent consider "Cottage Grove Reports" to be a "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	40%
MINOR SOURCE	45%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Eighty-five percent use the city newsletter as a source of information.

"Major source" is stated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Minor source" is stated more frequently by:

- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Not a source at all" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those who do not read the city newsletter
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

The newsletter included in city utility bills?

Seventeen percent view the newsletter included in city utility bills as a "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	17%
MINOR SOURCE	33%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	49%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Altogether, 50% use the utility bill newsletter as a source of information.

"Major source" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

"Minor source" is stated more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- men

"Not a source at all" is cited more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents not feeling empowered
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

The "Bulletin" newspaper?

Seventy-four percent consider the "Bulletin" newspaper as their "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	74%
MINOR SOURCE	15%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Eighty-nine percent view the newspaper as a source of information.

"Major source" is cited more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- men

"Not a source at all" is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- women

The "Star Tribune" or "Pioneer Press?"

Daily newspapers are a "major source" of information about the city:

MAJOR SOURCE	10%
MINOR SOURCE	31%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	59%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Forty-one percent see them as at least a "minor source."

"Major source" is stated most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"Minor source" is stated more often by:

- city newsletter readers
- men

"Not a source at all" is selected at a higher rate by:

- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- women

The City's website?

Eleven percent rate the City's website as a "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	11%
MINOR SOURCE	29%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	60%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Forty percent, overall, see it as a source of information.

"Major source" is reported more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

"Minor source" is posted more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Not a source at all" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Programming on your public access cable TV station?

Thirteen percent rely upon the programming provided by the public access cable television station:

MAJOR SOURCE	13%
MINOR SOURCE	27%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	59%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Forty percent see this programming as at least a "minor source."

"Major source" is stated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

"Minor source" is posted more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Not a source at all" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

City employees?

Only six percent view city employees as a "major source" of City information:

MAJOR SOURCE	6%
MINOR SOURCE	16%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	77%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-two percent see city employees as at least a "minor source" of information.

"Major source" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Not a source at all" is indicated more frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- under $75,000 annual income households

Direct mail updates?

Eight percent think direct mail updates are a "major source" of City information:

MAJOR SOURCE	8%
MINOR SOURCE	33%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	58%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Forty-one percent label direct mail updates as a "minor source" of City information.

"Minor source" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Not a source at all" is reported most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

City Newsletter

Respondents were asked:

> ***As you may know, the city recently introduced the Cottage Grove monthly newsletter which is distributed through utility bills or mailed separately to non-utility customers.***
>
> ***During the past year, did you receive "Cottage Grove Reports," the City's newsletter?***

Ninety-three percent report receiving "Cottage Grove Reports" during the past year:

YES	93%
NO	7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Receipt peaks among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Respondents receiving the city newsletter were asked a follow-up query:

> ***Do you or any members of your household regularly read it?***

Eighty-five percent say household members regularly read it:

YES	85%
NO	14%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

The reach of the city newsletter is 79% of Cottage Grove households.

Readership increases among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

It decreases among:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Respondents receiving the newsletter were also asked:

> ***How effective is the newsletter in keeping you informed about city government and its activities -- very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not at all effective?***

A large 90% consider the city newsletter to be at least "somewhat effective:'

VERY EFFECTIVE	27%
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	62%
NOT TOO EFFECTIVE	6%
NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Only eight percent are more critical in their judgments.

"Effective" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

Cable Television

Respondents were asked:

> ***Does your household currently subscribe to cable television?***

Sixty-six percent currently subscribe to cable television:

YES	66%
NO	33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Yes" is stated more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably

"No" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Residents subscribing to cable television were asked:

How often during the past year have you watched Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16 -- frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?

Forty percent either "frequently" or "occasionally" watch Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16:

FREQUENTLY	10%
OCCASIONALLY	30%
RARELY	27%
NEVER	32%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

In fact, a surprisingly large 10% watch the meetings "frequently."

Viewership increases among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

It decreases among:

- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Internet Access

Residents were asked:

Do you have access to the Internet at home? Do you have access to the Internet at work?

Eighty-five percent have access to the Internet either at home or at work:

HOME ONLY	43%
WORK ONLY	3%

BOTH	39%
NEITHER	16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Home only" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- retired and currently not working residents
- city newsletter readers
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

"Both" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- men
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Neither" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- those unsure about the City Council
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Residents having Internet access were asked:

Have you accessed the City's website?

Sixty-six percent visited the website:

YES	66%
NO	34%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

The reach of the website is 56% of the households in the community.

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"No" is posted more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Website visitors were asked:

How would you rate the City's website -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Seventy-one percent rate the City's website highly:

EXCELLENT	5%
GOOD	66%
ONLY FAIR	27%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-nine percent rate the City's website more critically.

Ratings are higher among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

They are lower among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- under $75,000 annual income households

Visitors were also asked:

Were you able to find what you were looking for?

A very high 91% report being able to find what they were looking for:

YES	91%
NO	7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Only seven percent report being unsuccessful.

"Yes" is cited more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds

On-line City Services and Information

Residents having access to the Internet were told:

Many city services and information can be made available through the Internet. How likely are you to use the Internet for each of the following services -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

A list of five city services and information opportunities were then read:

Paying utility bills?

Forty percent are at least "somewhat likely" to pay utility bills on-line.

VERY LIKELY	19%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	21%
NOT TOO LIKELY	18%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

A projected 20% of the households can be expected to use this service.

Likelihood increases among:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents feeling empowered
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- women
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

It decreases among:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- empty nesters
- men
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Finding information about your utility bill?

Fifty-seven percent are either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to use the Internet to find information about their utility bills:

VERY LIKELY	27%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	30%
NOT TOO LIKELY	7%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	35%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-one percent of the households in the community can be projected as users.

"Likely" is cited more frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Not likely" is posted more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Dog licenses and other applications?

Forty-eight percent are at least "somewhat likely" to use the Internet to file dog licenses and other applications:

VERY LIKELY	31%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	17%
NOT TOO LIKELY	13%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	40%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

An expected 20% would make these kinds of applications on the Internet.

"Likely" is cited more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

"Not likely" is mentioned most often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Registering for park and recreation programming?

Fifty-one percent are either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to register on-line for park and recreation programming:

VERY LIKELY	32%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	19%
NOT TOO LIKELY	10%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	38%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

A projected 21% of the households with Internet access would register on-line.

Likelihood is higher among:

- residents for less than thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Watching City Council meeting webcasts?

Twenty-two percent are at least "somewhat likely" to watch City Council meeting webcasts:

VERY LIKELY	8%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	14%
NOT TOO LIKELY	22%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	55%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Eight percent of the households with Internet would view webcasts.

Likelihood increases among:

- over $100,000 annual income households

It decreases among:

- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors

High-Speed Wireless Internet

Respondents were asked:

> ***As you may know, some cities are starting to offer for-profit services, such as high-speed wireless Internet, to their residents. The high-speed wireless Internet service is somewhat faster than dial-up, but somewhat slower than cable or DSL. Also, it is less expensive than cable or DSL, but more expensive than dial-up.***

Would you support or oppose Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access? Do you feel strongly way?

By a 52%-33% margin, residents support Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	16%
SUPPORT	36%
OPPOSE	15%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	16%

Intense support and intense opposition are about equal.

Supporters tend to be:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Opponents are more apt to be:

- residents who have contacted City Hall
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

Supporters were next asked:

How much would you be willing to pay for high-speed wireless Internet service offered by the City of Cottage Grove? Would you be willing to pay $___ per month? How about $___ per month?

The typical resident would be willing to pay $21.43 per month for City-offered high-speed wireless Internet service:

LESS THAN $20.00	32%
$20.00	30%
$25.00	27%
$30.00	6%
$35.00	1%
MORE THAN $35.00	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	4%

"Less than $20.00" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- under $75,000 annual income households

"$25.00" is cited more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Summary and Conclusions

Over sixty percent of the city's residents rely upon the "Bulletin" newspaper for information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities. The city newsletter is the principal source of information for 16%, while cable television is key to eight percent. Fifty-seven percent prefer to receive information through the "Bulletin" newspaper. The city newsletter is preferred by 16%, and the city's website, by 11%.

In assessing various sources of information, the "Bulletin" stands out as a major source of information for 74% of the community. "Cottage Grove Reports" is a major source for 40%. Seventeen percent consider the newsletter included in the city utility bills as a major source, while 13% feel similarly about programming on the public access cable television station.

Ninety-three percent recall receiving "Cottage Grove Reports" during the past year; among residents receiving the newsletter, 85% regularly read it. The reach of the city newsletter, then, is 79% of the households in the community. Eighty-nine percent of respondents receiving the city newsletter rate it highly; only eight percent are critical.

Sixty-six percent currently subscribe to cable television. Among subscribers, 40% at least occasionally watch Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16.

Eighty-five percent of the residents in the community have access to the Internet; in fact, 82% have access from their homes. Among Internet users, 66% report they have accessed the City's website. By a 71%-29% margin, residents rate the website favorably. Ninety-one percent were able to find what they were looking for. In evaluating potential City e-commerce opportunities, significant interest is show on three: "registering for park and recreation programming," "dog licenses and other applications," and "finding information about their utility bill."

By a 52%-33% margin, residents support the City of Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access. Among supporters, the consensus change for this service is $21.43 per month.

Chapter Eleven: Final Thoughts

Final Thoughts

Cottage Grove residents expressed some key opinions and suggestions about future policy on a number of issues. In fact, there is a hierarchy of concerns City decision-makers may wish to examine during the next couple of years.

1. The rate of growth and development is a key issue for many residents, although it does not exhibit the intensity of other communities. In fact, while growth troubles about one-third of the population, decisive majorities of residents support specific types of future development: entertainment establishments, dining establishments, full-time job opportunities, retail shopping opportunities, and job opportunities for students. As a result, support is high for both a new shopping center on the old Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater site and the development of an industrial park. When focused on housing, there is also moderately strong support for senior housing and starter homes for young families.

2. Concerns about property taxes are high, consistent with findings across the Metropolitan Area. Even so, tax hostility is much more limited than in other suburban communities. In fact, a narrow plurality will support a property tax increase to maintain city services at their current levels and three-quarters of the city favorably rate the value of city services in terms of the property taxes paid. City services are well-rated, and if additional funding is available, they would earmark it for street maintenance, police services, and parks and recreational opportunities. However, a major issue for the future is the quality of drinking water in the community.

3. Crime is not a major issue for most Cottage Grove residents. Even so, though, by a 74%-23% margin, residents support a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls.

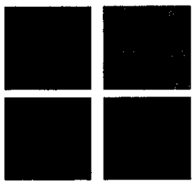
4. The Cottage Grove Park System is both well-utilized and well-regarded. No component's positive rating by users drops below the 90% mark. The vast majority of residents report existing recreational facilities and current park and recreation programming met their household's needs. But, there is solid support for a Community Center **in concept**, and the City may wish to more fully discuss this type of development in the near future.

5. The job ratings of both the Mayor and City Council as well as the City Staff are solidly within the highest quartile of suburban communities. Contact with the City Hall staff also proves to be a positive experience for most residents. And, clearly, the goals established by the City of Cottage Grove are consistent with the opinions and attitudes held by their residents.

6. Many residents holding jobs outside the community report their commutes are impacted by the delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge. A comparatively large 30% used public transportation during the past two years; positive ratings of the experience are solid. When the Red Rock Commuter Rail Corridor is completed, a very large 48% are likely to regularly use this service.

7. The City possess one of the most effective communications systems across the Metropolitan Area. The "Bulletin" is not only the most relied upon source of information about City Government and its activities, but also the most preferred source of information. The reach of the city newsletter, "Cottage Grove Reports," is comparatively high. Cablecasts of the City Council Meetings have a very high audience. Visits to city's website are also among the highest in the suburbs.

Overall, the City of Cottage Grove is a very highly regarded community. In view of the existing large reservoir of good will residents possess toward the City, public support should remain very high during the next few years as changes occur, if the rationale for further growth is persuasive.



Decision
Resources Ltd.

Survey

DECISION RESOURCES, LTD.
3128 Dean Court
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416

City of Cottage Grove
Residential Survey
FINAL DECEMBER 2007

Hello, I'm _____ of Decision Resources, Ltd., a polling firm located in Minneapolis. We have been retained by the City of Cottage Grove to speak with a random sample of residents about issues facing the community. This survey is being conducted because the City Council and City Staff are interested in your opinions and suggestions about current and future city needs. I want to assure you that all individual responses will be held strictly confidential; only summaries of the entire sample will be reported.

1. Approximately how many years have you lived in Cottage Grove?

LESS THAN FIVE YEARS	12%
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	25%
TEN TO TWENTY YEARS	28%
20 TO 30 YEARS	18%
OVER THIRTY YEARS	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

2. What do you like most about living in Cottage Grove?

QUIET/PEACEFUL, 12%; CLOSE TO FAMILY, 10%; CLOSE TO JOB, 12%; SMALL TOWN FEEL, 17%; SHOPPING, 5%; AFFORDABLE HOUSING, 4%; SAFE, 5%; NEIGHBORHOOD, 6%; SCHOOLS, 4%; FRIENDLY PEOPLE, 9%; RURAL/OPEN SPACE, 8%; LOCATION, 7%; SCATTERED, 3%.

3. What do you think is the most serious issue facing Cottage Grove today?

UNSURE, 10%; NOTHING, 2%; HIGH TAXES, 18%; LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING, 6%; TOO MUCH GROWTH, 32%; LACK OF RETAIL/RESTAURANTS, 11%; DRINKING WATER ISSUE, 5%; CITY GOVERNMENT, 3%; RISING CRIME, 2%; ROAD REPAIR, 2%; LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES, 6%; SCATTERED, 4%.

4. How would you rate the quality of life in Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	23%
GOOD	72%
ONLY FAIR	4%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

5. To which of the following do you feel a closer connection to:
   A) The City of Cottage Grove as a whole,
   B) Your neighborhood, or
   C) Your school district?

STATEMENT A	30%
STATEMENT B	56%
STATEMENT C	12%
NONE OF ABOVE	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

6. When you think about Cottage Grove, do you see it as a suburb, a city or a small town?

SUBURB	71%
CITY	8%
SMALL TOWN	21%
MULTIPLE (VOL.)	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

7. All in all, do you think things in Cottage Grove are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?

RIGHT DIRECTION	81%
WRONG TRACK	16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

IF "WRONG TRACK," ASK: (N=65)

8. Why do you think things are off on the wrong track?

LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING, 2%; TOO MUCH GROWTH, 62%; LACK OF RESTAURANT/RETAIL, 14%; DRINKING WATER ISSUE, 3%; CITY GOVERNMENT, 15%; LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES, 3%; SCATTERED, 2%.

I would like to read you a list of characteristics of a community. For each one, please tell me if you think Cottage Grove currently has too many or too much, too few or too little, or about the right amount.

	MANY MUCH	FEW/ LITT	ABOUT RIGHT	D.K./ REF.
9. affordable housing, defined by the Metropolitan Council as a single family home costing less than $205,000?	5%	23%	66%	7%
10. affordable rental units?	4%	13%	54%	29%
11. luxury rental units?	4%	10%	44%	43%
12. condominiums?	5%	8%	61%	26%
13. townhouses?	16%	4%	68%	12%
14. starter homes for young families?	2%	31%	60%	7%
15. "move up" housing?	7%	11%	78%	5%
16. higher cost housing?	25%	5%	65%	6%
17. senior housing?	4%	35%	49%	13%
18. parks and open spaces?	1%	24%	72%	2%
19. trails and bikeways?	1%	25%	73%	1%
20. service businesses?	1%	36%	62%	1%
21. retail shopping opportunities?	3%	65%	32%	0%
22. entertainment establishments?	0%	75%	24%	1%
23. dining establishments?	1%	70%	27%	2%
24. day care opportunities?	2%	14%	40%	45%
25. full-time job opportunities?	0%	67%	18%	15%
26. job opportunities for students?	1%	51%	29%	19%

As you may know, the Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater will be closing and there is a proposal to redevelop the site with a large shopping center.

27. Do you favor or oppose the development of a shopping center on this site? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY FAVOR	24%
FAVOR	40%
OPPOSE	14%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	21%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

28. Assuming this site is developed as a shopping center, what retail establishments would you like to see included?

UNSURE, 7%; NOTHING, 16%; OLD NAVY, 4%; HERBERGERS, 8%; WAL-MART, 18%; DOLLAR STORE, 3%; GANDER MOUNTAIN, 2%; LOWES, 3%; MACY'S, 11%; JC PENNY, 5%; SEARS, 5%; COSTCO, 2%; BEST BUY, 2%; SAM'S CLUB, 2%; DICK'S SPORTING GOODS, 2%; BARNES AND NOBLE, 2%; SCATTERED, 8%.

In the past several years, the City has tried to expand the tax base by development of an industrial park.

29. Do you support or oppose the City developing an industrial park in Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	19%
SUPPORT	54%
OPPOSE	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

The City has established a priority to develop housing for senior citizens. As a result, the Norris Square and White Pines projects are being developed.

30. Would you favor or oppose continued efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY FAVOR	17%
FAVOR	48%
OPPOSE	20%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

As you may know, in 2004 and 2005 the City, using public input, developed a master plan for the development of the East Ravine area.

31. Prior to this survey, were you aware of the development of the East Ravine master plan?

YES	58%
NO	39%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=233)

32. Do you favor or oppose the City using this type of process for future development in Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY FAVOR	20%
FAVOR	56%
OPPOSE	12%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Moving on.....

Property tax revenues are divided among the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, and your local public school district.

33. For each dollar of the property taxes you pay, about what percentage do you think goes to city government? (READ #1-#6)

TEN PERCENT OR LESS	10%
11 TO 20 PERCENT	45%
21 TO 30 PERCENT	24%
31 TO 40 PERCENT	4%
41 TO 50 PERCENT	0%
OVER 50 PERCENT	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	16%

34. Do you consider the city portion of your property taxes to be very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low in comparison with neighboring cities?

VERY HIGH	14%
SOMEWHAT HIGH	33%
ABOUT AVERAGE	43%
SOMEWHAT LOW	2%
VERY LOW	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

In 2007, the actual percentage of your property taxes going to the City of Cottage Grove was 31 percent.

35. Would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were needed to maintain city services at their current level?

FAVOR	49%
OPPOSE	45%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

IF "OPPOSE," ASK: (N=179)

36. What services would you be willing to see cut?

UNSURE, 11%; NOTHING/CUT WASTE, 67%; ADMINISTRATION, 2%; PARKS AND RECREATION, 11%; COMMUNICATIONS, 3%; GOLF, 2%, SCATTERED, 4%.

37. And, would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were used to improve and enhance current city services?

FAVOR	20%
OPPOSE	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

IF "FAVOR," ASK: (N=80)

38. What services would you like to see improved or enhanced?

UNSURE, 13%; STREET MAINTENANCE, 23%; GARBAGE/RECYCLING, 8%; COMMUNITY CENTER, 3%; TRAILS, 6%; POLICE, 20%; PARKS AND RECREATION, 13%; FIRE, 4%; DRINKING WATER, 4%; PUBLIC TRANSIT, 4%; SCATTERED, 3%.

I would like to read you a list of a few city services. For each one, please tell me whether you would rate the quality of the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor? (ROTATE)

	EXCL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK/R
39. Police protection?	25%	59%	14%	2%	1%
40. Fire protection?	28%	64%	3%	1%	5%
41. Recycling and brush pick-up?	15%	62%	13%	4%	5%

	EXCL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK/R
42. Storm drainage and flood control?	10%	66%	16%	4%	5%
43. Park maintenance?	13%	70%	9%	2%	6%
44. Trail maintenance?	14%	65%	10%	0%	12%
45. City-sponsored recreation programs?	8%	57%	17%	3%	14%
46. Animal control?	8%	70%	16%	2%	5%
47. Code and property maintenance enforcement?	7%	57%	22%	7%	8%

Now, for the next three city services, please consider only their job on city-maintained streets and roads. That means excluding interstate highways, state and county roads that are taken care of by other levels of government. Hence, Interstate 494, Highway 61, and County Roads, such as Keats Avenue and 70th Street, should not be considered. How would you rate ....

	EXCL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK/R
48. City street repair and maintenance?	12%	63%	21%	4%	0%
49. Snow plowing?	20%	65%	14%	1%	0%
50. Street lighting?	12%	66%	20%	3%	0%

51. When you consider the property taxes you pay and the quality of city services you receive, would you rate the general value of city services as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT.....5%
GOOD.....71%
ONLY FAIR.....18%
POOR.....2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5%

52. How would you rate the quality of drinking water in the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT.....5%
GOOD.....43%
ONLY FAIR.....32%
POOR.....18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%

IF "ONLY FAIR" OR "POOR," ASK: (N=199)

53. Why did you rate the drinking water as (only fair/poor)?

TOO MUCH CHLORINE, 11%; PARTICLES, 7%; 3M CONTAMINATION, 23%; BAD ODOR, 5%; BAD TASTE, 40%; BROWN COLOR, 2%; CHEMICALS, 11%; HARD WATER, 3%.

Thinking about garbage collection.....

54. Do you think you have too many choices, too few choices or about the right number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection?

TOO MANY.....3%
TOO FEW.....10%
ABOUT RIGHT NUMBER....82%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%

Thinking about another topic....

55. Are there areas in the City of Cottage Grove where you do not feel safe?

YES	12%
NO	88%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=48)

56. In which areas do you not feel safe?

BY LIBRARY, 23%; SHOPPING PARKING LOTS, 4%; BEHIND POLICE DEPARTMENT, 29%; SCATTERED PARKS, 15%; G-WILL LIQUOR, 6%; EVERYWHERE, 6%; SCATTERED APARTMENTS, 17%.

57. Do you feel safe in your immediate neighborhood walking alone at night?

YES	89%
NO	11%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

58. How would you rate the amount of police patrolling in your neighborhood -- too much, about the right amount or not enough?

TOO MUCH	3%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT	74%
NOT ENOUGH	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

59. How would you rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in your neighborhood -- too much, about right amount or not enough?

TOO MUCH	2%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT	75%
NOT ENOUGH	23%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

60. Would you support or oppose a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	37%
SUPPORT	37%
OPPOSE	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Continuing....

The Cottage Grove park system is composed of larger community parks and smaller neighborhood parks, trails, community ballfields and soccer fields, the Ice Arena and River Oaks Golf Course. Of these facilities, which have you or members of your household used during the past year? Then, for each one you have used, please tell me if you would rate the facility as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	NOT	EXC	GOO	FAI	POO	DKR
61. Larger community parks, such as Highlands Park or Woodridge Park?	33%	19%	46%	2%	1%	0%
62. Smaller neighborhood parks?	34%	19%	44%	3%	1%	0%
63. Trails?	30%	17%	47%	5%	0%	1%
64. Community ballfields and soccer fields?	46%	15%	36%	3%	1%	1%
65. The Ice Arena?	69%	6%	21%	3%	0%	1%
66. River Oaks Golf Course?	71%	11%	16%	0%	0%	2%

67. In general, do you feel that existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of you and members of your household?

YES	90%
NO	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

IF "NO," ASK: (N=39)

68. What additional recreational facilities would you like to see the City offer its residents?

FITNESS CENTER, 23%; TEEN CENTER, 10%; INDOOR WATER PARK, 13%; COMMUNITY CENTER, 21%; SECOND SHEET OF ICE, 23%; TRAILS, 10%.

69. Have you or members of your household participated in any City park and recreation programs?

YES	38%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=153)

70. Which ones?

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL, 26%; BASKETBALL, 3%; MULTIPLE SPORTS, 8%; HOCKEY, 5%; GYMNASTICS, 2%; SOCCER, 25%; FOOTBALL, 2%; GOLF, 7%; SAFETY CAMP, 5%; SKATING, 3%; TENNIS, 2%; SUMMER PROGRAMS, 7%; DANCE, 3%; SCATTERED, 3%.

71. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your experience?

SATISFIED	97%
DISSATISFIED	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

72. Does the current mix of City park and recreation programming meet the needs of your household?

YES	96%
NO	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

IF "NO," ASK: (N=9)

73. What program(s) do you feel are lacking?

SENIOR PROGRAMS, 33%; TEEN PROGRAMS, 67%.

74. Do you or members of your household currently leave the city for park and recreation facilities or activities? (IF "YES," ASK:) What would that be?

NO, 76%; ICE ARENA, 2%; BOATING, 3%; TRAILS, 6%; SPORTS LEAGUES, 2%; FITNESS CENTER, 2%; GYMNASIUM, 2%; CAMPING, 2%; SCATTERED, 5%.

Thinking about open space and natural areas.....

75. Do you think the City of Cottage Grove has too little, too much or about the right amount of open space and natural areas?

TOO LITTLE	27%
TOO MUCH	2%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

As you may know, the city has been improving parks, such as Highlands, Pine Tree Pond and Hamlet over the past few years.

76. Were you aware of these park improvements?

YES	75%
NO	25%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

77. Do you support or oppose the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	22%
SUPPORT	58%
OPPOSE	8%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

The City could consider the construction of a Community Center that would provide a gathering space for recreation, programs and meetings.

78. Do you support or oppose the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	28%
SUPPORT	44%
OPPOSE	11%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	11%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Funding for construction of the Community Center may require a property tax increase. Suppose the City of Cottage Grove proposed a Community Center development which you considered to be a reasonable approach.

79. How much would you be willing to see your property taxes increase to fund this construction? Let's say, would you be willing to see your annual property taxes increase by $____? (CHOOSE RANDOM STARTING POINT; MOVE UP OR DOWN DEPENDING ON RESPONSE) How about $____ per year?

NOTHING	36%
$40.00	25%
$80.00	13%
$120.00	4%
$160.00	0%
$200.00	1%
$240.00	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	22%

Moving on....

80. Do you leave the City of Cottage Grove on a regular or daily basis to go to work?

YES	57%
NO	24%
NOT EMPLOYED/RETIRED	19%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=226)

81. In what city is your job located?

MINNEAPOLIS, 14%; SAINT PAUL, 27%; BLOOMINGTON, 9%; VARIES, 3%; ROSEMOUNT, 2%; WOODBURY, 15%; WASHINGTON COUNTY, 5%; DAKOTA COUNTY, 8%; EAGAN, 6%; RAMSEY COUNTY, 4%; HENNEPIN COUNTY, 5%; REST OF METRO, 2%.

82. How many minutes does it take you to get to work?

FIVE MINUTES OR LESS	0%
SIX TO TEN MINUTES	5%
11 TO 15 MINUTES	21%
16 TO 20 MINUTES	18%
21 TO 25 MINUTES	16%
26 TO 30 MINUTES	11%
OVER 30 MINUTES	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

83. How would you rate the ease of getting to and from work -- excellent, good, only fair or poor?

EXCELLENT	20%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	30%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

84. Have delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affected your commute?

YES	37%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

85. How would you rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	19%
GOOD	74%
ONLY FAIR	6%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "ONLY FAIR" OR "POOR," ASK: (N=29)

86. What road, street or intersection in Cottage Grove is the most congested?

80TH AND POINT DOUGLAS, 17%; GRANGE, 10%; 80TH AND HADLEY, 7%; 80TH AND HIGHWAY 61, 17%; ALL ALONG 80TH, 17%; HIGHWAY 61, 10%; MANNING TRAIL, 3%; JAMAICA, 7%; SCATTERED STREETS, 12%.

87. Have you used public transportation, such as Metro Transit, during the past two years?

YES	30%
NO	70%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=120)

88. How would you rate your experience -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	18%
GOOD	73%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "NO," ASK: (N=280)

89. Were you aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis?

YES.....88%
NO.....13%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

90. Why haven't you used public transportation?

NEED CAR, 25%; DON'T LIKE BUSES, 8%; PREFER TO DRIVE, 19%; NO NEED, 27%; DOESN'T GO WHERE NEEDED, 21%.

Suppose the State of Minnesota prioritized the construction of the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor connecting Cottage Grove with Downtown Saint Paul and then to Downtown Minneapolis....

91. How likely would you or members of your household be to regularly use this service -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

VERY LIKELY.....20%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY.....28%
NOT TOO LIKELY.....27%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY.....25%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

The City recently completed construction of a "round about" on Jamaica Avenue and Highway 61.

92. Have you used this "round about?" (IF "YES," ASK:) How often do you use it -- daily, weekly, or less often?

NO.....6%
YES/DAILY.....28%
YES/WEEKLY.....45%
YES/LESS OFTEN.....22%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "USED," ASK: (N=378)

93. Do you think the "round about" is easy or difficult to navigate?

EASY.....67%
DIFFICULT.....33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

Changing topics....

94. Other than voting, do you feel that if you wanted to, you could have a say about the way the City of Cottage Grove runs things?

YES.....55%
NO 43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%

95. How much do you feel you know about the work of the Mayor and City Council -- a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or none at all?

A GREAT DEAL.....5%
A FAIR AMOUNT.....50%
VERY LITTLE.....36%
NONE AT ALL.....9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

96. From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) And do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY APPROVE.....8%
APPROVE.....47%
DISAPPROVE.....26%
STRONGLY DISAPPROVE....6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....15%

IF A JUDGMENT IS GIVEN, ASK: (N=342)

97. Could you tell me why you feel that way?

GOOD JOB, 26%; LISTEN, 8%; DON'T LISTEN, 8%; NO PROBLEMS, 19%; GOOD DEVELOPMENT, 8%; POOR SPENDING, 9%; TOO MUCH GROWTH, 7%; GOOD SPENDING, 2%; DON'T LIKE ROUND-ABOUT, 6%; COULD IMPROVE, 5%; SCATTERED, 3%.

98. How much first hand contact have you had with the Cottage Grove City staff -- quite a lot, some, very little, or none?

QUITE A LOT	2%
SOME	22%
VERY LITTLE	40%
NONE	36%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

99. From what you have heard or seen, how would you rate the job performance of the Cottage Grove City staff -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	7%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	38%

IF A JUDGMENT IS GIVEN, ASK: (N=248)

100. Could you tell me why you feel that way?

GOOD JOB, 20%; HELPFUL, 47%; FRIENDLY, 21%; POOR JOB, 6%; DON'T LISTEN, 2%; COULD IMPROVE, 4%.

101. During the past year, have you contacted Cottage Grove City Hall?

YES	26%
NO	74%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=104)

102. On your last telephone call or visit, which Department did you contact -- the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, Ice Center, Utility Billing, Park and Recreation, Building Inspections, Engineering, Planning, Administration, the Finance Department, or the General Information Desk?

POLICE DEPARTMENT	10%
FIRE DEPARTMENT	2%
PUBLIC WORKS	16%
ICE CENTER	0%
UTILITY BILLING	7%
PARKS AND REC	9%
BUILDING INSPECT	24%
ENGINEERING	5%
PLANNING	5%
ADMINISTRATION	4%
FINANCE DEPT	2%
GENERAL INFORMATION	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Thinking about your last contact with the City, for each of the following characteristics, please rate the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor....

	EXC	GOO	FAI	POO	DKR
103. Waiting time for the receptionist to help you?	38%	57%	4%	2%	0%

	EXC	GOO	FAI	POO	DKR
104. Courtesy of city staff?	39%	54%	7%	0%	0%
105. Ease of obtaining the service you needed?	39%	47%	9%	5%	0%

The City is examining its strategic goals and would like to know if and how much you value them. I am going to read you a list of the city's current goals. First tell me how important each goal is to you on a scale of "one" to "five," where "one" means "not at all important" and "five" stands for "extremely important."

	1	2	3	4	5	DK
106. Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.	1%	1%	8%	19%	71%	0%
107. Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.	0%	1%	8%	21%	70%	1%
108. Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.	1%	2%	13%	28%	57%	0%
109. Work to improve transportation and transit.	2%	7%	22%	22%	47%	0%
110. Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.	1%	4%	18%	30%	47%	0%
111. Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.	1%	4%	16%	25%	54%	0%

Now, for each of these goals, please rate how well the City is doing to achieve it. Again, let's use a "one" to "five" scale, where "one" means "poor" and "five" stands for "excellent."

	1	2	3	4	5	DK
112. Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.	1%	3%	23%	60%	13%	1%
113. Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.	1%	7%	33%	50%	6%	3%
114. Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.	2%	14%	42%	39%	3%	1%

	1	2	3	4	5	DK
115. Work to improve transportation and transit.	1%	5%	41%	44%	4%	5%
116. Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.	1%	3%	29%	56%	9%	3%
117. Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.	2%	5%	33%	52%	5%	3%

Moving on.....

118. What is your principal source of information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

CITY NEWSLETTER, 16%; BULLETIN, 63%; WEBSITE, 5%; CABLE TELEVISION, 8%; WORD OF MOUTH, 4%; PIONEER PRESS, 2%; SCATTERED, 3%.

119. How would you prefer to receive information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

CITY NEWSLETTER, 16%; BULLETIN, 57%; WEBSITE, 11%; CABLE TELEVISION, 7%; MAILINGS, 3%; WORD OF MOUTH, 2%; SCATTERED, 4%.

For each of the following, please tell me whether you consider it to be a major source of information for news about the city, a minor source, or not a source at all. (ROTATE)

	MAJ	MIN	NOT	DKR
120. The City newsletter, "Cottage Grove Reports?"	40%	45%	15%	1%
121. The newsletter included in city utility bills?	17%	33%	49%	1%
122. The "Bulletin" newspaper?	74%	15%	10%	0%
123. The "Star Tribune" or "Pioneer Press?"	10%	31%	59%	0%
124. The City's website?	11%	29%	60%	1%
125. Programming on your public access cable TV station?	13%	27%	59%	1%
126. City employees?	6%	16%	77%	1%
127. Direct mail updates?	8%	33%	58%	1%

As you may know, the city recently introduced the Cottage Grove monthly newsletter which is distributed through utility bills or mailed separately to non-utility customers.

128. During the past year, did you receive "Cottage Grove Reports," the City's newsletter?

YES.....93%
NO 7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=370)

129. Do you or any members of your household regularly read it?
YES.....85%
NO 14%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

130. How effective is the newsletter in keeping you informed about city government and its activities -- very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not at all effective?
VERY EFFECTIVE.....27%
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE....62%
NOT TOO EFFECTIVE.....6%
NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE...2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%

131. Does your household currently subscribe to cable television?
YES.....66%
NO 33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=265)

132. How often during the past year have you watched Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16 -- frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?
FREQUENTLY.....10%
OCCASIONALLY.....30%
RARELY.....27%
NEVER.....32%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

133. Do you have access to the Internet at home? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you have access to the Internet at work?
HOME ONLY.....43%
WORK ONLY.....3%
BOTH.....39%
NEITHER.....16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=336)

134. Have you accessed the City's website?
YES.....66%
NO.....34%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=222)

135. How would you rate the City's website -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?
EXCELLENT.....5%
GOOD.....66%
ONLY FAIR.....27%
POOR.....2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

136. Were you able to find what you were looking for?
YES.....91%
NO.....7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

Many city services and information can be made available through the Internet. How likely are you to use the Internet for each of the following services -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

	VRL	SML	NTL	NAA	DKR
137. Paying utility bills?	19%	21%	18%	43%	0%
138. Finding information about your utility bill?	27%	30%	7%	35%	1%
139. Dog licenses and other applications?	31%	17%	13%	40%	0%
140. Registering for park and recreation programming?	32%	19%	10%	38%	0%
141. Watching City Council meeting webcasts?	8%	14%	22%	55%	0%

As you may know, some cities are starting to offer for-profit services, such as high-speed wireless Internet, to their residents. The high-speed wireless Internet service is somewhat faster than dial-up, but somewhat slower than cable or DSL. Also, it is less expensive than cable or DSL, but more expensive than dial-up.

142. Would you support or oppose Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT.....16%
SUPPORT.....36%
OPPOSE.....15%
STRONGLY OPPOSE.....18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....16%

IF "STRONGLY SUPPORT" OR "SUPPORT," ASK: (N=207)

143. How much would you be willing to pay for high-speed wireless Internet service offered by the City of Cottage Grove? Would you be willing to pay $___ per month? CHOOSE RANDOM STARTING POINT; MOVE UP OR DOWN DEPENDING ON ANSWER) How about $___ per month? (REPEAT PROCESS)

LESS THAN $20.00.....32%
$20.00.....30%
$25.00.....27%
$30.00.....6%
$35.00.....1%
MORE THAN $35.00.....1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....4%

Now, just a few more questions for demographic purposes....

Could you please tell me how many people in each of the following age groups live in your household.

144. Persons 65 or over?

NONE.....83%
ONE.....10%
TWO OR MORE.....7%

145. Adults under 65?

NONE.....9%
ONE.....13%
TWO.....68%
THREE OR MORE.....11%

146. School-aged children?

NONE.....55%
ONE.....18%
TWO.....21%
THREE OR MORE.....6%

147. Pre-schoolers?

NONE.....83%
ONE.....14%
TWO OR MORE.....4%

148. Which of the following best describes your household: (READ)
A. Single, no other family at home.
B. Single parent with children at home.
C. Married or partnered, with children at home.
D. Married or partnered with no children or no children at home.
E. Something else.

SINGLE/NO OTHER.....7%
SINGLE PARENT.....2%
MAR/PARTN/CHILDREN....51%
MAR/PARTN/NO CHILD....40%
SOMETHING ELSE.....1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

149. Do you own or rent your present residence?

OWN.....91%
RENT.....9%
REFUSED.....0%

150. What is your age, please? (READ CATEGORIES, IF NEEDED)

18-24.....2%
25-34.....13%
35-44.....32%
45-54.....25%
55-64.....20%
65 AND OVER.....10%

151. Do you own a dog?

YES.....44%
NO.....56%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

And now, for one final question, keeping in mind that your answers are held strictly confidential....

152. Is your pre-tax yearly household income over or under $75,000?
IF "OVER," ASK:
Is it over $100,000? (IF "YES," ASK:) Is it over $125,000?
IF "UNDER," ASK:
Is it under $50,000?

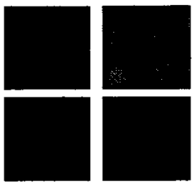
UNDER $50,000.....13%
$50,001-$75,000.....23%
$75,001-$100,000.....30%
$100,000-$125,000.....14%
OVER $125,000.....8%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....12%

153. Gender

MALE.....49%
FEMALE.....51%

154. REGION OF CITY

PRECINCT 1.....5%
PRECINCT 2.....10%
PRECINCT 3.....9%
PRECINCT 4.....6%
PRECINCT 5.....8%
PRECINCT 6.....10%
PRECINCT 7.....9%
PRECINCT 8.....8%
PRECINCT 9.....9%
PRECINCT 10.....10%
PRECINCT 11.....8%
PRECINCT 12.....10%



Decision
Resources Ltd.

Graphics

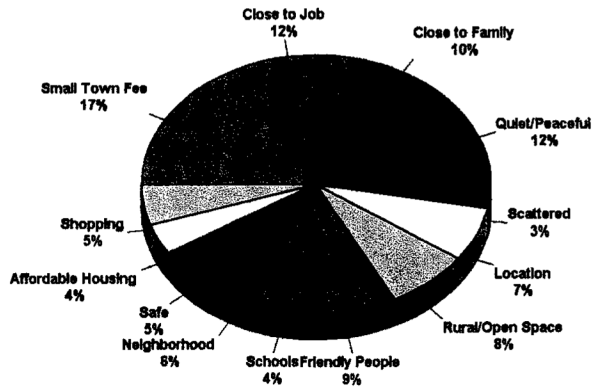
City of Cottage Grove

2007 Residential Study

Decision Resources, Ltd.

Like Most about City

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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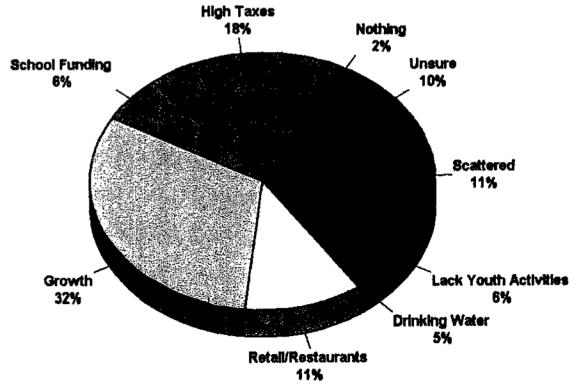
Most Serious Issue

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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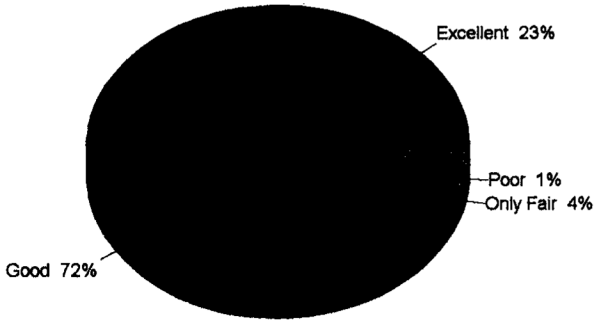
Quality of Life

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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Closest Connection

2007 City of Cottage Grove

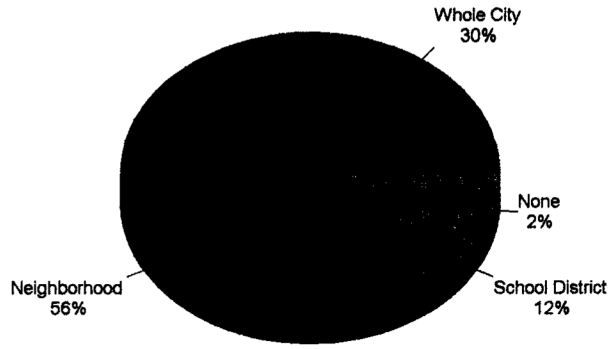

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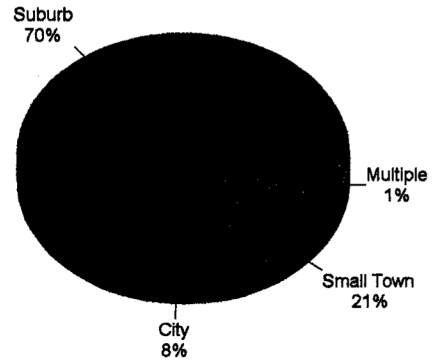
Image of City

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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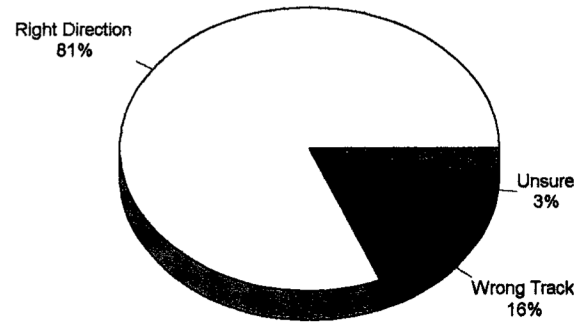
Heading of Community

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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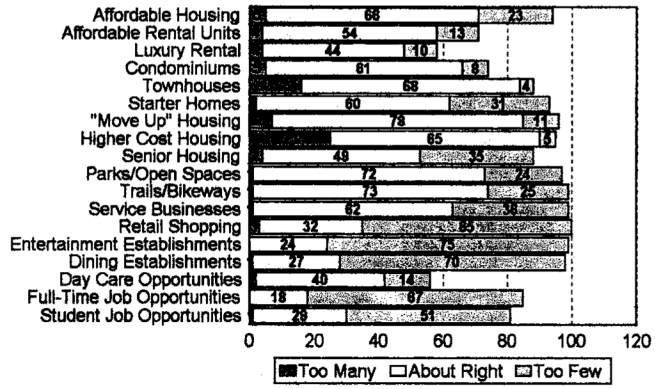
Community Characteristics

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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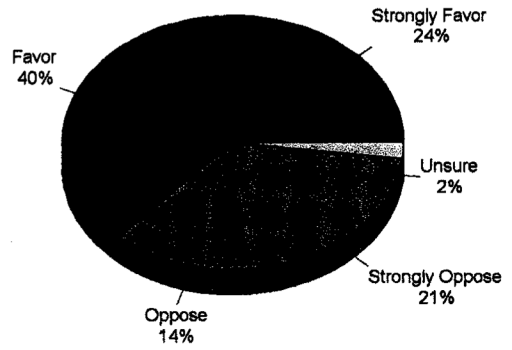
Shopping Center on Theater Site

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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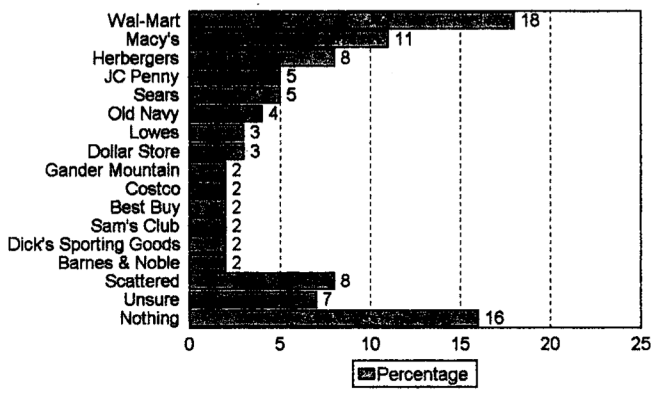
Retail Establishments at Shopping Center

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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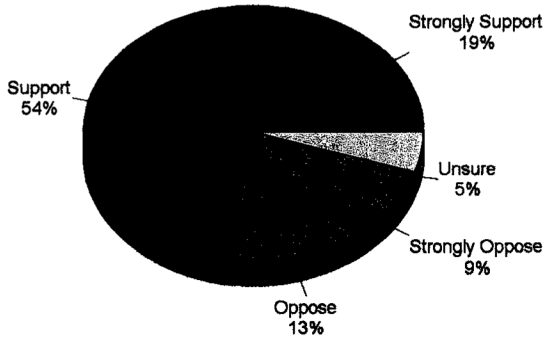
Industrial Park Development

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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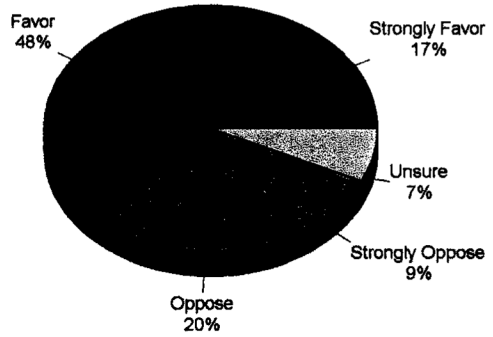
Efforts to Provide Senior Housing

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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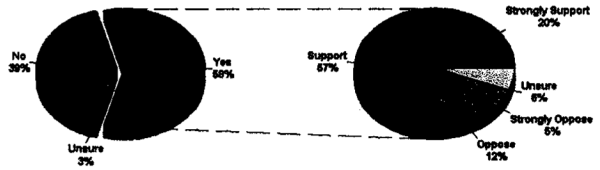
East Ravine Master Plan

2007 City of Cottage Grove



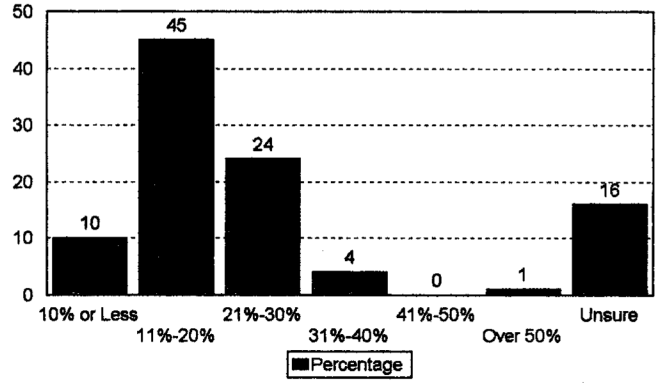
Awareness of Development of Master Plan

Use of Process in the Future

Decision Resources, Ltd.

City Property Tax Share

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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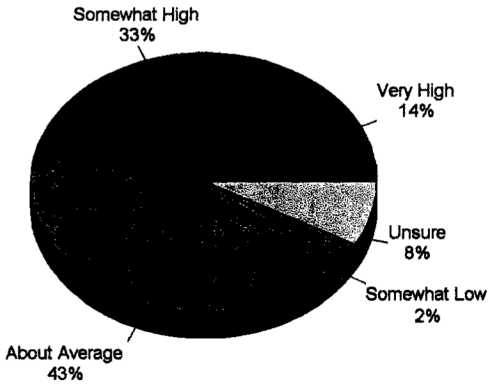
Comparative Property Taxes

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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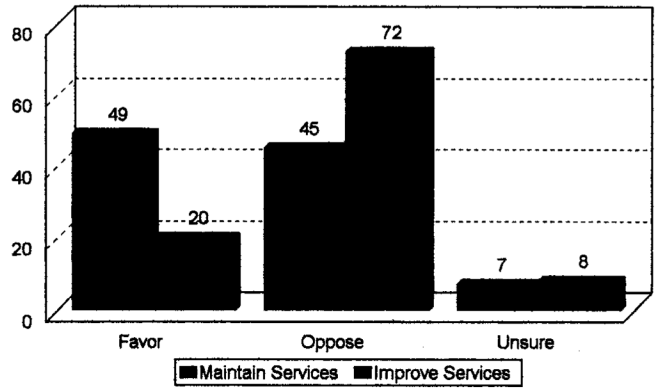
Increased Property Tax

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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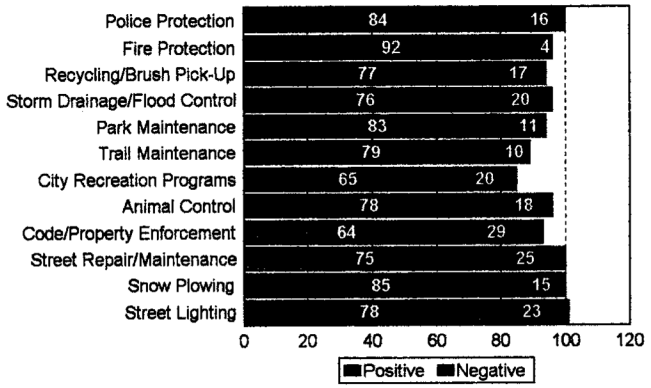
City Services

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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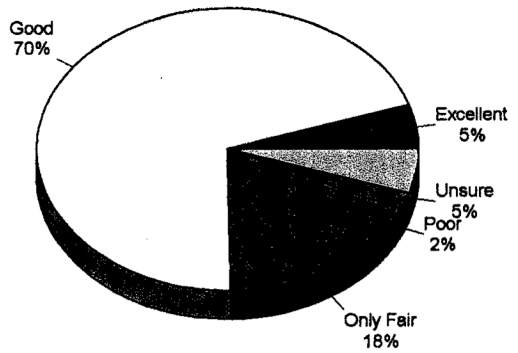
Value of City Services

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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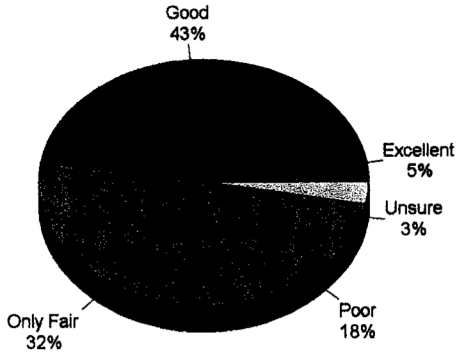
Quality of Drinking Water

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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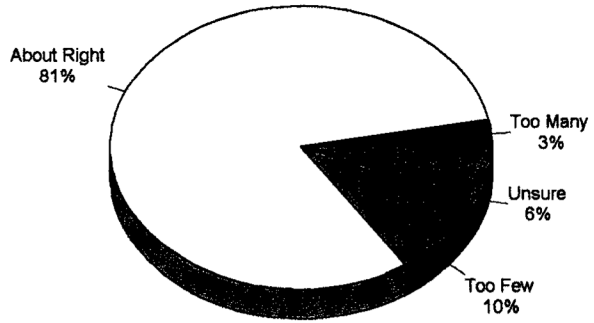
Choice of Garbage Collectors

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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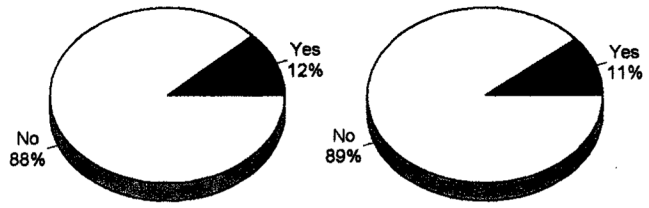
Unsafe Areas

2007 City of Cottage Grove



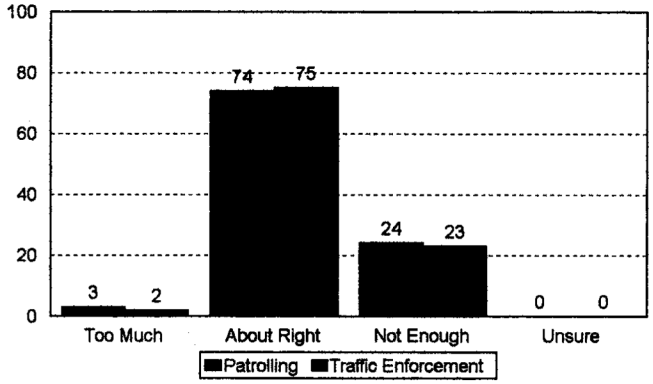
Unsafe Areas of City

Unsafe in Immediate Neighborhood Walking Alone at Night

Decision Resources, Ltd.

Neighborhood Police Activities

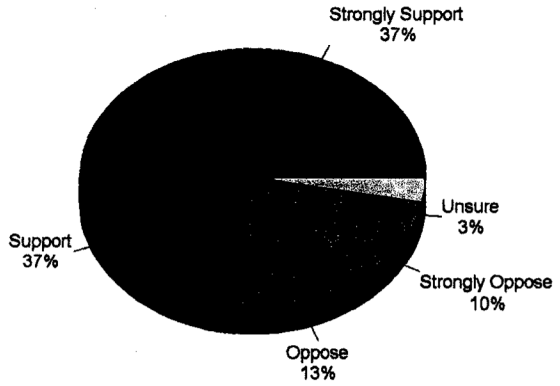
2007 City of Cottage Grove



Decision Resources, Ltd.

Outlawing Certain Breeds

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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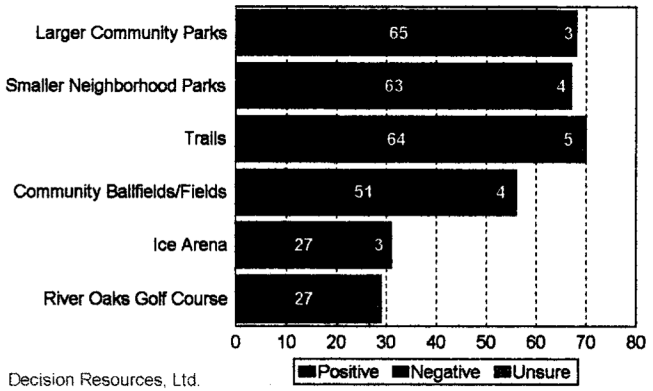
Use and Rating of Park System

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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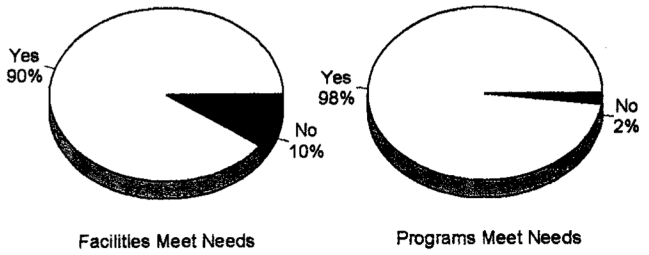
Recreation Facilities & Programs

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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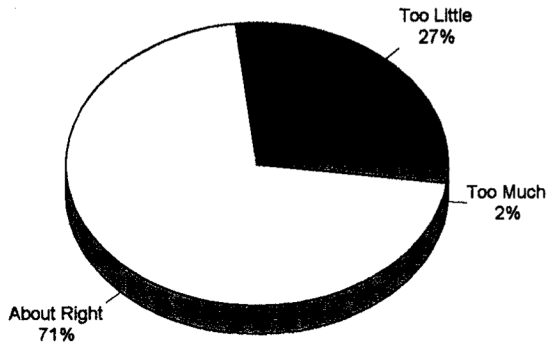
Amount of Open Space

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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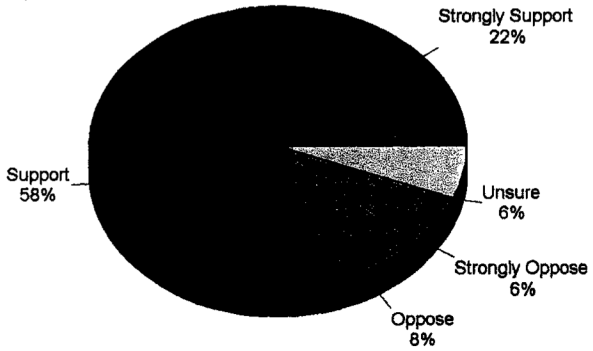
Funds for Park Improvements

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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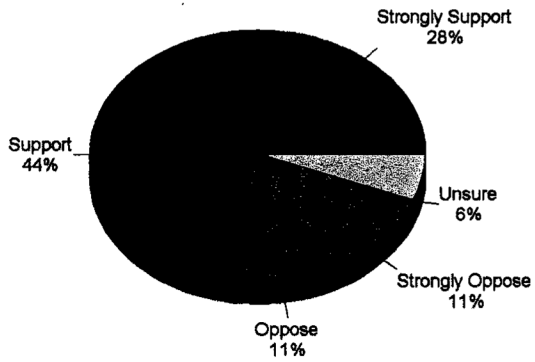
Community Center Concept

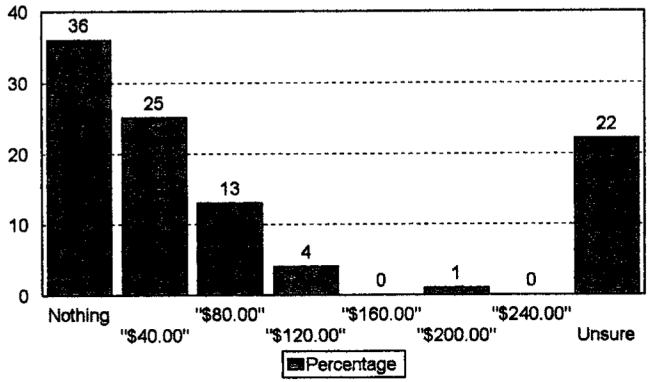
2007 City of Cottage Grove



Decision Resources, Ltd

Tax Increase for Construction

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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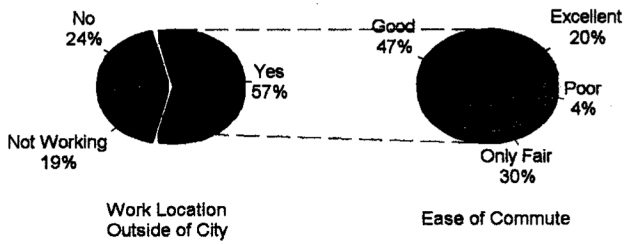
Commute Patterns

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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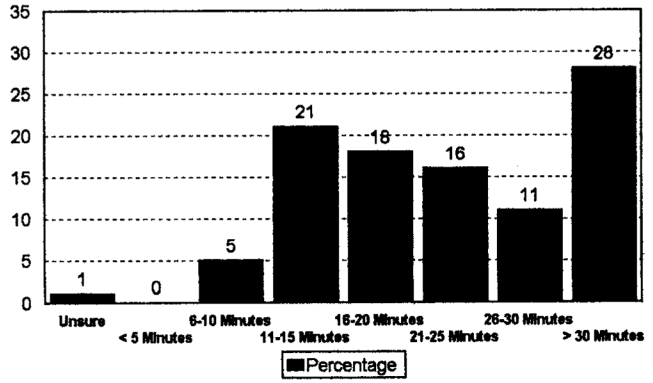
Average Commute Time

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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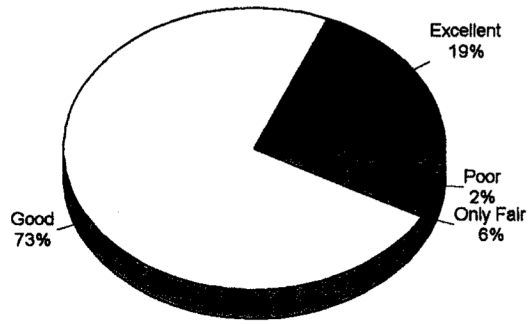
Ease of Intra-City Travel

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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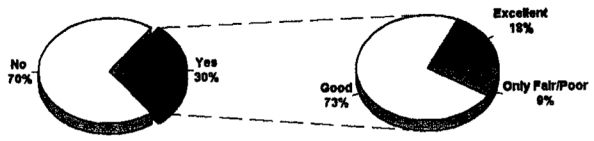
Public Transportation

2007 City of Cottage Grove



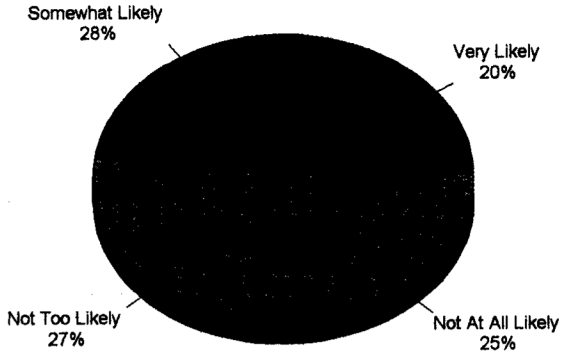
Used Public Transportation during Past Two Years

Rating of Experience

Decision Resources, Ltd.

Use of Red Rock Commuter Rail

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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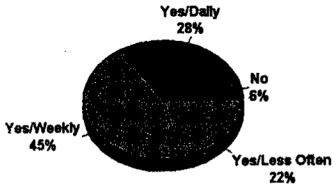
"Round About"

2007 City of Cottage Grove



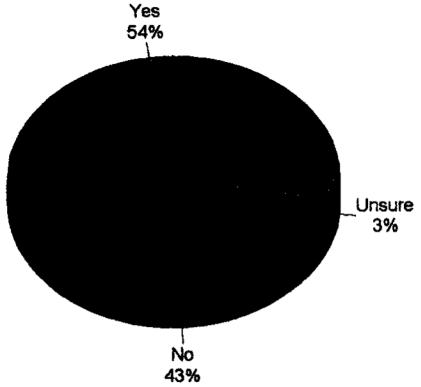
Frequency of Using Round About

Navigation of Round About

Decision Resources, Ltd.

Empowerment

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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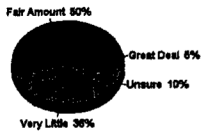
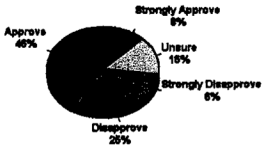
Mayor & City Council

2007 City of Cottage Grove



Knowledge of Work of Mayor and City Council

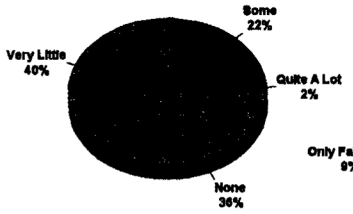


Job Performance of Mayor and City Council

Decision Resources, Ltd

City Staff

2007 City of Cottage Grove



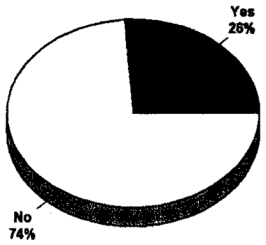
First-Hand Contact of City Staff

Job Performance of City Staff

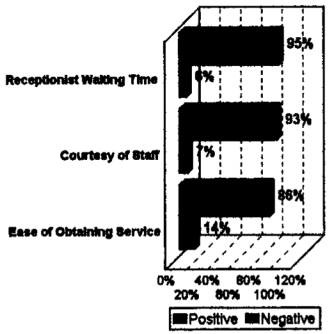
Decision Resources, Ltd

Cottage Grove City Hall

2007 City of Cottage Grove



Contacted City Hall during Past Year

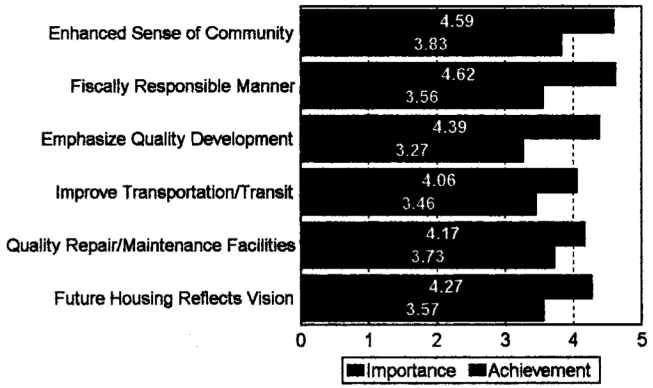


Rating of Service

Decision Resources, Ltd

Strategic Goals

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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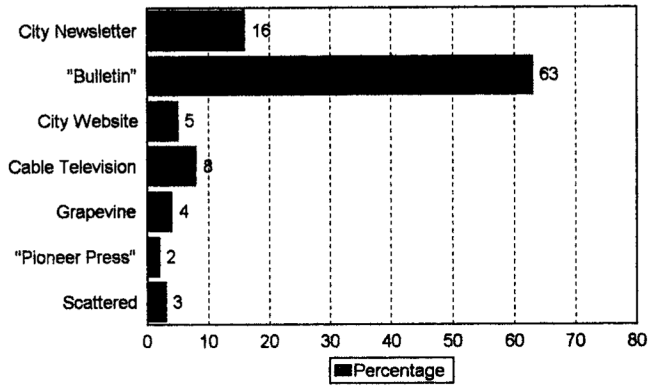
Principal Information Source

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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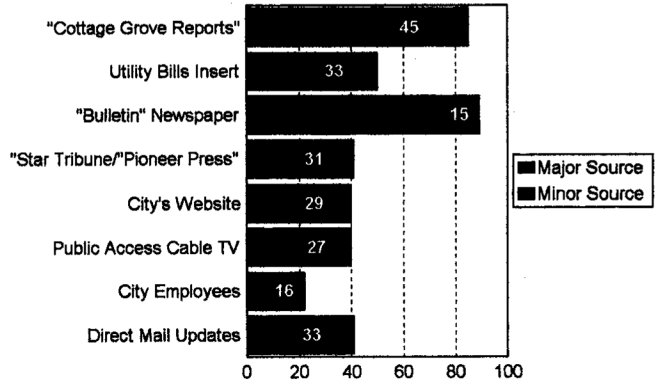
Information Sources

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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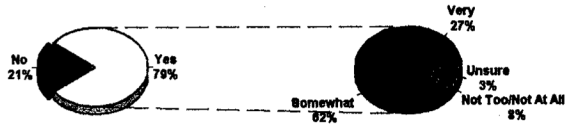
City Newsletter

2007 City of Cottage Grove



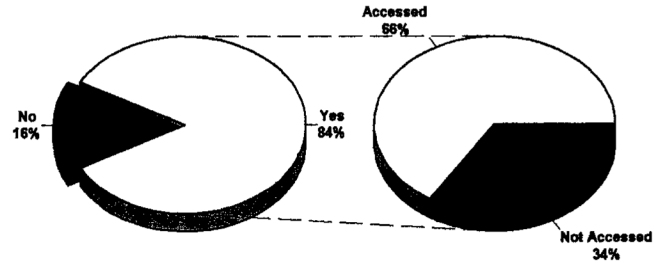
Readership of Newsletter

Rating of Quality

Decision Resources, Ltd

Computer Capability

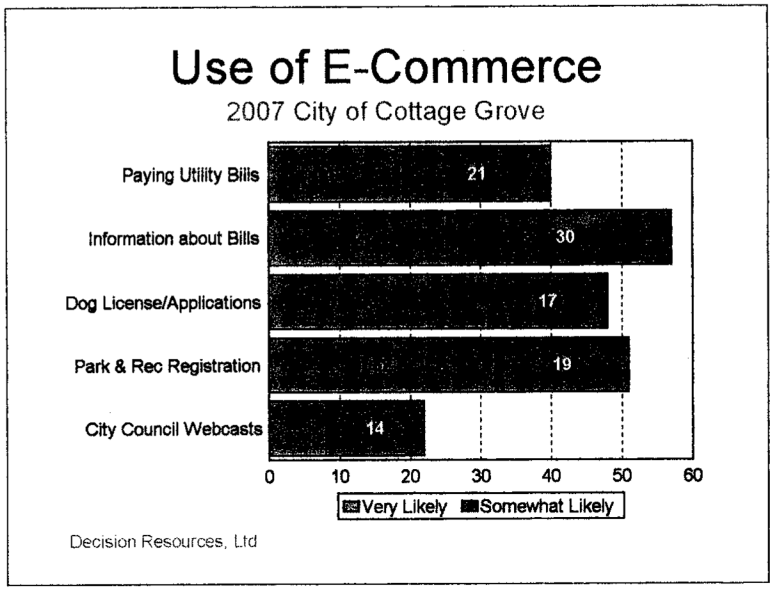
2007 City of Cottage Grove



Access to Internet at Home or at Work

Accessed City's Home Page

Decision Resources, Ltd.


Use of E-Commerce
2007 City of Cottage Grove
Paying Utility Bills
Information about Bills
Dog License/Applications
Park & Rec Registration
City Council Webcasts
21
30
17
19
14
0
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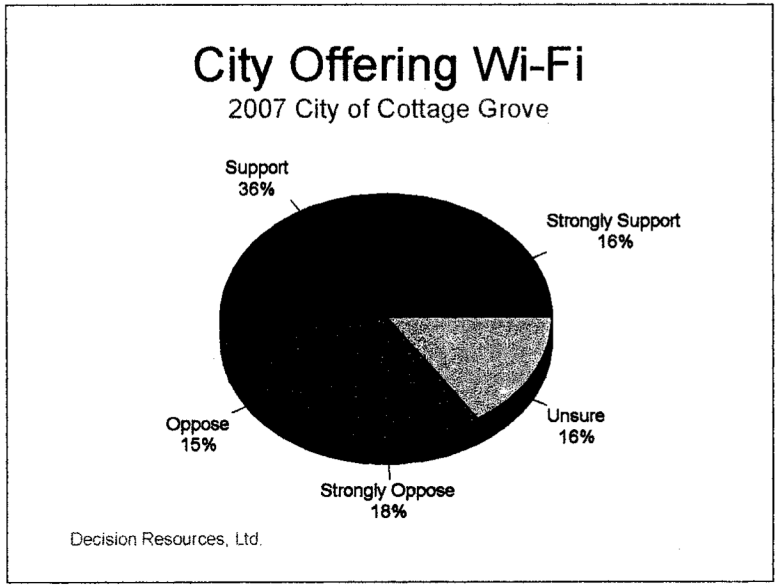
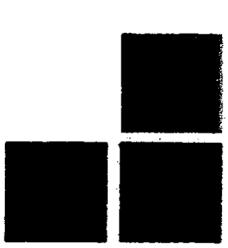
20
30
40
50
60
Very Likely
Somewhat Likely
Decision Resources, Ltd


City Offering Wi-Fi
2007 City of Cottage Grove
Support
36%
Strongly Support
16%
Unsure
16%
Strongly Oppose
18%
Oppose
15%
Decision Resources, Ltd.



Decision Resources Ltd.

2008 City of Cottage Grove

Residential Survey

Volume One:
Frequencies, Analysis and Graphics

Decision Resources, Ltd.
May 2008

3128 Dean Court • Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416 • (612) 920-0337 • Fax (612)929-6166

Survey Overview

Decision Resources, Ltd., is pleased to present the results of this study to the City of Cottage Grove. This section provides a brief introduction to the specifications of the survey and a guide to the organization of the written analysis.

While the most statistically sound procedures have been used to collect and analyze the information presented herein, it must always be kept in mind that surveys are not predictions. They are designed to measure public opinion within identifiable limits of accuracy at *specific points in time*. This survey is in no way a prediction of opinions, perceptions, or actions at any future point in time. After all, in public policy analysis, the major task is to impact these revealed opinions in a constructive fashion.

The Principal Investigator for this study was Dr. William D. Morris; the Project Director overseeing all phases of the research and analysis was Ms. Diane Traxler.

Research Design

This study contains the results of a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected residents in the City of Cottage Grove. Survey responses were gathered by professional interviewers across the community between December 12th, 2007 and January 16th, 2008.

The average interview took 26 minutes.

All respondents interviewed in this study were part of a randomly generated sample of the city. In general, random samples such as this yield results projectable to their respective universe within ± 5.0 percent in 95 out of 100 cases.

Interviews were conducted by **Decision Resources, Ltd.**, trained personnel from telephone banks in St. Paul, Minnesota. Approximately twenty percent of all interviews were independently validated for procedure and content by a Decision Resources, Ltd., supervisor. Completed interviews were edited and coded at the company's headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Statistical analysis and cross-tabulations were produced by the company's CfMC Mentor Analysis System and SPSS 15.0 FOR WINDOWS.

Organization of the Study

The results of this study are presented in the following order:

The ***Analysis*** consists of a written report of the major findings. The results contained herein were also presented verbally to the client.

The ***Questionnaire*** reproduces the survey instrument as it was used in the interviewing process. This section also includes a response frequency distribution for each question.

Any further questions the reader may have about this study which are not answered in this report should be directed to either Dr. Morris or Ms. Traxler.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Residential Demographics 7
Residential Demographics 8
Residential Longevity 8
Household Composition 9
Marital Status 10
Home Ownership 11
Age of Respondent 11
Dog Owners 11
Household Income 12
Gender 12
Region of the City 12
Summary and Conclusions 13

Chapter Two: Quality of Life Issues 14
Quality of Life Issues 15
Like Most 15
Most Serious Issue 16
Quality of Life 17
Closest Connection 17
See Cottage Grove 18
Headed in the Right Direction 19
Summary and Conclusions 20

Chapter Three: Development Issues 21
Development Issues 22
Community Characteristics 22
Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater Site 31
Industrial Park 33
Senior Housing 34
East Ravine Master Plan 34
Summary and Conclusions 36

Chapter Four: City Taxes and Services 37
City Taxes and Services 38
Percentage of Property Tax 38
Tax Comparison 39
Tax Increase to Maintain 40
Tax Increase to Improve or Enhance 41
City Service Ratings 42
General Value of City Services 49
Quality of Drinking Water 50
Garbage Collection 51
Summary and Conclusions 52

Chapter Five: Public Safety 53
Public Safety 54
Not Feel Safe 54
Amount of Police Patrolling 56
Amount of Traffic Enforcement 56
Outlawing Certain Breeds 57
Summary and Conclusions 58

Chapter Six: Parks and Recreation 59
Parks and Recreation 60
Facility Usage 60
Facilities Meet the Needs of your Household 65
Participation in Recreation Programs 66
Leave the City for Parks and Recreation 68
Amount of Open Space 68
Park Improvements 69
Construction of a Community Center 71
Summary and Conclusions 73

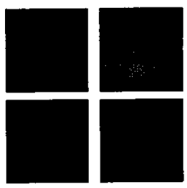
Chapter Seven: Transportation 75
Transportation 76
Commute to Work 76
Intra-City Travel 79
Use of Public Transportation 80
Red Rock Commuter Rail 82
"Round About" 83
Summary and Conclusions 85

Chapter Eight: City Government 86
City Government 87
Empowerment 87
Mayor and City Council 87
City Staff 90
Contact with City Hall 92
Summary and Conclusions 94

Chapter Nine: Strategic Goals 96
Strategic Goals 97
Importance of Strategic Goals 97
Rating of City on Strategic Goals 100
Summary and Conclusions 104

Chapter Ten: Communications 106
Communications 107
Principal Source 107
Preferred Source 107
Sources of Information 108
City Newsletter 114
Cable Television 115
Internet Access 116
On-line City Services and Information 119
High-Speed Wireless Internet 122
Summary and Conclusions 124

Chapter Eleven: Final Thoughts 125
Final Thoughts 126



Decision
Resources Ltd.

Analysis

Chapter One: Residential Demographics

Residential Demographics

Residents of the City of Cottage Grove were asked a series of questions about their demographic backgrounds. These questions were asked for two reasons: first, to validate this sample against the updated 2000 U.S. Census findings; and, second, to track any differences between subgroups and the rest of the population. There were no statistically significant differences between the findings of this survey and the census data. And, throughout the course of this study, subgroup differences will be discussed.

Residential Longevity

Respondents were asked:

> ***Approximately how many years have you lived in Cottage Grove?***

The typical resident lived in the community for 15.0 years:

LESS THAN FIVE YEARS	12%
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	25%
TEN TO TWENTY YEARS	28%
20 TO 30 YEARS	18%
OVER THIRTY YEARS	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-seven percent lived there for ten years or less, while 36%, for over 20 years.

"Two to five years" is reported more often by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"Five to ten years" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Ten to twenty years" is posted most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- households with children
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Twenty to thirty years" is cited at a higher rate by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

"Over thirty years" is stated most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Household Composition

Residents of Cottage Grove were asked:

Could you please tell me how many people in each of the following age groups live in your household.

Four age ranges were then read:

Persons 65 or over?

Seventeen percent of the city's households contain seniors:

NONE	83%
ONE	10%
TWO OR MORE	7%

Adults under 65?

Nine percent of the households are composed solely of senior citizens:

NONE	9%

ONE	13%
TWO	68%
THREE OR MORE	11%

A majority of households contain two adults.

School-aged children?

Forty-five percent of the Cottage Grove households contain school-aged children:

NONE	55%
ONE	18%
TWO	21%
THREE OR MORE	6%

Most households with school-aged children have more than one in residence.

Pre-schoolers?

Eighteen percent of the community's households contain pre-schoolers:

NONE	83%
ONE	14%
TWO OR MORE	4%

The community norm is a single pre-schooler in these households.

Marital Status

Residents were queried:

> ***Which of the following best describes your household:***
> ***A. Single, no other family at home.***
> ***B. Single parent with children at home.***
> ***C. Married or partnered, with children at home.***
> ***D. Married or partnered with no children or no children at home.***
> ***E. Something else.***

Nine percent are single or single parents:

SINGLE/NO OTHER FAMILY	7%
SINGLE PARENT	2%
MARRIED/PARTNERED/CHILDREN	51%
MARRIED/PARTNERED/NO CHILDREN	40%

SOMETHING ELSE 1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Forty percent are married or partnered empty-nesters, while 51% are married or partnered with children at home.

Home Ownership

Residents were asked:

Do you own or rent your present residence?

Ninety-one percent own their present residence:

OWN 91%
RENT 9%
REFUSED 0%

Only nine percent currently rent.

Age of Respondent

Residents were queried:

What is your age, please?

The typical adult resident is 45.9 years old:

18-24 ..... 2%
25-34 ..... 13%
35-44 ..... 32%
45-54 ..... 25%
55-64 ..... 20%
65 AND OVER 10%

Fifteen percent are under 35 years old, while ten percent are over 64 years old.

Dog Owners

Respondents were asked:

Do you own a dog?

Forty-four percent of the households in the community own a dog:

YES	44%
NO	56%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Household Income

Residents were asked:

> ***And now, for one final question, keeping in mind that your answers are held strictly confidential....***
>
> ***Is your pre-tax yearly household income over or under $75,000? Is it over $100,000? Is it over $125,000? Is it under $50,000?***

The median pre-tax household income is $82,000 per year:

UNDER $50,000	13%
$50,001-$75,000	23%
$75,001-$100,000	30%
$100,000-$125,000	14%
OVER $125,000	8%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	12%

Thirteen percent post incomes under $50,000, and eight percent indicate incomes over $125,000.

Gender

The gender of each respondent was noted:

MALE	49%
FEMALE	51%

Women outnumber men in the sample by two percent.

Region of the City

The precinct of residence of each respondent was also noted:

PRECINCT 1	5%

PRECINCT 2	10%
PRECINCT 3	9%
PRECINCT 4	6%
PRECINCT 5	8%
PRECINCT 6	10%
PRECINCT 7	9%
PRECINCT 8	8%
PRECINCT 9	9%
PRECINCT 10	10%
PRECINCT 11	8%
PRECINCT 12	10%

For further analysis purposes, the city was divided into four regions. Precincts 1-3 contain 24% of the households. Precincts 4-6 also contain 24% of the households in the city. Precincts 7-9 have 26% of the households, while Precincts 10-12 contain 28% of the city's households.

Summary and Conclusions

The typical adult resident lived in Cottage Grove for 15.0 years. Thirty-seven percent lived there for ten years or less, while 36% resided there for more than 20 years. The median adult age is 45.9 years old. Fifteen percent report ages under 35 years old, and ten percent post ages over 65 years old. Women outnumber men by two percent in the sample.

Seventeen percent report seniors in their households; nine percent of households are composed exclusively of senior citizens. Sixty-eight percent of the households contain two adults. Forty-five percent of the households have school-aged children, while 18% have pre-schoolers. Fifty-one percent of the households are married or partnered, with children at home; forty percent are married or partnered with no children or no children at home. Nine percent are single households, most without children. Forty-four percent own a dog.

Ninety-one percent own their present homes. The median pre-tax household income is $82,000.00 annually. Thirteen percent post incomes of under $50,000.00, and eight percent post incomes over $125,000.00. Twenty-four percent live in Precincts 1-2, and the same percentage reside in Precincts 4-6. Twenty-six percent live in Precincts 7-9, while 28% reside in Precincts 10-12.

Chapter Two: Quality of Life Issues

Quality of Life Issues

Cottage Grove residents were asked a short series of questions about their quality of life. First, the aspect of the city they like most and the aspect they think is the most serious issue facing the community were evaluated. Then, a general quality of life rating was solicited. The resident's strength of connectedness was discussed. The perception of the community, itself, was measured, followed by residents' feelings about the future.

Like Most

Respondents were asked:

What do you like most about living in Cottage Grove?

"Small town feel," at 17%, ranks first, followed by "quiet and peaceful" and "close to job," both at 12%:

QUIET/PEACEFUL	12%
CLOSE TO FAMILY	10%
CLOSE TO JOB	12%
SMALL TOWN FEEL	17%
SHOPPING	5%
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	4%
SAFE	5%
NEIGHBORHOOD	6%
SCHOOL	4%
FRIENDLY PEOPLE	9%
RURAL/OPEN SPACE	8%
LOCATION	7%
SCATTERED	3%

Ten percent like being "close to family," while nine percent cite "friendly people," eight percent appreciate "rural character and open space," and seven percent, "location."

"Small town feel" is key to:

- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers

"Quiet and peaceful" is reported more often by:

- city newsletter readers
- men

"Close to job" is stated more often by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Most Serious Issue

Cottage Grove residents were queried:

What do you think is the most serious issue facing Cottage Grove today?

Thirty-two percent bemoan "too much growth:"

UNSURE	10%
NOTHING	2%
HIGH TAXES	18%
LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING	6%
TOO MUCH GROWTH	32%
LACK OF RETAIL/RESTAURANTS	11%
DRINKING WATER ISSUE	5%
CITY GOVERNMENT	3%
RISING CRIME	2%
ROAD REPAIR	2%
LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES	6%
SCATTERED	4%

Eighteen percent point to "high taxes," and 11% cite "lack of retail shopping opportunities and restaurants."

"Too much growth" is indicated more often by:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"High taxes" troubled:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

"Lack of retail and restaurants" is a concern among:

- city newsletter readers

Quality of Life

Residents were asked:

How would you rate the quality of life in Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Ninety-five percent rate the quality of life as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	23%
GOOD	72%
ONLY FAIR	4%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Only five percent are more critical.

Ratings peak among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

Closest Connection

Residents were queried:

To which of the following do you feel a closer connection to:
A) The City of Cottage Grove as a whole,
B) Your neighborhood, or
C) Your school district?

