

**TOWN OF GROTTOS**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**September 24, 2024**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN**

- Roll Call

**PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – from the meeting on August 6, 2024**

**REPORT FROM SECRETARY**

**REPORT FROM TOWN MANAGER**

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

- **Comprehensive Plan Committee**- Taylor, Chair; Kohl
- **Capital Improvements Committee**- Baker, Chair; Haas
- **Land Use & Zoning Committee**- Ehlenfeldt, Chair; Stoll

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Request for six-unit townhouse complex on Aspen Avenue.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Comprehensive Plan

**ADJOURNMENT**

August 6, 2024

The Planning Commission meeting was held on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Grottoes Town Hall, Grottoes, Virginia.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nicely called the meeting of August 6, 2024 of the Grottoes Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Nicely requested a roll call.

ATTENDANCE: Commission Members present: Jean Stoll, Rene Ehlenfeldt, Dylan Nicely, Darrel Baker, Michael Kohl, and Maite Taylor. Absent Brooke Haas.

Other Town Officials present: Town Clerk Tara Morris and Police Chief Jason Sullivan.

**PUBLIC EXPRESSION** – No one signed up to speak.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

On motion by Commission member Ehlenfeldt, seconded by Commission member Taylor, and carried by a vote of 5-0, voting recorded as follows: STOLL – AYE; EHLENFELDT – AYE; NICELY – AYE; BAKER – AYE; KOHL – AYE; TAYLOR – AYE, the Commission approved the minutes from the meeting on May 28, 2024.

**REPORT FROM SECRETARY** - nothing to report.

**REPORT FROM THE TOWN MANAGER** - nothing to report.

### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Comprehensive Plan** – Commission member Taylor said Jeremy Crute from the CSPDC is here tonight and is going to update us on the progress on the comprehensive plan.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Nicely said we are to consider recommending a joint public hearing to amend the R7 zoning and asked for a staff report. Clerk Morris stated that the request came from a developer to the town council to consider removing the 62.5 feet of road frontage to be able to sale a duplex in the R& zoning. She said the lot regulations table in the town code states any zoning that duplexes are allowed would have a zero interior setback so both units can be sold. Clerk Morris stated that in the R7 zoning single and two-family dwellings are permitted uses that must follow the R3 guidelines. She stated the only action that needs to happen tonight is for the planning commission to recommend to the council to set a joint public hearing for this request. Chairman Nicely asked if anyone had any questions. On a motion made by Commission member Stoll, seconded by Commission member Ehlenfeldt, and carried by a vote of 5-0, voting recorded as follows: STOLL – AYE; EHLENFELDT – AYE; NICELY – AYE; BAKER – AYE; KOHL –

AYE; TAYLOR – AYE, to recommend the council set a joint public hearing for the request to amend R7 zoning.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Jeremy Crute gave an update on the chapters his staff has been working on. He also presented an updated timeline on how the CSPDC is planning to complete the comprehensive plan. He said the goal is to work on about two chapters a month and still aim for the completion of the project at the end of this year to the beginning of next year.

### **ADJOURN**

Chairman Nicely adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

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Chairman

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Secretary

# ASPEN TOWNHOMES

## PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN



**TERRA ENGINEERING  
AND  
LAND SOLUTIONS**

CIVIL ENGINEERS PLANNERS LAND SURVEYORS  
11111 MARKET CRAFT HIGHWAY, SUITE 100, DRAFT, VIRGINIA 24077

DATE: 08/01/2024

### PROJECT DATA:

PROJECT NAME: ASPEN TOWNHOMES  
SITE ADDRESS: 11111 MARKET CRAFT HIGHWAY, SUITE 100, DRAFT, VIRGINIA 24077  
OWNER: TERRA ENGINEERING AND LAND SOLUTIONS, PC  
CONTACT: JEFFREY B. DRAKE, CIVIL ENGINEER  
PHONE: 540-343-2000  
FAX: 540-343-2001  
PROJECT LOCATION: 11111 MARKET CRAFT HIGHWAY, SUITE 100, DRAFT, VIRGINIA 24077  
PROJECT TYPE: RESIDENTIAL, VACANT  
ADJACENT PROPERTY USE: RESIDENTIAL, VACANT  
SITE AREA: 1.00 AC  
ADJACENT AREA: 1.00 AC  
WATER: PUBLIC  
SEWER: PUBLIC

### VICINITY MAP



### LEGEND:

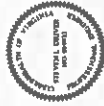
--- Proposed Right-of-Way  
--- Existing Right-of-Way  
--- Easement  
--- Other Road

### REVISIONS:

### SHEET INDEX:

Sheet 1 of 2

ASPEN TOWNHOMES  
COVER SHEET



NAME: JEFFREY B. DRAKE  
DESIGNED: JBD  
DRAWN: JBD  
CHECKED: JBD  
REVISIONS:

### APPROVALS:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



CONTRACTOR SHALL CONTACT  
THE STATE OF VIRGINIA  
FOR ANY REQUIRED PERMITS  
AND APPROVALS

1. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS PROJECT SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATEST EDITION OF THE VIRGINIA CONSTRUCTION CODES AND STANDARDS.
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## CHAPTER 1

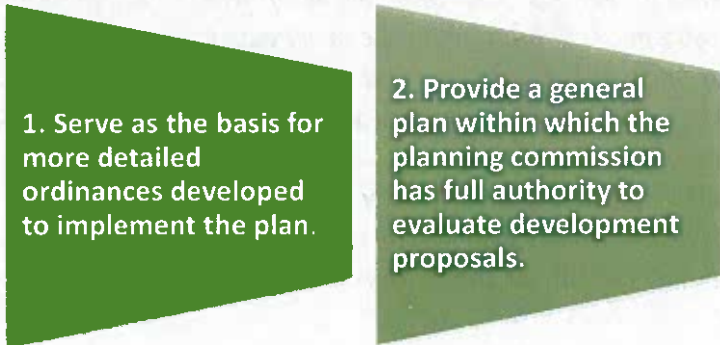
# INTRODUCTION

## THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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A Comprehensive Plan is a guidance document that defines the community's vision over a 25-year period and establishes goals and strategies to address issues. A comprehensive plan serves as a framework by which a municipality can identify its needs and rationally allocate its resources to meet those needs. To that end, the Town of Grottoes Comprehensive Plan provides a general overview of the present and future needs of the Town of Grottoes, accounting for the full realm of physical, social, and economic activity. The plan ultimately creates a collaborative vision Grottoes future by identifying goals and priorities that are understood and accepted by the community at large.

