



# COTTAGE GROVE

WISCONSIN



# F O R E W O R D

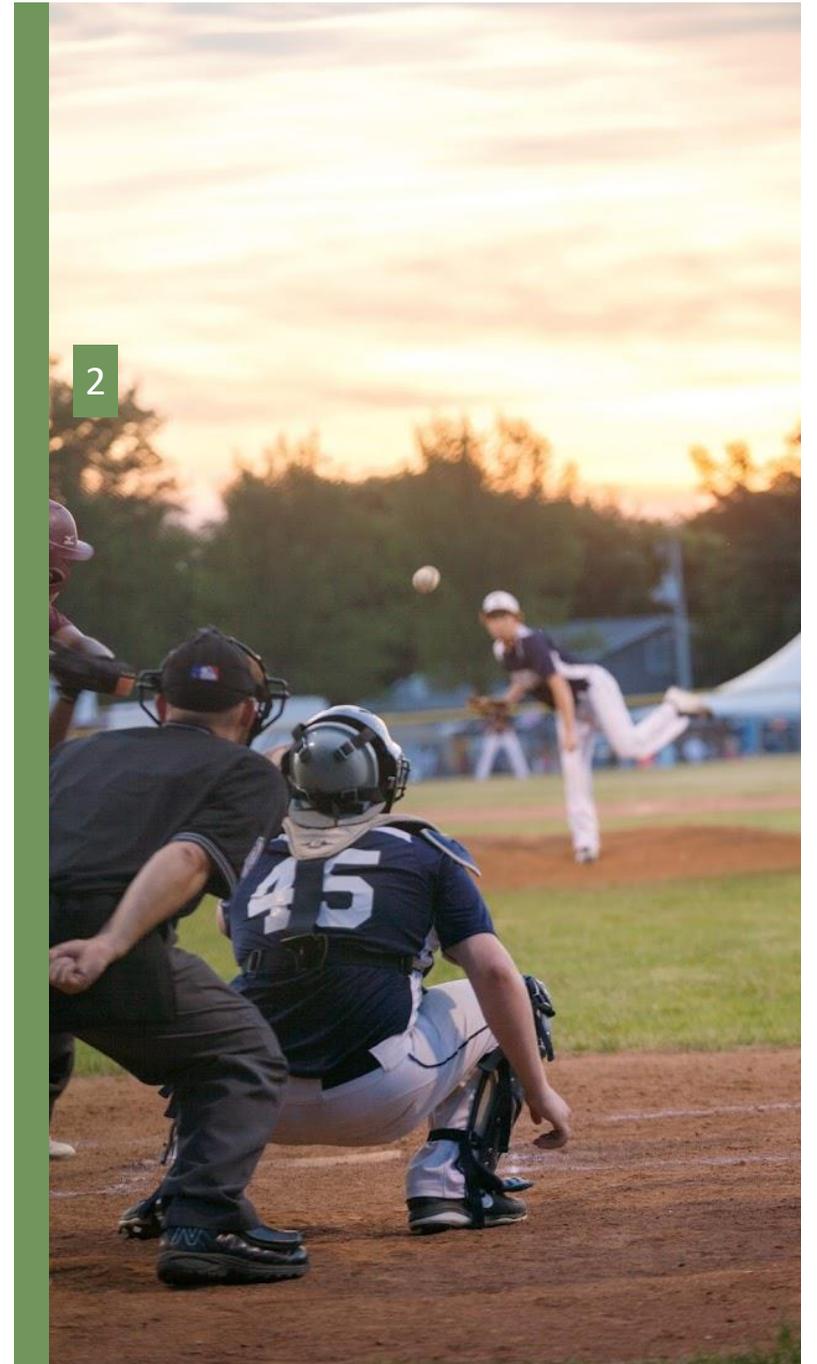
## WHY A BRAND STRATEGY?