A 56% majority feel closest to "their neighborhood:"

STATEMENT A	30%
STATEMENT B	56%
STATEMENT C	12%
NONE OF ABOVE	2%

DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Thirty percent point to "Cottage Grove as a whole," and 12% to their "school district:"

"Statement A" is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years

"Statement B" is posted at a higher rate by:

- empty nesters

"Statement C" is mentioned more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- over $100,000 annual income households

See Cottage Grove

Respondents were asked:

> ***When you think about Cottage Grove, do you see it as a suburb, a city or a small town?***

Seventy-one percent see Cottage Grove as a "suburb:"

SUBURB 71%
CITY 8%
SMALL TOWN 21%
MULTIPLE 1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Twenty-one percent view Cottage Grove as a "small town."

"Suburb" is reported most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- over $100,000 annual income households

Headed in the Right Direction

Respondents were queried:

> ***All in all, do you think things in Cottage Grove are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?***

Eight-one percent post "right direction:"

RIGHT DIRECTION	81%
WRONG TRACK	16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Sixteen percent think it is "off on the wrong track."

"Right direction" is stated most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

"Wrong track" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers

Residents seeing things as "off on the wrong track" were asked a follow-up question:

> ***Why do you think things are off on the wrong track?***

Sixty-two percent think there is "too much growth:"

LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING	2%
TOO MUCH GROWTH	62%
LACK OF RESTAURANT/RETAIL	14%
DRINKING WATER ISSUE	3%
CITY GOVERNMENT	15%
LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES	3%
SCATTERED	2%

Fifteen percent blame "city government," while 14% blame the "lack of retail shopping opportunities and restaurants."

"Too much growth" is a concern among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent

"City government" is stated more often by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

"Lack of restaurants and retail" troubled:

- residents feeling empowered

Summary and Conclusions

Residents of Cottage Grove most value its quiet and peacefulness, being close to family, being close to their jobs, and, most importantly, the small town feel of the community. But, the most serious issues facing the community are identified as rapid development and high taxes. A solid 95% rate their quality of life favorably; in fact, 23% rate it as "excellent."

Fifty-six percent report they feel the closest connection to their neighborhood. An unusually large 30% are most closely connected to the City of Cottage Grove as a whole, and 12% are tied most closely to the School District. Seventy-one percent see Cottage Grove as a "suburb," and 21% think of it as a "small town." Only eight percent view it as a "city."

Eighty-one percent think things in Cottage Grove are generally headed in the right direction. Only 16% feel things are off on the wrong track. Negative evaluations are primarily based upon perceptions of too rapid growth.

Chapter Three: Development Issues

Development Issues

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about development issues facing the community. First, their feelings about the current levels of several types of development were garnered. Then, development of the Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater site, an industrial park, and additional senior housing were discussed. Finally, the process for developing the Master Plan for the East Ravine Area was evaluated.

Community Characteristics

Residents were instructed:

> ***I would like to read you a list of characteristics of a community. For each one, please tell me if you think Cottage Grove currently has too many or too much, too few or too little, or about the right amount.***

A list of eighteen types of development was read:

> ***affordable housing, defined by the Metropolitan Council as a single family home costing less than $205,000?***

A 66% majority think there is "about the right amount" of affordable housing in the community:

TOO MUCH	5%
TOO LITTLE	23%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	66%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Twenty-three percent, though, see "too little."

"Too little" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"About the right amount" is indicated most frequently by:

- households with seniors
- over $100,000 annual income households

affordable rental units?

Fifty-four percent think there is "about the right amount" of affordable rental units" in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	4%
TOO FEW	13%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	54%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	29%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

luxury rental units?

Forty-four percent think there is "about the right amount" of luxury rental units in the city:

TOO MANY	4%
TOO FEW	10%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	44%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	43%

Forty-three percent, though, have no idea about the number.

"Too few" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- residents not feeling empowered

condominiums?

Sixty-one percent see "about the right amount" of condominiums in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	5%
TOO FEW	8%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	61%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	26%

"About the right amount" is selected more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

townhouses?

Sixty-eight percent think there is "about the right amount" of townhouses in the community:

TOO MANY	16%
TOO FEW	4%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	68%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	12%

"Too many" is posted most frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those unsure about the City Council
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is stated more frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

starter homes for young families?

Sixty percent see "about the right amount" of starter homes for young families:

TOO MANY	2%
TOO FEW	31%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	60%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Thirty-one percent report "too few."

"Too few" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- over forty-four year olds

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those who do not read the city newsletter

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"move up" housing?

Seventy-eight percent think there is "about the right amount" of "move up" housing in the community:

TOO MUCH	7%
TOO LITTLE	11%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	78%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

"Too little" is posted more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good

higher cost housing?

Sixty-five percent also think there is "about the right amount" of higher cost housing in Cottage Grove:

TOO MUCH	25%
TOO LITTLE	5%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	65%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Twenty-five percent feel there is "too much."

"Too much" is indicated more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

senior housing?

Forty-nine percent see "about the right amount" of senior housing in the community:

TOO MUCH	4%
TOO LITTLE	35%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	49%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	13%

But, 35% judge the current level as "too little."

"Too little" is cited more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- men
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is mentioned more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

parks and open spaces?

Seventy-four percent think there is "about the right amount" of parks and open spaces in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW/LITTLE	24%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Twenty-four percent, though, see "too little."

"Too little" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is selected more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

trails and bikeways?

Seventy-three percent thinks there is "about the right amount" of trails and bikeways in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	25%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	73%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-five percent sees "too few."

"Too few" is mentioned most often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children

"About the right amount" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households

service businesses?

Sixty-two percent thinks Cottage Grove has "about the right amount" of service businesses:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	36%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Thirty-six percent sees "too few."

"Too few" is posted more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"About the right amount" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

retail shopping opportunities?

Sixty-five percent sees "too few" retail shopping opportunities in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	3%
TOO FEW	65%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	32%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-two percent thinks there is "about the right amount."

"Too few" is indicated most frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is posted most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

entertainment establishments?

Seventy-five percent believe there are "too few" entertainment establishments in the city:

TOO MANY	0%
TOO FEW	75%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-four percent feel Cottage Grove as "about the right amount."

"Too few" is indicated more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

dining establishments?

Seventy percent see "too few" dining establishments in the community:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	70%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	27%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Twenty-seven percent believe there is "about the right amount."

"Too few" is stated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

"About the right amount" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

day care opportunities?

Forty percent see "about the right amount" of day care opportunities in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	2%
TOO FEW	14%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	40%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	45%

Forty-five percent, though, are unsure.

"Too few" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those unsure about the City Council
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"About the right amount" is indicated more often by:

- residents working in Cottage Grove
- city newsletter readers
- households with children

full-time job opportunities?

Sixty-seven percent see "too few" full-time job opportunities:

TOO MANY	0%
TOO FEW	67%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	15%

"Too few" is selected more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

job opportunities for students?

Fifty-one percent think there are "too few" job opportunities for students in Cottage Grove:

TOO MANY	1%
TOO FEW	51%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	29%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	19%

Twenty-nine percent believe there is "about the right amount."

"Too few" is posted most frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- men
- Precincts One, Two, Three, Four, Five and Six residents

"About the right amount" is cited at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater Site

Residents were told:

> ***As you may know, the Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater will be closing and there is a proposal to redevelop the site with a large shopping center.***

They were then asked:

> ***Do you favor or oppose the development of a shopping center on this site? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 64%-35% margin, residents favor the development of a shopping center on the site:

STRONGLY FAVOR	24%
FAVOR	40%
OPPOSE	14%

STRONGLY OPPOSE	21%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

But, intense support and intense opposition are at about the same levels.

Support is higher among:

- residents for less than ten years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- over forty-four year olds

Next, respondents were queried:

Assuming this site is developed as a shopping center, what retail establishments would you like to see included?

Eighteen percent urge a "Wal-Mart," and 11% want a "Macy's:"

UNSURE	7%
NOTHING	16%
OLD NAVY	4%
HERBERGERS	8%
WAL-MART	18%
DOLLAR STORE	3%
GANDER MOUNTAIN	2%
LOWES	3%
MACY'S	11%
JC PENNY	5%
SEARS	5%
COSTCO	2%
BEST BUY	2%
SAM'S CLUB	2%
DICK'S SPORTING GOODS	2%
BARNES AND NOBLE	2%
SCATTERED	8%

But, 16% want nothing on the site.

"Wal-Mart" is key to:

- those who do not read the city newsletter

- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Nothing" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- over forty-four year olds

Industrial Park

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

> ***In the past several years, the City has tried to expand the tax base by development of an industrial park.***
>
> ***Do you support or oppose the City developing an industrial park in Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 73%-22% margin, residents support the City developing an industrial park:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	19%
SUPPORT	54%
OPPOSE	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Intense support is double the level of intense opposition.

Supporters tend to be:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably

Opponents are typically:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Senior Housing

Respondents were queried:

> ***The City has established a priority to develop housing for senior citizens. As a result, the Norris Square and White Pines projects are being developed.***
>
> ***Would you favor or oppose continued efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 65%-29% margin, residents favor continued efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove:

STRONGLY FAVOR	17%
FAVOR	48%
OPPOSE	20%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Once again, intense support is almost double intense opposition.

Support increases among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

It decreases among:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those who do not read the city newsletter

East Ravine Master Plan

Residents were informed:

> ***As you may know, in 2004 and 2005 the City, using public input, developed a master plan for the development of the East Ravine area.***

They were then asked:

> ***Prior to this survey, were you aware of the development of the East Ravine master plan?***

A solid 58% report awareness of the development of the East Ravine master plan:

YES	58%
NO	39%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

"Yes" is cited more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"No" is mentioned more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- residents not feeling empowered
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Residents aware of the development of the master plan were asked a follow-up query:

> ***Do you favor or oppose the City using this type of process for future development in Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 76%-17% margin, respondents favor the City using this type of process for future development:

STRONGLY FAVOR	20%
FAVOR	56%
OPPOSE	12%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Intense support outdistances intense opposition by four-to-one.

"Favor" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably

"Oppose" is stated most frequently by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

Summary and Conclusions

In rating characteristics of the community, majorities of residents think the city lacks five types of development: retail shopping opportunities, entertainment establishments, dining establishments, full-time job opportunities, and job opportunities for students. About one-third of the respondents also feel there is too little senior housing, starter homes for young families, and service businesses. The only type of development which evidences some citizen push-back if higher cost housing.

By a 64%-35% margin, residents favor the development of a shopping center on the old Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater site. Respondents would like to see a Wal-Mart and a Macy's in the shopping center.

By a 73%-22% margin, residents also support developing an industrial park in Cottage Grove. Similarly, by a 65%-29% margin, residents support continuing efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove.

An unusually large 58% report awareness of the development of the East Ravine Master Plan for development. And, by a 76%-17% margin, those aware of the process and the plan favor the City using this type of process for future development in Cottage Grove.

Chapter Four: City Taxes and Services

City Taxes and Services

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about city taxes and services. Property taxes were examined in detail. Then, residents were asked for an evaluation of an array of city services. The value of city services was also discussed. Finally, drinking water and garbage collection was reviewed in greater detail.

Percentage of Property Tax

Respondents were initially asked:

> ***Property tax revenues are divided among the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, and your local public school district.***
>
> ***For each dollar of the property taxes you pay, about what percentage do you think goes to city government?***

The typical resident estimates the percentage as 17.7%:

TEN PERCENT OR LESS	10%
11 TO 20 PERCENT	45%
21 TO 30 PERCENT	24%
31 TO 40 PERCENT	4%
41 TO 50 PERCENT	0%
OVER 50 PERCENT	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	16%

This estimate is about one-half of the actual percentage. Only four percent were in the correct range.

"Ten percent or less" is stated more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

"Eleven to twenty percent" is selected more often by:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably

"Twenty-one to thirty percent" is posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents who have contacted City Hall

Tax Comparison

Residents were queried:

> ***Do you consider the city portion of your property taxes to be very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low in comparison with neighboring cities?***

Forty-seven percent consider their city property taxes to be "high:"

VERY HIGH	14%
SOMEWHAT HIGH	33%
ABOUT AVERAGE	43%
SOMEWHAT LOW	2%
VERY LOW	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

Forty-three percent think they are "about average." The property tax environment within Cottage Grove is generally benign.

"High" is selected most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About average" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

Tax Increase to Maintain

Residents were first asked:

> ***In 2007, the actual percentage of your property taxes going to the City of Cottage Grove was 31 percent.***
>
> ***Would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were needed to maintain city services at their current level?***

By a narrow 49%-45% margin, residents favor a property tax increase to maintain city services at their current level:

FAVOR	49%
OPPOSE	45%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

Support is higher among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over $100,000 annual income households

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

Opponents of a property tax increase for this purpose were asked a follow-up question:

> ***What services would you be willing to see cut?***

Sixty-seven percent feel "no services need to be cut, only waste:"

UNSURE	11%
NOTHING/CUT WASTE	67%
ADMINISTRATION	2%
PARKS AND RECREATION	11%
COMMUNICATIONS	3%
GOLF	2%
SCATTERED	4%

Cuts in "parks and recreation" are suggested by 11%.

"Nothing/Cut waste" is indicated more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

"Parks and recreation" is posted more often by:

- residents for less than ten years

Tax Increase to Improve or Enhance

Residents were next asked a parallel question:

> ***And, would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were used to improve and enhance current city services?***

By a decisive 72%-20% margin, residents oppose an increase to improve and enhance current city services:

FAVOR	20%
OPPOSE	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

Support increases among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably

It decreases among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

Supporters of a property tax increase for this purpose were also asked a follow-up question:

> ***What services would you like to see improved or enhanced?***

Twenty-three percent point to "street maintenance," while 20% cite "police services:"

UNSURE	13%

STREET MAINTENANCE	23%
GARBAGE/RECYCLING	8%
COMMUNITY CENTER	3%
TRAILS	6%
POLICE	20%
PARKS AND RECREATION	13%
FIRE	4%
DRINKING WATER	4%
PUBLIC TRANSIT	4%
SCATTERED	3%

Thirteen percent would like to see improvement and enhancements of "parks and recreation."

"Police" is reported more often by:

- under $75,000 annual income households

"Parks and recreation" is cited at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track

City Service Ratings

Respondents were instructed:

> ***I would like to read you a list of a few city services. For each one, please tell me whether you would rate the quality of the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

A list of twelve city services was then read:

> ***Police protection?***

Eighty-four percent rate police protection highly:

EXCELLENT	25%
GOOD	59%
ONLY FAIR	14%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Sixteen percent are more critical.

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- women

They are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Fire protection?

Ninety-two percent rate fire protection favorably, while four percent rate it unfavorably:

EXCELLENT	28%
GOOD	64%
ONLY FAIR	3%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Ratings soar among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers

Recycling and brush pick-up?

Seventy-seven percent rate recycling and brush pick-up highly:

EXCELLENT	15%
GOOD	62%
ONLY FAIR	13%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Seventeen percent are more critical.

Ratings increase among:

- those rating the quality of life as good

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- women

They decrease among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- men

Storm drainage and flood control?

Seventy-six percent rate storm drainage and flood control as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	10%
GOOD	66%
ONLY FAIR	16%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Twenty percent see the services as "only fair" or "poor."

Favorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- over forty-four year olds

Unfavorable ratings are posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Park maintenance?

Eighty-three percent rate park maintenance highly:

EXCELLENT	13%
GOOD	70%
ONLY FAIR	9%

POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Eleven percent are more critical in their evaluations.

Ratings increase among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers

They decrease among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

Trail maintenance?

Seventy-nine percent rate trail maintenance highly:

EXCELLENT	14%
GOOD	65%
ONLY FAIR	10%
POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	12%

Ten percent are somewhat more critical in their evaluations.

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

They are lower among:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

City-sponsored recreation programs?

Sixty-five percent think city-sponsored recreation programs are either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	8%
GOOD	57%
ONLY FAIR	17%
POOR	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	14%

Twenty percent rate them as either "only fair" or "poor."

Favorable ratings are given more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- women

Unfavorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Animal control?

Seventy-eight percent rate animal control favorably:

EXCELLENT	8%
GOOD	70%
ONLY FAIR	16%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Eighteen percent rate it unfavorably.

Ratings are higher among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

- residents who have not contacted City Hall

They are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall

Code and property maintenance enforcement?

Sixty-four percent view code and property maintenance enforcement favorably:

EXCELLENT	7%
GOOD	57%
ONLY FAIR	22%
POOR	7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

But, 29% post unfavorable ratings.

Ratings increase among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

They decrease among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Residents were next instructed:

> ***Now, for the next three city services, please consider only their job on city-maintained streets and roads. That means excluding interstate highways, state and county roads that are taken care of by other levels of government. Hence, Interstate 494, Highway 61, and County Roads, such as Keats Avenue and 70th Street, should not be considered. How would you rate ....***

A shorter list of three services was then read:

City street repair and maintenance?

Seventy-five percent of residents rate city street repair as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	12%
GOOD	63%
ONLY FAIR	21%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-five percent rate it as "only fair" or "poor."

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Snow plowing?

Eighty-five percent rate snow plowing favorably:

EXCELLENT	20%
GOOD	65%
ONLY FAIR	14%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Fifteen percent rate it unfavorably.

Favorable ratings are stated more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent

Unfavorable ratings are posted more frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

Street lighting?

Seventy-eight percent express positive ratings about street lighting.

EXCELLENT	12%
GOOD	66%
ONLY FAIR	20%
POOR	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

But, 23% are more negative in their evaluations.

Ratings increase among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

They decrease among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

General Value of City Services

Respondents were asked:

> ***When you consider the property taxes you pay and the quality of city services you receive, would you rate the general value of city services as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

A solid 76% award city services a positive value rating:

EXCELLENT	5%
GOOD	71%
ONLY FAIR	18%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

Twenty percent are more critical.

Ratings are higher among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over $100,000 annual income households

They are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- men

Quality of Drinking Water

Residents were asked:

> ***How would you rate the quality of drinking water in the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

While 48% rate the quality of drinking water highly, 50% rate the quality lower:

EXCELLENT	5%
GOOD	43%
ONLY FAIR	32%
POOR	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households

Unfavorable ratings are indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Critics were asked a follow-up question:

Why did you rate the drinking water as (only fair/poor)?

Forty percent cite "bad taste:"

TOO MUCH CHLORINE	11%
PARTICLES	7%
3M CONTAMINATION	23%
BAD ODOR	5%
BAD TASTE	40%
BROWN COLOR	2%
CHEMICALS	11%
HARD WATER	3%

Twenty-three percent mention "3M contamination," while 11% each indicate "too much chlorine" or "chemicals in the water."

"Bad taste" is a problem for:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds

"3M contamination" troubled:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with children

"Chemicals" is a concern among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Garbage Collection

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

Do you think you have too many choices, too few choices or about the right number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection?

An 82% majority think they have "about the right" number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection:

TOO MANY	3%
TOO FEW	10%

ABOUT RIGHT NUMBER 82%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 6%

"Too few" is posted at a higher rate by:

- over $100,000 annual income households

"About right number" is stated more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- over forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

Summary and Conclusions

The typical resident thinks 17.7% of his/her property taxes goes to city government. This estimate proves to be much lower than the actual share of 31%. Forty-seven percent think the city portion of their property taxes is comparatively high, while 43% see it as about average.

By a 49%-45% margin, residents narrowly support a property tax increase to maintain city services at their current levels. Opponents are most likely to feel that the need for a property tax increase can be mitigated through the elimination of existing waste. In contrast, a decisive 72%-20% margin opposes a property tax increase to improve and enhance current city services. If a tax increase were instituted, supporters would earmark the funds for street maintenance, parks and recreation services, and police services.

City service ratings are generally high in comparison with other communities. Ninety-two percent rate fire protection favorably. Between 80% and 89% post positive ratings for police protection, park maintenance, and snow plowing. Between 70% and 79% feel similarly about recycling and brush pick-up, storm drainage and flood control, trail maintenance, animal control, city street repair and maintenance, and street lighting. Only two services receive favorable ratings below 70%: city-sponsored recreation programs, at 65%, and code and property maintenance enforcement, at 64%.

By a 76%-20% judgment, residents consider the property taxes they pay and the quality of services to be a positive value. This almost four-to-one ratio places the community within the top quartile of suburbs across the Metropolitan Area.

Judgments about drinking water are mixed: 50% rate the quality negatively, while 48% post positive ratings. Negative ratings stem from concerns about the bad taste and 3M contamination.

A large majority of residents are satisfied with the number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection. Only 10% view the choice as limited.

Chapter Five: Public Safety

Public Safety

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about public safety issues in the community. First, they were asked about areas of the city where they feel unsafe. Their immediate neighborhood was considered, followed by a number of questions concerning neighborhood patrolling. Finally, an ordinance banning residents from owning certain breeds of dogs.

Not Feel Safe

Respondents were first asked:

Are there areas in the City of Cottage Grove where you do not feel safe?

Only 12% report there are areas in the City of Cottage Grove where they do not feel safe:

YES	12%
NO	88%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Yes" is cited more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those unsure about the City Council

"No" is mentioned more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as good

Next, residents feeling unsafe in certain parts of the community were asked a follow-up query:

In which areas do you not feel safe?

Twenty-nine percent cite the "area behind the Police Department," and 23% point to the area "by the library:"

BY LIBRARY	23%
SHOPPING PARKING LOTS	4%
BEHIND POLICE DEPARTMENT	29%
SCATTERED PARKS	15%
G-WILL LIQUOR	6%
EVERYWHERE	6%

SCATTERED APARTMENTS 17%

Fifteen percent mentioned various parks, while seventeen percent feel unsafe near various apartment buildings.

"Behind the Police Department" is indicated more often by:

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"By library" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters

"Scattered parks" is reported more often by:

- households with seniors

Next, the focus switched to their immediate neighborhoods:

Do you feel safe in your immediate neighborhood walking alone at night?

Eleven percent feel safe in their immediate neighborhood walking alone at night:

YES	89%
NO	11%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Yes" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- men

"No" is stated more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

Amount of Police Patrolling

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

> ***How would you rate the amount of police patrolling in your neighborhood -- too much, about the right amount or not enough?***

Seventy-four percent think the amount of police patrolling in their neighborhood is "about right:"

TOO MUCH	3%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	74%
NOT ENOUGH	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-four percent feel the amount of police patrolling is "not enough."

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Not enough" is indicated more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Amount of Traffic Enforcement

Respondents were then asked:

> ***How would you rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in your neighborhood -- too much, about right amount or not enough?***

Seventy-five percent rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in their neighborhood as "about right:"

TOO MUCH	2%
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	75%

NOT ENOUGH 23%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 0%

Twenty-three percent feel there is "not enough."

"About the right amount" is stated more often by:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Not enough" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents not feeling empowered
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Outlawing Certain Breeds

Residents were asked:

> ***Would you support or oppose a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 74%-23% margin, residents support a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs:

STRONGLY SUPPORT 37%
SUPPORT 37%
OPPOSE 13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE 10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 3%

Intense support outnumbers intense opposition by almost four-to-one.

Supporters tend to be:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

Opponents are typically:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

- those unsure about the City Council

Summary and Conclusions

Only 12% of the residents think there are areas in Cottage Grove where they do not feel safe. They point to the areas near the Library and behind the Police Department. Eighty-nine percent feel safe in their immediate neighborhood walking alone at night.

About three-quarters of the residents rate both the amount of police patrolling and the amount of traffic enforcement by police int their neighborhood satisfactorily. In each case, though, about one-quarter view it as insufficient.

By a decisive 73%-23% margin, residents support a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls. In fact, intense supporters outnumber intense opponents by nearly four-to-one.

Chapter Six: Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about parks and recreational opportunities. First, use and ratings of each component of the park system were gathered. Existing recreational facilities and programs were discussed. Leakage to other cities' facilities and programs was estimated. Open space and park improvements were focused on next. Finally, the construction of a Community Center was examined.

Facility Usage

Residents were instructed:

> ***The Cottage Grove park system is composed of larger community parks and smaller neighborhood parks, trails, community ballfields and soccer fields, the Ice Arena and River Oaks Golf Course. Of these facilities, which have you or members of your household used during the past year? Then, for each one you have used, please tell me if you would rate the facility as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

A list of six park system components was then read:

> ***Larger community parks, such as Highlands Park or Woodridge Park?***

Sixty-eight percent report using the city's larger community parks:

NOT USED	33%
USED/EXCELLENT	19%
USED/GOOD	46%
USED/ONLY FAIR	2%
USED/POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Sixty-five percent of the city residents rate larger community parks highly, while only three percent are less favorable.

"Not used" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

Smaller neighborhood parks?

Sixty-seven percent visit smaller neighborhood parks:

NOT USED	34%
USED/EXCELLENT	19%
USED/GOOD	44%
USED/ONLY FAIR	3%
USED/POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Sixty-three percent rate smaller neighborhood parks favorably, while four percent rate them unfavorably.

"Not used" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Favorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Trails?

Sixty-nine percent report using the city's trails:

NOT USED	30%
USED/EXCELLENT	17%
USED/GOOD	47%
USED/ONLY FAIR	5%
USED/POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Sixty-four percent rate trails highly, while five percent are more critical.

"Not used" is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Community ballfields and soccer fields?

Fifty-five percent report visiting community ballfields and soccer fields:

NOT USED	46%
USED/EXCELLENT	15%
USED/GOOD	36%
USED/ONLY FAIR	3%

USED/POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Fifty-one percent rate the community ballfields and soccer fields either "excellent" or "good," while only four percent rate them as "only fair" or "poor."

"Not used" is reported more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for less than thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- men

The Ice Arena?

Thirty percent report household members use the Ice Arena:

NOT USED	69%
USED/EXCELLENT	6%
USED/GOOD	21%
USED/ONLY FAIR	3%
USED/POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-seven percent rate the Ice Arena highly, while three percent are more negative in their evaluations.

"Not used" is indicated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors

- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

Positive ratings are given more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households
- men
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

River Oaks Golf Course?

Twenty-seven percent report visiting the River Oaks Golf Course during the past year:

NOT USED	71%
USED/EXCELLENT	11%
USED/GOOD	16%
USED/ONLY FAIR	0%
USED/POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Twenty-seven percent rate the River Oaks Golf Course favorably and no one is critical in their evaluations.

"Not used" is cited more often by:

- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

Ratings peak among:

- households with children
- over $100,000 annual income households
- men

Facilities Meet the Needs of your Household

Respondents were asked:

> ***In general, do you feel that existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of you and members of your household?***

Ninety percent think that existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of their household:

YES	90%
NO	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Ten percent disagree.

Agreement is higher among:

- empty nesters

It is lower among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- city newsletter readers
- households with children

Residents feeling their household's needs were not being met were asked a follow-up query:

> ***What additional recreational facilities would you like to see the City offer its residents?***

Twenty-three percent each would like to see either a "fitness center" or a "second sheet of ice:"

FITNESS CENTER	23%
TEEN CENTER	10%
INDOOR WATER PARK	13%
COMMUNITY CENTER	21%
SECOND SHEET OF ICE	23%
TRAILS	10%

Twenty-one percent favor a "Community Center."

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Participation in Recreation Programs

Respondents were asked:

Have you or members of your household participated in any City park and recreation programs?

Thirty-eight percent report household members participated in City park and recreation programs:

YES	38%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Yes" is cited more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households

"No" is mentioned more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Participants were asked:

Which ones?

"Baseball/Softball," at 26%, and "soccer," at 25%, lead the list:

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL	26%
BASKETBALL	3%
MULTIPLE SPORTS	8%
HOCKEY	5%
GYMNASTICS	2%
SOCCER	25%
FOOTBALL	2%

GOLF	7%
SAFETY CAMP	5%
SKATING	3%
TENNIS	2%
SUMMER PROGRAMS	7%
DANCE	3%
SCATTERED	3%

"Baseball and softball" is reported more often by:

- retired and currently not working residents

"Soccer" is indicated more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- households with children

Next, they were asked:

Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your experience?

A nearly unanimous 97% report satisfaction with their experience:

SATISFIED	97%
DISSATISFIED	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Next, all residents were queried:

Does the current mix of City park and recreation programming meet the needs of your household?

Only two percent feel the current mix of City park and recreation programming meet the needs of their household:

YES	96%
NO	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Agreement peaks among:

- residents feeling empowered
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

The very small subsample of residents feeling their household's needs were unmet were asked:

What program(s) do you feel are lacking?

"Teen programs" and "senior programs" are the two unmet needs:

SENIOR PROGRAMS	33%
TEEN PROGRAMS	67%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Leave the City for Parks and Recreation

Respondents were asked:

> ***Do you or members of your household currently leave the city for park and recreation facilities or activities? What would that be?***

Seventy-six percent do not leave the city to recreate elsewhere:

NO	76%
ICE ARENA	2%
BOATING	3%
TRAILS	6%
SPORTS LEAGUES	2%
FITNESS CENTER	2%
GYMNASIUM	2%
CAMPING	2%
SCATTERED	5%

Six percent leave the city to use the "trails" in other communities.

"No" is reported more often by:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households

Amount of Open Space

Residents were asked:

> ***Do you think the City of Cottage Grove has too little, too***

much or about the right amount of open space and natural areas?

Seventy-two percent think Cottage Grove has "about the right amount" of open space and natural areas:

TOO LITTLE	27%
TOO MUCH	2%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT	72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-seven percent see "too little."

"Too little" is cited most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"About right amount" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters

Park Improvements

Respondents were told:

As you may know, the city has been improving parks, such as Highlands, Pine Tree Pond and Hamlet over the past few years.

They were then asked:

Were you aware of these park improvements?

A large 75% are aware of these park improvements:

YES	75%
NO	25%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Awareness is higher among:

- residents feeling empowered

- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

It is lower among:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- under $75,000 annual income households

Next, residents were queried:

Do you support or oppose the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city? Do you feel strongly that way?

By an 80%-14% margin, residents support the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	22%
SUPPORT	58%
OPPOSE	8%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Intense support outnumbers intense opposition by almost four-to-one.

Supporters tend to be:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Opponents are typically:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors

- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Construction of a Community Center

Respondents were asked:

> ***The City could consider the construction of a Community Center that would provide a gathering space for recreation, programs and meetings.***
>
> ***Do you support or oppose the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove? Do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 72%-22% margin, residents support the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	28%
SUPPORT	44%
OPPOSE	11%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	11%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Intense support outnumbers intense opposition by almost five-to-two.

Supporters are more apt to be:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- women

Opponents are more likely to be:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- men

Next, respondents were asked:

> ***Funding for construction of the Community Center may require a property tax increase. Suppose the City of Cottage Grove proposed a Community Center development which you considered to be a reasonable approach.***
>
> ***How much would you be willing to see your property taxes increase to fund this construction? Let's say, would you be willing to see your annual property taxes increase by $____? How about $____ per year?***

The typical respondent would support a property tax increase of $26.40 per year:

NOTHING	36%
$40.00	25%
$80.00	13%
$120.00	4%
$160.00	0%
$200.00	1%
$240.00	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	22%

But, a large 36% are unwilling to support any property tax increase for this purpose.

"Nothing" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- men

"$40.00" is selected more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers

"$80.00" is stated at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall

Summary and Conclusions

The table below arrays each component of the Cottage Grove Park system with its usage rate and its positive evaluation percentage by users:

Park System Component	*Household Usage*	*Positive Rating*
Larger community parks	68%	96%
Smaller neighborhood parks	67%	94%
Trails	69%	93%
Community ballfields and soccer fields	55%	93%
The Ice Arena	30%	90%
River Oaks Golf Course	27%	100%

In every case, positive evaluations are at or above 90%. This consistency is rarely found in Metropolitan Area suburbs.

Only ten percent feel existing recreational facilities offered by the City fail to meet the needs of their households. This small group would urge the City to consider the development of either a fitness center or a community center.

Thirty-eight percent report household members participate in City park and recreation programs. A nearly unanimous 97% are satisfied with their experiences. Baseball/Softball and soccer are the two most frequently reported activities. Similarly, a nearly unanimous 96% believe the current mix of City park and recreational programming meets the needs of their household.

A comparatively low 24% report they leave the City for park and recreation activities and facilities elsewhere. The use of trails in other cities is the major reason for leaving.

Seventy-two percent think the City of Cottage Grove has about the right amount of open space

and natural areas; but, 27% think there are too little currently in the city. On a related topic, 75% are aware of the park improvements taking place during the past few years. In fact, by an 80%-14% margin, residents support the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city.

By a 72%-22% judgment, residents support <u>in concept</u> the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove. Intense supporters outnumber intense opponents by a five-to-two margin. Additionally, the typical resident is willing to see their property taxes increase by $26.40 per year to fund this construction; one cautionary note: 36% of the respondents are unwilling to see their property taxes increased, by **any** amount, for a community center.

Chapter Seven: Transportation

Transportation

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about transportation issues. First, commuter patterns were examined. Then, the ease of going from place to place was discussed. Public transportation was focused on, followed by reactions to the new "round about."

Commute to Work

Respondents were asked:

> ***Do you leave the City of Cottage Grove on a regular or daily basis to go to work?***

Fifty-seven percent leave the city on a regular or daily basis to go to work:

YES	57%
NO	24%
NOT EMPLOYED/RETIRED	19%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Twenty-four percent do not leave the city, while 19% are not employed or retired.

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- men

"No" is posted more frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those unsure about the City Council
- women

"Not employed/Retired" is indicated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Those leaving Cottage Grove regularly for work were asked a follow-up query:

In what city is your job located?

Twenty-seven percent report their job is located in "Saint Paul:"

MINNEAPOLIS	14%
SAINT PAUL	27%
BLOOMINGTON	9%
VARIES	3%
ROSEMOUNT	2%
WOODBURY	15%
WASHINGTON COUNTY	5%
DAKOTA COUNTY	8%
EAGAN	6%
RAMSEY COUNTY	4%
HENNEPIN COUNTY	5%
REST OF METRO	2%

Fourteen percent commute to "Minneapolis," while 15% work in "Woodbury."

"Saint Paul" is stated more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably

"Woodbury" is cited more frequently by:

- under $75,000 annual income households
- women

"Minneapolis" is reported more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years

Next, commuters were queried:

How many minutes does it take you to get to work?

The typical commute from Cottage Grove to work is 21.1 minutes:

FIVE MINUTES OR LESS	0%
SIX TO TEN MINUTES	5%
11 TO 15 MINUTES	21%
16 TO 20 MINUTES	18%
21 TO 25 MINUTES	16%
26 TO 30 MINUTES	11%

OVER 30 MINUTES	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-six percent post commute times of 15 minutes or less, while 28% have commute times of over 30 minutes.

"Eleven to fifteen minutes" is stated more often by:

- residents for less than ten years

"Sixteen to twenty minutes" is posted more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good

"Twenty-one to twenty-five minutes" is selected at a higher rate by:

- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Twenty-six to thirty minutes" is posted most frequently by:

- over $100,000 annual income households

Next, commuters were asked:

How would you rate the ease of getting to and from work -- excellent, good, only fair or poor?

Sixty-seven percent rate the ease of getting to and from work as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	20%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	30%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-four percent rate it as either "only fair" or "poor."

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for less than ten years

They are lower among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years

Commuters were finally asked:

Have delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affected your commute?

Thirty-seven percent report delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affected their commute:

YES	37%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- over $100,000 annual income households

Intra-City Travel

Residents were first asked:

How would you rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Ninety-three percent rate the ease of getting from place to place within the city as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	19%
GOOD	74%
ONLY FAIR	6%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Eight percent rate the ease lower.

Ratings peak among:

- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Next, the small subsample of critics were asked a follow-up query:

What road, street or intersection in Cottage Grove is the most congested?

Three locations are cited most often: "80th and Point Douglas," "80th and Highway 61," and "all along 80th Street:"

80TH AND POINT DOUGLAS	17%
GRANGE	10%
80TH AND HADLEY	7%
80TH AND HIGHWAY 61	17%
ALL ALONG 80TH	17%
HIGHWAY 61	10%
MANNING TRAIL	3%
JAMAICA	7%
SCATTERED STREETS	12%

"80th and Highway 61" is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Use of Public Transportation

Respondents were asked:

Have you used public transportation, such as Metro Transit, during the past two years?

A comparative large 30% used public transportation during the past two years:

YES	30%
NO	70%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Use increases among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

It decreases among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- retired and currently not working residents
- over $100,000 annual income households

Public transportation users were asked a follow-up query:

How would you rate your experience -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Ninety-one percent rate their experience as either "excellent" or "good:"

EXCELLENT	18%
GOOD	73%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Nine percent rate it as either "only fair" or "poor."

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Non-users were also asked a follow-up question:

Were you aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis?

Eighty-eight percent are aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis:

YES	88%
NO	13%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Awareness is higher among:

- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

It is lower among:

- residents for less than ten years
- those unsure about the City Council
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Non-users were also asked:

Why haven't you used public transportation?

Twenty-seven percent say they have "no need," while 25% say they "need a car" at work:

NEED CAR	25%
DON'T LIKE BUSES	8%
PREFER TO DRIVE	19%
NO NEED	27%

DOESN'T GO WHERE NEEDED 21%

Twenty-one percent report public transportation "doesn't go where they need it," and 19% just "prefer to drive."

"No need" is reported more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

"Need car" is stated more frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Doesn't go where needed" is selected at a higher rate by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council favorably

Red Rock Commuter Rail

Cottage Grove residents were asked:

> ***Suppose the State of Minnesota prioritized the construction of the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor connecting Cottage Grove with Downtown Saint Paul and then to Downtown Minneapolis....***
>
> ***How likely would you or members of your household be to regularly use this service -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?***

Forty-eight percent are either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to use the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor:

VERY LIKELY 20%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY 28%
NOT TOO LIKELY 27%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY 25%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 1%

Using standard market projection techniques, 17% of the households in Cottage Grove could be expected to ultimately use the rail corridor.

Greater likelihood is indicated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Less likelihood is mentioned more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Round About"

Residents were queried:

> ***The City recently completed construction of a "round about" on Jamaica Avenue and Highway 61.***
>
> ***Have you used this "round about?" How often do you use it -- daily, weekly, or less often?***

Ninety-five percent of the respondents report using the "round about:"

NO	6%
YES/DAILY	28%
YES/WEEKLY	45%
YES/LESS OFTEN	22%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

The typical driver uses the "round about" on a weekly basis.

"Yes/Daily" is stated more often by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove

- over $100,000 annual income households
- men

"Yes/Weekly" is selected more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- women
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

"Yes/Less often" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Round about" users were asked a follow-up query:

Do you think the "round about" is easy or difficult to navigate?

Sixty-seven percent think the "round about" is "easy" to use:

EASY	67%
DIFFICULT	33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Thirty-three percent consider it to be "difficult."

"Easy" is cited more often by:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Difficult" is stated more often by:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Summary and Conclusions

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents leave the City of Cottage Grove on a regular or daily basis to go to work. Nineteen percent are either not employed or retired. Twenty-four percent do not leave the city to work. Most commuters work in Saint Paul, Woodbury, and Minneapolis. The median commute time is 21.1 minutes; twenty-six percent post commute times of 15 minutes or less, while 28% report commute times over 30 minutes. While 67% rate the ease of their commutes favorably, 34% are far more critical. And, 37% think the delays in completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affects their commute. In contrast, the vast majority, 93%, highly rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Cottage Grove.

A comparative large 30% used public transportation during the past two years. Among users, 91% rate their experience favorably. Eighty-eight percent of public transit non-users report they are aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis. They also explain they have not used public transportation because they have no need, need their car at work, service does not exist to their destination, and just prefer to drive. Forty-eight percent report household members are at least somewhat likely to use the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor connecting Cottage Grove with Downtown Saint Paul and then to Downtown Minneapolis.

Ninety-five percent used the "round about" on Jamaica Avenue and Highway 61; most residents use the "round about" weekly. Sixty-seven percent of these drivers think the "round about" is easy to navigate; thirty-three percent disagree.

Chapter Eight: City Government

City Government

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about City Government. Their sense of empowerment was assessed, followed by the discussion of their perceptions of City Government and City Staff. Then, contacts with City Hall were evaluated in terms of the customer service provided.

Empowerment

Residents were asked:

> ***Other than voting, do you feel that if you wanted to, you could have a say about the way the City of Cottage Grove runs things?***

Fifty-five percent feel they could have a say if they wanted to:

YES	55%
NO	43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Forty-three percent feel less empowered.

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers

"No" is selected more frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

Mayor and City Council

Respondents were initially asked:

> ***How much do you feel you know about the work of the Mayor and City Council -- a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or none at all?***

A very large 55% think they know at least "a fair amount" about the work of the Mayor and City Council:

A GREAT DEAL	5%
A FAIR AMOUNT	50%
VERY LITTLE	36%
NONE AT ALL	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"A lot" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Not a lot" is posted more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Next, residents were asked:

> ***From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing? And do you feel strongly that way?***

By a 55%-32% margin, residents approve of the job of the Mayor and City Council:

STRONGLY APPROVE	8%
APPROVE	47%
DISAPPROVE	26%
STRONGLY DISAPPROVE	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	15%

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

They are lower among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- households with seniors
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Respondents offering judgments were asked a follow-up question:

Could you tell me why you feel that way?

"Good job," "lack of problems," and "listen to residents" are the main reasons for positive evaluations:

GOOD JOB	26%
LISTEN	8%
DON'T LISTEN	8%
NO PROBLEMS	19%
GOOD DEVELOPMENT	8%
POOR SPENDING	9%
TOO MUCH GROWTH	7%
GOOD SPENDING	2%
DON'T LIKE ROUND-ABOUT	6%
COULD IMPROVE	5%
SCATTERED	3%

"Poor spending," "lack of listening," and "too much growth" are the key reasons for negative ratings.

"Good job" is key to:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"No problems" is cited more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

City Staff

Respondents were initially asked:

> ***How much first hand contact have you had with the Cottage Grove City Staff -- quite a lot, some, very little, or none?***

An average 24% report "quite a lot" or "some contact" with the Cottage Grove City Staff:

QUITE A LOT	2%
SOME	22%
VERY LITTLE	40%
NONE	36%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Contact increases among:

- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

It decreases among:

- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- under $75,000 annual income households

Next, residents were queried:

> ***From what you have heard or seen, how would you rate the job performance of the Cottage Grove City Staff -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

Fifty-four percent rate the City Staff highly:

EXCELLENT	7%

GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	38%

Only nine percent are more critical.

Ratings peak among:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- men

Respondents posting judgements about the City Staff were asked a follow-up question:

Could you tell me why you feel that way?

"Helpful," "friendly," and "good job" are the main reasons for positive evaluations:

GOOD JOB	20%
HELPFUL	47%
FRIENDLY	21%
POOR JOB	6%
DON'T LISTEN	2%
COULD IMPROVE	4%

"Poor job" and "room for improvement" lead the list of negative causes.

"Helpful" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Friendly" is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters

"Good job" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Contact with City Hall

Residents were asked:

> ***During the past year, have you contacted Cottage Grove City Hall?***

A typical 26% report contacting Cottage Grove City Hall during the past year:

YES	26%
NO	74%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"No" is selected at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- under $75,000 annual income households

Residents contacting City Hall were asked:

> ***On your last telephone call or visit, which Department did you contact -- the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, Ice Center, Utility Billing, Park and Recreation, Building Inspections, Engineering, Planning, Administration, the Finance Department, or the General Information Desk?***

"Building Inspections" proved the most frequently contacted department:

POLICE DEPARTMENT	10%
FIRE DEPARTMENT	2%
PUBLIC WORKS	16%
ICE CENTER	0%
UTILITY BILLING	7%
PARKS AND RECREATION	9%
BUILDING INSPECTIONS	24%
ENGINEERING	5%

PLANNING	5%
ADMINISTRATION	4%
FINANCE DEPARTMENT	2%
GENERAL INFORMATION	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

"Public Works," "General Information," and the "Police Department" follow on the list.

"Public works" is stated more often by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- over $100,000 annual income households

"Building inspections" is posted more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

"General information" is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents working in Cottage Grove

Those contacting City Hall were then instructed:

> ***Thinking about your last contact with the City, for each of the following characteristics, please rate the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor....***

A list of three quality customer service dimensions was then read:

Waiting time for the receptionist to help you?

Ninety-five percent favorably rate their waiting time for the receptionist to help them:

EXCELLENT	38%
GOOD	57%
ONLY FAIR	4%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Courtesy of city staff?

Ninety-three percent positively rate the courtesy of city staff:

EXCELLENT	39%
GOOD	54%
ONLY FAIR	7%
POOR	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Ratings peak among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers

Ease of obtaining the service you needed?

Eighty-six percent favorably rate the ease of obtaining the service they needed:

EXCELLENT	39%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	9%
POOR	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Fourteen percent posted unfavorable ratings.

Ratings increase among:

- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

They decrease among:

- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

On all three quality customer service dimensions, Cottage Grove City Hall Staff exceeds the 80% threshold of high quality in the public sector.

Summary and Conclusions

While 55% feel, if they wanted to, they could have a say about the way the City of Cottage Grove runs things; 43% think they could not. As a side note, though, 22% of the community does not want to have a say, relying on the election to make their wishes known.

Fifty-five percent think they know a great deal or a fair amount about the work of the Mayor and City Council. By a 55%-32% margin, residents approve of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing. Unlike many suburban communities, the Mayor and City Council enjoy majority

approval ratings. Higher ratings are based on perceptions of a good job, lack of problems in the community, and listens to residents. Lower ratings are based on perceptions of poor spending, lack of listening to residents, and opposition to the "round about."

Twenty-two percent report at least some first-hand contact with the Cottage Grove City Staff. By a 54%-9% margin, residents rate the City Staff favorably. Higher ratings are based on perceptions of a good job, helpfulness, and friendliness. Lower ratings stem from perceptions of a poor job.

Twenty-six percent contacted Cottage Grove City Hall during the past year. The major reasons for contact include inquiries to building inspection services, public works questions and comments, requests for general information, and police department services. In evaluating their last contact, 95% rate the waiting time for the receptionist to help favorably, while 93% similarly evaluate the courtesy of city staff. Eighty-six percent positively rate the ease of obtaining the service they needed. In each case, the threshold of high quality customer service in the public sector, 80%, is exceeded.

Chapter Nine: Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about current city goals. First, the importance of each goal was estimated. Then, the current achievement of the City in reaching each goal was measured.

Importance of Strategic Goals

Residents were instructed:

> ***The City is examining its strategic goals and would like to know if and how much you value them. I am going to read you a list of the city's current goals. First tell me how important each goal is to you on a scale of "one" to "five," where "one" means "not at all important" and "five" stands for "extremely important."***

They were then read six goals:

> ***Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.***

The mean rating of this goal is 4.59, indicating great importance:

1	1%
2	1%
3	8%
4	19%
5	71%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Important" is stated more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

- women
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.

The mean rating of this goal is 4.62, also indicating great importance:

1	0%
2	1%
3	8%
4	21%
5	70%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Important" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents feeling empowered

Differences from the mean are cited more often by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.

The mean rating of 4.39 indicates a higher level of importance:

1	1%
2	2%
3	13%
4	28%
5	57%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Differences from the mean are stated more often by:

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Work to improve transportation and transit.

The mean rating of 4.06 indicates a high level of importance:

1	2%
2	7%
3	22%

4	22%
5	47%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Average" is stated most often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"Important" is posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

Differences from the mean are cited more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.

The mean rating of this goal is 4.17, also indicating a high level of importance:

1	1%
2	4%
3	18%
4	30%
5	47%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Important" is stated more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.

The mean rating of 4.27 indicates a higher level of importance:

1	1%
2	4%
3	16%
4	25%
5	54%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Average" is cited more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"Important" is mentioned more often by:

- residents who have not contacted City Hall

Differences from the mean are encountered among:

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Rating of City on Strategic Goals

Next, respondents were instructed:

> ***Now, for each of these goals, please rate how well the City is doing to achieve it. Again, let's use a "one" to "five" scale, where "one" means "poor" and "five" stands for "excellent."***

The same list of six goals was re-read:

> ***Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.***

The mean rating of 3.83 means the City is doing a good job in achieving this goal:

1	1%
2	3%
3	23%
4	60%
5	13%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Average" is posted at a higher rate by:

- city newsletter readers
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

Favorable ratings are given more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- households with children
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Differences from the mean are given most frequently by:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.

The mean rating of 3.56 means the City is also doing a good job in accomplishing this goal:

1	1%
2	7%
3	33%
4	50%
5	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

"Average" is posted more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- women

Favorable ratings are posted more often by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably

Differences from the mean are stated more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably
- those unsure about the City Council

Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.

The mean rating of 3.27 means the City is doing an above average job of achieving this goal:

1	2%
2	14%
3	42%
4	39%
5	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Ratings are lower among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- city newsletter readers

They are average among:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- empty nesters

They are higher among:

- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those unsure about the City Council
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Work to improve transportation and transit.

The mean rating of 3.46 also means the City is doing an above average job in achieving this objective:

1	1%
2	5%
3	41%
4	44%
5	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

"Average" is reported more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Favorable ratings are reported more frequently by:

- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Differences from the mean are reported more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.

The mean rating of 3.73 means the City is perceived as doing a good job on achieving this goal:

1	1%
2	3%
3	29%
4	56%
5	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

"Average" is stated more often by:

- those unsure about the City Council

Ratings peak among:

- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.

The mean rating of 3.57 also means the city is doing a good job on accomplishing the goal:

1	2%
2	5%
3	33%
4	52%

5 ..... 5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED 3%

"Average" is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents feeling empowered
- city newsletter readers

Favorable ratings are given most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Differences from the mean are encountered more often among:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter

Summary and Conclusions

Residents were asked to review the importance of each of six strategic goals adopted by the City of Cottage Grove on a one-to-five ascending scale. Then, residents were asked to rate how well the City is doing to achieve it, again on a one-to-five ascending scale. The table below arrays each goal with the mean rating of importance of each goal, the mean achievement score of each goal, and the difference between the two scores.

Goal	*Importance*	*Achievement*	*Difference*
Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment	4.59	3.83	-0.76
Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base	4.62	3.56	-1.06
Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development	4.39	3.27	-1.12
Work to improve transportation and transit	4.06	3.46	-0.60
Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities	4.17	3.73	-0.44

Goal	*Importance*	*Achievement*	*Difference*
Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process	4.27	3.57	-0.70

Residents classify all of the City's goals as highly important; in fact, the range between the highest ranked and lowest rank goal is only 0.56. The range of achievement scores is also limited, at an identical 0.56. On only one goal, "provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities," is the importance of the goal and the City's progress almost equivalent. On two goals, however, there is a moderately large deficit of achievement commiserate with their importance: "place an emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development" and "operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base."

Chapter Ten: Communications

Communications

Cottage Grove residents were asked a series of questions about communications from the City. First, their principal and preferred sources of information were identified. Then, the effectiveness of specific communications channels were evaluated. "Cottage Grove Reports" was examined in some detail, as well City Council Meeting Cablecasts and the City's website. Potential e-commerce services were reviewed for interest levels. And, finally, the City offering high-speed wireless Internet access was tested.

Principal Source

Respondents were queried:

What is your principal source of information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

Sixty-three percent regard the "Cottage Grove Bulletin" as their principal source of information:

CITY NEWSLETTER	16%
BULLETIN	63%
WEBSITE	5%
CABLE TELEVISION	8%
WORD OF MOUTH	4%
PIONEER PRESS	2%
SCATTERED	3%

Sixteen percent point to the "city newsletter," while eight percent cite "cable television."

"Bulletin" is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Preferred Source

Residents were asked:

How would you prefer to receive information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

Fifty-seven percent prefer to receive information through the "Cottage Grove Bulletin:"

CITY NEWSLETTER	16%

BULLETIN	57%
WEBSITE	11%
CABLE TELEVISION	7%
MAILINGS	3%
WORD OF MOUTH	2%
SCATTERED	4%

Sixteen percent point to the "city newsletter," and 11% cite the "website."

"Bulletin" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services

"City newsletter" is key to:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council

"Website" is important to:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children

Sources of Information

Residents were instructed:

> ***For each of the following, please tell me whether you consider it to be a major source of information for news about the city, a minor source, or not a source at all.***

A list of eight sources of information was read:

The City newsletter, "Cottage Grove Reports?"

Forty percent consider "Cottage Grove Reports" to be a "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	40%
MINOR SOURCE	45%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Eighty-five percent use the city newsletter as a source of information.

"Major source" is stated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Minor source" is stated more frequently by:

- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Not a source at all" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those who do not read the city newsletter
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over forty-four year olds
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

The newsletter included in city utility bills?

Seventeen percent view the newsletter included in city utility bills as a "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	17%
MINOR SOURCE	33%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	49%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Altogether, 50% use the utility bill newsletter as a source of information.

"Major source" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- retired and currently not working residents
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

"Minor source" is stated more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- men

"Not a source at all" is cited more often by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents not feeling empowered
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

The "Bulletin" newspaper?

Seventy-four percent consider the "Bulletin" newspaper as their "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	74%
MINOR SOURCE	15%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Eighty-nine percent view the newspaper as a source of information.

"Major source" is cited more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- households with children
- men

"Not a source at all" is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- residents not feeling empowered
- those unsure about the City Council
- women

The "Star Tribune" or "Pioneer Press?"

Daily newspapers are a "major source" of information about the city:

MAJOR SOURCE	10%
MINOR SOURCE	31%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	59%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Forty-one percent see them as at least a "minor source."

"Major source" is stated most frequently by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- residents who have contacted City Hall

"Minor source" is stated more often by:

- city newsletter readers
- men

"Not a source at all" is selected at a higher rate by:

- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- women

The City's website?

Eleven percent rate the City's website as a "major source" of information:

MAJOR SOURCE	11%
MINOR SOURCE	29%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	60%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Forty percent, overall, see it as a source of information.

"Major source" is reported more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

"Minor source" is posted more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Not a source at all" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Programming on your public access cable TV station?

Thirteen percent rely upon the programming provided by the public access cable television station:

MAJOR SOURCE	13%
MINOR SOURCE	27%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	59%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Forty percent see this programming as at least a "minor source."

"Major source" is stated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

"Minor source" is posted more often by:

- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

"Not a source at all" is indicated at a higher rate by:

- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

City employees?

Only six percent view city employees as a "major source" of City information:

MAJOR SOURCE	6%
MINOR SOURCE	16%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	77%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-two percent see city employees as at least a "minor source" of information.

"Major source" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- over $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Not a source at all" is indicated more frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- retired and currently not working residents
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- under $75,000 annual income households

Direct mail updates?

Eight percent think direct mail updates are a "major source" of City information:

MAJOR SOURCE	8%
MINOR SOURCE	33%
NOT A SOURCE AT ALL	58%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Forty-one percent label direct mail updates as a "minor source" of City information.

"Minor source" is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

"Not a source at all" is reported most frequently by:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

City Newsletter

Respondents were asked:

> ***As you may know, the city recently introduced the Cottage Grove monthly newsletter which is distributed through utility bills or mailed separately to non-utility customers.***
>
> ***During the past year, did you receive "Cottage Grove Reports," the City's newsletter?***

Ninety-three percent report receiving "Cottage Grove Reports" during the past year:

YES	93%
NO	7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Receipt peaks among:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services

Respondents receiving the city newsletter were asked a follow-up query:

> ***Do you or any members of your household regularly read it?***

Eighty-five percent say household members regularly read it:

YES	85%
NO	14%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

The reach of the city newsletter is 79% of Cottage Grove households.

Readership increases among:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

It decreases among:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have not contacted City Hall

- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

Respondents receiving the newsletter were also asked:

> ***How effective is the newsletter in keeping you informed about city government and its activities -- very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not at all effective?***

A large 90% consider the city newsletter to be at least "somewhat effective:'

VERY EFFECTIVE	27%
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	62%
NOT TOO EFFECTIVE	6%
NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Only eight percent are more critical in their judgments.

"Effective" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- city newsletter readers
- over forty-four year olds

Cable Television

Respondents were asked:

> ***Does your household currently subscribe to cable television?***

Sixty-six percent currently subscribe to cable television:

YES	66%
NO	33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

"Yes" is stated more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- those rating the City Council favorably

"No" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those thinking the city is off on the wrong track

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably

Residents subscribing to cable television were asked:

How often during the past year have you watched Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16 -- frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?

Forty percent either "frequently" or "occasionally" watch Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16:

FREQUENTLY	10%
OCCASIONALLY	30%
RARELY	27%
NEVER	32%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

In fact, a surprisingly large 10% watch the meetings "frequently."

Viewership increases among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- residents who have contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households

It decreases among:

- those unsure about the City Council
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Internet Access

Residents were asked:

Do you have access to the Internet at home? Do you have access to the Internet at work?

Eighty-five percent have access to the Internet either at home or at work:

HOME ONLY	43%
WORK ONLY	3%

BOTH	39%
NEITHER	16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

"Home only" is posted at a higher rate by:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents working in Cottage Grove
- retired and currently not working residents
- city newsletter readers
- households with seniors
- over forty-four year olds

"Both" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as good
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- men
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"Neither" is stated most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- retired and currently not working residents
- those unsure about the City Council
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Residents having Internet access were asked:

Have you accessed the City's website?

Sixty-six percent visited the website:

YES	66%
NO	34%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

The reach of the website is 56% of the households in the community.

"Yes" is stated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Four, Five and Six residents

"No" is posted more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Website visitors were asked:

How would you rate the City's website -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Seventy-one percent rate the City's website highly:

EXCELLENT	5%
GOOD	66%
ONLY FAIR	27%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-nine percent rate the City's website more critically.

Ratings are higher among:

- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

They are lower among:

- those rating the quality of life as good
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- under $75,000 annual income households

Visitors were also asked:

Were you able to find what you were looking for?

A very high 91% report being able to find what they were looking for:

YES	91%
NO	7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Only seven percent report being unsuccessful.

"Yes" is cited more frequently by:

- those thinking the city is going in the right direction
- residents who have not contacted City Hall
- over forty-four year olds

On-line City Services and Information

Residents having access to the Internet were told:

Many city services and information can be made available through the Internet. How likely are you to use the Internet for each of the following services -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

A list of five city services and information opportunities were then read:

Paying utility bills?

Forty percent are at least "somewhat likely" to pay utility bills on-line.

VERY LIKELY	19%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	21%
NOT TOO LIKELY	18%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

A projected 20% of the households can be expected to use this service.

Likelihood increases among:

- residents for less than ten years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- residents feeling empowered
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- women
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

It decreases among:

- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- empty nesters
- men
- Precincts Seven, Eight and Nine residents

Finding information about your utility bill?

Fifty-seven percent are either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to use the Internet to find information about their utility bills:

VERY LIKELY	27%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	30%
NOT TOO LIKELY	7%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	35%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Twenty-one percent of the households in the community can be projected as users.

"Likely" is cited more frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council favorably
- city newsletter readers
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

"Not likely" is posted more often by:

- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households

Dog licenses and other applications?

Forty-eight percent are at least "somewhat likely" to use the Internet to file dog licenses and other applications:

VERY LIKELY	31%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	17%
NOT TOO LIKELY	13%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	40%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

An expected 20% would make these kinds of applications on the Internet.

"Likely" is cited more often by:

- residents for less than ten years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

"Not likely" is mentioned most often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Registering for park and recreation programming?

Fifty-one percent are either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to register on-line for park and recreation programming:

VERY LIKELY	32%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	19%
NOT TOO LIKELY	10%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	38%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

A projected 21% of the households with Internet access would register on-line.

Likelihood is higher among:

- residents for less than thirty years
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $100,000 annual income households

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- those opposing a property tax increase to maintain city services
- retired and currently not working residents
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds
- under $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts One, Two and Three residents

Watching City Council meeting webcasts?

Twenty-two percent are at least "somewhat likely" to watch City Council meeting webcasts:

VERY LIKELY	8%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	14%
NOT TOO LIKELY	22%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	55%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Eight percent of the households with Internet would view webcasts.

Likelihood increases among:

- over $100,000 annual income households

It decreases among:

- residents not feeling empowered
- households with seniors

High-Speed Wireless Internet

Respondents were asked:

As you may know, some cities are starting to offer for-profit services, such as high-speed wireless Internet, to their residents. The high-speed wireless Internet service is somewhat faster than dial-up, but somewhat slower than cable or DSL. Also, it is less expensive than cable or DSL, but more expensive than dial-up.

Would you support or oppose Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access? Do you feel strongly way?

By a 52%-33% margin, residents support Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access:

STRONGLY SUPPORT	16%
SUPPORT	36%
OPPOSE	15%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	16%

Intense support and intense opposition are about equal.

Supporters tend to be:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents working outside of Cottage Grove
- residents feeling empowered
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- over $75,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Opponents are more apt to be:

- residents who have contacted City Hall
- empty nesters
- over forty-four year olds

Supporters were next asked:

How much would you be willing to pay for high-speed wireless Internet service offered by the City of Cottage Grove? Would you be willing to pay $___ per month? How about $___ per month?

The typical resident would be willing to pay $21.43 per month for City-offered high-speed wireless Internet service:

LESS THAN $20.00	32%
$20.00	30%
$25.00	27%
$30.00	6%
$35.00	1%
MORE THAN $35.00	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	4%

"Less than $20.00" is stated more frequently by:

- residents for less than ten years
- residents not feeling empowered
- those rating the City Council unfavorably
- those who do not read the city newsletter
- under $75,000 annual income households

"$25.00" is cited more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- those rating the quality of life as excellent
- those supporting a property tax increase to maintain city services
- those rating the City Council favorably
- $75,000 to $100,000 annual income households
- Precincts Ten, Eleven and Twelve residents

Summary and Conclusions

Over sixty percent of the city's residents rely upon the "Bulletin" newspaper for information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities. The city newsletter is the principal source of information for 16%, while cable television is key to eight percent. Fifty-seven percent prefer to receive information through the "Bulletin" newspaper. The city newsletter is preferred by 16%, and the city's website, by 11%.

In assessing various sources of information, the "Bulletin" stands out as a major source of information for 74% of the community. "Cottage Grove Reports" is a major source for 40%. Seventeen percent consider the newsletter included in the city utility bills as a major source, while 13% feel similarly about programming on the public access cable television station.

Ninety-three percent recall receiving "Cottage Grove Reports" during the past year; among residents receiving the newsletter, 85% regularly read it. The reach of the city newsletter, then, is 79% of the households in the community. Eighty-nine percent of respondents receiving the city newsletter rate it highly; only eight percent are critical.

Sixty-six percent currently subscribe to cable television. Among subscribers, 40% at least occasionally watch Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16.

Eighty-five percent of the residents in the community have access to the Internet; in fact, 82% have access from their homes. Among Internet users, 66% report they have accessed the City's website. By a 71%-29% margin, residents rate the website favorably. Ninety-one percent were able to find what they were looking for. In evaluating potential City e-commerce opportunities, significant interest is show on three: "registering for park and recreation programming," "dog licenses and other applications," and "finding information about their utility bill."

By a 52%-33% margin, residents support the City of Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access. Among supporters, the consensus change for this service is $21.43 per month.

Chapter Eleven: Final Thoughts

Final Thoughts

Cottage Grove residents expressed some key opinions and suggestions about future policy on a number of issues. In fact, there is a hierarchy of concerns City decision-makers may wish to examine during the next couple of years.

1. The rate of growth and development is a key issue for many residents, although it does not exhibit the intensity of other communities. In fact, while growth troubles about one-third of the population, decisive majorities of residents support specific types of future development: entertainment establishments, dining establishments, full-time job opportunities, retail shopping opportunities, and job opportunities for students. As a result, support is high for both a new shopping center on the old Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater site and the development of an industrial park. When focused on housing, there is also moderately strong support for senior housing and starter homes for young families.

2. Concerns about property taxes are high, consistent with findings across the Metropolitan Area. Even so, tax hostility is much more limited than in other suburban communities. In fact, a narrow plurality will support a property tax increase to maintain city services at their current levels and three-quarters of the city favorably rate the value of city services in terms of the property taxes paid. City services are well-rated, and if additional funding is available, they would earmark it for street maintenance, police services, and parks and recreational opportunities. However, a major issue for the future is the quality of drinking water in the community.

3. Crime is not a major issue for most Cottage Grove residents. Even so, though, by a 74%-23% margin, residents support a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls.

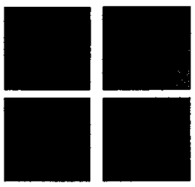
4. The Cottage Grove Park System is both well-utilized and well-regarded. No component's positive rating by users drops below the 90% mark. The vast majority of residents report existing recreational facilities and current park and recreation programming met their household's needs. But, there is solid support for a Community Center **in concept**, and the City may wish to more fully discuss this type of development in the near future.

5. The job ratings of both the Mayor and City Council as well as the City Staff are solidly within the highest quartile of suburban communities. Contact with the City Hall staff also proves to be a positive experience for most residents. And, clearly, the goals established by the City of Cottage Grove are consistent with the opinions and attitudes held by their residents.

6. Many residents holding jobs outside the community report their commutes are impacted by the delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge. A comparatively large 30% used public transportation during the past two years; positive ratings of the experience are solid. When the Red Rock Commuter Rail Corridor is completed, a very large 48% are likely to regularly use this service.

7. The City possess one of the most effective communications systems across the Metropolitan Area. The "Bulletin" is not only the most ~~relied~~ upon source of information about City Government and its activities, but also the most preferred source of information. The reach of the city newsletter, "Cottage Grove Reports," is comparatively high. Cablecasts of the City Council Meetings have a very high audience. Visits to city's website are also among the highest in the suburbs.

Overall, the City of Cottage Grove is a very highly regarded community. In view of the existing large reservoir of good will residents possess toward the City, public support should remain very high during the next few years as changes occur, if the rationale for further growth is persuasive.



Decision
Resources Ltd.

Survey

DECISION RESOURCES, LTD.
3128 Dean Court
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416

City of Cottage Grove
Residential Survey
FINAL DECEMBER 2007

Hello, I'm _____ of Decision Resources, Ltd., a polling firm located in Minneapolis. We have been retained by the City of Cottage Grove to speak with a random sample of residents about issues facing the community. This survey is being conducted because the City Council and City Staff are interested in your opinions and suggestions about current and future city needs. I want to assure you that all individual responses will be held strictly confidential; only summaries of the entire sample will be reported.

1. Approximately how many years have you lived in Cottage Grove?

LESS THAN FIVE YEARS	12%
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	25%
TEN TO TWENTY YEARS	28%
20 TO 30 YEARS	18%
OVER THIRTY YEARS	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

2. What do you like most about living in Cottage Grove?

QUIET/PEACEFUL, 12%; CLOSE TO FAMILY, 10%; CLOSE TO JOB, 12%; SMALL TOWN FEEL, 17%; SHOPPING, 5%; AFFORDABLE HOUSING, 4%; SAFE, 5%; NEIGHBORHOOD, 6%; SCHOOLS, 4%; FRIENDLY PEOPLE, 9%; RURAL/OPEN SPACE, 8%; LOCATION, 7%; SCATTERED, 3%.

3. What do you think is the most serious issue facing Cottage Grove today?

UNSURE, 10%; NOTHING, 2%; HIGH TAXES, 18%; LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING, 6%; TOO MUCH GROWTH, 32%; LACK OF RETAIL/RESTAURANTS, 11%; DRINKING WATER ISSUE, 5%; CITY GOVERNMENT, 3%; RISING CRIME, 2%; ROAD REPAIR, 2%; LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES, 6%; SCATTERED, 4%.

4. How would you rate the quality of life in Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	23%
GOOD	72%
ONLY FAIR	4%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

5. To which of the following do you feel a closer connection to:
   A) The City of Cottage Grove as a whole,
   B) Your neighborhood, or
   C) Your school district?

STATEMENT A	30%
STATEMENT B	56%
STATEMENT C	12%
NONE OF ABOVE	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

6. When you think about Cottage Grove, do you see it as a suburb, a city or a small town?

SUBURB	71%
CITY	8%
SMALL TOWN	21%
MULTIPLE (VOL.)	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

7. All in all, do you think things in Cottage Grove are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?

RIGHT DIRECTION	81%
WRONG TRACK	16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

IF "WRONG TRACK," ASK: (N=65)

8. Why do you think things are off on the wrong track?

LACK OF SCHOOL FUNDING, 2%; TOO MUCH GROWTH, 62%; LACK OF RESTAURANT/RETAIL, 14%; DRINKING WATER ISSUE, 3%; CITY GOVERNMENT, 15%; LACK OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES, 3%; SCATTERED, 2%.

I would like to read you a list of characteristics of a community. For each one, please tell me if you think Cottage Grove currently has too many or too much, too few or too little, or about the right amount.

		MANY MUCH	FEW/ LITT	ABOUT RIGHT	D.K./ REF.
9.	affordable housing, defined by the Metropolitan Council as a single family home costing less than $205,000?	5%	23%	66%	7%
10.	affordable rental units?	4%	13%	54%	29%
11.	luxury rental units?	4%	10%	44%	43%
12.	condominiums?	5%	8%	61%	26%
13.	townhouses?	16%	4%	68%	12%
14.	starter homes for young families?	2%	31%	60%	7%
15.	"move up" housing?	7%	11%	78%	5%
16.	higher cost housing?	25%	5%	65%	6%
17.	senior housing?	4%	35%	49%	13%
18.	parks and open spaces?	1%	24%	72%	2%
19.	trails and bikeways?	1%	25%	73%	1%
20.	service businesses?	1%	36%	62%	1%
21.	retail shopping opportunities?	3%	65%	32%	0%
22.	entertainment establishments?	0%	75%	24%	1%
23.	dining establishments?	1%	70%	27%	2%
24.	day care opportunities?	2%	14%	40%	45%
25.	full-time job opportunities?	0%	67%	18%	15%
26.	job opportunities for students?	1%	51%	29%	19%

As you may know, the Cottage Grove Outdoor Theater will be closing and there is a proposal to redevelop the site with a large shopping center.

27. Do you favor or oppose the development of a shopping center on this site? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY FAVOR	24%
FAVOR	40%
OPPOSE	14%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	21%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

28. Assuming this site is developed as a shopping center, what retail establishments would you like to see included?

UNSURE, 7%; NOTHING, 16%; OLD NAVY, 4%; HERBERGERS, 8%; WAL-MART, 18%; DOLLAR STORE, 3%; GANDER MOUNTAIN, 2%; LOWES, 3%; MACY'S, 11%; JC PENNY, 5%; SEARS, 5%; COSTCO, 2%; BEST BUY, 2%; SAM'S CLUB, 2%; DICK'S SPORTING GOODS, 2%; BARNES AND NOBLE, 2%; SCATTERED, 8%.

In the past several years, the City has tried to expand the tax base by development of an industrial park.

29. Do you support or oppose the City developing an industrial park in Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	19%
SUPPORT	54%
OPPOSE	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%

The City has established a priority to develop housing for senior citizens. As a result, the Norris Square and White Pines projects are being developed.

30. Would you favor or oppose continued efforts by the City to provide more senior housing in Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY FAVOR	17%
FAVOR	48%
OPPOSE	20%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	7%

As you may know, in 2004 and 2005 the City, using public input, developed a master plan for the development of the East Ravine area.

31. Prior to this survey, were you aware of the development of the East Ravine master plan?

YES	58%
NO	39%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=233)

32. Do you favor or oppose the City using this type of process for future development in Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY FAVOR	20%
FAVOR	56%
OPPOSE	12%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6%

Moving on.....

Property tax revenues are divided among the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, and your local public school district.

33. For each dollar of the property taxes you pay, about what percentage do you think goes to city government? (READ #1-#6)

TEN PERCENT OR LESS...10%
11 TO 20 PERCENT.....45%
21 TO 30 PERCENT.....24%
31 TO 40 PERCENT.....4%
41 TO 50 PERCENT.....0%
OVER 50 PERCENT.....1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....16%

34. Do you consider the city portion of your property taxes to be very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low in comparison with neighboring cities?

VERY HIGH.....14%
SOMEWHAT HIGH.....33%
ABOUT AVERAGE.....43%
SOMEWHAT LOW.....2%
VERY LOW.....0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....8%

In 2007, the actual percentage of your property taxes going to the City of Cottage Grove was 31 percent.

35. Would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were needed to maintain city services at their current level?

FAVOR.....49%
OPPOSE.....45%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....7%

IF "OPPOSE," ASK: (N=179)

36. What services would you be willing to see cut?

UNSURE, 11%; NOTHING/CUT WASTE, 67%; ADMINISTRATION, 2%; PARKS AND RECREATION, 11%; COMMUNICATIONS, 3%; GOLF, 2%, SCATTERED, 4%.

37. And, would you favor or oppose an increase in YOUR city property tax if it were used to improve and enhance current city services?

FAVOR.....20%
OPPOSE.....72%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....8%

IF "FAVOR," ASK: (N=80)

38. What services would you like to see improved or enhanced?

UNSURE, 13%; STREET MAINTENANCE, 23%; GARBAGE/RECYCLING, 8%; COMMUNITY CENTER, 3%; TRAILS, 6%; POLICE, 20%; PARKS AND RECREATION, 13%; FIRE, 4%; DRINKING WATER, 4%; PUBLIC TRANSIT, 4%; SCATTERED, 3%.

I would like to read you a list of a few city services. For each one, please tell me whether you would rate the quality of the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor? (ROTATE)

	EXCL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK/R
39. Police protection?	25%	59%	14%	2%	1%
40. Fire protection?	28%	64%	3%	1%	5%
41. Recycling and brush pick-up?	15%	62%	13%	4%	5%

	EXCL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK/R
42. Storm drainage and flood control?	10%	66%	16%	4%	5%
43. Park maintenance?	13%	70%	9%	2%	6%
44. Trail maintenance?	14%	65%	10%	0%	12%
45. City-sponsored recreation programs?	8%	57%	17%	3%	14%
46. Animal control?	8%	70%	16%	2%	5%
47. Code and property maintenance enforcement?	7%	57%	22%	7%	8%

Now, for the next three city services, please consider only their job on city-maintained streets and roads. That means excluding interstate highways, state and county roads that are taken care of by other levels of government. Hence, Interstate 494, Highway 61, and County Roads, such as Keats Avenue and 70th Street, should not be considered. How would you rate ....

	EXCL	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK/R
48. City street repair and maintenance?	12%	63%	21%	4%	0%
49. Snow plowing?	20%	65%	14%	1%	0%
50. Street lighting?	12%	66%	20%	3%	0%

51. When you consider the property taxes you pay and the quality of city services you receive, would you rate the general value of city services as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT.....5%
GOOD.....71%
ONLY FAIR.....18%
POOR.....2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5%

52. How would you rate the quality of drinking water in the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT.....5%
GOOD.....43%
ONLY FAIR.....32%
POOR.....18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%

IF "ONLY FAIR" OR "POOR," ASK: (N=199)

53. Why did you rate the drinking water as (only fair/poor)?

TOO MUCH CHLORINE, 11%; PARTICLES, 7%; 3M CONTAMINATION, 23%; BAD ODOR, 5%; BAD TASTE, 40%; BROWN COLOR, 2%; CHEMICALS, 11%; HARD WATER, 3%.

Thinking about garbage collection.....

54. Do you think you have too many choices, too few choices or about the right number of choices of companies to contract with for garbage collection?

TOO MANY.....3%
TOO FEW.....10%
ABOUT RIGHT NUMBER....82%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%

Thinking about another topic....

55. Are there areas in the City of Cottage Grove where you do not feel safe?

YES	12%
NO	88%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=48)

56. In which areas do you not feel safe?

BY LIBRARY, 23%; SHOPPING PARKING LOTS, 4%; BEHIND POLICE DEPARTMENT, 29%; SCATTERED PARKS, 15%; G-WILL LIQUOR, 6%; EVERYWHERE, 6%; SCATTERED APARTMENTS, 17%.

57. Do you feel safe in your immediate neighborhood walking alone at night?

YES	89%
NO	11%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

58. How would you rate the amount of police patrolling in your neighborhood -- too much, about the right amount or not enough?

TOO MUCH	3%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT	74%
NOT ENOUGH	24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

59. How would you rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in your neighborhood -- too much, about right amount or not enough?

TOO MUCH	2%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT	75%
NOT ENOUGH	23%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

60. Would you support or oppose a city ordinance outlawing residents from owning certain breeds of dogs, such as pit bulls? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	37%
SUPPORT	37%
OPPOSE	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%

Continuing....

The Cottage Grove park system is composed of larger community parks and smaller neighborhood parks, trails, community ballfields and soccer fields, the Ice Arena and River Oaks Golf Course. Of these facilities, which have you or members of your household used during the past year? Then, for each one you have used, please tell me if you would rate the facility as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	NOT	EXC	GOO	FAI	POO	DKR
61. Larger community parks, such as Highlands Park or Woodridge Park?	33%	19%	46%	2%	1%	0%
62. Smaller neighborhood parks?	34%	19%	44%	3%	1%	0%
63. Trails?	30%	17%	47%	5%	0%	1%
64. Community ballfields and soccer fields?	46%	15%	36%	3%	1%	1%
65. The Ice Arena?	69%	6%	21%	3%	0%	1%
66. River Oaks Golf Course?	71%	11%	16%	0%	0%	2%

67. In general, do you feel that existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of you and members of your household?

YES	90%
NO	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

IF "NO," ASK: (N=39)

68. What additional recreational facilities would you like to see the City offer its residents?

FITNESS CENTER, 23%; TEEN CENTER, 10%; INDOOR WATER PARK, 13%; COMMUNITY CENTER, 21%; SECOND SHEET OF ICE, 23%; TRAILS, 10%.

69. Have you or members of your household participated in any City park and recreation programs?

YES	38%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=153)

70. Which ones?

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL, 26%; BASKETBALL, 3%; MULTIPLE SPORTS, 8%; HOCKEY, 5%; GYMNASTICS, 2%; SOCCER, 25%; FOOTBALL, 2%; GOLF, 7%; SAFETY CAMP, 5%; SKATING, 3%; TENNIS, 2%; SUMMER PROGRAMS, 7%; DANCE, 3%; SCATTERED, 3%.

71. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your experience?

SATISFIED	97%
DISSATISFIED	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

72. Does the current mix of City park and recreation programming meet the needs of your household?

YES	96%
NO	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

IF "NO," ASK: (N=9)

73. What program(s) do you feel are lacking?

SENIOR PROGRAMS, 33%; TEEN PROGRAMS, 67%.

74. Do you or members of your household currently leave the city for park and recreation facilities or activities? (IF "YES," ASK:) What would that be?

NO, 76%; ICE ARENA, 2%; BOATING, 3%; TRAILS, 6%; SPORTS LEAGUES, 2%; FITNESS CENTER, 2%; GYMNASIUM, 2%; CAMPING, 2%; SCATTERED, 5%.

Thinking about open space and natural areas.....

75.	Do you think the City of Cottage Grove has too little, too much or about the right amount of open space and natural areas?	TOO LITTLE.....27% TOO MUCH.....2% ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT....72% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

As you may know, the city has been improving parks, such as Highlands, Pine Tree Pond and Hamlet over the past few years.

76.	Were you aware of these park improvements?	YES.....75% NO.....25% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
77.	Do you support or oppose the continued use of city funds for park improvements throughout the city? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?	STRONGLY SUPPORT.....22% SUPPORT.....58% OPPOSE.....8% STRONGLY OPPOSE.....6% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%

The City could consider the construction of a Community Center that would provide a gathering space for recreation, programs and meetings.

78.	Do you support or oppose the construction of a Community Center by the City of Cottage Grove? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?	STRONGLY SUPPORT.....28% SUPPORT.....44% OPPOSE.....11% STRONGLY OPPOSE.....11% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%

Funding for construction of the Community Center may require a property tax increase. Suppose the City of Cottage Grove proposed a Community Center development which you considered to be a reasonable approach.

79.	How much would you be willing to see your property taxes increase to fund this construction? Let's say, would you be willing to see your annual property taxes increase by $____? (CHOOSE RANDOM STARTING POINT; MOVE UP OR DOWN DEPENDING ON RESPONSE) How about $____ per year?	NOTHING.....36% $40.00.....25% $80.00.....13% $120.00.....4% $160.00.....0% $200.00.....1% $240.00.....0% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....22%

Moving on....

80.	Do you leave the City of Cottage Grove on a regular or daily basis to go to work?	YES.....57% NO.....24% NOT EMPLOYED/RETIRED..19% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=226)

81. In what city is your job located?

MINNEAPOLIS, 14%; SAINT PAUL, 27%; BLOOMINGTON, 9%; VARIES, 3%; ROSEMOUNT, 2%; WOODBURY, 15%; WASHINGTON COUNTY, 5%; DAKOTA COUNTY, 8%; EAGAN, 6%; RAMSEY COUNTY, 4%; HENNEPIN COUNTY, 5%; REST OF METRO, 2%.

82. How many minutes does it take you to get to work?

FIVE MINUTES OR LESS	0%
SIX TO TEN MINUTES	5%
11 TO 15 MINUTES	21%
16 TO 20 MINUTES	18%
21 TO 25 MINUTES	16%
26 TO 30 MINUTES	11%
OVER 30 MINUTES	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

83. How would you rate the ease of getting to and from work -- excellent, good, only fair or poor?

EXCELLENT	20%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	30%
POOR	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

84. Have delays in the completion of the I-494/Wakota Bridge affected your commute?

YES	37%
NO	62%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

85. How would you rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Cottage Grove -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	19%
GOOD	74%
ONLY FAIR	6%
POOR	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "ONLY FAIR" OR "POOR," ASK: (N=29)

86. What road, street or intersection in Cottage Grove is the most congested?

80TH AND POINT DOUGLAS, 17%; GRANGE, 10%; 80TH AND HADLEY, 7%; 80TH AND HIGHWAY 61, 17%; ALL ALONG 80TH, 17%; HIGHWAY 61, 10%; MANNING TRAIL, 3%; JAMAICA, 7%; SCATTERED STREETS, 12%.

87. Have you used public transportation, such as Metro Transit, during the past two years?

YES	30%
NO	70%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=120)

88. How would you rate your experience -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	18%
GOOD	73%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "NO," ASK: (N=280)

89. Were you aware of the express bus service to Saint Paul and Minneapolis?

YES.....88%
NO.....13%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

90. Why haven't you used public transportation?

NEED CAR, 25%; DON'T LIKE BUSES, 8%; PREFER TO DRIVE, 19%; NO NEED, 27%; DOESN'T GO WHERE NEEDED, 21%.

Suppose the State of Minnesota prioritized the construction of the Red Rock Commuter Rail corridor connecting Cottage Grove with Downtown Saint Paul and then to Downtown Minneapolis....

91. How likely would you or members of your household be to regularly use this service -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

VERY LIKELY.....20%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY.....28%
NOT TOO LIKELY.....27%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY.....25%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

The City recently completed construction of a "round about" on Jamaica Avenue and Highway 61.

92. Have you used this "round about?" (IF "YES," ASK:) How often do you use it -- daily, weekly, or less often?

NO.....6%
YES/DAILY.....28%
YES/WEEKLY.....45%
YES/LESS OFTEN.....22%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "USED," ASK: (N=378)

93. Do you think the "round about" is easy or difficult to navigate?

EASY.....67%
DIFFICULT.....33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

Changing topics....

94. Other than voting, do you feel that if you wanted to, you could have a say about the way the City of Cottage Grove runs things?

YES.....55%
NO 43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%

95. How much do you feel you know about the work of the Mayor and City Council -- a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or none at all?

A GREAT DEAL.....5%
A FAIR AMOUNT.....50%
VERY LITTLE.....36%
NONE AT ALL.....9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

96. From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) And do you feel strongly that way?

STRONGLY APPROVE.....8%
APPROVE.....47%
DISAPPROVE.....26%
STRONGLY DISAPPROVE....6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....15%

IF A JUDGMENT IS GIVEN, ASK: (N=342)

97. Could you tell me why you feel that way?

GOOD JOB, 26%; LISTEN, 8%; DON'T LISTEN, 8%; NO PROBLEMS, 19%; GOOD DEVELOPMENT, 8%; POOR SPENDING, 9%; TOO MUCH GROWTH, 7%; GOOD SPENDING, 2%; DON'T LIKE ROUND-ABOUT, 6%; COULD IMPROVE, 5%; SCATTERED, 3%.

98. How much first hand contact have you had with the Cottage Grove City staff -- quite a lot, some, very little, or none?

