



COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016
TRAINING ROOM - 5:00 PM

January 8, 2025

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Roll Call
- 3 Agenda Item
 - A 2025 Legislative Agenda



City Council Action Request

3.A.

Meeting Date 1/8/2025

Department Administration

Agenda Category Action Item

Title 2025 Legislative Agenda

Staff Recommendation Review the 2025 Legislative Agenda

Budget Implication N/A

Attachments

1.	2025 Legislative Agenda (Pages)_FINAL
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Legislative Agenda

City of Cottage Grove, MN
Solutions for a Safe, Healthy and Prosperous Community

Top Legislative Priority

County 19A & 100th Street Realignment Project

Priority

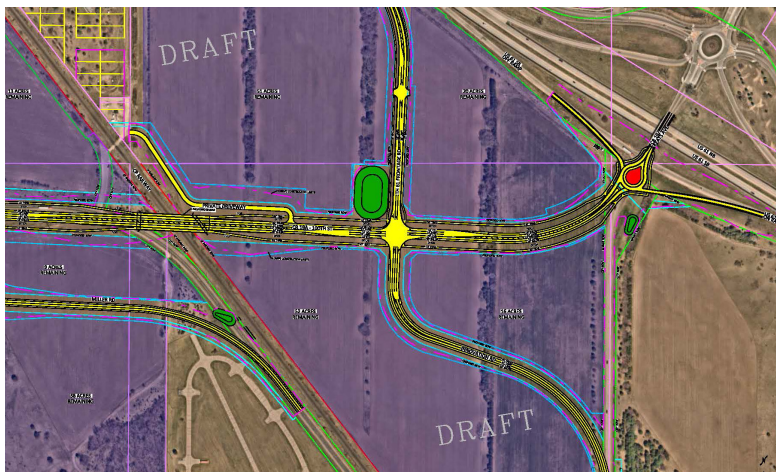
County 19A & 100th Street Realignment Project – Bonding Request of \$22.5 million

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove fully supports any efforts to fund the future 100th Street arterial roadway. The city and Washington County request **\$22.5 million** in state funds for design, right-of-way acquisition and construction of the arterial roadway and adjacent roadways.

Relevant Information

- In partnership with Washington County, a need was identified for a new arterial route to support 2,000 acres of planned development to help balance the regional traffic patterns to U.S. Hwy 61.
- A new railway grade separation included in the project will efficiently accommodate growth in freight traffic associated with the rapidly growing industrial area.
- The project will be transformative for the southeast metro as it improves safety and mobility and creates economic opportunity in the area.
- Washington County and Cottage Grove have partnered on preliminary design, right-of-way, environmental review, and utility studies, and have invested over \$1.3 million in local funds to date.
- This initiative is supported by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.
- If the state funds are not provided, federal and state grants funds that have already been awarded may have to be returned and the project will be delayed.
- The total estimated project cost is approximately \$47 million. (County funds: \$6 million, city funds: \$4.9 million, State of Minnesota: \$22.5 million, Federal and State Grants: \$13.6 million.
- The Cottage Grove Business Park is currently only served by one feasible interchange: Highway 61 at Jamaica Avenue, which is fully built out with a two-lane, six-leg roundabout that receives a significant amount of traffic.
- The project will include construction of a bridge over the CPKC Railway, which is estimated to cost \$11 million.
- Completing this extension in the next five years will be critical to relieving stress along Jamaica Avenue.



Top Legislative Priority

2007 Consent Order Funding for Permanent Operations and Management of PFAS Treatment

Priority

In May of 2024, communities in the East Metro were informed that all 3M Settlement Funds would be fully committed within two years. This would include significantly less operations and maintenance (O&M) funding for PFAS treatment. The Conceptual Drinking Water Supply Plan (CDWSP) originally included 20 years of O&M funding; this has been reduced to an estimated 5 years. Once funding through the 3M Settlement is depleted, a transition will take place back to the 2007 Consent Order to cover O&M costs as cited by the co-trustees.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove requests that a clearly defined process to transition O&M costs for PFAS Treatment back to the 2007 Consent Order be determined by May 31, 2025. If there is any gap in O&M funding, it will result in a significant financial burden to our residents, which will require years of planning to be able to fund locally.

Relevant Information

- Once both permanent PFAS treatment plants are operational in Cottage Grove, annual O&M costs, including annualized media replacement expenses, could exceed \$2 million.
- The annual Water Utility Fund budget for Cottage Grove is only \$2.8 million.
- If Cottage Grove is required to fund O&M costs for any amount of time, this could only be covered by an aggressive rate increase for water to our residents.
- Communities in the East Metro with a known source of PFAS contamination have received ongoing commitments that treatment costs will be covered by the 3M Settlement or 2007 Consent Order. It is critical that a clear path for this funding be finalized so those commitments can be upheld.



Low Zone Water Treatment Plant



Intermediate Zone Treatment Plant

Top Legislative Priority

Funding for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Aid

Priority

Provide funding for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) aid for ambulance services.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports state legislation to provide EMS aid to ambulance services including metro municipally operated ambulance services. Many ambulance services, including Cottage Grove Fire/EMS have operating deficits, primary due to Medicare reimbursement shortfalls.

Relevant Information

- Minnesota passed one-time EMS aid in 2024, however, community-operated metro services such as Cottage Grove were excluded from the aid.
- Cottage Grove recaptures as low as 26 percent of operating costs through EMS billing.
- Cottage Grove has had an annual EMS operating deficits since 2019 often exceeding \$100,000 annually.