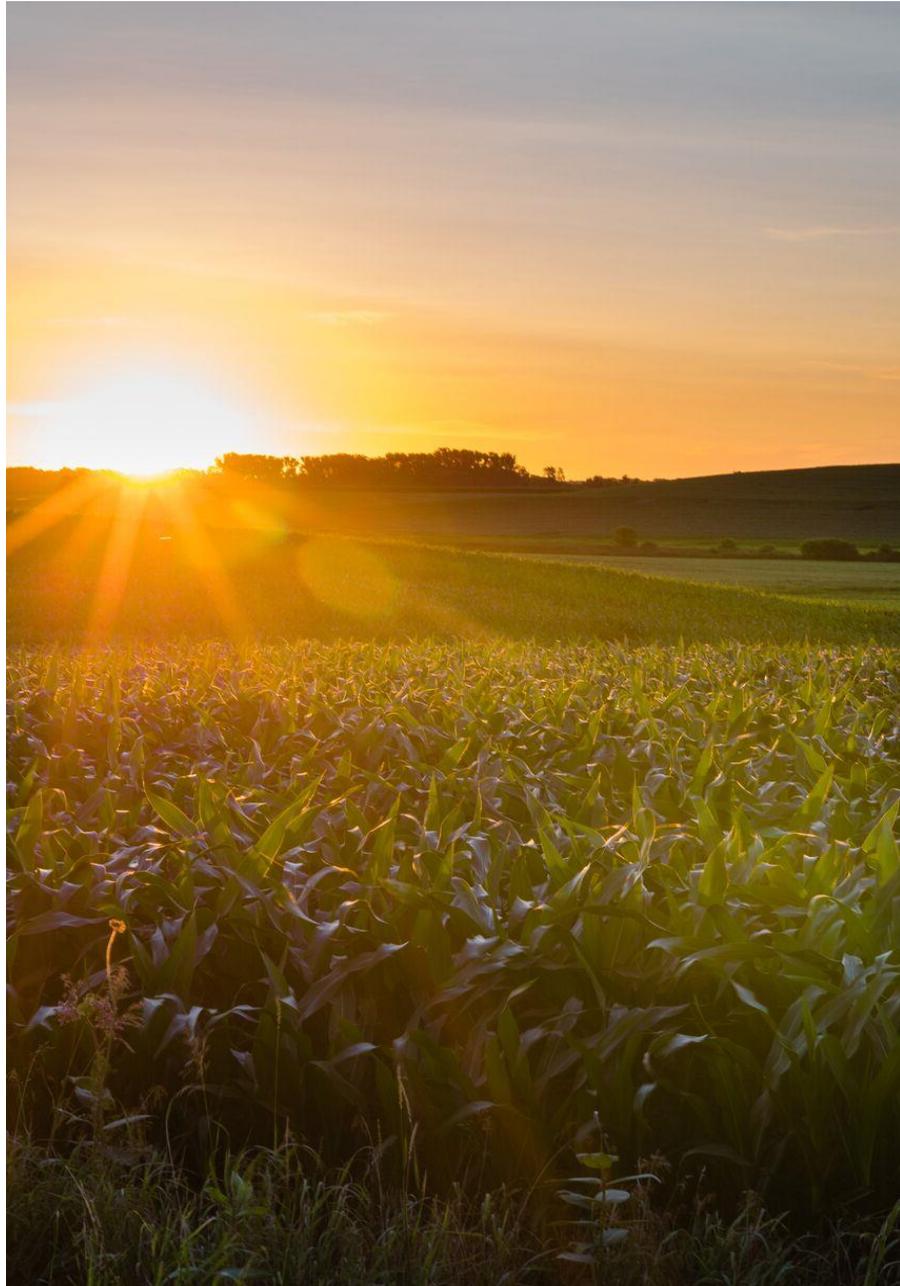
A strong brand identity can help a community, like ours, differentiate itself from other, similar places in a positive manner that helps achieve our community development goals.

The primary objective of this brand strategy is to help stakeholders within Cottage Grove deliver a consistent message about our community that is grounded in statistics, examples and testimony. It is the hope of the Cottage Grove Branding Committee that this work will support growth and development by articulating a common identity that will benefit those that work or live in Cottage Grove.

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Identifying  
the Brand



# The Brand Identification Process

## Why a Community Brand Strategy?

Communities in larger regions often find themselves in unspoken, friendly competition for attention and investment from stakeholders. A strong community brand identity **can help a community differentiate itself from other, similar communities in a positive manner** that helps achieve community and economic development goals.