QUITE A LOT	2%
SOME	22%
VERY LITTLE	40%
NONE	36%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

99. From what you have heard or seen, how would you rate the job performance of the Cottage Grove City staff -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

EXCELLENT	7%
GOOD	47%
ONLY FAIR	8%
POOR	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	38%

IF A JUDGMENT IS GIVEN, ASK: (N=248)

100. Could you tell me why you feel that way?

GOOD JOB, 20%; HELPFUL, 47%; FRIENDLY, 21%; POOR JOB, 6%; DON'T LISTEN, 2%; COULD IMPROVE, 4%.

101. During the past year, have you contacted Cottage Grove City Hall?

YES	26%
NO	74%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=104)

102. On your last telephone call or visit, which Department did you contact -- the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, Ice Center, Utility Billing, Park and Recreation, Building Inspections, Engineering, Planning, Administration, the Finance Department, or the General Information Desk?

POLICE DEPARTMENT	10%
FIRE DEPARTMENT	2%
PUBLIC WORKS	16%
ICE CENTER	0%
UTILITY BILLING	7%
PARKS AND REC	9%
BUILDING INSPECT	24%
ENGINEERING	5%
PLANNING	5%
ADMINISTRATION	4%
FINANCE DEPT	2%
GENERAL INFORMATION	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2%

Thinking about your last contact with the City, for each of the following characteristics, please rate the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor....

	EXC	GOO	FAI	POO	DKR
103. Waiting time for the receptionist to help you?	38%	57%	4%	2%	0%

	EXC	GOO	FAI	POO	DKR
104. Courtesy of city staff?	39%	54%	7%	0%	0%
105. Ease of obtaining the service you needed?	39%	47%	9%	5%	0%

The City is examining its strategic goals and would like to know if and how much you value them. I am going to read you a list of the city's current goals. First tell me how important each goal is to you on a scale of "one" to "five," where "one" means "not at all important" and "five" stands for "extremely important."

	1	2	3	4	5	DK
106. Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.	1%	1%	8%	19%	71%	0%
107. Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.	0%	1%	8%	21%	70%	1%
108. Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.	1%	2%	13%	28%	57%	0%
109. Work to improve transportation and transit.	2%	7%	22%	22%	47%	0%
110. Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.	1%	4%	18%	30%	47%	0%
111. Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.	1%	4%	16%	25%	54%	0%

Now, for each of these goals, please rate how well the City is doing to achieve it. Again, let's use a "one" to "five" scale, where "one" means "poor" and "five" stands for "excellent."

	1	2	3	4	5	DK
112. Promote an enhanced sense of community pride, mutual trust, respect, civility and a safe and secure environment.	1%	3%	23%	60%	13%	1%
113. Operate in a fiscally responsible manner while emphasizing growth and diversity of the tax base.	1%	7%	33%	50%	6%	3%
114. Place emphasis on quality retail, restaurant, and industrial development.	2%	14%	42%	39%	3%	1%

	1	2	3	4	5	DK
115. Work to improve transportation and transit.	1%	5%	41%	44%	4%	5%
116. Provide a high level of maintenance and repair and quality of construction of city facilities.	1%	3%	29%	56%	9%	3%
117. Ensure future housing developments reflect the community vision established through a planning process.	2%	5%	33%	52%	5%	3%

Moving on.....

118. What is your principal source of information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

CITY NEWSLETTER, 16%; BULLETIN, 63%; WEBSITE, 5%; CABLE TELEVISION, 8%; WORD OF MOUTH, 4%; PIONEER PRESS, 2%; SCATTERED, 3%.

119. How would you prefer to receive information about Cottage Grove City Government and its activities?

CITY NEWSLETTER, 16%; BULLETIN, 57%; WEBSITE, 11%; CABLE TELEVISION, 7%; MAILINGS, 3%; WORD OF MOUTH, 2%; SCATTERED, 4%.

For each of the following, please tell me whether you consider it to be a major source of information for news about the city, a minor source, or not a source at all. (ROTATE)

	MAJ	MIN	NOT	DKR
120. The City newsletter, "Cottage Grove Reports?"	40%	45%	15%	1%
121. The newsletter included in city utility bills?	17%	33%	49%	1%
122. The "Bulletin" newspaper?	74%	15%	10%	0%
123. The "Star Tribune" or "Pioneer Press?"	10%	31%	59%	0%
124. The City's website?	11%	29%	60%	1%
125. Programming on your public access cable TV station?	13%	27%	59%	1%
126. City employees?	6%	16%	77%	1%
127. Direct mail updates?	8%	33%	58%	1%

As you may know, the city recently introduced the Cottage Grove monthly newsletter which is distributed through utility bills or mailed separately to non-utility customers.

128. During the past year, did you receive "Cottage Grove Reports," the City's newsletter?

YES.....93%
NO 7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=370)

129. Do you or any members of your household regularly read it?
YES.....85%
NO 14%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

130. How effective is the newsletter in keeping you informed about city government and its activities -- very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not at all effective?
VERY EFFECTIVE.....27%
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE....62%
NOT TOO EFFECTIVE.....6%
NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE...2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%

131. Does your household currently subscribe to cable television?
YES.....66%
NO 33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=265)

132. How often during the past year have you watched Cottage Grove City Council Meeting telecasts on Channel 16 -- frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?
FREQUENTLY.....10%
OCCASIONALLY.....30%
RARELY.....27%
NEVER.....32%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

133. Do you have access to the Internet at home? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you have access to the Internet at work?
HOME ONLY.....43%
WORK ONLY.....3%
BOTH.....39%
NEITHER.....16%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=336)

134. Have you accessed the City's website?
YES.....66%
NO.....34%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=222)

135. How would you rate the City's website -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?
EXCELLENT.....5%
GOOD.....66%
ONLY FAIR.....27%
POOR.....2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%

136. Were you able to find what you were looking for?
YES.....91%
NO.....7%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

Many city services and information can be made available through the Internet. How likely are you to use the Internet for each of the following services -- very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

	VRL	SML	NTL	NAA	DKR
137. Paying utility bills?	19%	21%	18%	43%	0%
138. Finding information about your utility bill?	27%	30%	7%	35%	1%
139. Dog licenses and other applications?	31%	17%	13%	40%	0%
140. Registering for park and recreation programming?	32%	19%	10%	38%	0%
141. Watching City Council meeting webcasts?	8%	14%	22%	55%	0%

As you may know, some cities are starting to offer for-profit services, such as high-speed wireless Internet, to their residents. The high-speed wireless Internet service is somewhat faster than dial-up, but somewhat slower than cable or DSL. Also, it is less expensive than cable or DSL, but more expensive than dial-up.

142. Would you support or oppose Cottage Grove offering high-speed wireless Internet access? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly way?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	16%
SUPPORT	36%
OPPOSE	15%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	18%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	16%

IF "STRONGLY SUPPORT" OR "SUPPORT," ASK: (N=207)

143. How much would you be willing to pay for high-speed wireless Internet service offered by the City of Cottage Grove? Would you be willing to pay $___ per month? CHOOSE RANDOM STARTING POINT; MOVE UP OR DOWN DEPENDING ON ANSWER) How about $___ per month? (REPEAT PROCESS)

LESS THAN $20.00	32%
$20.00	30%
$25.00	27%
$30.00	6%
$35.00	1%
MORE THAN $35.00	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	4%

Now, just a few more questions for demographic purposes....

Could you please tell me how many people in each of the following age groups live in your household.

144. Persons 65 or over?

NONE	83%
ONE	10%
TWO OR MORE	7%

145. Adults under 65?

NONE	9%
ONE	13%
TWO	68%
THREE OR MORE	11%

146. School-aged children?

NONE.....55%
ONE.....18%
TWO.....21%
THREE OR MORE.....6%

147. Pre-schoolers?

NONE.....83%
ONE.....14%
TWO OR MORE.....4%

148. Which of the following best describes your household: (READ)
A. Single, no other family at home.
B. Single parent with children at home.
C. Married or partnered, with children at home.
D. Married or partnered with no children or no children at home.
E. Something else.

SINGLE/NO OTHER.....7%
SINGLE PARENT.....2%
MAR/PARTN/CHILDREN....51%
MAR/PARTN/NO CHILD....40%
SOMETHING ELSE.....1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

149. Do you own or rent your present residence?

OWN.....91%
RENT.....9%
REFUSED.....0%

150. What is your age, please? (READ CATEGORIES, IF NEEDED)

18-24.....2%
25-34.....13%
35-44.....32%
45-54.....25%
55-64.....20%
65 AND OVER.....10%

151. Do you own a dog?

YES.....44%
NO.....56%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%

And now, for one final question, keeping in mind that your answers are held strictly confidential....

152. Is your pre-tax yearly household income over or under $75,000?
IF "OVER," ASK:
Is it over $100,000? (IF "YES," ASK:) Is it over $125,000?
IF "UNDER," ASK:
Is it under $50,000?

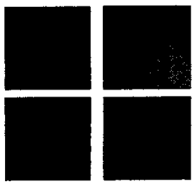
UNDER $50,000.....13%
$50,001-$75,000.....23%
$75,001-$100,000.....30%
$100,000-$125,000.....14%
OVER $125,000.....8%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....12%

153. Gender

MALE.....49%
FEMALE.....51%

154. REGION OF CITY

PRECINCT 1.....5%
PRECINCT 2.....10%
PRECINCT 3.....9%
PRECINCT 4.....6%
PRECINCT 5.....8%
PRECINCT 6.....10%
PRECINCT 7.....9%
PRECINCT 8.....8%
PRECINCT 9.....9%
PRECINCT 10.....10%
PRECINCT 11.....8%
PRECINCT 12.....10%



Decision
Resources Ltd.

Graphics

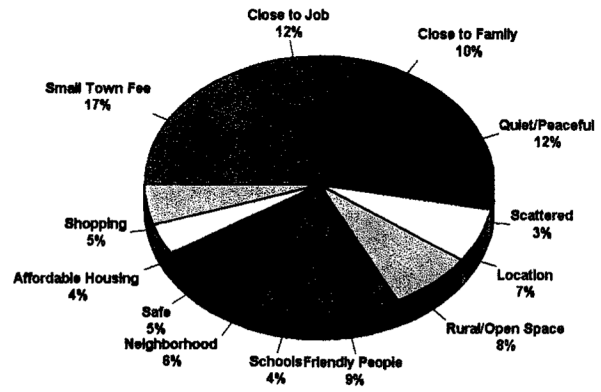
City of Cottage Grove

2007 Residential Study

Decision Resources, Ltd.

Like Most about City

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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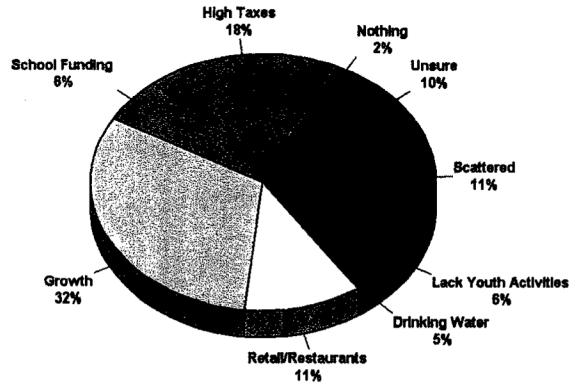
Most Serious Issue

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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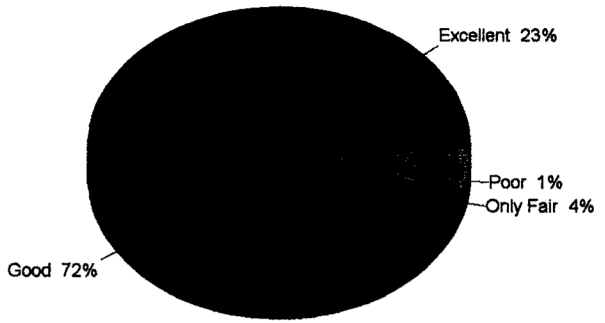
Quality of Life

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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Closest Connection

2007 City of Cottage Grove

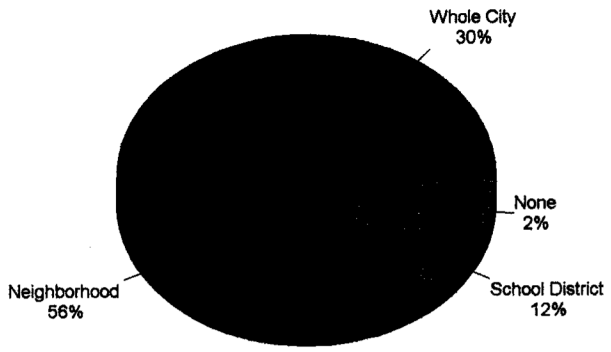

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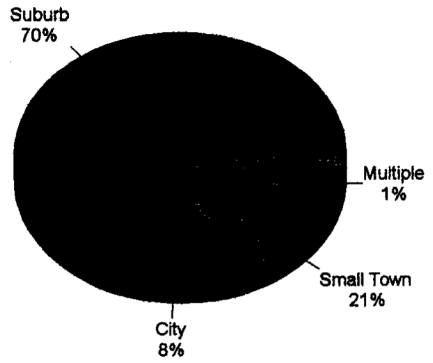
Image of City

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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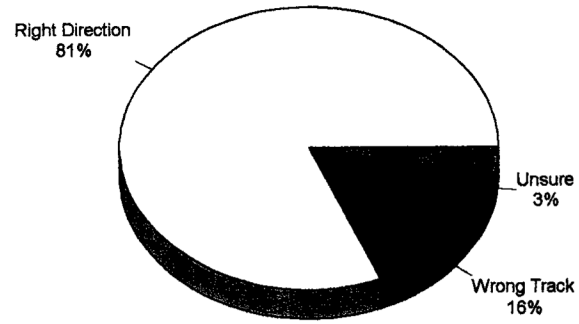
Heading of Community

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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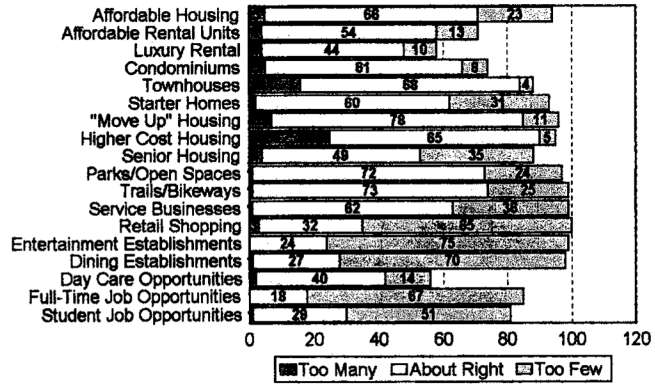
Community Characteristics

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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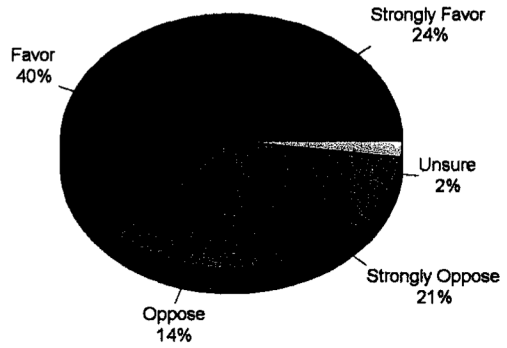
Shopping Center on Theater Site

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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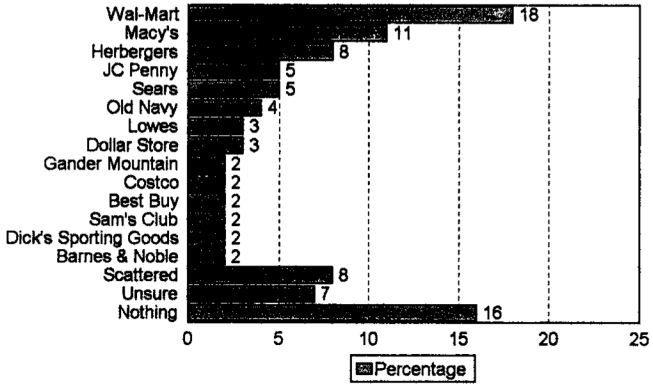
Retail Establishments at Shopping Center

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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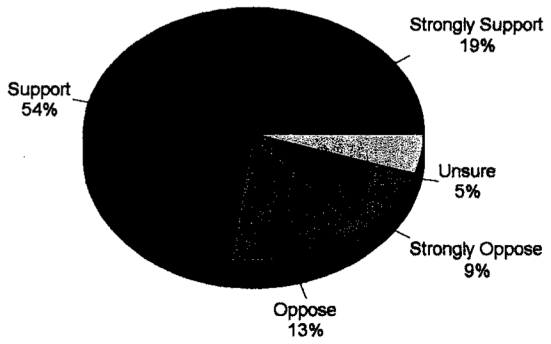
Industrial Park Development

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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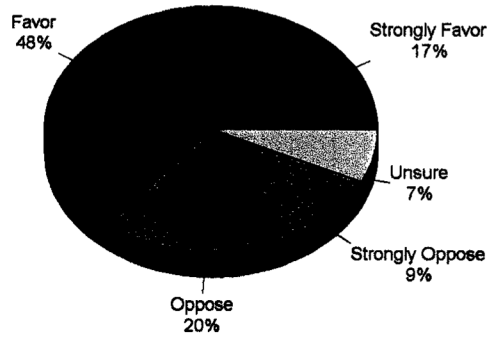
Efforts to Provide Senior Housing

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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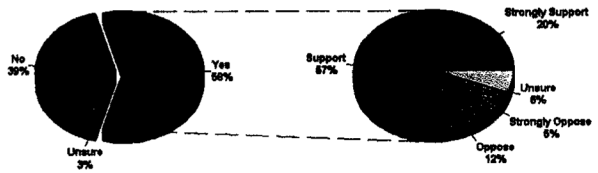
East Ravine Master Plan

2007 City of Cottage Grove



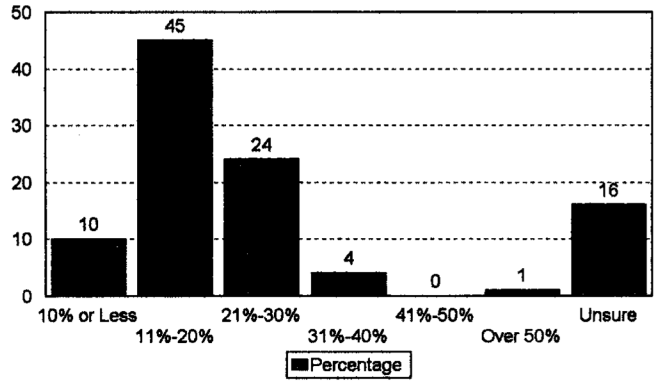
Awareness of Development of Master Plan

Use of Process in the Future

Decision Resources, Ltd.

City Property Tax Share

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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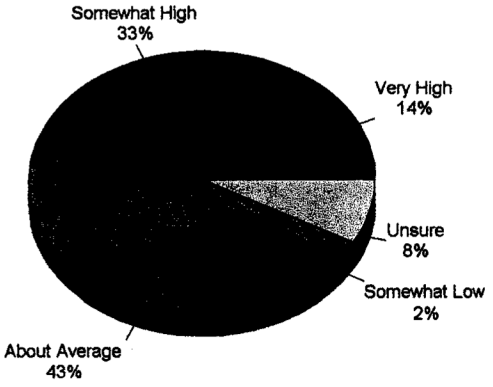
Comparative Property Taxes

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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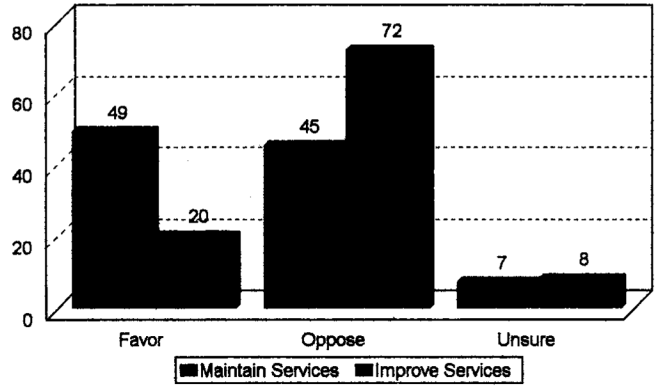
Increased Property Tax

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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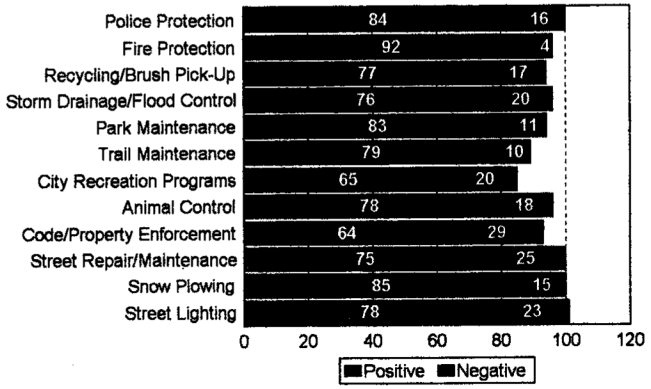
City Services

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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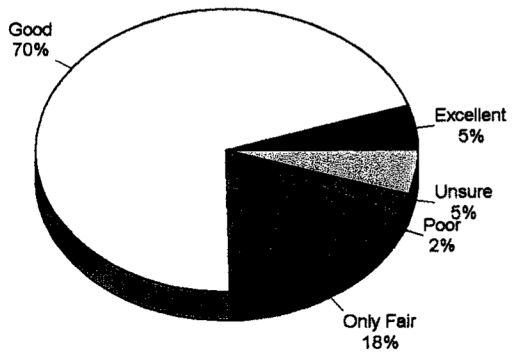
Value of City Services

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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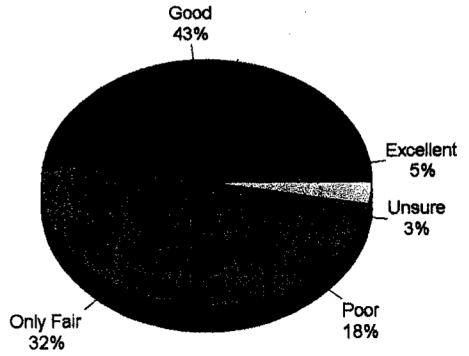
Quality of Drinking Water

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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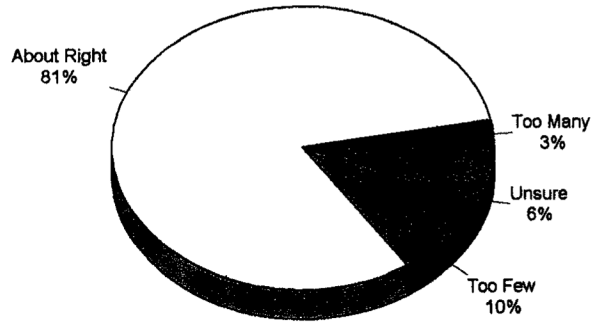
Choice of Garbage Collectors

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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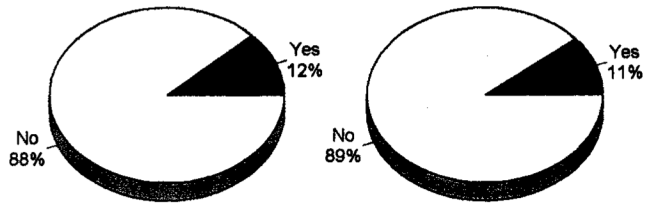
Unsafe Areas

2007 City of Cottage Grove



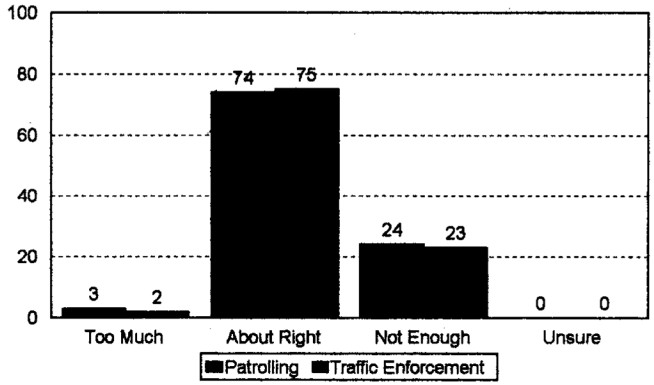
Unsafe Areas of City

Unsafe in immediate Neighborhood Walking Alone at Night

Decision Resources, Ltd.

Neighborhood Police Activities

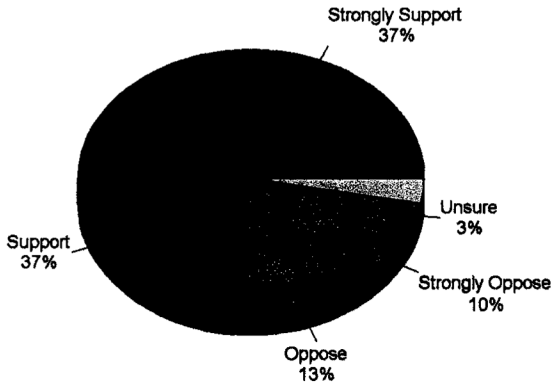
2007 City of Cottage Grove



Decision Resources, Ltd.

Outlawing Certain Breeds

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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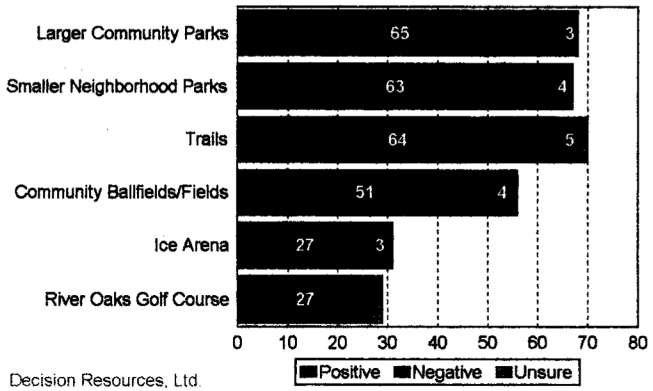
Use and Rating of Park System

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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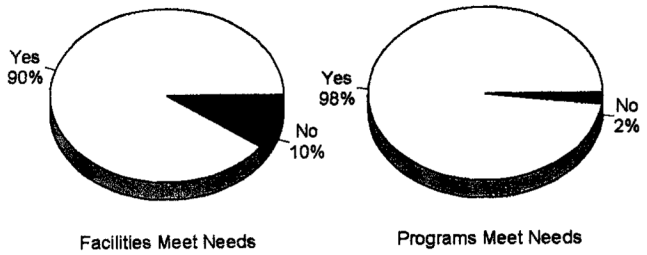
Recreation Facilities & Programs

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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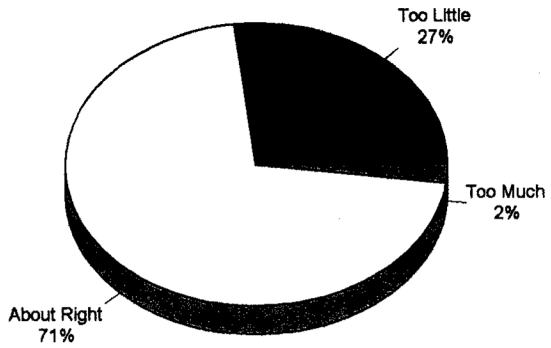
Amount of Open Space

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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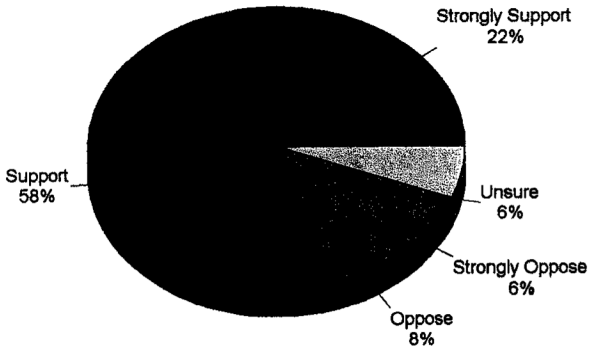
Funds for Park Improvements

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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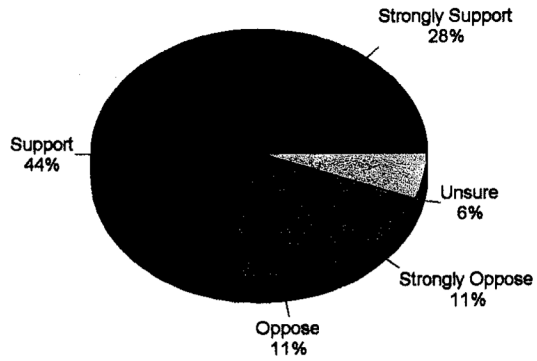
Community Center Concept

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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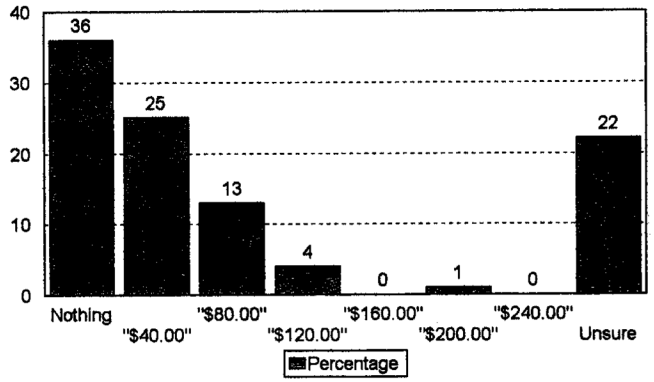
Tax Increase for Construction

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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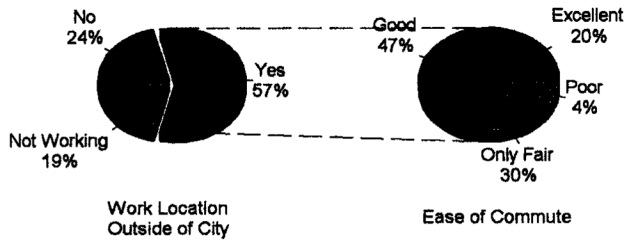
Commute Patterns

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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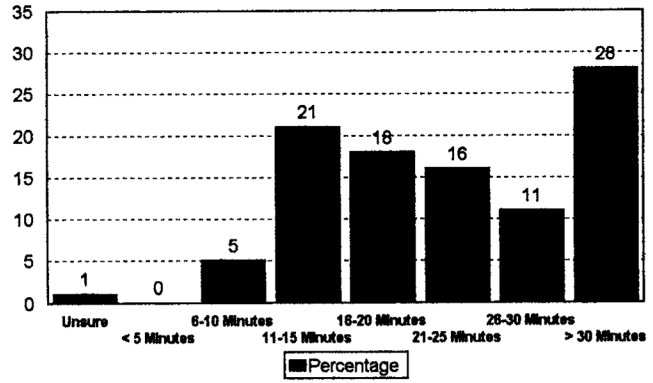
Average Commute Time

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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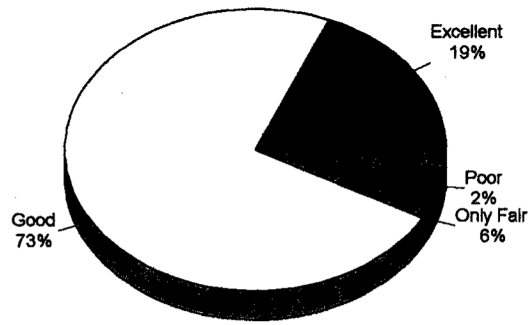
Ease of Intra-City Travel

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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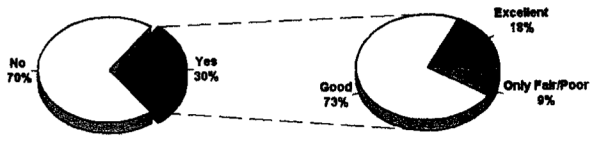
Public Transportation

2007 City of Cottage Grove



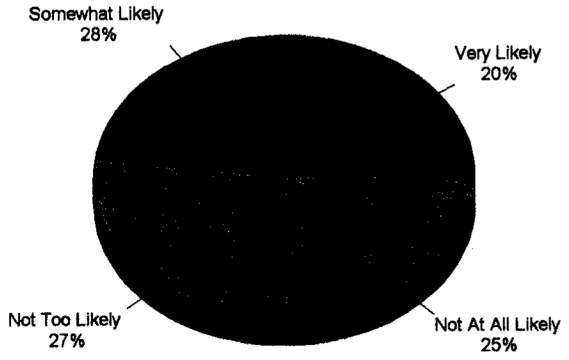
Used Public Transportation during Past Two Years

Rating of Experience

Decision Resources, Ltd.

Use of Red Rock Commuter Rail

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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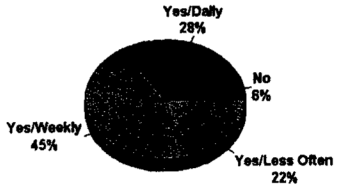
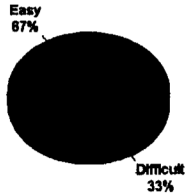
"Round About"

2007 City of Cottage Grove



Frequency of Using Round About



Navigation of Round About

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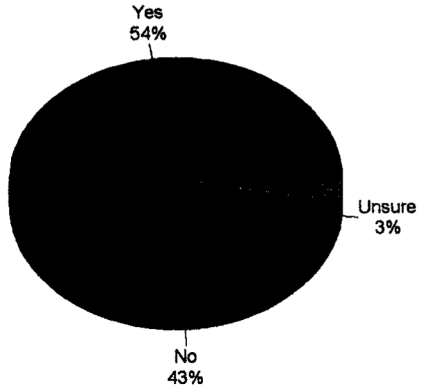
Empowerment

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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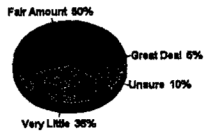
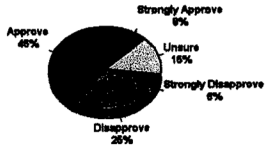
Mayor & City Council

2007 City of Cottage Grove



Knowledge of Work of Mayor and City Council

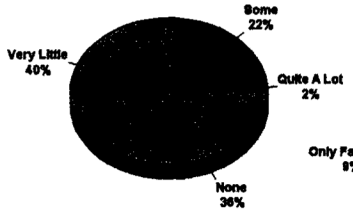


Job Performance of Mayor and City Council

Decision Resources, Ltd

City Staff

2007 City of Cottage Grove



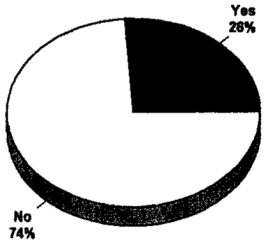
First-Hand Contact of City Staff

Job Performance of City Staff

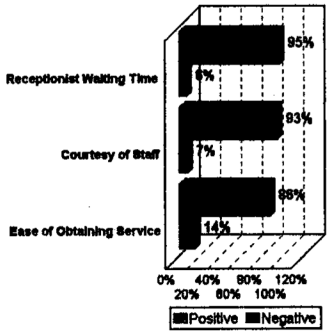
Decision Resources, Ltd

Cottage Grove City Hall

2007 City of Cottage Grove



Contacted City Hall during Past Year

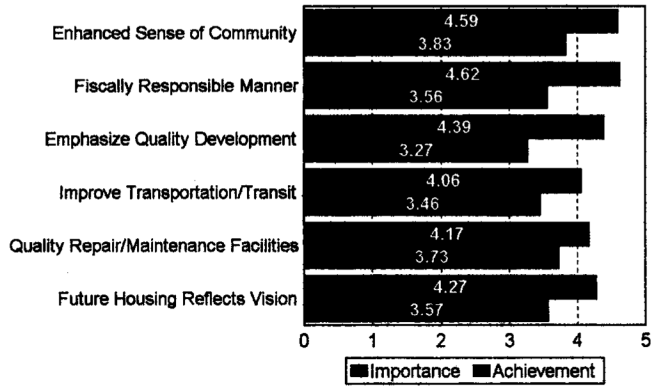


Rating of Service

Decision Resources, Ltd

Strategic Goals

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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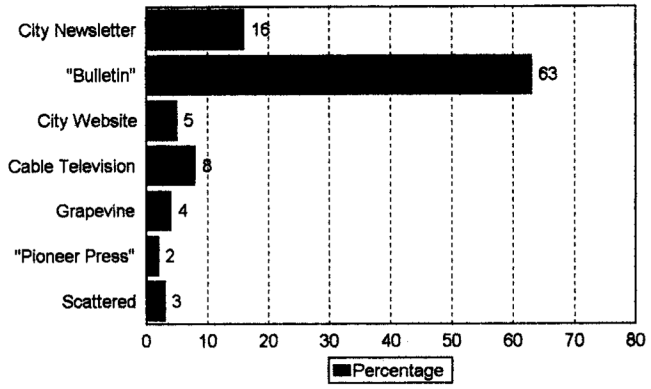
Principal Information Source

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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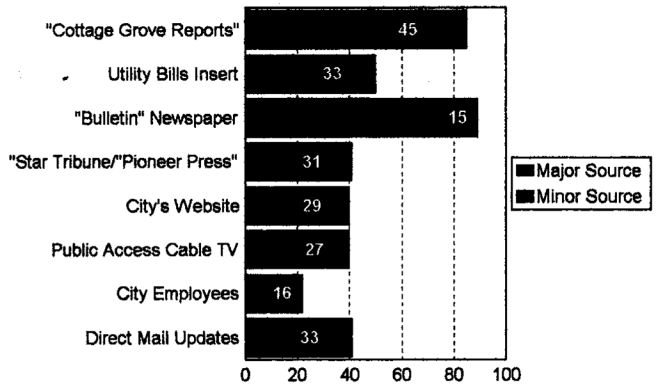
Information Sources

2007 City of Cottage Grove



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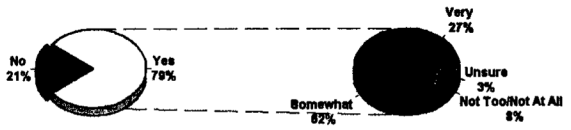
City Newsletter

2007 City of Cottage Grove



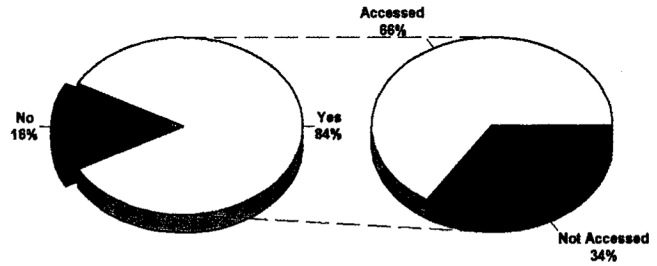
Readership of Newsletter

Rating of Quality

Decision Resources, Ltd

Computer Capability

2007 City of Cottage Grove



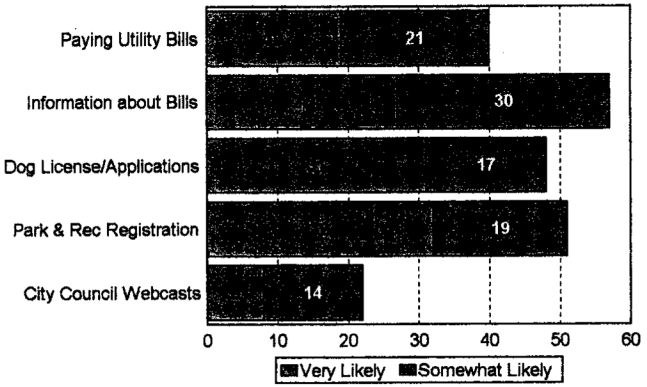
Access to Internet at Home or at Work

Accessed City's Home Page

Decision Resources, Ltd

Use of E-Commerce

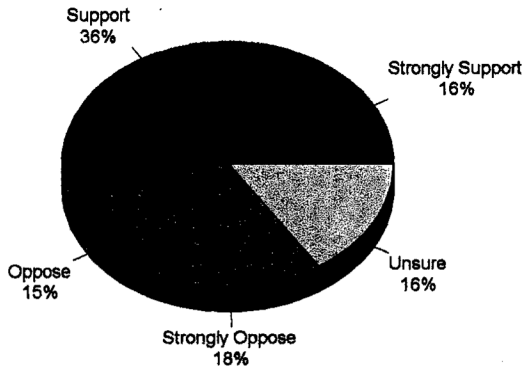
2007 City of Cottage Grove



Decision Resources, Ltd

City Offering Wi-Fi

2007 City of Cottage Grove



Decision Resources, Ltd.

City Council Action Request

3E

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	The Escape Game
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	Included in retreat budget
Attachments	5.1a The Escape Game Memo.tif 911.32KB

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator

DATE: January 13, 2022

RE: The Escape Game

The Escape Game is an effective team-building exercise that can help build a solid and successful team that is communicative, collaborative and thriving. Here are some of the benefits of participating in the Escape Game:

Improves communication
Communication is key to a successful team. Communication helps ensure everyone is on the same page and that time isn't spent duplicating work, which is not productive or efficient. Doing an escape room reveals how well a team communicates under pressure and provides an opportunity to develop those skills.

Builds trust
Trust is key to a successful, efficient and productive team. The Escape Game will help everyone see how dependable, clever and hard working their teammates are so they can develop and build trust in them.

Supports collaboration
The Escape Game is built on collaboration. Everyone must work together to achieve the goals as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Identifies strengths and weaknesses
This activity will help the City Council and staff discover individual strengths and weaknesses. This is important because the most successful teams include individuals with a variety of skills and traits. The Escape Game helps reveal them.

Develops task and time management skills
City Council and staff are required to complete deadline-oriented tasks. The Escape Game gives everyone an overarching goal to complete though there is very little time to do a large number of tasks. Doing a lot within a short period of time helps to develop task and time management skills. Team leaders can also delegate tasks out to the group to become more efficient as a team.

Covid Precautions
The Escape Game cleans and disinfects high touch surfaces in their games and lobby. Being that participants are in close quarters during the game, it is recommended to wear a mask while playing. Hand sanitizer will be provided during the meeting for use after playing.

Additional information
City Council time: 10:30am “The Heist”
City Staff time: 12:30pm “Gold Rush”

Please follow the link below to sign the waiver in advance of game time.
https://booking.theescapegame.com/checkin/6723c0c4b530504026a6ac7b1fe51c8d

City Council Action Request

3F

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Debt Management Policy Discussion
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A

Attachments

6.1a Debt Management Policy Discussion Memo.tif	1.32MB
6.1b Cottage Grove Debt Management Policy.tif	1.78MB
6.1c Burnsville Debt Management Policy.tif	407.59KB
6.1d Maple Grove Debt Management Policy.tif	3.28MB
6.1e Maplewood Debt Management Policy.tif	4.27MB
6.1f Ehlers Statement RE Potential Refunding of Existing Bonds.tif	475.64KB

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

To: Mayor and City Council Members
Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator

From: Robin Roland, Finance Director

Date: January 14, 2022

Subject: Debt Management Policy Discussion

Introduction

The city's debt management policy has not been updated since 2010. Staff will review the policy and the current debt situation during the working lunch. Copies of debt management policies from Burnsville, Maplewood and Maple Grove are included along with the 2010 Cottage Grove policy.

Discussion

The following chart reflects the December 31, 2021 balances of all city debt.

Funding for:	name	type	issue date	call date	balance 12/31/21	final pmt due
Central Fire Station	2017A	CIP	5/11/2017	2/1/2026	8,090,000	2/1/2038
HERO Center	2019A	CIP	2/14/2019	2/1/2027	3,945,000	2/1/2040
					12,035,000	
Ice Arena Refrigeration replacemnt	2019B	eq cert	2/14/2019	2/1/2025	2,340,000	2/1/2029
Ice Arena additon refinance	2016A	GO ref	1/28/2016	2/1/2024	2,210,000	2/1/2027
					4,550,000	
Pavement Management 2014-2015	2015A	imp	5/27/2015	2/1/2024	3,940,000	2/1/2031
Pavement Management 2016-2017	2016B	imp	11/16/2016	2/1/2026	3,300,000	2/1/2033
Ravine Pkwy & Hadley N of 65th	2018A	imp	6/26/2018	2/1/2026	7,210,000	2/1/2035
Pavement Management 2013 (ref)	2021B	imp	12/9/2021	2/1/2027	3,840,000	2/1/2029
Pavement Management 2021	2021A	imp	6/10/2021	2/1/2030	3,955,000	2/1/2037
					22,245,000	
TIF 1-12 Financing	2004A	TIF	7/1/2004	2/1/2014	**$ 820,000**	2/1/2024
					$ 39,650,000	

- CIP and Arena Equipment Certificates are 100% levy supported.
- Arena addition GO Refunding bonds are Arena revenue and levy supported.
- Improvement Bonds are levy and special assessment supported.
- Currently, the soonest any of these bonds could be called (to pay off) or refinanced would be 2024. (TIF debt is the exception. Final debt payment in 2024 coincides with closure of the TIF district).

- Bonds can be refinanced within 6 months of the call date, but only if appropriate interest savings exists. (See Ehlers memo for example)

The City of Cottage Grove's current Debt Management Policy (2010) includes a couple of metrics to restrict the amount of debt issued by the City.

1. Under 5.c. – the annual debt levy required by the total of all City debt shall not comprise more than 15% of annual General Fund expenses.

Year	total debt	debt per capita	population	debt levy as % of general fund expenditures
2010	$25,486,827	$ 745	34,589	10.1%
2011	17,774,934	514		9.4%
2012	17,761,525	510		4.4%
2013	23,014,308	654		4.9%
2014	21,533,521	608		5.9%
2015	25,725,523	727		6.1%
2016	27,436,125	775		5.8%
2017	34,885,704	985		6.3%
2018	38,919,104	1,099		9.1%
2019	43,576,327	1,223		8.9%
2020	41,041,364	1,056	38,839	14.2%

The current estimate for 2021 is 12.7%. For 2022, 13.6%.

2. Under 7.c. – the City will limit the total of its net (general obligation) debt to 0.80% of full market value of properties in the City.

2021/2022 Assessors Estimated Market Value	$ 4,450,532,100
3% Statutory Debt limit	$ 133,515,963
0.80% City limit	$ 35,604,257
12/31/2021 General Obligation Debt Cottage Grove	$ 14,375,000

During our lunch discussion we will ask:

- What concerns, if any, do you have with the current policy?
- Is the policy in line with our strategic priorities as we move forward?
- Are there other metrics regarding debt we should discuss annually during the budget process?

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-013

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

WHEREAS, a Debt Management Policy provides the general framework for the planning and evaluating debt proposals in the course of City operations;

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes there are no absolute rules or easy formulas that can substitute for a thorough review of all information affecting the City's debt position. Debt decisions should be the result of deliberative consideration of all factors involved;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Cottage Grove, Minnesota, to approve the following debt management policy for the City of Cottage Grove:

1. General Debt Policy

    a. The City shall seek to maintain and improve its current AA2/AA+ bond rating so borrowing costs are minimized and access to credit is preserved. It is imperative that the City demonstrate to rating agencies, investment bankers, creditors and taxpayers that City officials are following a prescribed financial plan.
    b. Every bond issue proposal will be accompanied by an analysis of the sources and uses of funds for the project to be financed with the bond proceeds and sources of funding for the repayment of the bonds. The analysis will reflect how the new bond will fit with the City's existing debt structure.
    c. The City will confine long-term borrowing to capital improvements or projects that cannot be funded from operating revenues and/or a reasonable amount of other resources. The City has developed a closed debt service fund which acts as a bridge to internally finance construction costs until property owner assessments or other third party revenues are received. Internal financing should significantly reduce the City's need to sell bonds and incur undue interest costs.
    d. Bonds will be sold on a competitive basis unless it is in the best interest of the City to conduct a negotiated sale. Competitive sales will be the preferred method. Negotiated sales may occur when selling bonds for a

defeasance of existing debt, for current or advanced refunding of debt or for other appropriate reasons.

2. Taxpayer Equity

    a. Cottage Grove's property taxpayers and citizens who benefit from projects financed by bonds should be the source of the related debt service funding. This principle of taxpayer equity should be a primary consideration in determining the type of projects selected for financing through bonds. Furthermore, the principle of taxpayer equity shall be applied for setting rates in determining net revenues for bond coverage ratios.

3. Uses

    a. Acceptable uses of bond proceeds can be viewed as items which can be capitalized. Non-capital furnishings and supplies will not be financed from bond proceeds.
    b. Bond proceeds should be limited to financing the costs of project planning and design, land acquisition, buildings and other permanent structures, attached fixtures, equipment acquired as part of the construction project and/or other costs as permitted by law. Utility revenue bond proceeds may be used to establish a debt service reserve as allowed by State law. Refunding bond issues designed to restructure currently outstanding debt are an acceptable use of bond proceeds
    c. The City will not use short term borrowing to finance operating needs except in the case of an extreme financial emergency which is beyond its control or reasonable ability to forecast. Recognizing that bond issuance costs add to the total interest costs of financing; bond financing should not be used if the aggregate cost of projects to be financed by the bond issue does not exceed $1,000,000.
    d. The City will not issue "interest only" debt.

4. Decision Analysis

    a. Whenever the City is contemplating a possible bond issue, information will be developed concerning the following categories commonly used by rating agencies assessing the City's creditworthiness. The subcategories are representative of the types of items to be considered. This information will be presented by the Finance Director to the City Administrator and City Council.
        i. Debt Analysis
            1. Debt capacity analysis

2. Purpose for which debt is issued
3. Debt structure
4. Debt burden
5. Debt history and trends
6. Adequacy of debt and capital planning
7. Obsolescence of capital plant

ii. Financial Analysis

1. Stability, diversity, and growth rates of tax or other revenue sources
2. Trend in assessed valuation and collections
3. Current budget trends
4. History and long term trends of revenues and expenditures
5. Fund balance status and trends in operating and debt funds
6. Cash flow projections

iii. Economic Analysis

1. Population and demographics
2. Economic environment and trends

b. The City may use the services of qualified internal staff and outside advisors to assist in the analysis, evaluation and decision process, including bond counsel and financial advisors. This policy is intended to insure that potential debt complies with all laws and regulations, as well as sound financial principles.

5. Debt Planning

a. General obligation bond borrowing should be planned and the details of the plan must be incorporated in the City's Five Year Capital Improvement Plan.
b. General obligation bond issues should be included in at least two Capital Improvement Plans proceeding the year of the bond sale. The first inclusion should contain a general description of the project, its timing and financial limits; subsequent inclusions should become increasingly specific.
c. The annual debt levy required by the total of all City debt shall not comprise more than 15% of annual General Fund operating expenses.

6. Communication and Disclosure

a. Financial reporting and disclosure requirements will be fulfilled annually according to the disclosure guidelines of the Government Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada.

7. General Obligation Bonds

   a. Every project proposed for financing through general obligation debt should be accompanied by a full analysis of the future operating and maintenance costs associated with the project.
   b. Bonds cannot be issued for a longer maturity schedule than a conservative estimate of the useful life of the asset to be financed. The City will attempt to keep the average maturity of general obligation bonds at or below 20 years.
   c. The City will limit the total of its net (general obligation) debt to 0.80% of full market value of properties in the City.

8. Revenue Bonded Debt

   a. It will be a long term goal that each utility or enterprise will ensure future capital financing needs are met by using a combination of current operating revenues and revenue bond financing.
   b. Each utility or enterprise should provide adequate debt service coverage. A specific factor is established by the City Council that the net of enterprise revenues and expenditures (exclusive of depreciation/amortization) shall be a minimum of 1.25 times the annual debt service costs.

Passed this 3rd day of February 2010.

Myron Bailey, Mayor

Attest:

Caron M. Stransky, City Clerk

9. DEBT MANAGEMENT

The use of borrowing and debt is an important and flexible revenue source available to the City. Debt is a mechanism which allows capital improvements to proceed when needed, in advance of when it would otherwise be possible. It can reduce long-term costs due to inflation, prevent lost opportunities, and equalize the costs of improvements to present and future constituencies.

Debt management is an integral part of the financial management of the City. Adequate resources must be provided for the repayment of debt, and the level of debt incurred by the City must be effectively controlled to amounts that are manageable and within levels that will maintain or enhance the City's credit rating. A goal of debt management is to stabilize the overall debt burden and future tax levy requirements to ensure that issued debt can be repaid and prevent default on any municipal debt. A debt level which is too high places a financial burden on taxpayers and can create problems for the community's economy as a whole.

POLICY STATEMENT

Wise and prudent use of debt provides fiscal and service advantages. Overuse of debt places a burden on the fiscal resources of the City and its taxpayers. The following guidelines provide a framework and limit on debt utilization:

1. The City will restrict long-term borrowing to planned capital improvements (see CIP Policy) and a limited use of short-term debt for capital outlay.
2. The City will not use long-term debt for current operations.
3. The City will strive to maintain a "pay-as-you-go" capital funding policy, supporting capital spending without use of debt whenever feasible. The City will strive to pay cash for capital projects that can be anticipated and planned for in advance.
4. The City will pay back debt within a period not to exceed the expected useful life of the projects, with at least 50% of the principal retired within 2/3 of the term of the bond issue.
5. Total general obligation debt shall not exceed 2% of the total market valuation of taxable property in the City.
6. Direct net debt (gross debt less available debt service funds) shall not exceed 3% of the total market valuation of taxable property in the City.
7. The City will maintain good communications with bond rating agencies regarding its financial condition. The City will follow a policy of full disclosure in every financial report and bond prospectus.
8. When feasible the City will use refunding mechanisms to reduce interest cost and evaluate the use of debt reserves to lower overall annual debt service where possible.
9. The City's goal has been to maintain the level of annual debt service at or below the current debt levy.
10. The City will annually review changes to continuing disclosure regulations to ensure compliance. The City will work with the City's Financial Advisor to prepare and file annual continuing disclosure reporting.

During the annual budget process, a debt study will be prepared in conjunction with the Capital Improvements Plan to provide information about the City's debt structure.

City of Maple Grove
Debt Management Policy

This policy is intended to provide guidance governing the issuance, management, continuing evaluation of and reporting on all debt obligations issued by the City of Maple Grove (the "City") and to provide for the preparation and implementation necessary to assure compliance and conformity with this policy

Debt Limits

1. Net general obligation debt will not exceed the statutory limit of 3% of the estimated market value of taxable property in the City as required by Minnesota Statute, Section 475.53 and at levels consistent with the City's creditworthiness objectives.

Debt Management

1. The City will use debt only for capital improvements, equipment or other long-term projects that have a life of more than 4 years and cannot be financed from current revenues.

2. Where possible, the City will endeavor to pledge special assessments, state-aid payments, utility revenues, reconstruction funds, sales tax or other non-property tax revenues to debt service payments. The City will endeavor to minimize the use of property tax revenues to support debt service.

Debt Structure Practices

1. In general, City debt will be issued through a competitive bidding process. Bids will be awarded on a true interest cost basis (TIC), providing other bidding requirements are satisfied. In the event that the City receives more than one bid with identical TICs, the tie may be broken by a flip of a coin.

2. Negotiated financings may be used in cases where the bond credit is not the full faith and credit of the City, where there is significant market volatility, the use of unusual or complex financing or specific revenue streams that result in credit quality issues or for financings of very small or very large issue size.

3. In the event of a negotiated bond sale process the City will seek to establish a competitive selection of financial institutions or banks as appropriate.

4. Debt will not be issued for periods exceeding the useful life or average useful lives of the project or projects being financed and will be structured for the shortest period possible, as applicable.

5. Debt will be structured to achieve the most efficient use of City resources and assets to achieve the lowest possible net cost to the City given market conditions while accomplishing the replacement, economic development and capital planning goals of the City.

6. The City will use an independent municipal advisor to assist with determining the type of financing, method of sale and structuring of the bond issue(s).

7. The City will retain external bond counsel for all debt issues. No debt will be issued by the City without a written opinion by bond counsel affirming that the City is authorized to issue the debt, stating that the City has met all state constitutional and statutory requirements necessary for issuance, and determining the debt's federal income tax status.

8. The Finance Division will utilize a fiscal agent on all City indebtedness. Fiscal agent fees for outstanding bonds will be paid from the Bond Interest and Redemption Fund, unless specified otherwise by the finance director.

Debt Management Practices

1. The City will periodically review all outstanding debt to determine refunding opportunities or opportunities to pay off bonds. Refunding's will be considered (within federal tax law constraints) if and when there is a net economic benefit of the refunding. Potential refunding benefits include reductions in future interest costs, restructuring debt to better fit evolving revenue sources and restructuring legal covenants. Refunding with a negative interest cost savings will not be considered unless there is a compelling public policy objective. Each refunding will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2. The City will maintain frequent and regular communications with bond rating agencies about its financial conditions.

3. The City will adhere to post issuance compliance requirements including continuing disclosure requirements and arbitrage requirements detailed in the bond transcripts for each issue and as summarized in the policy below under Regulatory Compliance.

4. The City Finance Director will report at least annually the outstanding bonds to the City Council.

Regulatory Compliance

1. The issuance of municipal bonds requires compliance with federal and state laws. Of particular note are federal requirements relating to full and timely disclosure and rebate/arbitrage.

2. Policy Compliance Responsibility: While the Mayor and City Council have ultimate responsibility for policy compliance, professional assistance will be delegated to the City's Finance Director.

3. Post Issuance Compliance

   i). The Finance Director of the City is designated as the City's agent who is responsible for post-issuance compliance obligations. The Finance Director shall assemble all relevant documentation, records and activities required to ensure post-issuance debt compliance in accordance with its Post Issuance Debt Compliance Procedures (the "Procedures") (See Appendix A). At a minimum, the Procedures for each qualifying obligation will address the following:

      1. General Post-Issuance Compliance
      2. General Recordkeeping
      3. Arbitrage Yield Restriction and Rebate Recordkeeping
      4. Expenditure and Asset Documentation to be Assembled and Retained
      5. Miscellaneous Documentation to be Assembled and Retained
      6. Additional Undertakings and Activities that Support Sections 1 through 5 above
      7. Continuing Disclosure Obligations
      8. Compliance with Future Requirements

   ii). The Finance Director shall apply the Procedures to each qualifying obligation and maintain a record of the results. Further, the Finance Director will ensure that this portion of the Policy and the Procedures are updated on a regular and as needed basis.

   iii). The Finance Director or any other individuals responsible for assisting the Finance Director in maintaining records needed to ensure post-issuance debt compliance, will attend training or secure use of other educational resources for ensuring compliance such as consulting, publications, and compliance assistance.

   iv). Most of the provisions of this portion of the Policy are not applicable to taxable governmental obligations unless there is a reasonable possibility that the City may refund their taxable governmental obligation, in whole or in part, with the proceeds of a tax-exempt governmental obligation. If this refunding possibility exists, then the Finance Director shall treat the taxable governmental obligation as if such issue were an issue of tax-exempt governmental obligations and comply with the requirements of this portion of the Policy.

4. Disclosure:

   i) The City shall comply with SEC rule 15(c)2(12) on primary and continuing disclosure and the City's Finance Director shall be responsible for all disclosure compliance requirements.

ii) The City will follow requirements relating to initial and ongoing disclosure of information deemed appropriate for each of its bond issues.

iii) The City will maintain records relating both to the initial issuance, the timing and use of proceeds and the ongoing use of financed assets so as to ensure the continuance of the tax-exempt status of any of its bond issues.

iv) The City will comply with all federal rebate and arbitrage regulations. It will take steps to issue its tax-exempt bonds in a manner which facilitates compliance, and where appropriate, seek eligibility for permitted safe harbor exemptions. The City shall complete an arbitrage rebate report for each issue no less than every five years after its date of issuance.

Interfund Borrowing

1. Interfund borrowing shall be used for loans of less than one year where feasible. Interfund borrowing for more than one year shall only be undertaken for capital expenditures. A reasonable payment schedule for repayment of the borrowed amounts and enforceable covenants, established to ensure recourse if the schedule is not adhered to, shall be approved by the City Council. Interest charges shall be included to compensate the lender fund for the use of its financial resources and shall be determined by the Finance Director. Interest charges for interfund loans can be as low as 0% where it makes financial sense or can be as high as the greater of the rates specified under MN Statutes 270.40 or 549.09 as of the date of the loan or the advance is authorized.

Conduit Debt

1. The Council may consider tax exempt financing for commercial, industrial health care, and any other projects authorized to be financed under the Industrial Development Act (referred to as "non-housing projects"), and housing projects under the Housing Act. An applicant for tax-exempt financing must submit to the City the application, obtained from the City's Finance Department.

2. Projects must be compatible with the overall development plans and objectives of the City and shall meet all applicable zoning and land use regulations of the City.

3. The applicant must select a qualified financial adviser or underwriter to assist the applicant in preparing all necessary application documents and materials. The financial adviser will submit a letter that establishes the financial feasibility of the project. Applications may, in the alternative, include a signed letter from a responsible financial institution indicating that the project is economically feasible and viable and stating that bonds can be successfully sold for the project or that an individual or institution intends to purchase all of the bonds. If the applicant is not seeking other public assistance for the project, the City's financial advisor will be required to review the project for financial feasibility.

The applicant must receive approval from the appropriate state agencies, secure financing and commence construction within one year of the date of the resolution giving preliminary approval to the project or the housing program. Upon application, the Council may approve an extension of the preliminary approval.

The City will appoint bond counsel for the bond issue, which will normally be the City's regularly retained bond counsel.

4. The City is to be reimbursed and held harmless for and from any out-of-pocket expenses related to the tax-exempt financing including, but not limited to, legal fees, municipal advisor fees, arbitrage consulting fees, bond counsel fees, the City staff's expenses in connection with the application, and any deposits or application fees required under state law in order to secure allocation of bonding authority. The applicant must execute a letter to the City undertaking to pay all such expenses, whether or not the bonds are issued. A non- refundable City application fee in the amount of $3,000 must be included with the submission of the application.

5. Prior to closing and delivery of the bonds for the project, the applicant must pay, or commit to pay at closing an administrative fee in the amount of 1% of par of the bonds, or as negotiated based upon size of issuance. The administrative fees required by this paragraph will be adjusted at or paid prior to delivery of the bonds if necessary to ensure compliance with the Internal Revenue Code and regulations.

   If the City determines that issuance of the bonds requested by the applicant is reasonably expected to cause governmental bonds issued by the City in that calendar year to be ineligible for designation as "qualified tax exempt obligations" under Section 265(b)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (also known as "bank qualified"), the applicant will be required to reimburse the City, at the time of issuance of the City's bonds, for any interest rate differential between bank qualified and non-bank qualified bonds.

6. Refunding's. The Council may approve the refunding of a tax-exempt issue but only upon a showing by the applicant of (i) substantial debt service savings, (ii) the removal of bond covenants significantly impairing the financial feasibility of the project, or (iii) both. In the case of refunding's of bonds for which the administrative fee listed in Section 5 above have been paid in full, no new administrative fees are required; but the non-refundable application fee must be paid together with all City expenses related to the refunded bonds in excess of that fee. If new project costs are being financed with the refunding, then the administrative fee will be required for the new money portion of the bonds, as well as an application. In the case of refunding's of bonds where no administrative fee has been paid, the administrative fees listed in Section 5 must be paid and an application submitted.

7. Subsequent Proceedings. Where changes to the underlying documents or credit facilities of outstanding bond issues are to be made and require Council action (including changes that are a "deemed reissuance" under Internal Revenue Service regulations), the City will not

charge an administrative fee but the actual costs incurred by the City must be reimbursed. No formal application form is required.

8. Issue by Another Political Subdivision. The City may consider requests for tax exempt financing of projects in the City by other political subdivisions. In these cases, the non-refundable application fee must be paid and all procedures through the approval of the preliminary resolution followed. The City will not charge an administrative fee but the actual costs incurred by the City must be reimbursed. The City reserves the right to reject such requests for any reason, including without limitation, a determination by the City that such issuance by another political subdivision would impair the City's ability to issue governmental bonds as "bank qualified bonds" (as defined in Section 5 above) in that calendar year.

9. Post-Issuance Compliance. The City will require that each borrower demonstrate to the City that the borrower will substantially meet the same procedures for post-issuance compliance that apply to City governmental bonds under the Policy and the Procedures. The City requires that borrowers retain either the City's arbitrage consultant or a trustee and/or an independent arbitrage consultant for the term of the bonds and provide the City with copies of all required reports showing compliance with regulations.

Appendix A

Post-Issuance Debt Compliance Procedures

The City Council (the Council") of City of Maple Grove, Minnesota (the City") has adopted a Debt Management Policy, dated December 20, 2021 (the "Policy"), which includes a section on Post-Issuance Debt Compliance. The Post-Issuance Debt Compliance portion of the Policy applies to qualifying debt obligations issued by the City. As directed by the Policy, the Finance Director of the City will perform the following Post-Issuance Debt Compliance Procedures for all of the City's outstanding debt.

1. General Post-Issuance Compliance

a. Ensure written procedures and/or guidelines have been established for individuals to follow when more than one person is responsible for ensuring compliance with Post-Issuance Debt Compliance Procedures.

b. Ensure training and/or educational resources related to post-issuance compliance have been approved and obtained.

c. The Finance Director understands that there are options for voluntarily correcting failures to comply with post-issuance compliance requirements (e.g. as remedial actions under Section 1.141-12 of the Treasury Regulations and the ability to enter into a closing agreement under the Tax-Exempt Bonds Voluntary Closing Agreement Program described in Notice 2008-31(the "VCAP Program")).

2. General Recordkeeping

a. Retain records and documents for the obligation and all obligations issued to refund the obligation for a period of at least seven years following the final payment of the obligation. If an obligation is refunded, then the final payment of the refunding obligation becomes the beginning of the period unless otherwise directed by the City's bond counsel.

b. Retain electronic (preferred) and/or paper versions of records and documents for the obligation.

c. General records and documentation to be assembled and retained:

i. Description of the purpose of the obligation (i.e. the project or projects) and the state statute authorizing the project.
ii. Record of tax-exempt status or revocation of tax-exempt status, if applicable.
iii. Any correspondence between the City and the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") and SEC.
iv. Audited financial statements.
v. All accounting audits of property financed by the obligation.
vi. Obligation transcripts, official statements, and other offering documents of the obligation.
vii. Minutes and resolutions authorizing the issuance of the obligation.
viii. Certifications of the issue price of the obligation.

ix. Any formal elections for the obligation (i.e. an election to employ an accounting methodology other than the specific tracing method).

x. Appraisals, demand surveys, or feasibility studies for property financed by the obligation.

xi. All information reports filed for the obligations.

xii. All management contracts and other service agreements, research contracts, and naming rights contracts.

xiii. Documents related to governmental grants associated with construction, renovation or purchase of property financed by the obligations.

xiv. Reports of any prior IRS examinations of the City or the City's obligations.

xv. All correspondence related to the above (faxes, emails, or letters).

3. Arbitrage Yield Restriction and Rebate Recordkeeping

a. Investment and arbitrage documentation to be assembled and retained:

i. An accounting of all deposits, expenditures, interest income and asset balances associated with each fund established in connection with the obligations. This includes an accounting of all monies deposited to the debt service fund to make debt service payments on the obligations, regardless of the source derived. Accounting for expenditures and assets is described in further detail in Section 4.

ii. Statements prepared by Trustee and/or Investment Provider.

iii. Documentation of at least quarterly allocations of investments and investment earnings to each obligation.

iv. Documentation for investments made with obligation proceeds such as:
   1. investment contracts (i.e. guaranteed investment contracts),
   2. credit enhancement transactions (i.e. obligation insurance contracts),
   3. financial derivatives (e.g. swaps, caps, and collars), and
   4. bidding of financial products:
      a. Investments acquired with obligation proceeds are purchased at fair market value (e.g. three bid safe harbor rule for open market securities needed in advance refunding escrows).

b. Computations of the arbitrage yield.

c. Computations of yield restriction and rebate amounts including but not limited to:

i. Compliance in meeting the "Temporary Period from Yield Restriction Exception" and limiting the investment of funds after the temporary period expires.

ii. Compliance in meeting the "Rebate Exception."
   1. qualifying for the "Small Issuer Exception,"
   2. qualifying for a "Spending Exception,"
      a. 6-Month Spending Exception
      b. 18-Month Spending Exception

c. 24-Month Spending Exception

3. qualifying for the "Bona Fide Debt Service Fund Exception," and
4. quantifying arbitrage on all funds established in connection with the obligation in lieu of satisfying arbitrage exceptions including reserve funds and debt service funds.

d. Computations of yield restriction and rebate payments.

e. Timely Tax Form 8038-T filing, if applicable.

i. Remit any arbitrage liability associated with the obligations to the IRS at each five-year anniversary date of the obligations, and the date in which the obligations are no longer outstanding (redemption or maturity date), whichever comes sooner, within 60 days of said date.

f. Timely Tax Form 8038-R filing, if applicable.

i. Remit the form after the date in which the obligations are no longer outstanding (redemption or maturity date), whichever comes sooner, within 2 years of said date.

g. Procedures or guidelines for monitoring instances where compliance with applicable yield restriction requirements depends on subsequent reinvestment of obligation proceeds in lower yielding investments (e.g. reinvestment in zero coupon SLGS).

4. Expenditure and Asset Documentation to be Assembled and Retained

a. Documentation of allocations of obligation proceeds to expenditures (e.g. allocation of proceeds to expenditures for the construction, renovation or purchase of facilities owned and used in the performance of exempt purposes).

i. Such allocation will be done not later than the earlier of:

1. eighteen (18) months after the later of the date the expenditures are paid, or the date the projects, if any, that are financed by the obligations are placed in service; or

2. the date sixty (60) days after the earlier of the fifth anniversary of the issue date of the obligations, or the date sixty (60) days after the retirement of the obligations.

b. Documentation of allocations of obligation proceeds to issuance costs.

c. Copies of requisitions, draw schedules, draw requests, invoices, bills, and cancelled checks related to obligation proceed expenditures during the construction period.

d. Copies of all contracts entered into for the construction, renovation or purchase of facilities financed with obligation proceeds.

e. Records of expenditure reimbursements incurred prior to issuing obligations for projects financed with obligation proceeds (declaration of official intent/reimbursement resolutions including all modifications).

f. List of all facilities and equipment financed with obligation proceeds.

g. Depreciation schedules for depreciable property financed with obligation proceeds.

h. Documentation that tracks the purchase and sale of assets financed with obligation proceeds.

i. Documentation of timely payment of principal and interest payments on the obligations.

j. Tracking of all issue proceeds and the transfer of proceeds into the debt service fund as appropriate.

k. Documentation that excess earnings from a Reserve Fund are transferred to the Debt Service Fund on an annual basis. Excess earnings are balances in a Reserve Fund that exceed the Reserve Fund requirement.

5. Miscellaneous Documentation to be Assembled and Retained

a. Ensure that the projects, while the obligations are outstanding, will avoid IRS private activity concerns.

b. The Finance Director shall monitor the use of all obligation-financed facilities in order to:

i. Determine whether private business uses of obligation-financed facilities have exceeded the *de minimus* limits set forth in Section 141(b) of the Code as a result of:

1. sale of the facilities;
2. sale of City capacity rights;
3. leases and subleases of facilities including easements or use arrangements for areas outside the four walls (e.g. hosting of cell phone towers);
4. leasehold improvement contracts, licenses, management contracts in which the City authorizes a third party to operate a facility (e.g. cafeteria);
5. research contracts;
6. preference arrangements in which the City permits a third-party preference (e.g. parking in a public parking lot, joint ventures, limited liability companies or partnership arrangements);
7. output contracts or other contracts for use of utility facilities including contracts with large utility users;
8. development agreements which provide for guaranteed payments or property values from a developer;
9. grants or loans made to private entities including special assessment agreements;
10. naming rights agreements; and
11. any other arrangements that provide special legal entitlements to nongovernmental persons.

ii. Determine whether private security or payments that exceed the *de minimus* limits set forth in Section 141(b) of the Code have been provided by nongovernmental persons with respect to such obligation-financed facilities.

c. The Finance Director shall provide training and educational resources to any City staff that have the primary responsibility for the operation, maintenance, or inspection of obligation-financed facilities with regard to the limitations on the private business use of obligation-financed facilities and as to the limitations on the private security or payments with respect to obligation-financed facilities.

d. The City shall undertake the following with respect to the obligations:

i. An annual review of the books and records maintained by the City with respect to such obligations.

ii. An annual physical inspection of the facilities financed with the proceeds of such obligations, conducted by Finance Director with the assistance of any City staff who have the primary responsibility for the operation, maintenance, or inspection of such obligation-financed facilities.

e. Changes in the project that impact the terms or commitments of the obligation are properly documented and necessary certificates or opinions are on file.

6. Additional Undertakings and Activities that Support Sections 1 through 5 above:

a. The Finance Director will notify the City's bond counsel, trustee, financial advisor and arbitrage provider of any survey or inquiry by the IRS immediately upon receipt. Usually responses to IRS inquiries are due within 21 days of receipt. Such IRS responses require the review of the above-mentioned data and must be in writing. As much time as possible is helpful in preparing the response.

b. The Finance Director will consult with the City's bond counsel, financial advisor and arbitrage provider before engaging in post-issuance credit enhancement transactions (e.g. obligation insurance, letter of credit, or hedging transaction).

c. The Finance Director will monitor all "qualified tax-exempt debt obligations" (often referred to as "bank qualified" obligations) within the first calendar year to determine if the limit is exceeded, and if exceeded, will address accordingly. For obligations issued during years 2009 and 2010 the limit was $30,000,000. During this period, the limit also applied to pooled financings of the governing body and provides a separate $30,000,000 for each 501 (c)(3) conduit borrower. In 2011 and thereafter it is $10,000,000 unless changed by Congress.

d. Identify any post-issuance change to terms of obligations which could be treated as a current refunding of "old" obligations by "new" obligations, often referred to as a "reissuance."

e. The Finance Director will consult with the City's bond counsel prior to any sale, transfer, change in use or change in users of obligation-financed property which may require "remedial action" under applicable Treasury Regulations or resolution pursuant to the VCAP Program.

i. A remedial action has the effect of curing a deliberate action taken by the City which results in satisfaction of the private business test or private loan test. Remedial actions under Section 1.141-12(d)(e) and (f) include the redemption of non-qualified obligations and/or the alternative uses of proceeds or the facility (i.e. to be used for another qualified purpose).

f. The Finance Director will ensure that the appropriate tax form for federal subsidy payments is prepared and filed in a timely fashion for applicable obligations (e.g. direct pay or other tax credit bonds).

7. Continuing Disclosure Obligations

a. Identify personnel at the City to be responsible for compliance with continuing disclosure obligations as defined by the Rule, and any covenants of outstanding obligations, and any policies of the City.

b. The personnel responsible for compliance may have the ability to assign responsibilities, delegate where appropriate or engage a dissemination agent or third-party service providers to perform all or some of the duties described in this section. The City cannot delegate its compliance responsibilities.

c. The City should specify how providers or delegated authorities will be monitored and supervised.

d. The City should identify the documents that set forth the respective requirements being monitored at the time of closing of each obligation.

e. The City should catalog all outstanding Continuing Disclosure Agreements and other reporting requirements and establish consolidated filing requirements.

f. The City should identify the frequency of the actions to be undertaken to ensure compliance, establish a system or filing alerts or reminders to administer the filing and reporting requirements.

g. The Finance Director for compliance must be made aware of any new outstanding debt, changes to obligation or loan covenants, events of acceleration or default that would materially affect investors.

h. The City should review a compliance checklist to verify compliance with CDA and other reporting requirements, at least annually, although it may be advisable to provide more frequent reviews in connection to specific material events.

i. The City should monitor for mandatory material events specifically identified in accordance with the Rule and file required notices within 10 days of occurrence.

i. Principal and interest payment delinquencies.
ii. Non-payment related defaults, if material.
iii. Unscheduled draws on debt service reserves reflecting financial difficulties.
iv. Unscheduled draws on credit enhancements reflecting financial difficulties.
v. Substitution of credit or liquidity providers or their failure to perform.
vi. Adverse tax opinion, IRS notices or material events affecting the tax status of the obligation.
vii. Modifications to rights of security holders, if material.
viii. Obligation calls, if material.
ix. Defeasances.
x. Release, substitution or sale of property securing repayment of the obligations, if material.
xi. Rating Changes.
xii. Bankruptcy, insolvency, receivership, or similar event of the obligated person(s).
xiii. Merger, consolidation, or acquisition of the obligated person, if material.
xiv. Appointment of a successor or additional trustee, or change of name of a trustee, if material.
xv. Incurrence of financial obligation of the City, if material, or agreement to covenants, events of default, remedies, priority rights, or other similar terms of a financial obligation of the City, any of which affect security holders, if material.

xvi. Default, event of acceleration, termination event, modification of terms, or other similar events under the terms of the financial obligation of the City, any of which reflect financial difficulties.

j. In addition to the mandatory material events, the City should review and file any additional or voluntary event notices.

k. The City should maintain a catalog of all outstanding obligations whether publicly offered or privately placed, and the terms and conditions that govern default or acceleration provisions, if any.

l. Any missed filing requirement should be remedied with a failure to file notice as soon as possible once the late filing is identified and the required information is available to file.

m. Sensitive information such as bank accounts and wire information should be redacted from documents prior to posting on EMMA.

n. The City needs to monitor for changes in law and regulations that effect continuing disclosure obligations and review disclosure policies and procedures periodically to ensure compliance and consistency with regulations and market expectations.

8. Compliance with Future Requirements

Take measures to comply with any future requirements issued beyond the date of these Post-Issuance Debt Compliance Procedures which are essential to ensuring compliance with applicable state and federal regulation

Adopted: December 20, 2021

8. DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

A. Purpose

The purpose of the debt policy is to ensure that debt is used wisely and that future financial flexibility remains relatively unconstrained. Debt is an important mechanism to fund capital expenditures. It can reduce long-term costs due to inflation, prevent lost opportunities, and equalize the costs of improvements to present and future constituencies.

Debt management is an integral part of the financial management of the City. Adequate resources must be provided for the repayment of debt, and the level of debt incurred by the City must be effectively controlled to amounts that are manageable and within levels that will maintain or enhance the City's credit rating.

A goal of debt management is to stabilize the overall debt burden and future tax levy requirements to ensure that issued debt is repaid and to prevent default on any municipal debt. A high debt level places a financial burden on taxpayers and can create economic problems for the community.

The debt policies ensure that the City's outstanding debt does not weaken the City's financial structure, provides manageable limits on debt, and allows for the best possible credit rating.

B. Policy

Wise and prudent use of debt provides fiscal and service advantages. Overuse of debt places a burden on the fiscal resources of the City and its taxpayers. The following guidelines provide a framework and limit on debt utilization:

i. Conditions for Issuance

a. The City will confine long-term borrowing to capital improvements, equipment, or projects that have a life of at least five years and cannot be financed from current revenues.

b. Net general obligation debt will not exceed the statutory limit of 3% of the estimated market value of taxable property in the City, as required by M.S. § 475.53.

c. The City shall use a competitive bidding process for the sale of debt unless the use of a negotiated process is warranted due to adverse market conditions, timing requirements, or a unique pledge or debt structure. The City will award competitively issued debt on the true interest cost (TIC) basis.

d. The City should strongly consider market conditions (i.e.,

interest rates, construction market) when planning for the issuance of debt. The City should consider issuing debt, rather than paying cash, when interest rates are lower.

e. Debt should be structured in a manner that distributes costs and benefits appropriately. Intergenerational equity aspects should be considered when financing capital assets. The debt payments should be distributed over the useful life of the asset.

f. Long-term forecasts should support the assumption that the City will be able to repay the debt without causing financial distress.

g. Interfund borrowing for periods of more than one year shall only be undertaken for capital expenditures. A payment schedule for the borrowed amounts shall be established by the City Council. Interest charges for interfund loans utilizing tax increment bonds will be in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, §469.178, Subd 7.

ii. Restrictions on Debt Issuance

a. Where possible, the City will issue revenue (including general obligation backed revenue) or other self-supporting type bonds instead of general obligation bonds.

b. The City will not use long-term debt for current operations.

c. The City should not issue debt with a longer amortization period than the life of the asset being financed.

d. When possible, the City should use pay-as-you-go financing for equipment and other minor capital assets.

iii. Financial Limitations

a. The City will strive to keep the total maturity length of general obligation bonds below 20 years and structure the bonds to allow for retirement of at least 50% of the principal within 2/3 of the term of the bond issue.

b. Bond rating categories shall be used as a means of assessing the City's financial condition. The City will strive to achieve and maintain a ratio of governmental funds debt service to expenditures that will result in an adequate, or better than adequate, debt and contingent liability profile rating from the rating agencies.

c. The City will strive to limit the amount of net direct outstanding debt at or below the range of $900 not to exceed $1,425 per capita.

d. The City will maintain regular communications with bond rating agencies about its financial condition and will follow a policy of full disclosure in every financial report and bond statement. The City will comply with Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) reporting requirements.

e. The City is committed to providing continuing disclosure to certain financial and operating data and material event notices as required by Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Rule 15c2-12. The Finance Department shall be responsible for the preparation of all disclosure documents and releases required under Rule 15c2-12.

f. When feasible, the City will use refunding mechanisms to reduce interest costs and evaluate the use of debt reserves to lower overall annual debt service. Refunding of outstanding debt shall only be considered when present value savings of at least 3.0% of the principal amount of the refunded bonds are produced, according to Minnesota statutes. Savings from refundings will be distributed evenly over the life of the refunded bonds unless special circumstances warrant a different savings structure.

g. Retirement funds will be examined annually to ensure adequate balances and funding progress.

h. The City should maintain the highest credit rating possible.

iv. Professional Service Providers

a. Municipal financial advisors should be selected through a process of evaluating formal proposals every 5-10 years. Selection should be based on, but not limited to, experience with the type, size, and structure of the bonds typically issued, ability to commit sufficient time to accomplish necessary tasks, and lack of potential conflicts of interest.

b. Proposals for bond counsel should be solicited and considered on an occasional or as-needed basis. Consideration should be given to experience with municipal debt, ability to commit sufficient time to accomplish necessary tasks, and lack of potential conflicts of interest.

c. For compliance review, an arbitrage specialist should be retained. The arbitrage specialist may be the City's municipal advisor, or may be solicited for on a periodic basis.

d. The City should strategically maintain good relations with rating agencies and a positive perception in the marketplace.

C. Conduit Debt Policy

The City of Maplewood is granted the power to issue conduit revenue bonds and other conduit revenue obligations under Minnesota Statutes, Section 469.152-469.165, as amended, and Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 462C, as amended. The Maplewood City Council, being aware that such financing may prevent the emergence of blighted land, excessive unemployment and the need for redevelopment financing from the State and Federal governments, has expressed its support for the use of such financing but has reserved the right to approve or reject projects on a case-by-case basis. The following criteria have been developed as a guide for review of applications:

i. Criteria

a. The project is to be compatible with the overall development plans and objectives of the City and neighborhood where the project is located.

b. New businesses locating in Maplewood must show new tax base being generated by the project.

c. Locating in areas of the City that the City wishes to develop, redevelop, or which in any way complements any development plans or policy of the City, will constitute a prime purpose under these guidelines. It is also the City's intent to assist in business expansions or relocations within the City where it can be shown that such would have a substantial, favorable impact on employment, tax base, or both.

d. It is the City's intent to assist new or existing businesses in the acquisition of existing facilities, where such acquisition will maintain the stability of the tax base, employment, or both.

e. The project must not put a burden on existing City services or utilities beyond that which can be reasonably and economically accommodated.

f. The applicant (and/or the lessee) must show sufficient equity in the project. Applicant must provide a copies of all financing agreements for review by the City.

g. The credit rating and method of offering conduit* bonds or notes of the City are important considerations. The City will not entertain applications for such financings unless (i) the debt is rated investment grade by a nationally recognized rating agency or (ii) the debt is sold in a private placement. Debt will be considered sold in a private placement (i) if no advertising or solicitation of the general public occurs, and (ii) if the bonds are initially sold to not more than ten purchasers (not including any underwriter or placement agent as a purchaser) and (iii) the City receives written certification from each initial purchaser (or each underwriter or placement agent based on its reasonable belief) that: (a) such purchaser has such knowledge and experience in financial and business matters that it is capable of evaluating the merits and the risks of the debt, and (b) such purchaser is not purchasing for more than one account or with a view to distributing the debt. In addition, for a private placement either (a) all bonds or notes (except for one bond or note) must remain in minimum denominations of not less than $100,000, with the exception of charter schools which may have minimum denominations of $25,000 or (b) investment letters from not only each initial purchaser, but from any subsequent purchaser must be obtained which contains the above described certifications from the purchasers. Any offering material for a private placement must prominently state in effect that: "THE CITY OF MAPLEWOOD HAS NOT ASSUMED ANY RESPONSIBILITY TO REVIEW THIS OFFERING MATERIAL AND HAS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS. THE CITY HAS NO FINANCIAL OBLIGATION OF ANY NATURE WITH RESPECT TO THE OFFERED BONDS." Finally, to qualify as a private placement the financing documents must require annual financial statements from the benefited private party (or the ultimate provider of credit) to be delivered to each investor (or a trustee).

