



MEMO

MEMO DATE: February 28, 2020

MTG. DATE: MARCH 2, 2020

TO: Village of Cottage Grove Plan Commission

CC: Village of Cottage Grove Board of Trustees
Matt Giese – Village Administrator
Lisa Kalata – Village Clerk

FROM: [Erin Ruth, AICP – Village Planning Director](#)

RE: Housing Task Force

BACKGROUND

In the spring 2019 Village Board prioritization process ‘expanding housing options/affordable housing/residential growth’ was the 2nd highest rated priority indicating a very high level of interest on the part of the Board in investigating housing issues in the Village.

When faced with similar priorities several Dane County communities have formed housing committees or task forces to examine local housing conditions.

OVERVIEW

A number of sources have indicated a lack of workforce housing (housing that is affordable to a typical working household) in the Village, throughout Dane County, and beyond. In particular, UW-Madison professor Kurt Paulson prepared a study for the Dane County Housing Initiative ([link](#)) and another for the Wisconsin Realtors Association ([link](#)) documenting the shortage of affordable housing units in Dane County and Wisconsin. The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard reports this is an issue nation-wide ([link](#)).

In the past year both Professor Paulson and Olivia Parry, the Dane County planner who staffs the Dane County Housing Initiative, spoke to the Village Board or Plan Commission about the issue.

In addition, research conducted by staff during the Comprehensive Plan update revealed a relative lack of variety of housing units compared to other Dane County communities. This data can be found in the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan ([link](#)).



Given these various factors, the Village may wish to have a broader focus including a range of issues including price, variety, and location.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Several Dane County communities have formed committees to study housing in their communities, including the following:

- Waunakee Housing Task Force
- Middleton Workforce Housing Committee
- Fitchburg Housing Advisory Committee
- Oregon Housing Coalition
- Sun Prairie Workforce Housing Committee

These committees are formed and operated differently in each community. For example, the Waunakee Housing Task Force was formed in mid-2018 and disbanded in late 2019 after publishing a report ([link](#)). Meanwhile, the Middleton Workforce Housing Committee was formed in 2007 and they still meet regularly as an active committee.

Not all committees are formed by the municipality. The Sun Prairie Workforce Housing Committee was formed by the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce. The Oregon committee was formed by residents and includes representatives from the local government and local non-profits.

Based on research of other Committees in the surrounding area, staff recommends a Task Force of between 7 – 13 members (not including Village staff) consisting of a wide range of backgrounds. Some examples: Village Board Member, Plan Commission citizen member, School District representative, Chamber of Commerce Board member or staff person, large business representative (50+ employees), small business representative (less than 50 employees), Senior housing representative, single family housing developer, multi-family housing developer, real estate broker, single family Village home owner, current Village renter/tenant. Staff can work with President Williams on identifying, contacting and posting availability for these roles.

Staff is seeking approval/direction to continue moving forward with creation of a task force and to direct staff and President Williams to begin the process of identifying Task Force members.

At the meeting of March 16th, staff will update the Board on Task Force composition and outline a recommended scope as well as objectives and timeline for the Committee.