The primary objective of this brand strategy is to help stakeholders within the Cottage Grove community **deliver a consistent message** about the community that is **grounded in statistics, examples and testimony**. It is the hope of the Cottage Grove Branding Committee that this work will support economic and community growth that will benefit those that work or live in Cottage Grove.

## How was the Cottage Grove Brand Strategy Identified?

The Cottage Grove Branding Committee, the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce and the University of Wisconsin-Extension researched and drafted the brand strategy over an 18-month period. In 2017, the committee conducted a **community identity survey** through the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Survey Center in order to better understand the resident experience of Cottage Grove. This study was supplemented by information from various government and private sector sources.

For nearly 200 years Cottage Grove has been the entry point for new residents coming to Wisconsin's capitol region. The community identity survey revealed that Cottage Grove offers a **positive resident experience**, and a **high quality of life in close proximity to education, government and business centers**.



The goal of community branding is to create a set of messages, images and facts that helps communicate ...

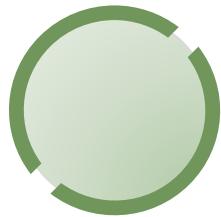
**What** the community offers to different stakeholder groups

**How** the community builds and upholds a positive reputation

**Why** the community seeks to welcome others

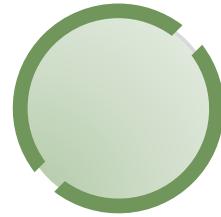
# A BLUEPRINT FOR COMMUNICATING

Because a community brand is a set of internal mental associations related to a particular place, a community brand identity is only useful if it is communicated to stakeholders. This requires effort on the part of those who are already invested in the community.



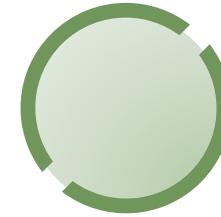
## Proactive

Cottage Grove must be **proactive** in promoting its message to potential stakeholders



## Consistent

Using the Cottage Grove Brand Book as a reference guide for communication will help ensure that a **consistent and clear message** is communicated to stakeholders.



## Positive

Relying on the Cottage Grove Brand Book increases the chances that we will be successful in promoting **positive associations** related to the community.



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For nearly 200 years Cottage Grove has been the entry point for new residents coming to Wisconsin's capitol region. Our community offers positive resident experience, and a high quality of life in close proximity to education, government and business centers.



# Community Brand Identity Goals

This community brand is focused on community identity, with a particular interest in expressing the Cottage Grove resident experience in a way that would enhance collective community identity. Initiated by the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, and supported by both the Village of Cottage Grove and Town of Cottage Grove, **this process was undertaken out of recognition that individuals have a wide variety of choices when considering communities to call home in Wisconsin's capitol region.**

We are honored when people choose Cottage Grove, and hope to communicate a part of who we are as a community through this community brand identity. The goals of this brand identity include:

- **Appeal** to talented residents and stakeholders
- **Differentiate** Cottage Grove from other communities within the greater Madison and Dane County region
- **Encourage** and welcome potential residents and stakeholders to invest in Cottage Grove, whether that means a commitment to growing their career, business, home or family in our community
- **Grow** public and private community assets within Cottage Grove
- Help Cottage Grove **attract and retain business and retail development** that will enhance the resident experience
- **Leverage** existing municipal and private investments in the community



# What is a Community Brand Pillar?

A **community brand** expresses the enduring essence of a community, including its reputation, values, resident feelings and community-wide expectations. A community brand helps us succinctly communicate the underlying promise of a community. In other words, a community brand is the expression of what makes a community special.

**Community brand pillars are short phrases that succinctly express the brand identity.** Community brand pillars are often the reasons residents and stakeholders have chosen to become, or remain, a part of the community. The community brand pillars in this book were carefully identified after reviewing results of a survey on community identity and discussions with various Cottage Grove leaders and stakeholders. When possible, examples and statistics are provided as “proof points” to support the community brand pillars.