This Comprehensive Plan has two primary functions:



1. Serve as the basis for more detailed ordinances developed to implement the plan.

2. Provide a general plan within which the planning commission has full authority to evaluate development proposals.

Because comprehensive plans are long-range, they must be flexible enough to change or be revised as the community undergoes change. The plan does not provide specific regulations and restrictions. It does, however, provide the framework for Town staff, elected and appointed officials to develop appropriate ordinances and policies to prevent inappropriate development from occurring. It is these policies that help bring the plan to reality.

## VIRGINIA LAW

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A comprehensive plan should present the long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia delineates the procedure by which a locality in Virginia prepares a comprehensive plan:

*"In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities."*

The comprehensive plan is general in nature, in that it designates the approximate location and character of each feature shown on the plan. The Code requires the development of a transportation plan, and the designation of areas and implementation of measures to promote affordable housing. In addition, the plan may include, but need not be limited to:

- (1) The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use,*
- (2) The designation of a system of community service facilities, such as parks, sports playing fields, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like,*
- (3) The designation of historical areas and areas for renewal,*
- (4) The designation of areas for groundwater protection measures,*
- (5) A capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps,*
- (6) the location of existing or proposed recycling centers,*
- (7) The designation of corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 150 kilovolts or more.*

Once adopted, Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia designates the following legal status for the comprehensive plan:

*"Whenever a local planning commission recommends a comprehensive plan or part thereof for the locality and such plan has been approved and adopted by the governing body, it shall control the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan. Thereafter, unless a feature is already shown on the adopted master plan or part thereof... no street or connection to an existing street, park or other*

*public area, public building or public structure, public utility facility or public service corporation facility other than a railroad facility or an underground natural gas or underground electric distribution facility of a public utility...whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed, established or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent therefor has been submitted to and approved by the commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof."*

Therefore, the plan is the general guideline for community development. Once it is adopted, the local commission has the authority to approve or disapprove proposals for development based on conformance of the proposal with the plan. The comprehensive plan is the basic planning document upon which other implementation documents, such as the official map, zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations, should be based.

The comprehensive plan is part of an ongoing community development process, and as such, the State Code requires that the plan is reviewed and updated every five-year. This requirement ensures that the plan reflects the current conditions as they relate to the community development process.

## **PLANNING IN THE TOWN OF GROTTOS**

The Town of Grottoes adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1977. This plan was prepared by the Rockingham County Planning Department, with direction provided by the Grottoes Area Citizen Advisory Committee. In 1985, the Grottoes Town Council began a Community Development Program whose primary goal was:

*"To work toward the orderly and efficient development of the Town of Grottoes, thereby providing a desirable living environment for this and future generations."*

As part of this overall program, the Town Council directed the Planning Commission to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan in 1985, 1999, 2006, 2012, and 2017. The 2024 update to the Plan will provide a planning document that reflects the current conditions and community needs of the Town of Grottoes.



## PLANNING PROCESS

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In December 2023, the Town of Grottoes established a Comprehensive Planning Committee comprised of members of the Planning Commission to guide and oversee the 2024 update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Town and the Committee partnered with the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) to facilitate the planning process.

Effective planning is a dynamic process that must coordinate numerous factors and voices to answer four key questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to be?
- How will we get there?

An achievable vision for the future must be grounded in a clear understanding of the community's current conditions, strengths, assets, challenges, and weaknesses. As such, it is essential to start with a strong foundation of data and analysis. The planning process began with a robust evaluation of relevant information and data that identified gaps and needs to be addressed as well as opportunities and trends to capitalize on.

However, quantitative data alone is not sufficient. Community engagement is critical to the comprehensive planning process because it ensures the plan reflects the values, aspirations, and unique character of the community. Residents were given opportunities to shape the plan at every stage of the process. In particular, citizen input was gathered through a Community Survey and a Public Open House:

***Community Survey*** – The first phase of public engagement collected community input through a public survey. This survey aided the planning process by assessing current conditions, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and rating future needs and priorities. The online survey was advertised on the Town's website and social media pages, but a paper version of the survey was also made available at the Town Hall and was distributed by the Comprehensive Planning Committee. The survey opened March 21, 2024 and closed June 8, 2024 and received 424 responses. Appendix A provides a copy of the survey questionnaire and summarizes the community feedback received through the multiple choice and short answer responses.

**Public Open House** – On May 16, 2024, the Comprehensive Planning Committee hosted a Community Open House at Grottoes Town Hall. A series of eight input stations provided opportunities for residents to engage in collaborative discussions aimed at identifying community assets, envisioning a desired future, and pinpointing opportunities for improvement. Each station was manned by a facilitator from the Town of Grottoes Planning Commission or the CSPDC. Topics covered during the open house included appreciative visioning, improving the Town of Grottoes, transportation, placemaking, infrastructure, and land use. Each station was manned by a facilitator from the Town of Grottoes Planning Commission or the CSPDC. Appendix B details the activities conducted and the feedback received at the Public Open House.