*The term "conduit" refers to any type of City revenue obligation the proceeds of which are loaned to a private party and for which the City has no financial obligation.

h. Applications for acquisition of or replacement of machinery and equipment will be discouraged unless in conjunction with a totally new business in Maplewood, a physical plant expansion of an existing business, or where it is shown that the equipment acquisition is essential to the continued operation of the business in Maplewood. Also, it is the City's intent to assist where possible in the acquisition of pollution control equipment for any new or existing business being required to meet mandated standards.

i. At the request of a conduit borrower, the City Council may grant host approval, as defined in Treasury Regulations, Section 5f.103-2(c)(3) for conduit bonds proposed to be issued by a conduit issuer, other

than the City or the EDA, with respect to bond-financed facilities located in or to be located in the City. The host approval fee shall be in accordance with the fee schedule in effect at the time the City Council grants host approval.

j. A further permitted use under these guidelines are projects, whether profit or nonprofit, engaged in providing health care services, including hospitals, nursing homes, and related medical facilities, when either of the following findings can be made:

- Number of new jobs is increased.
- The project would provide a facility or service considered desirable or necessary by the community.

The following procedures facilitate the application for financing:

ii. Procedures

a. The applicant shall make an application for financing on forms available from the Finance Department of the City of Maplewood. The completed application is to be returned to the Finance Director, accompanied by the processing fee, whereupon the application will be forwarded to the City Council with a staff recommendation. Specific findings shall be made and recited regarding the criteria as well as satisfaction of public purposes of the applicable statutes.

b. The application cannot be considered by the City until tentative City Code findings and requirements have been made with respect to zoning, building plans, platting, streets and utility services.

c. The applicant is to select qualified financial consultants and/or underwriters, as well as legal counsel, to prepare all necessary documents and materials. The City may rely on the opinion of such experts and the application shall be accompanied by a financial analysis (pro forma income statement, debt service coverage, mortgage terms, etc.) by the underwriter as to the economic feasibility of the project and the underwriter's ability to market the financing. Financial material submitted is to also include most recent fiscal year-end, audited, financial statements of the applicant and/or of any major lessee tenant, if readily available.

d. Further, in the case of the tax exempt mortgage placements, the applicant will be required to furnish the City, before passage of the Final Resolution, a comfort letter (but not necessarily a letter of commitment) from the lending institution, to the affect that said lending institution has reviewed the economic feasibility of the project, including the financial responsibility of the guarantors and find that, in their professional judgment, it is an economically viable project.

e. The applicant shall furnish with the application, a description of the project, plat plan, rendering of proposed building, etc., and a brief description of the applicant company, all in such form as shall be required at the time of application. This data, as necessary, may be furnished to members of the City Council as background information.

f. If an allocation of bonding authority is required under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 474A, as amended, the applicant shall be required to pay any required application fee and provide any required application deposit as specified in Chapter 474A, without regard to whether the application fee or deposit will be refunded.

g. The applicant shall covenant in the applicable conduit bond documents to comply with all applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), and the applicable Treasury Regulations, including, but not limited to: (i) the arbitrage and rebate requirements of Section 148 of the Code; and (ii) the qualified bonds provisions of Sections 141(e), 142, 143, 144, and 145 of the Code. The applicant shall be the party responsible for monitoring the conduit bonds for compliance with such requirements and to remediate nonqualified bonds in accordance with the requirements of the Code and applicable Treasury Regulations. The applicant shall be the party responsible for monitoring compliance with the requirements of Section 148 of the Code.

h. The applicant shall covenant in the applicable conduit bond documents to reimburse the City for all costs paid or incurred by the City (including the fees of attorneys, financial advisors, accountants, and other advisors) as a result of the City's response to or compliance with an audit, inspection, or compliance check (random or otherwise), by the Internal Revenue Service, the Minnesota Department of Revenue, the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor, or any other governmental agency with respect to the conduit bonds or the project financed with the proceeds of the conduit bonds.

The following administrative fees and provisions apply to the application for financing:

iii. Administrative Fees and Provisions

a. The City Council reserves the right to deny any application for financing at any stage of the proceedings prior to adopting the final resolution authorizing issuance of the industrial development financing. The City Council may waive any provision of this Conduit Bonds Policy if the City Council determines that such waiver is in the best interests of the City.

b. The City is to be reimbursed, and held harmless, for and from any out-of-pocket costs related to the actual or proposed issuance of conduit revenue bonds. In addition, a nonrefundable processing fee of $2,500 must be submitted with the application. Upon closing, an administrative fee is due and payable to the City based on the following schedule:

On the first $20,000,000	.50% of par
On portion in excess of $20,000,000	.10% of par

c. In the case of a refinancing, the fee shall be calculated at 50% of the above schedule. The City will be reimbursed for any technical changes to a bond issue previously issued at 25% of the above schedule.

d. Administrative fees collected in connection with the issuance of conduit debt shall be deposited in the EDA Fund. The processing fee shall be deposited in the General Fund.

e. All applications and supporting materials and documents shall remain the property of the City. Note that all such materials may be subject to disclosure and/or public review under applicable provisions of State law.

f. The Finance Department shall, report all conduit debt issues in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and shall report any material events with regard to all conduit debt issued by the City, and still outstanding, to the City Council.

g. The applicant will be responsible for providing the City any required arbitrage reports, continuing disclosure reports, and annual financial statements after the issuance of the debt.

D. Post-Issuance Compliance Policy for Tax-Exempt Governmental Bonds

The City of Maplewood issues tax-exempt governmental bonds to finance capital improvements. As an issuer of tax-exempt governmental bonds, the City is required by the terms of Sections 103 and 141-150 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), and the Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder (the "Treasury Regulations"), to take certain actions subsequent to the issuance of such bonds to ensure the continuing tax-exempt status of such bonds. In addition, Section 6001 of the Code and Section 1.6001-1(a) of the Treasury Regulations, impose record retention requirements on the City with respect to its tax-exempt governmental bonds. This Post- Issuance

Compliance Procedure and Policy for Tax-Exempt Governmental Bonds (the "Policy") has been approved and adopted by the City to ensure that the City complies with its post-issuance compliance obligations under applicable provisions of the Code and Treasury Regulations.

i. **Effective Date and Term**. The effective date of this Policy is the date of approval by the City Council of the City and shall remain in effect until superseded or terminated by action of the City Council of the City. This Policy amends and restates the Post- Issuance Compliance Procedure and Policy for Tax-Exempt Governmental Bonds adopted by the City Council of the City on June 10, 2012.

ii. **Responsible Parties.** The Finance Director of the City shall be the party primarily responsible for ensuring that the City successfully carries out its post-issuance compliance requirements under applicable provisions of the Code and Treasury Regulations. The Finance Director will be assisted by the staff of the Finance Department of the City and by other City staff and officials when appropriate. The Finance Director of the City will also be assisted in carrying out post-issuance compliance requirements by the following organizations:

   a. Bond Counsel (the law firm primarily responsible for providing bond counsel services for the City);

   b. Municipal Advisor (the organization primarily responsible for providing financial advisor services to the City);

   c. Paying Agent (the person, organization, or City officer primarily responsible for providing paying agent services for the City); and

   d. Rebate Analyst (the organization primarily responsible for providing rebate analyst services for the City).

The Finance Director shall be responsible for assigning post-issuance compliance responsibilities to members of the Finance Department, other staff of the City, Bond Counsel, Paying Agent, and Rebate Analyst. The Finance Director shall utilize such other professional service organizations as are necessary to ensure compliance with the post-issuance compliance requirements of the City. The Finance Director shall provide training and educational resources to City staff who are responsible for ensuring compliance with any portion of the post-issuance compliance requirements of this Policy.

iii. **Post-Issuance Compliance Actions.** The Finance Director shall take the following post- issuance compliance actions or shall verify

that the following post-issuance compliance actions have been taken on behalf of the City with respect to each issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds issued by the City:

a. The Finance Director shall prepare a transcript of principal documents (this action will be the primary responsibility of Bond Counsel).

b. The Finance Director shall file with the Internal Revenue Service (the "IRS"), within the time limit imposed by Section 149(e) of the Code and applicable Treasury Regulations, an Information Return for Tax-Exempt Governmental Obligations, Form 8038-G (this action will be the primary responsibility of Bond Counsel).

c. The Finance Director shall prepare an "allocation memorandum" for each issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds in accordance with the provisions of Treasury Regulations, Section 1.148-6(d)(1), that accounts for the allocation of the proceeds of the tax-exempt bonds to expenditures not later than the earlier of:

    - eighteen (18) months after the later of (A) the date the expenditure is paid, or (B) the date the project, if any, that is financed by the tax-exempt bond issue is placed in service; or

    - the date sixty (60) days after the earlier of (A) the fifth anniversary of the issue date of the tax-exempt bond issue, or (B) the date sixty (60) days after the retirement of the tax-exempt bond issue.

Preparation of the allocation memorandum will be the primary responsibility of the Finance Director (in consultation with the Municipal Advisor and Bond Counsel).

d. The Finance Director, in consultation with Bond Counsel, shall identify proceeds of tax-exempt governmental bonds that must be yield-restricted and shall monitor the investments of any yield-restricted funds to ensure that the yield on such investments does not exceed the yield to which such investments are restricted.

e. In consultation with Bond Counsel, the Finance Director shall determine whether the City is subject to the rebate requirements of Section 148(f) of the Code with respect to

each issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds. In consultation with Bond Counsel, the Finance Director shall determine, with respect to each issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds of the City, whether the City is eligible for any of the temporary periods for unrestricted investments and is eligible for any of the spending exceptions to the rebate requirements. The Finance Director shall contact the Rebate Analyst (and, if appropriate, Bond Counsel) prior to the fifth anniversary of the date of issuance of each issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds of the City and each fifth anniversary thereafter to arrange for calculations of the rebate requirements with respect to such tax-exempt governmental bonds. If a rebate payment is required to be paid by the City, the Finance Director shall prepare or cause to be prepared the Arbitrage Rebate, Yield Reduction and Penalty in Lieu of Arbitrage Rebate, Form 8038-T, and submit such Form 8038-T to the IRS with the required rebate payment. If the City is authorized to recover a rebate payment previously paid, the Finance Director shall prepare or cause to be prepared the Request for Recovery of Overpayments Under Arbitrage Rebate Provisions, Form 8038-R, with respect to such rebate recovery, and submit such Form 8038-R to the IRS.

iv. **Procedures for Monitoring, Verification, and Inspections.** The Finance Director shall institute such procedures as the Finance Director shall deem necessary and appropriate to monitor the use of the proceeds of tax-exempt governmental bonds issued by the City, to verify that certain post-issuance compliance actions have been taken by the City, and to provide for the inspection of the facilities financed with the proceeds of such bonds. At a minimum, the Finance Director shall establish the following procedures:

a. The Finance Director shall monitor the use of the proceeds of tax-exempt governmental bonds to: (i) ensure compliance with the expenditure and investment requirements under the temporary period provisions set forth in Treasury Regulations, Section 1.148-2(e); (ii) ensure compliance with the safe harbor restrictions on the acquisition of investments set forth in Treasury Regulations, Section 1.148-5(d); (iii) ensure that the investments of any yield-restricted funds do not exceed the yield to which such investments are restricted; and (iv) determine whether there has been compliance with the spend-down requirements under the spending exceptions to the rebate requirements set forth in Treasury Regulations, Section 1.148-7.

b. The Finance Director shall monitor the use of all bond-financed

facilities in order to: (i) determine whether private business uses of bond-financed facilities have exceeded the *de minimus* limits set forth in Section 141(b) of the Code as a result of leases and subleases, licenses, management contracts, research contracts, naming rights agreements, or other arrangements that provide special legal entitlements to nongovernmental persons; and (ii) determine whether private security or payments that exceed the *de minimus* limits set forth in Section 141(b) of the Code have been provided by nongovernmental persons with respect to such bond-financed facilities. The Finance Director shall provide training and educational resources to any City staff who have the primary responsibility for the operation, maintenance, or inspection of bond-financed facilities with regard to the limitations on the private business use of bond-financed facilities and as to the limitations on the private security or payments with respect to bond-financed facilities.

c. The Finance Director shall undertake the following with respect to each outstanding issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds of the City: (i) an annual review of the books and records maintained by the City with respect to such bonds; and (ii) an annual physical inspection of the facilities financed with the proceeds of such bonds, conducted by the Finance Director with the assistance with any City staff who have the primary responsibility for the operation, maintenance, or inspection of such bond-financed facilities.

v. **Record Retention Requirements.** The Finance Director shall collect and retain the following records with respect to each issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds of the City and with respect to the facilities financed with the proceeds of such bonds: (i) audited financial statements of the City; (ii) appraisals, demand surveys, or feasibility studies with respect to the facilities to be financed with the proceeds of such bonds; (iii) publications, brochures, and newspaper articles related to the bond financing; (iv) trustee or paying agent statements; (v) records of all investments and the gains (or losses) from such investments; (vi) paying agent or trustee statements regarding investments and investment earnings; (vii) reimbursement resolutions and expenditures reimbursed with the proceeds of such bonds; (viii) allocations of proceeds to expenditures (including costs of issuance) and the dates and amounts of such expenditures (including requisitions, draw schedules, draw requests, invoices, bills, and cancelled checks with respect to such expenditures); (ix) contracts entered into for the construction, renovation, or purchase of bond-financed facilities; (x) an asset list or schedule of all bond-financed depreciable property and any depreciation schedules with

respect to such assets or property; (xi) records of the purchases and sales of bond-financed assets; (xii) private business uses of bond-financed facilities that arise subsequent to the date of issue through leases and subleases, licenses, management contracts, research contracts, naming rights agreements, or other arrangements that provide special legal entitlements to nongovernmental persons and copies of any such agreements or instruments; (xiii) arbitrage rebate reports and records of rebate and yield reduction payments; (xiv) resolutions or other actions taken by the governing body subsequent to the date of issue with respect to such bonds; (xv) formal elections authorized by the Code or Treasury Regulations that are taken with respect to such bonds; (xvi) relevant correspondence, including letters, faxes or emails, relating to such bonds; (xvii) documents related to guaranteed investment contracts or certificates of deposit, credit enhancement transactions, and financial derivatives entered into subsequent to the date of issue; (xviii) bidding of financial products for investment securities; (xix) copies of all Form 8038- Ts, Form 8038-Rs, and Form 8038-CPs filed with the IRS and any other forms or documents filed with the IRS; (xx) the transcript prepared with respect to such tax-exempt governmental bonds, including but not limited to (a) official statements, private placement documents, or other offering documents, (b) minutes and resolutions, orders, or ordinances or other similar authorization for the issuance of such bonds, and (c) certification of the issue price of such bonds; and (xxi) documents related to government grants associated with the construction, renovation, or purchase of bond-financed facilities.

The records collected by the Finance Director shall be stored in any format deemed appropriate by the Finance Director and shall be retained for a period equal to the life of the tax-exempt governmental bonds with respect to which the records are collected (which shall include the life of any bonds issued to refund any portion of such tax-exempt governmental bonds or to refund any refunding bonds) plus three (3) years. The Finance Director shall also collect and retain reports of any IRS examination of the City or any of its bond financings.

vi. **Remedies.** In consultation with Bond Counsel, the Finance Director shall become acquainted with the remedial actions (including redemption or defeasance) under Treasury Regulations, Section 1.141-12, to be utilized in the event that private business use of bond-financed facilities exceeds the *de minimus* limits under Section 141(b)(1) of the Code. In consultation with Bond Counsel, the Finance Director shall become acquainted with the Tax Exempt Bonds Voluntary Closing Agreement Program described in Notice 2008-31, 2008-11 I.R.B. 592, to be utilized as a means for an issuer to correct any post-issuance infractions of the Code and Treasury Regulations with respect to outstanding tax-exempt bonds.

vii. **Continuing Disclosure Obligations.** In addition to its post-issuance compliance requirements under applicable provisions of the Code and Treasury Regulations, the City has agreed to provide continuing disclosure, such as annual financial information and material event notices, pursuant to a continuing disclosure certificate or similar document (the "Continuing Disclosure Document") prepared by Bond Counsel and made a part of the transcript with respect to each issue of bonds of the City that is subject to such continuing disclosure requirements. The Continuing Disclosure Documents are executed by the City to assist the underwriters of the City's bonds in meeting their obligations under Securities and Exchange Commission Regulation, 17 C.F.R. Section 240.15c2-12, as in effect and interpreted from time to time ("Rule 15c2-12").The continuing disclosure obligations of the City are governed by the Continuing Disclosure Documents and by the terms of Rule 15c2-12. The Finance Director is primarily responsible for undertaking such continuing disclosure obligations and to monitor compliance with such obligations.

viii. **Other Post-Issuance Actions.** If, in consultation with Bond Counsel, Municipal Advisor, Paying Agent, Rebate Analyst, the City Manager, the City Attorney, or the City Council, the Finance Director determines that any additional action not identified in this Policy must be taken by the Finance Director to ensure the continuing tax-exempt status of any issue of governmental bonds of the City, the Finance Director shall take such action if the Finance Director has the authority to do so. If, after consultation with Bond Counsel, Municipal Advisor, Paying Agent, Rebate Analyst, the City Manager, the City Attorney, or the City Council, the Finance Director and the City Manager determine that this Policy must be amended or supplemented to ensure the continuing tax-exempt status of any issue of governmental bonds of the City, the City Manager shall recommend to the City Council that this Policy be so amended or supplemented.

ix. **Taxable Governmental Bonds.** Most of the provisions of this Policy, other than the provisions of Section 7, are not applicable to governmental bonds the interest on which is includable in gross income for federal income tax purposes. On the other hand, if an issue of taxable governmental bonds is later refunded with the proceeds of an issue of tax-exempt governmental refunding bonds, then the uses of the proceeds of the taxable governmental bonds and the uses of the facilities financed with the proceeds of the taxable governmental bonds will be relevant to the tax-exempt status of the governmental refunding bonds. Therefore, if there is any reasonable possibility that an issue of taxable governmental bonds may be

refunded, in whole or in part, with the proceeds of an issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds then, for purposes of this Policy, the Finance Director shall treat the issue of taxable governmental bonds as if such issue were an issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds and shall carry out and comply with the requirements of this Policy with respect to such taxable governmental bonds. The Finance Director shall seek the advice of Bond Counsel as to whether there is any reasonable possibility of issuing tax-exempt governmental bonds to refund an issue of taxable governmental bonds.

x. **Qualified 501(c)(3) Bonds.** If the City issues bonds to finance a facility to be owned by the City but which may be used, in whole or in substantial part, by a nongovernmental organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a) of the Code as a result of the application of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code (a "501(c)(3) Organization"), the City may elect to issue the bonds as "qualified 501(c)(3) bonds" the interest on which is exempt from federal income taxation under Sections 103 and 145 of the Code and applicable Treasury Regulations. Although such qualified 501(c)(3) bonds are not governmental bonds, at the election of the Finance Director, for purposes of this Policy, the Finance Director shall treat such issue of qualified 501(c)(3) bonds as if such issue were an issue of tax-exempt governmental bonds and shall carry out and comply with the requirements of this Policy with respect to such qualified 501(c)(3) bonds.

EHLERS
PUBLIC FINANCE ADVISORS

May 25, 2021

Robin Roland, Finance Director
City of Cottage Grove, Minnesota
12800 Ravine Parkway
Cottage Grove, MN 55016-3161

RE: Potential Refunding of Existing Bonds

As your Municipal Advisor one of the services we provide is to monitor your outstanding bond issues and alert you to any potential refunding opportunities. An updated status report for your outstanding debt is attached. It includes general information about your existing debt and a brief comment regarding potential savings based on current market conditions. We will continue to monitor your issues on an ongoing basis and will contact you if we identify refunding opportunities that merit consideration.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Ehlers

Shelly Eldridge

Shelly Eldridge
Senior Municipal Advisor/ Vice President

Sean Lentz
Senior Municipal Advisor/ Director

Status Report on Refunding of Existing Bond Issues

Original Bond Amount	Title	Last Maturity	Call Date	Callable Amount	Callable Rates Low	Callable Rates High	Status
$1,405,000	General Obligation Tax Increment Bonds, Series 2004A	02/01/2024	02/01/2017	$820,000	4.500%	4.650%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$7,345,000	General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2013A	02/01/2029	02/01/2022	$3,875,000	3.000%	3.500%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that a current refunding will produce a savings of $284,090, or a present value savings of 6.47%. Still scheduled for Fall current refunding.
$5,700,000	General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2015A	02/01/2031	02/01/2024	$2,810,000	2.500%	3.000%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$4,660,000	General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2016A	02/01/2027	02/01/2024	$1,140,000	2.000%	2.000%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$4,275,000	General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2016B	02/01/2033	02/01/2026	$1,885,000	2.000%	2.100%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$9,155,000	General Obligation Capital Improvement Plan Bonds, Series 2017A	02/01/2038	02/01/2026	$6,090,000	2.500%	3.250%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$7,620,000	General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2018A	02/01/2035	02/01/2026	$4,970,000	3.000%	3.000%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$4,090,000	General Obligation Capital Improvement Plan Bonds, Series 2019A	02/01/2040	02/01/2027	$2,955,000	3.000%	3.375%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$2,845,000	General Obligation Equipment Certificates, Series 2019B	02/01/2029	02/01/2025	$1,240,000	3.000%	3.000%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.
$3,955,000	General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2021A	02/01/2037	02/01/2030	$1,975,000	1.200%	1.650%	As of May 25, 2021, we estimate that this refunding would not generate sufficient savings to be considered.

City Council Action Request

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

3G

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Team Development and Collaboration
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A
Attachments	

City Council Action Request

3H

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Reimagining Recreational Amenities
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A

Attachments

8.1a Local Option Sales Tax Memo.tif	2.35MB
8.1b Glacial Valley Park MP w Pickleball.tif	6.81MB
8.1c Glacial Valley Park Structure - Concept Diagrams - 2021-12-14.tif	7.86MB
8.1d Hamlet Park Plan.tif	15.56MB
8.1e Mississippi Dunes Park.tif	208.35MB
8.1f Oltman Park Master Plan.tif	26.93MB
8.1g Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan 2017.tif	145.05MB
8.1h Other City Sales Tax Info.tif	5.04MB

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

To: Mayor and City Council Members
Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator

From: Robin Roland, Finance Director
Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director

Date: January 13, 2022

Subject: Local Option Sales Tax

Introduction

Looking towards long term funding of Park projects, staff investigated alternative funding sources including the local option sales tax.

Discussion

According to Minnesota House Research in October 2019, over 43 cities currently impose local sales taxes for various purposes. Many of these involve parks, trails, and other improvements to city facilities. A listing of cities, their local sales tax percentages and uses of the revenues is attached.

If Cottage Grove were to desire to pursue the local option sales tax, the process is as follows:

Under Minnesota Statutes section 297A.99, the city must

1. **Adopt a resolution.** The city council must first adopt a resolution proposing the tax. The resolution must include the proposed tax rate, documentation of the "regional significance" of each project to be funded, the amount to be raised with the tax and the estimated length of time the tax will be needed.
2. **Submit resolution to state tax committees.** The city is required to submit the adopted resolution and documentation on regional significance to the chairs and ranking minority members of the House and Senate Tax committees by January 31 of the year that it is seeking the special law.
3. **Get legislative authorization.** The city must secure the passage of a special law authorizing the enactment of the local sales tax. The city would typically work with its local legislators to introduce special legislation.
4. **Adopt a resolution.** After approval, the city must adopt a resolution accepting the new law. The city must also file the resolution and a local approval certificate (https://www.sos.state.mn.us/media/1998/certificate_of_approval_of_special_law.pdf?inline=true) with the office of the Secretary of State before the next legislative biennium begins.
5. **Hold a referendum.** The city must conduct a referendum during a general election within two years of receiving legislative authority for the local sales tax. The referendum must include separate questions for each project, and only the ballot questions approved by voters may be funded by the sales tax.
6. **Pass an ordinance.** The city council must pass an ordinance imposing the tax. It must also notify the commissioner of Revenue at least 90 days before the first day of the calendar quarter that the tax will be imposed.

We should note that in 2019 when the above process was adopted the Legislature placed emphasis on the "regional significance" of any project(s) funded by the proposed local sales tax.

As is clear from the list of cities who have imposed local sales taxes, funding is primarily for capital costs and projects need to be specifically identified.

In Cottage Grove, long term funding for new parks and ongoing park improvements is proving challenging using just Park Dedication Fees and cell phone tower leasing revenues. Under a local option sales tax scenario, proposed parks such as Glacial Valley and the Mississippi Landing park along the Mississippi River could be packaged together as a "project" with "regional significance".

A potential timeline for imposition of a local sales tax in Cottage Grove could be:

- Adoption of a resolution proposing the tax and submission of same to the House and Senate Tax Committees by January 31, 2022
- Introduction of special legislation by local legislators during session 2022
- Approval by legislature
- Adopt resolution accepting new law – Summer 2022
- Hold referendum Fall 2022 (or within two years of legislative approval)
- Pass an ordinance imposing the tax after a successful referendum

If imposed, the local sales tax applies to the same tax base with the same exemptions as the state sales tax and the state handles the collection administration and enforcement of the program. The net local tax revenue is paid to the city on a quarterly basis. Funding could be used for bond payments or operating expenses.

In December 2020, Jason Aarsvold of Ehlers & Associates, estimated that a local option sales tax in Cottage Grove might produce annual revenue of between $578,259 and $1,156,517 (at 0.25% and 0.50% respectively) based on projected annual taxable retail sales of $231,300,000 in 2021. Notably, expected retail and commercial/industrial growth such as the Northpoint development would have a positive impact on these projections.

Minnesota Legislature requires a detailed description of up to five capital projects. A capital project includes:

1. A single building or structure, including associated infrastructure needed to safely access or use the building or structure.
2. Improvements within a single park or named recreation area
3. A contiguous trail

Staff has compiled a list of planned projects within the CIP below that would meet the stated criteria. This list is only meant to guide discussion and is certainly not limiting to any other project ideas or consideration from Council.

1. Glacial Valley Park Development - $6M – Includes larger building and field lights (Attachment B and C)
2. Hamlet Park Completion - $6.5M – Includes last two ballfields, field lighting, final parking lot, concrete skate park and splash pad. (Attachment D)
3. Mississippi Dunes Park - $7M – Includes all features of master plan (Attachment E)

4. Oltman Middle School Athletic Complex - $2M includes all features in master plan as well as field lighting. (Attachment F)
5. Central Greenway Regional Trail – Work with Washington County to expedite master planned recreational trail connection between Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and Lake Elmo. This trail could also be extended to Point Douglas Regional Trail/Hastings if master planning is in place at that time (no current master plan for this portion). Costs not known at this time given the potential partnerships. (Attachment G)

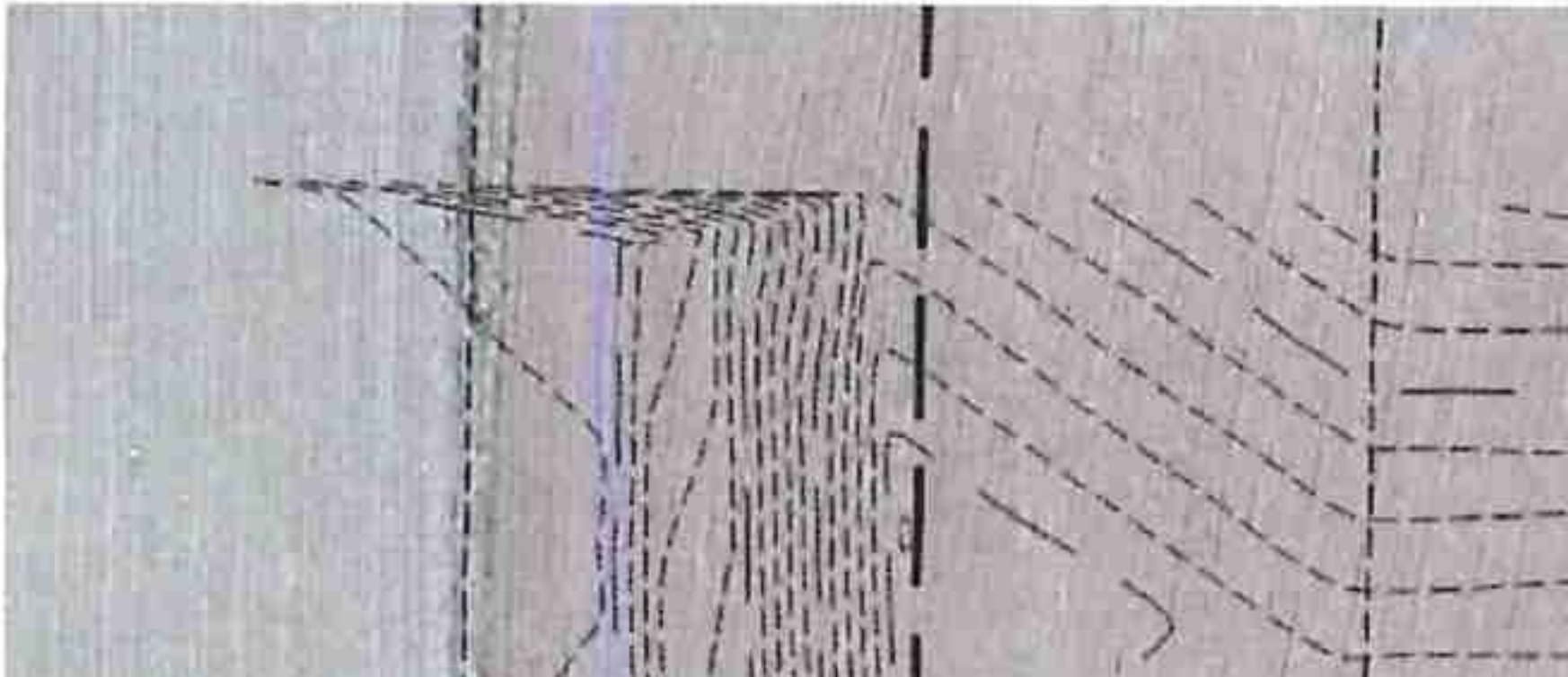
Additionally, there are many projects that staff, Council, Commissioners, user groups or citizens have requested over the years that have merit but have not been funded due to their large capital costs. Some examples include:

1. Full-synthetic soccer/football turf field with lights and grandstand at Kingston Park (or other) to extend playing seasons and draw major events - $2M
2. Baseball grandstand at one of the large Hamlet Park fields to draw major events and start a townball baseball program - $1M
3. Large Arboretum/Garden to draw visitors to the community - $2M
4. Oakwood Park (or other location) large amphitheater - $1M
5. Outdoor Park Ice Rink with full boards, concrete surface and shelter to extend skating season and offer alternative use in off-season such as trade shows, farmers markets, roller hockey, etc. - $3M
6. Sports Training Facility – partnership with CGAA to offer indoor and year-round training opportunities. Space could be leased out a program provider. - $2M
7. Nature Center for nature-based educational, program and events - $10M

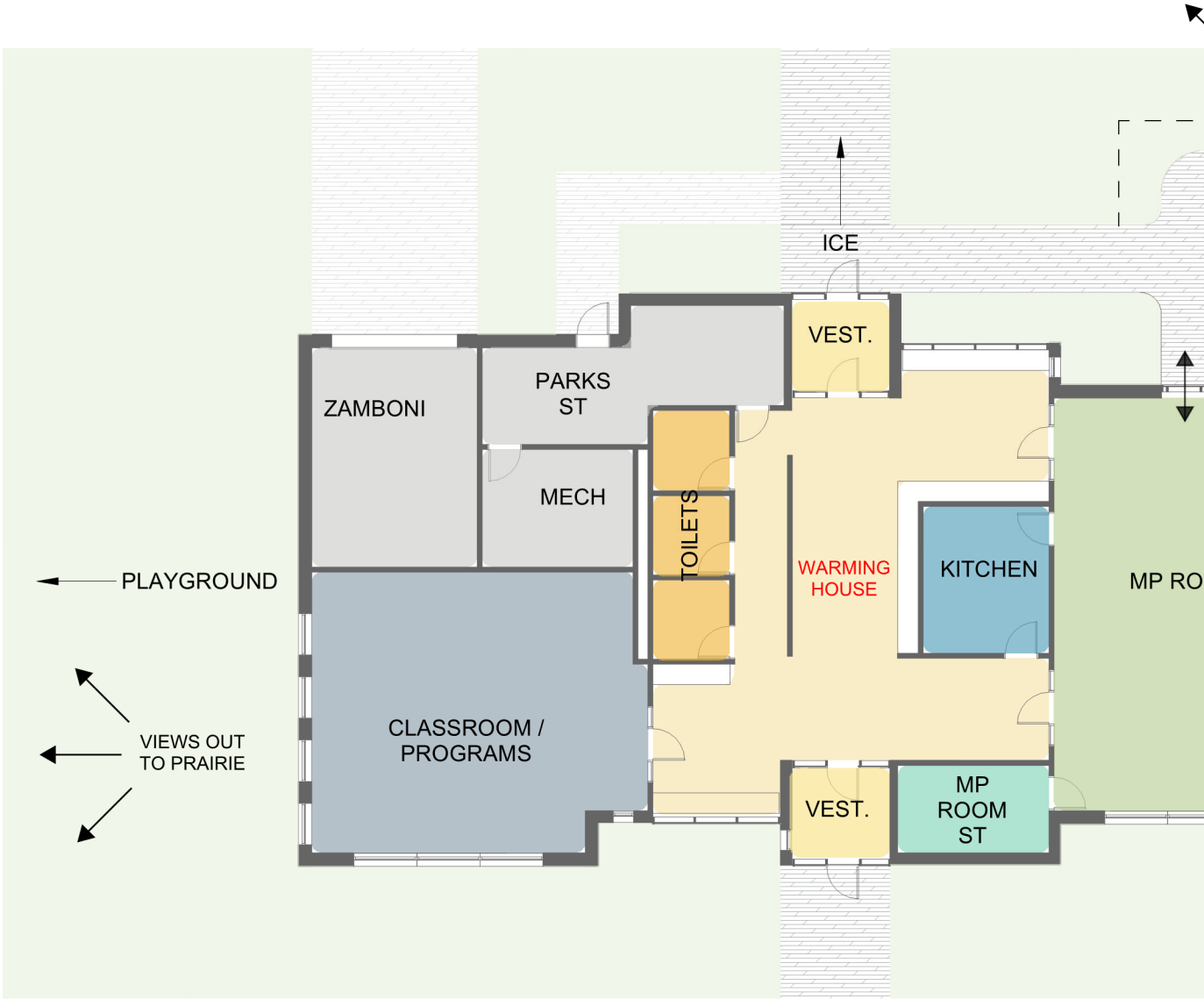
Staff is ready to discuss this information as part of the Reimagining Recreational Amenities agenda item.

Attachments

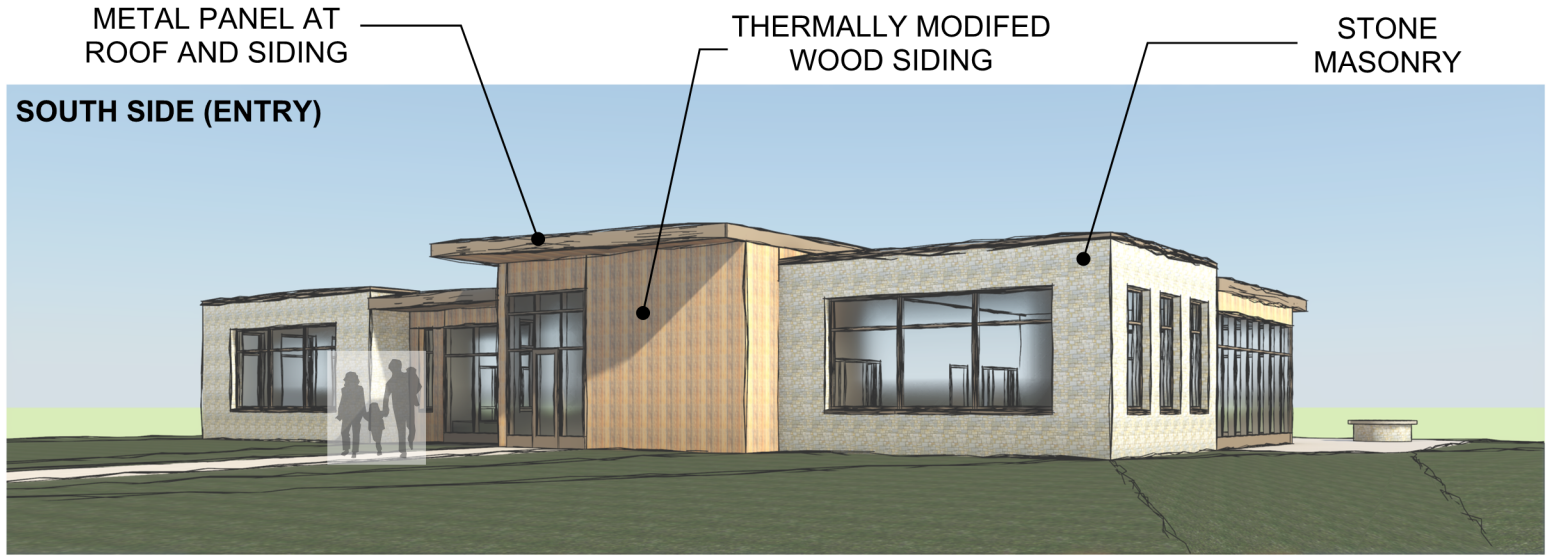
Glacial Valley Park Master Plan
Glacial Valley Park Concept Diagram
Hamlet Park Plan
Mississippi Dunes Park Master Plan
Oltman Park Master Plan
Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan
Other city Sales Tax Info



PLAN CONCEPTS



MATERIAL CONCEPTS



SITE CONTEXT

SITE INVENTORY

PROJECT STATEMENT

- Capitalize on a unique opportunity to provide additional **access to the Mississippi River** and Water Trails Network.
- Reserve **valuable river front** area as part of the redevelopment of the site to single family and medium-density housing.
- Provide programming and design to ensure enough space is reserved for useful, **high-quality recreation space and river access** where housing and open space benefit each other.
- Coordinate and collaborate with **adjacent land owners** including the SNA and DNR.

OPPORTUNITIES + CONSIDERATIONS

OVERALL SITE PLAN

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

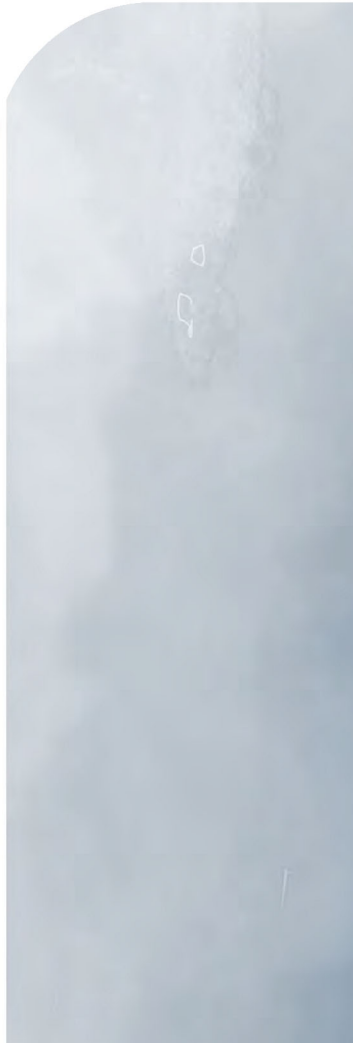
Residential Development
- *72 Acres Single Family Housing - 232 Lots*
- *18 Acres Medium Density Housing*

Residential Development Property Expansion
- 14.2 Acres

Medium Density Housing

SNA Expansion
- 12.3 Acres

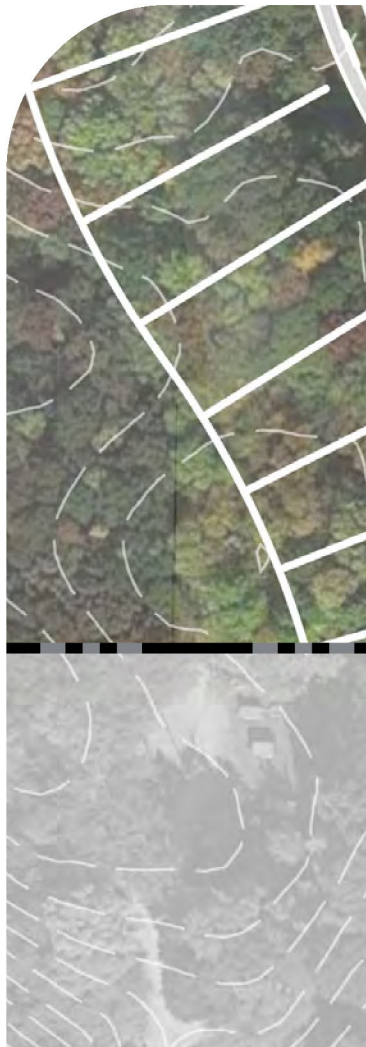
Riverfront Park
- 33.2 Acres



ENLARGEMENT PLAN

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. Wayfinding / Public Art
2. Four Season Building (4,000 SF)
3. Nature-Based Playground (6,000 SF)
4. Open Lawn Area
5. Terrace / Patio
6. Parking Lot (40 Stalls)
7. Future Parking Expansion



RIVERFRONT PARK SECTION ELEVATIO

River Access

Shoreline
Restoration

Riverfront
Recreation

RIVERFRONT PARK AMENITIES

Parking Lot
(96 Stalls)
Parking Lot
Light (typ.)
Goodview Ave S
Entry Monument
Oakridge Dr
120 FT x 10 FT
Backstop Net (typ.)
Geneva Ave S
120 YD x 60 YD
Lacrosse Field (typ.)
Future Field
Lighting (typ.)

CENTRAL GREENWAY
Regional Trail Master Plan

South Segment: Interstate 94 to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park

September 6, 2017
Draft

Washington County

Central Greenway Regional Trail

South Segment: Interstate 94 to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park

Master Plan

Washington County, MN

Draft, September 6, 2017

Prepared for:

Washington County

Living Healthy in Washington County

Prepared by:

SRF Consulting Group, Inc. | Engineers Planners Designers

Acknowledgments

The Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan has been a team effort led by a dedicated group consisting of Washington County staff, along with local city and agency staff.

Project Steering Committee

» Connor Schaefer, Washington County

» John Elholm, Washington County

» Peter Mott, Washington County

» Ann Pung-Terwedo, Washington County

» Patricia Galligher, Washington County

» Bob Klatt, City of Woodbury

» Zac Dockter, City of Cottage Grove

» Matt Moore, South Washington Watershed District

» John Loomis, South Washington Watershed District

» Andy Schilling, South Washington Watershed District

Consulting Team

» SRF Consulting Group, Inc.

Executive Summary

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will enhance the region's multi-modal transportation and recreation system by providing a safe and accessible trail connection between three of the region's premier regional park facilities, Big Marine Park Reserve, Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The Central Greenway Regional Trail will provide direct connections for people living in the suburban communities of Lake Elmo, Cottage Grove and Woodbury to vital employment, retail, and recreational sites in the east metropolitan area – providing safety, economic development, mobility, and environmental benefits.

Trail Location

This trail master plan will cover segments of existing and proposed trail between I-94 and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The 4.0 mile trail segment between I-94 and County Road 18/Bailey Road is developed. This plan includes designating these segments as a regional trail. This plan also proposes developing 5.65 miles of trail that will connect County Road 18/Bailey to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. A majority of the trail distance exist on both the east and west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue.

Natural Resource Description

The Central Greenway Regional Trail corridor is located in a suburban edge area with connections to local and regional trails and parks in both the City of Woodbury and the City of Cottage Grove. The trail corridor is mostly flat. The Central Greenway Regional Trail provides access high quality nature resources in the Cottage Grove Regional Park. The park's terrain includes hardwood and dry oak forest, oak savanna, and prairie.

The Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) identifies the majority of the Central Greenway Regional Trail route as two main land covers. North of Bailey Road the land cover is predominantly impervious. South of Bailey Road the land cover is predominantly agricultural land, except southwest of 70th Street S., which the MLCCS identifies as impervious. There are several locations adjacent to the corridor that the MLCCS identifies as forest and short grasses, including Eagle Valley Golf Course and Prestwick Golf Club.

Development Concept

A fully developed Central Greenway Regional Trail will act as a central arterial route. This is an important link in Washington County's trail network and will connect to many of region's amenities. When fully developed, the Central Greenway Regional Trail will provide residents of Washington County with direct access to a regional trail that connects three premier regional park facilities: Big Marine Park Reserve, Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. In addition, the regional trail will provide a separated, off-road facility for recreation and transportation purposes that will connect with adjacent local trails and other recreation amenities, such as Eagle Valley Golf Course and a future city park along the west side of Keats Avenue in Cottage Grove.

Central Greenway Regional Trail Segments				
Segment	From	To	Along	Length
A	I-94	Valley Creek Road	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	2.0 Miles
B	Valley Creek Road	Bailey Road	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	2.0 Miles
C	Bailey Road	Crossroads Church	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.85 Miles
D1	Crossroads Church	Military Road	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.0 Mile
D2	Crossroads Church	Military Road	Off-Road Alignment West of Crossroads Church	1.6 Miles
E	Military Road	85th Street	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.6 Miles
F	85th Street	Park Entrance	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.2 Miles

Figure I: Central Greenway Regional Trail Proposed Alignment

Trail Segments

The section of the Central Greenway Regional Trail covered in this master plan has been divided into six segments (Figure 15) that are composed of developed and undeveloped trail. The trail segments generally follow the County Road 19/Keats Avenue alignment but there are two exceptions. The first is in Lake View Knolls Park where the trail follows existing park trails south until Valley Creek Road. The second location is west of Crossroads Church, where an alternate alignment has been identified that would extend the trail off-road for a distance of 1.6 miles, connecting at Military Road with the proposed trail corridor as it extends south along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. Washington County will determine which alignment is best suited for trail development at a future date.

Implementation

It is anticipated that the regional trail will be implemented in stages, with the construction of various stages driven by available funding and local factors, such as timing of adjacent roadway improvements, and public desire to expand the regional trail system. Until the corridor is fully developed, gaps in the regional trail will exist. However, the ultimate trail geometry will consist of a 10-foot-wide (minimum) paved surface, separate from any adjacent roadway, so that trail users will not share the roadway with motorized vehicles.

Development Costs

Regional trail development includes the cost to prepare the site; reconfigure roadways as required; modify drainage patterns where necessary; pave the trail; and install signage, striping, and landscaping. In total, the estimated development cost for the Central Greenway Regional Trail is $7,901,000. The cost for development from I-94 to Bailey Road, including rest stops, signage and pedestrian crossing upgrades is estimated to be $1,299,000, including contingencies. Improvements for the existing segment of trail from Bailey Road to the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park entrance is estimated to cost $6,602,000, including contingencies. The total cost for acquisitions within the proposed corridor is $470,500.

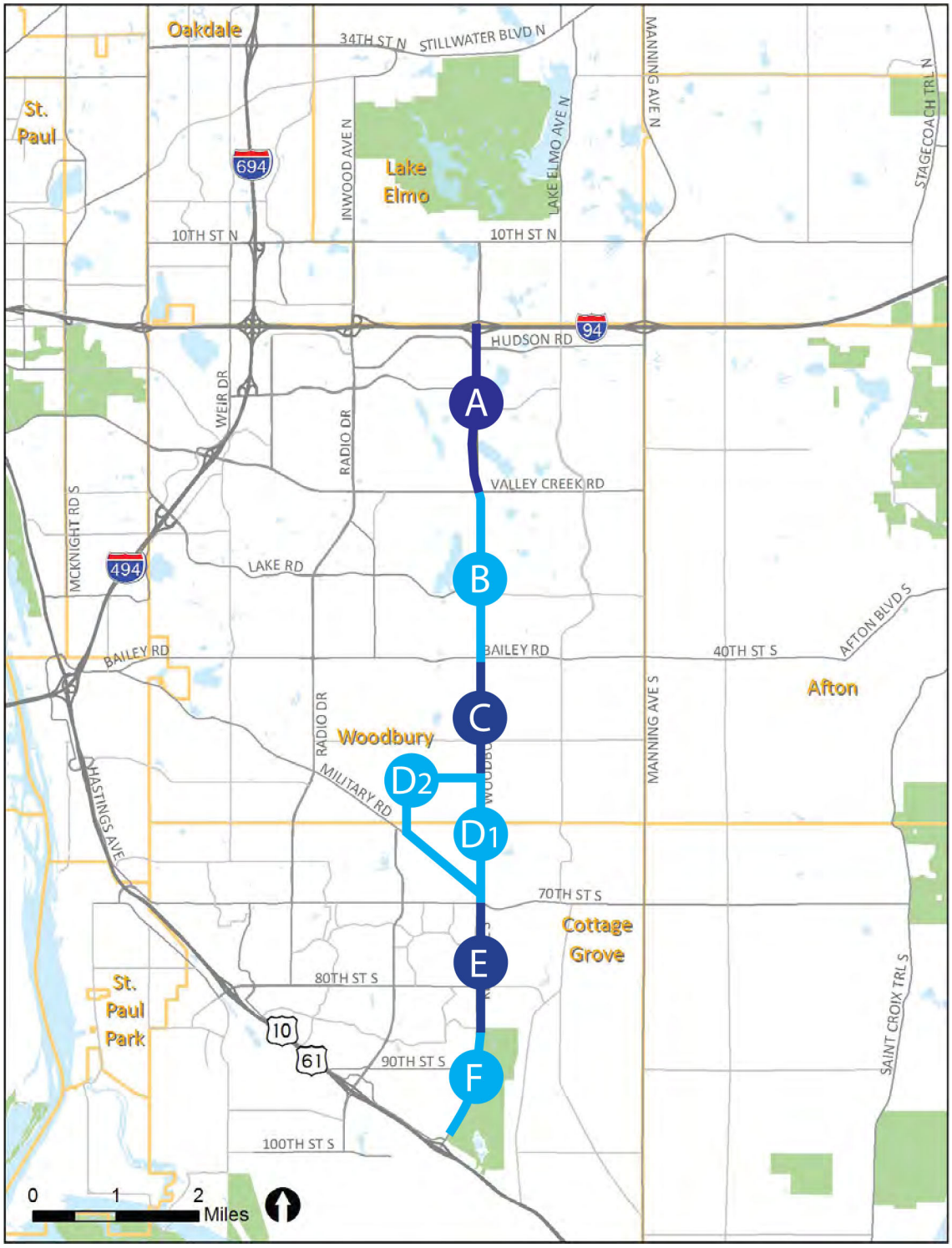


Figure II: Central Greenway Regional Trail Segment Map.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary VII

Introduction. 1

Section I: Boundaries & Acquisitions 3

Section II: Natural Resources 9

Section III: Demand Forecast 11

Section IV: Development Concept. 15

Section V: Conflicts and Coordination with Adjacent Public Services 39

Section VI: Operations & Maintenance 41

Section VII: Public Engagement and Participation 43

Section VIII: Public Awareness 51

Section IX: Accessibility. 53

References. 54

Appendix A: Detailed Cost Estimate. 55

Appendix B: Rare Species List. 57

Appendix C: Local Trail Maps 59

Appendix D: Resolutions of Support 61

Figures

Figure 1: Central Greenway Regional Trail Location 4

Figure 2: Land Acquisition and Acreage Summary. 6

Figure 3: Land Acquisition Map. 7

Figure 4: MLCCS Map 10

Figure 5: Trail Primary Service Area Map 12

Figure 6: Household Description. 12

Figure 7: Age Distribution 12

Figure 8: Race. 12

Figure 9: Regional Population Forecast. 13

Figure 10: Population Growth Comparisons. 13

Figure 11: Typical Trail Cross-Section 16

Figure 12: Wayfinding Signage Locations 18

Figure 13: Wayfinding Signage Location Map. 19

Figure 14: Existing Eight-Foot Wide Trail Segments 20

Figure 15: Central Greenway Regional Trail Segment Map. 21

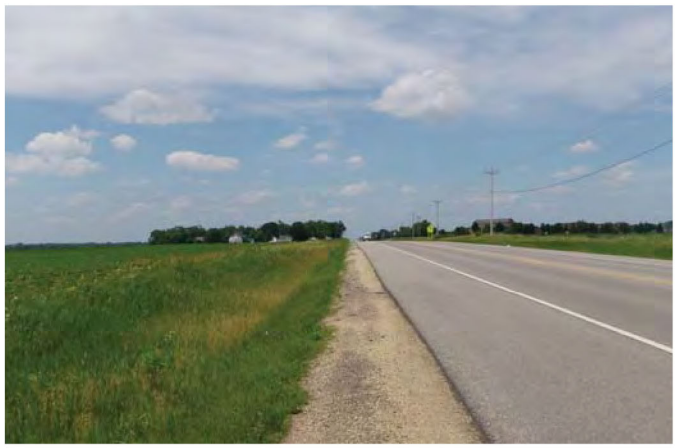
Figure 16: Trail Corridor Maps. 27

Figure 17: Summary of public comments and responses 49

Introduction

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will enhance the region's multi-modal transportation and recreation system by providing a safe and accessible trail connection between three of the region's premier regional park facilities, Big Marine Park Reserve, Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The Central Greenway Regional Trail will provide direct connections for people living in the suburban communities of Lake Elmo, Cottage Grove and Woodbury to vital employment, retail, and recreational sites in the east metropolitan area – providing safety, economic development, mobility, and environmental benefits.

When completed, the trail route will measure approximately 25 miles from Big Marine Park Reserve at the north end of the corridor to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park at the south end of the corridor. Opportunities for local trail connections will exist along the proposed trail route, and there will be connections to other local attractions including community parks and golf courses.



The Central Greenway Regional Trail will extend south along County Road 19/ Keats Avenue through the Cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove.

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will connect with trails in Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

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Section I: Boundaries & Acquisitions

Location and Contextual Relationship

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will extend from Big Marine Park Reserve in May Township south to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park in the City of Cottage Grove. The trail will be a Regional Linking Trail, as defined by the Metropolitan Council. Linking trails are intended to provide connections between regional parks or park reserves. The Central Greenway Regional Trail will provide a connection between Big Marine Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, generally along the County Road 19/Keats Avenue corridor. County Road 19/Keats Avenue is also referred to as Woodbury Drive, Keats Avenue North, Chemolite Road South and Innovation Road. For this master plan, the roadway will be referred to as County Road 19/Keats Avenue.

This trail master plan will cover the two segments of existing and proposed trail between I-94 and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The 4.0 mile trail segment between I-94 and County Road 18/Bailey Road is developed, and for a majority of this distance, trails exist on both the east and west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. One purpose of this master plan is to identify which existing trail segments will become part of the Central Greenway Regional Trail, and which segments will remain local trails.

South of County Road 18/Bailey Road, there are only small segments of existing trail, interspersed along both sides of County Road 19/Keats Avenue, and in varying conditions. The purpose of the master plan for this 5.65 mile segment of trail is to identify the best location for the trail to connect the existing trails north of County Road 18/Bailey Road to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

The Cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove have plans for extensive local trail systems. Woodbury's local trail system is more fully developed than Cottage Grove's system, due, in part, to the level of development within the cities, in this part of Washington County. As development in Cottage Grove expands to the south, the local trail system will expand accordingly.

In addition to the local trail systems, South Washington Watershed District owns several parcels of property along the County Road 19/Keats Avenue corridor, which may play an important role in providing locations for local trails to connect between existing and future neighborhoods and connections to the Central Greenway Regional Trail.

Acquisition Status

The Central Greenway Regional Trail consists of developed and undeveloped segments in the corridor between Interstate 94 and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. Existing local trails between Interstate 94 and Bailey Road will be identified as segments of the regional trail. No land acquisitions are needed for this segment of trail.

The Central Greenway Regional Trail south of County Road 18/Bailey Road is mostly undeveloped. As a general guideline, Washington County Parks will attempt to work within the established right-of-way along County Road 19/Keats Avenue. Washington County will coordinate with the local municipalities and other potentially affected agencies,

Figure 1: Central Greenway Regional Trail Location

including MnDOT, as needed. The proposed trail alignments along County Road 19/Keats Avenue south of Bailey Road have been identified with the understanding that future roadway improvements, such as widening the road to four lanes, would require additional right-of-way. If, in the future, the County expands the roadway and additional land is acquired, it is assumed that the proposed roadway plans will include trail in the design. As such, additional right-of-way acquisitions, if needed for incorporating the regional trail adjacent to a future county road widening project, was not studied as part the this master plan.

In the event Washington County does not expand County Road 19/Keats Avenue or trail development precedes roadway improvements, additional right-of-way will be required to develop the proposed trail. The amount of right-of-way required depends on the existing conditions. There are three locations identified in this master plan where additional right-of-way may be required to develop or improve the proposed regional trail. These segments and the right-of-way needed are identified in more detail below and in Figure 3.

Acquisition Area A

Segment C is the proposed trail segment that will extend the regional trail along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue from Bailey Road to Crossroad Church. This plan calls for an underpass located north of Dale Road and south of Bailey Road (see Figure 16). 0.25 acres of additional right-of-way is needed to accommodate the underpass.

Acquisition Area B

Segment D2 is the alternate alignment that would extend the trail west from County Road 19/Keats Avenue north of Crossroads Church south to Military Road on land that is owned by the City of Woodbury, South Washington Watershed District and is presently in agricultural use. One parcel is owned by a private corporation. This segment is approximately 1.75 miles long and would require a corridor twenty feet wide to accommodate a new trail with clear zones and room for drainage and grading modifications. The total estimated acquisition needed for this segment is 4.25 acres.

Acquisition Area C

There is an existing trail between 80th Street and 85th Street on the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue that is eight feet wide. The trail is adequate on a short-term basis, until a permanent trail on the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue can be developed. This segment is approximately 0.50 miles long and to develop a trail along the west side of the County Road, an additional ten feet of right-of-way would be needed to accommodate a new trail with clear zones and room for drainage and grading modifications. The total estimated acquisition needed for this segment is 0.60 acres.

Acquisition Area D

Segment F is the proposed trail segment that will extend the regional trail along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue between 85th Street South and the proposed new entrance to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. There are nine parcels along this proposed segment of trail that may be impacted. Land use includes five single-family lots, a church and agricultural fields. This segment is approximately 0.85 miles long and would require an additional twenty feet of right-of-way to accommodate a new trail with clear zones and room for drainage and grading modifications. The total estimated acquisition needed for this segment is 2.0 acres.

Boundaries & Acquisition Costs

The Central Greenway Regional Trail corridor is planned for development within the County Road 19/Keats Avenue right-of-way, with an alternate alignment that may extend west into Woodbury and Cottage Grove. Several segments of the proposed regional trail exist and need little or no improvement. Three segments may need additional right-of-way for development. These segments are described in Section I: Boundaries & Acquisitions. The anticipated cost to acquire the necessary right-of-way for these segments is approximately $470,500, as shown in Figure 16. Development of trail underpasses may require additional right-of-way, which will depend on the final alignment. Determination of the final alignment of potential underpasses will require coordination with other Washington County agencies, adjacent communities, MnDOT and the South Washington Watershed District.

It is estimated that the underpass located south of 85th Street will require additional right-of-way. The right-of-way needed is included in the 2.0 acres acquisition measurement indicated for the Acquistion Area D in Figure 2.

An additional 0.25 acres of right-of-way is needed for the underpass north of Dale Road. This includes widening the ROW an extra 15 feet, both on the west and east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue for a short segment indicated on Figure 3. The estimated cost for this acquisition is indicated in Figure 2.

Willing Seller Policy

The regional trail acquisition process is typically a "willing-seller" approach. This means parcel acquisition typically occurs when a property owner is willing and ready to sell, and several acquisition alternatives are often evaluated to best meet the needs of the property owner and the implementing agency. In addition, it is also common for an implementing agency to closely coordinate with local and regional agencies to partner on other opportunities that may assist in securing the required trail right-of-way. In turn, it is difficult to determine when acquisition will occur and when the trail construction will begin. Acquisition alternatives may include the following:

- Route the regional trail to use portions of the property with marginal development potential. This could include land adjacent to wetland or flood fringes.
- Acquire regional trail easements for the trail route through owner/developer negotiations that may include redevelopment incentives.
- Work with the city and owner/developer to secure park dedication lands for the regional trail in advance of the actual development as applicable.
- Coordinate with city initiatives that may result in the acquisition of the entire property/parcel, with the intent to resell the property subject to easements for the regional trail.
- Acquire the development rights to the property. Development areas would then be negotiated with the developer.
- Accept donations for portions of the property for the regional trail corridor.
- Acquire a portion of the property through purchase.

Future Acquisition Summary	Acres	Cost*
Acquisition Area A	0.25	$20,000
Acquisition Area B	4.25	$164,000
Acquisition Area C	0.6	$11,500
Acquisition Area D	2.0	$275,000
Total	7.1 (approx.)	$470,500
* Based on 2017 tax assessed value of adjacent property.		

Figure 2: Land Acquisition and Acreage Summary

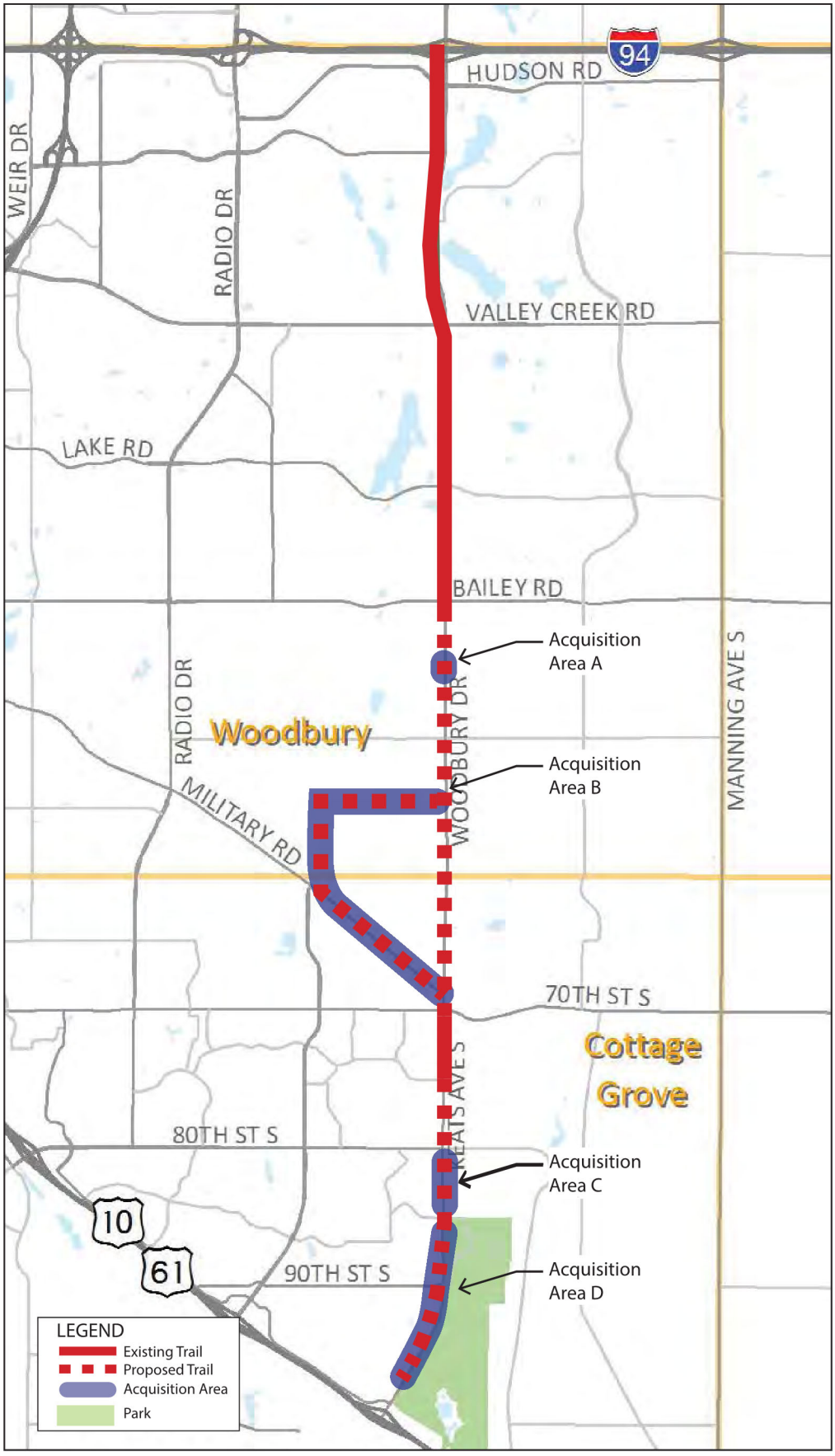

Figure 3: Land Acquisition Map

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Section II: Natural Resources

The Central Greenway Regional Trail corridor is located in a suburban edge area with connections to local and regional trails and parks in both the City of Woodbury and the City of Cottage Grove. The trail corridor is mostly flat.

The Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) identifies the majority of the Central Greenway Regional Trail route as two main land covers. North of Bailey Road the land cover is predominantly impervious. South of Bailey Road the land cover is predominantly agricultural land, except southwest of 70th Street S., which the MLCCS identifies as impervious. There are several locations adjacent to the corridor that the MLCCS identifies as forest and short grasses, including Eagle Valley Golf Course and Prestwick Golf Club.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has documented several rare species and high-quality plant communities near the Central Greenway Regional Trail corridor. A one-mile buffer surrounding the project limits was evaluated for the presence of rare plants, animals, native plant communities, and other rare features using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in conjunction with the MnDNR's Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) (Copyright 2014 State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources). The Natural Heritage data is provided by the Division of Ecological Resources, Minnesota DNR, and was current as of December 2014 (license agreement 625). These data are not based on an exhaustive inventory of the state. The lack of data for any geographic area shall not be construed to mean that no significant features are present.

All documented observances are not directly adjacent to the regional trail and are not anticipated to be impacted by the regional trail. There were seven species identified within three-mile of the Central Greenway Regional Trail. A complete list of species is provided in Appendix B.

No specialized maintenance or construction is proposed for the regional trail corridor to manage any wildlife adapted to urbanized conditions. The Central Greenway Regional Trail provides access high quality natural resources in the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The park's terrain includes hardwood and dry oak forest, oak savanna, and prairie.

Native Plantings & Pollinator Habitats

Washington County is committed to providing healthy habitat for wildlife. This includes pollinators, such as bees, birds, bats, and other insects, who play a crucial role in flowering plant reproduction and in the production of most fruits and vegetables. Providing habitat for pollinators has a number of benefits:

- Native flowers and the wildlife they attract will add visual interest to the corridor.
- Habitat corridors provide the connectivity of habitats that are important for species migration, dispersal, and mixing.
- Prairie plants help infiltrate water, one acre of established prairie can absorb 9" of rainfall per hour before runoff occurs - capturing stormwater pollutants and increasing groundwater recharge.
- Cost savings from a reduction in mowing area and frequency.
- Reduced noise and air pollution.
- Increases food production for neighborhood gardens and farms.
- Habitat offers opportunities for people to connect to the land via education, volunteering and community involvement.

In the development of the Central Greenway Regional Trail, the County will consider planting pollinator-friendly vegetation along the trail buffer, outside a 2-foot mowed shoulder. The vegetation will be planted where appropriate, as to match the aesthetic of the adjacent landscape. Specific locations will be determined during the design and development phase. In particular, the portion of the trail south of Bailey Road will be considered because it is surrounded by undeveloped or rural land and most of the trail segments are yet to be built. Diverse seed mixes will be comprised of native grasses and flowers, as recommended by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Field Guide to the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province Native Plant Communities.

Where pollinator-friendly vegetation is planted, Washington County will coordinate the necessary maintenance. This will include annual mowing during the first one to two years of establishment to provide sunlight and to decrease competition for seedlings. Once established, the following maintenance activities will be used; controlled burns, haying and mowing, and noxious weed control on an as-needed basis, based on yearly staff assessments.

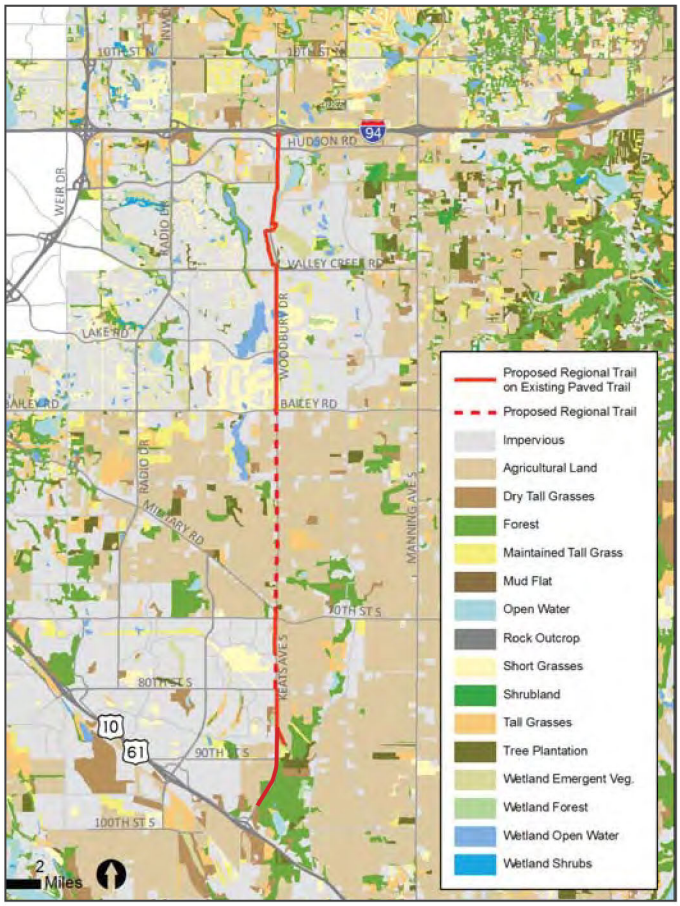


Figure 4: MLCCS Map

Section III: Demand Forecast

Demographic Overview

In general, recreation use trends are affected by demographic trends. By analyzing statewide and regional data, Washington County can begin to assess how the Central Greenway Regional Trail will function within the larger trail network.

Statewide and Regional Trends

The 2014-2018 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), published by the Minnesota DNR, gives outdoor recreation decision-makers and managers a focused set of priorities and suggested actions to guide them as they make decisions about outdoor recreation. The SCORP outlines outdoor recreation trends, challenges, and issues, including protecting existing natural resources, sustaining existing facilities, promoting healthy lifestyles, connecting people with nature, and an increasing demand for a diverse range of recreation opportunities based upon population changes.

The Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan notes that, according to SCORP, several studies show that involvement in nature-based outdoor recreation among young adults and their children had decreased since the 1990s. SCORP also notes that location plays an important role because many users of the regional trail system live within three miles of the park or trail that they utilize. Regional trails play an important role because they provide healthful forms of exercise for people of all age groups that can be carried out by families, groups, or individuals.

According to SCORP, Minnesota's growth rate has increased since 2000, but at a slower rate than in the 1990s. Although population growth in the state has slowed, the geographic pattern of growth remained largely the same with the high growth areas centered on the Twin Cities metropolitan area. This new growth will fuel demands for near-home recreation opportunities in these areas. The Metropolitan Council's Thrive 2040 MSP forecasted growth rate for the Central Greenway Trail's primary service area is anticipated to increase by close to 30,000 people (Figure 9). Outside factors such as gas prices, trail infrastructure improvements, and increased local sidewalk and trail network connectivity, may also promote increased use as trail users look for more recreation opportunities closer to home and use of the regional trail system as part of their transportation network. Within fully developed areas where population levels are expected to remain relatively stable, trail visitation levels and type of use will also reflect shifting demographics of those areas.

Methodology

To analyze demographics specific to the Central Greenway Regional Trail, Washington County used a quantitative measuring methodology that identifies a primary service area that is three miles on all sides of the proposed trail corridor

(Figure 5). This methodology provides detail specific to the primary service area for the proposed trail corridor, which is defined as users within three miles of the trail corridor. The demographic data on the following pages is based on the primary service area.

Aging Population

While the trend of young adults and their children shows a reduction in their involvement in nature-based recreation, SCORP notes that older adults have maintained a more stable involvement in outdoor recreation. Older adult recreation habits are well established and demand for their preferred activities will continue to be strong. However, as this group ages, physical limitations will require some park and trail visitors to change their recreational activities from higher intensity activities such as running, in-line skating, and biking to lower-impact recreational activities such as walking, nature observation, and educational opportunities. Figure 7 shows that approximately 25 percent of the residents in the primary service area are currently between the ages of 40 and 55. Many of these activities are accommodated by the regional trail system. The Central Greenway Regional Trail provides a

Figure 5: Trail Primary Service Area Map

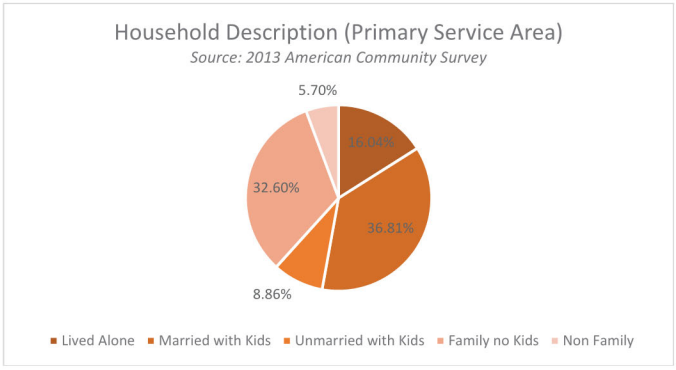


Figure 6: Household Description

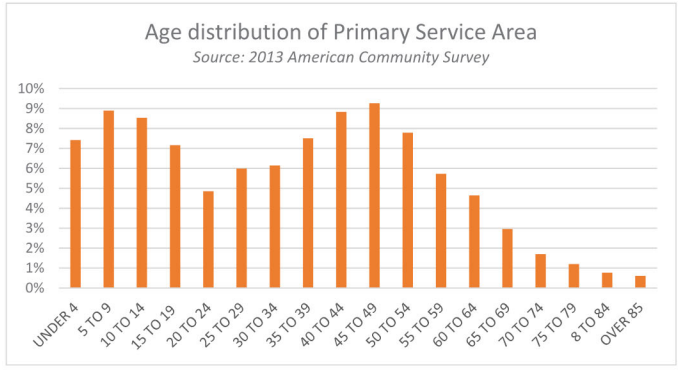


Figure 7: Age Distribution

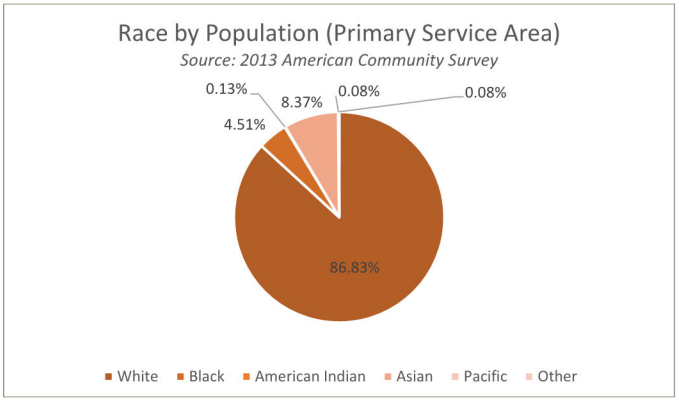


Figure 8: Race

recreational opportunity for older residents. A continuous, wide, and separated trail with limited elevation changes will serve this population well.

Minority Populations

Metropolitan Council demographers anticipate that by 2040, 40 percent of the region's population will be people of color, compared with 24 percent in 2010. Within the region, there are three prevalent immigrant groups: Hmong/Southeast Asians, Hispanic/Latino, and Somali/West Africans. Within the primary service area, 13 percent of the population are non-white (Figure 8). Washington County will look to provide trail amenities to accommodate trail users of all backgrounds. One strategy that will be explored is providing multi-lingual signage.

Other Trends Affecting Recreation

A 2013 study by the Minnesota Department of Health found that statewide 26 percent of adults were obese and 36 percent were overweight. Obesity is a key predictor for many future health problems, including diabetes. Lack of adequate exercise – partially resulting from inadequate outdoor recreation facilities or opportunities – is often cited as a contributor to obesity. Many young people are not getting enough exercise and face future health risks as a result. The economic health of the state relies on continued use and enjoyment of our outdoor recreation resources. Availability of a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities is one of the factors most often cited as contributing to the state's perceived high quality of life. Participation in outdoor recreation may correspond to a greater interest in and support for measures to protect land, facilities, and resources necessary to ensure those same activities are available for future generations.

Population growth in the region and the primary service area will lead to an increase in the demand for recreational opportunities within Washington County. New trails, such as the Central Greenway Regional Trail, will be needed to accommodate the increase in demand.

Active Living By Design – A Complementary Vision

The "active living by design" movement gaining momentum across the country complements the vision for the regional trail. As stated by one of the initiators of the movement, active living by design "is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines." Key principles of this movement as it pertains to this plan include:

» Physical activity is a behavior that can favorably improve health and quality of life.

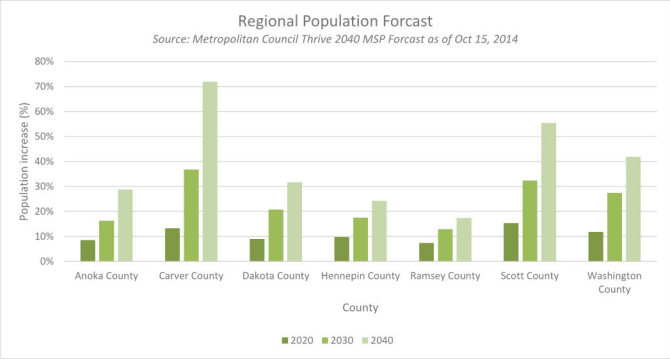


Figure 9: Regional Population Forecast

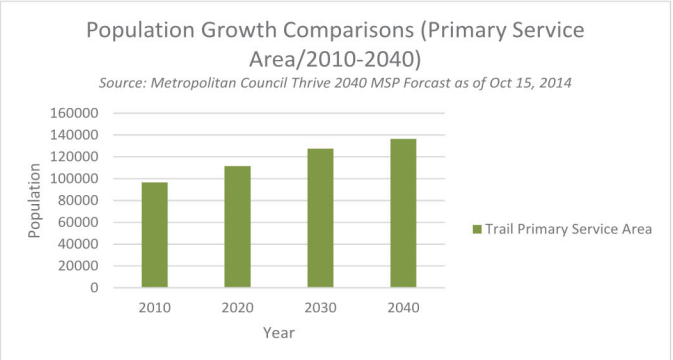


Figure 10: Population Growth Comparisons

» Everyone, regardless of age, gender, language, ethnicity, economic status or ability, should have safe, convenient and affordable choices for physical activity.

» Parks and trails, should be safe, accessible and part of a transportation network that connects destinations of interest, such as other parks, housing, schools, work sites, transit, community services and businesses.

» Municipalities and other governing bodies should plan for ongoing interdisciplinary collaboration, promotion of facilities, behavioral supports, policies that support the vision of active living, and routine maintenance that ensures continued safety, quality and attractiveness of the physical infrastructure and the natural environment.

The following provides an overview of pertinent findings from research that supports the active living movement and development of this regional trail.

Physical Activity/Preventing Obesity

Physical inactivity causes numerous physical and mental health problems, is responsible for an estimated 200,000 deaths per year in the United States, and contributes to the obesity epidemic. The design of communities and the presence or absence of parks, trails, and other quality public recreational facilities affects people's ability to reach the recommended 30 minutes each day of moderately intense physical activity. A growing number of studies show that people in activity-friendly environments are more likely to be physically active in their leisure time.

For example, research findings clearly indicate that better access to facilities, pleasant surroundings, safe places, walkable neighborhoods, and activity-friendly environments all encourage higher levels of active recreation. Proximity, connectivity, and design quality of trails can be added to this list to encourage more active lifestyles.

This is especially the case with children, where better access to healthy choices is vital to reducing the rate of obesity. Since the 1970s the percentage of obese children 6 to 11 years old has tripled. Obesity has doubled among preschool children and adolescents. Turning these statistics around means increasing children's physical activity and improving what they eat.

Connectivity and Accessibility

Being able to reach or access a variety of destinations (e.g., parks, retail areas, tourist site, workplaces, health services, grocery stores) via trails is critical to many dimensions of a healthy community and healthy personal lifestyle. Ensuring that trails meet ADA standards is important to accommodate the broadest cross-section of user groups.

Mental Health

A number of studies have demonstrated how being outdoors and in direct contact with nature leads to improved mental health and psychological development. Recent data show that mental health disorders will account for some of the world's largest health problems in upcoming decades. People do not have to actively use nature to benefit from it; rather, visual exposure is enough. The outdoor experience offered along the Central Greenway Regional Trail will, at some level, contribute positively to the collective well-being of the communities along the trail corridor.

Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

Washington County, through the SHIP program, has developed the Living Healthy in Washington County initiative in order to implement policies and practices that create active communities by increasing opportunities for non-motorized transportation and access to community resources and recreation facilities.

Section IV: Development Concept

When fully developed, the Central Greenway Regional Trail will provide residents of Washington County with direct access to a regional trail that connects three premier regional park facilities: Big Marine Park Reserve, Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. In addition, the regional trail will provide a separated, off-road facility for recreation and transportation purposes that will connect with adjacent local trails and other recreation amenities, such as Eagle Valley Golf Course and a future city park along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue in Cottage Grove.

Regional Bicycle Transportation Network

Washington County trails and the local trail network are further supported and enhanced by the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN), which is identified as part of the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). The RBTN helps define the region's on-street bikeways and off-street trail connections, and how they work together to serve regional transportation trips by bicycle. The RBTN is also used to identify corridors and alignments for future trail development and infrastructure investments. These corridors and alignments provide transportation connectivity to outlying regional destinations within and beyond the urban/suburban areas and serve to connect priority regional bicycle transportation corridors/alignments. County Road 19/Keats Avenue from I-94 to the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park entrance is recognized as a Tier 2 Corridor and assigned the second tier priority for regional transportation funding. Thus, the proposed alignment for the Central Greenway Regional Trail should be considered for inclusion as a Tier 2 alignment in the TPP update (2018), making it fully eligible for the Metropolitan Council's Regional Solicitation for federal transportation funds.

Development Plan

Permitted Regional Trail Uses

The regional trail will be open to the general public. Its intended uses include walking, jogging, in-line skating, bicycling, and other uses mandated by state law including, but not limited to, non-motor electric personal assisted devices. Motorized vehicle and equestrian uses will be prohibited, except for motorized vehicles used by the Washington County and partner cities for maintenance or law enforcement activities or otherwise permitted for ADA access.

Regional Trail Design Guidelines

The trail design for the Central Greenway Regional Trail is a 10-foot-wide paved surface separated from vehicular traffic. There may be instances that require the trail to be temporarily reduced in width for short segments until funding is available to improve sections that do not meet typical regional trail design guidelines (Figure 14). A bituminous trail surface is preferred because it is cost-effective, less prone to erosion than aggregate surfaces, provides for a more desirable trail user experience.

