



DANE COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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FROM: Majid Allan, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: County Board Ordinance Amendment 2024-OA-40: Town of Cottage Grove
Comprehensive Plan Amendment
DATE: April 30, 2025
CC: Todd Violante, Director of Planning & Development
Roger Lane, Zoning Administrator

This memo describes amendments to the Dane County Comprehensive Plan proposed by the Town of Cottage Grove. Town comprehensive plans are incorporated into the Dane County Comprehensive Plan under section 82.55 of the Dane County Code of Ordinances and help guide town and county decisions on zoning map amendments, conditional use permits, land division proposals, and other public / private land use proposals. To assist county officials in their decision making, the Planning Division prepares written information describing any proposed town plan amendments. Please direct any questions to me by email at allan.majid@danecounty.gov, or by phone at 608-267-2536.

I. SUMMARY

On January 20, 2025, the Town of Cottage Grove Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to the *Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan*. The Town requests that the Dane County Board of Supervisors adopt the updated *Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan* as an amendment to the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*. The plan is presented in two volumes: [Volume I: Conditions and Issues](#); and [Volume 2: Vision and Direction](#), with Volume 2 including the detailed policies covering the town's future development.

A few substantive changes were made to Volume 2, including changing the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) transfer ratio from 8:1 to 10:1 for development proposals within designated development areas. A number of changes are also made to the Town's commercial area policies, and to several maps and exhibits. See section IV on page 2, or [this memo](#) from the town's planner, Mark Roffers, for a more detailed summary of changes.

Pending any concerns or issues raised at the Zoning and Land Regulation Committee's public hearing, staff recommends adoption of OA #40.

II. BACKGROUND

- A. Ordinance and Plan Amended: If adopted, OA #40 would amend Chapter 82, Subchapter II of the Dane County Code of Ordinances to incorporate the updated 2024 *Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan* as part of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*. The complete text of the proposed amendment and other relevant information is available on the county's Legistar website, [here](#).

- B. *Action required:* The County Board and the County Executive must approve OA #40 for it to become effective. Town comprehensive plans are adopted as part of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan* under the Intergovernmental Cooperation Policies for Town Governments (pp. 77-78) of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*. The *Dane County Comprehensive Plan* is adopted under Chapter 82, Subchapter II, Dane County Code, s. 59.69, Wis. Stats, and s. 66.1001, Wis. Stats.
- C. Zoning and Land Regulation (ZLR) Committee review: The ZLR advises the County Board on proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. **The ZLR Committee has a public hearing on OA #40 at 6:30pm on May 27, 2025.**
- D. Sponsors: County Supervisors Peterson and Doolan sponsored and introduced OA #40 on February 21, 2025.

III. DESCRIPTION

- A. OA #40 would amend the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan* by incorporating amendments to the *Town of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan*, as adopted by the Town of Cottage Grove Board of Supervisors on January 20, 2025.

IV. ANALYSIS

- A. Comparison with current county-adopted town plan.

As noted in the summary, above, the town plan is presented in two volumes. Volume 1 “Conditions and Issues” includes 2 updates that represent changing circumstances since the 2022 update of the town plan. One update reflects the inter-municipal “Local Negotiated Agreement” addressing a variety of issues related to the proposed new landfill site in the township south of US 12/18 on a portion of the Yahara Hills golf course property.

The other Volume 1 update is to chapter 9 (Intergovernmental Cooperation) and outlines potential inconsistencies between the Village of McFarland’s Eastside Plan, and the Town of Cottage Grove plan. The update also points out that, “...the western part of McFarland’s planned development area is also within City of Madison expansion area, as agreed under the 2022 City-Town intergovernmental agreement. All of these factors present a confusing future land use picture for this area.”

The more substantive changes are to Volume 2 “Vision and Direction”, which lays out specific goals, objectives, and policies to guide the town’s future development. The most noteworthy changes are to the town’s Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), planned commercial development area, and residential development policies in areas close to the village of Cottage Grove.

TDR program changes

- Increases the density bonus incentive from 1:8 to 1:10 – i.e., for every density unit transferred from a property in the agricultural preservation area, 10 residential lots can be developed in a designated *Neighborhood Development* or *Agricultural Transition Area*.
- Clarifies which situations that do/do not qualify from the TDR program exemption for designated agricultural transition areas close to the Village of Cottage Grove. Properties within a designated development area that are also within ¼ mile of the Village boundary

may not be required to obtain a transferrable development right in order to develop at higher densities.

Commercial area changes

- Adds language to clarify the Town's expectations for developments within designated commercial development areas. This includes requiring more detailed soil studies for development in areas shown as having wetlands, wetland indicators, or soils with limited potential for on-site septic systems.
- Requires any business operating at night to minimize light pollution.
- Creates a limited amount of flexibility for commercial lots to be served by a holding tank if no other viable on-site waste treatment system were possible. Any such allowance would be subject to a number of requirements intended to ensure proper maintenance.

B. Impact on development potential at build out: The additional density bonus of the TDR program could result in a modest increase in potential development at full build out. Other changes in the plan have no net effect on development potential. Along the western edge of the Town, development is also subject to the town's [Intergovernmental Agreement with Madison](#). The Town has also expressed interest in establishing a boundary agreement with other neighboring municipalities (Sun Prairie and McFarland).

C. Consistency with other provisions of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*

- a. Housing: No significant conflicts found.
- b. Transportation: No significant conflicts found.
- c. Utilities and Community Facilities: No significant conflicts found.
- d. Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources: No significant conflicts found.
- e. Economic Development: No significant conflicts found.
- f. Land Use: No significant conflicts found.
- g. Intergovernmental Cooperation: No significant conflicts found.

V. COMMENTS BY OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OR STATE AGENCIES

A. No municipal, county, state, or federal agencies have commented on this amendment as of April 30, 2025.