*Figure 1: Residents Participate in the Public Open House*

## HISTORY

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Native Americans long inhabited the Shenandoah Valley before the arrival of Europeans, using the Valley for hunting, agriculture, and trade. Over time, various cultures developed distinct lifestyles, from mobile hunter-gatherers to settled agricultural communities. Several archaeological sites belonging to native American cultures have been found along the South River. As climatic shifts, disease, and conflict reshaped the region, the Iroquois eventually dominated the Valley, using it primarily for hunting and fur trapping. By the 18th century, colonial expansion transformed the Valley, leading to the displacement and migration of native populations.

European settlement of the area now called Grottoes likely occurred around 1735, the year where a grant of sixty thousand acres on the Shenandoah River, where the Augusta County/Rockingham County line is currently located, was given to John Thomas, John Taylor, and William Beverly. One of the grant's stipulations required that one family settle on each thousand-acre parcel every two years.

Visitors would also come to explore Madison's Saltpeter Cave on Cave Hill, situated directly southwest of the Grottoes area across the South River. Notable visitors included Meriwether Lewis, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson would later publish a map of the cave in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, attracting further visitors to the area.

In 1806, Bernard (Barnette) Weyer, an 18-year-old trapper, was retrieving one of his hunting traps when he discovered another cave entrance on Cave Hill. The caver, larger than Madison's Saltpeter Cave, became known as "*Weyer's Cave*." The Cave was quickly opened to the public in the same year as its discovery, making Grand Caverns the oldest continually operating show cave in the United States. Weyer's cave, also known as "*the Grottoes of the Shenandoah*," quickly became a popular destination on the 1800s tourist circuit and ultimately is the inspiration behind the Town's present name.

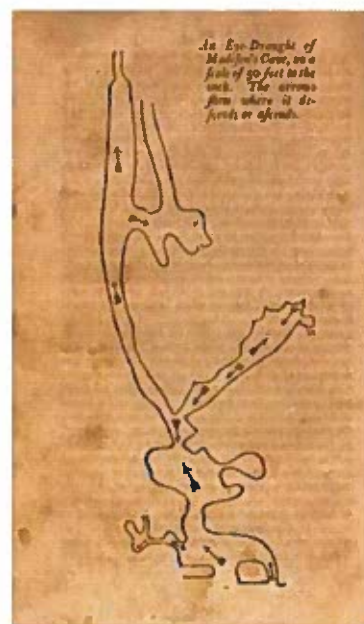


Figure 2: Sketch of Madison's Cave, *Notes of the State of Virginia* (Courtesy of UNC Chapel Hill)

During the American Civil War (1861–1865), the Grottoes area witnessed significant activity from both Union and Confederate forces. During the Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1862, Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson's had his troops rest at the foot of Cave Hill. In 1864, Union soldiers would also camp at the foot of the caves. Throughout the conflict, soldiers from both sides visited the caverns, leaving behind over 200 verified Civil War signatures on the caves' walls.

After the War, the settlement in the area became known as "*Liola*", and most of the land was owned by the Abbott Iron Company. In 1888, the area was renamed "*The Grottoes*." Between 1889 and 1892, the Grottoes Company, led by its president Jed Hotchkiss, a major developer in the region, began purchasing land around Grottoes. Hotchkiss, who served as Stonewall Jackson's mapmaker during the Civil War, became interested in the area during the conflict.

Hotchkiss attracted capital from financiers in New York City, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and West Virginia for developing the area, impressing them with his hopes for Grottoes. The Grottoes Company sold stock in its corporation for one hundred dollars per share. People buying the stock had the option of making a small down payment with a note to pay the full balance at some future date. The Grottoes Land Company acquired Weyers Cave, renovating and modernizing it by installing electric lighting in 1889.

The area of the future town met all the requirements of becoming a city-site: There was adequate land for manufacturing plants; the land was suitable for businesses to locate; it was a beautiful

location for home sites (being located on the South River with the Blue Ridge Mountains in the background); and the area had natural drainage. The Shenandoah Valley Railroad, running from Hagerstown, MD, to Waynesboro, VA, passed through the area, significantly contributing to the Towns' development as the region's rich coal and ore deposits could be easily transported to northern markets via the railroad.

In 1890, the town was laid out and named "*Shendun*," a portmanteau of "*Shenandoah*" and "*dun*," a Gaelic meaning "castle" or "fortified hill." The town was well-planned when it was laid out: Factories were to be built between 1st and 3rd Avenues and from 6th to 29th Streets. All public buildings such as schools and churches would be between 5th and 6th Avenues and 3rd and 29th Streets. The remainder of the town would be reserved for home lots. The price of home lots in 1890 was from two hundred to six hundred dollars per twenty-five by one hundred twenty-foot plot.

By 1891, Shendun was bustling with industry, and its population had surged to around seven hundred, representing a one hundred percent increase over the previous five months. This rapid growth was part of a broader "boom" the area experienced in the late 1800s. Shendun's mail service from Staunton began in January 1891, and the Valley Bank of Virginia, the Town's first bank, began operations in March 1891. That same year, Eutsler Brothers & Company, a carpentry business, was established and was contracted to build twenty homes in Grottoes.

Additionally in 1891, streetcar lines were being laid, connecting Port Republic to Shendun, and paving work began on the streets. Construction on an electric plant also started, with power poles placed in the alleys behind homes rather than in front, along the streets, preserving the Town's attractiveness. The Shendun News, the Town's newspaper, was being printed in the best-equipped printing establishment in Virginia. The Plumber's Supply Works and a brass factory were being built. The Town also had two brick factories, Jordan Brick Works and Law Brick Factory, a woolen mill, a plaster factory, a tile factory, and a sash and blind factory. Many of these factories had borrowed money from the Grottoes Company to initiate their business. The first telephone line connecting Shendun to Staunton was completed in May of 1891. A tin shop was ready to open, and a twenty-four-room hotel was under construction.