A number of factors will be taken into consideration as final designs for unconstructed segments are implemented, such as:

- Right-of-way width
- Topography and drainage impacts
- Existing vegetation
- Curb cuts and driveway crossings
- Overhead and subsurface utilities
- Intersection crossings
- Proximity to adjacent buildings, homes, farms, businesses and churches

In circumstances with limited right-of-way, trails will still be located off-road, but with less boulevard between the trail edge and back of curb. In these locations, the trail will be separated from the road by a minimum paved two-foot-wide clear zone. This paved clear zone between the back of curb and trail edge provides a buffer between the trail users and

motorists and will be striped to delineate the edge of the trail. Curb ramps will be used at all roadways. Regional trails should have a maximum of five percent grade and a cross slope of two percent for drainage. A regional trail may be wider than 10 feet if forecasted user volumes warrant an increased width and space is available for the trail. In addition, where right-of-way allows, final trail design will attempt to maximize the boulevard width to account for sign placement and snow storage.

Regional trail segments will be designed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local codes. In addition, the following sources will be referred and adhered to when preparing the design and construction plans as appropriate:

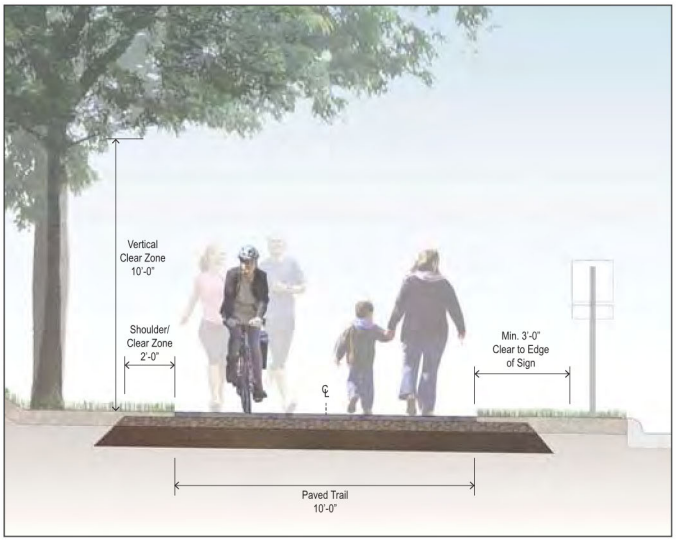


Figure 11: Typical Trail Cross-Section

- Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, prepared by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), 2012
- MnDOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), March 2007
- State Aid Rule 8820.9995 Minimum Bicycle Path Standards, State Aid for Local Transportation
- Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR)
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), MnDOT, 2014
- Public Right-of-way Access Guidelines (PROWAG)
- Best Practices for Traffic Control at Regional Trail Crossings, A collaborative effort of Twin Cities road and trail managing agencies, July 2011
- Selecting Roadway Design Treatments to Accommodate Bicycles, Federal Highway Administration, January 1994
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding, Metropolitan Council, October 2011

Primary Trail Design Elements

Trail Crossings

The suburban setting for the Central Greenway Regional Trail requires that it coexist with higher volume roadways. There are numerous locations where the regional trail crosses such roadways, including:

- Hudson Road
- Commerce Drive
- Valley Creek Road
- Lake Road
- Bailey Road
- 70th Street S.

The types of trail crossing treatments appropriate for each crossing location will be designed in accordance with industry best practices, in order to minimize conflicts between trail users and roadway traffic.

In all cases, existing roadway configuration, infrastructure elements, vegetation, and other potential visual obstructions will be evaluated so sight lines can be maintained. Special provisions, such as mirrors, may be added to improve trail visibility from driveways if deemed appropriate. As vehicular traffic fluctuates, there may be a need for additional traffic signals or modifications to existing signalized intersections. These type of design considerations and trail enhancements will be addressed during the trail design development phase.

Trail Underpasses

In some situations where the regional trail crosses higher volume roadways it may be appropriate to install a grade-separated trail underpass. The benefit of a trail underpass is that is provides safe access to the other side of a high-volume roadway without interaction with vehicular traffic. Several factors need to be considered when planning the location for underpasses. Groundwater levels, existing grades and sufficient right-of-way are all important considerations to assess when locating underpasses. These types of design considerations and trail enhancements will be addressed during the trail design development phase.

Supporting Trail Elements

Trail wayfinding signage, traffic signage and devices, rest stops, and drainage are important elements of regional trails. Their proper design and placement add both aesthetic and functional value to the trail.

Trail Amenities

Wayfinding Signage: Regional trail wayfinding signage provides trail users with orientation and location information for amenities and services. Wayfinding signage may provide:

- An overview map of the regional trail network in Washington County, and the specific regional trail.
- Directions and distances to major destinations and points of interest along the regional trail.
- Directions for long-term detours or interim routes when there are gaps within the regional trail.
- Location information for nearby amenities such as local parks and local trails. The Cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove's parks and trail plans are included in the appendix.
- Location information for nearby services, such as drinking water, public restrooms, and public parking.

» Visual identification of the regional trail network through physical kiosk/signage structures.

The suburban nature of the Central Greenway Regional Trail requires wayfinding signage at strategic delineated points (Figure 12 & Figure 13). These typically include major roadway intersections with other trails, trailheads, parks or other adjacent public facilities. The exact location and content of wayfinding signage will be determined in conjunction with local community input and is often dictated by available public right-of-way.

Washington County Parks uses kiosks in their parks as wayfinding signage to identify trail routes and system amenities. Developing directional signage for the Central Greenway Regional Trail that includes visual indication of direction and location of points of interest along the trail will benefit trail users along the trail route. The design of the directional sign can include arrow blades and/or text to identify features. Descriptions of each are as follows:

Kiosks: A free-standing structure that provides trail users with a map of the park or trail system, the park or trail rules, and general information about the park or trail.

Directional Signage: A post structure depicting the direction, the name, and the distance to major destinations and points of interest on the trail.

Rest Stops: Rest stops are located at key locations and provide places for trail users to stop and rest along the trail and an area for amenities such as benches, and bicycle racks. These simple but important amenities can serve to reinforce the identity of the regional trail route. Locations for rest stops will be evaluated and incorporated into Central Greenway Regional Trail as appropriate during design and implementation. The cost per rest stop is approximately $6,000 each (2016 dollars).

Directional Sign	Kiosk
I-94 Bridge	City Walk Drive
Markgrafs Lake	Powers Lake Park
Powers Lake Park (2)	Future Cottage Grove City Park
Lakeview Knolls Park	Cottage Grove Middle School
Valley Creek Road Intersection	Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park
Lake Road Intersection	
Bailey Road Intersection	**Rest Stop**
Dale Road Intersection	Bailey Road
Watershed District Property (Alignment D2)	Cottage Grove Middle School
Military Road (2) (Alignment D2)	
80th Street South Intersection	
Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Entrance	

Figure 12: Wayfinding Signage Locations

Traffic Signage and Devices

In addition to wayfinding signage, the regional trail will incorporate traffic control signs and devices, such as trail stop signs and trail crossing signage. These signs and devices will reflect the physical characteristics and usability of individual trail segments and the system as a whole. Therefore, as trail segments are developed (or reconstructed), trail signs and devices may require modification. The cost to add traffic control signs and devices, to a regional trail is approximately $1.50 per linear foot.

Figure 13: Wayfinding Signage Location Map

Example of kiosk concept and signage for Washington County trails. (Artwork provided by Washington County)

Hardwood Creek kiosk and rest stop. (Photo provided by Washington County)

Drainage

In many locations, the drainage of the regional trail is similar to that of a typical sidewalk. Stormwater sheet flows over the trail pavement and onto the adjacent roadway, where it is collected and conveyed by the roadway stormwater drainage system. In areas where the regional trail is on an independent route, such as through parks or other green spaces, alternative stormwater best management practices, such as rain gardens and infiltration swales, may be explored during the design

phase of the regional trail. Stormwater must shed rapidly from the surface of the trail to prevent hazardous situations for the users, such as water pooling on the trail surface.

Sub-Standard Trail Segments

Three existing trail segments do not meet regional trail design standards, which are identified in Figure 14. The proposed trail widening in Lakeview Knolls Park and between 70th Street and Indian Boulevard will fit within existing public right-of-way and no additional acquistion is needed to widen these segments of trail. The trail segment from 80th Street to 85th Street is proposed as a temporary trail alignment, until a permanent trail can be developed on the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue, which is identified as Acquisition Area C in Section I: Boundaries & Acquisitions of this report. It is the intent of Washington County to bring existing segments of trail into compliance when reconstruction is needed, or other opportunities present themselves.

From	To	Length
Lakeview Knolls Park	Valley Creek Road	.60 Miles
70th Street	Indian Blvd.	.50 Miles
80th Street*	85th Street	.50 Miles
*Temporary alignment		

Figure 14: Existing Eight-Foot Wide Trail Segments

Route Assessment

The section of the Central Greenway Regional Trail covered in this master plan has been divided into six segments (Figure 15) that are composed of developed and undeveloped trail. To preserve and protect the longevity of the trail and rights and responsibilities associated with owning, operating, and maintaining a regional trail, public trail easements are recommended for the entire corridor, regardless of the compliance of existing segments with the design standards of the governing agency. Securing easements to bring non-compliant trail segments into compliance is important, but it is less important than securing easements for trail sections that currently do not exist.

The trail segments are described on the following page.

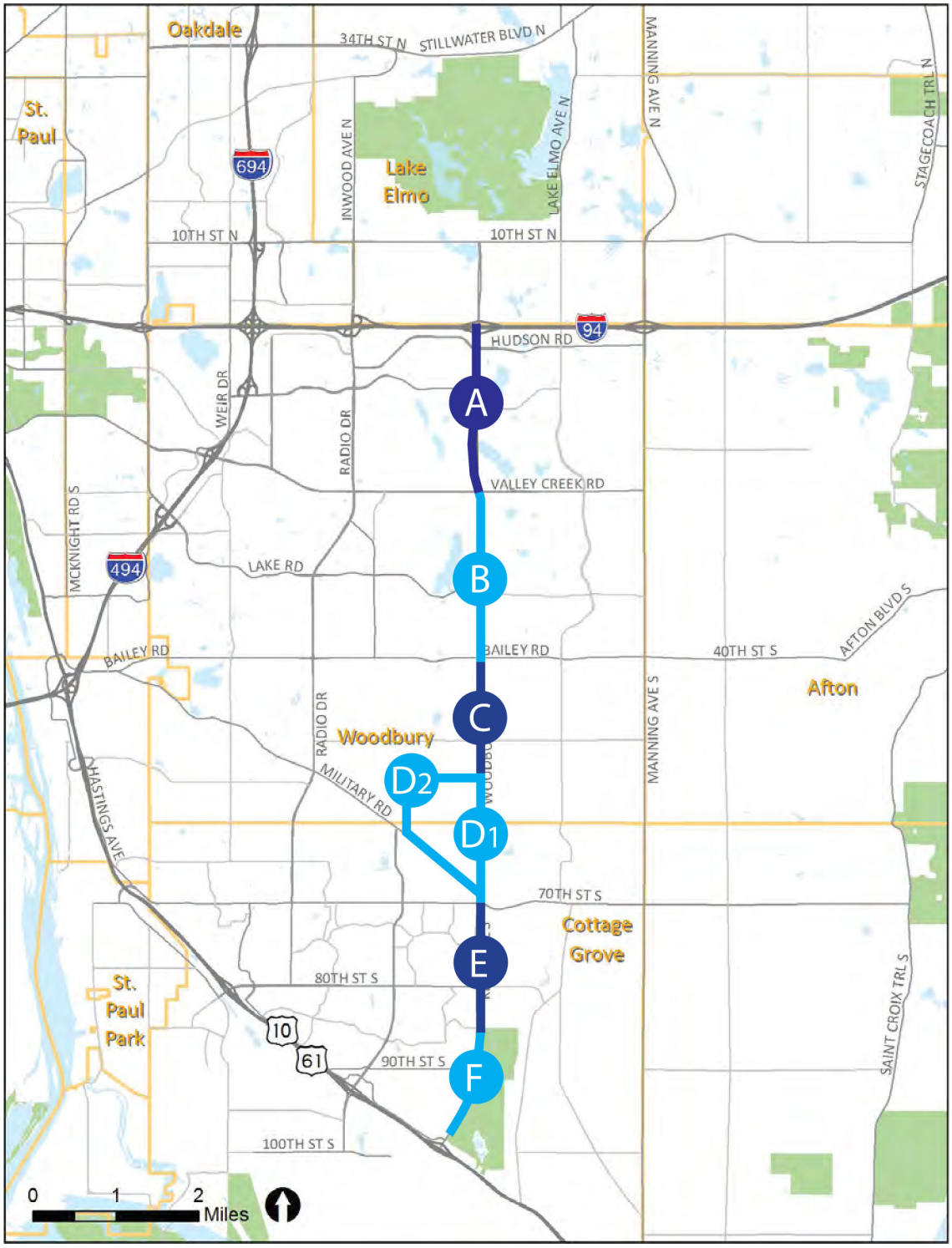


Figure 15: Central Greenway Regional Trail Segment Map

Central Greenway Regional Trail Segments				
Segment	From	To	Along	Length
A	I-94	Valley Creek Road	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	2.0 Miles
B	Valley Creek Road	Bailey Road	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	2.0 Miles
C	Bailey Road	Crossroads Church	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.85 Miles
D1	Crossroads Church	Military Road	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.0 Mile
D2	Crossroads Church	Military Road	Off-Road Alignment West of Crossroads Church	1.6 Miles
E	Military Road	85th Street	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.6 Miles
F	85th Street	Park Entrance	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.2 Miles

Segment A- I-94 to Valley Creek Road

Segment A measures approximately two miles long and extends from I-94 to Valley Creek Road. South of I-94, the Central Greenway Regional Trail will utilize the existing trail along the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue, through signalized intersections at Hidden Road, Markgrafs Lake Drive, Tamarack Road, and along the shore of Markgrafs Lake. South of Markgrafs Lake, the regional trail will continue along the existing trail, extending south through a signalized intersection at Wynstone Drive before entering Powers Lake Park. In Powers Lake Park the trail will pass under County Road 19/Keats Avenue through an existing trail underpass, where the trail will cross through Lakeview Knolls Park, still continuing along the existing trail corridor. The trail width through the park and extending to Valley Creek Road is 8-feet wide. The trail will be widened to ten feet at a future date in conjunction with park or roadway improvements. From this point south, the trail will continue on the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. Trail underpass improvements will also be considered at this time.

South of Lakeview Knolls Park, the trail crosses Regatta Drive at a mid-block crossing that is striped, and includes Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant pedestrian ramps with raised truncated domes and trail stop signs. Continuing south, the trail extends along an independent alignment, crossing Regatta Alcove, which includes ADA compliant pedestrian ramp on the north side, but requires a new pedestrian ramp on the south side to meet current ADA standards. South of Regatta Alcove, the trail continues south across Catalina Drive and a second crossing of Regatta Drive, both requiring upgraded pedestrian ramps to be ADA

compliant. A short distance further south, the trail crosses Valley Creek Road, which also requires upgraded pedestrian ramps.

Segment B- Valley Creek Road to Bailey Road

South of Valley Creek Road, the trail extends south along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue, passing Valley Crossing Community School and across Park Crossing, a signalized four-way intersection that includes striped crosswalks, but needs upgraded pedestrian ramps. The trail extends south along the existing trail to Hidden Lake Drive.

From Hidden Lake Drive south to Lake Road, the trail will continue to follow the existing trail along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. Upgraded pedestrian ramps have been incorporated at crossings of Edgewater Drive, the roundabout at Lake Road, Antrim Road and the Bailey Road roundabout.

Segment C- Bailey Road to Crossroads Church

Segment C measures approximately 1.85 miles long and extends from Bailey Road to Crossroads Church. There is no existing trail along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue between Bailey Road and just north of Crossroads Church. A new, ten-foot-wide trail will be constructed in the County Road right-of-way. A new pedestrian crossing will be required at Dale Road, which is a stop condition only for Dale Road, but is a through-street for County Road 19/Keats Avenue.

A new pedestrian underpass is planned to pass under County Road 19/Keats Avenue approximately 0.30 miles north of Dale Road to provide a mid-block crossing and a future connection to development on the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. It is anticipated that this trail underpass will not be constructed until significant development has occurred on the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue.

There are 15 driveway crossings and three field access roads along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue between Bailey Road and Crossroads Church that will require trail stop signs or yield signs for trail users.

Segment D

There are two alternatives for Segment D between Crossroads Church and Military Road that include an alignment along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue and off-road to the west of Crossroads Church. Washington County Parks will determine which alignment is best suited for trail development at a future date. There

Segment D Alternatives				
Segment	From	To	Along	Length
D1	Crossroads Church	Military Road	County Road 19/Keats Avenue	1.0 Mile
D2	Crossroads Church	Military Road	Off-Road Alignment West of Crossroads Church	1.60 Miles

are several unknown circumstances in this area including patterns of residential development, future local park locations and land protection for water quality that may provide suitable locations and connections for the regional trail. Both trail alternatives are described below.

Segment D Alternatives

Washington County will determine which alignment is best suited for implementation at a future date. This decision will be based on a number of factors, including available resources, stakeholder input, timing of corresponding projects, and the development in the region.

Segment D1

Segment D1 extends along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue between Crossroads Church and Military Road. There are three driveway crossings and two field access drives that will require stop or yield signage for trail users. Military Road is a three-way stop intersection, but will require pedestrian ramps and a crosswalk across Military Road.

Segment D1 would provide the trail user a more direct connection through this corridor. This alternative follows a county-operated road, so implementation and maintenance may be easier to coordinate. This route would best serve trail users looking to get from one destination to another in a quick and direct fashion.

Segment D2

Segment D2 extends west from County Road 19/Keats Avenue and south to Military Road in an off-road alignment through several undeveloped parcels that are currently in agricultural production. Properties include one parcel owned by the City of Woodbury, one parcel owned by a private entity and two parcels owned by the South Washington Watershed District. Once the alignment reaches Military Road, it extends southeast along the north edge of Military Road to County Road 19/Keats Avenue. In this section, the proposed alignment crosses three private parcels.

Segment D2 intends to offer a more scenic experience, since it would direct trail users off of County Road 19/Keats Avenue and through an area of open space owned by the South Washington Watershed District. This alternative would add .6 more miles and $1,094,800 to the route than Segment D1. If Segment D2 was to be implemented, the trail shall be strategically placed to mitigate adverse impacts to the surrounding natural resources, in collaboration with project partners.

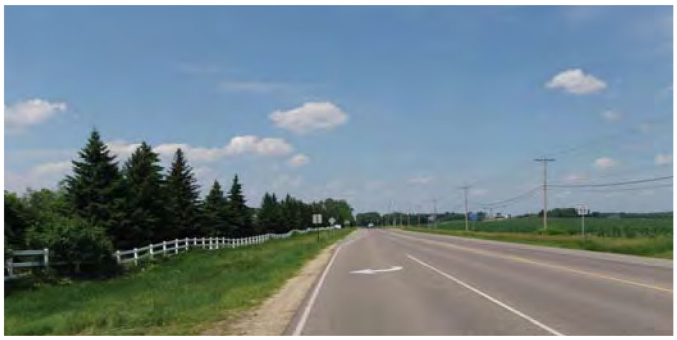
Segment E

South of Military Road, there is a roundabout at 70th Street South and intersections at Jorgensen Lane South, Jordan Avenue South and Indian Boulevard South. An existing eight-foot-wide trail exists between 70th Street South and Indian Boulevard South that will need to be widened to ten feet, at a later date, to meet regional trail standards. The pedestrian ramps at these intersections do meet current ADA standards.

South of Indian Boulevard South, the trail will pass by Cottage Grove Middle School, where a rest stop could be developed that would provide a kiosk for trail users. The trail will cross intersections at 77th Street South, 80th Street South and 82nd Street South.

The City of Cottage Grove has acquired Safe Routes to School funding to develop the trail segment between Indian Boulevard South and 80th Street South for development in 2017. This trail segment will be constructed to meet regional trail standards.

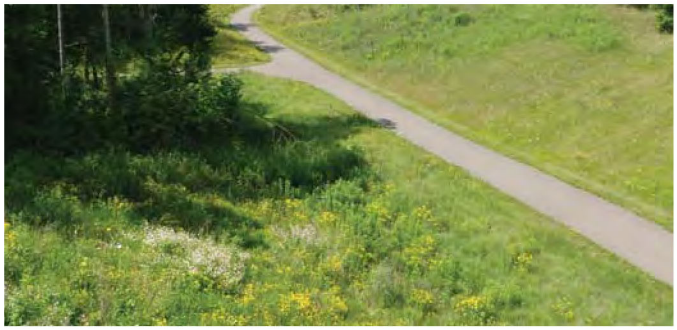
When the trail reaches 80th Street South, it will extend south along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue to 85th Street South. This segment of trail is currently undeveloped. A temporary alignment will cross County Road 19/Keats Avenue at the existing marked pedestrian crossing to join the existing eight-foot trail that extends along the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue until it enters Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.



Safe Routes to School funding will be utilized to develop a segment of trail along County Road 19/Keats Avenue.

Existing 8-foot trail segments will be reconstructed at a later date to regional trail width standards of 10-feet.

Trail access into Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park at 85th Street S.



Trails in Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park that will connect with the Central Greenway Regional Trail.

Segment F

Segment F will extend south along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue between 85th Street South and the proposed new entrance to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The new park entrance will be located approximately 1/3 mile north of Highway 61. The trail will cross 90th Street South at-grade and will require pedestrian ramps on both sides of the intersection. The trail will cross three driveways between 85th Street South and 90th Street South. Two new pedestrian underpasses will be developed to provide grade-separated crossings under County Road 19/Keats Avenue to access Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. One will be south of 85th Street South. The other will be located south of 90th Street South, at the park's future entrance.

Implementation

It is anticipated that the regional trail will be implemented in stages, with the construction of various stages driven by available funding and local factors, such as timing of adjacent roadway improvements, and public desire to expand the regional trail system. Until the corridor is fully developed, gaps in the regional trail will exist. However, the ultimate trail geometry will consist of a 10-foot-wide (minimum) paved surface, separate from any adjacent roadway, so that trail users will not share the roadway with motorized vehicles.

The development and implementation of unconstructed trail segments and upgrading of certain trail segments to regional trail standards will require additional activities beyond the master plan phase. These activities typically include the preparation of final construction documents, additional property and natural resource analysis, final cost estimates, city staff review, trail-way cooperative agreements, and public approval meetings (such as City Council and Park Commission and County Board meetings).

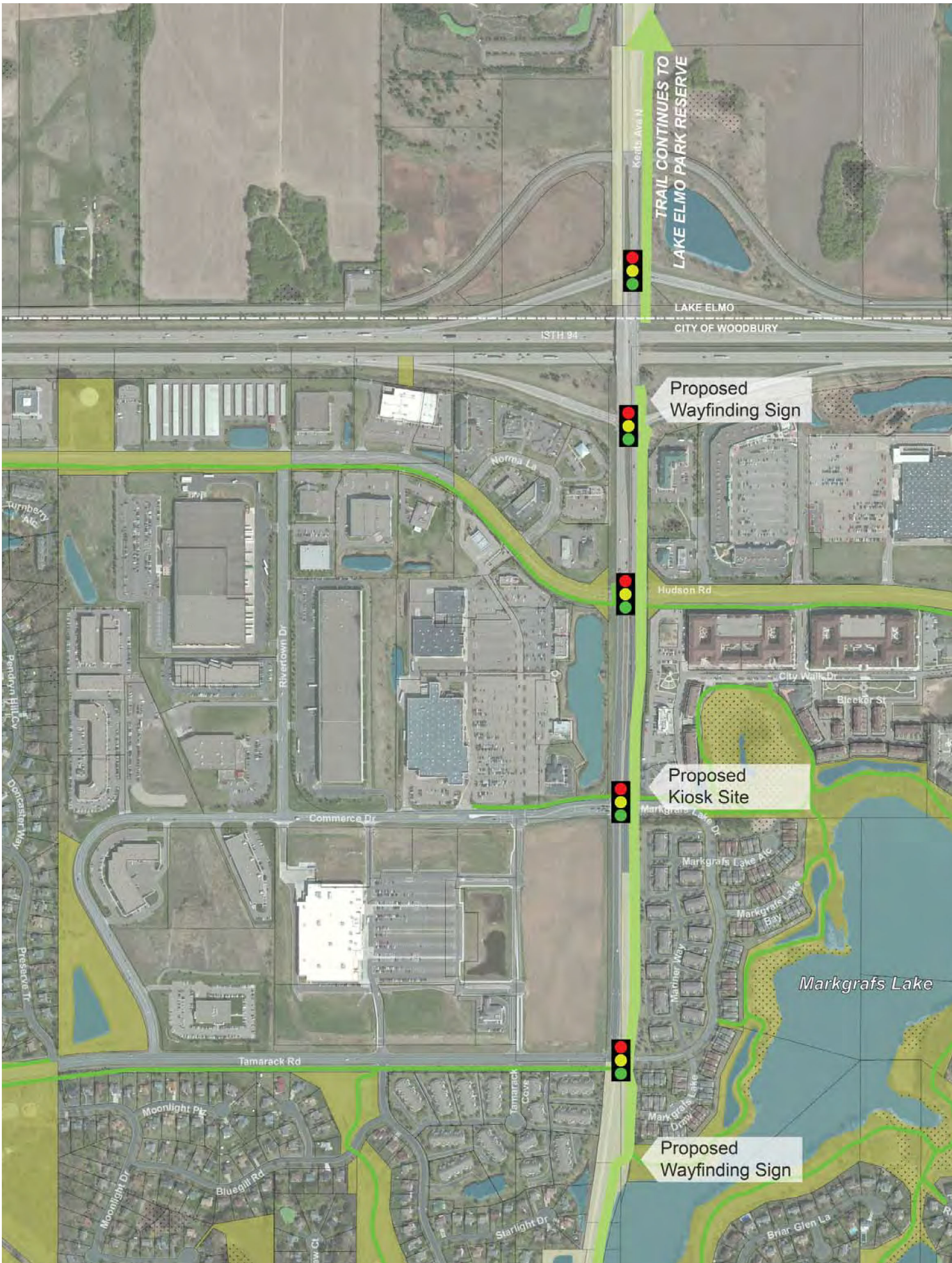
Estimated Costs & Funding

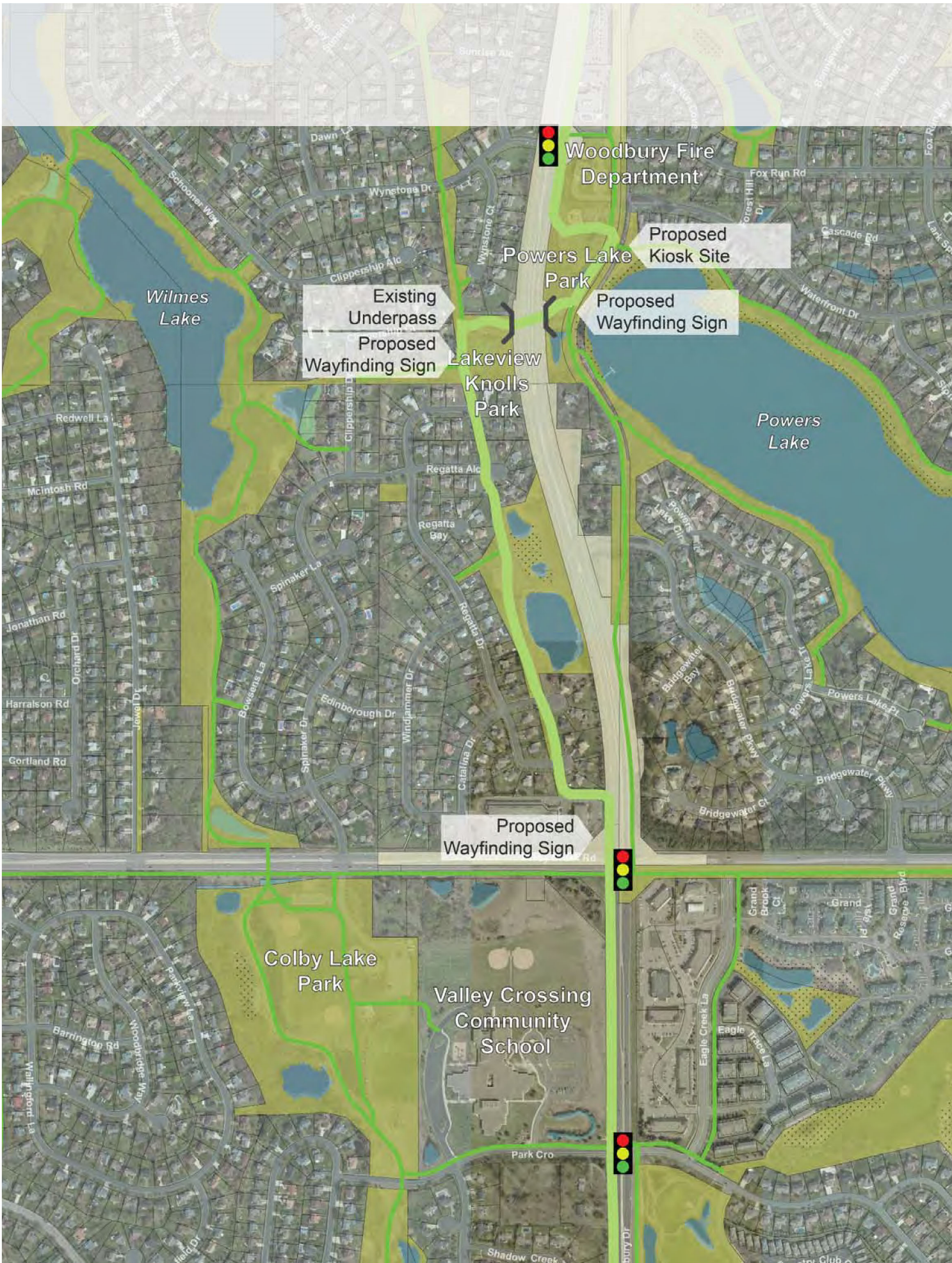
Regional trail implementation has both initial costs (acquisition and development) and on-going costs (operations and maintenance). Trail development will occur as opportunities to coordinate with other agencies/projects occur, funding becomes available, and at the discretion of the Washington County Board of Commissioners, Woodbury City Council and Cottage Grove City Council. Individual development projects may move ahead of schedule to coincide with development adjacent to the trail corridor that can result in cost savings.

Development Costs

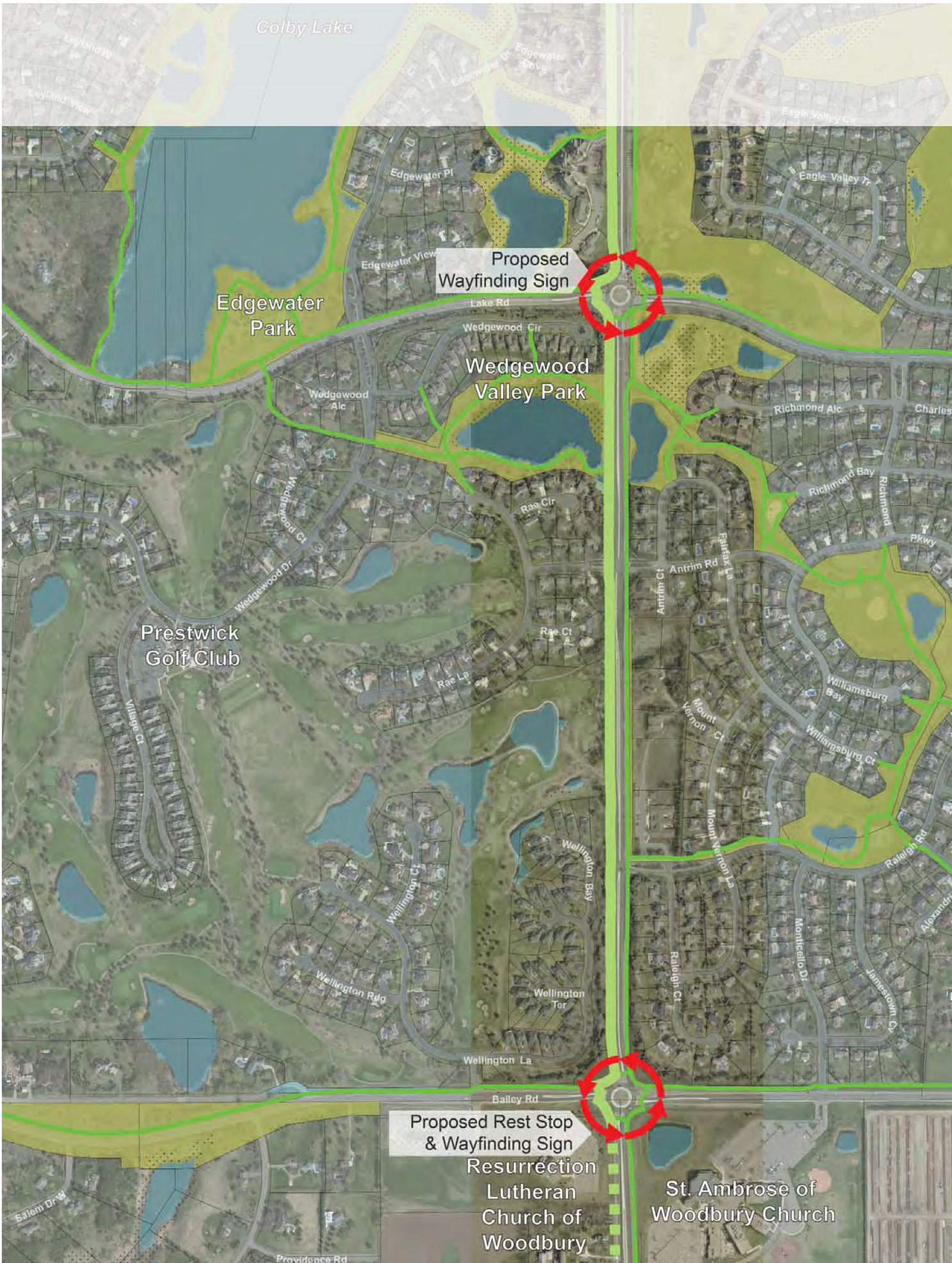
Regional trail development includes the cost to prepare the site; reconfigure roadways as required; modify drainage patterns where necessary; pave the trail; and install signage, striping, and landscaping. In total, the estimated development cost for the Central Greenway Regional Trail is $7,901,000. The cost for development from I-94 to Bailey Road, including rest stops, signage and pedestrian crossing upgrades is estimated to be $1,299,000, including contingencies. Improvements for the existing segment of trail from Bailey Road to the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park entrance is estimated to cost $6,602,000, including contingencies. The total cost for acquisitions within the proposed corridor is $470,500. See Appendix A. Detailed Cost Estimate for further information.

Figure 16: Trail Corridor Maps





Woodbury Fire Department
Proposed Kiosk Site
Powers Lake Park
Proposed Wayfinding Sign
Existing Underpass
Proposed Wayfinding Sign
Lakeview Knolls Park
Wilmes Lake
Powers Lake
Proposed Wayfinding Sign
Colby Lake Park
Valley Crossing Community School
Dawn La
Wynstone Dr
Schooner Way
Clippership Alc
Wynstone Ct
Fox Run Rd
Cascade Rd
Waterfront Dr
Redwell La
Mcintosh Rd
Regatta Alc
Regatta Bay
Spinaker La
Regatta Dr
Jonathan Rd
Orchard Dr
Harralson Rd
Jewel Dr
Cortland Rd
Bowsens La
Edinborough Dr
Windjammer Dr
Catalina Dr
Bridgewater Bay
Bridgewater Pkwy
Powers Lake Tr
Powers Lake Pt
Bridgewater Ct
Grand Brook Ct
Grand Reserve Blvd
Eagle Creek La
Eagle Trace La
Barrington Rd
Woodbridge Way
Wallingford La
Park Cro
Shadow Creek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Edgewater Park
Proposed Wayfinding Sign
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Wedgewood Valley Park
Wedgewood Alc
Edgewater Pl
Edgewater View
Eagle Valley Tr
Richmond Alc
Richmond Bay
Richmond Pkwy
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Rae Ct
Rae La
Wedgewood Ct
Wedgewood Dr
Prestwick Golf Club
Village Ct
Antrim Ct
Antrim Rd
Fairfax La
Williamsburg Bay
Williamsburg Ct
Mount Vernon Ct
Mount Vernon La
Raleigh Rd
Raleigh Ct
Monticello Dr
Jamestown Ct
Wellington Bay
Wellington Ct
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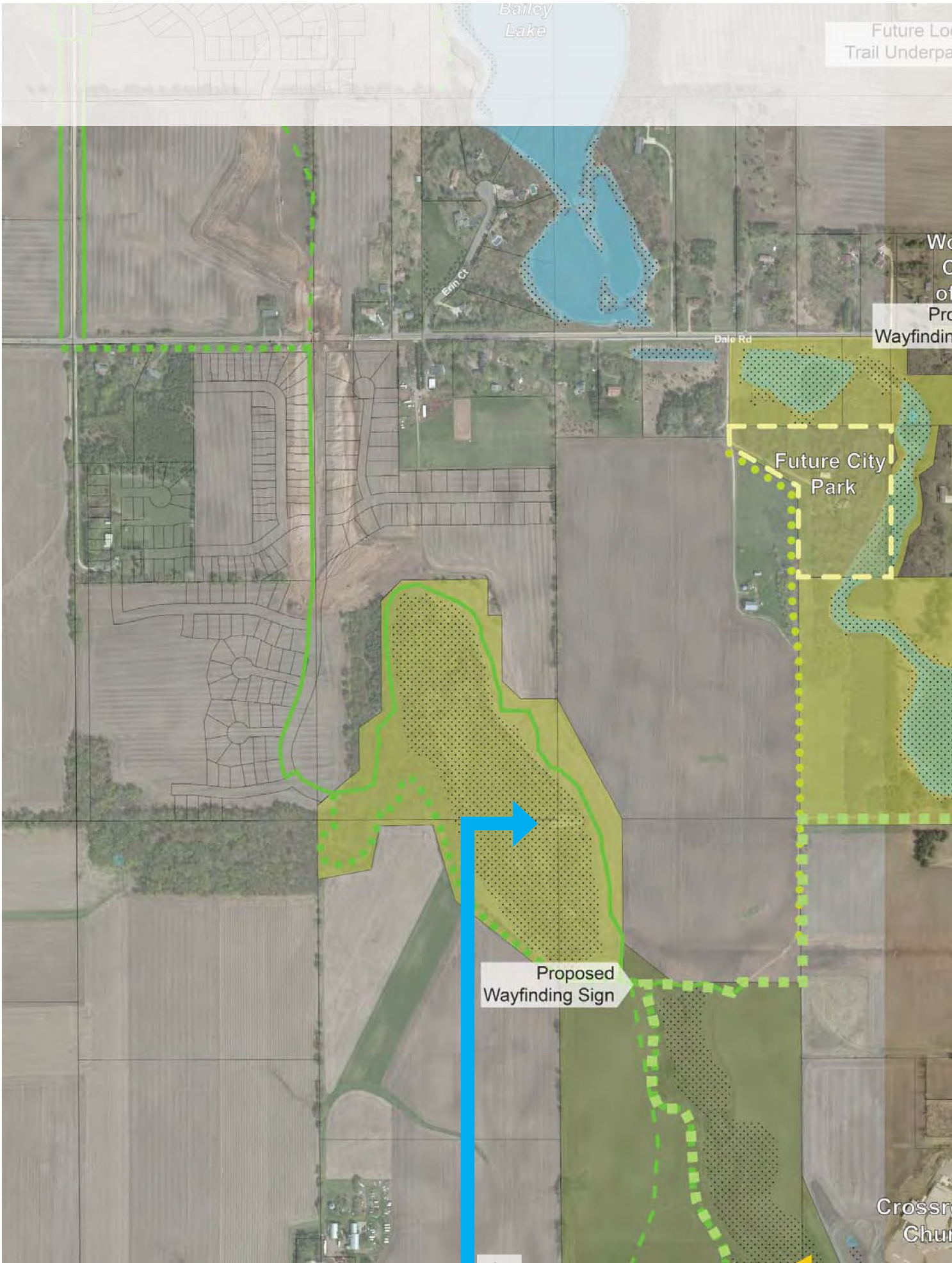
Wellington Ter
Wellington La
Bailey Rd
Proposed Rest Stop & Wayfinding Sign
Resurrection Lutheran Church of Woodbury
St. Ambrose of Woodbury Church
Salem Dr W
Providence Rd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Jenner Cir S
Jenner La S
Jocelyn Alc S
Jocelyn Bay S
Jocelyn Ct S
Joliet Cir S
Jonathan Ave S
Joplin Ave S
Jordon Ave S
Indian Boulevard Ct S
Indian Blvd S
Jamaica Ave S
Jeffery Ave S
Cottage Grove Elementary School
Cottage Grove Middle School

Arbor Medows Park
Johansen Ave S
Jody Cir S
Jody Ct S
84th St S
85th Street Pl S
Jorgensen Ave S
87th St S
Jewel La S
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Section V: Conflicts and Coordination with Adjacent Public Services

The Central Greenway Regional Trail is proposed to be developed within public right-of-way along County Road 19/Keats Avenue. Additional right-of-way may be needed to develop some segments of the trail, and for the development of trail underpasses. Final determination of right-of-way needs will be identified when the underpasses are proposed, which may coincide with road widening projects or adjacent property development. The total estimated cost of additional right-of-way is $470,500.

There are buried utilities, including gas and sanitary sewer along portions of the County Road 19/Keats Avenue right-of-way, and high-voltage overhead power lines cross the proposed trail corridor in two locations. Coordination with utilities will be required during design development to ensure that the trail is constructed without imposing on utility easements or otherwise impacting the utility corridors.

The City of Cottage Grove and the South Washington Watershed District own property on the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue north of Military Road that may be beneficial for future trail development. The City of Cottage Grove is planning to develop a park on a parcel west of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. Coordination with the City of Cottage Grove and South Washington Watershed District when the trail is developed may provide opportunities for local connections and developing alternative trail alignments.

Trail rest stop example, which is located on Ravine Parkway South.

Existing conditions along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue.

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Section VI: Operations & Maintenance

Washington County manages and operates its park and trail system with internal staff including 19 permanent employees. In addition, approximately 100 seasonal employees are hired each year as life guards, maintenance workers and gate attendants. The Parks Division has an annual operations and maintenance budget of approximately $3,025,700 to operate and maintain the County's park and trail system.

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will be overseen by professional public safety, operations and maintenance staff operating out of the South Maintenance Unit based at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.

This trail will add new mileage to the Washington County's regional trail system and operations and maintenance costs will increase because of the expansion of the system. Additional staff time and equipment will be needed to maintain the new trail segments. No new equipment will be needed as the County will utilize existing trucks and mowers to maintain the trail. It is anticipated that the annual cost to maintain the trail upon full build out will be $16,000, including additional staff and time and resources. An additional $2,000 annually will be needed for the first five years to establish the prairie and pollinator plantings along the trail, as proposed in the natural resources section of the master plan.

Mowing turf trail shoulders.

Proposed Maintenance Activities

Maintenance operations will include seasonal condition assessments and periodic inspections, followed by necessary maintenance actions. Inspections will address possible safety issues, vandalism, and non-routine maintenance concerns. Washington County will also respond to maintenance issues identified by the public, on a timely basis, as funding permits. Extraordinary maintenance may be required to respond to storm damage, vandalism and other unplanned circumstances.

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will receive scheduled seal coating and reconstruction in accordance with Washington County standards, and as funding permits.

Washington County will provide routine maintenance as identified below.

- Sign inventory and replacement, spring cleanup, trail sweeping, trash pickup, erosion repair, fence repair, bituminous patching, and striping replacement, as needed.
- Mowing adjacent to the trails will be coordinated by Washington County.
- Washington County will coordinate snow removal maintenance for the trail south of Bailey Road if appropriate.

Public Safety

Washington County Sheriff's Department, along with the Woodbury and Cottage Grove Police officers will provide public safety services on Central Greenway Regional Trail.

Sources of Revenue

Washington County budgets annually for operating the park and trail system. The budget includes maintenance of recreation facilities and management of natural resources within the parks. Revenue for these expenditures originates from three primary sources:

- Vehicle passes and campground reservations at County parks
- County levy
- Operations and maintenance grants consisting of State general funds and lottery in-lieu sales tax funds that are disbursed through the Metropolitan Council

Washington County does not charge for trail use.

Ordinances

Washington County has adopted Ordinance No. 174 which establishes rules and regulations for park and trail use and management under its jurisdiction. The ordinance incorporates Minnesota statutes that address regulations for:

» Public Use

» General Conduct

» General Parkland Operation

» Protection of Property, Structures and Natural Resources

» Recreational Activities

» Motorized Vehicles, Traffic and Parking

A copy of the ordinance is available for review through Washington County.

Rules and regulations are posted, as needed, throughout Washington County park properties and facilities. Posted information includes park hours, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, map of the parks and trails, and who to contact in case of an emergency.

Regular trail maintenance including pavement repair will be scheduled by Washington County to keep the trail functional and operational.

Section VII: Public Engagement and Participation

Overview

Washington County strives to provide an inclusive public engagement process for its trail planning efforts. To reach a diverse cross-section of the community and to engage people of diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and national origin, Washington County staff developed a plan to provide information to the public in multiple ways with an emphasis on trying to make it easy and accessible for all interested citizens to participate in the planning process. The public engagement process included several meetings with a technical advisory committee, updates to the Washington County Parks Commission on the plan development progress, conducting public open houses and pop-up meetings to provide public updates and presenting information at local city council meetings to keep the communities updated about the master plan process. The general public, including park and trail users and Washington County residents are important stakeholders in the master planning process and their input is highly valued. Comments received have been addressed in revisions to the master plan.

Regional Trail Planning

Planning for the Central Greenway Regional Trail is in response to expressed demand for recreational and non-motorized transportation options in suburban edge communities. The Central Greenway Regional Trail is identified as a Regional Trail Search Corridor in the Metropolitan Council 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. As such, the Central Greenway Regional Trail needs an approved master plan to become eligible for Metropolitan Council regional parks system funding for development.

Central Greenway Regional Trail Technical Advisory Committee

A Central Greenway Regional Trail Technical Advisory Committee was established to guide the trail master plan and coordinated planning efforts within the local communities and greater region. Members of the Task Force included representatives from the following stakeholders: City of Woodbury, City of Cottage Grove, Washington County and the South Washington Watershed District.

The responsibilities of the Task Force included:

- Coordinating with respective governing bodies, such as City Councils, Planning Commissions, Park Commissions and other staff/departments within the respective city/agency.
- Assisting in implementing public participation opportunities.
- Providing information and support necessary to identify feasible trail routes and review/complete the trail master plan that meets city and applicable agency goals.
- Assisting Washington County in local municipality/agency approval processes.

The full Task Force met six times:

» May 12, 2015

» June 30, 2015

» July 15, 2015

» September 1, 2015

» September 30, 2015

» January 12, 2016

Throughout the master planning process, Washington County staff met with Task Force members to identify opportunities and address and resolve their issues and concerns. These meetings often involved other individuals, groups, and organizations as detailed route information was exchanged.

Washington County Park Commission

The Washington County Park Commission reviewed planning updates and the final draft master plan four times throughout the planning process, including:

» September 17, 2015

» November 19, 2015

» December 17, 2015

» January 21, 2016

Municipal Presentations & Input

Washington County staff presented updates on the master plan process to local city councils, city government committees and watershed district meetings several times throughout the master plan process to keep local authorities updated and to solicit additional input about the master plan. Meetings were held on the following dates:

» September 14, 2015	City of Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Commission
» September 29, 2015	City of Woodbury Park, Planning and Economic Development staff presentation
» February 17, 2016	Cottage Grove City Council presentation
» February 24, 2016	Woodbury City Council presentation

Washington County received letters of support from Woodbury and Cottage Grove. These are included in the appendix.

Public Communications/ Social Media

Online and social media tools were identified as alternative ways to get information and updates to the public. The Washington County website was the primary on-line portal for meeting information and for posting draft plans for public review. All open houses and pop-up meetings were listed on the County's website. The County utilized its Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote the pop-up events. In addition, fliers were printed and posted at County facilities to promote the pop-up events.

A MySidewalk social media site was developed for the master plan, but the site was not made public because this phase of the master plan process coincided with a county-wide update of on-line and social media materials, which impacted opportunities to utilize this on-line tool in a timely fashion for appropriate public engagement.

Public Open Houses & Pop-up Meetings

Washington County, with the support and assistance of select Technical Advisory Committee members presented the Central Greenway Regional Trail planning efforts and held six public engagement events where the public had an opportunity to review the status of planning efforts and provide comments. In an effort to reach out to a variety of Washington County residents, Washington County held meetings at public buildings accessible to the public. In addition, one open house was held at a public housing facility to provide easier access to the information. Public presentations were held on the following dates:

- July 28, 2015 — Open House at the Washington County South Service Center
- September 22, 2015 — Open House at the Washington County South Service Center
- November 18, 2015 — Open House at the Washington County South Service Center
- December 12, 2015 — Open House at The Woodlands Apartment Complex

Washington County initiated two additional public pop-up events to seek more public input about the master plan update. The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan requires that the public engagement process seek to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic barriers and include people of diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and national origin. In order to reach out to populations that may not feel comfortable attending open houses or public meetings, the County set up two pop-up events designed to "meet people where they are already located." Staff set up tables at strategic locations and times that are frequented by Washington County residents of all backgrounds. Pop-up style tabling allowed for more in-depth, one-on-one conversations. The County received positive feedback on conducting this type of engagement, as several members of the public mentioned they would not typically attend an open house, but were happy they were given the opportunity to provide feedback in this setting. The pop-up meetings were held on the following dates:

- April 24, 2017 — Central Park Atrium in Woodbury
- April 26, 2017 — Park Grove Library in Cottage Grove

Open House #1 Approach & Findings

The first public open house was held on July 28, 2015 at the Washington County South Service Center. The Service Center is located adjacent to the trail corridor in an easily accessible public building with ample parking. Attendance at the open house included 21 members of the public and

representatives from Washington County, the City of Cottage Grove, the City of Woodbury and the South Washington Watershed District. The proposed trail alignment maps were presented at the meeting. Feedback from the first open house was positive with interest in developing a linking regional trail along County Road 19/Keats Avenue with connections to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. Specific comments from the open house are listed in Figure 17.

Open House #2 Approach & Findings

A second open house was held on September 22, 2015 at the Washington County South Service Center. Attendance at the open house included ten members of the public and representatives from Washington County, the City of Cottage Grove, the City of Woodbury and the South Washington Watershed District. In addition to the analysis graphics presented at the first open house, revisions to the trail alignment maps were shown. While attendance was light at this open house, those in attendance provided input on the proposed revisions to the trail alignments. Positive feedback was given about the proposed regional trail. A complete list of comments from the public meetings is included in Figure 17.

Open House #3 Approach & Findings

The third open house, held on November 18, 2015 at the Washington County South Service Center was meant to provide the public with another opportunity to learn about and comment on the proposed trail master plan. Attendance at the open house included three members of the public and representatives from Washington County, the City of Cottage Grove, the City of Woodbury and the South Washington Watershed District. A complete list of comments from the public meetings is included in Figure 17.

Open House #4 Approach & Findings

The public engagement opportunity that was added to the public process was an open house at the Woodlands Apartments in Cottage Grove, located just a couple miles from the trail corridor. County staff felt it was important to reach out to nearby residents who may not have easy access to the South Service Center or other public meeting venues. The draft trail corridor was presented at the open house on December 12, 2015. Attendance was light at this open house with three members of the public providing input. Staff was surprised at the low attendance and discussed additional ways to solicit input from existing and future trail users. A complete list of comments from the public meetings is included in Figure 17.

All open house materials were also posted on the Washington County website for public review and comment.

The open house meetings included presentations and numerous information boards and maps describing the current trail plan. Attendees were given the opportunity to write comments on comment cards to add their ideas.

Pop-Up Event #1 Approach & Findings

In an effort to obtain more input from the public about the Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan, Washington County held two pop-up meetings. The first pop-up event was held at Central Park Atrium in Woodbury on April 24, 2017. This pop-up event was strategically located here because this is a popular mid-day destination for many community members that would be potential trail users. The facility connects to Washington County R.H. Stafford Library, Woodbury YMCA, Lookout Ridge Indoor Playground, and Stonecrest Senior Living. Several County service buildings, multifamily developments, and schools are also located within walking distance. The Central Park Atrium is located adjacent to the trail corridor. Several comments were made about the trail amenities that are planned for this corridor. These comments were used in locating signage/kiosks/rest stops. Twenty visitors asked questions about the master plan and provided input.

Pop-up Event #2 Approach & Findings

The second pop-up event was held at the Park Grove Library in Cottage Grove on April 26, 2017. Four people stopped by the pop-up event to provide comments and ask questions about the trail master plan.

This pop-up meeting was scheduled during the morning, providing an alternative to evening meeting times. The library is located approximately three miles west of the park in an area with several apartment complexes and nearby two schools. The library's story time program was scheduled for the same time frame and this created the opportunity for families and youth trail users to provide input. Input from this event included new residents to Washington County, one of which who does not have access to a vehicle and relies on a bicycle as his only method of transportation. These new perspectives were helpful in planning the regional trail connections to the local network.

Washington County held two pop-up meetings in April 2017 to seek additional public input about the master plan update.

Community Engagement Results

The various meetings and public outreach events that were conducted as part of the Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan process provided the project team with beneficial input about what the public wants for this regional trail. The comments received in the community engagement process supported the County's sentiment to expand the regional trail

system and develop the trail in a safe and thoughtful way. Several themes and ideas came out during the public process. These included:

» A trail by nature is a linear feature that not only passes through its surroundings, but becomes part of the community fabric.

» Make local trail connections a priority.

» Provide connectivity with established points and destinations.

» Provide safe route with least amount of driveway crossings, utility poles, etc.

» Minimize adjacent property impacts.

» Provide consistency with existing agency planning and policies.

» Provide preferred trail route that is politically palatable.

Summary of Public Engagement Comments

The following table summarizes the comments that were received at the open houses and pop-up meetings throughout the master planning process. Several of the comments were repeated at multiple events but are listed only once for clarity.

Public Comment/Question	Response
Open House Meetings	
Avid road biker who likes the proposed regional trail alignment	Regional Trail will be developed for all trail user types
Can a Nice Ride bike rental facility be added?	Nice Ride Minnesota is an independent non-profit not affiliated with Washington County Parks
Plow paved trails in winter.	Winter maintenance will be covered in the master plan
Why does the County need a regional trail along a County Road?	This trail type is a regional connector, designed to link regional parks and facilities, and this is the most direct route.
Preserve the underpass south of 85th as a way to cross CR 19 safely	This crossing has been added to the master plan
Wayfinding signage is needed	Signage will be addressed in the master plan
Pop-Up Meeting #1	
There are a lot of bicyclists in the area that would benefit from the trail.	The plan addresses this comment.
It will be good to have a trail connection to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.	The plan addresses this comment.
The underpass into Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park is a really good idea.	The plan addresses this comment.
Traffic along CR 19 travels too fast [for bikers].	The independent trail will address this concern.
A comment was made that the alternate route does not fit with the purpose of a linking regional trail.	An alternate alignment is included so future study at implementation is allowed to determine the best route.
Include intermediate stops with water fountains and benches placed along the trail.	Rest stops are noted on the plan.
Develop space at intersections for pop-up events or food trucks.	Better addressed during design development.
Kiosk signage depicting local destinations near trail, distance and estimated minutes of travel to next kiosk, information on local history.	Important information that will be addressed during design development.
Look for ways to avoid bike and pedestrian spacing conflicts.	Trail will be minimum ten feet wide.
A north-south arterial trail through the entire County is needed.	The plan addresses this comment.
Preference for separated trails over sidewalks.	The plan addresses this comment.
Pop-Up Meeting #2	
Biking in Washington County can feel dangerous due to lack of bike infrastructure and high speed roadways.	The master plan includes separate trail alignment.
Users who do not own cars find it difficult to move around the county safely.	The regional trail system benefits all users in the region and city.
Trail connections to shopping centers and major areas of employment will improve bikeability in the county.	The plan addresses this comment.
Concerns over pedestrian bike conflict of sidewalks.	The plan addresses this comment.
Concerns over steep climbs along trail.	The trail typically follows County Road 19/Keats Avenue and will mirror grades on the adjacent roadway.
Amenities suggested that would improve the Central Greenway Trail include: drinking fountains, signage to local trails, signage indicating time to major destinations, shelters to provide cover during rain and snow events, and restrooms.	The plan addresses this comment with rest stops planned and connections to local and regional parks and facilities.
Winter plowing of trails would be great.	The plan addresses this comment.
Include signage for connecting to local trail network.	The plan addresses this comment.

Figure 17: Summary of public comments and responses

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Section VIII: Public Awareness

Washington County uses public relations, marketing, and media relations tools, such as a website, event planning, press releases, and promotional materials to promote their parks and trails. Washington County also collaborates with a wide array of community, business, and government organizations to promote their facilities, programs, and services and to educate the public about the available resources.

Washington County Parks engages the public through several on-line and social media tools. The County website has a page dedicated to parks and trails that provides information on the parks and trails across the county, lists information about programs and events, explains how individuals can support the park system by donating or volunteering, and provides information and a link for reservations and permits. Washington County actively posts information on Twitter and Facebook to share news and information about the park system.

Opportunities for expanding social media and on-line resources for public awareness will likely expand in the future as new media tools and new platforms become available. Younger park users frequently access public service information on-line and will continue to seek additional ways to engage with the County about the park system through social media.

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Section IX: Accessibility

Washington County is committed to providing access and recreational opportunities to all people, including persons with disabilities, minorities, and other special-population groups. Washington County meets this commitment through appropriate facility design and programming considerations and by actively addressing potential barriers to participation.

All regional trail facilities described in the master plan will be developed in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and guidelines. More specifically, the Central Greenway Regional Trail will adhere to the Minnesota Bikeway Facility Design Manual (MnDOT 2007); Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines (MnDNR 2007); Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access, Part I and II: Best Practices Design Guide (FHWA); ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (United States Access Board); and ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (U.S. Access Board) unless more current guidelines and standards exist at the time of development.

All unconstructed segments and those associated with regional trail reconstruction, associated trailheads and trail amenities, such as rest stops, parking, rest rooms and water access, will be designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities. In addition, the paved trail will safely accommodate two-way directional non-motor vehicle traffic and incorporate periodic rest stops to provide users an opportunity to rest, overlook the natural environment, and comfortably interact with other trail users.

Compliance with ADA standards is an important goal of trail design. Routing the trail within existing street right-of-way makes it a challenge to fully comply with ADA standards in certain areas. Washington County and local municipalities have made every attempt to identify a trail route that minimizes these occurrences. Parking is available at existing local parks, shopping centers, and regional parks on and along the trail. Regional and community parks function as trailheads for the proposed trail in addition to other identified key orientation points along the trail.

Crossing major roadways is necessary because the trail passes through fully developed urban areas. Washington County will investigate opportunities to coordinate grade-separated pedestrian crossings with appropriate agencies, modify, or add traffic signal timing, crosswalks and signage to ensure the trail meets all relevant design guidelines. The trail has also been planned to provide access to important local community destinations such as parks, commercial areas, community facilities, and transit facilities. The regional trail passes through a variety of neighborhoods with varying demographics, providing access to people with a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds.

On a broader scale, the Central Greenway Regional Trail provides direct access to the metropolitan regional trail system for an area currently under served by regional trails. Communities adjacent to the trail will not only have access to the Central Greenway Regional Trail, but also gain direct access to three existing regional parks/park reserves. Local trail connections are anticipated at regular intervals along the trail to further increase access to neighboring communities.

Affordability

Trails are free to use in Washington County, providing a recreational opportunity to residents of all income levels. The Central Greenway Regional Trail will also provide access to the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park without purchase of a parking pass. Park access fees are not charged for patrons who walk or bicycle into parks. Trail users who access Washington County parks will have access to free programming for park users including campfire talks, fitness hikes, bird walks and other programs coordinated with free Tuesdays.

The Washington County Parks Division and Community Services is working to provide free park permits to individuals who receive financial assistance from the County.

References

» Metropolitan Council, "Annual Use Estimate of Metropolitan Regional Parks System for 2014," Metropolitan Council, July 2015.

» Metropolitan Council, "2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan," Metropolitan Council, St. Paul, MN. February 2015.

» Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, "Minnesota's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2014-2018". Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, MN 2014.

» Health and obesity data retrieved from Minnesota Department of Health website: https://apps.health.state.mn.us/mndata/obesity_basic#byage.

Appendix A: Detailed Cost Estimate

Estimated Project Construction Cost	Estimated Quantity	Unit of Measurement	Estimated Unit Cost	Estimated Total Cost	Notes
North Segment (I-94 to Bailey Road)					
Existing 8' Trail Removal	3,200	Lin Ft	$16.00	$51,200	
Trail Construction	3,200	Lin Ft	$90.00	$288,000	
Pedestrian Ramps	9	Each	$2,000.00	$18,000	
Wayfinding Directional Signage	7	Each	$4,000.00	$28,000	
Wayfinding Kiosk	2	Each	$20,000.00	$40,000	
Rest Stops	1	Each	$6,000.00	$6,000	
Traffic Control Signs and Devices (includes MUTCD signage)	21,120	Lin Ft	$1.00	$21,120	
			North Segment Total	**$452,000**	
South Segment (Bailey Road to Ravine Park Entrance)					
Existing 8' Trail Removal	5,230	Lin Ft	$16.00	$83,680	3
Trail Construction	27,700	Lin Ft	$90.00	$2,493,000	5
Wayfinding Directional Signage	4	Each	$4,000.00	$16,000	10
Wayfinding Kiosk	3	Each	$20,000.00	$60,000	
Rest Stops	1	Each	$6,000.00	$6,000	
Traffic Control Signs and Devices (includes MUTCD signage)	30,000	Lin Ft	$1.50	$45,000	
Pairie and Pollinator Habitat Planting	14	Acres	$6,000.00	$81,000	8
			South Segment Total	**$2,785,000**	
Trail Underpasses					
Underpass north of Valley Creek Road (Improvements)	1	Lump Sum	$450,000.00	$450,000	9
Underpass at 85th Street South (New Structure)	1	Lump Sum	$900,000.00	$900,000	9
Underpass at future Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park entrance (south of 90th Street South) (New Structure)	1	Lump Sum	$900,000.00	$900,000	9
			Underpasses Total	**$2,250,000**	
Subtotal Construction Cost Estimate				**$5,487,000**	
20% Construction Contingency				**$1,097,000**	
Subtotal Construction Cost Estimate with Construction Contingency				**$6,584,000**	
20% Design and Engineering Contingency				**$1,317,000**	
Total Estimated Construction Cost				**$7,901,000**	

Future Property Acquisitions (2017 tax assessed values)	Acres	Cost
Acquisition Area A	0.25	$20,000.00
Acquisition Area B	4.25	$164,000.00
Acquisition Area C	0.6	$11,500.00
Acquisition Area D	2	$275,000.00
Total Anticipated Acquisition Cost in 2017 Dollars	**7.1**	**$470,500.00**

D2 Segment					
Trail Construction	8,500	Lin Ft	$90.00	$765,000	
Traffic Control Signs and Devices (includes MUTCD signage)	8,500	Lin Ft	$1.00	$8,500	
Wayfinding Directional Signage	2	Each	$4,000.00	$8,000	
			D2 Segment Total	**$782,000**	
20% Construction Contingency for D2 Segment				$156,400	
20% Design and Engineering Contingency for D2 Segment				$156,400	
			Total Estimated Cost for D2 Segment	**$1,094,800**	

Estimated Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs	Estimated Cost	Notes
Equipment Costs	$7,100	11
Staff Wages	$8,900	12
Total Estimated Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs	**$16,000**	

Estimate Notes

1. Construction cost estimate includes a 20% design and administration fee and an additional 20% construction contingency factor for unforeseen costs.

2. Estimates are based on current 2017 construction costs.

3. Existing trail removal assumes 8' wide bituminous trail or concrete walk. Actual dimensions may vary.

4. Estimate does not include any utility relocation costs except as noted for trail underpass.

5. Existing trail construction assumes 10' wide bituminous trail, turf establishment, and signage. Estimate does not include any retaining walls or streetscaping such as boulevard trees and decorative lighting.

6. Estimate includes items such as removing and reinstalling curb and gutter, driveway aprons and storm sewer catch basins.

7. Segments of existing trail do not conform to regional trail design standards. In light of recent construction of certain segments, the trail will stay in its current condition. When road reconstruction occurs in the future, the trail will be reconstructed to meet regional trail design standards.

8. Native prairie planting for pollinator species assumes planting area is 20 feet wide, length of segments C-F. Cost includes seed purchase, planting, mowing, burn and weed control by hired contractor. Assuming internal County staff undertakes work, cost estimated at $1,256 per acre.

9. Trail underpass price includes contingency costs for utility relocation, traffic control, construction and contractor safety.

10. Directional signs will increase from 4 to 6 if Segment D2 is implemented.

11. Equipment costs based on anticipated service needs; including, plowing, sanding, mowing, sweeping, and grooming.

12. Based on estimated 184 staff hours needed to annually to perform maintenance tasks.

Appendix B: Rare Species List

This appendix includes a complete list of rare species found within one mile of the Central Greenway Regional Trail.

A one-mile buffer surrounding the project limits was evaluated for the presence of rare plants, animals, native plant communities, and other rare features using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in conjunction with the MnDNR's Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS)[1]. The Natural Heritage data is provided by the MnDNR's Division of Ecological Resources and Water Resources, and was current as of December 2014 (License Agreement 625). These data are not based on an exhaustive inventory of the state. The lack of data for any geographic area shall not be construed to mean that no significant features are present.

Species:

» Bald Eagle

» Loggerhead Shrike

» Western Fox Snake

» Blanding's Turtle

» Peregrine Falcon

» Pugnose Shiner

» Least Darter

[1] Copyright 2014 State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources.

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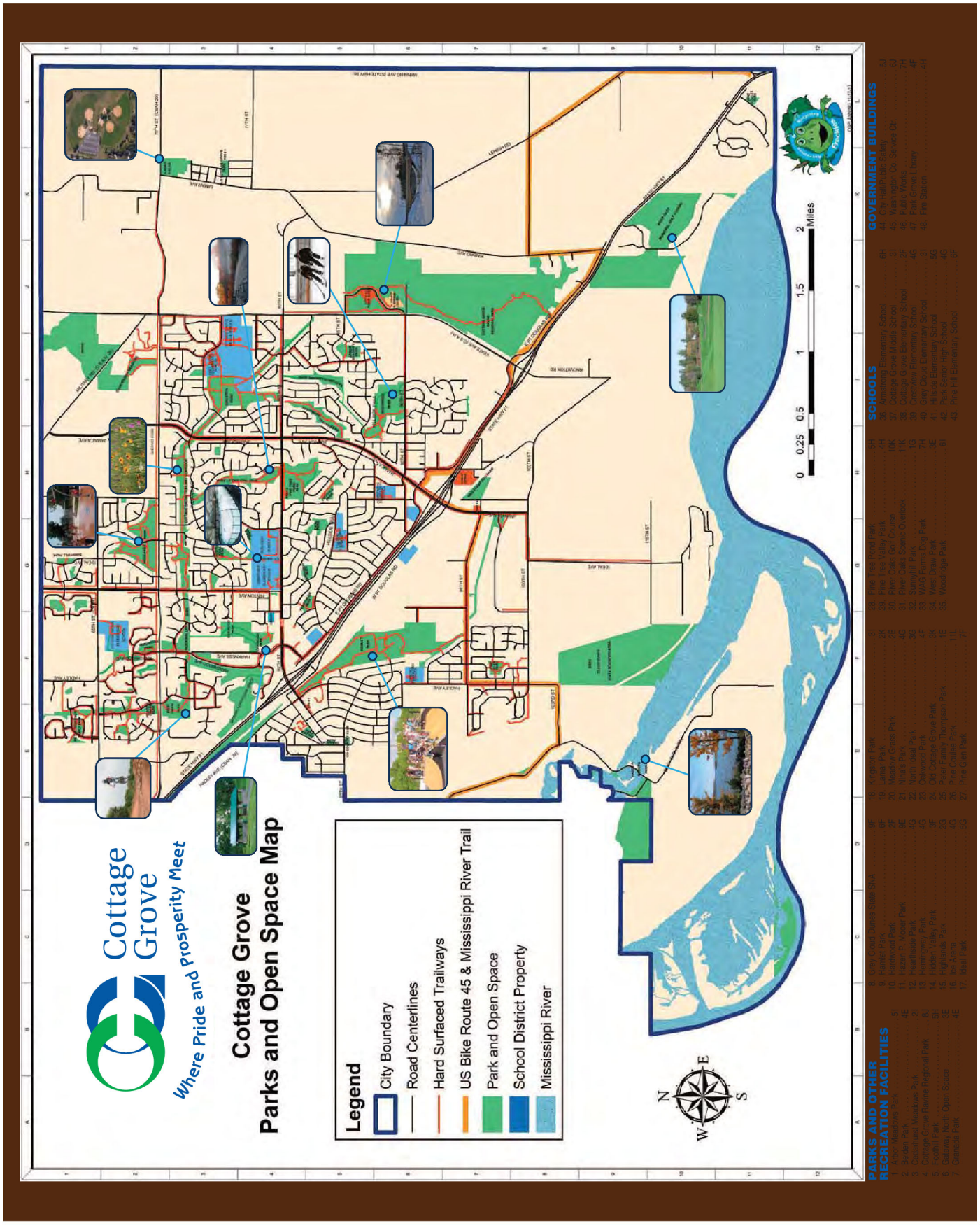
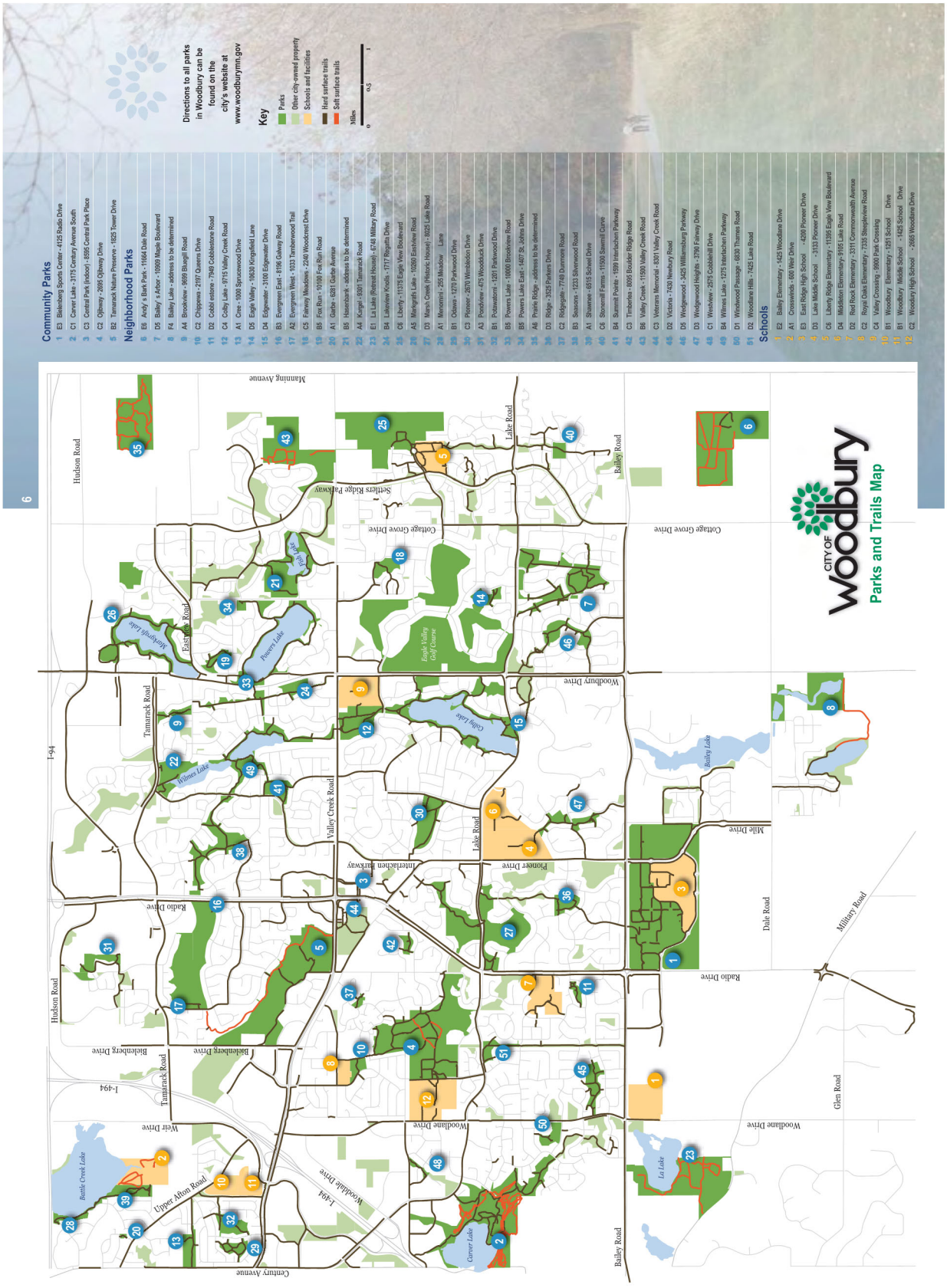
Appendix C: Local Trail Maps

City of Cottage Grove Park and Trail Map



City of Woodbury Park and Trail Map



Appendix D: Resolutions of Support

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

August 25, 2017

Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Support for the Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan submitted to the Metropolitan Council

Dear Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space Commission:

The City of Cottage Grove is pleased to provide this letter of support for Washington County's Central Greenway Regional Trail master plan proposal to the Metropolitan Council. The planned development of this trail in the City of Cottage Grove is an important part of the regional trail system. The master plan conforms to the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan and will be identified in the upcoming 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will benefit surrounding communities and further the development of a trail network within Cottage Grove. The trail will run along County Road 19/Keats Avenue allowing trail users safe off-road access to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. Ultimately, this trail will provide a needed link in the regional trail system that will connect Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and Big Marine Park Reserve.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 651-458-2808.

Sincerely,

Zac Dockter
Parks and Recreation Director

CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE • 12800 Ravine Parkway • Cottage Grove, Minnesota 55016
www.cottage-grove.org • 651-458-2800 • Fax 651-458-2897 • Equal Opportunity Employer

CITY OF Woodbury

8301 Valley Creek Road • Woodbury, Minnesota 55125-3330 • www.ci.woodbury.mn.us
651/714-3500 • TDD 651/714-3568 • FAX 651/714-3501

August 30, 2017

Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Re: Support for the Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan Submitted to the Metropolitan Council

Dear Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space Commission:

The City of Woodbury is pleased to provide this letter of support for Washington County's Central Greenway Regional Trail master plan proposal to the Metropolitan Council. The planned development of this trail in the City of Woodbury is an important part of the local and regional trail system. The master plan conforms to the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan and will be identified in the upcoming 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

The Central Greenway Regional Trail will benefit surrounding communities and further the development of a trail network within Woodbury. The trail will run along County Road 19/Keats Avenue allowing trail users safe off-road access to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. Ultimately, this trail will provide a needed link in the regional trail system that will connect Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and Big Marine Park Reserve.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (651) 714-3576.

Sincerely,

Mary Giuliani Stephens
Mayor

MA/bjr

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
Duluth – 1973	1.0% until September 30, 2019 1.5% as of October 1, 2019	City council approval Approved by voters at a 2017 general election	The tax may be used for any city purpose, as determined by the city council. No expiration date. In 2019, the city was granted authority to increase the tax by an additional 0.5%, based on voter approval at the city's 2017 general election, to fund improvements as outlined in its 2017 Street Improvement Plan. The additional tax expires at the earlier of 25 years after imposition or when revenues are sufficient to fund the improvements.
Rochester – 1983	0.5% until December 31, 2015 0.75% as of January 1, 2016	All but 1989 and 2013 extensions required voter approval at a general or special election	This tax has been renewed or extended six times, in 1989, 1992, 1998, 2005, 2011, and 2013. Initially enacted at 1.0% to raise $16 million for a civic center and $16 million for flood control; the rate was lowered to 0.5% in 1992. The 1998 extension allows the city to raise another $76 million for various higher education, transportation, and sewer capital projects. The tax extension in the 2005 special legislative session allowed another $40 million to be raised for a joint road project with Olmsted County. In 2011, the tax was extended again to fund an additional $139.5 million in projects if approved by the voters at the 2012 general election. However, $5 million of the new $139.5 million must be shared with small cities surrounding Rochester for economic development purposes in those communities. In 2013, the city was granted authority to extend the tax to 2049 and/or increase the existing rate by one-quarter of 1.0% without a referendum to generate additional revenue to pay the city's required match to get state aid to fund the Destination Medical Center (DMC) project. The city chose to increase the rate beginning January 1, 2016.
Minneapolis – 1986	0.5%	Approval of the city's board of estimate and taxation, and after imposition of the local restaurant and lodging taxes	Fund construction and maintenance of the convention center. In 1992, the city was authorized to use excess proceeds for neighborhood early learning centers but the city has not done so. The tax expires when all bonds are paid off. In 2009, the use of the revenue was modified to allow the city to use revenues collected in excess of the convention center bond payments for other city purposes. For CY 2009 and 2010, the excess revenues could be used for any purpose. Beginning in CY 2011, the excess revenues could only be used to fund capital projects to further economic development. In 2012, the tax was extended to 2046 without a referendum to help fund the city's share of a new football stadium. Beginning in 2021, when the current convention center bonds are paid off, the state will annually retain a portion of the city's sales tax revenues to reimburse it for the city's share of the stadium costs.

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
			Excess revenue not needed to pay off the convention center bonds or the football stadium may be used to support a basketball arena as well as fund other economic development capital projects in the city.
Mankato – 1991	0.5%	Reverse referendum for initial approval invoked by petition of 10% of voters in the 1992 general election; the 2017 change was approved at the 2016 general election	To fund capital and operations of the Riverfront project, including a sports arena. In 1996 this was expanded to allow $4.5 million for an airport project. The tax was extended again in the 2005 special legislative session to allow up to $1.5 million annually to fund operating costs of the Riverfront facility based on approval by the voters at a general or special election. The tax was to expire no later than 2018. In 2008 the allowed uses of the tax were modified to exclude operating costs and include capital costs of an attached performing arts theatre and a women's hockey exposition center used by Minnesota State University, Mankato. The expiration date was moved to December 31, 2022. A reverse referendum for these changes could have been invoked by a petition of 10% of the voters at the 2008 general election, but was not. In 2009, the requirement that the performing arts center and hockey center be attached to the Riverfront facility was removed. In 2017, the city was allowed to extend the tax to pay for up to an additional $47 million in various recreational, transit, water, and other capital projects of regional significance. The tax will now expire at the earlier of (1) when revenues are sufficient to pay for the projects and associated bond costs, or (2) December 31, 2038.
St. Paul – 1993	0.5%	A city resolution passed before July 1, 1993, stating the intent to impose the tax	40% must be used to fund capital costs of the civic center, which includes the hockey arena; the remainder may be used for other neighborhood projects. The allowed uses of the remaining 60% of the revenues have been modified over time, most recently in 2009. In 2013 the law was amended to allow any excess of the 40% amount not needed for the civic center and hockey arena to go into an economic development fund rather than neighborhood projects. This allows excess revenues to be used to fund a minor league ballpark. The tax was set to expire December 31, 2030, but the 2013 law extended it to December 31, 2042.
Hermantown – 1996	0.5% Changed to 1.0% on April 1, 2013	Required voter approval at a general or special election for original; increase approved at 2012 general election; the 2017 extension was	The projects included water and sewer projects and a police/fire station. The tax expires at the later of ten years or when sufficient funds have been raised for the three projects. A 2008 provision added water system improvements to the list of approved projects. In 2011 the city was given authority to increase the tax by an additional 0.5% if approved at the 2012 general election because the original authority had been to impose up to a 1.0% tax and the revenues from the 0.5% tax

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
		approved at the 2016 general election	were insufficient to fund the authorized projects. In 2017, the city was allowed to use tax revenues to fund a city wellness center, and the expiration date was changed to the earlier of (1) when revenues are sufficient to fund the authorized projects, or (2) December 31, 2036.
Two Harbors – 1998	0.5% Changed to 1.0% on October 1, 2019	Required voter approval at the 1998 general election	The projects included sewer separation, wastewater treatment, and harbor development projects. The tax expires when sufficient funds have been raised for the three projects. In 2019, the city was allowed to impose an additional 0.5% tax to fund another $30 million of water and sewer infrastructure projects provided they are enumerated in a separate resolution (see page 3). This additional tax expires at the earlier of 25 years or when funds are sufficient to pay for the allowed projects.
Proctor – 1999	0.5% Changed to 1.0% on October 1, 2017	Required voter approval at a special election held November 2, 1999	Funded community center and transportation projects. Tax expires when sufficient funds to pay for up to $3.6 million in bonds for the center have been raised. A 2008 provision allowed up to another $7.2 million in capital projects in the areas of public utilities, sidewalks, bikeways and trails, and parks and recreation. In 2010 legislation was introduced to replace the two separate bond authorities of $3.6 million and $7.2 million with one authority for $20 million, but the final provision signed into law replaced it with a combined authority of $10 million. In 2017, the tax rate was allowed to increase to 1.0% but the amount allowed to be raised before the tax expires remains unchanged.
New Ulm – 1999	0.5%	Required voter approval at the 1999 general election; the 2017 change was approved at the 2016 general election	Funded a civic and community center project. Tax expires when sufficient funds to pay for up to $9 million in bonds for the center have been raised. In 2017, the city was allowed to use the tax to pay for an additional $14.8 million in bonds to fund a number of recreational facilities with the expiration of the tax delayed until revenues are sufficient to pay off these new bonds.
Central Minnesota Cities – 2002 (includes St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell, St. Augusta, St. Joseph, and Waite Park)	0.5%	Required voter approval at a general election in each city	Funded improvements of the St. Cloud airport and other capital projects in each city. The authorizing referenda in St. Joseph and Waite Park originally failed so the tax was not imposed in those cities, but in 2005, Waite Park was allowed to impose the tax based on a successful 2004 referendum. In 2005, the group of cities was allowed to replace this tax with an identical tax to fund a new regional library in St. Cloud and other capital projects in each city. Imposition required voter approval at a general election, which passed in all cities, including St. Joseph. The tax was to expire in 2018, however, during the 2013 legislative session, each city was granted authority to extend the tax until 2038, provided it was approved at a local

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
			referendum by November 7, 2017. The referendum authorizing the extension must list the additional projects to be funded.
Albert Lea – 2005	0.5%	Required voter approval at the 2006 general election, or a special election on November 8, 2005	Fund a lake improvement project. Expires at the earlier of ten years or when $15 million is raised. In 2014, the ten-year expiration date was extended to 15 years after the date imposed, because the annual revenues generated have been less than expected. In 2017, the 15-year termination date was extended to the earlier of 30 years or when $30 million is raised.
Bemidji – 2005	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2002 general election	Fund park and trail improvements. Expires when revenues are raised to pay $9.826 million in bonds.
Austin – 2006	0.5%	Voter approval at a general or special election before January 1, 2007	Fund flood mitigation projects. Expires at the earlier of 20 years or when revenues are sufficient to pay $14 million in bonds. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city general fund.
Baxter – 2006	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2004 general election	Fund joint water and wastewater facilities for the cities of Baxter and Brainerd and a fire substation for Baxter. Expires at the earlier of 12 years or when revenues are sufficient to pay $15 million in bonds. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city capital project fund. The tax was set to expire in early 2015, however in 2014 the law was modified to allow the city to extend the tax to December 31, 2037, to fund payment of up to an additional $40 million in bonds if approved by voters at the 2014 general election. $8 million of the additional spending must be used on improvements to the Brainerd Lakes Area Airport with the remainder available for sanitary and storm sewer projects and transportation safety improvements.
Brainerd – 2006	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2004 general election	Fund joint water and wastewater facilities for the cities of Baxter and Brainerd and trail improvements. Expires at the earlier of 12 years or when revenues are sufficient to pay $15 million in bonds. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city capital project fund. In 2014 the law was modified to allow the city to extend the tax for an additional 18 years and spend another $15 million for water and wastewater infrastructure and trails if approved by voters at the 2014 general election. The extension was set to coincide with the extension authorized in the neighboring city of Baxter.
Hennepin County – 2006	0.15%	No voter approval required	Fund up to $260 million in costs for a baseball stadium plus up to $4 million annually (adjusted for inflation) to fund youth, youth sports, and county libraries. Expires

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
			when the stadium bonds are paid off or when reserves from the tax are sufficient to pay the bonds. In 2011 the law was modified to include a definition of "sufficient reserves."
Clearwater – 2008	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2006 general election	Fund the acquisition, construction, and improvement of a pedestrian bridge and land and buildings for a community recreation center. In 2011 the allowed uses were expanded to include park and recreation projects contained in the city's adopted 2006 improvement plan. In 2013 the projects included in the 2006 improvement plan were explicitly listed in the law since the city had never formally adopted the 2006 plan. Expires at the later of 20 years after imposition or when revenues are sufficient to fund $12 million in bonds. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city general fund.
Cook County – 2008	1.0%	Voter approval at a general or special election before December 31, 2009	Fund the construction and improvements to a county community center and recreation area, including a skateboard park, hockey rink, ball fields, tennis courts, and associated improvements and the Grand Marais public library. Expires at the later of 20 years after imposition or when revenues are sufficient to fund $14 million in bonds. Any excess revenue is deposited in the county general fund. In 2009 the authority to use revenues for a skateboard park, hockey rink, ball fields, and tennis courts was eliminated, and the use was expanded to include construction and improvement of a high-speed communication infrastructure network and a district energy plant for public facilities in Grand Marais. The bonding authority was increased from $14 million to $20 million.
North Mankato – 2008	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2006 general election; the 2017 change was approved at the 2016 general election	Fund up to $6 million in capital costs for the local share of the Trunk Highway 14/County State-Aid Highway 41 interchange project, the Taylor library, regional parks and trails, riverfront development, and lake improvement projects. Expires when revenues are sufficient to fund the $6 million in bonds plus associated bond costs. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city capital project fund. In 2017, the city was allowed to fund up to an additional $9 million in bonds to fund regional athletic facilities with the tax terminating at the earlier of (1) when revenues are sufficient to fund the authorized projects, or (2) December 31, 2038.
Hutchinson – 2011	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2010 general election	Fund the costs of constructing the city's water treatment facility and renovating the city's wastewater treatment facility. Expires at the earlier of 18 years or when revenues are sufficient to pay for the projects and associated bond costs. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city general fund.