# Cottage Grove Community Brand Pillars



Positive Resident Experience



Higher Quality of Life



Close Proximity to Education, Government & Business Centers



# Positive Resident Experience

Welcoming Newcomers Since 1834

Cottage Grove takes its name from an early settler's cottage, nestled in an oak grove, which was the first building to greet immigrants heading into southwestern Wisconsin. From this early beginning, Cottage Grove has established itself as a welcoming community for new residents in Wisconsin's capitol region. Although there are life long residents of Cottage Grove, the community has grown from less than 1,000 people in 1970 to over 9,000 in 2018.

Modern newcomers have found a warm welcome here. Cottage Grove attracted new residents at an annual rate of 6.5 percent from 2010 through 2017, outpacing Dane County (5.6%), the State of Wisconsin (1.9%), and the United States (4.8%) during the same time period. Between 2010 and 2017, the population of Cottage Grove grew by 11.8 percent. Since 73 percent of our residents have been in their current home more than eight years, we can confidently say that Cottage Grove is place where newcomers grow deep roots.

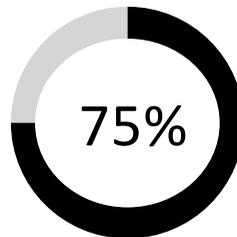
In a recent survey on community identity, Cottage Grove residents reported that people in the community are friendly, trustworthy and watch out for one another. About 77 percent of survey respondents living in the community for less than five years reported spending social time with neighbors at least several times a year, and 45 percent reported social time with neighbors at least several times a month.





Average Commute  
Time

80% of residents say their neighbors  
watch out for one another.



The quality of the local public schools  
was rated as an important factor in  
deciding where to live by 75% of  
Cottage Grove residents on a recent  
survey on community identity.

## Midwestern nice.

Cottage Grove residents report  
that time with family, friends,  
church or worship, and outings  
to local restaurants, parks or  
festivals are the ways in which  
they spend their free time.



### AFFLUENT

Median 2016 household income was \$88,600 and mean household income was \$101,207



### GROWING

An increase of 11.8% in the number of households from 2010 to 2017



### EDUCATED

43% of residents ages 25 to 34, and 51% of those 35 to 44 have at least a bachelor's degree