By the end of the year 1891, Shendun was booming, but the Town's economy was showing signs of weakening, and the Grottoes Company began to lay off employees. In addition to the laborers being laid off, the engineering corps was released, clerical staff were reduced, and the general manager and architect were no longer working. Jed Hotchkiss resigned as President of the Grottoes Company, and E.S. Ruffins, a man from Norfolk who had the reputation of being a hustler, was appointed in his place. Even though the economy was faltering, 1891 was still a good year for Shendun.

In 1892, through an act of the General Assembly on February 16, the Town of Shendun was officially incorporated. The act also provided that the Government of the Town include a Council of seven persons to be elected by ballot every two years.

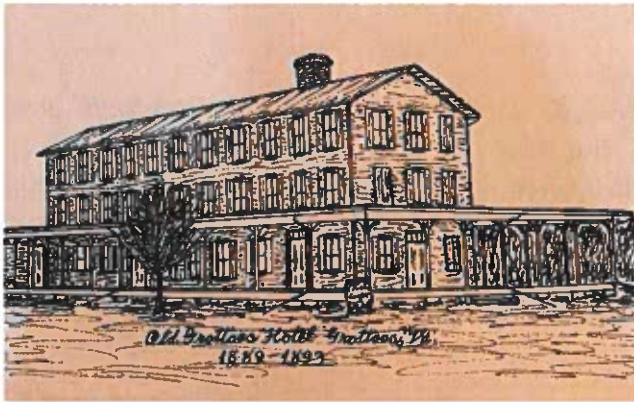


Figure 3: Sketch of the Old Grottoes Hotel destroyed by fire in 1893, Town of Grottoes Centennial Cookbook Feb, 1992

In January 1893, the Grottoes Hotel caught fire, resulting in significant business losses for both the town and the Grottoes Company. Town's newspaper also went bankrupt in the same year, soon followed by The Grottoes Company itself. The Company's financial woes were caused by its failure to collect on stock subscriptions, coupled with the cessation of lot sales. The Grottoes Company sued its stockholders for payments. The Circuit Court ruled in favor of the stockholders for reasons of false and fraudulent representation: The directors bought stock in the company without notifying the stockholders,

and the property of an ironworks company was never owned by the Grottoes Company. After the Company went bankrupt, families started leaving Shendun. Locals tried to save the Town by leasing the caves, the streetcar lines, and other business, but to no avail.

Several factors may have contributed to Shendun's failure: Firstly, Hotchkiss overlooked many risks associated with an enterprise of that magnitude; secondly, the paper value of the land owned by The Grottoes Company never matched its market value; thirdly, apart from Eutsler Brothers, the Company never owned an enterprise that was had a financially stable; and finally, the new directors that would replace Hotchkiss at the head of The Grottoes company lacked the ambition for the Town that Hotchkiss had, leading to stagnation in the town's growth. Additionally, the entire country was in a state of depression in 1893.

In the early 1900's, Shendun had a woodworking plant, several dry goods stores, real estate offices, a bowling alley, a mill, and blacksmith shop. The Bank of Grottoes also opened for business on February 17, 1908. In 1912, by an Act of the General Assembly, the town's name was changed from "*Shendun*" to "*Grottoes*." By this time, Grottoes' population had decreased to about four hundred people. In 1926, Weyer's Cave was renamed "*Grand Caverns*."

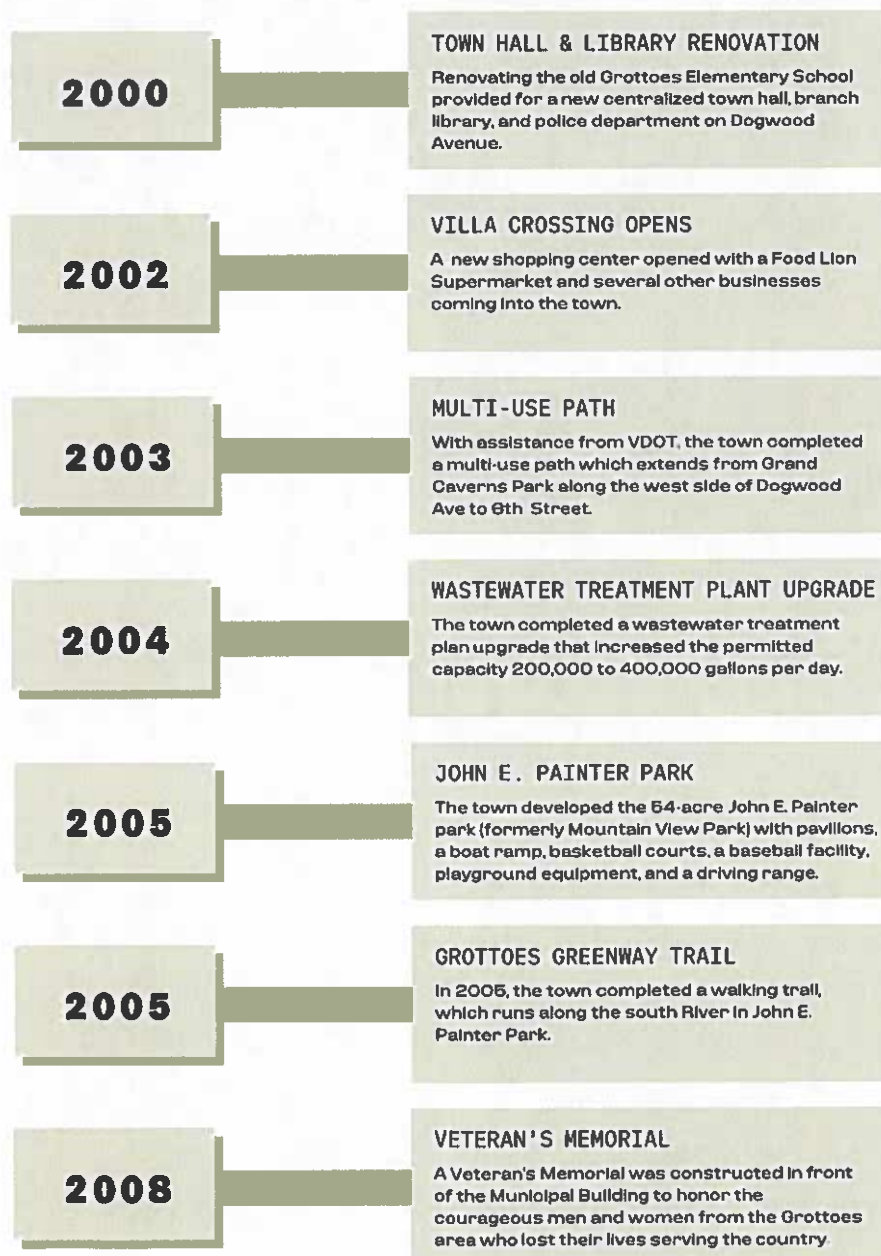
In 1948 a central water system was installed in the Town the Volunteer Fire Department was also organized. The Reynolds Metals Company began operations in 1956. In 1983, the town received two grants to construct its centralized sewer system to allow the town to continue to grow without the limitations of individual sewer systems.