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
Lanesboro – 2011	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2010 general election	Fund up to $800,000 in improvements to the local dam, city streets and utilities, and municipal buildings. Expires when revenues are sufficient to fund the projects plus associated bond costs. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city general fund.
Cloquet – 2011	0.5%	Voter approval at a general election	Fund up to $16.5 million in park and specified infrastructure improvements. The tax expires at the earlier of 30 years after imposition, or when revenues are sufficient to fund the authorized projects and associated bond costs.
Marshall – 2011	0.5%	Voter approval at a general election within two years	Fund up to $17.29 million in costs of an emergency response and industry training center and regional amateur sports center. The tax expires at the earlier of 15 years after imposition, or when revenues are sufficient to fund the authorized projects and associated bond costs.
Medford – 2011	0.5%	Voter approval at the 2012 general election	To repay up to $4.2 million in loans from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority to improve the city's water and wastewater treatment facilities. The tax expires at the earlier of 20 years after imposition, or when revenues are sufficient to repay the loans.
Olmsted County – 2013	0.25%	Approval by the county board	To fund the county's match required to fund public transit for the Destination Medical Center (DMC) project. A wheelage tax of $10 per vehicle was also imposed. The taxes expire December 31, 2049, or earlier if sufficient revenues are collected to meet the county match. The county may use excess funds collected in any year, beyond what is needed to meet the DMC match, for other county transportation and transit projects.
East Grand Forks – 2017	1.0%	Approved at a special election held March 7, 2016	Fund up to $2.82 million in bonds to finance improvement to the city swimming pool. Expires at the earlier of 25 years after imposition or when the revenues are sufficient to pay the bonds.
Fairmont – 2017	0.5%	Approved at the 2016 general election	Fund up to $15 million in various recreational projects including a community center and trails. Expires at the earlier of 25 years after imposition or when the revenues are sufficient to pay for the projects and associated bond costs.
Fergus Falls – 2017	0.5%	Approved at the 2016 general election	Fund up to $9.8 million in bonds to expand and improve the public library. Expires at the earlier of 12 years after imposition or when the revenues are sufficient to pay the bonds.
Moose Lake – 2017	0.5%	Approved at the 2012 general election	Fund up to $3 million in bonds for parks, street, and municipal arena improvements. Expires at the earlier of 20 years after imposition or when the revenues are sufficient to pay the bonds.

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
New London – 2017	0.5%	Approved at the 2016 general election	Fund up to $872,000 of capital projects including construction of a library, community room, and ambulance bay, and improvements to a senior citizen center. Expires at the earlier of 20 years after imposition or when the revenues are equal to $872,000 plus the associated bond costs.
Spicer – 2017	0.5%	Approved at the 2016 general election	Fund $800,000 in bonds to finance improvements for public safety, parks and trails, and community facilities. Expires at the earlier of ten years after imposition or when the revenues are equal to $800,000 plus the associated bond costs.
Walker – 2017	1.5%	Approved at the 2012 general election	Fund up to $20 million in bonds for street, gutter, and sidewalk projects. Expires at the earlier of 20 years after imposition or when the revenues are equal to the project costs plus the associated bond costs.
Clay County – 2017	0.5%	Approved at the 2016 general election	Fund up to $52 million in bonds for a new correctional facility, law enforcement center, and associated parking. Expires at the earlier of 20 years after imposition or when the revenues are equal to $52 million plus the associated bond costs.
Garrison, Kathio, West Mille Lacs Lake Sanitary District – 2017	1.0%	Approved at the 2016 general election	Repay up to $10 million in bonds and other debt related to the sewer service agreement between the district and ML Wastewater Inc., including sewer extension costs. Expires at the earlier of 20 years after imposition or when the revenues are equal to $10 million plus the associated bond costs.
Avon – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund up to $1.5 million in transportation improvement projects. The city was required to enumerate the specific projects in a separate resolution (see page 3). The tax terminates at the earlier of December 31, 2045, or when revenues are equal to $1.5 million plus associated bond costs.
Blue Earth (city) – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund up to $5 million in various sewer, street, and recreational improvement projects. The city was required to enumerate the specific projects in a separate resolution (see page 3). The tax terminates at the earlier of 25 years after imposition or when revenues are equal to $5 million plus associated bond costs.
Cambridge – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund up to $8 million for a library and $14 million for street improvement projects. The city was required to enumerate the specific projects in a separate resolution (see page 3). The tax terminates at the earlier of December 31, 2043, or when revenues are equal to $5 million plus associated bond costs.
Detroit Lakes – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund up to $6.7 million for a new police facility. The tax terminates at the earlier of ten years after imposition or when revenues are equal to $6.7 million plus associated bond costs.

Table 2

Currently Imposed Local Sales Taxes

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
Elk River – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund $35 million for a number of enumerated park and recreational facilities, dredging Lake Orono, and building trail connections. The tax terminates at the earlier of 25 years after imposition or when revenues are equal to $35 million plus associated bond costs.
Excelsior – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2014 general election	Fund $7 million of improvements to the city commons included in the 2017 Commons Master Plan. The tax terminates at the earlier of 25 years after imposition or when revenues are equal to $7 million plus associated bond costs.
International Falls – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund up to $30 million of transportation and other infrastructure projects. The city was required to enumerate the specific projects in a separate resolution (see page 3). The tax terminates at the earlier of 30 years after imposition or when revenues are equal to $30 million plus associated bond costs.
Rogers – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund $16.5 million of specified projects including trail and pedestrian projects; aquatic facilities, and various improvements at the South Community Park. The city is also imposing a $20 motor vehicle excise tax for the same purpose. The taxes terminate at the earlier of 20 years after imposition or when revenues are equal to $16.5 million plus associated bond costs.
Willmar – 2019	0.5%	Approved at the 2018 general election	Fund $30 million of specified recreation and stormwater infrastructure projects. The city is also imposing a $20 motor vehicle excise tax for the same purpose. The taxes terminate at the earlier of 13 years after imposition or when revenues are equal to $30 million plus associated bond costs.

Table 3

Local Sales Taxes That Were Imposed But Have Expired

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
Cook County – 1993	1.0%	Required voter approval at a general or special election	Originally set to expire when $4 million was raised for the Cook County hospital. Extended in 1997 to allow an additional $2.2 million to be raised for the North Shore care center. Expired April 1, 2008.

Table 3

Local Sales Taxes That Were Imposed But Have Expired

Taxing Jurisdiction & Year Authorized	Rate	Approval Required	Use of Revenues/Other Comments
Willmar – 1997	0.5%	Required voter approval at the 1996 general election	Funded library improvements. Expired December 31, 2001, after $4.5 million was raised.
Winona – 1998	0.5%	Required voter approval at the 1998 general election	Dredged Lake Winona. Expired December 31, 2001, after raising $4.0 million.
Willmar – 2005	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2004 general election	Funded an airport, park and trails, and civic center improvement projects. Expired at the later of seven years or when revenues raised were sufficient to pay $8 million in bonds. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city general fund. Expired December 31, 2012.
Worthington – 2005	0.5%	Voter approval by a general election held before December 31, 2009	Funded a community center and renovations to the Memorial Auditorium. Originally expired at the earlier of ten years or when revenues raised were sufficient to pay $6 million in bonds. In 2014 the city was granted authority to extend the tax through 2039 if revenues were used to pay for the city's share of the local match needed to get state aid to fund the Lewis and Clark water project. In 2017, the city was allowed to extend the tax to fund an additional $1.3 million in bonds, subject to a reverse referendum, to construct public athletic facilities. The tax expired September 30, 2018.
Owatonna – 2006	0.5%	Required voter approval at the 2006 general election	Funded transportation projects, regional parks and trails, a fire hall, and library improvements. Expired at the earlier of ten years or when revenues were sufficient to pay $12.7 million in bonds. Expired June 30, 2011.
Fergus Falls – 2011	0.5%	Based on voter approval at the 2010 general election	Funded up to $6 million in costs related to a community ice arena facility. Expired when revenues raises are sufficient to finance the facility and pay associated bond costs. Any excess revenue is deposited in the city general fund. Expired December 31, 2016.

City Council Action Request

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

3I

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Five Year Staffing Reports
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A

Attachments

9.1a Department Staffing Plans Memo.tif	562.22KB
9.1b Administration Staffing Plan.tif	11.57MB
9.1c Community Development Staffing Plan.tif	16.22MB
9.1d CD Strategic planning computations jan 2022.tif	258.99KB
9.1e Finance Staffing Plan.tif	2.17MB
9.1f Parks and Rec RecIceRO Staffing Memo.tif	702.59KB
9.1g Parks and Rec Parks Maintenance Staffing Plan.tif	9.43MB
9.1h Public Safety Staffing Plan.tif	11.56MB
9.1i PS Appendix A Speciality and Extra Duties.tif	985.26KB
9.1j Public Works Staffing Plan.tif	8.4MB
9.2a 2021 Employee Survey Memo.tif	3.38MB
9.2b 2021 General Employee Survey Results.tif	7.32MB
9.2c 2021 Employee Survey General Report.tif	8.38MB

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator

DATE: January 13, 2022

RE: Department Staffing Plans

Background

As the City of Cottage Grove continues to grow, a plan to address future programs and services in an affordable manner is critical to effective financial planning. The City Administrator and Department Directors developed departmental staffing plans to identify staffing requirements which meet the needs of a growing population and a thriving, local economic market.

Discussion

The staffing plans created by each department take a forward look at the City's needs to maintain the current service levels that Cottage Grove residents and businesses expect and take into account the projected growth in the City over the next five year.

The departmental staffing plans create an action plan to accomplish strategic growth goals established by the City Council. These five-year staffing plans are not a budget. However, the plan is intended to be used to set the stage for each year's budget process, subject to change based upon available resources, changes in the economy and environment, and Council's direction.

Recommendation

1. What data or information is still needed with a department's plan that you would like to see before the February 9 and February 23, 2022 meetings?

2. What concerns you about future operations and services?

3. What operations or service needs have not been addressed and should be?

Attachments

Administration Staffing Plan
Community Development Staffing Plan
Finance Staffing Plan
Parks and Recreation – Recreation, Ice Arena, and River Oaks Staffing Memo
Parks and Recreation – Parks Maintenance Staffing Plan
Public Safety Staffing Plan
Public Works Staffing Plan

ADMINISTRATION

Staffing Strategy Report 2022-2026

Executive Summary

The Administration Department consists of several divisions including city clerk, human resources, communications, economic development and the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The City Administrator is proposing to move Information Technology (IT) division under the Administration Department in 2023. That division is currently under the Finance Department and future staffing will be outlined in the Finance Department's section of their report. The Administration Department has the following nine regular positions. The Economic Development Director position is currently vacant.

City Administrator	Human Resources Manager/City Clerk	Deputy City Clerk
Communications Manager	Marketing & Communications Specialist	Assistant to the City Administrator
Payroll Specialist	Economic Development Director	Administration Specialist

In 2022, staff used budget savings to promote the administration Intern to a full-time administration specialist. Staff will be looking to keep this position in 2023 and beyond. Salary and benefits would be about $57,000 annually.

In 2021, we hired the marketing and communications specialist position with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. That funding runs out the end of 2024. As we look to maintain and increase our communications efforts, we would also propose to fund this position in 2025 and beyond to support the Cottage Grove Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Salary and benefits would be about $110,000. Increasing the city's social media presence strategically and effectively — should the City Council choose to make this a priority — will require an additional communications staff person to monitor, answer questions when appropriate, keep abreast of new social media tools, etc. Protecting and building the city's image through social media use requires a specific skillset and training in social media. This is a position that should not be absorbed by other city staff who do not have proper training. The cost of adding a 1.0 FTE social media specialist is projected at $82,000 for salary and benefits.

As detailed below, staff is proposing that Washington County take over elections administration in 2023. It would cost approximately $11,000 more per year but that number does not include the number of hours the human resources manager/city clerk and deputy city clerk dedicate to the election.

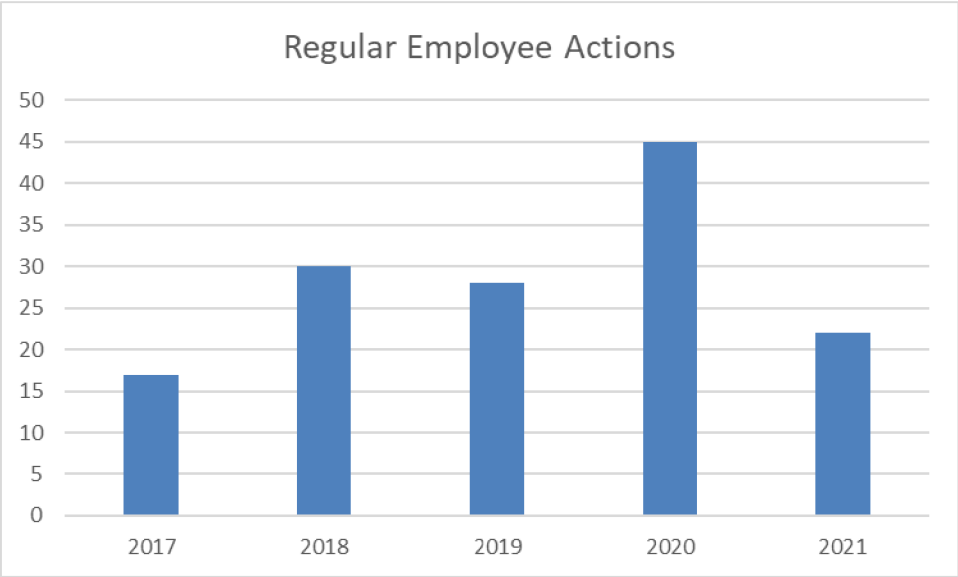
Hiring an economic development director and shifting elections to Washington County will allow the assistant to the city administrator and human resources manager/city clerk to devote more time to diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

Human Resources/Payroll

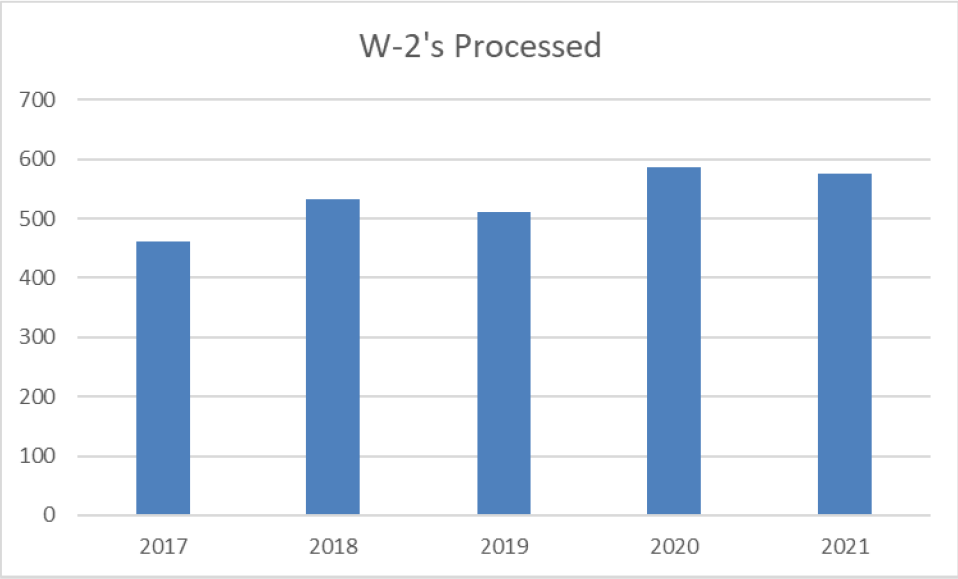
The Human Resources Division is responsible for hiring, payroll, benefits, safety, wellness, labor relations and policy development. A majority of this work is completed by the human resources manager/city clerk, deputy city clerk and payroll specialist.

The chart below shows the regular employee actions over the past five years. These actions include job description creation and review, posting the position, accepting applications, interviewing for the position and onboarding the selected candidate. This process can take anywhere from a couple weeks to a couple months with public safety positions taking the longest. As the chart shows, the number of employee actions fluctuates from year to year with 2020 being the

high year at 45. Most of the time, the number of actions depends on three factors: budget additions, resignations and retirements.



The number of W-2s processed annually shows how many employees were on staff throughout the year. This includes all full-time, part-time, seasonal and election judge staff. Most employees are paid bi-weekly with City Council members and part-time fire department staff paid once per month. Election judges are paid a week following each election. There is quite a bit of turnover in seasonal staff and election judges — probably around 50% each year. Thus, staff must have new employees complete the new hire paperwork and enter the employee in the payroll system. The City did get new software in 2021 that allows applicants to complete all the paperwork electronically. This should save staff time reviewing and inputting all the necessary paperwork today and into the future.



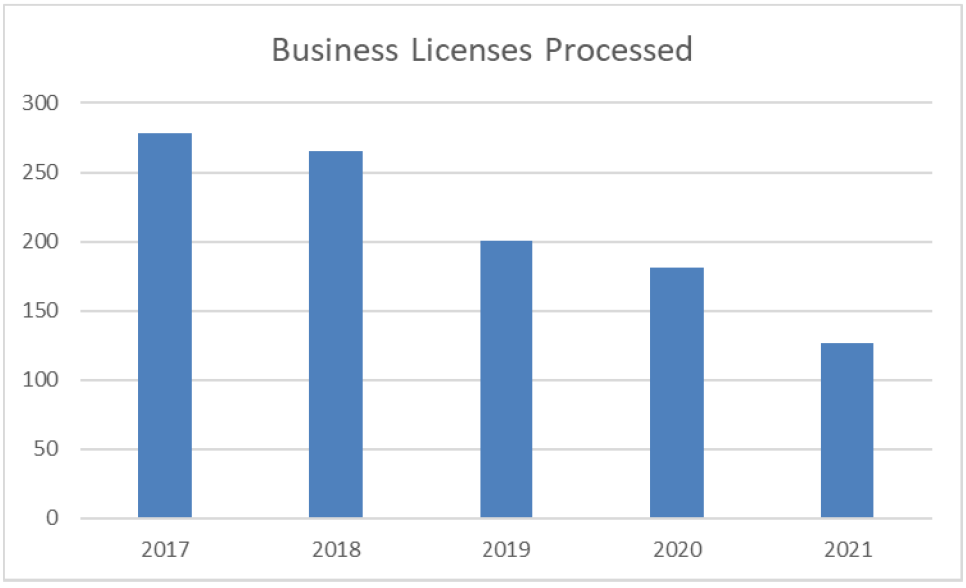
Staff does not propose adding Human Resources Division staff in the next five years. The technology and systems in place have helped to mitigate the need for additional staff.

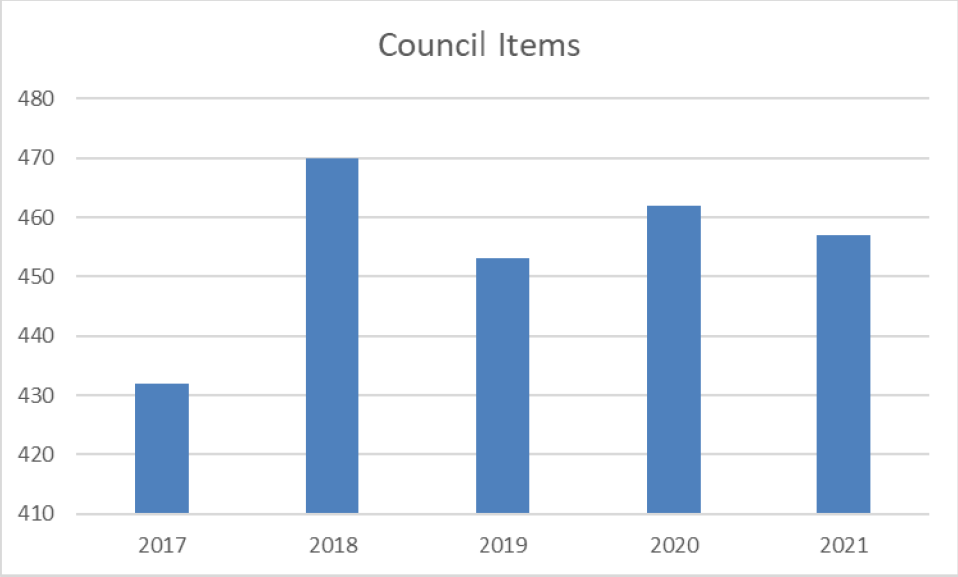
Elections

The City has three staff members dedicated to elections: the human resources manager/city clerk, the deputy city clerk and a seasonal elections coordinator. The Parks & Recreation Department staff also assist with bringing equipment, supplies and signage to the polling places. The elections coordinator handles a majority of the work duties including communications with election judges, setting election judge rosters, scheduling training, communicating with Washington County staff, putting together test decks and working with the head judges before and during the election. During a presidential election year, there are three elections. There are two elections during other even years and one election during odd years. Staff is finding it harder to recruit election judges for a variety of reasons. The election coordinator is looking to retire after the November 2022 election. Staff has requested a quote from Washington County to take over administering the elections. The quote is about $31,000 plus the costs we are responsible for either way — election judges, publication fees and equipment maintenance. The elections coordinator is paid approximately $20,000 annually for even-year elections. The $31,000 quote from Washington County is less expensive than our current costs if you account for the staff time it takes run the election. Having Washington County administer the elections also frees up the deputy city clerk and Human Resources Manager/City Clerk to focus on other job duties. Washington County also administers elections in Woodbury, Oakdale and Forest Lake.

City Clerk

The main functions of the City Clerk Division are licensing, data practices, City Council meeting agenda preparation and city code administration. A majority of the work is performed by the deputy city clerk. The two charts below show business licensing processing and City Council items processed. The reason for the business license processing reduction is that we no longer license commercial alarm holders. The City still does charge for false alarms. The number of City Council items processed each year has remained fairly consistent.





Staff is not recommending adding staff to the City Clerk Division in the next five years. It is recommended when the deputy city clerk retires the position would be re-hired as a city clerk, and the city clerk function would be removed from the human resources manager's position. This will create more time for the HR manager to handle personnel matters, programs and trainings.

Communications

Summary

Effective, timely and proactive communication helps brings more development, tourism and business to our city. As the City grows, we must continue investing in our communications staff and equipment to ensure the City can stay connected to its residents, staff, visitors and potential and current business owners. Investing in and growing the City's communications team helps ensure the City Council's mission of providing excellent services to those who live, work and play here. Investing in communications also ensures the City's image and brand are being protected, misinformation is being monitored and corrected if necessary, rumors are being monitored and addressed if necessary, the City is transparent, and that we are speaking to our residents and stakeholders in a professional and consistent tone to help build trust and strong relationships.

Background

Effective communication is critical to support the City Council's mission of providing excellent public services to residents, businesses, property owners and visitors.

Effective communication is timely, transparent and proactive. Communication becomes increasingly important as the community grows so that people know Cottage Grove is accessible, business friendly, and a safe place to live, play and work.

Effective and strategic communications reiterates that Cottage Grove City Council and city staff are fiscally responsible in providing well-maintained infrastructure, access to quality inter- and intra-community transportation and transit, safe residential and commercial neighborhoods and public spaces.

Everyone who represents the City government in any official capacity can be considered a communicator for the City. It is important to create a unified structure defining the message and process for all communicators to ensure reliable

communication with and for the City's stakeholders. The success of a communications program depends on everyone's understanding and participation.

We work daily to ensure the Mayor and City Council are an active and integral part of communications. We take pride in keeping City of Cottage Grove residents informed and increasing their awareness of City programs and services, Council actions as well as City policies and ordinances. The communications team develops and presents information that is relevant, timely and helpful to the Cottage Grove community and city staff so people will feel involved, be aware of what is happening in the City and have a sense of pride in their city and where they work.

Under the direction of the communications manager, the team helps ensure we are talking to our residents, businesses, partners and stakeholders using one voice and that our messaging is accurate, professional and consistent whether it's on social media, through our city newsletter, during a ribbon cutting ceremony, in the Mayor's State of the City address or through other means. Our team monitors misinformation and rumors from residents, community groups, businesses and others and pushes out accurate information if necessary.

What we do

- **Connect residents** of Cottage Grove with City government.
- **Keep residents and staff informed** of City programs and services, City Council actions, City policies and ordinances.
- **Encourage public and staff participation** in City government.
- Ensure the communication channels and tools used by the City of Cottage Grove **provide the most accurate and trusted source of City government information**.
- **Tell the positive stories** of the residents of Cottage Grove and the work of the City and City Council to build and improve our community and increase community pride.
- **Identify existing communication efforts** and methods for improvement.
- **Apply consistent standards for quality** of content and design in all communications.

How we do it

- **Online**: If you want to watch your City leaders in action but can't make it down to City Hall, we air City Council meetings on TV and stream them on the web.
- **Behind the scenes**: We're doing even more behind the scenes. We're always planning and collaborating with City leaders, departments, and outside organizations to make sure that residents, businesses and visitors of Cottage Grove understand what's happening in their city government and how it affects their lives.
- **In print:** That City brochure or poster you're looking at? We likely produced it.
- **Writing and editing:** Content writing and editing for City Council members, social and web channels, proofreading of reports, creation of talking points and speeches, writing or editing of trade publication articles, drafting of internal communication (monthly newsletters, videos, policy, etc.).
- **Digital:** Social media content and strategy, web support, assistance with presentation materials.
- **Graphics:** Design and production services for media and collateral.
- **Media relations:** First point of contact for media inquiries, writing and distribution of news releases and advisories, on-scene incident public information officer support.
- **Marketing:** Promote City and Chamber of Commerce events like Strawberry Fest, the Holiday Train, Santa Breakfast and others.
- **Media training and preparation:** Work with City Council members and department heads to prepare for media interviews.
- **Video production and coordination:** Work with SWCTC to produce long-form projects including topical and training videos (both internal and external), and incident-based and educational videos for immediate use.
- **Photography:** Staged and on-scene photography for publications on digital channels.

- **Internal communications:** Keep staff informed and engaged. Provide opportunities for staff to give feedback (employee surveys), emergency messaging or policy communications (COVID-19, for example), city staff event marketing and coordination, etc.

Examples of communications projects

- Scripts for monthly Mayor's Moment and City Council Update.
- Scripts for ribbon-cutting ceremonies.
- Weekly City Council updates.
- Project-based communications plans. Examples:
    - Cedarhurst Mansion and Mississippi Dunes development projects.
    - NorthPoint Development.
- Monthly newsletter to Cottage Grove residents.
- Monthly internal staff newsletter
- PowerPoint templates for presentations to consistently represent the City of Cottage Grove to audiences.
- City and department annual reports.
- Brochures and assorted print materials.
    - Postcards
    - Doorhangers
    - Maps
    - Direct mail
    - Letters
    - Utility bill messages
- Signs
    - Digital signs
    - Carousel displays
    - Park interpretive signs
    - Banner stands
- Events, outreach and awards.
    - Displays at events, presentations, meetings and open houses and to celebrate the community through city-wide events such as the Holiday Train.
- Promotional materials —items with the City's logo— that serve as a communication tool to raise awareness and educate about a specific City department, program or topic.
- Promotion of city-wide events to build community pride.
    - Holiday Train
    - Holiday Tree Lighting
    - Photo Contest
    - Strawberry Fest event and parade
    - Volunteer Recognition
    - Winter Lights Contest
    - Green Garden
    - Medallion Hunt
    - Egg Hunt
    - Arbor Day
    - Kids Mud Run
- Promotion of city department and River Oaks events
    - Night to Unite
    - Noon Out
    - Fourth of July Fireworks

- Citizens Academy
- Spring Clean-up Day
- Mayor for a Day
- Various recreation programs
- Open houses
- Santa Breakfast
- Various golf tournaments

Communications guiding principles

Be Trustworthy and Transparent. Provide information that is timely, accurate, factual, clear and responsive. Respect the privacy rights of residents and employees. We do the right thing – even when it's hard. We're honest, transparent and fair. Work to ensure that information is shared throughout the community and the organization, emphasizing two-way informational flow to keep residents well informed and help the City make the best decisions.

Be Proactive. Use a proactive versus reactive approach to communications. The City will tell its story rather than expecting the news media or others to interpret the City's actions and decisions. The City will work closely with and be responsive to media requests. Providing residents with accurate and timely information will help them form educated and informed opinions about the City. We look beyond the hood. We aim to see the rest of the road and prepare for what's to come.

Embrace change. An important part of today's communications is the use of communications technology, including social media, for both providing information and receiving information. We don't do something just because we have always done it that way.

Focus on our audience. It's not about us. We make it about the audience and give them a reason to care.

Be strategic: We use objective-based strategies and messages. We ask ourselves and division leadership, "What's the purpose?" and "What do you want to accomplish?" before we begin a communication project.

Our audience

The city's audience is diverse, each group with its own unique communications needs.

External

- Cottage Grove residents: By using strategic communication planning we can strengthen the relationship between City government and the residents.
- Visitors: These visitors are potential customers of hospitality, food and retail establishments located in the City of Cottage Grove. They may or may not already be familiar with Cottage Grove and their impression of the City may have been formed from communications they received on the City's website, through media channels or while visiting surrounding communities. Targeting communications to this group will help them have a positive, welcoming experience when they visit.
- New or prospective residents and businesses: Prospective businesses and residents may have heard about the City through a variety of communications such as the City's website, word of mouth, or from the media. Targeting communications to this group will help them become aware of all the City has to offer. The City has a reputation for being "easy to work with" and that is a message we want potential businesses to hear. This group can have an impact on the success of the community.
- Media: By keeping the media informed on interesting events, services and actions provided by the City they can help to continually build awareness and affinity for the city.

Internal

- City Council, and commission and board members: Targeting specific communications to this group will help keep them informed, involved and advocates for the City of Cottage Grove.
- City employees: Employees help communicate about the various departments in the City. In addition, each individual is a reflection of the organization in their daily work.

Communication strategies

- A multi-media and multi-level communication approach.
- Monitor existing communication tools and adjust as needed.
- Explore new or additional communication tools.
- Maintain a positive working relationship with local and regional media to effectively deliver information about the City of Cottage Grove to the community.
- Use social media tools when appropriate to engage target audiences in the communication process.
- Focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in our communications so all people in our community feel welcome and part of the process.

Primary concerns

- Monitoring social media comments and community pages.
    - Social media is a great tool to use to reach our key audiences. It's free, it's quick and we can control our message. However, only a small percentage of our residents are following us on social media. While instinct is to engage and defend (especially if information is incorrect, hurtful or unfair), that is typically not the best option from a communications and messaging standpoint.
- Providing customer service to social media users who reach out to the city, police and fire departments with questions and concerns.
- Continuing to produce quality products.
- Being proactive.
- Promoting business and community events as more businesses and residents come to town.
- Keeping a transparent relationship between the city, residents, business owners and other stakeholders.
- Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI): Creating a viable strategy for DEI takes time, resources and expert assistance so the City's strategy is effective and brings key players to the table. The City needs to do more than simply say it supports DEI – the City needs to do something to show it supports DEI.

Increased services

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an important communications tool because it is direct to our audience, immediate, free, shareable among community and business members, monitored by news reporters and in our control. Our community and visitors expect a robust presence on social media.

The city's social media following has grown exponentially since the channels were first created in 2014.

City social media following

- **Total of 36,292 followers**
    - Instagram: 1,066 (not actively used when established in 2013)
    - Facebook
        - City: 10,547 (up from 5,180 in 2014 — a 104% increase)
        - Police: 15,072 (up from 5,906 in 2014 — a 155% increase)
        - Fire: 5,613 (up from 1,133 in 2014 — a 395% increase)

        - Parks/Rec: 2,098 (up from 597 in 2014 — a 251% increase)
        - River Oaks: 1,896 (up from 487 in 2014 — a 289% increase)
    - Twitter:
        - CottageGroveMN: 2,206 (up from 780 in 2014 — a 183% increase)
        - RiverOaks: 153 (up from 134 in 2014)
    - LinkedIn: 517 (up from 180 followers in 2014 — a 187% increase)
    - Pinterest: Not used
- YouTube video stats:

Televised and Webstreamed Cottage Grove City Meetings

2019	45
2020	44
2021	47

Videos Created for the City of Cottage Grove

2019	80
2020	86
2021	74

City of Cottage Grove YouTube Channel

YEAR	VIEWS	HOURS WATCHED	TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS	SUBSCRIBER INCREASE
2017	231,200	5,300	385	+198
2018	142.900	3,300	583	+159
2019	132,400	3,000	736	+153
2020	185,432	4,200	941	+205
2021	141,548	3,600	1,100	+159

Over the next five years, the communications team proposes:

- Launching a Cottage Grove public safety Twitter account for police and fire.
- Re-engaging on the city's Twitter account.
- Utilizing Nextdoor as a city and suggesting City Council and mayor also engage with residents using this tool.
- Using LinkedIn to promote city jobs and show the city as a destination employer. Engage with employees so they can become brand ambassadors.
- Increasing content on the police and fire department Facebook pages.
    - Communications recommends combining the two pages into one public safety page. This makes it easier to reach more people.
- Using social media to recruit more police and firefighters via targeted advertising.
- Using social media, City's website and other means available (SWCTC, community events, etc.) to connect with and provide resources for diverse audiences.
    - Sharing resources in different languages.
    - Promoting businesses owned by Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) populations.
    - Better representing BIPOC and other underrepresented groups in our social, web and print content.
    - Amplifying diverse voices and influencers on social media where appropriate.
- Monitoring social media more closely to get a better grasp on community concerns and sentiment toward the city.
    - Answering private messages on Facebook and direct messages on Twitter from people with legitimate questions or concerns (do not engage with baiting questions or trolls).

MARKETING

As more businesses come to Cottage Grove, communications will be working with SWCTC on ribbon-cutting events and assisting the City's Economic Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce with marketing of businesses.

The population growth and business growth also mean the communications staff will need to engage with residents and business owners more to convey important information from the city.

GENERAL

The communications team will need to develop a crisis communication plan that key city staff and the city's Emergency Management Team train on annually so we can handle an emergency in our community.

Communications will also work on developing writing guidelines and a style guide to assist City staff with publications and presentations. The guide would follow accepted standards of desktop publishing and the Associated Press (AP) style guide.

Communications will be updating the city's communications policy so that it represents to need for city officials to follow a set of guidelines. Updating and following this policy will ensure city messaging is on point and that the city is speaking with one voice. Following this policy will also ensure the communications manager is aware of potential issues or concerns and can address them proactively when possible.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

To be a destination for people to come live, work and play, we must understand how our community is evolving and how we can best meet their needs. We need to promote and harness the capacity of all members of our community if we want to stay economically competitive and socially and politically relevant in the world today.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion matter because we all prosper when everyone living, visiting and doing business in Cottage Grove achieves their full potential. Working toward DEI will create a healthier, more competitive, more diverse workforce and business sector. This stronger workforce will have increased purchasing power to support local businesses and generate a higher tax base to support necessary government services.

When it comes to DEI, the City must respond not only in our hiring and human resources practices but also in our marketing and communications. The way we communicate translates through words and pictures and can either reflect the people we work for and with, or it can reinforce discrimination and marginalization of specific groups of people.

Now more than ever before, we must pay attention to how we are telling our stories and who we are including or excluding.

In the next five years, communications staff propose:

- Developing a DEI communications plan.
- Creating a group of BIPOC/diverse stakeholders to engage for advice when crafting and issuing certain communications.
- Working to provide written materials in English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali.
    - Brochures and other information handed out at community events.
    - Information on website.
- Working with SWCTC to produce relevant content for English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali-speaking community members.
- Building a photo library that includes images of BIPOC community members and business owners.
- Using LinkedIn to recruit, hire, and develop a high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

Equipment and software needs

Using current technology and investing in modern equipment will help ensure our communications are professional and our team members are considered experts in Washington County and the Twin Cities. We want to create a gold-star level of service.

Equipment needs

- Digital camera
    - Investing in a new digital camera will help us build an image library full of professional-quality images to use for presentations, brochures, advertising, social media and online products. New camera should also have video capability so we can shoot video in breaking news situations without having to rely on SWCTC.
    - Current equipment is outdated and does not work well in low-light conditions (the holiday tree lighting, for example).
    - City is spending money purchasing photos from professional photographers.
    - Estimated one-time cost for camera and lenses: $5,000 one-time cost.
- Audio equipment for digital camera and cell phone
    - Important so City Council members and subject matter experts can be heard clearly during breaking news or live events where SWCTC is not available and we must go live with a cell phone or our own digital camera.
    - Estimated cost: $500 one-time cost.
- Professional backdrop
    - Use for news conferences, taping videos, city events, media interviews, City Council updates, Mayor's Moment, etc.
    - Provides a professional background branded with the city's logo and motto.
    - Estimated cost: $1,800 one-time cost.
    - Having a professional backdrop that uses city branding for news conferences, interviews and other public appearances.
- Portable feather flag signs for city, PD and fire to use at events to draw attention
    - Need to research cost and whether or not these are allowed under city code.
- Promotional items
    - Providing items branded with the city's logo and motto help build community pride and connect residents to the city and government.
    - Estimated cost: $500 annually.

Software needs

- Adobe Creative Cloud — A collection of software used for graphic design, video editing, web development and photo editing.
    - Proposal: Increase from two to three licenses so each communications staff member has access.
    - Cost: $1,908/year or $150/month. Renewals happen in October.
- Adobe stock images — Access to thousands of videos and images to use in print and online products.
    - Proposal: Purchase two licenses
    - Cost: $720/year or $60/month. Renewals happen in October.
- Canva Pro — A graphic design platform, used to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents and other visual content.
    - Proposal: Keep current subscription
        - One account, multiple users
    - Cost: $12.95/month
- Subscriptions to Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, Cottage Grove Journal — Subscriptions help us stay current on Cottage Grove and surrounding community news.

    - Proposal: Keep current annual subscriptions.
    - Cost: $180/annually (Star Tribune), $119.60/annually (Pioneer Press).
- Hootsuite — A social media management platform that puts all social platforms in one place for easier posting, management, engagement, metrics, etc.
    - Proposal: Purchase annual subscription to help manage increasing number of social media accounts.
    - Cost: $49/month.
- Constant Contact (email marketing platform)
    - Proposal: Keep current subscription.
    - Cost: $70/month

Budget savings

- Newsletter option No. 1: Consider shifting to electronic city newsletter and no longer distributing printed versions via mail.
    - Potential cost savings: $2,379/month for printing + $2,300/month for postage total = $4,700/month or **$56,400/year.**
- Newsletter option No. 2: Consider printing and mailing city newsletter four times a year instead of monthly.
    - Potential cost savings: **$37,600/year.**
- Shift to electronic city annual report.
    - Potential cost savings: $6,131 for printing, $231 for postage, total = **$6,362/year.**

The communications team realizes that many residents get their information about the city from the newsletter. However, there are other avenues that are free to distribute this information. We can utilize our email distribution service, our website and our social media channels as well as SWCTC.

Current staffing

As of December 2021, the city's communications team consists of:

- Communications manager (1.0 FTE)
- Communications and marketing specialist (1.0 FTE — position funded 75% with ARPA funds, 25% through the EDA)
- Administrative specialist (.25 FTE)
- **Total FTE:** 2.25 FTE

Future staffing recommendations

History

The city first hired a communications coordinator in 2013. The title of that position was changed to a communications manager in 2018. A 75% **grant-funded** communications and marketing specialist was added in July of 2020.

2022

An administration specialist who will assist with communications was added in January of 2022. This position is already built in to the 2022 budget.

2023

Recommend continuing funding the administration specialist. This position assists with a variety of important projects spanning several departments including administration, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, communications and economic development. The city will not be hiring an intern and will instead be utilizing the person in this position to perform those tasks.

Proposed staffing structure

- Communications manager (1.0 FTE)
- Communications and Marketing Specialist (1.0 FTE — position funded 75% with ARPA funds, 25% through the EDA)
- Administrative Specialist (.25 FTE)
- **Total FTE:** 2.25 FTE

2024

Recommend keeping staff level the same as 2023.

2025

The communications and marketing specialist position is currently 75% funded with APRA funds that will end in fiscal year 2025. Recommend permanently funding that position through tax levy. This will equate to less than half of 1% increase in the total levy.

Proposed staffing structure

- Communications manager (1.0 FTE)
- Communications and marketing specialist (1.0 FTE — city funded through tax levy at a cost of approximately $110,000)
- Administrative specialist (.25 FTE)
- **Total FTE:** 2.25

2026

Increasing the city's social media presence strategically and effectively will require an additional communications staff person to monitor, answer questions when appropriate, keep abreast of new social media tools, etc. Protecting and building the city's image through social media use requires a specific skillset and training in social media. This is a position that should not be absorbed by other city staff who do not have proper training. The cost of adding a 1.0 FTE social media specialist is projected at $82,000 for salary and benefits.

Recommend adding a social media specialist.

Proposed staffing structure

- Communications manager (1.0 FTE)
- Social media specialist (1.0 FTE)
- Communications and marketing specialist (1.0 FTE)
- Administrative specialist (.25 FTE)
- **Total FTE:** 3.25

Conclusion

Continuing to grow the city's communications staff and resources will help ensure we can use a multi-faceted approach to communications to provide accurate, timely and transparent communication to all residents.

Not adding communications staff or investing in communications will lead to:

- A decrease in social media monitoring.
- The potential to miss important information or comments from residents and businesses.
- Decreased opportunities to create our own narrative and tell our own stories and to get the right information to the right people at the right time so they can make the right decisions.
- Decrease in product quality.

The city is responsible for messaging on a variety of issues including community development, community health, education, recreation, crime, and interesting stories about its citizens. Despite our best efforts, public trust continues to decline.

Strong communication in local government creates trust in its citizens. The hope is that this trust will inspire citizens to become involved in their communities. As the relationship builds between governments and citizens, over time, citizens will come to realize that their concerns matter. Community engagement keeps citizens informed on the projects that affect their taxes and their lives. Citizens gain assurance that their local government is well-prepared to handle emergencies. Engagement also helps to inform voters about their choices at the polls. Messages can easily be distorted or changed when noise interferes with them.

The challenge for local governments is how to cut through the noise and get clear, effective messages across to the community.

We need to invest in communications so residents are getting accurate information that is timely, honest, responsive and genuine.

Economic Development

Economic development has been a high priority for the City Council with the strategic plan motto, “Positioning for Growth.” The City has expanded its efforts and reach by attending more expos, conferences, magazine publications, and partnership tours with DEED. The focus of the Economic Development (ED) Division has been retail, commercial, industrial and high-density housing. The ED team includes 1 FTE for the economic development director, and 0.5 FTE of the assistant to the administrator. The city administrator also plays a vital role in economic development as the executive director of the EDA.

The Economic Development Division has run without a director since August of 2021. The position is being actively recruited. The division is well supported by the communications manager, communications and marketing specialist and the administration specialist. Economic development is a team effort with the Community Development (planning and building) Division, engineering and the city attorney. We all work together to provide outstanding service and get developers to construction faster than our competition. We have created a very positive image in developer circles and made a name for Cottage Grove as ”pro-growth" city.

As part of economic development, we have worked hard to build relationships in the business community, especially through the Chamber of Commerce and our Business Retention and Expansion program. Those relationships have enabled us to support businesses and attract new businesses to town.

Even with our current level of growth and business engagement, we are able to maintain a strong level of engagement and business support through the team approach and the key members of the administration team who have been added. There is no proposed staffing in the next five years.

Convention and Visitors Bureau

Summary

The Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is responsible for promoting Cottage Grove as a premier destination for leisure travelers, weddings and outdoor enthusiasts. The CVB also promotes Cottage Grove as a recognized and successful host city for meetings, conventions and sporting events. Cottage Grove is home to multiple attractions that would draw people to our City such as the Hope Glen Farm Tree House Suite, Bike Park, recreational spaces for outdoor enthusiasts and beautiful wedding facilities.

The CVB team consists of .75 FTE of a communications and marketing specialist position and .25 FTE of an assistant to the city administrator position. They are led under the direction of the CVB Board and economic development director. In 2021, City Council authorized the hiring of one full time administration specialist to begin in 2022. This additional hire adds .25 FTE to the CVB as well, bringing the total to 1.25 FTE employees.

City Council has requested information regarding the CVB labor force to better understand the long-term needs of the division and to meet our service commitment to the community, while also managing for rapid growth of Cottage Grove and its residents. The CVB team recommends no further changes to staffing at this time.

Background

CVB staff work closely together, and work tasks vary day-to-day. However, primary roles have been adopted to assure service needs are met and employees can train and excel in their area of expertise. Current positions with a brief description of focus areas in the CVB division are:

Communications and Marketing Specialist	Visitor Guide, partnerships, communications
Assistant to the City Administrator	Budgets, board meetings, board meeting packets
Administration Specialist	Special projects

Revenue

The CVB was started in May of 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the Visitor's Bureau has had to adjust revenue projections to account for the drastic downturn in the lodging and hospitality industry. Initial pre-COVID-19 projections for the Visitor's Bureau used a 60-65% occupancy rate for calculating lodging tax revenue.

With the effects of COVID-19, revenue projections for 2020 were adjusted to a 10-15% occupancy rate. Final revenue for 2020 showed a slow and steady return of occupancy rates over the course of the year. Similarly, as the hospitality industry was still showing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 revenue projections used a 40-45% occupancy rate. This all makes the case that the Visitor Bureau does not yet have a reliable history to base projections and will not until we can get two to three years of numbers post COVID-19. However, we are seeing numbers steadily increasing. For 2022, the Visitor's Bureau is using a 60% occupancy rate for total lodging tax revenue.

Current Staffing

Currently, 75% of the communications and marketing specialist position salary is funded through ARPA grant dollars and the remaining 25% is funded through Economic Development Authority dollars. This will remain in effect through 2024.

In 2025 it is recommended to fully include staffing and benefits for this position under the general levy. This will equate to less than half of 1% increase in the total levy.

Software and Tools

Below are the current software and tools needed for staff of the CVB. These are used in social media efforts, marketing, and creation and distribution of the Visitor's Guide in addition to sending monthly emails to subscribers and businesses to stay informed of happenings in and around Cottage Grove.

Software needs include:

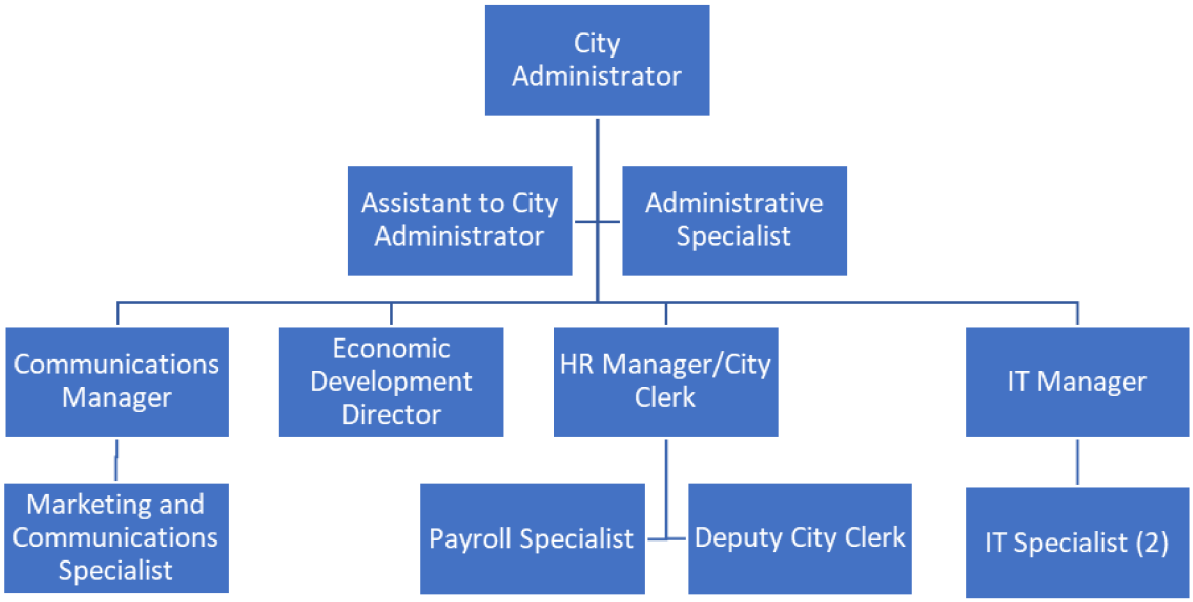
- Adobe Creative Cloud — *(shared with city communications)*
  - Proposal: Keep current subscription
  - Cost: $50/month *(paid for by city communications)*
- Adobe stock images — Access to thousands of videos and images to use in print and online products. *(shared with city communications)*
  - Proposal: Purchase one license
  - Cost: $30/month *(paid for by city communications)*
- Access to a digital camera *(shared with city communications)*
  - Updating and maintaining photo library to market Cottage Grove
- Constant Contact email marketing platform *(shared with city communications)*
  - Proposal: Keep current subscription
  - Cost: $70/month *(paid for by city communications)*
- Canva Pro — A graphic design platform, used to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents, and other visual content. *(shared with city communications)*
  - Proposal: Keep current subscription
    - One account, multiple users
  - Cost: $12.95/month *(Paid for by city communications)*

Conclusion

The CVB is proud of the work that has been accomplished since its inception in 2020 and is excited to grow along with the City of Cottage Grove. The recommendations of this report are directly related to the growth of the community, and more specifically, the growth of lodging taxes in our community. These recommendations are intended to be malleable to encourage conversation and adaptability as population and demographics change. The CVB's mission will always remain to showcase Cottage Grove in the best light, to attract travelers, sports teams, engaged couples and outdoor enthusiasts to our city.

Information Technology

The organizational study that was previously completed suggested moving the Information Technology Division (IT) under the Administration Department when the finance director changed. IT is a function and service that supports citywide operations and should be supervised from administration. It is proposed that this change takes place following any retirement. Please see the Finance Department's staffing plan for additional details on IT staffing needs.


City Administrator
Assistant to City Administrator
Administrative Specialist
Communications Manager
Economic Development Director
HR Manager/City Clerk
IT Manager
Marketing and Communications Specialist
Payroll Specialist
Deputy City Clerk
IT Specialist (2)

City of Cottage Grove

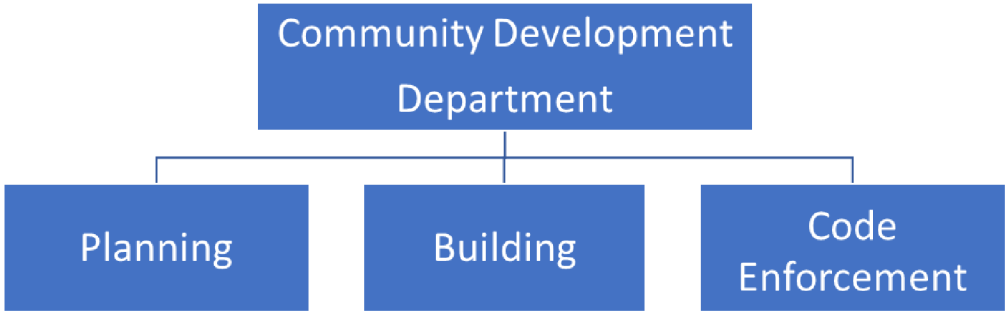
Community Development Staffing Strategy Report

Cottage Grove

Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

Executive Summary

The City of Cottage Grove Community Development Department supports the long-term vitality of the City through city-wide land use planning and development review activities, as well as assuring all construction projects and properties are designed, constructed, and maintained in a compliant and safe manner. The department includes 14 full- and part-time employees within the following divisions:



The Planning Division evaluates and regulates development in the City as stipulated in the Comprehensive Plan, City Ordinances and metropolitan policies, as well as ensuring that the land in the City is being used efficiently and appropriately. The staff team has consisted of two (2) Senior Planners and has not changed in over 30 years.

Building Division addresses many facets of permit processing for all new and existing properties including plan review, permit issuance, inspections, and project approvals. The City additionally provides building services for not only Cottage Grove, but began providing building services (permitting to plan review) for Newport beginning in 2010, St. Paul Park in 2013, Denmark Township in 2013, and Grey Cloud Island Township in 2019. The current staff team consists of one (1) Building Official, one (1) Senior Building Inspector, three (3) Building Inspectors, one (1) Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer, two (2) Building Permit Technicians, and one (1) part-time Scheduler/Front Counter Assistant.

The newer positions added to the division in 2019-2020, included promotion from within of one of the Building Inspectors to Senior Building Inspector so that he could gain supervisory experience. Then with the retirement of the Building Official in January 2022, it would allow the transition of the Senior Building Official to Chief Building Official. At this time the Senior Building Inspector position is vacant. In 2021, two Seasonal Building Inspectors were hired, one Inspector would also help with Code Enforcement specifically rental inspections. In December 2021, a retired Building Inspector was brought in to help with plan review to allow for the increase in inspections.

Originally the front counter included three positions of Utility Billing, General Administrative Assistant, and a Building Permit Technician. In February 2020, the General Administrative Assistant resigned and the Utility Billing Clerk moved away from the front counter. The General Administrative Assistant position was filled with another Building Permit Technician and the Community Development Assistant moved to the front. These three positions take on the work of answering not only the Community Development's general number, scheduling inspections, and taking in and issuing all building permits, but also are responsible for answering the City's main phone line and assisting and transferring callers as well as being the first contact for anyone who comes to City Hall. In 2020 a part-time Front Counter

Assistant was hired which has helped assist with inspection scheduling, allowing the Building Permit Technicians time to input and issue all permits. The Front Counter Assistant position also has taken on greeting in-person visitors to City Hall. The Community Development Assistant assists with all matters related to planning and land use and works closely with the planning staff to ensure the State Statute requirements are followed for planning cases. The Community Development Assistant assists at the front counter with walk-in water bill payments and they receipt accounts receivable checks for the Finance Department.

Code Enforcement Division works with residents to ensure neighborhoods are clean, safe, and healthy for the community to enjoy, and responds to concerns appropriately to ensure the preservation of property values and prevent unsafe, unsanitary issues from infringing on the rights of others. The staff team consists of one (1) Code Enforcement Officer which has been in place since 2007. The Code Enforcement division prior to 2021 has had a summer intern to help with the additional case load that appears in warmer weather months. In addition, the City Council has directed Code Enforcement staff to conduct proactive enforcement throughout the community.

Background

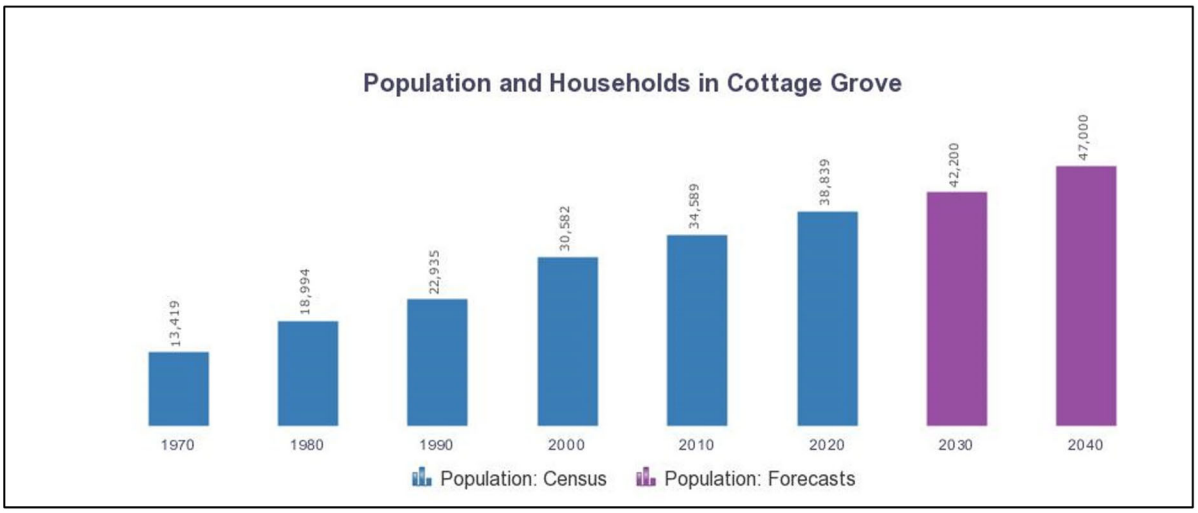
Today's Community Development Department staff has not changed significantly in the City's history. As the City has strategically planned for growth, the community is on the cusp of seeing tremendous development in not only the residential market but the industrial market, which in turn will most likely bring additional commercial and redevelopment interest to the community. The continued growth will stretch thin the Department's time and capabilities even more causing a potential reduction in the level of service the Community Development Department has provided to date.

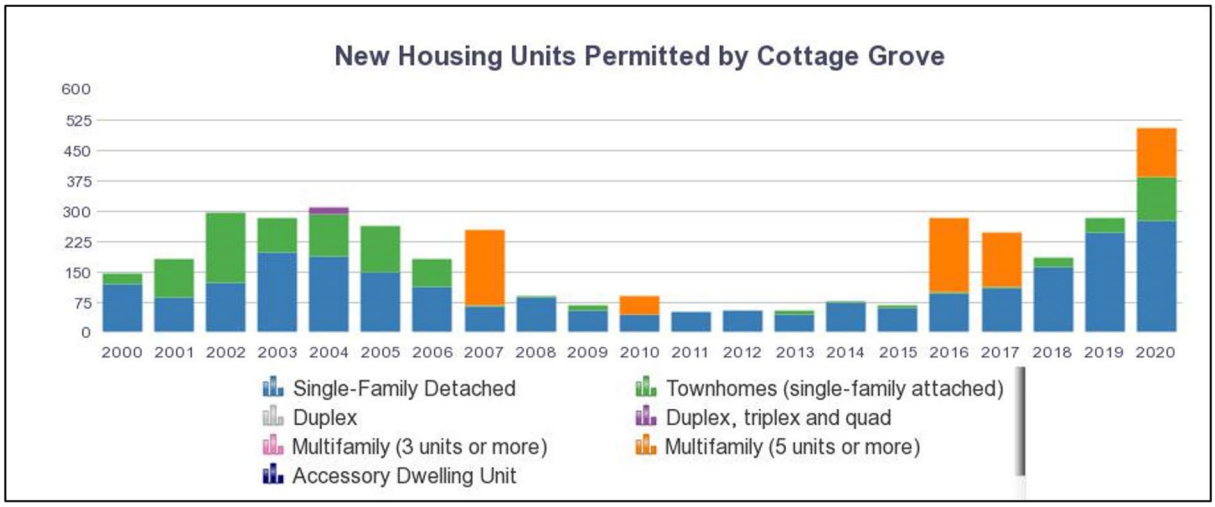
Growth

The work done by the Community Development department is impacted by the growth in the community and the number of single-family and multifamily developments platted and developed. Since 2018, over 2,804 acres have been platted for residential development, which has allowed for 4,771 residential lots. Beginning in 2020 there were 1,681 lots added to Cottage Grove. If one was to use the average household size in 2020 for Cottage Grove of 2.95, that would approximately equate to an additional 4,959 residents within the last two years in Cottage Grove. Additionally, if one was to assume that continued rate of growth for the next seven years that would be an additional 34,713 residents that call Cottage Grove home. This growth will bring more tax capacity into the community.

Issued	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
additional residents	290	340	548	840	1,131	1,699	1,628	1,628	1,628	1,465	1,317	1,184
population	37,111	37,451	37,999	38,839	39,970	41,669	43,297	44,925	46,553	48,018	49,335	50,519
Residential permits	115	185	284	382	574	550	550	550	495	445	400	360
valuation	$ 34,561,365	$ 50,234,001	$ 78,018,244	$ 101,983,793	$ 155,998,356	$ 148,500,000	$ 148,500,000	$ 148,500,000	$ 133,650,000	$ 120,150,000	$ 108,000,000	$ 97,200,000
commerical permits	12	15	11	11	17	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
valuation	$ 11,658,461	$ 37,706,096	$ 55,625,776	$ 21,241,710	$ 26,296,632	$ 50,000,000	$ 50,000,000	$ 50,000,000	$ 37,000,000	$ 35,000,000	$ 32,000,000	$ 30,000,000
full value on tax roll	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
addl tov residential	$ 345,614	$ 502,340	$ 780,182	$ 1,019,838	$ 1,559,984	$ 1,485,000	$ 1,485,000	$ 1,485,000	$ 1,336,500	$ 1,201,500	$ 1,080,000	$ 972,000
addl tov commercial	$ 233,169	$ 754,122	$ 1,112,516	$ 424,834	$ 525,933	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000	$ 740,000	$ 700,000	$ 640,000	$ 600,000
	$ 578,783	$ 1,256,462	$ 1,892,698	$ 1,444,672	$ 2,085,916	$ 2,485,000	$ 2,485,000	$ 2,485,000	$ 2,076,500	$ 1,901,500	$ 1,720,000	$ 1,572,000
tax capacity growth %	8.6%	8.3%	8.5%	7.0%	8.0%	10.3%	9.8%	9.4%	7.5%	6.6%	5.8%	5.1%

In addition to new homes, existing homeowners are making home improvements to the existing housing stock; within the last five years 17,371 permits with a total valuation of $101,498,987 have been pulled by existing homeowners.

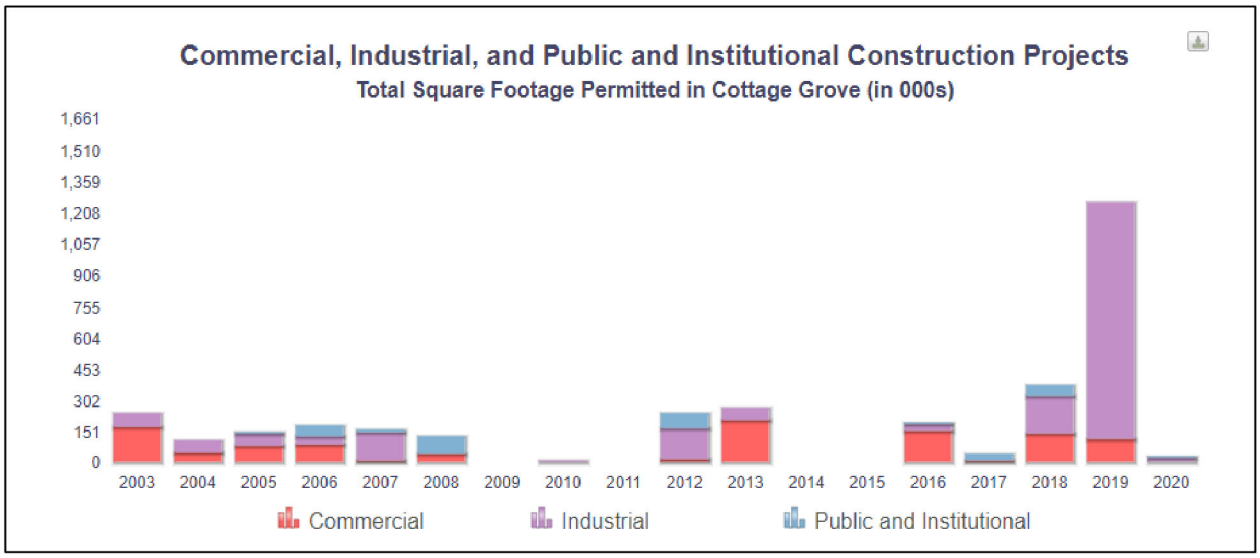




Cottage Grove is also starting to see the farmers who once farmed east of Keats Avenue (County Road 19) reaching out to staff to begin their future planning since the practice of farming within the metro is not what it use to be; there is approximately 4,200 acres east of Keats Avenue all the way to Old Cottage Grove and down to Highway 61/10. Of those 4,200 acres, approximately 850 acres directly east of Keats will be developable sooner, and we will begin to see development interest in a relatively short timeframe. The farmers east of Keats of Tanks, Goebbels, and Biscoe are a few who have reached out expressing interest in development of portions of their farm area. In addition, with Jim Jansen passing away in October 2021, his farm of approximately 178 acres located in the southwest corner of Keats Avenue and 90th Street has gained interest by many developers within a short amount of time since his passing (the family hasn't decided yet). As the community continues to grow, and our border with Woodbury has blurred and development south of 100th Street has begun, the next logical step is for development to move east of Keats Avenue.

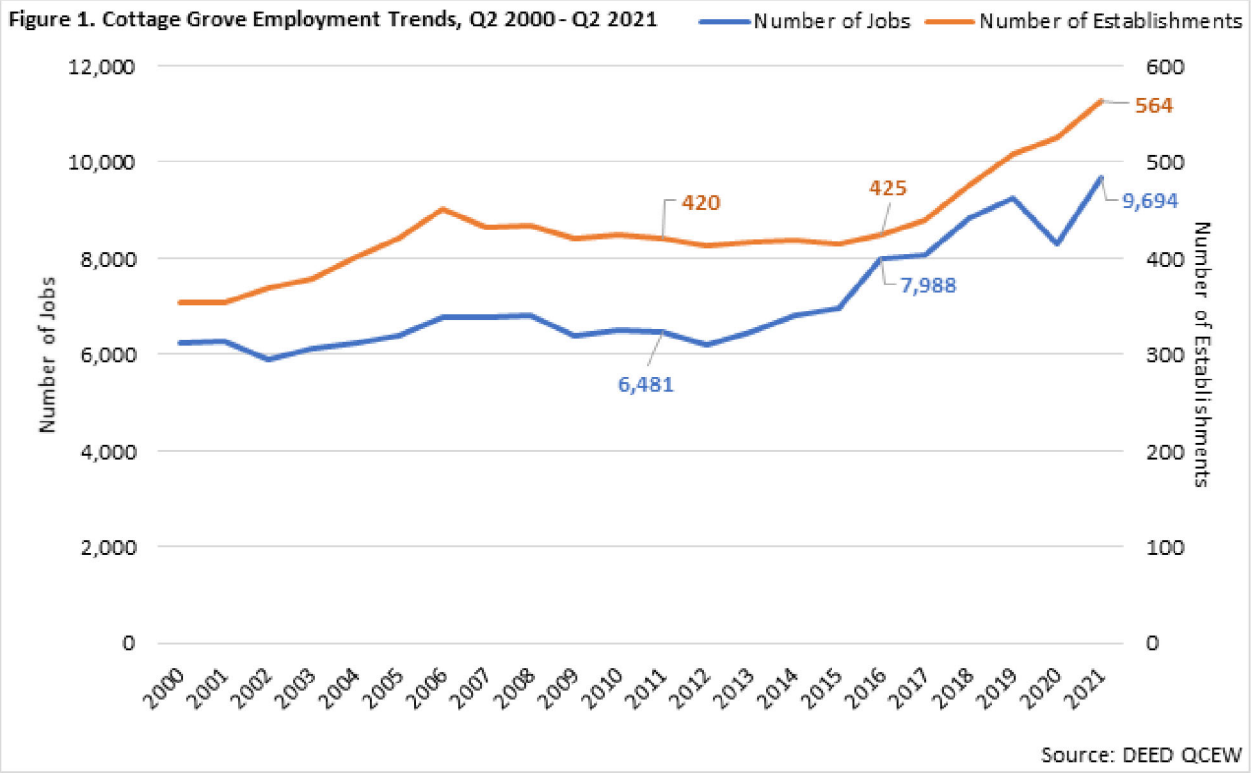
Generalized Land Use in Cottage Grove

Land Use	2016		2020	
	Acres	Change	Acres	Change
Residential Total	**5,291**	**N/A**	**5,564**	**5.16%**
Single Family Detached	5,000	N/A	5,245	4.90%
Multifamily	291	N/A	319	9.56%
Commercial Total	**306**	**N/A**	**315**	**2.94%**
Retail and Other Commercial	262	N/A	278	6.19%
Office	44	N/A	38	-15.35%
Industrial Total	**1,096**	**N/A**	**1,445**	**31.84%**
Industrial and Utility	829	N/A	1,047	26.31%
Extractive	157	N/A	227	44.46%
Railway	111	N/A	172	55.29%
Institutional Total	**430**	**N/A**	**475**	**10.47%**
Park and Recreational	**2,438**	**N/A**	**2,624**	**7.63%**
Park, Recreational or Preserve	2,110	N/A	2,297	8.84%
Golf Course	327	N/A	327	0.00%
Mixed Use Total	**4**	**N/A**	**21**	**425.00%**
Mixed Use Residential	2	N/A	10	431.58%
Mixed Use Industrial	0	N/A	9	100%
Mixed Use Commercial and Other	2	N/A	2	0.00%
Major Roadways	**335**	**N/A**	**336**	**0.30%**
Agricultural and Undeveloped Total	**11,429**	**N/A**	**10,554**	**-7.66%**
Agriculture	7,355	N/A	6,522	-11.33%
Undeveloped Land	4,074	N/A	4,033	-1.01%
Open Water	**2,856**	**N/A**	**2,850**	**-0.21%**
Total	**24,185**	**N/A**	**24,184**	**0.00%**



As the City continues to grow, it is estimated that we will add approximately 4,000-5,000 new residents every ten years and by 2040, our population will be 47,000 with an increase in employment opportunities as well.

Employment in Cottage Grove increased by 3,213 jobs (+49.6%) between the second quarters of 2011 and 2021 (avg. annual growth of 5.0%). Statewide employment expanded by an annual average of 0.6% between the second quarters of 2011 and 2021. More recently, between the second quarters of 2016 and 2021, the City's total employment expanded by 1,706 jobs (+21.4%) (avg. annual growth of 4.3%). This growth accounts for the whiplash experienced during the COVID-19 recession.



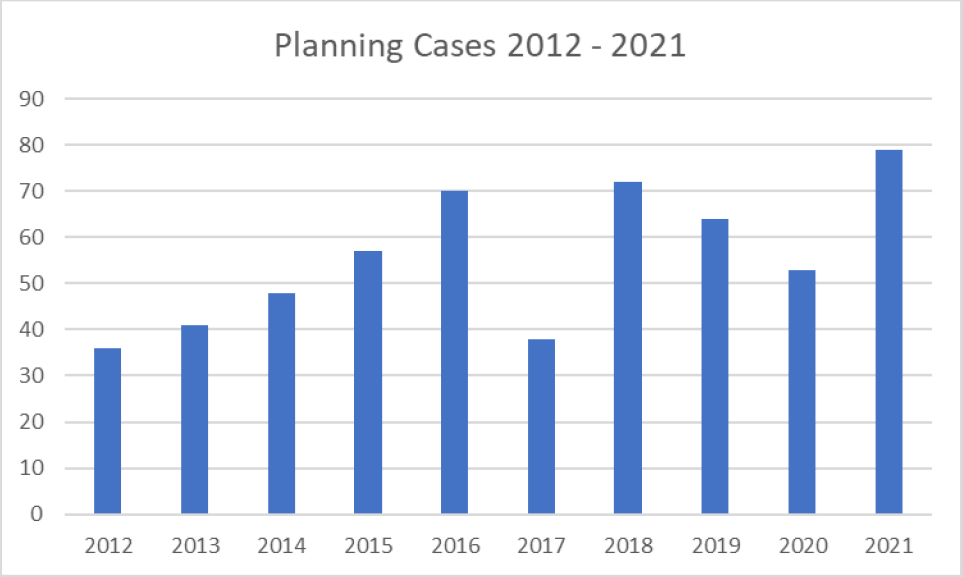
We will continue to see strong employment growth with the job requirements that NorthPoint will have to add over the four phases of their development which will include the addition of 1,870 jobs to Cottage Grove. The development of NorthPoint most likely will spur additional development within the community as we have seen many of the remaining sites available in the business park have a Letter of Intent (LOI) which will bring additional jobs.

Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) also shows that the number of establishments in Cottage Grove has increased significantly in recent years. Over the past five years, between the second quarters of 2016 and 2021, the number of establishments in Cottage Grove increased from 425 to 564. Annual total payroll in the city increased from $188.2 million in 2000, to $217.9 million in 2010, to $257.9 million in 2015, to $444.8 million in 2020. Growth has really accelerated in Cottage Grove (employment growth, number establishments, total payroll) since 2015/2016.

DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) also shows that Cottage Grove's total labor force size equaled 20,588 persons in annual 2020. This was up 6.3% (1,219 people) from 2010. Minnesota's labor force increased by 5.3% during that time.

Increased Services

The Planning Division has always had two Senior Planners and the graph below demonstrates the number of planning cases/workload that the Senior Planners have completed the last nine years. Though the case load has fluctuated, the complexity in the cases has increased (i.e. NorthPoint, Cedarhurst Mansion, Mississippi Dunes/Landing, Aggregate Industries EIS) significantly which requires additional time and coordination with the applicant, consultants, and various City departments (engineering, finance, and fire). In addition, it is planning's responsibility to update the comprehensive plan every ten years (last undertaking lasted three years), AUARs, EAWs, master plans and small area studies which should also be updated every 5-10 years to prevent them from becoming outdated and not in compliance with the current version of the comprehensive plan.



The Planners are also the point person for existing residents who are making home improvements and have questions about their property. Though the Community Development Assistant helps with some minor items that can be done over the counter (shed, fences, and driveways), it is still the Planners responsibility to ensure that what is being relayed to businesses and residents meets the City Code requirements. Planning does not provide assistance to Newport or St. Paul Park, but they do provide planning assistance for Denmark and Grey Cloud Township if it is related to a building permit application. Both Townships have sometimes taken advantage of this service, though it has been made clear that Cottage Grove will not contract additional planning services for them.

As the community continues to grow, planning is seeing the increase in planning case load and cannot take on any more without assistance. A Planning Consultant was brought in in late 2021 to assist the Planning Division. The Planning Consultant is assisting with temporary certificate of occupancy by conducting field inspections, notifying Public Works to schedule curb box inspection, and notifying Building Permit Technicians when temporary Certificates of Occupancy can be released and become final Certificates of Occupancy. The Planning Consultant is also assisting with residential phone calls, smaller land use and zoning cases, as well as taking on four upcoming Planning Commission cases in the next month. In addition, the consultant is reviewing the various projects proposed by Wayne Butt for Old Cottage Grove.

The Planning Consultant is more than capable of taking on projects with little direction and has relieved some of the work. The Planning Consultant has helped with the relief on a temporary basis and is working on assignments as an "as needed" basis but there is no long-term commitment. The cost to have a Planning Consultant is recovered in the fees charged for land use and planning cases as well as development agreements. The Planning Consultant continues to work for other communities that they consult for and are not fully devoted to all of Cottage Grove's activities.

The Building Division has seen the increase in its services and can be documented below in the increase in the number of permits and valuation, the number of inspections in Cottage Grove, as well as in the communities we contract with (Newport, St. Paul Park, Denmark Township, and Grey Cloud Township)

		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of Permits		3,898	3,414	3,628	4,466	5,655
Total Valuation	$	164,016,409.00	$ 116,931,536.00	$ 165,934,314.00	$ 162,371,146.00	$ 231,869,956.00
Inspections		11,300	12,124	8,799	12,608	15,362
Contract Community Inspections		2,359	2,228	2,664	3,247	3,386

The growth that Cottage Grove will see in the coming years will increase the number of inspectors that are in the field on the inspection. It is expected that larger projects such as Oppidan and NorthPoint will require roughly three-hour inspection blocks. Currently, only two Building Inspectors, and the Chief Building Official are licensed for commercial/industrial and school project inspections. If a project is a State project, then plan review can only be done by our Chief Building Official or our current Building Plan Reviewer, and inspections can be done only by the Chief Building Official and one of our Building Inspectors. All Building Inspectors can do single-family residential. It is the hope that one of the two Building Inspectors that were hired in May 2021 will have the credit hours to take the required test to become licensed for commercial/industrial inspections. This Building Inspector has strong interest in the Senior Building Inspector position if the position were to be available. The other Building Inspector hired in May 2021 is brand new to the profession and does not have any building trade experience like the other inspectors do.

The two Building Permit Technicians and Part-time Front Counter Assistant continue to handle all calls, inspections, and scheduling. The front counter staff not only handle all the calls related to building and planning but they also assist any individual who comes to City Hall whether its questions about voting, Strawberry Fest, paying an assessment, water bill, solicitor license, location of County Service Center, location of Police Department, directions for the community, individuals visiting for a meeting, COVID testing site, etc. They also have their own phone line as well to maintain and answer calls from.

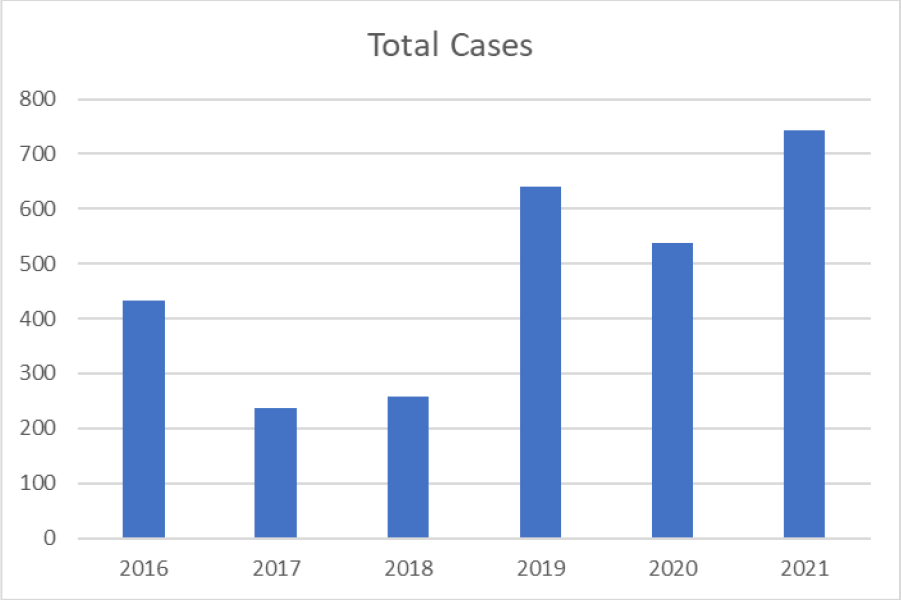
The Community Development Assistant happily fills in when someone is absent as well as assists in the answering of the phone lines. Currently there is no phone system report that is easy to read or available for the Community Development Director to pull to verify progress and workload of the front counter staff. Since there is no phone report, one could guesstimate that if you took the inspection total for 2021 of both Cottage Grove and the contracted communities, which totals 18,748 Inspections, on average each of those inspections would require a phone call to schedule an initial inspection and then a final inspection. A new home has roughly ten inspections through the building process from foundation to framing, plumbing, etc. This is not including those that fail and require a reinspection or a contractor calling in to schedule multiple framing inspections at one time or a contractor calling to reschedule an inspection. If you assumed the 18,748 inspections were all roughly two calls, that is approximately

37,496 phone calls handled by two Building Permit Technicians with the Community Development Assistant and part-time Front Counter Assistant helping when a staff member is absent from the front counter, and they are not busy with their own work or on a call.

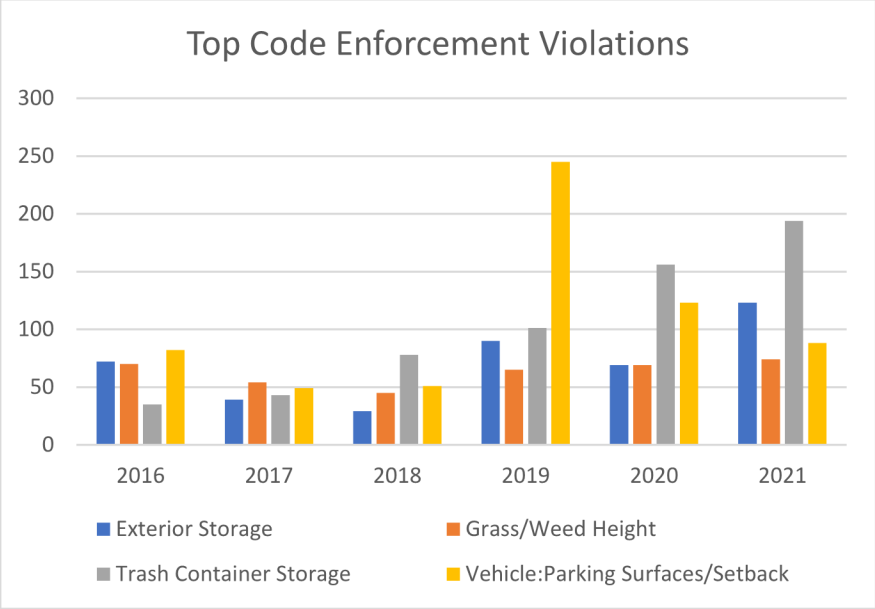
The difficultly is having the front counter staff participate in any city-wide events because the front counter has to be maintained for not only building services but all other city services (solicitor licenses, assessments, utility billing, elections, etc.) and there is very little help from other departments who are responsible for these other services.

The Code Enforcement Division has been a part of Community Development since 2007 when a Code Enforcement Officer was added to the department. In 2019, the City of Cottage Grove began providing code enforcement services for not only Cottage Grove but contracted code enforcement services with Newport, St. Paul Park, Denmark Township, Grey Cloud Township as well as providing rental inspections for Newport and St. Paul Park.

Code enforcement activity in Cottage Grove only has seen an increase in case work in the last three years, beginning in 2019 with a total of 640 cases, 537 cases in 2020 which may in part be due to COVID-19 pandemic, and 743 cases for 2021.