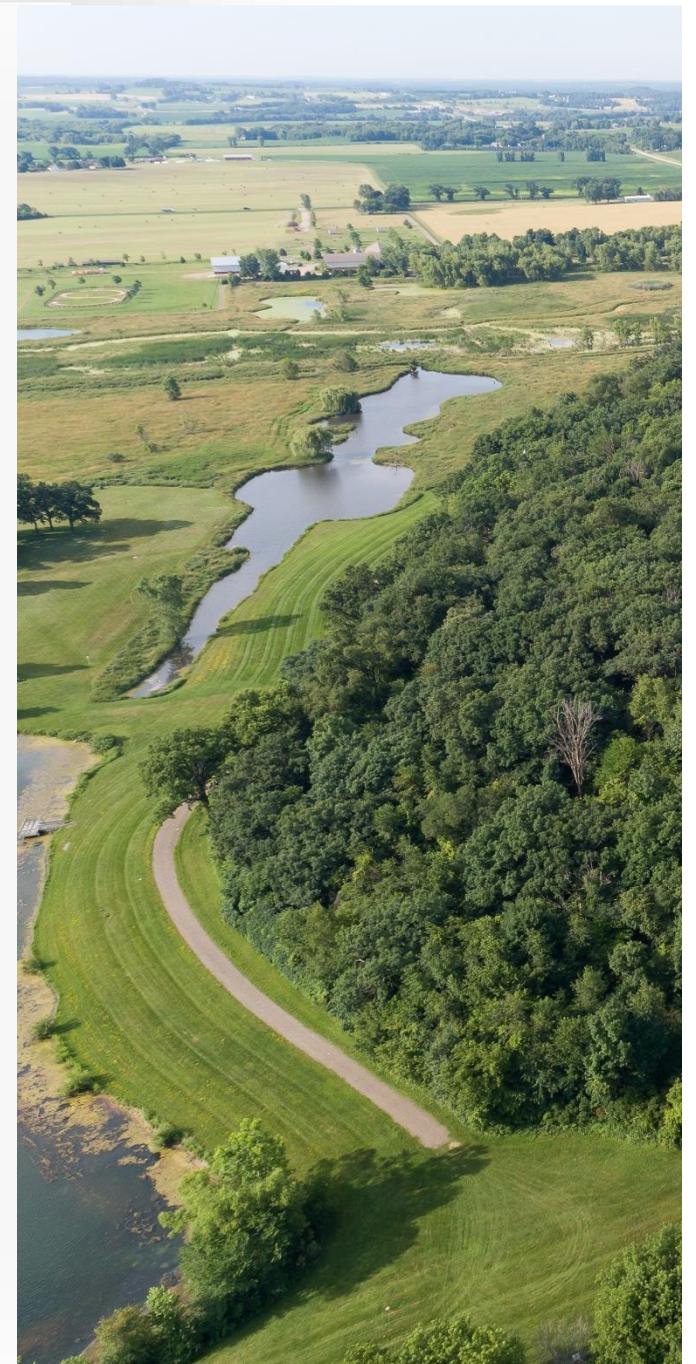
### CLOSE BY

Less than 20 minutes to downtown Madison, 75 minutes to Milwaukee, and 180 minutes to Chicago

Average commute of 20 minutes.

85% of new residents say Cottage Grove is a good place for working parents.

80% of households with children under 6 have two adults in the workforce.





# Higher Quality of Life

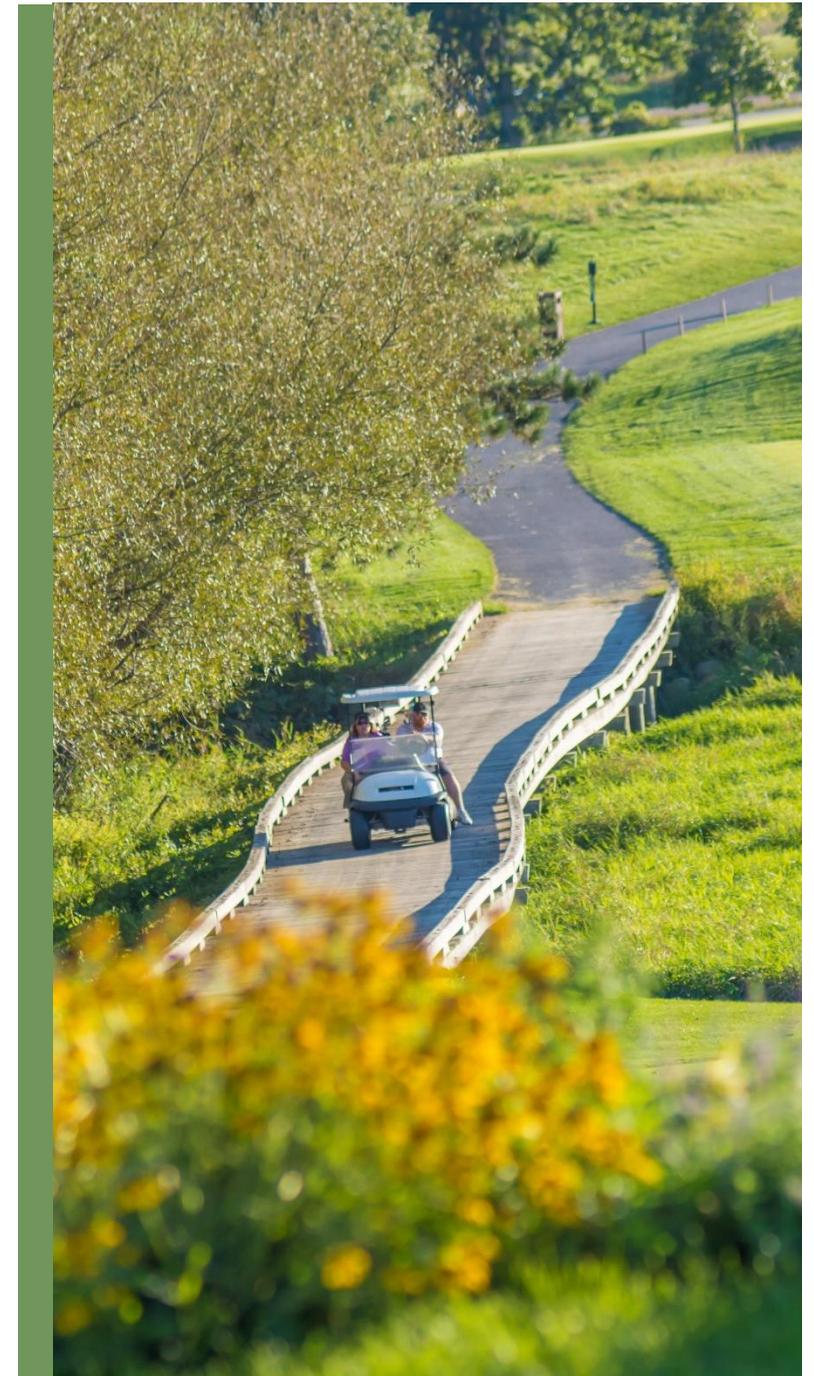
## Open Space, Short Commutes & Work/Life Balance