In 1973, the National Park Service designated the nearby caves a National Natural Landmark in recognition of their unique formations. The following year, Gladys Kellow, the owner, donated the caverns and surrounding lands to the Upper Valley Regional Park Authority (UVRPA). The UVRPA managed the caves for 35 years, until its dissolution in 2009, when the Town of Grottoes assumed ownership of the cave.

In recent years, the town has made major improvements to key public facilities to preserve and improve the quality of life enjoyed by community residents. Figure 1.1 provides a timeline of notable events and improvements that have shaped Grottoes into the community it is today.

**Figure 1.1. Recent Community Milestones**



## CHAPTER 2

# DEMOGRAPHICS

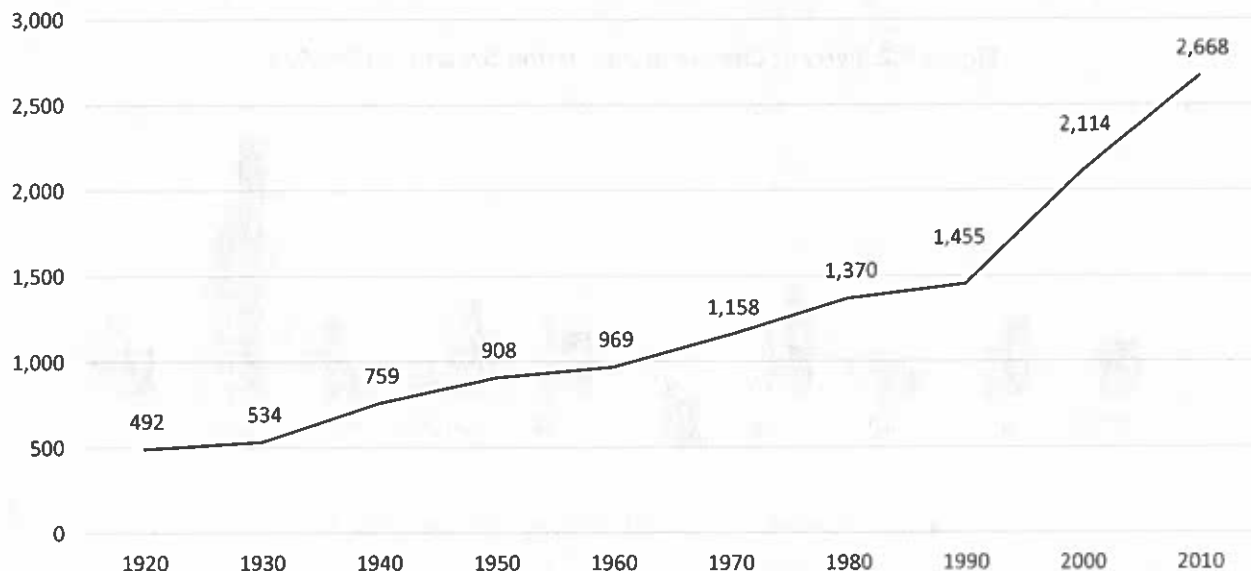
Planning for the Town's future must begin by understanding the population we are planning for. Analyzing demographic data and trends is integral to the planning process, as it provides localities with tools to evaluate the future demands on public facilities, community services, and land use. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan details and highlights demographic data and trends for the Town of Grottoes, as well as Augusta and Rockingham counties where appropriate.

## POPULATION TRENDS

### Historic Growth, 1920-2010

The U.S. Decennial Census estimates that the Town of Grottoes' population increased from about 492 residents in 1920 to 2,668 residents in 2010. The town experienced its most significant population growth from 1930 to 1940 (42.1% increase), 1990 to 2000 (45.3% increase), and 2000 to 2010 (26.2% increase). U.S. Decennial Census data indicates that the town experienced an average growth of 20.1% decade-over-decade. Figure 2.1 illustrates population change in the Town of Grottoes from 1920 to 2010.