Top Legislative Priority

Paid Family Leave (Minnesota Chapter 268B – 2024 Minnesota Statutes)

Priority

Exempt local units of government from the law if they have a self-funded leave program similar to the program outlined in the law.

Legislative Direction

Provide an exemption to local units of government. Most cities have paid leave programs that are self-funded and do not require the employee and/or employer to pay in to the State program. These are real payroll deductions that all employees will have to pay, thus reducing their take-home pay. The amount of employees paying the payroll tax as proposed versus the number of employees receiving the payment benefits is unbalanced.

Based on the estimated 0.88% tax per actuarial and consulting firm Milliman, in 2026, the city will pay \$105,000 in payroll taxes and city employees will pay \$105,000 in payroll taxes.

If cities are not exempted, allow cities to restrict use of paid time off if MN Paid Leave payments are received by the employee. It is plausible that an employee could receive 20 weeks of leave per year under the law and then come back to work and use their accrued paid time off. This puts a tremendous burden on the employer, especially when staffing minimums need to be maintained.

Relevant Information

Most cities, including Cottage Grove, have generous policies regarding paid leave and FMLA. These mandates at times conflict not only with each other but also existing federal and state leave laws, making implementation challenging. For most cities, these mandates are in addition to existing generous sick leave policies local governments already offer to their employees as part of key attraction and retention strategies.



Agenda

Administration

Cottage Grove is committed to excellence in the delivery of public services to community residents, businesses and property owners. The city operates with transparency and cost-efficient communication while ensuring businesses operate safely and to the highest standards, with a need to focus on:

- Newspaper Notification Requirement
- Licensure of Massage Therapists
- Continued Health Insurance for Duty Disabled Peace Officers and Firefighters

Parks and Recreation

Cottage Grove has the vision of giving its residents the best recreational opportunities in the state by focusing on:

- Future State/County Recreational Trail Connection
- Park Dedication

Community Development

Cottage Grove continues to experience residential, commercial and industrial growth, creating a need for legislative action regarding:

- Redevelopment
- Housing

Economic Development

Cottage Grove is a well-balanced city where business adds to the quality of life for all who live, work, shop and play. We focus on:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Flexibility
- Business Expansion
- Workforce Readiness
- Childcare Programs

Transportation

Due to rapid yet measured growth, Cottage Grove is focusing on the following areas:

- Red Rock Corridor
- Street Improvement Districts
- Lights on Highway 61
- Road and Bridge Funding



Agenda

Water Quality and Sustainability

Cottage Grove remains committed to delivering water that meets state guidelines and producing a long-term plan to enhance resource sustainability while meeting community needs by focusing on:

- Private Well Drilling Restriction Authority
- Groundwater and Well Monitoring
- Impaired Water
- Water Conservation
- Stormwater and Wastewater

Finance

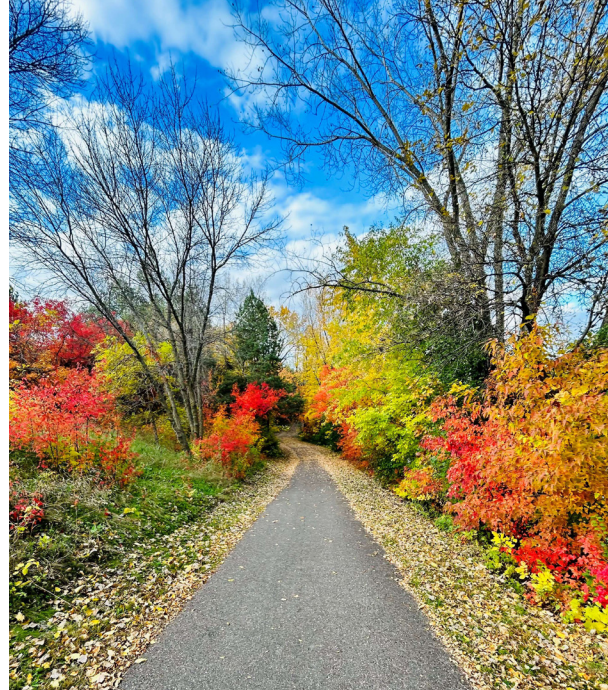
Cottage Grove is committed to maximizing citizen engagement in the budgeting process, as well as maintaining transparency and responsible stewardship of our citizens' tax dollars by focusing on:

- Office of the State Auditor (OSA) TIF
- Restrictions on Local Government Budgets
- Sales Tax on Local Government Purchases