Code enforcement attempts to do proactive code enforcement and there are four code violations that continually are a concern throughout the community and those violations have increased since 2019 shown in the graph below. In addition to proactive code enforcement and emailed/phoned in code complaints, the Code Enforcement Officer also is responsible for all rental inspections in Cottage Grove and the communities in which we contract building services, which has included code enforcement.



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Exterior Storage	72	39	29	90	69	123
Grass/Weed Height	70	54	45	65	69	74
Trash Container Storage	35	43	78	101	156	194
Vehicle: Parking Surfaces/Setback	82	49	51	245	123	88

The Code Enforcement Officer handles all rental inspections in Cottage Grove, Newport and St. Paul Park. In Cottage Grove rental inspections are done every two years. The total number of rental inspections can vary year-to-year based on those properties that choose to no longer be a rental property. Below is a table of the rental inspections for only Cottage Grove:

	2019	2020	2021
Licenses	287	273	264
Inspections	468	210	391

The low number of inspections in 2020 is due to the COVID-19pandemic.

For rental inspections Cottage Grove will see the addition of the 120-units from Grove80 Apartments, and in 2022, the additional of 202 units from the developments by Oppidan and Pillai Builder projects in the Harkness area.

In regards to the additional communities Cottage Grove provides the inspection services which includes the initial inspection and any reinspection required as part of that community's rental license. Below is a table of Newport and St. Paul Park:

Newport				
	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022 (YTD)**
Inspections	110	143	45	47

St. Paul Park				
	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022 (YTD)**
	225	N/A	132	
SPP operates on an "off year, on year" cycle for rental inspections that is why there are none listed for 2020				

Inspections have decreased with COVID-19 pandemic but at the beginning of the 2022, staff was notified from St. Paul Park that have added rental licensing to an additional 85 single-family homes in their community. This could increase over the coming years to eventually include additional single-family homes in St. Paul Park. This is not a cap but rather a starting point.

Since Cottage Grove has contracted code enforcement services as part of our building service contracts with surrounding communities, the Code Enforcement Officer has seen a spike in his services in other communities.

Hours Spent in Contract Communities			
	2019	**2020**	**2021**
Hours	82.75	26	65

Again, COVID-19 impact number in 2020. The cases have included several hoarding cases or cases that involve multiple visits to bring into code compliance. In addition, both Denmark and Grey Cloud Island Townships will have code enforcement cases started by our Code Enforcement Officer that will lead towards a criminal citation per their code requirements but then both townships often choose to not follow through due to the legal fees that would be incurred by that township. Thus, the feeling is those hours are somewhat wasted time when the community doesn't pursue code compliance and our Code Enforcement Officer could spend those hours working in Cottage Grove on proactive code enforcement for our community.

Primary Concerns to Maintaining Level of Service

The Community Development Department truly takes pride in providing quality planning, inspections, and property services to the businesses and residents of Cottage Grove. The concern from all divisions is that the past level of services cannot be maintained at current staffing levels without a change in the expectation of services. Also it is important to consider succession planning of the entire Community Development Department as we move forward in growth.

Planning

Planning is the frontline of the department in that they are ensuring a project, no matter if it is as small as a shed or 3.4 million square feet of industrial space, receives the same service. Unfortunately, the smaller projects without as critical of a deadline (i.e. shed, deck, driveway) sometimes do not receive the same review due to the larger projects that have multiple moving parts. Though the Planning Consultant has helped with this measure, but it is a temporary fix as they are not fully devoted to Cottage Grove since they consult with other communities. We currently have a consultant for roughly 21-24 hours a week. Planning is unable to take a proactive role in some of the planning process such as updating various environmental documentation (AUAR and EAW), conducting and updating master plans for various community nodes, and has become more reactionary to making changes. When it involves a larger project, it will get wrapped into the planning process for a proposed development such as Mississippi Landing and Cedarhurst since there is not the time with the current number of projects and only two individuals and one consultant taking on all the cases. It is recommended that a future

position of an entry level planner be considered who can take on the smaller cases that come before the department as well as serve as the staff contact for anyone who comes to City Hall. This position would also handle the temporary certificate of occupancy inspections to ensure that builders have submitted all their final requirements to obtain a full certificate of occupancy. Currently this is the work done by the Planning Consultant. If an entry level planner is not considered, continuation of the planning consultant would be recommended along with a summer intern to assist with the workload and projects.

Currently projects are becoming more complicated and require potentially one or more neighborhood meetings and updating of previous plans and studies that hadn't taken into account the current growth the community is seeing. Though the Planning Division is excited for the growth and opportunities for the community, the concern is that there is not the time to review and update past studies and plans to reflect the growth and a more reactionary process is taking place in the development process. As the community grows, new factors of growth will need to be addressed and studied such as sustainability, workforce development, and public transportation. The planning profession role is centered on creating and executing a vision for the development of land use plans and programs that help create communities, accommodate population growth, and revitalize physical facilities. The Planners in Cottage Grove are unable to execute their professional due diligence fully without additional assistance. The level of service currently experienced by residents, businesses and developers is a delay in returned phone calls, emails, and plan review. There is no time for on-site inspections, and most project meetings need to be scheduled weeks out because there are only two Planners to handle the increase in growth seen by the number of planning cases increasing (See chart on page 6) as well as the complexity of the cases.

Building

Building will see an increase in workload as the NorthPoint, Oppidan and additional industrial development begins in 2022. The Building Division will also see major change with the retirement of Chief Building Inspector Bob LaBrosse on January 14, 2022, after 28+ years with Cottage Grove. Andy McLean will become the new Chief Building Official thus vacating the Senior Building Inspector position. Currently there is not a Building Inspector to fill this position, though interest in the position for a recent hire who needs to obtain more credits and testing.

The contracted building services that Cottage Grove provides to other communities will begin to dimmish potentially within the next few years. Newport stated that they have approximately 57 acres of greenfield development remaining for single-family development. Additional development for Newport would include infill development and/or redevelopment of areas. St. Paul Park has stated that they have one potential development left that will be an apartment/assisted living facility, otherwise it too will be infill development and/or redevelopment. Both Denmark Township and Grey Cloud Township building services include existing home improvement projects (garages, sheds, etc.) and construction of new single-family homes.

An additional factor that needs to be considered is the retirement of additional Building Division staff. It is expected that in the next 5-7 years the Building Division could see the retirement of approximately three more building inspectors and one building permit technician. It has become more difficult to find replacement staff for the Building Inspector positions; individuals are not going into the profession. A survey conducted by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) for the International Code Council (ICC) reveals a 'mass exodus' of building safety professionals over the next several years. "In fact, 80

percent of respondents plan to retire within the next 15 years, with 30 percent planning to hang it up in the next five years." Cottage Grove will be faced with this issue if we do not begin planning now.

Additionally, due to the layout of the department, the Building Permit Technicians and the Community Development Assistant are the first point of contact for services on the general government side of the city. These positions receive the most phone calls and interruptions to their work as the first point of contact. Besides doing their own required work per their job description such as inputting building permits into the permitting software (Energov), scheduling and rescheduling all inspections for inspectors, issuing temporary and full certificates of occupancy, etc. They also end up doing the services outside of their job description which takes them away from their assigned work. They are often giving directions to various buildings and the police department, announce visitors or appointments with other staff, sign for packages with vendors, first point of contact for solicitor licensing, utility and assessment payments, receive and distribute mail, accept bid packages, voting information, COVID testing site locations, Strawberry Fest information and answering the main city line and transferring calls to the appropriate staff person.

Beginning in 2021, a part-time Front Counter Assistant was hired to help with the phones, in particular the inspection line and scheduling inspections. This has allowed the two Building Permit Technicians the ability to issue building permits, accept and process building permit plans for Cottage Grove and Denmark Township, process permits for St. Paul Park and Newport, verify contractor licensing is current with the State, issue temporary and final certificates of occupancy, and receipting. The Community Development Assistant assists planning staff with legal notifications, neighborhood mailings, review and creation of resolutions and ordinances, uploading of Planning Commission and Advisory Commission on Historic Preservation packets, assists Code Enforcement with rental inspection payments and letters, assists Finance Department in walk-in utility bills and account receivable payments, and assist in building permit issuance when one or both of the Building Permit Technicians are out of the office. Taking on the additional front counter duties that are not specific to their position has not allowed them to cross train between themselves. Nor have the Building Permit Technicians had the opportunity to train the Building Inspectors on how to reschedule an inspection and issue a permit at the front counter because the Building Inspectors have been needed in the field for inspections due to the increase in development.

Code enforcement recognizes the desire to provide proactive code enforcement in Cottage Grove but this has been difficult to maintain on a consistent basis with the time and work spent in the contract communities. Within the contract communities, our Code Enforcement Officer spends a lot of time working on a code enforcement cases and conducting rental inspections. In addition, with the increase in multi-family developments there will be an increase in rental licenses and inspections in Cottage Grove in the coming year based on the current known developments. As the community grows this could continue to increase. To continue with all the current services, code enforcement would need to change to a complaint-based code enforcement. Even with the growth and the assistance of one of the Building Inspector for rental inspections (0.5 FTE) the concern is that the level of service that is known would decrease.

Future Position Recommendations

Future position requests were broken down by what would ultimately make the department fully function at the highest possible level of service and considering succession planning for the Department future is found under the columns labeled, "Request for Staffing". The "Alternative Request" column

would allow the Department to maintain the current level of service. Two directions are provided for consideration and the requested additions are shown in red below:

Planning Division Staff		
Current Staffing	**Request for Staffing**	**Alternate Request**
Community Development Director	Community Development Director	Community Development Director
Two Senior Planners	Two Senior Planners	Two Senior Planners
Community Development Assistant	Community Development Assistant	Community Development Assistant
Planning Consultant	Entry Level Planner	Planning Consultant
Summer Planning Intern	Summer Planning Intern	Summer Planning Intern

Request to consider is replacing the Planning Consultant with an entry-level planner. This would allow for that entry-level planner to take the smaller planning cases, assist with all front counter inquiries, inspections for obtaining a final certificate of occupancy, and assist the Code Enforcement Officer with code related enforcement issues. An entry-level planner per the pay plan would fall under Step 16, and at a step 1 would be $30.13 per hour or a yearly salary of $64,500. We currently pay the Planning Consultant $106 per hour. The Planning Consultant hours dedicated to Cottage Grove are approximately 21-24 hours per week and no more than 30 hours weekly. If an entry-level planner is not added, the request would be to maintain the Planning Consultant until the workload subsides in roughly the year 2025.

Building Division Staff		
Current Staffing	**Request for Staffing**	**Alternate Request**
Building Official	Building Official	Building Official
Senior Building Inspector	Senior Building Inspector	Senior Building Inspector
4 Building Inspectors	3 Building Inspectors	4 Building Inspectors
	1 Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Asst.	2 Building Permit Technicians
2 Building Permit Technicians	2 Building Permit Technicians	Cross train Community Dev. Assistant to take on more building permit work
1 PT Front Counter Assistant	1 FT (or 2 PT) Front Counter Assistant	1 PT Front Counter Assistant
1 PT Plan Reviewer	1 PT Plan Reviewer	1 PT Plan Reviewer

The request for consideration is to attempt to fill the Senior Building Inspector position as soon as possible. Currently, there are two Building Inspectors that may qualify; one may not be interested since it requires supervising code enforcement the other needs to obtain their full license which they would have by 2024/2025. Additionally, the Building Inspector that is also helping with code enforcement is roughly 0.5 FTE of his position. They obtained their limited building license in October 2021 and as they become more up to speed with inspections and building code requirements, they will be able to take on more building inspections and their time will most likely be fully devoted to building inspections which will be necessary as development increases in the warmer months. This will be necessary as we are down one Building Inspector with the retirement of f Bob LaBrosse.

The request is also to consider making the Front Counter Assistant either a full-time position or hiring two part-time individuals. This position has really been essential in allowing the Building Permit Technicians and the Community Development Assistant to focus on their work and job assignments while the Front Counter Assistant assists with inspection scheduling and the additional duties with front counter traffic. The part-time Plan Reviewer was hired in approximately December 2021 and has assisted the Building Inspectors in being able to keep up with the plan review and permits moving through the review process. Previous to the Plan Reviewer, assisting the Building Division permits would take 2-3 weeks to review due to the number of inspections that were scheduled for each Building Inspector. If positions could not be added, one potential thought would be for the Community Development Assistant to potentially take on more building permit duties but it would have to be done around their schedule for the Planning Commission and City Council process.

Additionally, as the Community Development Director, I would like the ability through our phone system to pull a phone report to accurately determine the number of phone calls that are received at the front counter which assists in determining the workload. When inquiring about a phone system report through our current phone system, the report is unclear and does not detail what phone line the call came in on or where is was transferred too. Having an accessible phone report allows the Community Development Director the ability to track time spent on phone calls which is a large portion of all the positions at the front counter.

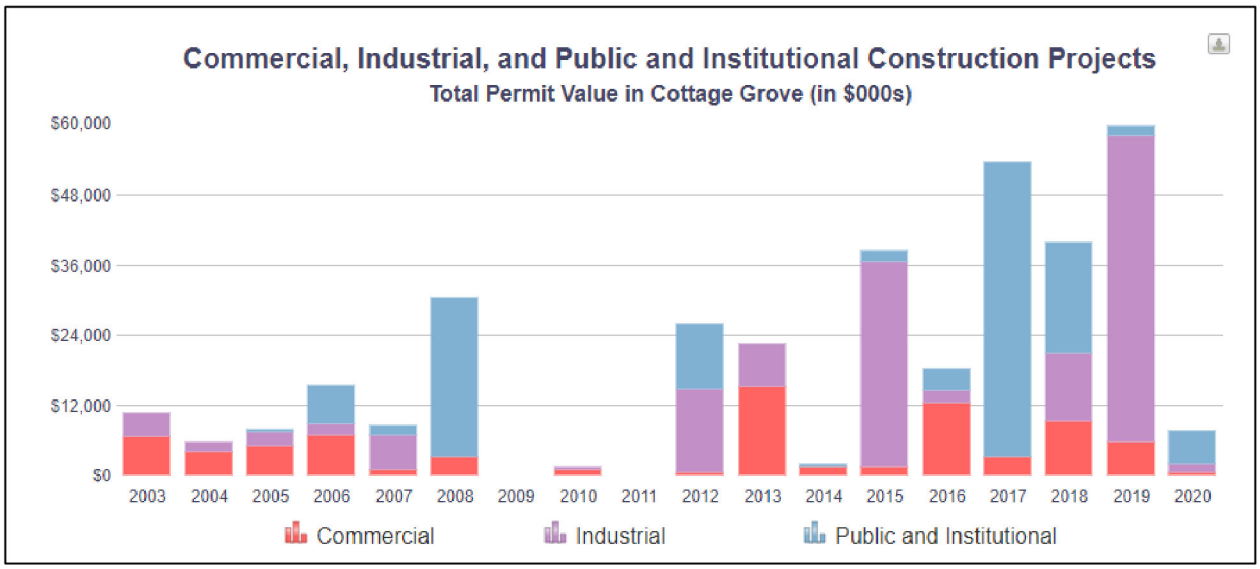
Code Enforcement Division Staff		
Current Staffing	**Request for Staffing**	**Alternate Request**
1 Code Enforcement Officer	1 Code Enforcement Officer	1 Code Enforcement Officer
½ Building Inspector for rental	Summer Intern	Summer Intern
	½ Building Inspector for rental	½ Building Inspector for rental

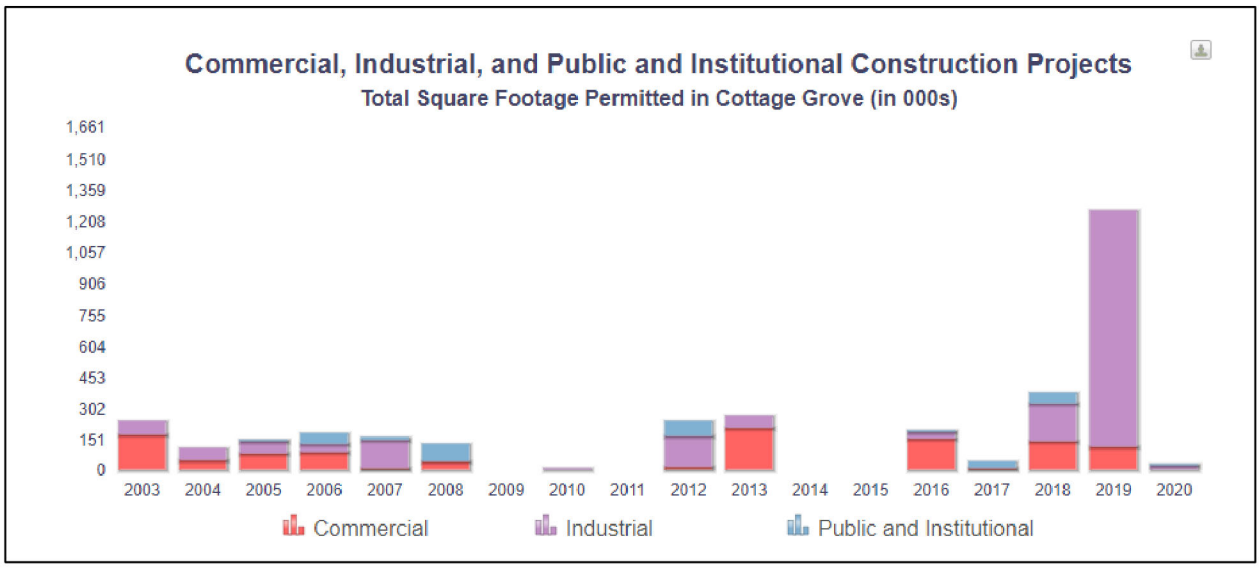
Request for consideration is the addition of a summer intern. Additionally, it would be recommended that code enforcement services (code violations and rental inspections) no longer be provided to the communities that Cottage Grove contracts with (Newport, St. Paul Park, Denmark Township, Grey Cloud Township). The growth of Cottage Grove and removal of contract services will allow the Code Enforcement Officer to focus solely on Cottage Grove and continue proactive services.

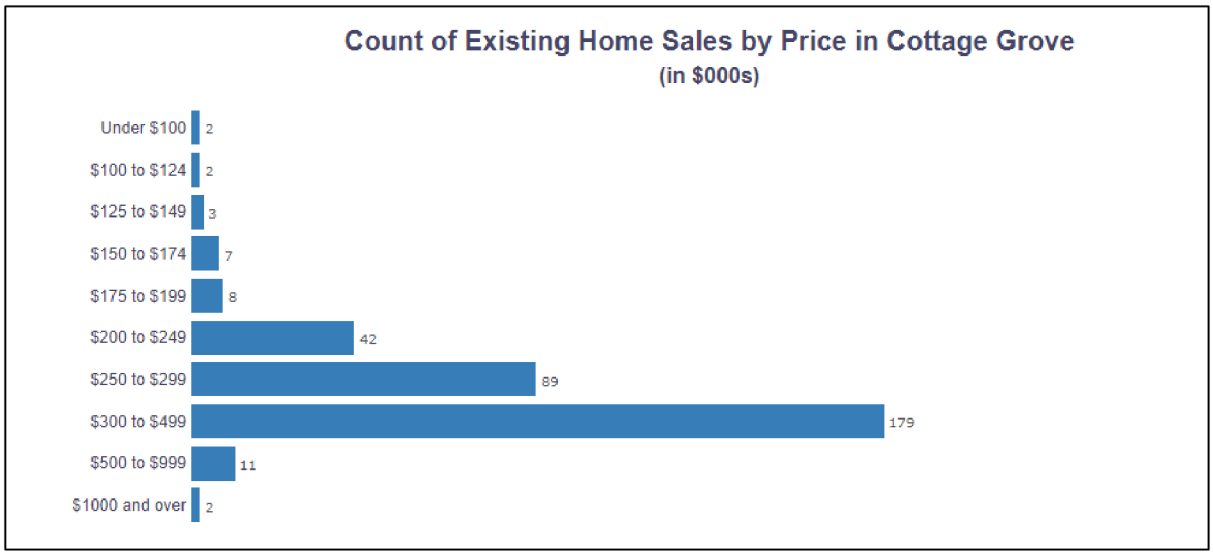
Conclusion

The Community Development Department truly takes pride in their work in supporting Cottage Grove's growth and being a team member along with the other City departments. The Community Development Department guides and plans for development and land uses, we assist in approving and assuring structures meet code and life safety and we enforce City Code to ensure the continued beautification of the community, so Cottage Grove continues to be a wonderful place to live, work, and play! As referenced by other City departments, this report is directly related to the growth of the community and is intended to encourage conversation to maintain the level of service the community has received and expects in the coming years but to also consider future growth and succession planning of the Community Development Department.

Additional Data






Count of Existing Home Sales by Price in Cottage Grove
(in $000s)
Under $100
2
$100 to $124
2
$125 to $149
3
$150 to $174
7
$175 to $199
8
$200 to $249
42
$250 to $299
89
$300 to $499
179
$500 to $999
11
$1000 and over
2

Issued	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Additional residents	290	340	548	840	1,131	1,699	1,628	1,628	1,628	1,465	1,317	1,184
Population	37,111	37,451	37,999	38,839	39,970	41,669	43,297	44,925	46,553	48,018	49,335	50,519
Residential permits	115	185	284	382	574	550	550	550	495	445	400	360
Valuation	$34,561,365	$50,234,001	$78,018,244	$101,983,793	$155,998,356	$148,500,000	$148,500,000	$148,500,000	$133,650,000	$120,150,000	$108,000,000	$97,200,000
Commerical permits	12	15	11	11	17	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Valuation	$11,658,461	$37,706,096	$55,625,776	$ 21,241,710	$ 26,296,632	$ 50,000,000	$ 50,000,000	$ 50,000,000	$ 37,000,000	$ 35,000,000	$ 32,000,000	$30,000,000
Full value on tax roll	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Add'l tcv residential	$ 345,614	$ 502,340	$ 780,182	$ 1,019,838	$ 1,559,984	$ 1,485,000	$ 1,485,000	$ 1,485,000	$ 1,336,500	$ 1,201,500	$ 1,080,000	$ 972,000
Add'l tcv commercial	$ 233,169	$ 754,122	$ 1,112,516	$ 424,834	$ 525,933	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000	$ 740,000	$ 700,000	$ 640,000	$ 600,000
	$ 578,783	$ 1,256,462	$ 1,892,698	$ 1,444,672	$ 2,085,916	$ 2,485,000	$ 2,485,000	$ 2,485,000	$ 2,076,500	$ 1,901,500	$ 1,720,000	$ 1,572,000
Tax capacity growth %	8.6%	8.3%	8.5%	7.0%	8.0%	10.3%	9.8%	9.4%	7.5%	6.6%	5.8%	5.1%

Cottage Grove

Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

FINANCE

Staffing Strategy Report 2022-2026

Executive Summary

The Finance Department oversees the daily financial operations of the City and prepares the City's budget, annual financial report (AFR) and five-year capital improvement plan for the benefit of residents and all interested parties including the State Auditor's Office and bond rating agencies. The department is also responsible for debt management and investment of city funds.

The Information Technology (IT) division develops and coordinates computer solutions that provide easy access to information and operating/processing software. Division staff support all City departments in implementing technology systems including phone, voicemail, and internet.

Current Finance staffing includes the Finance Director, Assistant Finance Director, Accountant, Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable Clerk, Utility Billing Clerk, and a half time Office Clerk. Current IT staff includes the IT Manager and two (2) IT Coordinators.

Based on the analysis provided here, staff is recommending the addition of one and a half (1.5) FTE in Finance over the next five years and one (1) FTE in IT.

Background

Finance staffing has remained virtually the same for the last 20 years. Staff fulfills basic dedicated functions which are not significantly variable with the growth of the city; bills are issued, invoices are paid, employees are paid, bank accounts are reconciled, financial reporting and budget creation are completed. The volume of invoices, billings and paychecks have increased however, technology solutions have allowed staff levels to remain stable.

For example, we utilize a third-party provider whose software calculates, generates, prints, and mails utility bills as well as supplementing customer service support daily. One Utility Billing clerk interfaces with Utilities/Public works staff and the provider, performing the required tasks and providing customer service support. The change to lockbox payment processing and acquisition of an online bill payment module have greatly reduced the need for staff to process cash and check payments for the daily bank deposit.

Staff duties ebb and flow between positions as is necessary. Prior to the beginning of the building boom (2019-2020), certain daily finance duties were provided by front desk personnel. When that individual left, the position was replaced by a second Building Permit Tech and finance duties were absorbed by existing finance staff.

After the 2020 audit, Finance added a half time (.5) Office Clerk to increase the segregation of duties as recommended by the Auditor. This clerk provides support in the areas of daily operations (bank deposit and journal entries) and UB customer service.

Conversely, IT staffing has significantly increased over the last ten years due to the exponential growth in demand for computers, software, and internet connectivity, to

provide the solutions mentioned above. In 2010, IT staff was comprised of one (1) three quarter (.75) Coordinator and one part time (.50) technician. Today, the staff of three in this division may, at times, work around the clock maintaining everything from computers and servers to internet connections and cyber security.

Service Levels

Current staffing levels in Finance provide accurate and timely financial reporting, accounts payable and receivables, utility billing and all other operational requirements to satisfy internal and external customers.

However, dissatisfaction with the third-party Utility Billing service has grown due to the lack of system updates and certain billing and reporting difficulties. In 2006, the system supported 8,900 monthly utility bills; currently the system supports 12,500 monthly utility bills. After viewing demos from other providers, staff will pursue Request for Proposal (RFP) for a different provider in the first quarter of 2022. Assuming a new provider is chosen, implementation/conversion is expected in the first quarter of 2023.

Since our current provider supplements our UB clerk's customer service (receiving customer phone calls after 4:30 PM daily), we assume that the change in providers would result in the need for an additional UB clerk to maintain the same (or improved) level of customer service in 2023 and beyond. Fees currently paid to the third party for this service would partially offset the cost of the additional position.

Accounts payable is another spot where technology and automation have allowed us to provide consistent service without the addition of staff members. Currently, two individuals in the Public Works department enter coded invoices into the Tyler financial software before sending them, and the data entry report, to the Finance Department for review. Public Works receives the most invoices from vendors so this processing significantly short-cuts the time required by the AP clerk.

The impact of the 3M settlement with the planning and constructing of water treatment facilities, will be seen in the required tracking, and reporting of expenses to the State of Minnesota so that appropriate reimbursement of these expenditures occurs. Currently, the Assistant Finance Director completes these monthly/quarterly reports, but the function should fall more in the Accountant/Accounts payable area. Potentially, the need exists for an additional half (.5) time position to complete administration of the funding as we get further into all the projects associated with the settlement.

In 2021 demand for technology services saw the three current IT staff members respond to and close 955 help desk tickets. The increase in public infrastructure including the previously mentioned water treatment plants**,** and park facilities will require corresponding network development and maintenance of equipment. This workload would suggest an additional IT technician will be necessary to be able to provide the same level of internal customer support beginning in 2023.

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director
Cc: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator
Date: January 11, 2022

Subject: Parks and Recreation Department Staffing Strategy

Introduction/Background
The Parks and Recreation Department has submitted a detailed staffing strategy report to manage the maintenance needs of our growing park system. Because park maintenance needs are immediate, full justification for the positions has been provided to Council for consideration at the strategic planning session. However, within the Parks and Recreation Department, there are three additional service areas to be considered:

1. Ice Arena
2. River Oaks
3. Recreation Programming/Services

Because all three operations are so heavily focused on service provisions, it is difficult to speculate on five-year growth needs at this time. Rather, these business programs must remain pliable to the market conditions and adapt service needs to meet both community trends and recreational industry trends.

River Oaks and the Ice Arena have fairly stable and consistent operations from year to year and are guided by solid business plans. As such, any future growth needed to serve our clientele should be developed within 5-year business plans and the annual budgeting process. It is recommended that revenue offset any additional payroll expenses for these two operations. Additional full-time employment requests are likely minimal in the coming three to five years. However, additional personnel expense for part-time and seasonal employees should be increased incrementally to keep up with operational demands and labor market wages.

Recreation services will likely need to grow in the next five years to meet the growing population and service demands of Cottage Grove. Although no budget request is being made at this time, we do anticipate the need for additional full-time support of 1 to 1.5 employees within the next five years. As staff analyzes detailed service needs of the community in the coming year, justification of those employees will be more apparent to management and can be articulated to Council. Any position requests should include revenue offset opportunities. Like River Oaks and the Ice Arena, recreation also relies heavily on part-time seasonal staff and will need incremental budget increases to meet market wages.

Parks Maintenance Staffing Strategy Report

Executive Summary

Cottage Grove is very proud of its ability to build unique park, trail and natural areas for public enjoyment. The physical, mental, social, environmental and economical benefits of these spaces in a community are priceless. However, the degradation of these facilities can result in a reversal of those benefits. Thus, it is important to align the resources necessary to assure the oldest, newest, smallest and largest parks all receive the attention so needed.

Parks Maintenance is a division of the Parks and Recreation Department. The staff team consists of 1 Park Foreman (Head Supervisor), 1 Park Lead Person (Assistant Supervisor), 6 full-time public service workers and 13 (3.8 full-time equivalent) seasonal/part-time staff. They are led under the direction of the Parks Superintendent. In 2021, City Council authorized the hiring of one half-time park maintenance, half-time ice arena maintenance staff person for the 2022 budget. This would bring the maintenance division to 8.5 full time maintenance employees.

City Council has requested information regarding park maintenance labor to better understand the long-term needs of the department to meet our service commitment to the community while also managing for rapid growth of Cottage Grove and its' parks system.

Based on the analysis provided in this report, the Parks maintenance team recommends the addition of two (2) full-time public service workers to meet the recreational service needs for our growing community by the year 2025.

Background

Today's full-time park maintenance staffing level has not changed in 20 years; something the staff team is proud to report. Through new technology implementation, new equipment, maintenance best practices, work scheduling efficiencies, part-time/seasonal labor usage and a dedicated staff team, the department has been able to run a very lean program for many years. Although lean, exceptional customer service and customer experiences always remain the highest priority for the team. The division has adapted well to resident's desire for new and improved recreational facilities.

Park staff is very interchangeable and work tasks vary from day to day. However, primary roles have been adopted to assure service needs are met and employees can train and excel in their area of expertise. Current positions with a brief description of focus areas in the Parks Department are:

Parks Foreman	Division Supervisor, project management, field work
Park Lead Person	Assistant Supervisor, project management, field work
PSW	Operator, special projects, rough cutting
PSW	Athletic Fields, Playgrounds
PSW	Field Lining, Mowing
PSW	Irrigation, turf management (spraying, fertilizing, aerating, top dressing)
PSW	Mowing Crew Leader
PSW	Horticulturist; all landscaping and park trees
Future 0.5 PSW	Mowing, ballfields, horticulture and special projects

Growth
The park maintenance staff has done a tremendous job of absorbing growth over the past twenty years. As the expectation of park services grows, so does the workload for staff.

In just the past five years six new parks have opened:

1. Sunnyhill Park and Open Space (12 acres)
2. Cedarhurst Meadows West Park and Open Space (20 acres)
3. Cedarhurst Meadows East Park and Open Space (20 acres)
4. Antler's Ridge Park and Open Space (20 acres)
5. Ravine Parkway and Open Space (10 acres)
6. Strawberry Fields Park and Open Space (9 acres)

In the coming five years, our master plans show that additional parks will need turf, athletic facility, trail, landscaping, open space and infrastructure maintenance and repair at (acreage estimated):

1. Hamlet Park South (40 acres - large athletic field expansion, habitat restoration and building)
2. Oltman Middle School (12 acres - large lacrosse/soccer complex and building)
3. Michael's Point (10 acres - neighborhood park and open space near Robert's Lake)
4. Glacial Valley Community Park (10 acres - serving Upper East Ravine neighborhoods)
5. Still Ponds Park (44 acres - large park and open space around lake at former Posavod property)
6. Mississippi Dunes Park and Open Space (44 acres – riverfront park and open space)
7. Summers Gate Park and Open Space (8 acres – neighborhood park near Northpoint)
8. Multiple new park developments east of Keats Avenue depending on housing growth rate.

Perhaps one of the more significant areas of growth is the increased customer/resident expectations of our services. Pre-2000, a common Cottage Grove park included a playground, a picnic bench, non-irrigated turf and perhaps a ballfield or two. Today's parks include these features but also tend to have flower gardens, shelters, well-manicured turf areas, irrigation systems, clean restrooms, rentable facilities and unique/sophisticated play experiences. These increased desires of the park system have a direct correlation with increased maintenance needs. A good example of managing service changes is in the area of irrigation. Irrigation and turf maintenance alone consumes one full-time position throughout the growing season. By improving efficiencies and greatly reducing labor in our open space mowing operations, we were able to divert labor hours to irrigation systems and turf quality work. However, all future parks will be irrigated as neighborhoods now expect adjacent public spaces to reflect the landscape requirements/expectations of their own property, thus adding skilled labor requirements for the division.

Beyond parks, maintenance expectations of other public facilities have and will continue to grow. One such area includes the Ravine Parkway which has irrigated/treated turf, trees and many gardens. Ravine Parkway is a beautiful greenway to be proud of. But in just the past two years this site alone has added hundreds of hours per year of turf, irrigation and landscape maintenance. Six roundabouts with extensive landscaping have also been added to the community in recent years and three to four more are anticipated in the near future. Roundabouts continue to be a focal point for beautification and require considerable planning and upkeep in these high traffic and dangerous work zones.

The table below is a snapshot of the park growth with 2022/2023 projections.

Parks	2000	2010	2020	Projected 2022/2023	Projected 2025
Parks	22	27	33	36/37	43
Acreage Maintained	600	850	915	950	1,150
Rectangular Fields Maintained	25	28	30	33	37
Ball Diamonds Maintained	40	46	47	49	51
Winter Skating Rinks	14	11	13	14	15
Hard Courts (tennis/pball/bball)	26	28	32	35	40
Sand Volleyball Courts	4	3	3	3	4
Playgrounds	20	25	28	31/32	38
Picnic Shelters	6	11	21	28	33
Park Buildings	8	9	9	10	11
Irrigation Zones	75	250	536	600	700
Trail/Sidewalk Miles	19	46	76	90	110
Disc Golf Course	1	1	1	1.5	1.5
Splash Pads	0	0	1	1	1
Dog Parks	0	0	1	1	1
Landscape Beds	25	120	293	320	350
Facility Rental Revenue	$4,000	$13,000	$40,000	$55,000	$65,000

Increased Services
Staff has worked to increase its service levels at the request of the community. Some of the more recent service additions include:

Splash Pad – Opened in 2014 and requires staff to clean and inspect the area, restrooms and equipment 7 days a week.

Inclusive Playground – Opened in 2017 and requires dedicated labor 7 days a week to clean and inspect the playground, restrooms and supporting amenities.

Kingston Park – Restrooms were opened to the public on a daily basis (Monday through Thursday for soccer/softball programs) beginning in 2017.

Playgrounds – Playgrounds are perhaps the most litigious service area in the park industry. As such, the Parks and Recreation Department has been working hard to improve education, training, maintenance, documentation and overall care and safety for these play areas. As recreational desires grow, playground equipment continues to become more unique both in terms of play experiences and upkeep of equipment. It is a service area we would like to improve our maintenance practices on, such as leveling woodchip surfacing more regularly, but have a hard time keeping up with all 28 units.

Irrigation – The addition of irrigation to the majority of parks has multiple maintenance related needs. The start up and shut down of the irrigation systems takes one full-time employee 3 weeks each spring and 3 weeks each fall to install parts, test/drain the system and repair any broken equipment. With nearly 600 zones and thousands of heads to care for, it is a daily challenge during growing season. Additionally, irrigated turf requires more mowing, trimming, spraying, aerating and fertilizing on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Lastly, as many systems age, there is increased maintenance demand to repair/replace faulty pipes, valves and wiring.

Athletic Fields – Perhaps as notable as irrigation/turf, athletic field expectations for quality have increased to the point of requiring a full-time position dedicated to the upkeep of these facilities. Things such as goal-mouth repair, mound maintenance, weeding, backstop repair and equipment repair are just a few example areas that once were more seasonal maintenance tasks but now require more skilled and technical labor. Without this attention to detail, safety is jeopardized and so is the ability to host large recreational events and tournaments that bring visitors to Cottage Grove. Additionally, sport field line painting and tournament/event preparation needs will increase as our community and programs grows.

Rentals – As the park system has grown and improved, facility use requests (buildings, shelters, fields, courts, rinks, etc.) have tripled since 2010. 2021 has seen a great resurgence in facility rentals and as such, we continue to build more of these amenities for public enjoyment. These rentals require cleaning and inspection of the facility before, after and sometimes during events depending on their duration. Rentals most often take place on evenings and weekends thus requiring overtime labor rates. More recently, the addition of the PaddleShare kayak rental program requires weekly equipment cleaning, repair and servicing.

Primary Concerns to Maintaining Service Levels

As our park maintenance team gathered to discuss the current and future needs to maintain our park system, several service area concerns were noted. If additional labor support is not provided, services levels in these areas will have to be modified significantly and will have a negative impact on overall customer and user experiences.

Horticulture

Our public landscaping program has been proudly embraced by the community. However, the growth of these features is outpacing our ability to adequately maintain them. One Horticulturist cannot keep up with the day-to-day maintenance (weeding, mulching, pruning, etc.) while also replanting dead or dying plant material to assure healthy and beautiful gardens. About 25% of our gardens (over 75 gardens) are now underplanted as a result of dead or dying plants. When we have access to horticulture interns, we are able to get more work done in a season. However, three of the past four seasons we have not been able to find internship candidates and thus place in regular seasonal employees who attempt to learn plant identification and care needs through on-the-job training. Because of this position's educational requirements and passion for the work, it is recommended that future position growth have some background in landscaping care. Without this support, it will be important to minimize growth of landscaping in future development areas while also looking to eliminate and/or reduce in size up to 25% of current landscape beds to allow for future growth.

Forestry

The municipal park system has hundreds of acres of forest with tens of thousands of trees to care for. We do not have a forester or arborist on staff to manage our public forests and receive limited support from the Public Works Forester simply because that position is already stretched thin managing boulevard and residential tree needs. Our park staff operates more on an as-needed basis for tree care in the public park system. As forests overgrow, invasive species spread, disease is identified or tree-care is clearly needed, we document the concern in our work order management system and prioritize the work to be done. Safety concerns are handled quickly while preventative maintenance or trees downed safely in the woods may take months or more to respond too. Also, there is very little studying, planning or scheduling of maintenance needs for our public forests. This natural resource management planning could help to improve the overall health of our forests and reduce long-term maintenance costs. A Certified Arborist or position with background in plant/tree care would be recommended for a future position to bring a more proactive approach to managing this function. One

position cannot be solely responsible for all the physical work,but having an employee that is dedicated to the urban forests is important. This position would have the educational background to identify challenges and opportunities while also developing a strategy utilizing both in-house and contracted services to protect and enhance these community assets. Some benefits to proactive forest management include reduced costs from storms and disease. By proactively maintaining healthy forests, these areas are less susceptible to mass tree loss, safety concerns and forest degradation that left unchecked, become costly to mitigate.

If a labor position cannot be funded, it would be recommended that the City consider allocating at least $50,000 in financial resources to contract arborist services from a licensed contractor. If that is not an option, the other alternative would be to reduce service responses to all public forest and move to a five to seven year rotating schedule of public forest cleanup (instead of the current seasonal response). This would assure each public forest is inspected and cleared of dangerous materials at least every five to seven years. However, the community will have to get accustomed to significantly delayed responses for downed timber and closed trails as overgrowth of the forests will make it more challenging to access sites efficiently.

Ball Diamonds
Ball diamonds include baseball and softball fields. At surface level, they appear easy to maintain. However, they need constant attention to remain playable, safe and to prevent degradation of the facility. Routine grading is necessary to assure water drains off playing fields and that there is ample dirt material for a safe playing surface. Grass and weeds constantly grow into the playing surfaces and must be removed and cut back on a regular schedule to assure the playing field remains at the proper dimensions. Pitching mounds have a very specific shape to assure the proper angling of the pitching delivery; mounds need daily, weekly and monthly inspection and repair to assure clay/dirt material is in proper place. Home plate and base areas consistently lose dirt/clay material during use and must be replaced daily to assure safe playing conditions. Other areas such as fencing, dugouts, benches, bleachers, bullpens and turf all need attention as well. Currently staff has been unable to maintain a regular schedule for seasonal ball diamond care. We would estimate that about 30 (over 60%) of ball diamonds are deficient in some way from the level of service we would desire. These deficiencies can be any of the maintenance/repair tasks aforementioned and would require approximately 250 additional hours per year to bring back to service level expectations.

Should additional labor support not be available, the facilities will simply continue to degrade in terms of safety, playability and aesthetics. Services cannot really be reduced without losing efficiency and increasing costs at a later date. Fields that are not regularly maintain degrade quickly due to heavy usage and wear. It takes significantly longer and is more expensive to restore a field to playable conditions than to foster a routine maintenance schedule.

Turf Mowing and Care
We have realized about 50% growth in our maintained turf areas since 2000, and we expect to add another 20% by 2025. All said, that would be growth of 100% from the year 2000 to 2025. We rely heavily upon seasonal labor for mowing but are just as reliant on quality equipment that can make our crews as efficient as possible. We continue to seek new technology to improve performance but we seem to be limiting out on those opportunities at this time. Also, travel time from park to park as the community grows increases inefficiencies because mowers are spending more time on the road and less time mowing parks.

Our park staff takes tremendous pride in our turf quality. This living organism is in constant need of care. Beyond mowing, we have regular fertilizing, spraying, aeration and irrigation needs that must be applied consistently to maintain this asset. Presently, staff is concerned with the ability to maintain the turf management schedule. Additional growth will only continue to falter our best practices goals. As

an example, we are only aerating about 1/3 of what we would desire. We are doing much more spot-spraying of turf areas because we simply do not have the time to dedicate to a full-scale herbicide treatment community-wide. Irrigation repairs can extend days or weeks and turf quality declines quickly. Irrigation zones have doubled since 2010 and grew by 800% when comparing to the year 2000. The expectations for quality turf in public parks has changed. No longer can we let turf rely on mother nature for its water and nutrient needs. As we expect neighborhoods to care for their lawns, they too expect their park spaces to be cared for as well or better.

Customer Service Needs
With the growth of the park system comes growth in usage. We are excited that the parks we work so hard to build and maintain are enjoyed by the public. But service needs continue to expand as we add new recreational features. Facility rentals continue to grow and much of those needs are on evenings and weekends. Future staffing should take into account the best opportunity to serve the customers while they are utilizing the facilities. In particular, servicing athletic tournaments along with community events have proven to be popular in the community while bringing revenue to the City (facility use permits). Further, these tournaments and events are shown to bring thousands of visitors to the community each year which has a positive impact on the local economy. It has always been important to our local leaders and our team of staff to show visitors the pride we have in maintaining our parks for these event venues and providing the highest level of customer service to welcome our residents and guests.

Services can be reduced in this area but would have a direct correlation with a diminished user experience. The City would most likely see an overall reduction of events and rentals. Over time, that usage decline typically leads to decline in appreciation and dedication from the community to invest and care for its park system. This is a trajectory not advised by staff. We have lots of great usage, appreciation, volunteerism and support for the parks because of the quality experiences we currently provide to our residents and visitors.

Overtime Pressure
Staff is regularly having to come in on weekends to cover tournaments, events, rentals and restrooms servicing. It is beginning to create stress on the staff. Although they appreciate the overtime pay, the time off for individual and family needs is just as important and becoming less available to them for a quality work-life balance. There are weekends where we dispatch multiple staff (sometimes 3 or 4) to cover the work needs. We attempt to preschedule these overtime requirements to help employees plan their personal time off better, but we are also committed to the customers/residents and do what it takes to assure positive experiences in our parks and community. Reduction of these services would diminish overall park experiences by having to reduce maintenance and cleanup for public restrooms (Woodridge, Highlands, Kingston), sports tournaments and special events. Although we could reassign staff schedules to cover evenings and weekends, doing so is also challenging because regular maintenance is best performed during weekday morning/afternoon hours when staff can efficiently maintain the parks with the least amount of conflict with park usage.

Snowplowing Needs
In discussion with the Public Work Director, there is additional need for employees in snow removal services. Any new positions would contribute to snow removal by absorbing route expansions as the community grows. This new position may also allow for quicker winter servicing of our park parking lots, trails and ice rinks. Currently, these features are lower priority and serviced after streets are completed. We are experiencing increased service calls to open our park and recreation opportunities to the public after snow events. Streets will continue to be the priority for public safety, but as labor is available, these other areas of the City may be serviced quicker.

Equipment Needs
With any added position, the City needs to consider what role the employee will fill and what tools they need to maximize their performance. Pickups, hand tools, mowers and ballfield equipment are a few items that would need consideration. In order to maximize the performance of the team with the inclusion of new employees, the following equipment and today's projected purchase cost would be recommended.

Pickup Truck (1)	$50,000
Small Bucket Truck (1)	$150,000
Smithco (or like) w/Ballfield Drag (1)	$22,000
11-foot or 16-foot Mower (1)	$70,000 or $120,000

Benchmarking
Benchmarking between communities can be both valuable and difficult. Each City and department operates differently and required services are always unique to their specific community needs. But in comparing to National Recreation and Park Association Benchmarking data, we believe Cottage Grove continues to provide great recreational opportunities to the public at a great value.

National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Data Benchmarking:
NRPA Residents per Park: 2,300
Current Cottage Grove Residents per Park: 1,000

NRPA Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents: 9.9
Cottage Grove Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents: 23.38

NRPA Residents per playground: 3,600
Cottage Grove Residents per playground: 1,330

NRPA Full-Time Employee Equivalent per 10,000 residents: 8.2
Cottage Grove Full-Time Employee Equivalent per 10,000 residents:4.6

NRPA Operating Expenditures per Capita: $88.30/year
Cottage Grove Operating Expenditures per Capita: $51.60

Using this same data draw, we can also compare Cottage Grove to some of our fellow south suburban communities but once again caution the unique service needs of each community.

Residents per Park:	
Cottage Grove	*1,000*
Apple Valley	1,100
Burnsville	850
Eagan	1,150
Lakeville	1,050
Rosemount	850
Woodbury	1,300
Farmington	985
Hastings	650

Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents:	
Cottage Grove	*23.4*
Apple Valley	12.5
Burnsville	17.2
Eagan	20.9
Lakeville	17.4
Rosemount	21.1
Woodbury	45.5
Farmington	22.1
Hastings	29.0

Residents per Playground:	
Cottage Grove	1,330
Apple Valley	1,040
Burnsville	1,340
Eagan	1,430
Lakeville	1,510
Rosemount	1,170
Woodbury	1,570
Farmington	1,180
Hastings	1,080

Full-Time Equivalents ~ Population:	
Cottage Grove	12.0 ~ 36,600
Apple Valley	23.0 ~ 56,400
Burnsville	24.0 ~ 64,300
Eagan	24.0 ~ 68,900
Lakeville	19.0 ~ 69,500
Rosemount	9.0 ~ 25,700
Woodbury	29.5 ~ 69,900
Farmington	5.5 ~ 22,900
Hastings	9.0 ~ 22,800

Alternative Service Options
Full-time employees are not the only resources available to satisfy community service needs. Park maintenance attempts to achieve the most efficient and cost-effective methods to achieve its end goals. Examples include seasonal/part-time employees, independent contracting and technology enhancements.

Our park maintenance team is very proud of its history of utilizing part-time and/or seasonal employees. These employees typically work 3 to 6 months and can vary from 10 to 40 hours per week. Like all employees, they need operating, service and safety training and equipment to be effective. The most efficient use of these employees is for routine maintenance tasks that require less mechanical, specialized skill-sets and/or supervision. Currently, most part-time/seasonal roles fit into one of the categories below:

1. Mowing/Trimming
2. Ballfield Dragging/Chalking/Game Prep
3. Landscaping
4. Waste Hauling
5. Building/Shelter Caretaking

These are vital tasks to the overall operation. However, these are also roles in which supervisors can train employees in a short period of time and get employees into a regular maintenance schedule with minimal supervision.

Part-time/seasonal employees have limiting factors to be considered. Although the tasks can be routine, supervision is always necessary. Each one of the functions aforementioned have a direct supervisor that is a full-time employee. Depending on the size and skill set of the part-time/seasonal crews, that level of supervision can pull the full-time employee away from their hands-on work considerably. With the growth of the community and parks system, there is a need for more field supervision to assure maintenance service levels are achieved and consistent each day, week, month and season across the entire 36 square miles of Cottage Grove.

Further, the majority of these employees are students. Their school schedules leave the months of April, May, September, October and November with staff shortages where full-time staff must pull together to cover basic service needs such as mowing, athletic fields and general caretaking. Fulfilling those basic service needs during fringe months is becoming more difficult to achieve as the park system grows. Because of this, many of the seasonal maintenance projects we were once able to perform regularly, are now postponed to fulfill basic services. Tasks like ballfield repairs, turf care, leaf cleanup, tree care, fencing repairs and building preventative maintenance are all areas that seem to be falling behind more regularly with each season.

Part-time/seasonal employees are an essential part of our team and are essential to our service goals. We will always look to this type of employment first as a cost-effective approach to maintaining our parks. However, with the addition more full-time staffing support we also know that we can split crews, cover more ground and have proper supervisory levels to utilize these employees to their highest level of efficiency. The size of the crew is less important than the efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of the crew.

Staff also considers independent contracting to cover service areas that may consume valuable City labor hours. The most recent example includes the turf care services contracted to Valdes Lawn Care for public facilities. This has been a positive experience because these independent sites require significant mobilization to get both staff and equipment in place to perform maintenance requirements. Additionally, these sites are on very regular maintenance schedules. To contract services for parks is less efficient because most parks are mowed in sequence and require little travel time from site to site while having much larger turf areas. They do not need as much of the inefficient and focused care as small turf areas around parking lots and buildings with the need for a lot of trimming and blowing of clippings as well. Additionally, park mowing schedules change from park to park and from season to season. Athletic complexes can be mowed up to three times per week depending on season, temperature, turf quality, rain/irrigation, fertilizing and usage patterns. When turf is growing at its peak, mowing must be strategic to assure we can cut once and not bag clippings or mow multiple passes to eliminate clumping that effects playability of the surface. For special events and tournaments, we are diligent in mowing just prior to events to assure the best playing surface and best visual impressions are in place. The same thing can be said for spraying, fertilizing, aerating and other turf and landscape care. We have seen these challenges with the School District's contract labor services and do not believe it is in the best interest of our community parks. We feel it is important to retain control of these maintenance practices so that reliance on these contract schedules do not negatively affect one of our greatest park assets; turf.

Changing service level expectations is another option that could be considered. Although our staff team does not recommend this, it is possible to mow less, remove trash less, downgrade athletic facility maintenance, irrigate/fertilize/spray less, reduce care of forest/habitat areas and reduce our commitment to building out special projects. We believe we are efficient in our performance. The community appreciates our high level of service in the parks and downgrading would have negative impacts to the overall park system. We have great equipment and procedures to get the work done at a high level of service and would recommend we continue. Because our park system is heavily-used and appreciated, it tends to reduce acts of vandalism and other crime because residents are quick to point out concerns and help to police our parks. The more our parks are used, the safer they are, the more respected they are and the more users are willing to pay for these services for a more livable community.

Future Position Recommendation
Based on the analysis provided in this report, the Parks maintenance team makes the following recommendations for future staffing to best serve the community:

2023 – Add one full-time Public Service Worker to immediately aid in turf and ballfield maintenance while improving customer service needs. Secondary focus would be to aid with horticulture and special projects. Winter focus of the position would be to aid in snowplowing, tree care and maintaining the additional hockey rink at Glacial Valley Park. This position may be considered for a varied schedule to help alleviate overtime pressure and better serve the public on evenings and/or weekends.

2024 – Add one full-time Public Service Worker with education/experience in plant and tree care while also able to provide regular park customer service needs. Secondary focus will be to aid with special projects (carpentry, concrete, construction, landscaping, irrigation install, athletic field renovations, building repair, park furniture assembly/install/repair, playground repair, etc.) and routine maintenance. Winter role would be heavily focused on public forest management including field work, plan development, maintaining tree/forest care schedules, building relationships with arborist contractors and City Forester while also managing citizen work orders. This position would work very closely with the existing Horticulturist on staff. Additionally, the position should help with park trail and parking lot plowing as well as aiding in ice rink maintenance during winter months.

Conclusion
The Parks and Recreation department is very proud of its work and appreciates the opportunity to share its' cumulative vision for managing and maintaining our park assets for the next ten years. The recommendations of this report are directly related to the growth of the community so it is intended to be a malleable process that encourages conversation as land use and demographics of Cottage Grove change. Regardless of how the community changes, it will always remain our department's mission to create and promote policies, programs and places that make Cottage Grove a more active, healthy and happy community.

Cottage Grove

Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Fire EMS Emergency Management

Staffing Strategy Report 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Safety Department provides services that protect lives and property, including public education and risk management; full-service policing; fire suppression and rescue; and emergency medical services including advanced life support (ALS) transportation.

The Department of Public Safety includes Police, Fire/EMS, and Emergency Management. The Chief of Police is also the Director of Public Safety; the Fire Chief is also a Deputy Director of Public Safety reporting to the Police Chief. Support Services are shared amongst all divisions allowing us savings and operational efficiencies.

We are well known, within our own community and our State, as an example of compassionate and just service rooted in integrity and professionalism. This summary is a “fluid” document, one that can and must be changed as society changes and best practice standards are set forth locally and nationally.

Cottage Grove Public Safety’s response model has had significant changes in the last decade. Since the mid 1970’s, Cottage Grove had a police-based EMS response model. Around 2012, the paramedic program transitioned to the fire division. This added significant growth to the fire division; however, the staffing growth to Fire/EMS has remained unchanged since 2017.

Over the next five years, the Public Safety Department will continue to evaluate the level of service we provide to the citizens. Staffing will always remain a challenge due to numerous factors that include shift minimums, training requirements, call volume and response times. Public Safety has always been progressive and follows best practices.

POLICE DIVISION HISTORY/STAFFING

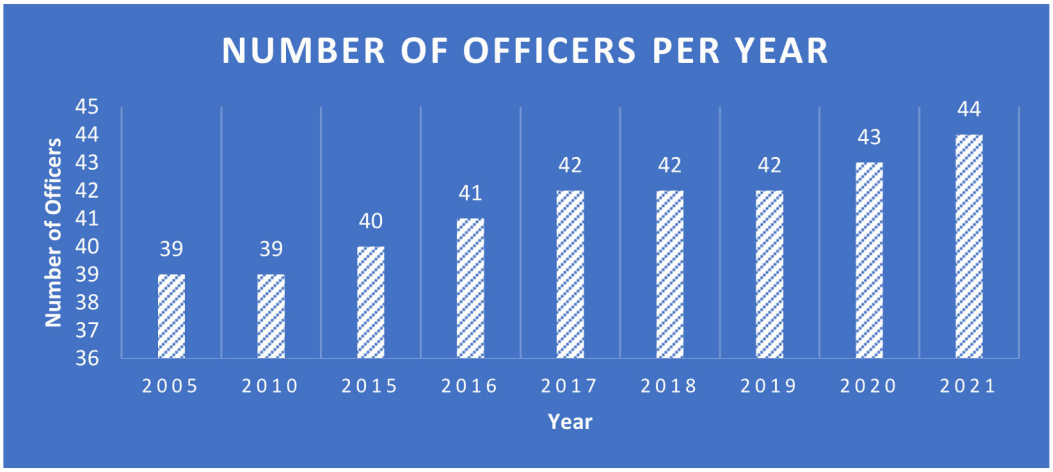
The Cottage Grove Police Department has an excellent service model, and our current community-oriented and proactive programs in the areas of mental health response, case management, school resource officers, special investigations unit, and human trafficking investigations help us stand out from other agencies. In addition, in March of 2020, Council authorized the Police Division to apply for the 2020 COPS hiring program that is designed to advance public safety through community policing. This grant allowed us to add one officer to our authorized staff.

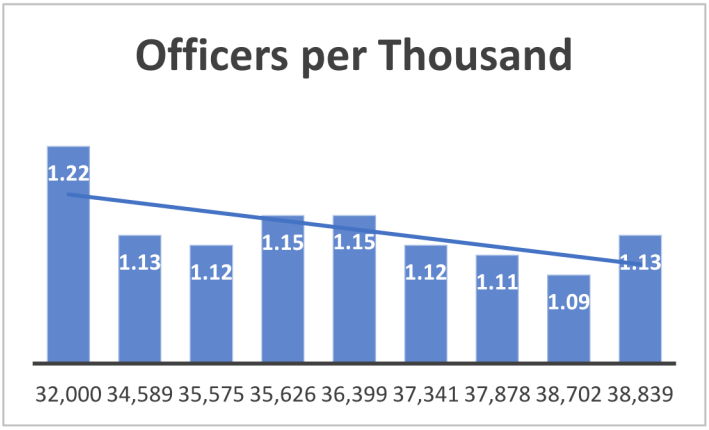
One way to evaluate a staffing analysis is a police officer to population ratio. While simple, there are challenges that it may not reflect community complexity, community dynamics (i.e., socioeconomics, business development emphasis, presence of retail) and does not reflect the patrol staffing allocations. What are the community expectations and what level of service will be provided?

Our staffing levels have had a slight increase since 2005 when we had 39 authorized officers; however, as populations have increased, our officer per thousand has decreased. Currently we are at 1.13 officers per 1000 and the average in our group (metro populations 25,000 to 65,000 plus Lakeville) is 1.18 officers per 1000.

City	Total Sworn	Population	Ratio of Ofcrs per 1000
Lakeville	64	69,490	0.92
Burnsville	86	64,317	1.34
Eden Praire	72	64,198	1.12
Coon Rapids	71	63,599	1.12
AppleValley	55	56,374	0.98
Minnetonka	58	53,781	1.08
Edina	53	53,494	0.99
St. Louis Park	58	50,010	1.16
Shakopee	50	43,698	1.14
Maplewood	56	42,088	1.33
Cottage Grove	44	38,839	1.13
Richfield	46	36,994	1.24
Roseville	55	36,254	1.52
Inver Grove Heights	40	35,801	1.12
Brooklyn Center	49	33,782	1.45
Savage	34	32,465	1.05
Fridley	46	29,590	1.55
Oakdale	32	28,303	1.13
Chaska	25	27,810	0.90
Ramsey	29	27,646	1.05
Prior Lake	31	27,617	1.12
Elk River	34	25,835	1.32
Rosemount	29	25,650	1.13

Cottage Grove has increased our authorized police officer staff 12.8% since 2005 and our population has increased 21.4%.





Year	# of Officers	Population	Officers per Thousand
2005	39	32,000	1.22
2010	39	34,589	1.13
2015	40	35,575	1.12
2016	41	35,626	1.15
2017	42	36,399	1.15
2018	42	37,341	1.12
2019	42	37,878	1.11
2020	43	38,702	1.09
2021	44	38,839	1.13

While per-capita approach (police to population) is one method, we need to consider factors such as minimum staffing and workload- based models (multi-dimensional analysis – calls for service type, units responding, response times and seasonal variations.)

One such workload model is the “rule of 60”. There are three critical variables that include:

- Approximately 60% of the department’s total number of sworn officers should be assigned to the patrol function.
- The average patrol workload should not exceed 60% (Community initiated CFS, police initiated CFS, out of service/admin time, and directed patrols).
- Total Service Time (officer-minutes) should not exceed factor of 60 (recognizes a need to plan on 25% of schedule force being unavailable).

One challenge with the data is our current records management system. We are working on exporting data.

We want to provide more proactive and preventative police responses, and also give officers an opportunity for specialty positions such as detective. We have continued to provide opportunities and have increased our detective numbers, yet this provides challenges in patrol. It is more difficult for time off and current training mandates for officers. Currently, we have 44 authorized police officers.

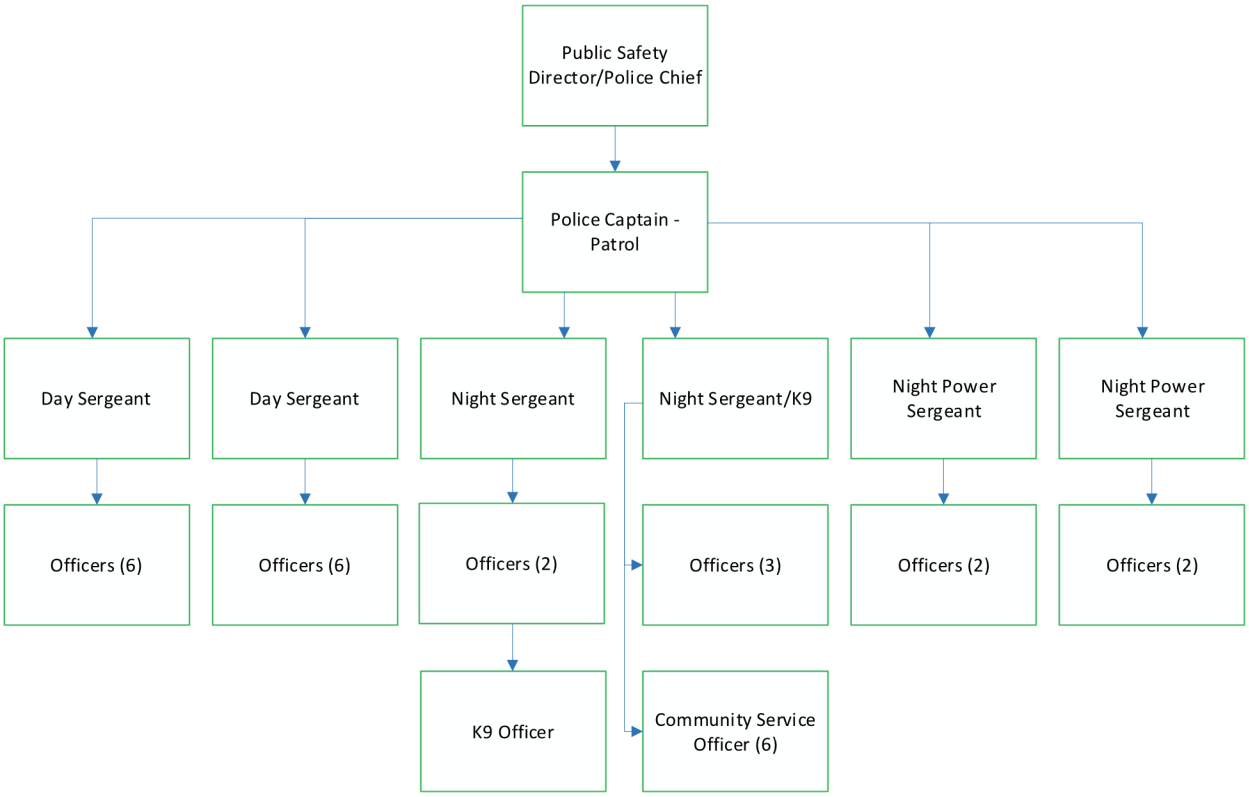
Personnel Schedule				
Position	2019	2020	2021	2022
Director of Public Safety	1	1	1	1
Deputy Director	3	3	3	3
Patrol Sergeant	6	6	6	6
Detective Sergeant	1	1	1	1
Detective	3	3	3	3
Rotating Detective	1	2	2	2
Case Management Unit	0	0	0	1
Community Engagement	0	0	0	1
Major Crimes	0	0	0	1
Drug Task Force Officer	1	1	1	1
*Canine Officer	1	1	1	2
School Resource Officer	2	2	2	1
Patrol Officer	22	22	24	22
Authorized Patrol Officers	24	23	24	23
Total Authorized Officers	42	42	44	44

Support Services				
Position	2019	2020	2021	2022
Support Staff	5	5	6	6
Investigative Aide	1	1	1	1
Total Authorized Support	7	7	7	7
Investigative Aide PT	1	1	1	1
Transcription PT	2	2	2	2

Response to calls for service have become much more complex and officers are called upon to handle a variety of crisis calls. This requires officers to have more specific training. The MN POST Board also added additional mandated training that includes crisis, conflict and community diversity.

With one of our strategic plans being an employer of choice, we have specialty positions and additional duties for staff. The specialty positions range from detective, school resource officer to task force members. Officers also have additional duties ranging from instructor positions, SWAT, mobile field force, to drone operators. (Appendix A)

PATROL DIVISION



The patrol division makes up our core function of service delivery. Currently, we have 28 officers assigned (6 patrol sergeants 21 officers and 1 canine officer). The shifts are made up of 4 crews each working 10.5-hour shifts. There are two-day rotations and two night rotations working Sun, Mon, & Tue and Wed, Thur & Fri with crews working every other Saturday. (Appendix B). The day shift has 7 officers (1 sergeant and 6 officers and night shift have 7 officers (1 sergeant, 1 night power sergeant and 5 officers) per rotation.

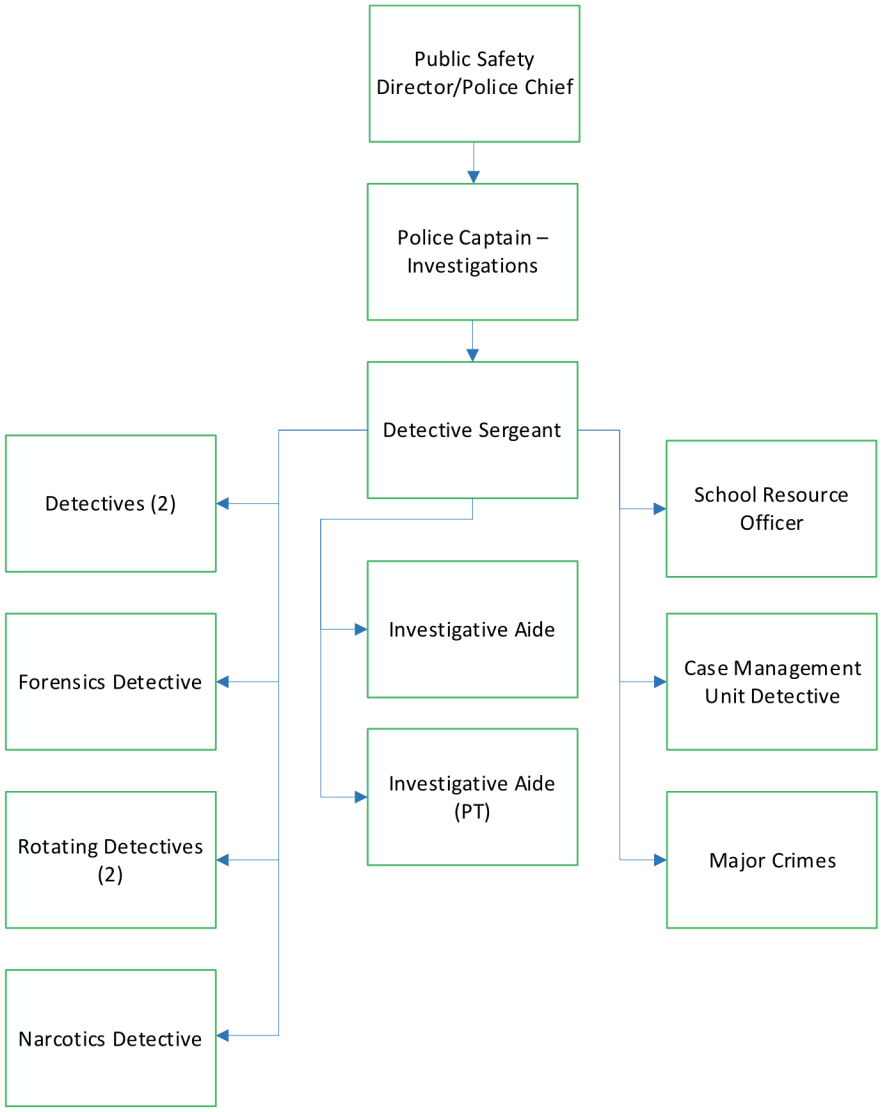
Each shift has minimum coverage - 3 officers from 2:30 am to 9 am and 4 officers from 9 am to 2:30 am. While we attempt to maintain 7 officers assigned to each of the crews, there are numerous factors to consider. Officers have their annual leave and comp time and as they gain years, their balance increases. The schedule needs to allow for more time off. We follow a philosophy of work life balance, and we are concentrating efforts on mental health. As mentioned, officers are required to do more mandatory training, and this has an impact on the schedule. Another factor that is hard to predict is officers out on injury or FMLA.

As our specialty positions have grown, authorized staff has increased slightly. As we experience an increase in population, we know our minimum coverage will grow from 4

officer minimums to 5 officer minimums. Our factors for determining when additional officers are needed are call volume, services provided and time off.

INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

The investigative division has a model that allows us to be proactive and investigate the more complex crimes. Many crimes are now orchestrated on computers or smart phones, so a focus on forensics is important. Technology also allows us to use more investigative tools to solve crimes. We will continue our proactive programs in the areas of mental health response, case management, forensics, major investigations, and human trafficking investigations, which help us stand out from other agencies.



For 2022, we have assigned an officer to case management detective (through grant funding) and will be joining the Washington County Major Crimes Unit. Our detective will

be a part of the task force that will include major crimes, sex trafficking and major fraud investigations.

The Case Management Unit detective is a position that will provide long-term and proactive management of cases involving serious and persistent mental illness or threats of violence towards others. Expected benefits will include violence reduction and prevention, definitive treatment for people suffering from mental illness, and reducing the overuse/abuse of public safety resources.

The Major Crimes Unit detective position was created to address some weaknesses in our current skill sets. Primarily, this position is intended to address complex crimes—crimes that require additional knowledge over a general investigator. For example, financial crimes are very difficult to investigate and require specialized knowledge and training. Also, they require access to special databases that are outside the normal purview of most general investigators. The named detective for this unit has all of this specialized training—as well as a big interest in it. The position will also expand our ability to do covert and plainclothes cases as well as investigate human trafficking cases. Ultimately, this position will be better able to investigate complex crimes, follow the money, and seize that money for either return to victims or for forfeiture. This will be a big benefit to our citizens.

We have made significant changes in the investigative division and don't anticipate additional detective positions. The focus of growth will be the patrol division. In 2021, the school district decided to not renew our agreement for a school resource officer at the middle schools. The position will be used as the major crime's unit.

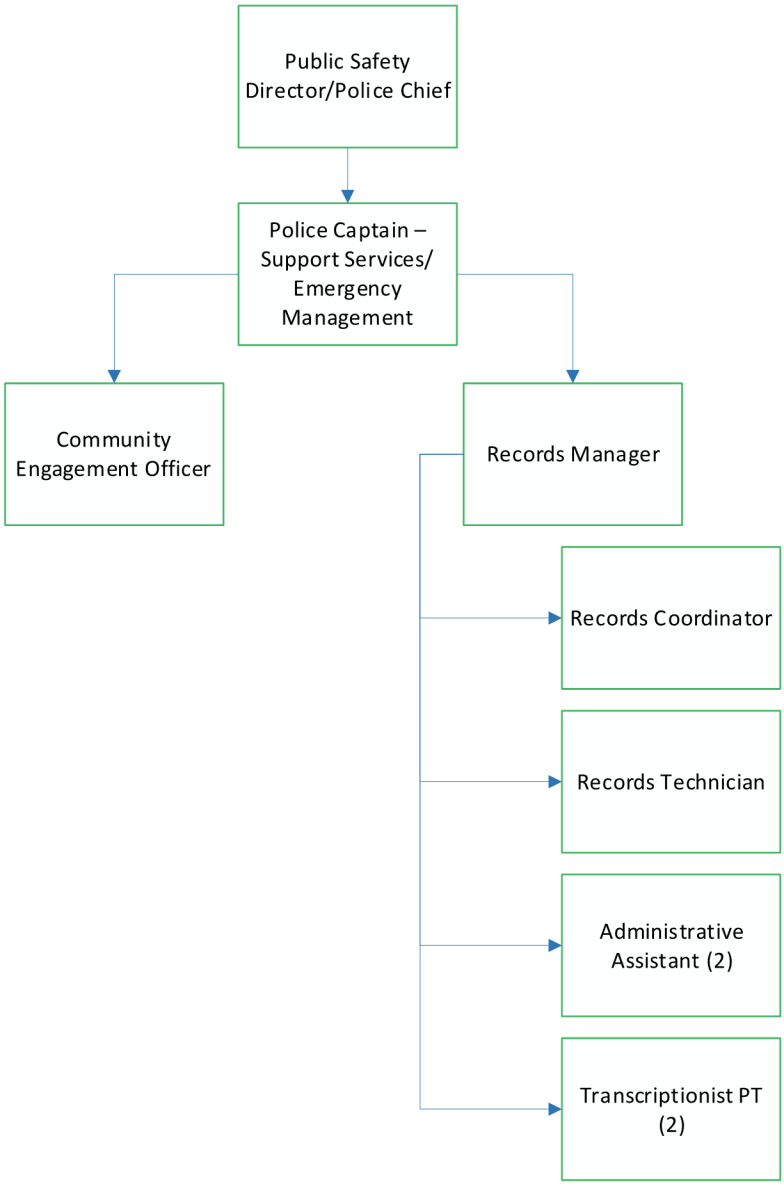
We have identified some minor restructuring and changes to the division. Currently, we have a full-time investigative aide and property room technician. We plan to reclassify the investigative aide position to a criminal analyst. The position would need a salary increase to be in line with the current market rate. Analyst capabilities would be a vast benefit and force-multiplier for the division. We would also move towards a full-time property room technician that would take on some of the investigative aide responsibilities. The criminal analyst position has an increased salary compared to investigative aide and there are costs associated with GIS.

Currently, we have a detective assigned to computer/cell phone forensics. Each year we anticipate additional forensics costs as there are new tools, software and training. Due to the complexity of the investigations and high costs with training, we have officers that will be attending forensics training as we work on succession planning. The current forensics detective has less than five years until retirement.

Measuring success
As we continue to add to our TriTech cases, we will have an improving ability to measure outcomes for Investigations. For example, we'll be better able to measure crime trends and assign investigators and resources to those crimes that are on the upswing. Through our analyst position, we'll be able to identify hot spots for crime and

the dates and times that those crimes occur so that we can more effectively deploy our patrol and investigative resources. With both our Major Crimes detective as well as our DHS/HSI task force officer/detective, we'll be able to recover stolen funds from victims and return it. We'll also be better able to seize funds gained through illicit means through the forfeiture process. All of this will be measurable. Finally, we know from research that a detective's case success rate goes down as their individual caseloads go up. We can measure current open cases and when those start going up consistently in the future, we will look at adding investigations resources which could be positions or technology.

Support Services



Public Safety has also had growth and changes in the support services division. In 2019, we identified a need in emergency management. The Director of Public Safety

and Fire Chief were responsible for emergency management, but with many additional responsibilities, a position of Deputy Director/Police Captain was created. The Captain is the emergency manager, oversees support services and is assigned to special projects.

One significant change is the development of the Community Engagement Officer, which began on January 1, 2022. The Community Engagement Officer was developed to foster a collaborative approach to building trust and developing public safety/community partnerships within the City of Cottage Grove. This officer will work to identify and solve public safety challenges, to be involved in outreach and education, and to promote positive community contacts by establishing, improving, and sustaining effective relationships both inside and outside the organization. The Community Engagement Officer will also focus on working directly with local businesses and with people from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Management Analyst position provides administrative staff assistance in analysis and coordination of department research, planning and other administrative activities. The position also collects and analyzes data, prepares reports and recommendations, and acts as a financial liaison for the Department, coordinating and maintaining the financial records of the Department. The Management Analyst assists the Director with budget preparation and manages the Public Safety scheduling software, including preparing payroll.

In 2019, the Administrative Secretary to the Chief retired and after evaluation, the position was reclassified as Public Safety Administrative Assistant. There have also been new demands placed on support services. With the deployment of body cameras, we needed a person assigned to managing the cameras which includes data requests, attorney requests, etc.

Support Services Staffing:
Records Manager: Oversees the records division by supervising and maintaining schedules of the Records Coordinator, Records Specialist, Public Safety Administrative Assistants and the part-time transcriptionists. The Records Manager is responsible for coding and classifying all police reports to prepare for NIBRS submission as well as maintaining criminal history suspense files. The position also ensures the department maintains CJIS compliance by coordinating training through various user accounts and holds the position of BCA TAC.

Records Coordinator: The Records Coordinator processes incoming public data requests on a daily basis and prepares them for release. The position is responsible for data retention and redaction as well. A primary job duty also includes running background checks for various employment positions as well as various city business permits/licenses including but not limited to massage, solicitor, liquor, gambling and tobacco.

Records Specialist: The Records Specialist position was a newly created position in 2020. The primary job duties focus on digital data pertaining to body worn camera footage and squad video. The Records Specialist processes all attorney discovery requests and prepares files for upcoming court cases. The position works closely with the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, the Washington County Attorney's Office and the Cottage Grove City Attorney.

Public Safety Administrative Assistants: The Cottage Grove Public Safety Department has two administrative assistant positions. Both positions primarily focus on the day-to-day operations (answering phones, assisting with lobby traffic, distributing mail, etc.) within the department. In addition to these duties, the Public Safety Administrative Assistants review and process EMS calls for service to prepare them for billing by validating for accuracy. The administrative assistants also process the Minnesota Permits to Purchase that are received daily. They are also responsible for processing all traffic citations before they are submitted to court.

Transcriptions: Currently, we have two-part time transcriptionists. One is assigned during the week and the other works weekends. When a rush report is needed, we also have access to a contract transcriptionist. With possible retirements in the next few years, we are evaluating speech recognition software which will include a cost analysis.

Police Staffing Summary

Over the next five years, we anticipate an additional 2-4 patrol officers. The positions can be staggered as officers will fill shifts with the highest call volumes and additional benchmarks.

Based on the analysis, the police division makes the following recommendation when we hit identified benchmarks based on the following:

- Increasing crime rate (NIMRS)
- Decreasing case clearance rate
- Increasing calls for service
- Complexity of calls and investigations
- Increasing population and development
- Increasing training demands
- Time off requests

2023 Police Officer - $90,000
2024 Police Officer - $90,000

The years may vary and are dependent on the benchmarks.

Reclassify Investigative Aide to Criminal Analyst (review pay to be comparable to market rate) and begin planning the transition of duties to property room technician and future full-time status. Current investigative aide is $54,000-$66,000 and market rate of criminal analyst is $62,000-$76,000.

2023 Reclassify to Criminal Analyst - $10,000 budget increase

Equipment Needs
With any added position, we need to consider what role the employee will fill and what tools they will need. Additional costs for an officer include uniforms, body worn camera, workstation/computer, etc. For every two officers, one additional squad is needed to be added to the fleet. With our additions in specialty assignments, we need to add three “unmarked” vehicles to the fleet. With the Major Crimes Unit, we will utilize forfeiture funds. The cost of administrative vehicle is $31,000 with $9,000 in set up, lights, and equipment.

2022 Major Crimes Unit - $40,000 forfeiture funds
2023 Community Engagement Vehicle - $40,000
2023 Case Management Detective - $40,000

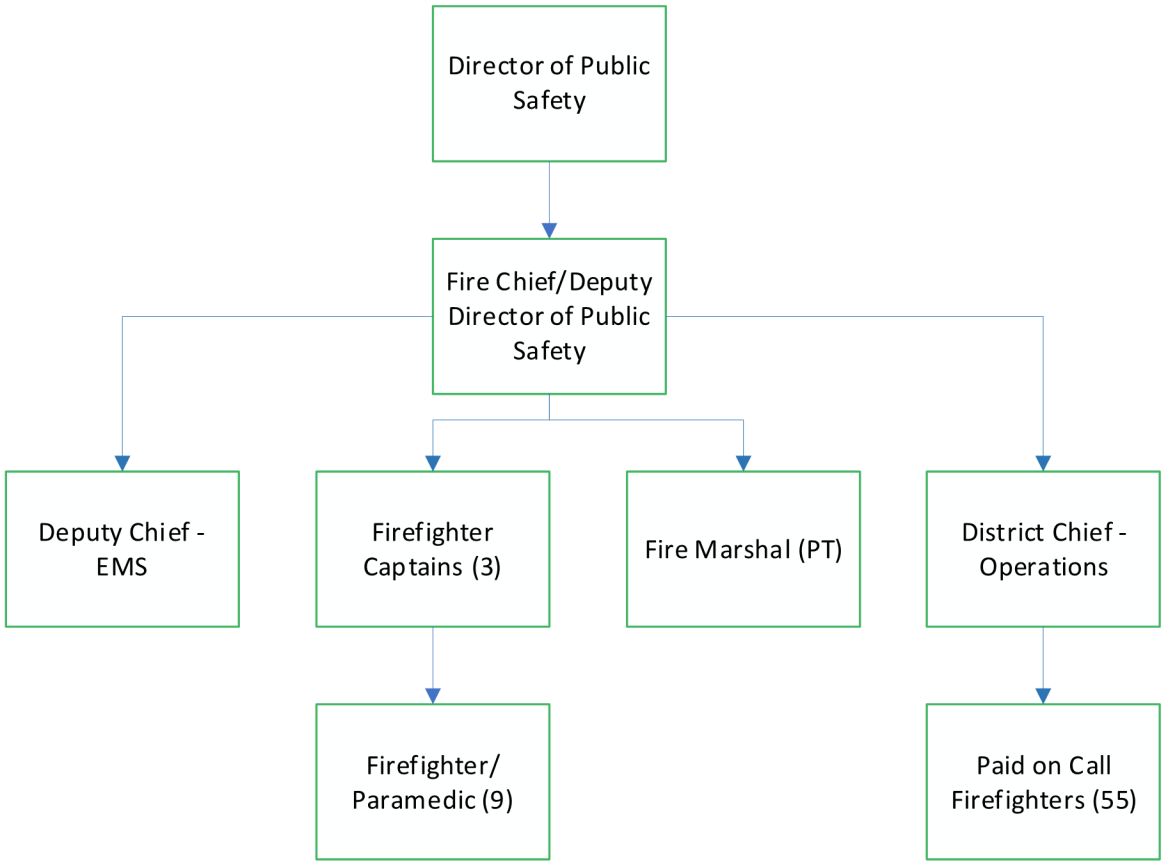
A squad car costs approximately $34,000 and the squad is in the fleet for 3 years before moving to a secondary vehicle in the city fleet. The initial set up includes equipment, lights, computer, and squad camera which is $40,000. The squad then is added to the squad replacement schedule.

2024 Marked Police Vehicle - $70,000

Forensics Equipment/Software and training
We anticipate an increase in the forensics equipment/software in the amount of $5,000. With our succussion planning an additional $2,500 will cover the costs.

Fire/EMS

The Fire and EMS Department is a combination department employing both career and non-career responders and officers to provide services as the primary EMS agency for the city. The Department is undergoing considerable change, with the relatively recent addition of career firefighter/paramedics on three rotating 24-hour shifts. We have had significant changes to the staffing in Fire/EMS. In 2019, we participated in an organizational study and have established goals and priorities.



Deputy Director of Public Safety/Fire Chief
The Fire Chief is response for the planning, organization, implementation and direction of fire and emergency medical services (EMS). The Fire Chief is also a part of the emergency management team.

Deputy Chief/EMS
We had our Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal retire and we used this time to reevaluate the needs of the organization. We identified management of our EMS division as a top priority. Our new Deputy Chief is responsible for EMS operations. The Deputy Chief supervises the Captains and oversees the career staff. That officer will also be responsible for EMS administration, regulatory compliance, and supplies.

Captains
In 2020, with the 12 full-time Firefighter/Paramedics, we created a shift Captain. We promoted three of the current staff to the Captain position. The Captains are responsible for supervising career firefighters on their shift and providing command and work direction to non-career firefighters working duty crew shifts as well. This department is now a 24-hour operation staffed by career and duty crew personnel; this supervisory structure will support that operational model.

Lieutenants
Unity of command is a critical element of safety and effectiveness in emergency response. With the appointment of career Captains, we recommend that non-career officers maintain the rank of Lieutenant and that both firefighters and Lieutenants report to the Captains from a command perspective, on shift.