**Figure 2.1. Historic Population (1920-2010)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

## Recent Growth, 2012-2022

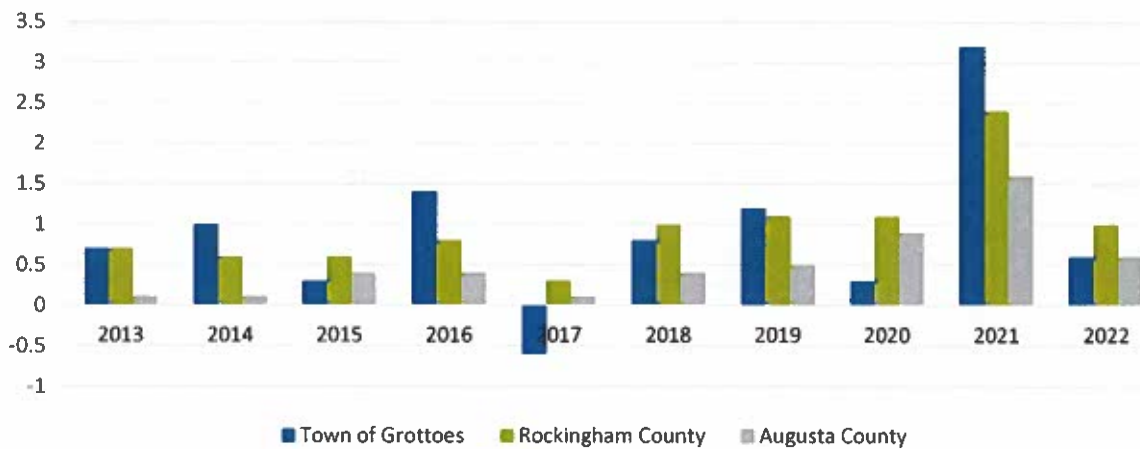
According to American Community Survey, the Town of Grottoes experienced relatively consistent population growth from 2012 to 2022. On average, the town population increased 0.9% per year, from an estimated 2,659 residents in 2012 to 2,904 residents in 2022. Over the same period, the population of Rockingham County increased by an average of 1.1% per year while the population of Augusta County increased by an average of 0.5% per year. Table 2.1 and Figure 2.2 further detail population estimates and year-over-year percent changes in population for the Town of Grottoes, Rockingham County, and Augusta County from 2012 to 2022.

**Table 2.1. Population Estimates, 2012-2022**

Year	Town of Grottoes		Rockingham County		Augusta County	
	Total	% Change	Total	% Change	Total	% Change
<b>2012</b>	2,659	--	76,353	--	73,662	--
<b>2013</b>	2,678	0.7%	76,885	0.7%	73,726	0.1%
<b>2014</b>	2,705	1.0%	77,345	0.6%	73,770	0.1%
<b>2015</b>	2,714	0.3%	77,785	0.6%	74,053	0.4%
<b>2016</b>	2,751	1.4%	78,427	0.8%	74,330	0.4%
<b>2017</b>	2,734	-0.6%	78,653	0.3%	74,390	0.1%
<b>2018</b>	2,756	0.8%	79,444	1.0%	74,701	0.4%
<b>2019</b>	2,789	1.2%	80,284	1.1%	75,079	0.5%
<b>2020</b>	2,797	0.3%	81,138	1.1%	75,754	0.9%
<b>2021</b>	2,886	3.2%	83,090	2.4%	76,948	1.6%
<b>2022</b>	2,904	0.6%	83,905	1.0%	77,433	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

**Figure 2.2. Percent Change in Population Growth, 2012-2022**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

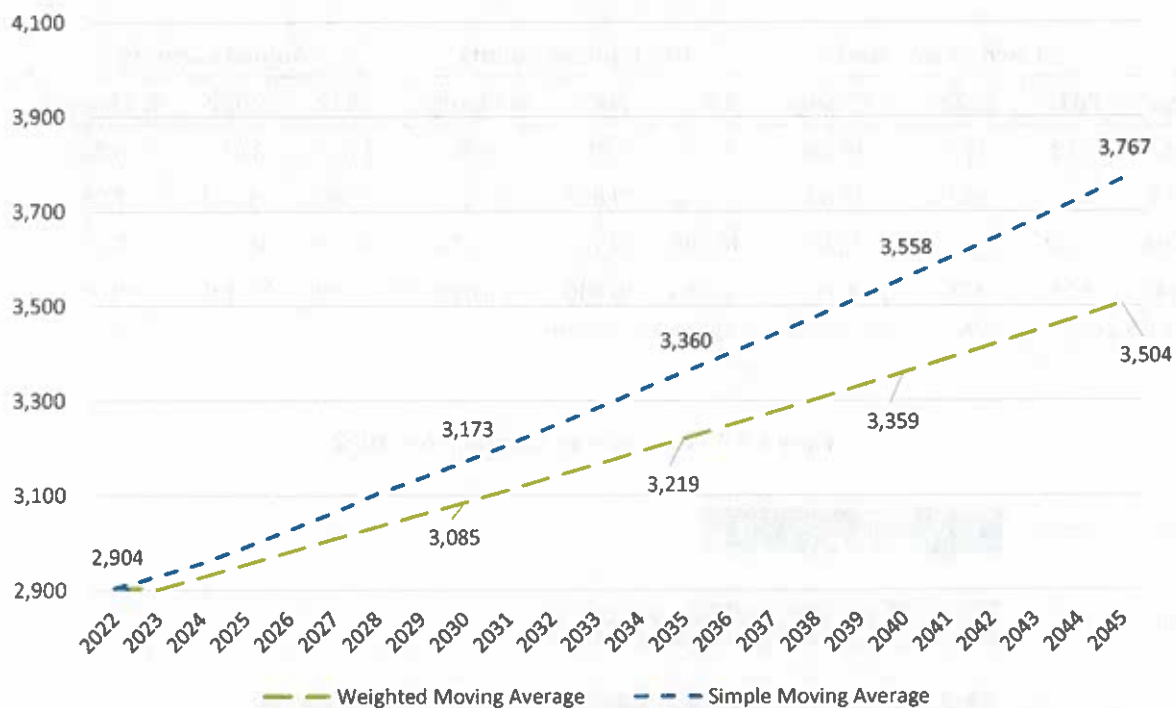


## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

According to U.S. Decennial Census data (1920-2010), the Town of Grottoes experienced an average population growth of 2.0% per year of the last 100 years. However, more recent American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate data (2015-2022) suggests that the town has experienced an average population growth of 1.0% over the last several years.