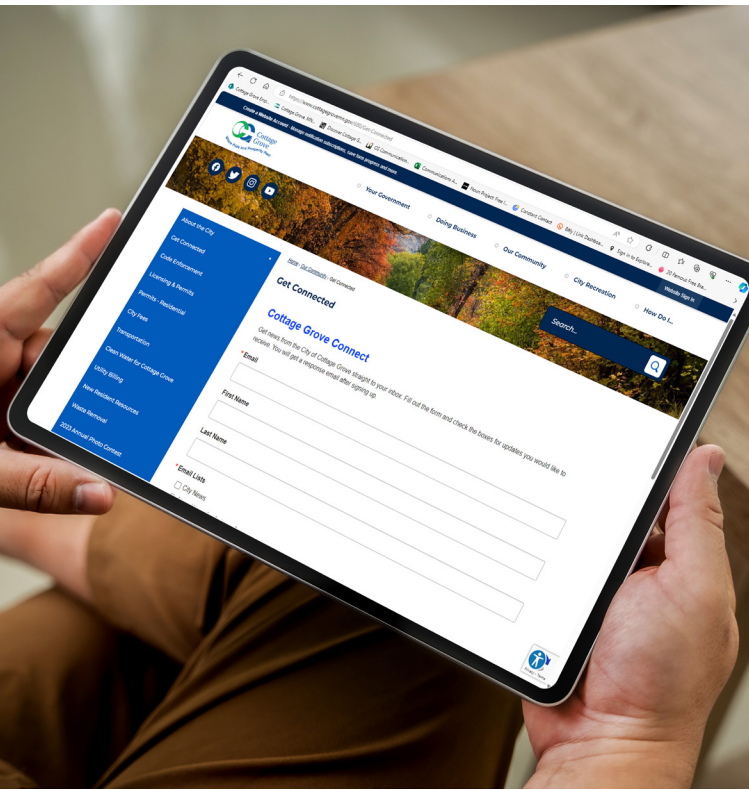
Public Safety

Cottage Grove Public Safety remains committed to protecting the city and its citizens by focusing on:

- Mental Health Response Act
- Officer Wellness
- K-12 Threat Assessments
- Recruitment and Retention Needs
- Law Enforcement Training Funding
- Fleeing Vehicles
- Permit to Purchase Fees
- Paid Health Insurance For Law Enforcement Retirees
- Body Worn Camera Redaction
- Copper Wire Theft
- Single Way Out (Single Stairway) in Apartments
- Requirement that MCPA, MSA, MPPOA Appoint Representatives to Post Board
- EMS Delivery and Sustainability Task Force



Administration



Newspaper Notification Requirement

Priority

Replace the requirement of a local newspaper notification with electronic notices on the city website and other social media platforms.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove requests the state repeal the newspaper notification requirement due to the costs for municipalities, the decline of local newspapers, and the increase and proliferation of technology information tools.

Licensure of Massage Therapists

Priority

Seek to establish a state requirement for licensure of massage therapists.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove requests the implementation of a statewide licensing system for massage therapists, ensuring minimum competency requirements are successfully met.

Continued Health Insurance for Duty Disabled Peace Officers and Firefighters

Priority

State funding to assist local governments in claims.

Legislative Direction

The City of Cottage Grove faces a huge liability if this program is not fully funded by the State. Previously, the City of Cottage Grove has submitted \$76,576.92 in claims.



Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator
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Parks and Recreation

Future State/County Recreational Trail Connection

Priority

Secure funding for a trail connecting Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park to Point Douglas Regional Trail/Park.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports the planning, design, and future funding of a Highway 61 Trailway connection between Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and Point Douglas Regional Trail/Park.

Relevant Information

A trail along Highway 61 from Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park to Point Douglas Regional Trail/Park would be a unique recreational experience for the region, state and outstate visitors. Highway 61 is both historic and scenic but has no recreational trail access. The trailway would connect Cottage Grove's Ravine Lake to the confluence of the Mississippi and St Croix rivers as well as historic Hastings downtown via the Highway 61 arch bridge trail.



Park Dedication

Priority

Address the need for cities to require park dedication fees and/or land without the requirement that land be subdivided.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports preserving existing city authority to require parkland dedication and park dedication fees and amend Minn. Stat. § 462.358 to allow all cities the option to require a reasonable portion of land or park dedication fee on new housing units and new commercial and industrial development without the requirement that land be subdivided.

Relevant Information

For decades, Minnesota cities have been permitted in Minnesota Law Chapter 462 to adopt ordinances that require a reasonable portion of land be dedicated to the public, or to impose a dedication fee on new housing units and new commercial and industrial development in a city for parks. As a result, cities across the state have been able to create parkland that provides intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to cities and their residents, which enhances property values, increases municipal revenue, and supports local economic development.



Community Development



Redevelopment

Priority

Begin implementation of redevelopment plans to reinvigorate a tax base that is not fulfilling its potential.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports the growth of current programs that help facilitate redevelopment and reinvestment in our residential, commercial and industrial sectors.

Relevant Information

- Cottage Grove supports funding and technical support for programs that provide support for property owners for weatherization and energy efficiency improvements, including programs available for local governments to support existing and naturally occurring affordable housing stock.
- Cottage Grove supports the administrative fine authority that allows cities to issue administrative fines for regulatory ordinances including building codes, zoning codes, and nuisance ordinances.



Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director
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Community Development

Housing

Priority

Diversify the city's housing stock to ensure it is serving all demographic and socio-economic communities and recognizing certain barriers to housing disparity impact certain members of our community, Cottage Grove supports programs that reduce barriers to fair housing and equal opportunity.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports State programs that allow municipalities to facilitate full-spectrum housing growth and rehabilitate older housing stock for residents in all stages of life.

Relevant Information

- Consider establishing a program to address immediate needs throughout the year to provide a match for new or existing city-supported affordable housing projects. This could include matching funds, issued on a timeline that is consistent with local budgeting processes, for local revenues allocated to a local affordable housing trust fund.
- Cottage Grove supports providing funding and financing tools to cities to create affordable senior housing for our aging population.



Economic Development

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Flexibility

Priority

Increased flexibility in use of TIF for development and redevelopment.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports financing, regulatory tools, and increased flexibility in the use of TIF to support a broader range of development and redevelopment projects including transit-oriented development (TOD).