The wide Midwestern prairies, rolling drumlins and big skies in Cottage Grove provide a perfect background for biking, hiking and horse trails. A generous amount of public park land, and close proximity to professional and collegiate sports, theatre, dining and entertainment centers in Madison and Milwaukee have attracted residents seeking a higher quality of life.

The community's appeal to professionals means that median income for all Cottage Grove households is \$88,600, and average income rises to \$104,352. Nearby childcare and family-oriented amenities makes life easier for working parents. Approximately 80 percent of Cottage Grove households with children under six years of age report that both parents are in the workforce, with 74 percent of households with children 6 to 17 years old reporting the same. In a recent survey 85 percent of residents less than five years reported that this is a good community for working parents.

Good jobs are made easier by short commutes, only 20 minutes on average, that allow residents a healthy work/life balance. Residents report that spending time with family, friends, and taking advantage of area park and recreation areas, along with local festivals are among their favorite past times.





# Close Proximity to Education, Government & Business

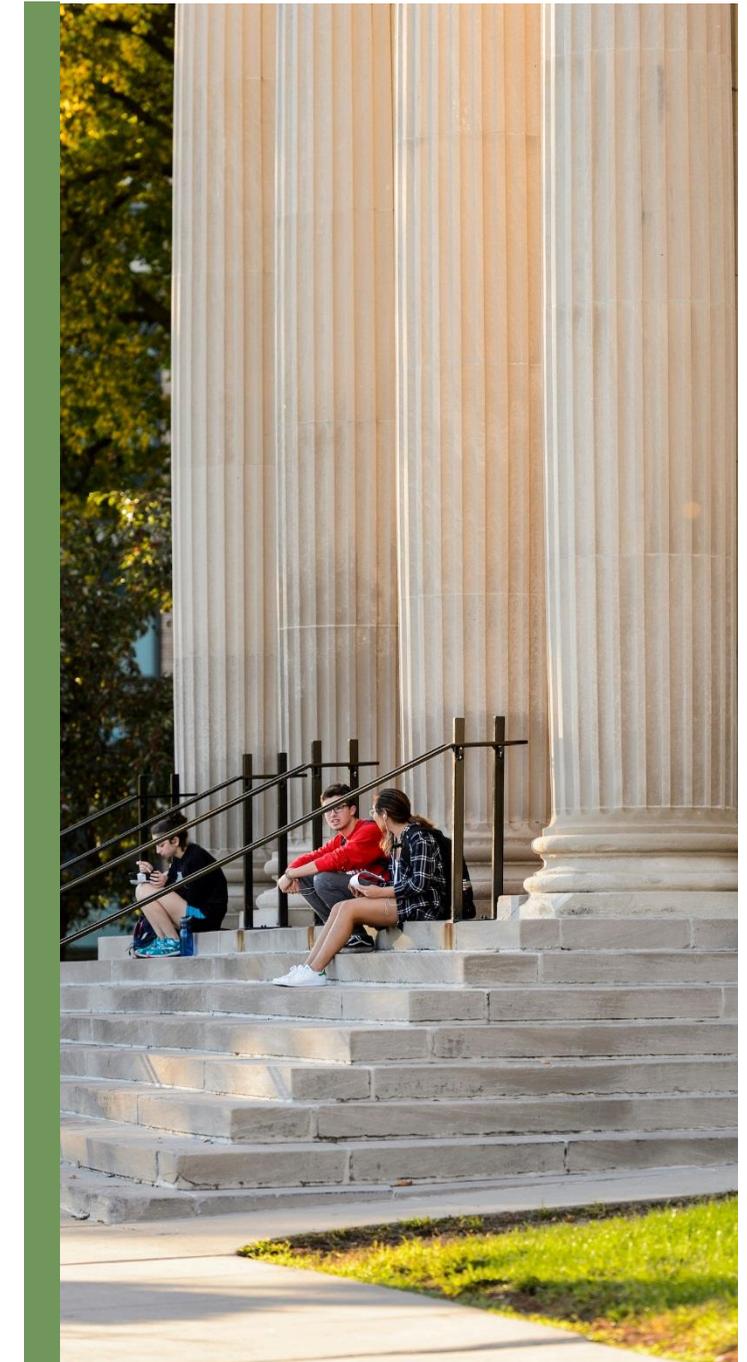
Well-Funded Public Schools, a World-Class University, Center for State Government & a Vibrant Economic Region