Figure 2.3 illustrates population projections for the Town of Grottoes through 2045, based on the Simple Moving Average and Weighted Moving Average forecasting models. The Simple Moving Average method utilizes the average population change of the last several years to forecast population estimates. The Weighted Moving Average utilizes the average population change over the last several years, weighing recent years more heavily, to forecast population estimates. Based on these estimates, Grottoes population is expected to reach between 3,504 and 3,767 by 2045.<sup>1</sup> However, limited land availability for residential development may slow future population growth.

**Figure 2.3. Population Projections (2022-2045)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates;  
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission

<sup>1</sup> These estimates do not include growth through annexation. If the Town annexes additional land in the future, the population may grow faster than the projections.

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

### Age

According to the American Community Survey, the Town of Grottoes experienced a significant increase in working-age adults from 2012 to 2022. The population of residents age 18 to 64 increased by 23%, while the population of residents age 0 to 18 and 65 and older both decreased (15.5% and 4.8%, respectively).

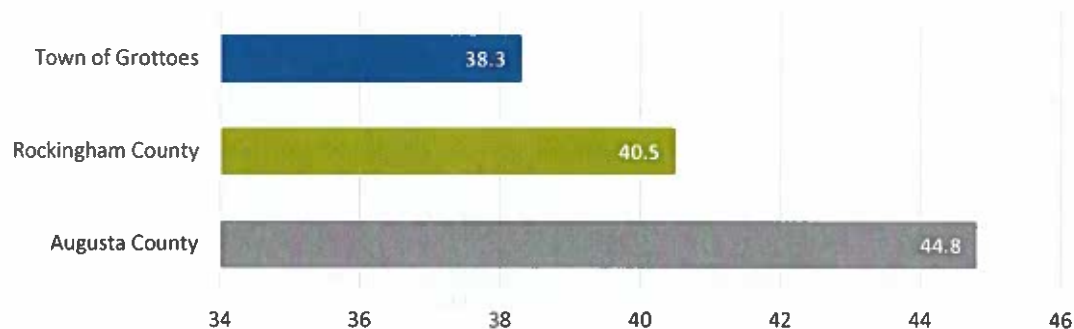
In contrast, Rockingham County experienced a slight increase in the number of residents age 0 to 64 (5.1% increase, overall) and a 34.9% increase in the number of residents age 65 and older, during the same period. Augusta County experienced a slight decrease in the number of residents age 0 to 64 (1.8% decrease, overall) and a 40.8% increase in the number of residents age 65 and older. Table 2.2 illustrates population age estimates and percent changes for the Town of Grottoes, Rockingham County, and Augusta County from 2012 to 2022.

**Table 2.2. Population by Age (2012-2022)**

	Town of Grottoes			Rockingham County			Augusta County		
Age	2012	2022	% Change	2012	2022	% Change	2012	2022	% Change
<5	228	193	-15.4%	4,551	4,711	+3.5%	3,679	3,452	-6.2%
5-17	441	372	-15.6%	13,310	13,652	+2.6%	11,940	11,101	-7.0%
18-64	1,597	1,965	+23.0%	46,306	49,102	+6.0%	46,105	46,071	-0.1%
65+	393	374	-4.8%	12,186	16,440	+34.9%	11,938	16,809	+40.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