Relevant Information

Increased TIF flexibility could be used to encourage green job development and related innovation, for the expansion of transit services for potential transit-oriented projects TOD and by maintaining existing municipal authority to establish SSD.

Business Expansion

Priority

Cottage Grove continues to support investments in the MIF and JCF funds to increase capital investment and create good paying jobs.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports existing and future state programs to help businesses thrive and expand.

Relevant Information

Continue to fund sustainable funding programs supporting job creation including Minnesota Investment (MIF) and Job Creation Funds (JCF) as well as grants for site cleanup and allowing opportunities for communities to develop, create infrastructure, and help businesses expand.



Economic Development

Workforce Readiness

Priority

Expand investments in workforce readiness programs.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports increased funding for the Job Skills Partnership, youth employment programs and other workforce training programs, investments in programs that address the gender wage gap, and a payroll tax credit for job training programs that invest in employees.

Relevant Information

The City of Cottage Grove will work with the public and private sectors to address workforce readiness to include removing barriers to education access, addressing racial disparities in achievement and employment gaps, addressing the occupational gender gap, and support training and jobs for people with disabilities.

Childcare Programs

Priority

Cottage Grove supports legislative changes to increase investment in more affordable childcare programs.

Legislative Direction

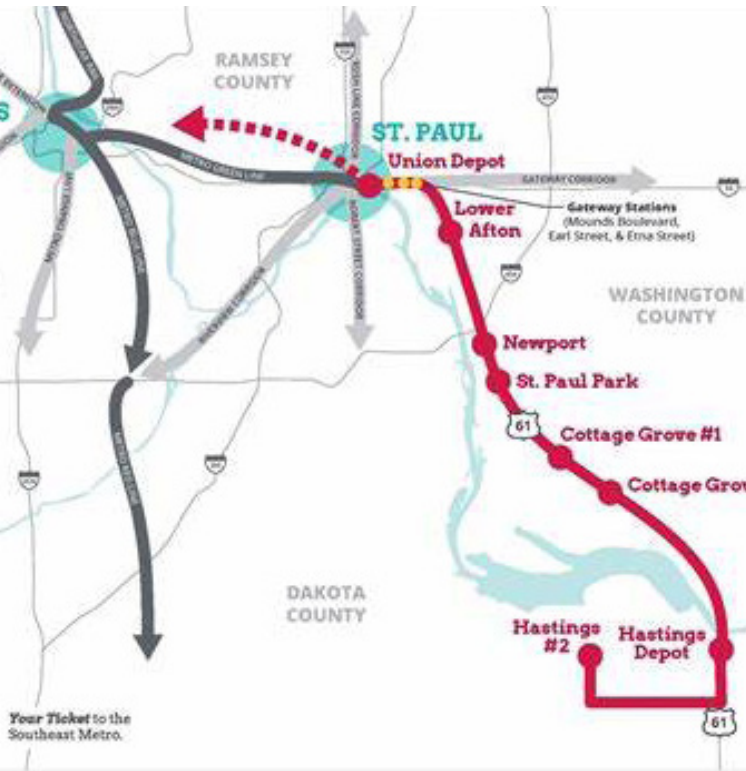
Cottage Grove supports the continued investment in programs that provide direct financial incentives and grants to childcare providers.

Relevant Information

Access to affordable childcare supports working families and allows parents to enter or remain in the workforce. Infant care at a childcare center in 2024 is \$20,165 the fourth highest in the country. Undergraduate resident tuition at UMN is \$15,148. A family making Minnesota’s median household income of \$87,791 spends more than 23% of their earnings on childcare. The National guidelines suggest childcare should cost about 7% of a family’s annual income.



Transportation



Red Rock Corridor

Priority

Give businesses the ability to attract talent from the surrounding community through transportation into Cottage Grove.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports implementation of the Red Rock Corridor Bus Rapid Transit.

Relevant Information

- The Metropolitan Council projects the southeast metro will grow by at least 100,000 people over the next 20 years while 94% of the jobs will stay in Minneapolis/St. Paul.
- Cottage Grove businesses have indicated in multiple Business Retention and Expansion interviews that they are having a hard time attracting talent without a reliable transportation network into the city.
- The Red Rock Corridor is a 20-mile stretch serving the southeast metro, which is part of the National Highway and National Scenic Byway systems.
- Communities along the corridor have conducted a thorough investigation of transit needs and produced a phased approach with a near-term need for new local bus service and a long-term plan for bus rapid transit (including high frequency service, robust stations and enhanced parking facilities).