In a recent study on community identity, 75 percent of Cottage Grove residents surveyed reported that the quality of public schools was an important factor in deciding where to live. Cottage Grove residents are served by six separate public school districts; Monona Grove, Deerfield, McFarland, Stoughton, Sun Prairie and Marshall.

The world-class University of Wisconsin-Madison enrolls 43,000 students and is located only 15 miles from Cottage Grove. UW Madison provides residents with access to a world-class education, in addition to public lectures, concerts and other cultural opportunities. Edgewood College and Madison College (formerly Madison Area Technical College) round out local opportunities for higher education.

Located 15 miles from Wisconsin's State Capitol, and even closer to several large state agencies, Cottage Grove is an ideal location for those who need access to state government.

Cottage Grove is nestled in a vibrant region with a high degree of entrepreneurship and access to highly skilled employees. Known for innovative healthcare, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and information technology, the Wisconsin's capitol region is one of the Upper Midwest's economic engines.

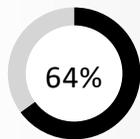




“ Close Knit & Close By ”

Cottage Grove attracted new residents at an annual rate of 6.5 percent from 2010 through 2017, outpacing Dane County (5.6%), the State of Wisconsin (1.9%), and the United States (4.8%) during the same time period.

When calculated as an increase in households, as opposed to general population, Cottage Grove grew by 11.8% between 2010 and 2017, nearly four times the growth rate for the State of Wisconsin (2.4%).



64% of Households are Middle Class or Higher.

Median Household Income.

**\$88,600**



# A Growing Community



# You are Always Welcome in Cottage Grove

Consider this an invitation to become a part of our community. Whether you're a new resident, new business, or just passing through, we're sure you'll feel at home in Cottage Grove.



Cottage Grove WI  
Welcoming Newcomers Since  
1834



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a dense green forest covers a hillside. To the left, a golf course with several green fairways and a small pond is visible. In the middle ground, there's a residential area with houses and a large building. In the background, there are open fields, a small town with a church steeple, and a train with several white freight cars on a track in the bottom right corner. The sky is clear and blue.

## Our Thanks

## Acknowledgements

This brand strategy was completed by a local study group of community leaders, working with the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, the Village of Cottage Grove, the Town of Cottage Grove and the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Funding was provided by the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, the Village of Cottage Grove and the Town of Cottage Grove.

# University of Wisconsin-Extension Cottage Grove Community Identity Survey

January 27-February 23, 2017

Responses: 447; +/- 4.5%

Between January 27 and February 23, 2017 a random sample of Cottage Grove residents received a mail survey about their perceptions of living in Cottage Grove. The survey included respondent perceptions of the degree to which Cottage Grove residents are open to others, friendly, trustworthy and able to talk about community problems. Additional questions including the importance of community amenities and features were included, along with several sets of questions that focused on resident social life, civic engagement and attention to various media outlets for local news.

