

- The desire for high-quality residential, commercial, and industrial development that advances the overall desired character of the Village.
- The need for a downtown center in the Village.

## F. Key Planning Issues and Opportunities

The need for a *Comprehensive Plan* for the Village of Cottage Grove is dictated in part by the challenge of balancing future population growth, land development activity, traffic, and the need to guide and accommodate anticipated growth in a manner that forwards the long-term objectives of the community. In addition to this *Comprehensive Plan*, detailed local plans are the essential planning component of long-range *Plan* implementation. When used in combination with development regulations, public investments, and coordinated cross-jurisdictional planning efforts, local comprehensive plans are very effective in achieving a future which best fulfills the desires of the community and the region as a whole.

Within the planning area, key planning issues and challenges revolve around the issue of how, when, and where new development is approved. This concern necessarily involves issues of the type and quality of development; required public utilities, transportation, and recreation facilities; and annexation. Community consensus on these issues is essential in maintaining the highest possible quality of life at the lowest possible cost of living. Intergovernmental consensus on these issues is becoming an increasingly important component of local plan implementation.

In all, the demographic and economic statistics described in this chapter of the *Plan* reflect a community undergoing rapid population growth. Cottage Grove's growth has been driven largely by employment growth throughout Dane County. Reflective of this growth, many people who live in Cottage Grove commute to work in Madison and other employment centers. The planning area will continue to experience increased growth pressure as the expanding central urban area of Dane County gets closer. ~~With unplanned growth, the Village could again experience a very high rate of new residential development, and could become more of a bedroom community than a relatively independent urban center.~~ As of 2009, Cottage Grove had the lowest ratio of local jobs per employed resident and the highest percentage of residents who commute outside their home municipality among comparable Dane County communities. These numbers suggest the Village is in danger of becoming a bedroom community as opposed to an independent urban center. This trend is both economically and environmentally unsustainable. Specifically, the Village should continue to work hard to attract and retain high quality offices, services, industries and jobs particularly to the established Commerce Park and to the north of the I-94/CTH N interchange. The Village should attempt to ensure that the historic balance between owner-occupied (approximately 60-65 percent) and rental housing (approximately 35-40 percent) remains stable.

The Village aims to ensure that the pace of nonresidential tax base keeps pace with, or preferably, exceeds residential development. If Cottage Grove and the planning area continue in an extended period of commuter-oriented development, the typical pattern will be for notably higher levels of demand for housing than for employment. Employment booms may, in fact, lag the boom in the commuter residential market by more than twenty years. As employment trends evolve, the planning area will first see expansions in the warehousing, wholesale, and storage sectors, followed by general industrial (assembly and fabrication), commercial, and office and research development. The office and research booms are not likely to peak within the planning area within the next ten years—while the residential boom is currently underway. Because of this lag effect, the Village must work hard to ensure that key long-term tax base sites and areas are reserved for high real estate value and salary level nonresidential uses, and not used for residential development or lower value non-residential uses.

Other critical issues that this *Plan* will address include:

- The need to ensure a top-quality appearance of development.
- The need for logical, efficient, complementary, and predictable land use patterns.

- The need to protect the broad range of environmental resources which contribute to the health and beauty of the area.
- The need for efficient transportation facilities and services which are closely coordinated with development patterns, uses, and site designs.
- The need to respond efficiently to market demand in a manner that complements the overall planning and development strategy—particularly in regard to office, commercial, and industrial sites which provide high levels of visibility, accessibility, and quality.
- The need to provide public facilities efficiently and effectively.
- The need to recognize the importance of intergovernmental coordination and to contribute positively and proactively to such efforts.
- The need to ensure efficient and predictable fiscal performance into the future.
- The need to implement the *Plan* recommendations so as to best respond to these general needs while balancing overall community objectives with the site specific desires of individuals and neighborhoods.

### **G. Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

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Each element of the *Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan* includes a set of goals and objectives. The goal setting process includes the identification of present and future problems, the determination of aspirations in the form of goals and objectives, and the identification of strategic issues and priorities among them.

Goals are broad statements that express general public priorities about how the Village should develop and redevelop over the next 20 years. The goals are formulated based on the identification of key issues, opportunities, and problems that affect the Village. Objectives are more specific than goals and are usually attainable through strategic planning and implementation activities. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.

Policies are rules and courses of action used to ensure *Plan* implementation—including the accomplishment of goals and objectives and turning planning maps and graphics into reality. Because policies often accomplish more than one objective, or a blend of goals and objectives, planning policies for Cottage Grove are presented as a separate section following the goals and objectives. For example, the Planning Commission should use these policies as it considers proposals to rezone property, review site plans, or issue conditional use permits. The policies also provide guidance to the Village as it revises development-oriented ordinances such as the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Official Map. Village staff can use these policies to develop Capital Improvement Plans. Finally, the private sector should be familiar with these policies so that it knows what the Village expects in terms of the location, timing, and quality of development.