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Transportation

Street Improvement Districts

Priority

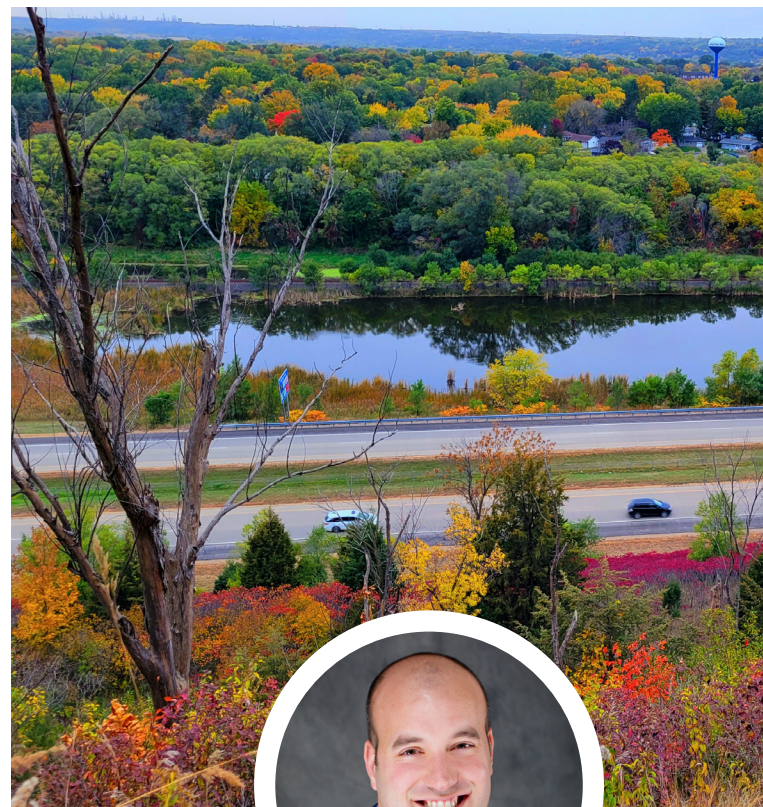
Address the limited funding mechanisms for maintaining aging streets.

Legislative Direction

- Cottage Grove supports the authority of local units of government to establish street improvement districts, allowing cities in developed/developing areas to fund reconstruction and maintenance.
- Cottage Grove also supports changes to special assessment laws to make assessing state-owned property a more predictable process regarding the payment of assessments.

Relevant Information

- Funding sources for local transportation projects are limited to the use of Municipal State Aid, property taxes and special assessments.
- The street improvement district is designed to allow cities to create a district(s) where fees will be raised on all properties in the district and must be spent within specific boundaries.
- The city supports the modification of state laws to clarify the definition of “benefits received” as it relates to special assessments.



Transportation

Lights on Highway 61

Priority

Acquire \$4 million for funding corridor lighting along Highway 61 from the interchange at Washington County State Aid Highway 22 to the intersection with Trunk Highway 95.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove fully supports any efforts to fund highway lighting and increased safety on an increasingly busy stretch of highway, serving one of the fastest growing areas of the state.

Relevant Information

- The only interchange lighting that exists is at 80th Street South, Jamaica Avenue South and County State-Aid Highway 19 (Innovation Road South).
- There is no lighting from County State-Aid Highway 19 to Trunk Highway 95 and there are several unrestricted local access intersections present.

Road and Bridge Funding

Priority

Cottage Grove supports the use of dedicated taxes and fees to fund transportation infrastructure.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports state funding to assist cities over-burdened by cost participation responsibilities from improvement projects on state or county highways.

Relevant Information

- Cities lack adequate tools and resources for the maintenance and improvement of municipal street systems, with resources restricted to property taxes and special assessments. It is imperative that alternative revenue generating authority be granted to municipalities and that state resources be made available for this purpose to aid local communities and relieve the burden on the property tax system.
- Municipal State Aid Funding provides an important but limited revenue source that assists eligible cities with street infrastructure needs and is limited to twenty percent of a city's street system.



Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director
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Water Quality and Sustainability

Private Well Drilling Restriction Authority

Priority

Continue to allow local control over private well drilling in municipal utility service boundaries.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports current law that authorizes cities to regulate and prohibit the placement of private wells within municipal utility service boundaries and opposes any attempt to remove or alter that authority. Cottage Grove supports funding that can be used to seal private wells.

Relevant Information

Municipal water suppliers follow strict requirements related to testing and water quality, ensuring safe and compliant drinking water for all users. Abandoned wells pose a serious risk to groundwater aquifers, however the cost of sealing those wells continues to increase each year. Ongoing funding to assist in sealing private wells is critical to protect this precious resource.

Groundwater and Well Monitoring

Priority

To support water quality and well monitoring efforts in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Act.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove strongly encourages continued funding of grant money through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to assist communities in implementing their wellhead protection plans (specifically drilling additional sentinel wells to monitor aquifer levels and contamination plumes).

Relevant Information

- Cottage Grove supports additional funding for PFAS biomonitoring in the area.
- The city supports working with MDH on the continuous monitoring of city groundwater and wells for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), having completed part one of our Wellhead Protection Plan in August 2015 and part two in March 2017.



Water Quality and Sustainability

Impaired Water

Priority

Support continued metropolitan development while protecting all water resources.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports continued funding to improve the region's ability to respond to developmental market demands including, but not exclusive to, surface water impairment assessments, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development and stormwater or wastewater construction grants.

Relevant Information

- Cottage Grove supports and values initiatives aimed at protecting water resources at the municipal, county, state and federal levels, which includes the Clean Water Act.
- Cottage Grove opposes entity-specific exemptions from fees because every type of property is required to pay stormwater fees.

Water Conservation

Priority

Contribute to a statewide effort to promote water conservation while providing municipal autonomy relative to individual communities.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation promoting aquifer recharge, change in water use practices, development of minimum irrigation standards, applying technology for smart water use, additional scientific data collection and exploring water reuse options at contaminated sites that rely on water extraction or pollution containment.

Relevant Information

- A single “catch-all” option should not be applied to a region or sub-region.
- The city opposes funding of any implementation cost involved with the DNR North & East Metro Groundwater Management Area if it does not directly result in supplying water to the City of Cottage Grove and its residents.