Career Firefighter/Paramedics
With the addition of the Captain rank, we currently have 9 full-time Firefighter Paramedics that work a 24-hour shift. They are divided into three crews. The Firefighter/Paramedic acts a front-line responder who protects and serves through fire suppression and emergency medical service.

Non-career firefighters
The rest of the staff is made up by Firefighter EMTs and Firefighter Paramedics. They also include members that are Lieutenants and a District Chief. The non-career (part-time) work 12 hour shifts that make up the duty crews. The Firefighter/Paramedic and Firefighter/EMT acts a front-line responder who protects and serves through fire suppression and emergency medical service.

We also have a part-time District Chief handling much of the training.

Future administrative/command positions

Deputy Chief/Operations
We identified the need for a second Deputy Chief. That position will lead the department's training program and supervise the non-career firefighters, who will be organized into teams led by a Lieutenant or team leader. The Deputy Chief for operations and training will also be responsible for overseeing maintenance of the fleet, non-EMS equipment, gear, SCBA, etc.

Fire Marshal
We hired a part-time Fire Marshal to conduct necessary inspections. With the significant growth in the city, we have identified making the position full-time. Some of this position can be funded through permit fees. Having the position full-time will provide timely support for economic development projects underway and planned in the city. This position would conduct necessary inspections and plan reviews and assist with public education as needed.

The Fire Marshal conducts approximately 10 site plans and residential fire sprinkler plans per month. With the position, we would look in the future to do fire sprinkler plans which are currently done by our fire protection contractor. Currently we outsource approximately $10,000 per year to the contractor.

This position would be responsible for:

- Site plans
- Residential fire sprinkler plans
- Complaint inspections
- Hazardous materials plan reviews
- Open burning permits
- Construction site fire & life safety inspections
- Certificate of occupancy inspections
- Special fire extinguishing systems plan review
- Inspections and approval (i.e., cooking and other special hazards)
- Coordinating fire company inspection program

This position will also enhance our fire prevention programs - some of which we are already doing. Programs include:

- Project Safe Haven (This program helps residents make their homes a "Safe Haven" from fire. It's a voluntary program where residents can do a self-inspection of their homes using a colorful checklist. If requested, firefighters can come to their homes and review their self-inspection, help them with their fire escape plan, and install smoke alarms, CO alarms, and stovetop firestops. We can also take blood pressures and more such community paramedicine while we're there.
- Fire prevention talks in the elementary and preschools
- Fire safety and fall prevention for seniors.
- More car seat clinics.
- Safety camp
- Arson prevention
- Pre-fire planning

We will put an emphasis on fire prevention programs and community risk reduction. While COVID caused challenges, we conducted 63 public education events in 2019, 27 in 2020 and 36 in 2021. This does not include us getting creative during COVID and doing hundreds of parades with public safety.

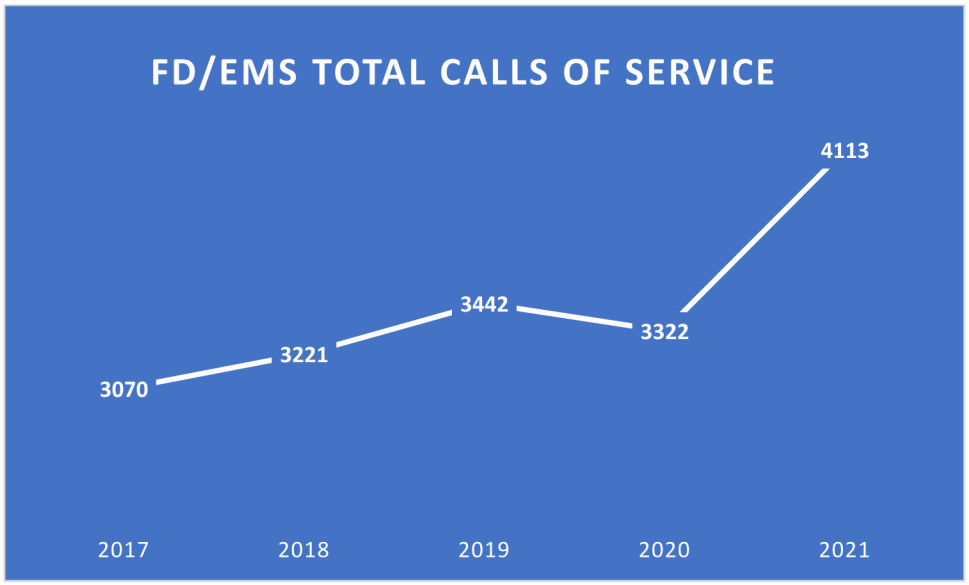
The transition to the above structure will take place over time. Cottage Grove has been remarkably effective at recruiting non-career firefighters compared with other cities. In 2019, Cottage Grove received 35 applicants for the most recent hiring period, compared with most other cities in the metropolitan area receiving fewer than 10. The current

recruit class will likely bring the department to full authorized strength, which is increasingly uncommon statewide.

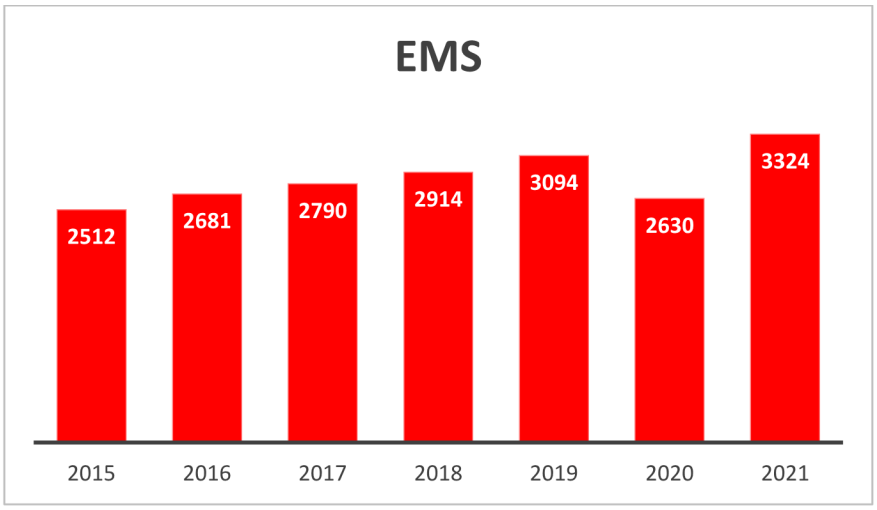
We must continue to support the non-career firefighters and continued recruitment is extremely important as the expectations continue to increase. We do not see the model changing in the next five years.

Calls for service increases

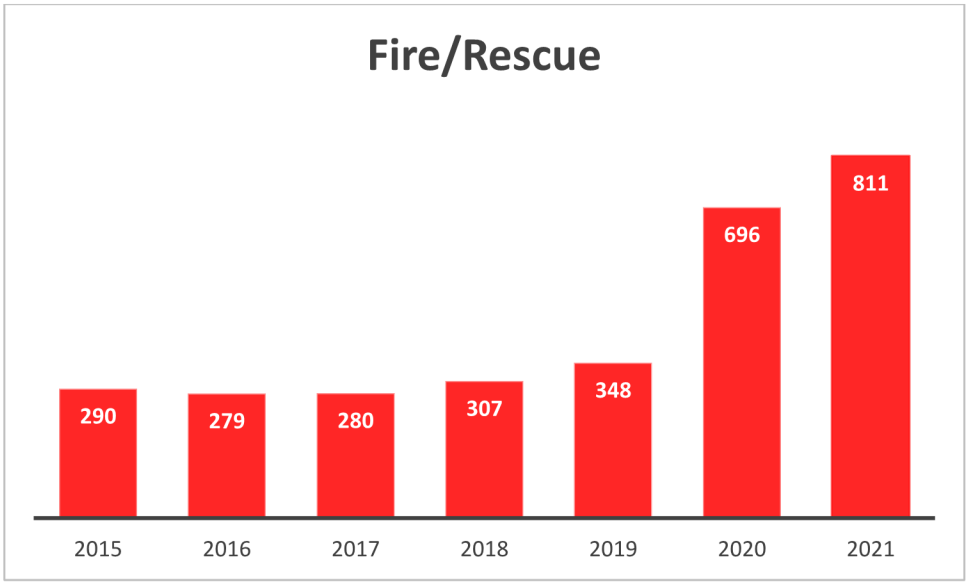
The Cottage Grove Fire Department has witnessed significant growth in demand for its services which includes both fire, EMS and other types of emergencies. Since 2017, the fire department has experienced a 34 percent increase in calls for service. This demand for service has followed the population growth in Cottage Grove.



As we witness the increase in population, which leads to increased overall volume of requested response, we have seen a rise in utilization per 1000 residents as well. Specifically, our community's Fire/EMS utilization was 85.5 calls/1000 people in 2017, it is now 103 calls/1000 people in 2021. With a rising population and rising utilization, we need a plan to provide consistent and high-quality services.



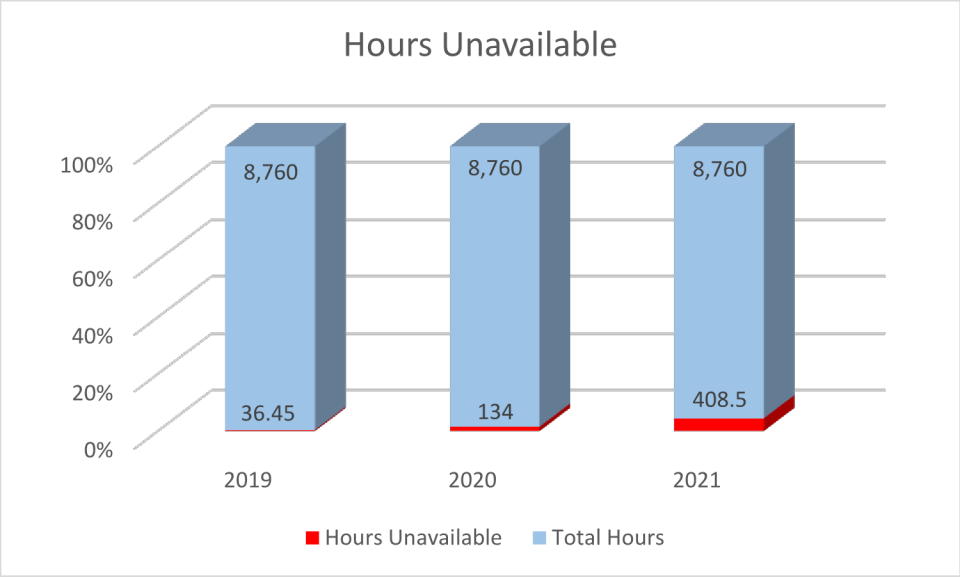
From 2015 to 2019, we had an average 5.3% increase in medicals calls. In 2020, we had a 3.5% decrease. In 2021, we had a 24% increase, and we anticipate at least a 12% increase.



In 2020, we started coding EMS calls that we got cancelled for as “good intent” and now fall into fire/rescue.

Unavailable hours

One of our best metrics to show how our staffing effects our ability to have staff ready to response to calls in our community is the station unavailable. Due to increased population and utilization, which has translated to a significant increase in call volume, we have seen our station unavailable time increase over the last 3 years. We started collecting this data in 2019 and we have seen a significant increase in the amount of time we do not have a crew available to respond to calls for service. We are unavailable just under 5% of the time. (408.5 hours out of 8,760 hours in a year)



In 2021, during these 408.5 hours, our community did not have staff available to immediately respond to emergency needs. Instead, they had and will continue to have to reply on mutual aid or “all-call” responses to serve them, which significantly increases response time. To put this into perspective on how the business has increased, the hours unavailable represents the amount of time we were on at least two calls simultaneously.

“Confined fire to room origin”
For fire, we have a valuable metric that evaluates the ability to positively affect a fire in a structure. This is called “confined fire to room of origin.” When we respond and can confine a fire to the room it started in, such as a kitchen, it reduces the risk of death by 9 times (16.2 to 1.8 deaths/1000 fires). The average dollar loss is also reduced over 8 times when we can confine the fire to the room it stared in. The ability to do this has a direct relation to the amount of time it takes us to get to a scene and how many people arrive on-scene within a certain amount of time. Many departments use NFPA 1710 standard, yet we used a modified standard we felt was achievable and was the minimum - 12 people in 12 minutes - which includes mutual aid help; in comparison, NFPA 1701 prescribes 15 people in 10 minutes which is the direction we are moving. We call this “effective response force”.

As we evaluate staffing, we continue to evaluate services we can continue to provide versus which are limited due to staffing levels. We have also identified services that can provide potential revenue streams. (*items are potential revenue streams)

- Community Fire Education
    - In-school
    - Seniors
    - In-home safety programs*
        - High priority grants available to cover most costs (staffing and material)

- Day care inspections*
- Comprehensive Fire Inspection services*
- Community Paramedic (expand and build) *
- Federal and state wildfire deployments*
    - Major potential revenue (we can charge for trucks and personnel)
- CPR and first aid courses*
- Fire and EMS Training at HERO Center*

Fire Staffing Summary

Over the next five years, we anticipate an additional full-time Fire Marshal, Deputy Chief/operations and 3 Firefighter/Paramedics. The positions can be staggered as we fill shifts with the highest call volumes and additional benchmarks. We can also look at during the increase doing 12-hour power shifts.

Based on the analysis, the fire/EMS division makes the following recommendation when we hit identified benchmarks based on the following:

- Increased response times
- Unavailable hours
- Increasing calls for service
- Increasing population and development
- Increasing training demands
- Time off requests

2022/2023 Fire Marshal - $100,000 (market rate study pending)
This is an increase of $63,000 from current part-time salary and we are evaluating revenue from permit fees/inspections to off-set some salary.

2023 Deputy Fire Chief - $120,000
2024 Firefighter/paramedic - $90,000
2025 Firefighter/paramedic - $90,000
2026 Firefighter/paramedic - $90,000

The years may vary and are dependent on the benchmarks. Another area to consider is a SAFER grant that will provide the firefighter/paramedic salary for three years.

Fire command staff is evaluating our fire apparatus to determine future needs and current replacement schedules. This is an opportunity to make fleet "more efficient".

Fire Apparatus (replacement schedule)
Evaluate Chief vehicles to make them more response capable.

2026 1996 Tanker/Pumper $500,000

Planning for SCBA replacement $250,000-$300,000 (explore grant opportunities)

Cottage Grove EMS has three ambulances in our current replacement schedule. Due to delays on the last build and a damaged ambulance, we are adjusting our rotation, so we don’t have years where two need to be replaced. We currently have a 6-year replacement schedule.

Ambulances (replacement schedule)
2024 Ambulance Medic 832 $250,000
2025 Ambulance Medic 833 $250,000

Speciality Positions

Appendix A

Detective Sergeant
Sgt Mike McCormick

Detective
Jared Landkamer
Jordan Ziebarth

Rotating Detective
Nick Bailey (2 yr)
Ryan Pierre (1 yr)

Forensics Detective
Terry Raymond

School Resource Officer
Luke Landgraf

Wash Co Narcotics Task Force
Brian Campbell
Rob Swanson (July 1)

Major Crimes/Sex Trafficking
Brain Campbell (July 1)

Case Management Detective
Pat Young

K9
Sgt Nils Torning
Brandyn Graff

Community Engagement Officer
Dan Schoen

Officer Extra Duties

Use of Force Instructors
Sgt Brad Petersen
Nick Bailey
Matt Sorgaard
Joe Pierre
Andrew Ronning
Scott Shaver
Cody Linssen
Matt Bagan

Firearms Instructors
Andrew Bushey
Luke Landgraf
Sgt Andrea Lindeen
Ryan Pierre
Jon Strehlo
Rob Swanson
Sgt Nils Torning
Michael McClain
Andrew Ronning (July 1)
Nathan Klika (July 1)

Use of Force Review & Training
Sgt Andrea Lindeen
Sgt Brad Petersen
Nick Bailey
Ryan Pierre

Tech Instuctors
Dominic Belmares
Ben Deitner

SWAT
Sgt Brad Petersen
Nick Bailey
Joe Pierre
Andrew Ronning
Matt Sorgaard
Rob Swanson
Andrew Bushey (Tech)
Ben Deitner (Tech)
Dan Schoen (Negotiations)
Scott Shaver (Negotiations)

Mobile Field Force
Sgt Mike Coffey
Sgt Justin Henseler
Dave Liermann
Andrew Bushey
Scott Shaver
Pat Young
Ben Deitner

Taser Instructors
Sgt Justin Henseler
Jeff Rydeen
Matt Sorgaard
Joe Pierre
Andrew Ronning

CIRAS Instructors
(Collaborative Incident Response)
Sgt Nils Torning
Ben Deitner
Michael McClain

DNR Hunter Safety
Sgt Nils Torning
Ryan Pierre
Ed Weber

LESO Represenatives
Captain Gwen Martin
Sgt Brad Petersen
Sgt Mike Coffey
Nick Bailey

UAS Program (Drone)
Sgt Mike McCormick
Captain Gwen Martin
Dave Liermann
Brandyn Graff
Ben Deitner
Andrew Bushey
Rob Swanson
Jeff Rydeen
Jordan Ziebarth
Jon Strehlo

Explorer Post
Jon Strehlo
Matt Sorgaard
Dominic Belmares
Brandyn Graff
Travis Mulvihill
Ryan Sisterman

Field Training Officers
Ryan Pierre
Jeff Rydeen
Ed Weber
Matt Sorgaard
Pat Young
Rob Swanson
Nick Bailey
Scott Shaver
Dominic Belmares
Joe Pierre
Andrew Ronning
Michael McClain

Case Management Officer
Sgt Pat Nickle
Sgt Mike McCormick
Alec Bobick
Luke Landgraf
Travis Mulvihill

Alcohol/Tobacco Compliance
Sgt Mike McCormick
Brandyn Graff
Travis Mulvihill
Alec Bobick
Matt Sorgaard

Predatory Offender Registration
Captain Gwen Martin
Sgt Mike McCormick
Ed Weber
Alec Bobick

Crime Free Multi-Family
Jordan Ziebarth

Drug Recognition Expert
Matt Sorgaard

CISM Team
(Critical Incident Stress Management)
Mike Vandervort

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
Sgt Pat Nickle

Squads
Sgt Mike Coffey
Jeff Rydeen

Public Safety Board Liaison
Dan Schoen

Police Reserve Liaison
Dan Schoen

Chaplain Liaison
Dan Schoen

Appendix A

Public Works
5-Year Staffing Plan

Executive Summary

The Cottage Grove Public Works Department is responsible for the planning, design, and ongoing maintenance of all City owned infrastructure, buildings, and vehicles. These basic services are critical to both support the growth of the community along with ensuring quality of life for the City's residents. While the efforts of a Public Works Department are often unnoticed, they serve as a core function of any city.

Public Works is broken up into five divisions: Public Works Administration, Streets, Fleet & Facilities, Utilities, and Engineering. Each division serves a key role in meeting the overall goals of the Department. The Department is made up of 39 full-time staff and 19 part-time staff. This includes the Public Works Director/City Engineer, 3 administrative staff, 3 engineers, 3 Division Superintendents/Managers, 3 Foreman, 4 Lead Workers, 1 Forester, and 21 Public Service Workers (PSWs).

To appropriately plan for the extensive growth the City has been experiencing, this 5-year staffing plan was completed to ensure residents and businesses will not see a reduction in level of service. Based on the anticipated growth by 2026, it is recommended that 4 public service workers, 1 engineer, and 2 administrative staff be added in that time frame; and also, that the City Engineer and Public Works Director positions be separated. Finally, the addition of a 14th plow route will be necessary to maintain the high plowing standards our residents have come to know and deserve. Below is a breakdown showing the years these positions are recommended.

- 2023 – Streets PSW (Forestry focus)
- 2023 – Sustainability Programs Engineer
- 2023 – Separate Public Works Director & City Engineer Positions
- 2024 – Utilities PSW
- 2024 – Public Works Management Analyst
- 2025 – Fleet PSW
- 2025 – Utilities front desk/administrative position
- 2026 – Streets PSW

Background

Within the five primary divisions of Public Works, there is a wide range of staff and programs. Below is a short summary of each division:

Public Works Administration

Responsible for the overall administration of the Public Works Department. This includes budget preparation and tracking, managing work orders and purchase orders,

invoicing, working with the 49ers union, and long range planning for the department. Currently, there are three full-time staff that work in this division:

- Public Works Director/City Engineer
- Public Works Administrative Secretary
- Public Works Secretary
- 1 Seasonal Worker

Prior to 2020 this division included a Management Analyst and Public Works Supervisor position. In November 2019 the Management Analyst was promoted to the new Fleet & Facilities Manager position. In 2020 the Public Works Supervisor position was broken into separate Streets Superintendent and Utilities Superintendent positions. Following the promotion of the Management Analyst, their duties were either retained by the Fleet & Facilities Manager or distributed to the Division Superintendents and Administrative Secretary.

Streets

The Streets division is comprised of five programs including Street Maintenance, Snow Plowing, Stormwater, Forestry, and Signs. The Streets Superintendent was added in 2020 to provide a non-union supervisor of the division, which is typical for a City like Cottage Grove. Below is a list of the staff within the division:

- Streets Superintendent
- Streets Foreman
- Streets Lead Worker
- Forester
- 11 Public Service Workers (8 Streets, 2 Stormwater, 1 Signs)
- 14 Seasonal Workers

The general duties of this division remain similar from year to year, with workload increasing as the City grows. The largest single responsibility for this division is the thin overlay program, which continues to increase in importance as City streets age a deteriorate. These thin overlays are the last option as stripping of City streets continues to accelerate faster than the Pavement Management program can keep up. One aspect of this division that continues to increase in complexity is stormwater, where state and federal standards add new inspection and maintenance requirements each year. The stormwater division will be adding a Stormwater Lead Worker in the summer of 2022, which was approved as part of the 2022 Budget.

Fleet & Facilities

The Fleet & Facilities Division is comprised of two separate programs, Fleet Maintenance and Facilities Maintenance. Facilities Maintenance was added to Public Works in 2020, prior to then it was under Community Development. With the addition of this program, a Fleet & Facilities Manager position was added to provide non-union oversight of the staff. Below is a list of the staff within the division:

- Fleet & Facilities Manager
- Fleet Foreman
- Fleet Lead Worker
- 2 Public Service Workers - Mechanics
- Administrative Fleet Technician (non-union, handles parts ordering, scheduling, and invoicing)
- Facilities Maintenance Lead Work
- Facilities Public Service Worker
- 1 Facilities Maintenance Seasonal Worker

Utilities

The Utilities Division is comprised of five separate programs, including Water Distribution, Water Treatment, Sanitary Sewer, Street Lights, and Traffic Signals. Similar to the Streets Division, a Utility Superintendent was added in 2020 to provide a dedicated non-union supervisor of the division. Below is a list of staff within the division:

- Utilities Superintendent
- Utilities Foreman
- Utilities Lead Worker
- 7 Public Service Workers (6 water & sewer, 1 streetlights & traffic signals)
- 2 Seasonal Workers

Engineering

The Engineering Division is responsible for overseeing the design and inspection of all new and reconstructed City infrastructure. This includes all infrastructure that is designed and constructed as part of new development. In addition to this work, the division is responsible for the following programs: Pavement Management, Recycling, Water Conservation, Municipal State Aid Streets (MSAS), GreenStep Cities, and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4). The MS4 program covers a broad range of responsibilities, including stormwater education, illicit discharge inspections, stormwater plan reviews for new developments, and annual reporting to the State on all

inspection and maintenance activities. Below is a list of staff within the division:

- Assistant City Engineer
- Project Engineer
- GIS Technician
- Graduate Engineer
- Engineering Intern

The shared position of Public Works Director/City Engineer also plays a major role in this division, providing staff supervision and project oversight, management of larger City projects, and acting as the liaison with other government agencies.

Future Growth

Much of the workload within Public Works is driven by additions to City infrastructure. Below is a summary of the growth the City has experienced over the last 10 years. Due to the ongoing recession in the early 2010's, most of this growth has occurred since 2016.

2012-2021 City Infrastructure Growth

Miles of Streets & Sidewalks	**31-Dec-12**	**31-Dec-21**	**% Increase**
Streets	157	191	21.66%
Curb and Gutter	214	274	28.04%
Sidewalks/Trails	47	86	82.98%
Municipal Water System			
Number of wells	11	12	9.09%
System capacity-storage (MGD)	5.15	7.15	38.83%
Miles of water main	145	180	24.14%
Number of hydrants	1,310	1,704	30.08%
Number of valves	2,491	3,576	43.56%
Municipal Sanitary Sewer System			
Miles of sanitary sewer	128.00	147	14.84%
Storm Sewer System			
Miles of storm sewer	79.00	117	48.10%
Number of ponds	129	189	46.51%
Street Lighting System			
City owned streetlights	2,298	3,072	33.68%

2022-2026 Projected Growth

To estimate how the future growth of Cottage Grove may impact staffing and equipment needs to maintain our current level of service, a detailed projection of the additions to City infrastructure from 2022-2026 was prepared. To complete this projection, a review was completed of the observed increases in the City's infrastructure from 2012 to 2021. This data was then correlated to the amount of new housing units that were added in that same time period.

For the period of 2022-2026, the City's comprehensive plan calls for approximately 950 new housing units to be added, which was used for the low-end growth projection in the table below. For the high-end, the City's average growth rate in recent years was carried forward for a total of 1,625 new housing units over the next five years. Based on these projections, the below table was developed detailing the projected increases in City infrastructure.

2022-2026 Projected Infrastructure Growth

	As of 12/31/2021	Projected 12/31/2026 Low-End	Projected 12/31/2026 High-End	Low-End Increase	High-End Increase	Average Increase
Streets & Sidewalks						
Streets	191	206	217	7.85%	13.61%	10.73%
Curb and Gutter	274	310	336	13.14%	22.63%	17.88%
Sidewalks/Trails	86	111	127	29.07%	47.67%	38.37%
Municipal Water System						
Well Capacity (million gallons/day)	17.8	17.8	17.8	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Storage Capacity (million gallons)	7.15	8.65	8.65	20.98%	20.98%	20.98%
Miles of water main	180	203	219	12.78%	21.67%	17.22%
Number of hydrants	1,704	1,923	2,078	12.85%	21.95%	17.40%
Number of valves	3,576	4,121	4,508	15.24%	26.06%	20.65%
Municipal Sanitary Sewer System						
Miles of sanitary sewer	147	162	173	10.20%	17.69%	13.95%
Storm Sewer System						
Miles of storm sewer	117	156	184	33.33%	57.26%	45.30%
Number of ponds	189	232	263	22.75%	39.15%	30.95%
Street Lighting System						
City owned streetlights	3,072	3,691	4,130	20.15%	34.44%	27.29%
Boulevard Trees						
City owned boulevard trees	12,150	13,205	13,955	8.68%	14.86%	11.77%

While not a direct correlation to level of service, monitoring the 5-year infrastructure growth is a good indicator of workload increases and potential staffing needs. In the following section, a more detailed review and recommended additions the Public Works Department is provided.

2022-2026 Staffing Needs

Public Works Administration

While staffing levels in Public Works Administration do not necessarily correlate to a direct level of service to the City and its residents, it is important to ensure there is efficiency as they manage a large number of staff and 16 separate budgets. When looking to the future, it is recommended that the Management Analyst position be filled in the next two to three years. There is a benefit to centralizing certain department duties, rather than being split up among the Superintendents. This position would play a key role in department-wide work, below is a list of proposed major job duties:

- Public Works Budgets – Spring includes preparation work & research; summer includes budget discussions & meetings; fall includes working with finance on the final budget document, compiling goals & accomplishments.
- Public Works fee table updates and comparable community research.
- Public Works & Parks safety program manager; lead the Public Works & Parks Safety Committee.
- Grant programs research and applications.
- Coordinating large public works community events, including Spring Cleanup and Public Works & Parks Open House.
- Assist in the hiring of 33 seasonal Public Works & Parks employees each year.
- Public Works & Parks training program manager.
- Sentence to Serve coordinator.

It is recommended that this position be added in 2024, with funding broken out from the various Public Works budgets.

Streets Division

One of the key drivers for the Streets Division regarding level of service is plowing, and more specifically, the number and length of plow routes. Currently the City has 13 plow routes, the last of which was approved with the 2018 budget, based on 2017 statistics. On top of the 13 dedicated plow routes, there are 15 miles of “group routes”, which are made up of the City’s major roads such as 80th Street and Jamaica Avenue. These group routes are cleared first in a coordinated effort, prior to drivers moving onto their

individual routes. The goal has been to keep the average plow route length between 12-13 miles, and more importantly, the time to average complete the group and individual routes at 8 hours. As of December 31, 2017, there were 159 miles of individual routes. Based on the 12 routes the City had at that time, it equated to 13.2 miles per route on average. With the addition of a 13th route, it brought the average route length back down to 12.2 miles.

As of December 31, 2021, the City has 176 miles of individual plow routes, which results in an average route length of 13.5 miles. As shown by this number, the City is already over the average route length compared to when the 13th route was added. This can be seen in the average time it takes to do a complete round of plowing. Every snowstorm results in a range of time to complete this, depending the amount and density of the snow. Right now, the time to complete the routes ranges from 7-11 hours, with an average of 9 hours. Considering more extensive growth is anticipated in 2022, it is recommended that a 14th plow route be added in 2023. As all new streets are built to the 28-foot wide standard, this truck is recommended to be a single-axle, instead of a larger dual-axle, which has a savings of approximately $40,000. A driver for this truck is identified under the staffing discussion below.

For the past few years, the City has been adding between 3-5 miles of street per year. Realistically, to maintain the desired level of service, a new plow route could be added every 3-4 years. Cul-de-sacs are also added each year, which are cleared by separate equipment and staff. Pickups are able to plow approximately 20 cul-de-sacs, and loaders can clear 50. Rather than adding a new cul-de-sac route and piece of equipment, it is recommended that a loader be rented at a cost of $20,000 for the winter to replace one of the pickup routes. This should be reviewed for inclusion in the 2023 budget.

From a staffing perspective, the last streets focused employee was added in 2014. One key issue has been the need for streets focused PSWs to assist the City Forester. Many of the Forester duties require two staff to be in attendance due to safety requirements. This includes general chainsaw work, either for tree trimming or felling, along with using the chipper. In 2023, it is recommended to add a forestry focused PSW, which would also fill the 14th plow route in the winter. Having this dedicated position to work with the Forester would allow Streets PSWs to focus on their required duties throughout the year, such as pothole patching and snow cleanup in the winter and paving activities in the summer months.

From a funding perspective, the forestry budget could largely absorb this cost in 2023 with minimal impact to the levy. 2022 will largely see the end to the volunteer ash tree removal program, with the final 150 trees being removed, bringing our total down to 1,500 remaining ash trees. This program has been ramped up over the last five years, which includes $90,000 in contracted tree removals, stump grinding, and planting that could be greatly reduced, to cover the new PSW. Even with the addition of this forestry

PSW, it will still be important to look at the addition of a Streets PSW in the future as well. Due to the ongoing growth in the community, it is recommended a dedicated Streets PSW be added in 2026. As City streets continue to age, paving and patching needs increase each year as well. Adding this position in 2026 will help to ensure the ongoing ride quality and general maintenance of City streets.

Fleet & Facilities Division

The Fleet Division last added a mechanic in 2002 and has maintained the Foreman/Lead Worker/2 Mechanic model since that time. There have been changes over the years, however, to help increase the efficiency of the division. Until 2010, the Fleet Division also handled facility maintenance responsibilities, until it transferred to the Utilities Division and therefore freeing up additional staff time. In 2020, a non-union Administrative Fleet Technician was hired. Among other duties, this position handles parts ordering, scheduling, and invoicing, which was previously handled by the Foreman. Adding this position not only allowed the Foreman to spend more time completing vehicle work orders, but it also increased the overall efficiency in the shop. Even with the changes over the years, there will come a time when a fifth mechanic will be needed. Below is a chart depicting the increase in vehicles since 2010.

Total City Equipment & Vehicles – 2010 to 2021						
Year	Licensed Vehicles	Police Vehicles & Equipment	Utility/Tractors/Mowers	Fire Vehicles	Total	Percent Increase
2010	71	29	36	20	156	35% increase
2021	108	43	40	20	211	

One opportunity to add a fifth mechanic, while seeing some savings to offset the cost, would be to hire a public safety focused mechanic who would also handle the outfitting of new squad vehicles. Right now, this work is contracted out a labor cost of $3,500 per vehicle/per year, with 4-5 vehicles being outfitted per year on average. Hiring this position would require the addition of two hoists, with a one-time cost of $40,000.

The question of space for this would also need to be addressed. There is a cost-effective option of removing the existing wash bay wall to expand the shop, however this would require the addition of the recently discussed heated storage building that could also include a new wash bay. The issue of space needs for Public Works is an ongoing discussion, involving the potential move of the Utilities Division to the Low Zone Treatment Plant, and is outside the scope of this report. Based on the potential resolution of this issue with the completion of the Low Zone Treatment Plant in 2024, it would be recommended this position be added in 2025.

When the Facilities Division was brought to Public Works in 2020, it only included one PSW. A Lead Worker was added in 2020, and a 6-month seasonal worker will be added in 2022. This staffing level is deemed sufficient for the next five years. The

space needs question does relate to this division however, as they have no specific vehicles bays or workspace. Currently they share space with the shop and streetlights, which has worked in the interim.

Utilities Division

As part of the State's plan to address PFAS contamination in the East Metro, two full-time treatment plant operators are included to manage the two permanent treatment plants that will be built in our City. While these treatment plant staff will have a dedicated work plan and state funding, it will reduce the current workload of the existing utility staff, as they manage the operation of the three interim treatment plants. When considering this, and the fact the water division added a PSW in 2019, additional staff are not anticipated to be needed in the next five years.

When looking at the sanitary sewer division, a significant workload increase is currently being experienced. In 2021, two temporary lift stations were added to the City's system to serve development. They are designated as "temporary" as a future gravity sewer line will allow them to be removed. The timing of this future removal is development driven, with no specific completion date. In 2022-2023, development is anticipated to drive the need for 2 permanent lift stations. Lift stations require a large amount of staff time, averaging 4-5 hours per station per week, due to regular checks, weekly cleaning needs, and monthly maintenance. As such, these four stations will result in 16-20 hours of staff time per week.

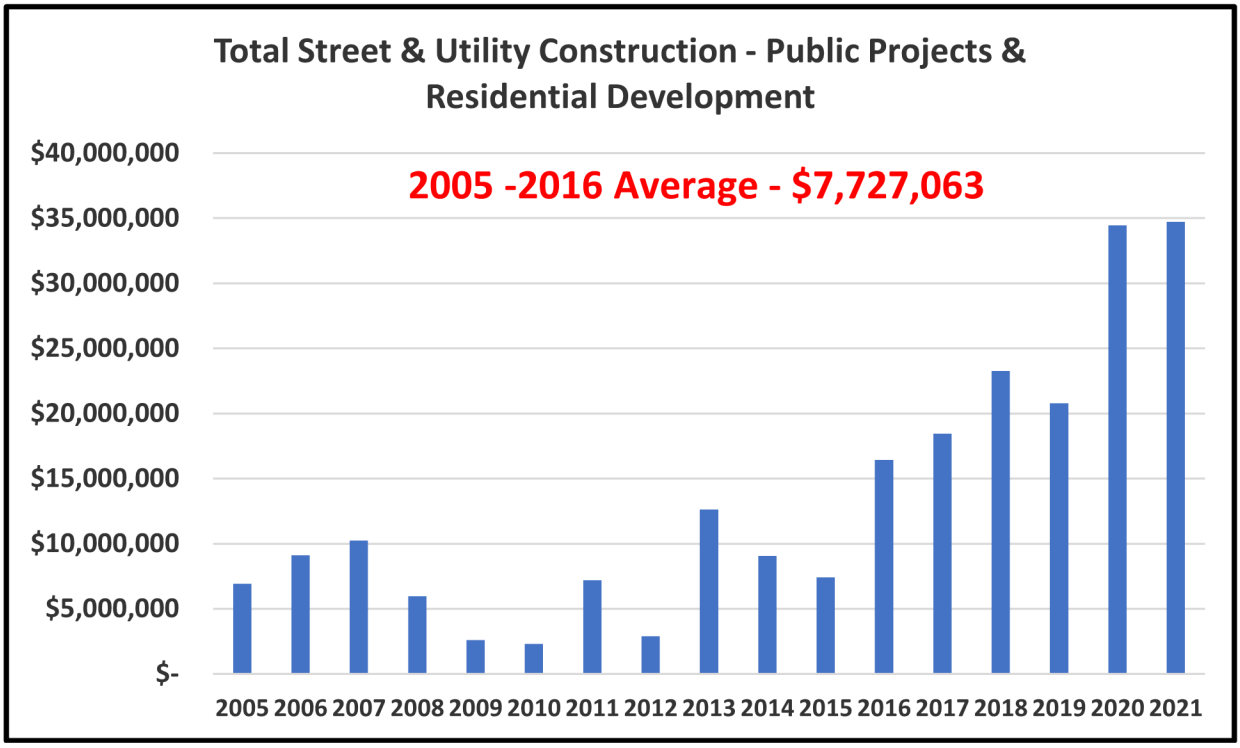
Another program with increasing staffing needs is the streetlight division. While only 1 FTE is programmed, it has consistently required more than one PSW over past few years to maintain the system. From 2017-2021, work orders have averaged 426 per year, however 2021 saw 496 alone. Also, staff are consistently having to deal with larger scale outages that include many lights or an entire feed point system, which still show up as a single work order. As streetlights continue to be added with new development, and aging streetlights fail, this workload will only increase. To address the needs of these two programs, a PSW and associated truck is recommended to be added in 2024 that would be shared between the two funds. As this division is also responsible for plowing of sidewalks in trails in the community, which continue to see the fastest expansion of all infrastructure, this position would staff a new trail plowing route as well.

If the Utility Division were to move to the Low Zone Treatment Plant, it would require the addition of a new administrative position to be housed out of the facility. This position would handle division work orders, invoicing, answering phones, distributing water meters, and scheduling appointments. Funding for the position would be split between water/sewer/streetlighting and need to be added in 2025.

Engineering Division

The Engineering Division has seen great change over the past 10 years. In 2013, the division was comprised of a Community Development Director/City Engineer and one Graduate Engineer. The Graduate Engineer position was promoted to a Project Engineer in 2015. An Assistant City Engineer position was added in 2017, and in early 2019, the division changed to a dedicated City Engineer. In November 2019, the final change was made to the current model of 3.5 FTEs. This division has historically relied on consultants to complete project design, field inspection work, and specialty engineering services. This is typical for a growing city, as the workload is greatly fluctuating and development driven, which would not be practical to handle with dedicated full-time staff.

While the division has many duties, the largest responsibility is the administration and oversight of public infrastructure projects. Below is a chart showing the increase in project workload since 2005. From 2005 to 2016, the average annual project workload was $7.7 million, or approximately $5 million per FTE during that time. For the last two years, the project workload has averaged nearly $35 million, or $10 million per FTE. Moving forward, this workload will likely fluctuate but is anticipated to remain high. Through 2026 the City will be implementing PFAS projects totaling $60 Million that will only further strain this division. These projects have been and will be mitigated by a dedicated consultant project manager, however it will inevitably add to the City staff workload as well.



The first option to mitigate the ever-building workload will be to separate the City Engineer and Public Works Director positions. This will not only provide dedicated oversight to the Engineering Division, but it will also allow the Public Works Director to focus on the department as a whole. While there are certain cities in the Metro that have this shared role, they are typically more stable in terms of growth and have a smaller reconstruction focused workload. Having a dedicated City Engineer will better support the City's ongoing growth and shared work with the Planning Division. It is recommended that this transition occur in 2023.

One other option to increase efficiency in the division would be to hire a position dedicated to the many environmental and sustainability programs the division oversees. This includes MS4, Water Conservation, Recycling, and GreenStep Cities. Currently, oversight of these programs are broken up between the division staff. By hiring this dedicated position, the current staff could more efficiently focus on project management and development activities. Also, this position would be funded by a combination of water utility, stormwater utility, and recycling funds and have minimal impact to the levy. These are programs are required by various State and County mandates, so funding and project workload is anticipated to remain stable. It is recommended that this position be added in 2023.

Conclusion

As shown by this report, Public Works is a complex department that plays a major role in the ongoing growth and development of Cottage Grove. In order to meet the many roles and responsibilities, Staff continue to look for innovative practices and procedures to introduce. This includes many different examples such as implementing a new work order system, utilizing a more effective type of treated salt, improving and modernizing equipment, and training staff to be highly effective and efficient in their roles.

Even with optimization and innovation, growth of the community does result in additional staffing needs in order to maintain level of service. The Public Service Workers identified in this report have the greatest impact on actual level of service. By not adequately adding to this workforce, an impact will be seen for items such as plowing times, boulevard and tree maintenance, vehicle repair times, and length of streetlight outages. While not on the front line of completing this work, the support staff identified play a critical role in collecting, disseminating, and organizing work in the most efficient way possible. Finally, the engineering team plays a different role in ensuring proper planning occurs related to City infrastructure, either from a reconstruction perspective or working with developers on what is newly constructed.

To not properly plan for these needs would result in reduced service to the residents and other Departments that Public Woks supports. While not a set-in stone necessity, this staffing plan provides a snapshot of what should be considered over the next five years to maintain the high level of service our City deserves.

Cottage Grove
Where Pride and Prosperity Meet

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator

FROM: Jaime Mann, Assistant to the City Administrator

DATE: January 6, 2022

RE: Employee Survey Results

Background

Each year, the City of Cottage Grove completes an Employee Survey in which employees can indicate their thoughts and feelings about working for the City. Each year brings employee requests for improvements to the City and those requests are responded to by the leaders of each department, to improve overall employee satisfaction and work environments. Due to complications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, no employee survey was conducted in 2020. The 2019 survey saw 84 respondents and an 89% completion rate.

The 2021 Employee Survey was sent out on June 28, 2021 and closed on July 16, 2021 with a total of 109 responses and a completion rate of 92%. When broken down by department, the number of respondents from each department is listed below.

Administration, Finance, Community Development	20
Fire	13
Parks and Recreation and River Oaks	8
Police	24
Public Works	21
Did not identify	23

The survey included a total of 72 multiple choice and open-ended questions covering topics such as job satisfaction, training, teamwork, leadership, onboarding processes, wages, benefits and communication. A complete report of survey questions and results is attached.

In addition to the responses outlined in this report, all department heads and supervisors attended a series of “effective onboarding” trainings to give them insight into how to improve internal onboarding techniques.

Administration

Many employees, especially ones who work out in the field or at the front desk at City Hall cannot attend Java with Jennifer sessions live. The Java with Jennifer meetings are now being recorded and can be accessed on the employee intranet. This will allow employees who cannot attend them live to be able to watch them at their own convenience so that they won’t miss any of the important information covered within them.

New employee interviews will be continuing in to 2022. They are allowing City Administrator Levitt and Human Resources Manager Fischbach to connect with new employees early in their career with the City and to help with any benefits questions.

In addition, to encourage greater engagement between staff and the City Administrator, a "Creating Connections with Jennifer" campaign was launched on the first of the year. This will allow employees to schedule a 30-minute meeting with City Administrator Levitt to converse about anything they wish. These meetings will allow employees to have more face time with City leadership, as well as freely discuss concerns or suggestions for improvements to the City, two things requested within the Employee Survey.

Employees also expressed a desire for expanded social media presence from the city on a more diverse set of platforms. In the past months, the City has begun regularly posting on Instagram and is working towards growing the following on other platforms. Other possible social media platforms are under consideration.

Many employees expressed confusion about the benefits they receive and the benefit offerings of the City. An informational video was sent out to City employees in December, which covered the two optional retirement plans offered by the City. In addition, employees are strongly encouraged to reach out to Human Resources with any questions or concerns, so that they can be assisted directly or connected with benefit provider representatives.

Community Development

In response to Employees' concerns regarding city-wide communication, Community Development has implemented two items. First, Community Development employees who are in the field during the monthly Java with Jennifer meeting, have been given access to Java with Jennifer on the tablets that they use in the field during inspections. In addition, Community Development employees have been given a link to the City's intranet to be able to watch Java with Jennifer at a time that works better with their schedule. This can be viewed from their office computer once they return from the field. Second during monthly staff meetings, Java with Jennifer will be replayed to ensure that all staff can view.

Concerns with the succession planning for the Building Division have also been expressed by employees, due to the potential number of retirements the Building Division will see in the next 5-7 years. For example, our current Building Official, Bob LaBrosse, is retiring in January 2022. Andy McLean, the Senior Building Inspector, has gained supervisory experience within the Community Development Department in his current position. This, in addition to his long time employment at the City, has made him well position to replace Bob Labrosse as building official. The Community Development succession planning will continue to have considerations such as this one be made to ensure the vitality of the department amongst retirements.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department has not increased staffing levels in 20 years. While they have been able to adjust on a variety of fronts to maintain their employees' workload amidst growing expectations from the community, employees still expressed that they are short staffed within the survey. After analyzing staffing needs, the department has put together their findings and recommendations in a Parks Maintenance Staffing Report. The report and its outlined staffing additions over the next five years will give relief to the entire department.

Outdated or needed additions to the department's tools and equipment was also a concern of employees. In response, each division, if they have not already done so, will be organizing and revieing their existing tools and equipment, in order to decide what further efficient purchases are needed. As an example, a line marker machine will be purchased, which will greatly reduce the amount of time spent on ball fields allowing employees to prioritize other needed tasks.

While the pandemic impeded many training opportunities for Parks and Recreation staff, the Union of Operating Engineers Local 49 plan to reintroducing training opportunities, as the pandemic allows. Once reintroduced, employees will be able to advance their individual skills and knowledge. Additionally, the department is also brainstorming ways to promote diversity within the department through video programming and partnerships, such as high school programs, with Local 49.

The pandemic also caused problems for regular orientation and training processes as employees were forced to social distance, among other safety requirements. Employees expressed frustration with what they felt was rushed, on the job training. As the pandemic allows, new employee check-ins and performance reviews will become regular practice. This will allow for more transparent communication and a smoother training process.

As a response to city-wide concerns with communication, the department has seen the return of monthly departmental meetings. This will allow for all staff to be informed of critical communications within the department.

Public Safety

Employees in the Public Safety department expressed that they felt the FTO phase process was too short or not comprehensive enough. As a result, the department is working towards expanding the shadow phase period to be more widespread and cover all divisions within the department. This will allow for all new officers to have a least a basic level of working knowledge of each division and how it operates. In addition, employees asked that a mentorship program be implemented. The Police Department does already have in place a mentorship program, but very few employees have participated. The department will work towards greater communication that this program exists.

Employees in the Public Safety department have shown large interest in city developments. This was echoed within the Employee Survey. Sergeants will now be giving staff construction updates during roll call.

The addition of a second K9 to the Police Department was also requested from employees. In September, a specialty K9 position was opened to all sworn officers in the department, and that position has been filled. The K9 for this position will be introduced into the department this year.

Diversity in the Police Department has been a long-standing concern within the City, the metro, and the greater United States. The Cottage Grove Police Department is taking actions towards increasing diversity by expanding recruitment methods. Chief Koerner has become a member of the National Latino Police Officer Association (NLPOA) and is working with the organization on connecting with different ethnic groups in the community to assist in a more diverse hiring process. In addition, a police recruitment video highlighting the people of the CGPD and what they enjoy about working here will be used in hiring efforts.

Public Works

Along with Parks and Recreation, the Public Works Department will also be working with the Local 49 to spur diversity in the department. In addition, supervisors will make a concerted effort to educate their staff about discriminative language. Both of these efforts will be implemented to ensure equity and inclusion of existing staff, as well as to expand diversity of future staff.

Throughout the survey, many employees expressed frustration with the lack of knowledge or confusion within GIS systems. A future GIS Specialist position will solve many of these problems. In addition, a basic level of GIS training will be given to existing employees.

Once again, Public Works employees desire to know more about development projects in the city. As one example of how the department is responding to this request, Community Development Director Costello met with Public Works employees at the annual snowplow meeting in October to share updates from Community Development. Such informational meetings covering development are expected to continue. Additionally, more consistent all-staff meetings will improve overall communications throughout the department.

Recommendation

Accept the Employee Survey results.

Attachments

2021 Employee Survey
2021 Employee Survey results

Constant Contact Survey Results

Survey Name: City of Cottage Grove Employee Survey

Response Status: Completed

Filter: None

7/20/2021 2:53 PM CDT

*Overall, I am satisfied with my job.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		48	48.0 %
Somewhat Agree		44	44.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		7	7.0 %
Strongly Disagree		1	1.0 %
I Don't Know		0	0.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*I would recommend working for the City.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		47	47.0 %
Somewhat Agree		45	45.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		3	3.0 %
Strongly Disagree		3	3.0 %
I Don't Know		2	2.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

I plan on working for the City one (1) year from now.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		68	68.0 %
Somewhat Agree		21	21.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		3	3.0 %
Strongly Disagree		1	1.0 %
I Don't Know		7	7.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

I plan on working for the City five (5) years from now.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		48	48.0 %
Somewhat Agree		27	27.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		5	5.0 %
Strongly Disagree		6	6.0 %
I Don't Know		14	14.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

If you plan on leaving the City, why?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
I am continuing with the City		40	40.0 %
Moving		0	0.0 %
Lack of Career Opportunity with the City		6	6.0 %
Better Compensation Elsewhere		4	4.0 %
Better Benefits Package Elsewhere		6	6.0 %
Retiring		11	11.0 %
Prefer not to say		8	8.0 %
Other		13	13.0 %
No Response(s)		12	12.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*On average, I have the right amount of work to do.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree			45	45.0 %
Somewhat Agree			32	32.0 %
Somewhat Disagree			18	18.0 %
Strongly Disagree			4	4.0 %
I Don't Know			1	1.0 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
		Totals	**100**	**100%**

*On average, I feel appreciated for the work I do.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree			37	37.0 %
Somewhat Agree			33	33.0 %
Somewhat Disagree			18	18.0 %
Strongly Disagree			11	11.0 %
I Don't Know			1	1.0 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
		Totals	**100**	**100%**

*I understand what is expected of me.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree			63	63.0 %
Somewhat Agree			25	25.0 %
Somewhat Disagree			9	9.0 %
Strongly Disagree			2	2.0 %
I Don't Know			1	1.0 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
		Totals	**100**	**100%**

I have access to the resources (e.g., equipment, information, materials, software, technology) needed to do my job effectively.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		50	50.0 %
Somewhat Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Disagree		11	11.0 %
Strongly Disagree		8	8.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		1	1.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

What resources, if any, do you need that you currently do not have?

*My position fits my skills and abilities well.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		69	69.0 %
Somewhat Agree		27	27.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		4	4.0 %
Strongly Disagree		0	0.0 %
I Don't Know		0	0.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*In my job, I have the opportunity to develop and learn new skills.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		54	54.0 %
Somewhat Agree		32	32.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		11	11.0 %
Strongly Disagree		3	3.0 %
I Don't Know		0	0.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

My supervisor encourages me to grow my job skills and advance in my career.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		55	55.0 %
Somewhat Agree		23	23.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		12	12.0 %
Strongly Disagree		9	9.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

The City provides adequate opportunities to help employees develop the knowledge and skills necessary for the position.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		42	42.0 %
Somewhat Agree		38	38.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		9	9.0 %
Strongly Disagree		7	7.0 %
I Don't Know		4	4.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

The City attracts the talent needed to continue functioning at a high level.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		24	24.0 %
Somewhat Agree		37	37.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		24	24.0 %
Strongly Disagree		10	10.0 %
I Don't Know		5	5.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*The City does a good job of retaining talent.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		23	23.0 %
Somewhat Agree		41	41.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		20	20.0 %
Strongly Disagree		6	6.0 %
I Don't Know		10	10.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*Are you active in a professional association?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes		53	53.0 %
No		34	34.0 %
I am unaware of a professional association for my job.		13	13.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*If active in a professional association, what type of training do they offer? (Please select all that apply)

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Webinars		42	42.0 %
In-Person		46	46.0 %
Online		39	39.0 %
Conferences		47	47.0 %
I am not in a professional association.		44	44.0 %
Other (please specify)		2	2.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*Have you ever attended any of their trainings?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes		52	52.0 %
No		16	16.0 %
I am not in a professional association.		32	32.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*Has cost or long travel distance ever been an impediment to you attending those trainings?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes, Cost		7	7.0 %
Yes, Travel Distance		2	2.0 %
Both		18	18.0 %
No		42	42.0 %
Not Applicable		31	31.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*How likely would you be to attend those trainings if cost was less of a factor?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Very Likely		37	37.0 %
Somewhat Likely		13	13.0 %
Somewhat Unlikely		2	2.0 %
Very Unlikely		2	2.0 %
Not Applicable		46	46.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

What ideas do you have to improve the City's training programs? Do you have examples of other programs that you have seen?

*Employees are provided with appropriate orientation and training when hired.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		27	27.0 %
Somewhat Agree		48	48.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		13	13.0 %
Strongly Disagree		8	8.0 %
I Don't Know		4	4.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*When I started my position, I felt I was prepared to succeed.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		35	35.0 %
Somewhat Agree		47	47.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		16	16.0 %
Strongly Disagree		1	1.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

Should anything be done differently during the orientation process? If so, what?

*I hold a supervisory role in the organization.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes		32	32.0 %
No		57	56.9 %
Prefer not to say		11	11.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*I get the information I need to do my work effectively.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		40	40.0 %
Somewhat Agree		42	42.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		14	14.0 %
Strongly Disagree		3	3.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My direct supervisor promotes a positive work environment.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		58	57.9 %
Somewhat Agree		24	24.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		12	12.0 %
Strongly Disagree		5	5.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*I feel that I have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect me and the future of my department.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		36	36.0 %
Somewhat Agree		35	35.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		11	11.0 %
Strongly Disagree		17	17.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*How often do you receive feedback from your direct supervisor?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Daily		21	21.0 %
Weekly		34	34.0 %
Monthly		23	23.0 %
Yearly		17	17.0 %
I don't receive feedback from my supervisor.		5	5.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My direct supervisor's feedback on my performance is productive and sufficient.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		43	43.0 %
Somewhat Agree		39	39.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		14	14.0 %
Strongly Disagree		1	1.0 %
I Don't Know		3	3.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My direct supervisor allows me to make decisions regarding my work.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		67	67.0 %
Somewhat Agree		23	23.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		3	3.0 %
Strongly Disagree		6	6.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*On average, my direct supervisor is fair in their dealings with me.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		76	76.0 %
Somewhat Agree		17	17.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		5	5.0 %
Strongly Disagree		1	1.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My direct supervisor encourages me to express my honest opinions and ideas.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		65	65.0 %
Somewhat Agree		19	19.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		9	9.0 %
Strongly Disagree		6	6.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*When encouraged to, I express my honest opinions and ideas.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		64	64.0 %
Somewhat Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Disagree		3	3.0 %
Strongly Disagree		4	4.0 %
I Don't Know		0	0.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My direct supervisor is able to problem solve and make changes for the better within my work group.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		51	51.0 %
Somewhat Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Disagree		9	9.0 %
Strongly Disagree		9	9.0 %
I Don't Know		2	2.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*I have confidence in the leadership and management of my department.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		56	56.0 %
Somewhat Agree		23	23.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		9	9.0 %
Strongly Disagree		10	10.0 %
I Don't Know		2	2.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*I have confidence in the leadership and management of the City Administrator.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		55	55.0 %
Somewhat Agree		26	26.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		9	9.0 %
Strongly Disagree		2	2.0 %
I Don't Know		8	8.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*How often do you receive feedback from your Department Director?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Daily		7	7.0 %
Weekly		32	32.0 %
Monthly		22	22.0 %
Yearly		17	17.0 %
I don't receive feedback from my department director.		22	22.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*The City's performance evaluation process is an effective way to measure performance.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		11	11.0 %
Somewhat Agree		43	43.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		18	18.0 %
Strongly Disagree		11	11.0 %
I Don't Know		17	17.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My work group works as an effective team.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		49	49.0 %
Somewhat Agree		38	38.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		9	9.0 %
Strongly Disagree		3	3.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*People in my work group share my commitment to doing quality work.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		51	51.0 %
Somewhat Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Disagree		17	17.0 %
Strongly Disagree		2	2.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*People in my work group have the right training and skills to do their work effectively.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree			50	50.0 %
Somewhat Agree			38	38.0 %
Somewhat Disagree			7	7.0 %
Strongly Disagree			3	3.0 %
I Don't Know			2	2.0 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
		Totals	**100**	**100%**

*People in my work group freely share information that will help me perform my job better.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree			50	50.0 %
Somewhat Agree			31	31.0 %
Somewhat Disagree			11	11.0 %
Strongly Disagree			8	8.0 %
I Don't Know			0	0.0 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
		Totals	**100**	**100%**

*As a team, the City Administrator and Department Directors do an effective job of planning for the future of the City.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree			41	41.0 %
Somewhat Agree			31	31.0 %
Somewhat Disagree			11	11.0 %
Strongly Disagree			3	3.0 %
I Don't Know			14	14.0 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
		Totals	**100**	**100%**

*The City Administrator and Department Directors effectively communicate the City's strategic direction, mission, and goals through the Strategic Plan.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		37	37.0 %
Somewhat Agree		36	36.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		10	10.0 %
Strongly Disagree		4	4.0 %
I Don't Know		13	13.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*I understand how my work contributes directly to the success of the City's Strategic Plan.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		41	41.0 %
Somewhat Agree		32	32.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		11	11.0 %
Strongly Disagree		7	7.0 %
I Don't Know		9	9.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My department's structure is flexible and can make needed changes.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		37	37.0 %
Somewhat Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Disagree		21	21.0 %
Strongly Disagree		11	11.0 %
I Don't Know		2	2.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*The City provides competitive wages for work responsibilities.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		34	34.0 %
Somewhat Agree		31	31.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		21	21.0 %
Strongly Disagree		14	14.0 %
I Don't Know		0	0.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*The City provides a competitive amount of benefits for work responsibilities such as Annual Leave, Paid-Time Off, Health Benefits, Retirement, etc.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Disagree		19	19.0 %
Strongly Disagree		14	14.0 %
I Don't Know		9	9.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*The City provides the necessary information to explain my benefits.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		29	28.9 %
Somewhat Agree		43	43.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		19	19.0 %
Strongly Disagree		2	2.0 %
I Don't Know		7	7.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*How did you learn about your benefits? (Check all that apply)

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Orientation		35	35.0 %
Wellness Fair		31	31.0 %
Coworker		46	46.0 %
Monthly News		17	17.0 %
Appointment with Human Resources		34	34.0 %
I have not learned about my benefits.		10	10.0 %
Other (please specify)		6	6.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

How do you want your benefits explained to you?

*How often do you want your benefits explained to you?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yearly		49	49.0 %
Whenever there is a change		41	41.0 %
I Do Not Know		5	5.0 %
Other (please specify)		5	5.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*Have you attended a Java with Jennifer event within the last year?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes		67	67.0 %
No		33	33.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

What other activities do you desire to engage with the Administrator or Management?

*Overall, the City does a good job communicating with its employees.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		32	32.0 %
Somewhat Agree		49	49.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		14	14.0 %
Strongly Disagree		3	3.0 %
I Don't Know		2	2.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*My Department Director communicates well with their employees.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		42	42.0 %
Somewhat Agree		39	39.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		10	10.0 %
Strongly Disagree		8	8.0 %
I Don't Know		1	1.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*Where do you usually get your updates about the City? (Check all that apply)

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Facebook		29	28.9 %
Monthly News		65	65.0 %
Java with Jennifer		50	50.0 %
Website		10	10.0 %
Co-Worker		48	48.0 %
Supervisor		65	65.0 %
Cottage Grove Reports		24	24.0 %
Other (please specify)		3	3.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*Department Directors listen to employee opinions.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		41	41.0 %
Somewhat Agree		37	37.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		7	7.0 %
Strongly Disagree		10	10.0 %
I Don't Know		5	5.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

*The City Administrator listens to employee opinions.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		34	34.0 %
Somewhat Agree		32	32.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		5	5.0 %
Strongly Disagree		3	3.0 %
I Don't Know		26	26.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

Do you have any ideas on how we can improve communication with City staff.

*How would you like to receive information from the City? (Please rank, with 1 as "want most" and 3 as "want least")

1 = Want Most

Answer	1 2 3	Number of Response(s)	Ranking Score*
Electronically (E-mail, Internet, Podcast, etc.)		100	1.5
Print		100	2.6
In-Person (Departmental meetings, Supervisor, City-wide meetings, etc.)		100	1.9

*The Ranking Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted rankings by the number of total responses.

*How often would you like to receive information from the City? (Please rank, with 1 as "want most" and 4 as "want least")

1 = Want Most

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Ranking Score*
Weekly					100	2.7
Bi-Weekly					100	2.0
Monthly					100	2.0
Quarterly					100	3.2

*The Ranking Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted rankings by the number of total responses.

What information do you want to receive from the City?

Do you have any ideas on how we can improve communication with the public?

Is there anything we should have asked about in this survey?

*Please rank the following priorities, with 1 as "most important to me", and 5 as "least important to me".

1 = Most important

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Ranking Score*
Access to training and development of my job skills						100	3.4
Productive communication and feedback from my supervisor						100	3.2
Cooperation with other employees in my work group						100	3.0
Clear expectations of what is expected of me and understanding how I contribute to the City						100	3.1
Competitive wages and benefits						100	2.2

*What Department are you a part of?

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Public Works		21	21.0 %
Fire		13	13.0 %
Police		24	24.0 %
Administration/Finance/Community Development		20	20.0 %
Parks and Recreation/River Oaks		8	8.0 %
Prefer not to say		14	14.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

Do you have anything else to tell us? General comments? Concerns?

*The City is inclusive.

Answer	0% 100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		34	34.0 %
Somewhat Agree		39	39.0 %
Somewhat Disagree		4	4.0 %
Strongly Disagree		5	5.0 %
I Don't Know		18	18.0 %
No Response(s)		0	0.0 %
	Totals	**100**	**100%**

Do you have any ideas about how to increase diversity within the City?

2021 Annual Employee Survey – General

Changes in Survey: The Annual Employee Survey for 2021 is 72 questions, 1 question longer than the last Annual Employee that was conducted in 2019. In 2020, complications due to COVID prevented the annual survey from being completed. The 2021 survey and added two questions about diversity, equity, and inclusion. The survey was broken into 10 sections which included topics such as job satisfaction, work group, and leadership, in addition to open ended questions. The 2021 Survey had a total of 109 total respondents and a completion rate of 92%, more than the 2019 survey which had a total of 84 respondents and an 89% completion rate, and the 2018 survey which had a total of 94 respondents and an 84% completion rate.

Implementation: The Employee was opened on June 28, 2021 and was closed on July 16, 2021.

Section 1: Job Satisfaction

Executive Summary:

This Section asked employees 8 questions related to job satisfaction and their future with the City. In general, employees are satisfied with their job, would recommend working for the City, plan on working for the City 1 year and 5 years from now, have the right amount of work to do, feel appreciated for the work they do, and know what is expected of them. However, the results from this survey are less positive than either 2019 or 2018 for every question in this section.

Detailed Summary:

1. Overall, employees are satisfied with their job. 92% agreed with this statement, 48% of whom strongly agreed. The overall satisfaction is about the same as 2019, when 93.33% of respondents agreed. Both years are a decrease from 2018, when 95.74% of respondents agreed. Every year, however, is an improvement from 2017 when the number of respondents who agreed was just 86.61%.
2. Most employees would recommend working for the City. Again, the 92% agreement of 2021 and the 92.22% agreement of 2019 are a decrease from 2018 when 95.75% agreed, but an increase from 2017, when 78.38% agreed.
3. Most employees plan on working for the City one (1) year from now. 89% of respondents agree with this statement, 68% of whom strongly agree. This is an improvement from the 86.66% of respondents who agreed in 2019 and the 80.36% of respondents in 2017, but falls short of the 96.81% who agreed in 2018.
4. Employees were next asked whether they plan on working for the City 5 years from now. The number who agreed slightly dropped from the previous questions, but 75% still agreed, just over 1.5% higher than 2019. 14% of respondents indicated that they did

not know. Agreement was an 8% drop from 2018, which was the first year this question was asked.

5. There is a slight discrepancy between this question and the last. While 12 employees skipped this question, 48 gave some reason for why they would leave the city, in contrast to the 11 who said they disagreed that they would be at the City in 5 years, and the 4 that disagreed that they would be at the City in 1 year. The greatest proportion of respondents chose to fill in their answer to this question, citing reasons such as retirement, favoritism and/or a poor police climate in general, better benefits, compensation, and/or opportunities in another organization. One respondent cited racism and a lack of diversity at the City.
6. There were 77% of respondents that agree that they have the right amount of work to do, a 5% drop from the 2019 survey. The responses from 2018 and 2017 were within 1.5% of the 2019 number.
7. More employees agree that they feel appreciated for the work they do than those who disagree, but the margin between them is the smallest yet. 70% of employees agreed, while 29% disagreed. This is the same as in 2019 and a decrease from 76.6% in 2018, and an increase in disagreement from the 28.89% in 2019 and 23.4% in 2018. Notably, in 2018 this question was rephrased from the 2017 survey which asked whether employees felt valued for they work they do. The 2018 survey saw a 15% increase in agreement and 12% decrease in disagreement from 2017.
8. A majority of 88% of employees know what is expected of them. This is a 4% decrease from 2019, and a 12% decrease from both 2018 and 2017.

Section 2: Training

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees 14 questions related to training opportunities and resources available to them. More employees believe that their position fits their skills and abilities, that they have opportunities to develop and learn new skills, and that their supervisor encourages it than in 2019. Less employees believe that the City provides adequate opportunities to develop, or that it does a good job of attracting and retaining talent than did in both 2019 and 2018. About half of employees are active in professional associations that provide additional training for their job, but those who attend the trainings or would possibly attend them in the future if they were more accessible has slightly decreased from previous surveys. Employees also requested that the city provide more training opportunities for individuals that are interested in them.

Detailed Summary

9. Less employees agreed, and more employees disagreed that they have access to the resources they need to do their job effectively between 2019 (89.53% agreed, 10.47% disagreed) and 2021 (78.9% agreed, 19% disagreed). Conversely, more agreed in 2021 than did in 2018.
10. Many employees indicate that they needed better IT resources. Utility Billing and Energov software have also caused concern from employees. Some also request better training, more staff, and more time. In the Police Department, employees requested a second K9, more supportive leadership, CAD, radios, pagers, license plate readers, and MCDs
11. The percentage of employees that agree that their position fits their skills and abilities well increased slightly from 94.18% in 2019 to 96% in 2021. Both 2018 and 2017 had similar numbers to 2019.
12. The percentage of employees (86%) that feel they have the opportunity to develop and learn new skills increased slightly from 2019 (86%). 2019 was slight decrease from 2018 (86.66%), which was an increase from 2017 (82.4%) and 2016 (84.74%).
13. More employees feel that their supervisor encourages them to grow their job skills and advance in their career than in 2019. 78% agreed this year, while 72.09% agreed in 2019. Both 2018 and 2017 were 80%.
14. The percentage of employees who feel that the City provides adequate opportunities to help develop the knowledge and skills necessary for their position has decreased from 83.72% in 2019 to 80% in 2020. 2018 saw similar results to 2019, at 82.23%. 2021 is an increase from both 2017 (75.92%) and 2016 (77.14%).
15. The percentage of employees who agree that the City attracts the talent needed to continue functioning at a high level has decreased almost 10% between 2021 (61%) and

2019 (70.93%). This trend was also present between 2019 and 2018, when 77.78% of respondents agreed.

16. Those who agree that the City does a good job of retaining talent is 64%. This has decreased from 2019, when 72.09% agreed, and 2018, when 72.22% agreed. This year's number is an increase from 2017, when it was 60.85%. All years are a sharp increase from 2016 , when only 48.57% agreed.
17. The percentage of employees who are active in a professional association has slightly increased from 50% in 2018, 48.84% in 2019, and 53% in 2021.
18. The types of training that professional associations offer – webinars, in-person events, online events, and conferences - has remained unchanged. One respondent did comment, however, that their supervisor is not supportive of membership in professional associations.
19. The percent of employees who have attended their trainings has slightly decreased from 53.25% in 2019 to 52% this year.
20. Respondents who agree that cost is an impediment to attending trainings has slightly increased from 5.81% in 2019 to 7%. Those who cited travel distance is about the same at 2%. Those who felt that both factors were an impediment also decreased from 23.26% to 18%. Finally, those who don't agree that either were an impediment increased from 32.56% to 42%. In 2018, all categories were larger percentages than 2021 and 2019, except that neither cost nor travel distance was an impediment.
21. Less employees feel that they would be likely to attend trainings if cost were less of a factor than in the past two surveys. The percentage of respondents who feel that it is unlikely that they would attend if cost were less of a factor, increased from 1.16% to 4%. Those who don't believe it is applicable increased from 39.53% to 46%.
22. There were 27 employees that responded with ideas on how to improve the City's training programs. Multiple responses were about increasing funding for training or allowing out-of-state training, training at different times of the year, or distributing trainings amongst employees who are interested. Some employees also requested that the City support higher education through tuition reimbursement programs. Many concerns were raised about training in the police department, which employees believed to be repetitive or excessive, unfair, and favored towards SWAT. Additional answers included EMR and CPR training, additional job-specific training for new employees, and training on how to retain employees. Finally, one employee recommended that the City look into the employee development program at the City of Burnsville as a great example.

Section 3: New Hire Orientation (Employee On-Boarding)

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees three questions related to new hire orientation. More employees feel that they are provided with appropriate orientation and hiring than in 2019, but less than in 2018. Less employees feel that they were prepared to succeed when they started their position than in both 2018 and 2019, but the number is still largely positive.

Detailed Summary:

23. The percentage of employees who feel that they are provided with appropriate orientation and training is about the same from 2019 to 2021 at 75%. Both years were a slightly decrease from 2018 (76.14%) and an increase from 2017 (71.3%).
24. Less employees feel that when they started their position, they were prepared to succeed than in 2019. This percentage decreased from 84.89% in 2019 to 80% in 2021, which are both increases from the 75% of employees who agreed in 2018.
25. There were 26 employees who had comments about the orientation process. Two employees expressed frustration that they received no training when they started in their position, and two others who had very little, rushed training, and/or trained as they went. Suggestions for improving the orientation process included sitting down with IR, HR, and Payroll within the first week, a final meeting with supervisor at the end of training to review expectations, longer and more standardized PD training, more thorough explanation of benefits, mentorship programs, quarterly or weekly check-ins, and more explanation of the City's structure and policies.

Section 4: Supervisor Relationship and Performance

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees 15 questions related to their relationship with their supervisor and the leadership and the management of their department and the City. Around a third of respondents hold a supervisory role. Most employees get feedback from both their direct supervisor and their department director. Every question in this section had more positive outcomes than in 2019, except two. These two outliers remained the same as in 2019.

Detailed Summary:

26. Just over a third of employees who took the survey (32%) hold a supervisory role within the organization. Another 11% preferred not to say. This is an increase from just over a fifth of employees (22.62%) who indicated that they held a supervisory role in the 2019 survey.
27. About the same percentage of employees (82%) feel that they get the information they need to do their jobs effectively as in 2019 (82.35%), which was the first time this question was asked. More of those who agreed did so strongly, which increased from 35.44% to 40% between those years.
28. The percentage of respondents who feel that their direct supervisor promotes a positive work environment increased from 75.2% in 2019 to 81.9% in 2021. Both years are a large decrease from 2018, when 88.37% of employees felt this way.
29. The percentage of employees who feel that they have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect them and the future of their department increased from 62.36% in 2019 to 71% in 2021. 2018 has a slightly smaller percentage of positive responses, at 69.76%.
30. A majority of 95% of employees receive feedback from their direct supervisors either daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly. This is a large increase from the 84.71% of employees who reported that they receive feedback from their supervisor in 2019, but it falls short of 2018 when all employees (100%) reported that they receive feedback.
31. Employees who agree that their direct supervisor's feedback on their performance is productive and sufficient increased almost 17% between 2019 (64.7%) and 2021 (82%) The percentage of agreement in 2018 was also smaller than this year, at 74.42%.
32. The percentage of employees who feel that their direct supervisor allows them to make decisions regarding their work has increased slightly from 2019 (89.41%) to 2021 (90%). This has decreased from 2018, when 90.7% of employees felt this way.
33. The percentage of employees who feel that their direct supervisor is fair in their dealings with them is 93%. This is larger than in 2019 (90.59%), and the same as 2018 (93.03%).
34. More employees agree that their direct supervisor encourages them to express their honest opinions and ideas. The percentage is 84% this year and was 92.94% in 2019.

Both years are a decrease from 2018, when 91.86% of employees agreed with this statement.

35. When encouraged to, 92.9% of employees express their honest opinions and ideas. This is about the same as 2019 (92.94%). In 2018, the percentage was slightly larger at 94.19%.
36. In 2021, 79.9% of employees agree that their direct supervisor is able to problem solve and make changes for the better within their work group, which is almost 15% more than in 2019 (65.89%), almost the same as 2018 (79.07%) and 4% more than in 2017 (75.97%).
37. The percent of employees who have confidence in the leadership and management of their department has continually increased since 2018. In 2021, 79% of employees agreed with this statement., in 2019, 74.12% agreed, and in 2018, 7211% agreed.
38. More employees have confidence in the leadership and management of the City Administrator (81%) than in 2019 (75.3%), which was the first year this question was asked.
39. More employees receive feedback from their Department Director than in 2019. In 2021, 78% receive feedback, in 2019, 68.68% received feedback, and in 2018, 72.29% received feedback. Employees are most likely to receive feedback from their Department Director weekly, followed by monthly, yearly, and daily.
40. The percentage of employees who agree that the City's performance evaluation process is an effective way to measure performance is 54%, while 17% don't know. This is an increase from the 52.95% of employees who agreed in 2019. The results in 2018 were more negative, when 40.7% of employees disagreed with the statement.

Section 5: Work Group

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees 4 questions related to their relationship with their work group. More employees than in 2019 feel that their work group works effectively, but less than in 2018. Those who feel that their work group shares their commitment to doing quality work remained the same as 2019 but decreased from 2018. Less employees feel that their work group has the right training and skills than in both 2018 and 2019. Less employees also feel that their work group freely shares information with them than either 2018 or 2019.

Detailed Summary:

41. Slightly more employees agree that their work group works as an effective team. 87% agree in 2021, and 84.71% agreed in 2019. Both years are a decline from 2018, when a high 91.76% agreed.
42. Employees who feel that people in their work group share their commitment to doing quality work remained about the same, at 80 % in 2019 and 79.9% in 2021. In 2018, 84.71% agreed felt this way.
43. The percentage of employees who agree that the people in their work group have the right training and skills to do their work effectively dropped from 2019 (94.12%) to 2021 (88%). In 2018, the percent was about the same as this year (88.23%), and every year is an increase from 2017 (82.69%).
44. Less employees agree that the people in their work group freely share information that will help them perform their job better than in both 2018 and 2019. Just 81% agree with this statement in 2021. 2019 (84.71%) and 2018(84.7%) had similar results.

Section 6: Strategic Planning and Structure

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees 4 questions related to the City's Strategic Plan and the structure of their department. Less employees agree that the City Administrator and Department Directors do an effective job of planning for the future of the City than in 2018 and 2019. About the same percentage of employees from the last survey believe that the City Administrator and Department Directors effectively communicate the Strategic Plan and understand how their own work contributes to the success of the Strategic plan. More employees feel that their department's structure is flexible and can make needed changes than in 2019, but less than in 2018.

Detailed Summary:

45. The percentage of employees who agree that the City Administrator and Department Directors do an effective job planning for the future of the City has decreased continually since 2018. This year, 72% of employees agreed, while 75.29% agreed in 2019, and 85.88% agreed in 2018. 14.6% of respondents indicated that they don't know.
46. 73% believe that the City Administrator and Department Directors effectively communicate the City's strategic direction mission, and goals through the Strategic Plan as last year. This is slightly larger than in 2019 (68.24%), but almost a 10% decrease from 2018 when 77.65% of employees agreed.
47. The percentage of employees who understand how their work contributes directly to the success of the City's Strategic Plan has remained relatively the same for the past three years. In 2018, this percentage was 75.29%, in 2019, it was 73.41%, and this year it is 73%.
48. A greater percentage of employees (65.9%) than in 2019 (61.18%) agree that their department's structure is flexible and can make needed changes. Both years are lower than in 2018, however, when the percentage was 67.06%.

Section 7: Wage and Benefits

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees 6 questions related to their wage and benefits. More employees believe that the City provides competitive wages and benefits for their work responsibilities than in 2019, but less than in 2018. The largest percentage of employees learn about their benefits through a coworker, and many would prefer that they be explained to them more thoroughly from HR when they start their employment, with updates either yearly or whenever they change.

Detailed Summary:

49. Employees who believe that the City provides competitive wages for work responsibilities increased 5% from 2019, at 65% total. 2018 was also higher at 72.94%.
50. There is a 12% increase in the percentage of employees who agree that that the City provides a competitive amount of benefits for work responsibilities, as only 45.06% agreed in 2019 and 57.8% agree in 2021. A larger percent (60%) was shown in the 2018 survey.
51. Fewer employees feel that they are provided with the necessary information to explain their benefits in 2021 (66.6%) than in 2019 (71.76%). The results of 2018 were in the middle (70.59%), and 2017 was the same as this year.
52. Most employees learn about their benefits through a coworker (46%), followed by during orientation (35%), an appointment with Human Resources (34%), and a wellness fair (31%). Other employees indicated that they found out their benefits for themselves either in their orientation material, on the intranet, or by asking questions. 10% of employees responded that they have not learned about their benefits. This is an increase from 2019, when that number was 5.88%.
53. When asked how they would like their benefits explained to them, 36 employees responded with suggestions. Many employees suggested that they be explained plainly and clearly. Some requested benefits be explained in small group or on-on-one, in-person meetings, others requested through emails or other written documents, with periodic check-ins or updates. One employee suggested a Wellness Fair.
54. Most employees want their benefits explained to them either yearly (49%) or whenever there is a change (41%). Some also commented that monthly or even bi-monthly would be preferred.

Section 8: Communication

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees 12 questions related to how the City communicates both internally and externally. Almost double the number of employees have attended a Java with Jennifer this year, and some request greater communication with the City Administrator and Department Directors. Satisfaction with the City's communication has decreased, but the communication from Department Directors has increased. More employees agree that Department Directors and the City Administrator listen to employee opinions. Most employees get information about the City from either the Monthly News or their supervisor, and prefer to get information quarterly or weekly. Employees want to hear more about new development projects, benefits, financials, new and retiring employees, and the City's progress in the Strategic Plan. Many employees find that presence on a wider variety of social media platforms would be beneficial.

Detailed Summary:

55. 67% of employees have attended a Java with Jennifer event within the last year. This is a very large increase from 2019, when employees were asked whether they had attended a Java with Jennifer or Brown Bag event, and only 35.71% of employees responded that they had.
56. When asked what other activities are desired to engage with the Administrator or Management, 17 employees responded. Many comments simply expressed the desire for greater engagement in any form. Others requested that Brown Bag events be brought back, or monthly/weekly meetings and check-ins. Employees who work night shifts or unconventional hours requested that greater effort be put into reaching out to them, whether that be by recording Java with Jennifer, or providing other outlets to speak directly with the Administrator and/or Department heads during those times.
57. The overall satisfaction with the City's communication with its employees decreased both this year and in 2019. 86.95% of employees agreed that the City did a good job communicating in 2018, which dropped to 82.14% in 2019, and again to 81% this year.
58. This year saw the highest overall satisfaction with the Department Director's communication with their employees. 79.27% agreed that the Department Directors did a well in 2018, 77.38% in 2019, and 81% this year.
59. Most employees usually get updates about the City either from the Monthly News (65%) or from their supervisor (65%). A large proportion also get it from Java with Jennifer (50%) or from a co-worker (48%).
60. The percentage of employees who agree that Department Directors listen to employee opinions increased from 72.62% in 2019 to 78% in 2021.
61. The percentage of employees who agree that the City Administrator listens to employee opinions also increased from 61.9% in 2019 to 66% in 2021.

62. 21 employees responded with ideas on how to improve communication with City staff. The most common response was more transparent information exchange between departments on key happenings in their departments. From the Police Department, some employees requested that records be kept of staff meetings to prevent miscommunication or misinterpretation of the conversations that are had. Some also requested that Administration speak with all shifts, so that events that happen with night shifts are also being heard. Other employees requested weekly departmental meetings, monthly update emails from the City Administrator, and non-formal employee events.
63. Most employees want to receive information about the city on paper, followed by in-person, and finally electronically.
64. Most employees want to receive information quarterly, followed by weekly, with bi-weekly and monthly tied for the lowest rating.
65. When asked what information employees want to receive from the City, 33 responded. Many employees want to hear information about new projects and developments, City financials, benefits information, new and retiring employees, progress on the goals of the Strategic Plan, and departmental updates. Some employees request that they only receive information that is essential to their position. A few employees also expressed frustration that oftentimes, the general public knows about information pertaining to the City before they do.
66. When employees were asked whether they had ideas on how to improve communication, 24 responded. The most common response was to be more active on a wider variety of social media platforms. Others said to be more active on the City website, host more public events, and provide more video communication. One employee had an idea to use creative problem solvers and public artists to generate interest and engage the public.

Section 9: Miscellaneous

Executive Summary:

This section asked employees 6 questions to get additional feedback on topics not covered in previous sections, and for data analytics purposes. Employees wanted to see more questions about their frustrations, concerns, and general opinions about the City, the direction that it is going, and how their work relates. The priorities of employees have changed since the last survey, with the most important one this year being competitive wages and benefits. Around a fifth of employees left additional feedback for comments or concerns, many of them emphasizing comments left previously in the survey.

Detailed Summary:

67. 14 employees had other questions they would have liked to see asked in the survey. Some asked for more questions about employee frustrations or concerns in general, or specifically in relation to staffing, and compensation and/or benefits compared to other cities. More police-specific questions, COVID questions, questions about employee's feelings, and questions about what employees want to see happening in the City in the future were other topics employees want to be asked about.
68. Employee's priorities have changed from the last survey. This year, access to training and development of job skills is the most important priority, and competitive wages and benefits is the least important. The opposite was true in the 2019 survey. The second most important priority is productive communication and feedback from supervisors, followed by clear understanding of expectations and contributions to the city, and cooperation with other employees in work groups taking 4th place.
69. Public Works made up 21% of survey results, Fire made up 13%, Police made up 24%, Administration, Finance, and Community Development made up 20% and Parks and Recreation and River Oaks made up 8%. 14% of respondents preferred not to identify their department.
70. 23 employees made other comments for the City. Many employees reemphasized comments made earlier in the survey about concerns in the police department such as excessive training, favoritism of SWAT, and concerns about leadership. Others requested better communication, higher pay for part time fire, more IT personnel, better health insurance, and shared concerns that there is a skill gap between full time and seasonal employees. Employees also want their opinions and ideas to be listened to more. One employee expressed an idea to have a concert for employees to raise money for children's hospitals.

Section 10: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Executive Summary:

The final section is a new addition to the survey this year. In this section, employees were asked two questions about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the City. Overall, employees do find the City to be inclusive. While some employees had ideas on how to increase diversity, some also felt that there should be no internal efforts to increase diversity.

Detailed Summary:

71. When asked about the statement that the City is inclusive, 73% of employees agreed and 9% disagreed. A large 18% responded that they don't know.
72. The final question is also a new question. When asked if they have ideas on how to increase diversity, 21 employees responded. Of those responses, 14 of them expressed that there should not be efforts to increase diversity, but rather that the City should focus on hiring the best candidate, regardless of their attributes . Ideas on how to increase diversity included diversifying housing stock in the City, creating mentorship and internship programs, advertising job openings on diversity job sites and/or in the metro, City recognition of minority holidays, more recruitment efforts, and putting high quality effort into creating a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan.

City Council Action Request

3J

Meeting Date	1/22/2022
Department	Administration
Agenda Category	Agenda Item
Title	Key Takeaways
Staff Recommendation	
Budget Implication	N/A
Attachments	