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Water Quality and Sustainability

Stormwater and Wastewater

Priority

Ensure attempts to address water supply sustainability take all water users (and variables) into account, including municipalities, industry, private wells, agriculture and contamination containment.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports the removal of barriers to wastewater and stormwater re-use and advocates for improved interagency coordination on all levels, including on the state level.

Relevant Information

Water regulation is complex and compartmentalized, requiring strategies to cross agency jurisdictions through improved coordination and cooperation.



Office of the State Auditor (OSA) TIF

Priority

A reasonable time frame for tax increment financing (TIF) non-compliance violations should be established. Encourage the State Auditor to continue to work toward a more efficient and streamlined reporting process.

Legislative Direction

A reasonable time frame for TIF non-compliance should be established. The legislature should reasonably restrict the OSA's ability to issue noncompliance notices to the six-year period prior to the notice's issuance date. The legislature should also require the OSA to conduct any audits on decertified districts within one year of decertification.

Relevant Information

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) has the authority to issue noncompliance notices for every existing tax increment financing (TIF) district in the state for alleged violations of the TIF laws. This authority extends retroactively to the inception of the district. Accordingly, TIF authorities can receive noncompliance notices for alleged violations that occurred 20 or more years ago. Often, staff and record-keeping procedures have changed, and TIF authorities find it difficult to reconstruct the past to identify and remedy these situations. Similarly, the OSA claims the authority to audit TIF districts for up to 10 years after decertification, which requires cities to expend staff resources to maintain files and a working knowledge of old districts for an unreasonable period of time.

Restrictions on Local Government Budgets

Priority

Maintain city autonomy in deciding the appropriate level of local taxation and services.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove strongly opposes levy limits, reverse referenda, super majority requirements for levy, and valuation freezes, or other restrictions on local government budgeting and taxing processes.

Relevant Information

These types of restrictions undermine local budgeting and taxing processes, planned growth and the relationship between locally elected officials and their residents.



Brenda Malinowski, Finance Director
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Sales Tax on Local Government Purchases

Priority

Secure sales tax exemption for purchases of goods and services made by cities.

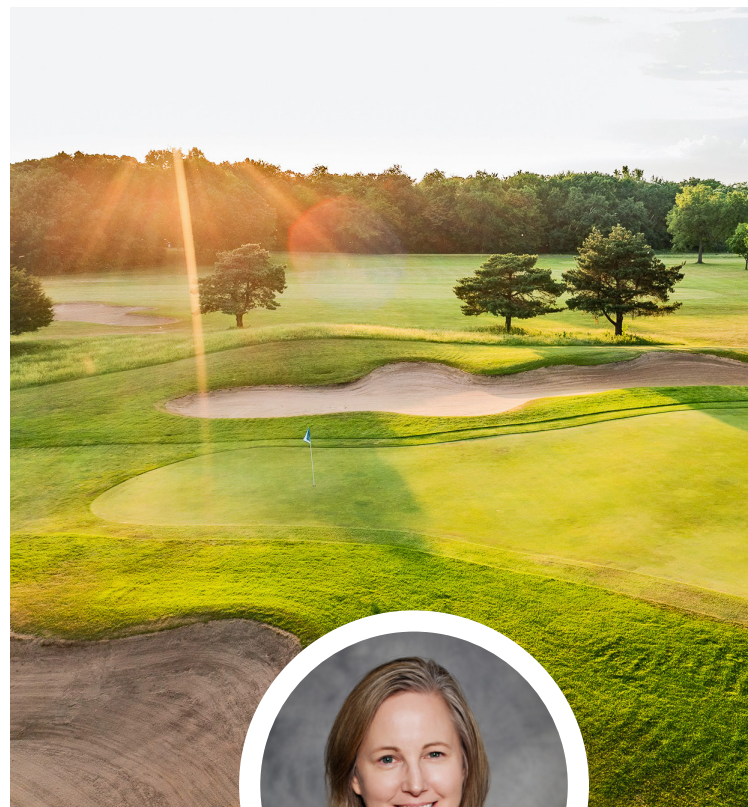
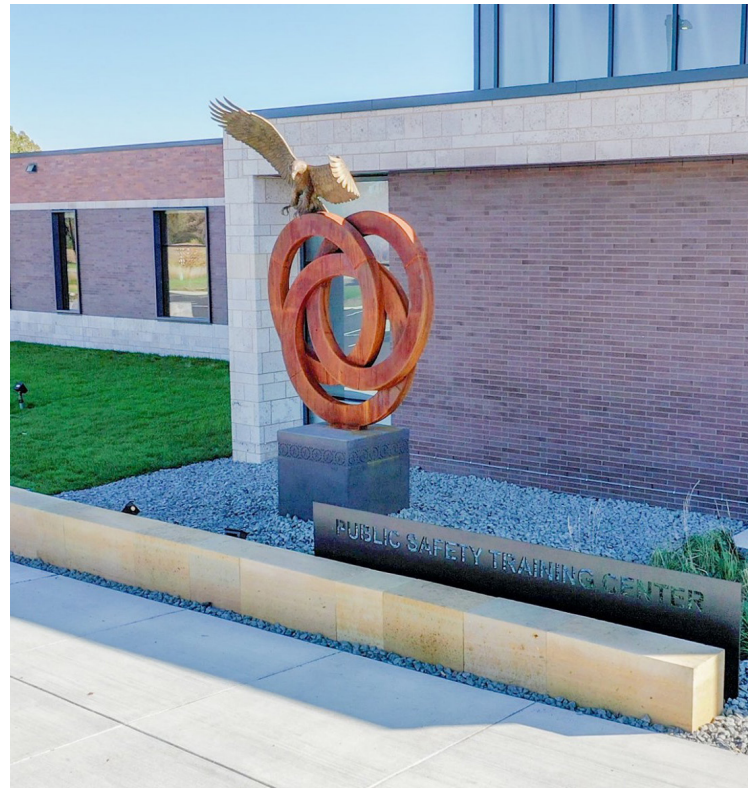
Legislative Direction

The local government sales tax exemption enacted in 2013 and expanded in 2014 does not apply to all city purchases. Some purchases for municipal enterprise operations, such as golf courses, are excluded from the exemption. In addition, in order to receive the sales tax exemption on construction materials under current law, cities must bid labor and materials separately and also designate a contractor to be a purchasing agent on behalf of the city.

Relevant Information

The existing Department of Revenue rules (Minn. Rule 8130.1200, subp. 3) are complex and the implementation can be so complicated that it can cost cities more money to implement than they will save on the tax exemption. Finally, although cities currently do not pay the motor vehicle sales tax on marked police vehicles or firefighting vehicles, other city vehicles are not exempt from the motor vehicle sales tax.

- The exemption should apply to all purchases made by local units of government.
- The process to receive the exemption for construction materials used in local government projects should be simplified or added to the refund process now available for local government public safety facilities.
- The exemption should be extended to all local government purchases that would otherwise be subject to the motor vehicle sales tax in Minn. Stat. ch. 297B.



Mental Health Response Act

Priority

Fund a multi-jurisdictional co-responder program.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation to fund multi-jurisdictional co-responder programs or embedded social workers. Additionally, Cottage Grove supports making changes to current policy and practices to better share information amongst first responders, medical professionals and human services representatives.

Relevant Information

The goal is to improve the response to, and outcomes of, mental health calls with request for service.

Officer Wellness

Priority

Understand and deal with the effects of common stressors facing our law enforcement professionals.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation to provide a permanent funding source for the law that passed in 2023. It is critical to find a way to fund the treatment for mental health injuries as well as continuing to expand the network of providers who are training to do this vitally important work.

Relevant Information

This would fund support groups, mental health checks and therapy, suicide prevention, awareness and family support.



Pete Koerner, Director of Public Safety
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Public Safety

K-12 Threat Assessments

Priority

Support mandated K-12 threat assessments teams.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation requiring school districts to establish a team of trained subject matter experts to examine and address school safety issues based on the national best practice known as behavioral threat assessment.

Relevant Information

- This legislation would move our state beyond physical school safety measures, such as infrastructure improvement grants, passed by the Legislature in 2018.
- Threat assessment is an evidence-based way to identify, assess and manage threatening situations.
- Threat assessment, when properly done, is considered a standard-of-care/best practice by numerous organizations and advocacy groups including the U.S. Department of Education, National Association of School Psychologists and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- K-12 threat assessment teams and legislation have been officially supported by the MN Chiefs of Police Association.

Recruitment and Retention Needs

Priority

Support funding for state-wide recruitment and retention efforts.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports a multi-faceted approach with recruitment and retention efforts including grants for retention bonuses and scholarship opportunities.

Relevant Information

Agencies across our state are having difficulty recruiting and retaining officers for a variety of reasons. The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) supports a multi-faceted approach to helping agencies of all sizes recruit and retain officers. This should include, but is not limited to, a grant program for bonuses, bringing back part-time officer licensure for small agencies and scholarship programs with our higher education partners. Any funding for this use should reflect different needs for small, medium and large agencies alike.



Law Enforcement Training Funding

Priority

Continue to fund training mandated by the MN Police Officer Standards and Training Board (MN POST Board).

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports continuing the MN POST Board training reimbursement allocation to local agencies, which began in 2018.

Relevant Information

The Peace Officer Training Fund is for mandated training in the areas of recognizing and valuing diversity and cultural differences, conflict management and mediation, crisis intervention and mental illness crises.

Fleeing Vehicles

Priority

Increased penalties for fleeing in a motor vehicle and modification of tracking devices used on fleeing vehicles.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation to stiffen penalties for fleeing in a motor vehicle and modify the law governing the use of tracking devices on fleeing vehicles.

Relevant Information

Fleeing is becoming a significant concern in law enforcement. The number of offenders that now flee has gone up exponentially. Offenders understand that the majority of the time police officers won't chase them because the risk is not worth it. They also know that if officers do chase them and they are caught the consequences are non-existent compared to the risk they have exposed to our community and law enforcement officers too. Officers and organizations continue to battle the decision to pursue fleeing vehicles. Additionally, a law was passed in 2022 allowing tracking devices to be used on stolen vehicles however the law.



Public Safety

Permit to Purchase Fees

Priority

Allow agencies to charge a reasonable fee for processing a permit to purchase.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports allowing local municipal police departments to charge a reasonable fee for processing a permit to purchase application.

Relevant Information

Currently Minnesota Statute § 624.7131 Subd 3. states there shall be no charge for forms, reports, investigations, notifications, waivers or any other act performed, or materials provided by a government employee or agency in connection with application for or issuance of a transferee permit. The permits and their renewal shall be granted free of charge.

Paid Health Insurance for Law Enforcement Retirees

Priority

Support paid health insurance for law enforcement retirees.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports a legislative appropriation that would provide paid health care for licensed police officers who retire at 55 years old and have 10 years of consecutive service with a Minnesota city, county or tribal government.

Relevant Information

To help in addressing the recruitment and retention challenges, at age 55 or any time thereafter, each month the employer shall pay the full employer contribution toward health and dental insurance coverage for employees who have 10 years of service or more. It shall also cover the employee's dependents until the employee reaches age 65. The employer shall be reimbursed from the State of Minnesota for these costs.



Body Worn Camera Redaction

Priority

Support reducing body worn camera redaction requirements in areas visible to the public.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports changing current law to allow for greater discretion by the Chief Law Enforcement Officer (CLEO) or their designee to release data without redaction in instances where any member of the public may record the same footage with their own device.

Relevant Information

Current law allows for CLEO's to release data to dispel rumors or other information, but we cannot do so without complying with redaction. This will allow the public more transparency, especially in certain high-profile cases.

Copper Wire Theft

Priority

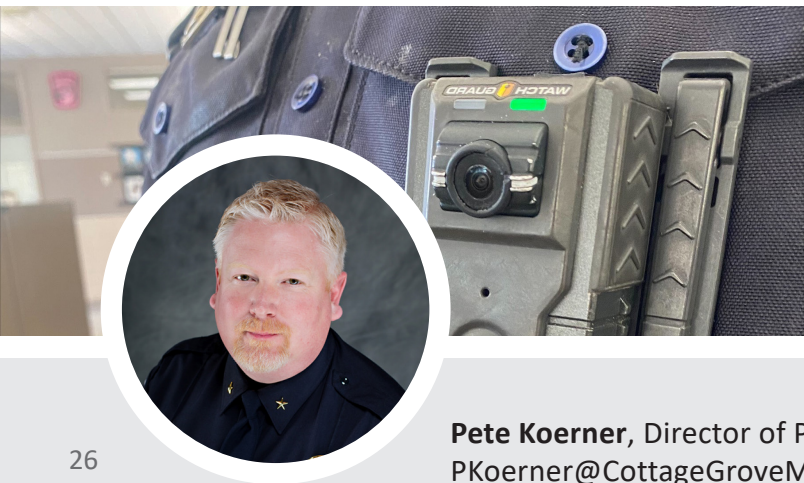
Address the growing and costly issue of copper wire theft from street lighting and traffic signal systems.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports efforts to curtail the theft of copper wires from public infrastructure and private property. Cottage Grove supports statutory changes that would require appropriate controls on the purchase and sale of scrap copper and other metals. Cottage Grove also supports increasing penalties for copper wire and other metal theft.

Relevant Information

Wire theft from streetlights, other public infrastructure, and private property negatively impacts communities, by reducing public safety for all transportation modes. These thefts also cost cities hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to replace and repair damaged infrastructure. Even when a conviction is reached related to theft, restitution only covers a small portion of the repair costs.



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Public Safety

Single Way Out (Single Stairway) in Apartments

Priority

Oppose single way out (single stairway) in apartments.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove opposes single way out (single stairways) in apartments amendment to the Minnesota State Building Code.

- The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's Code Advisory Council has approved single way out in apartments up to four stories.
- The Minnesota Legislature implemented a working group to study the issue due to safety concerns.

Relevant Information

- Fire staffing throughout Minnesota and especially in Metro suburbs does not provide adequate response to allow single-way out stairwells in apartment buildings.
- If a fire obstructs one of the stairwells, residents only exit will be a window as high as four stories.
- Firefighters must operate in the same stairwell as the evacuating residents which may expose victims to lethal heat and smoke.
- The single-way out amendments focus on affordable housing options however affordable housing residents are at a higher risk to experience fires and fire related injuries and death.

Requirement that MCPA, MSA, MPPOA Appoint Representatives to POST Board

Priority

At least one of the two Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police, and Peace Officer positions on the POST board shall be appointed by the MN Sheriff, MN Chiefs, and MPPOA.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports a legislative that positions on the POST board should include Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police and Peace Officer positions.

Relevant Information

The current process, by which all these positions are appointed by the Governor, has the potential of creating an unbalanced representation of views on the board. The purpose of this proposal is to ensure the voices of those respective groups are represented on the board. Having the associations have at least one of the picks allotted to the positions would ensure the voices from these groups are represented on the board, which would hopefully translate into better policy and rule-making decisions by the board.





EMS Delivery and Sustainability Task Force

Priority

Support the work of the EMS Delivery and Sustainability Task Force.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove calls for the legislature and Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to implement policies that would:

- Allow local units of government to designate which ambulance service provider(s) may serve their communities and to determine the appropriate level of service.
- Provide local units of government with tools and authority to ensure transparency of EMS providers.
- Uncouple the professional standards overview role of the Office of EMS from service area determinations.
- Include representatives of municipalities on the Office of EMS' EMS Advisory Council.
- Provide authority for the Office of EMS to set professional standards.
- Require the Office of EMS to submit biennial reports on EMS service delivery data points for each local unit of government to appropriate legislative committees.

Relevant Information

- Local units of government have little to no ability to determine who provides ambulance services in their community.
- The Office of EMS (formally the MN EMSRB) has no operational standards to ensure adequate coverage or service level.
- There has been a lack of transparency to local units of government from EMS providers.