**Figure 2.4. Median Age Comparison, 2022**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2022

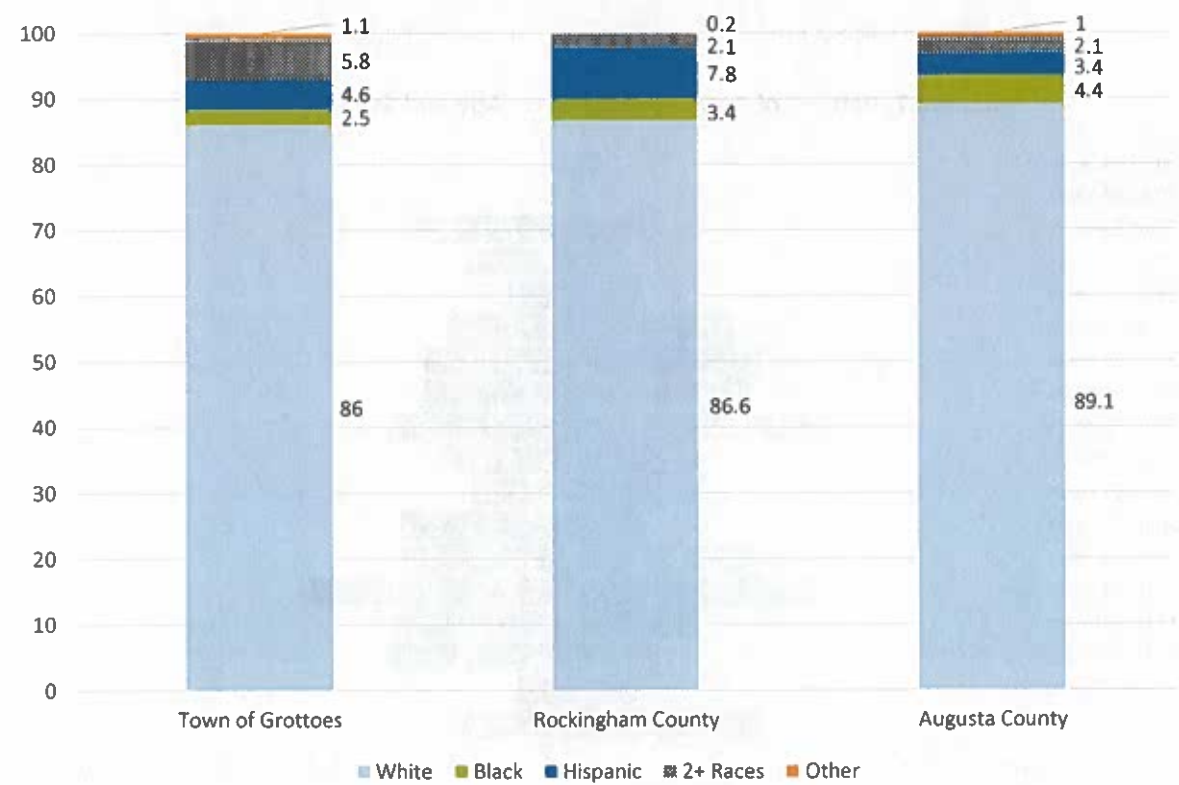
Race/Ethnicity

According to American Community Survey, the Town of Grottoes experienced a decrease in the number and proportion of Black residents and an increase in the number and proportion of Hispanic/Latino residents from 2012 to 2022. In 2012, the town had an estimated 150 Black residents (5.6% of the population) and an estimated 77 Hispanic/Latino residents (2.9% of the population). By 2022, the town had an estimated 72 Black residents (2.5% of the population) and an estimated 134 Hispanic/Latino residents (4.6% of the population). Figure 2.5 compares the racial/ethnic population characteristics for the Town of Grottoes, Rockingham County, and Augusta County in 2022.

Table 2.3. Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2012-2022

Year	White	Percent	Black	Percent	Hispanic/Latino	Percent
2012	2,412	90.7%	150	5.6%	77	2.9%
2022	2,577	88.7%	72	2.5%	134	4.6%

Figure 2.5. Percent Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2022

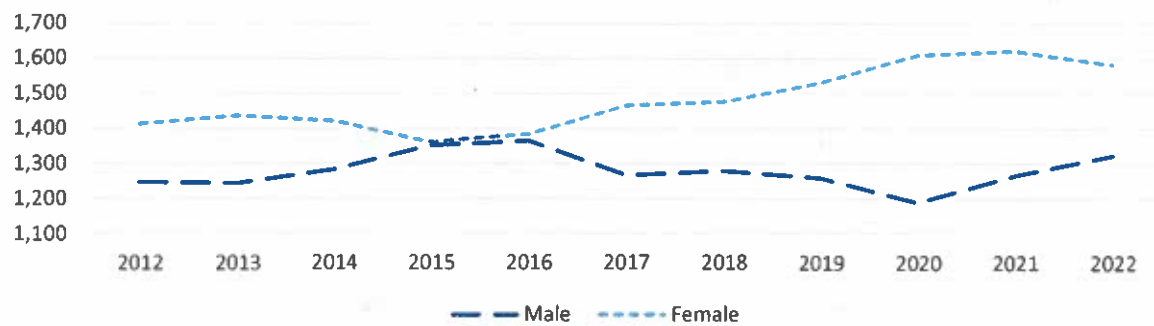


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP05, 2022

Sex/Gender

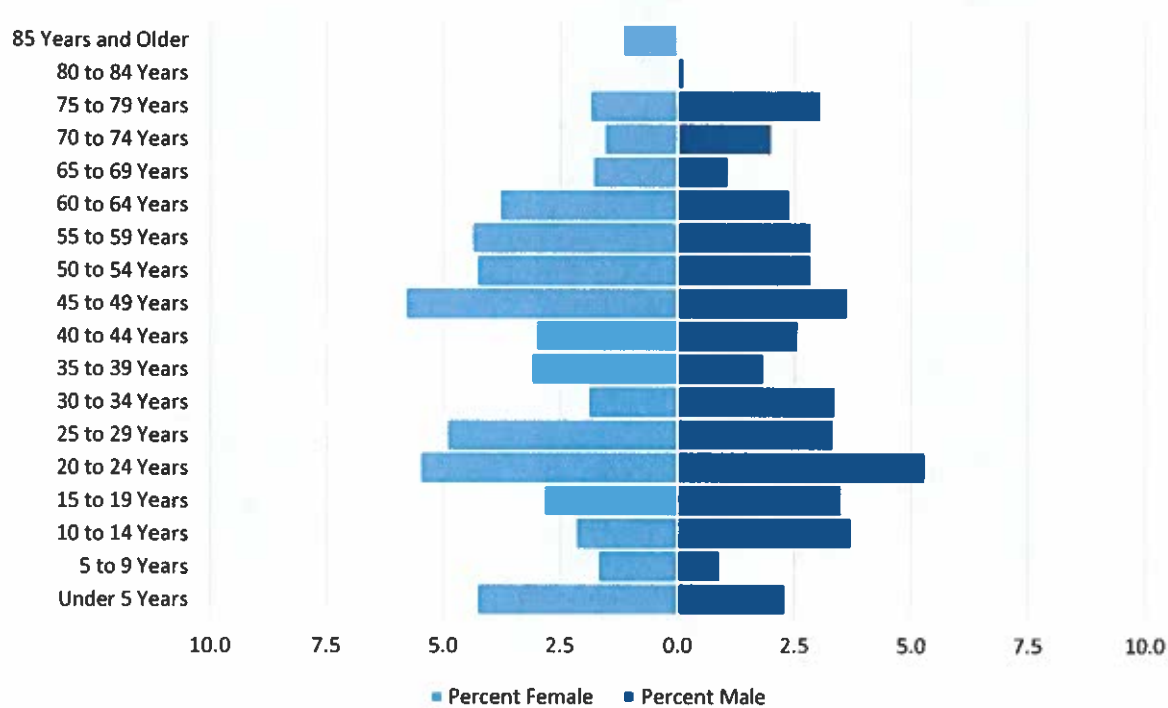
According to American Community Survey, the Town of Grottoes has slightly more female residents than male residents. While the ratio of male to female residents has fluctuated somewhat over the last ten years, the town has consistently had a higher number of female residents since at least 2012. Figure 2.6 illustrates the sex/gender population characteristics for the Town of Grottoes from 2012 to 2022. Figure 2.7 details the percent of the town's total population by age and sex in 2022.

Figure 2.6. Population by Sex (2012-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

Figure 2.7. Percent of Total Population by Age and Sex (2022)

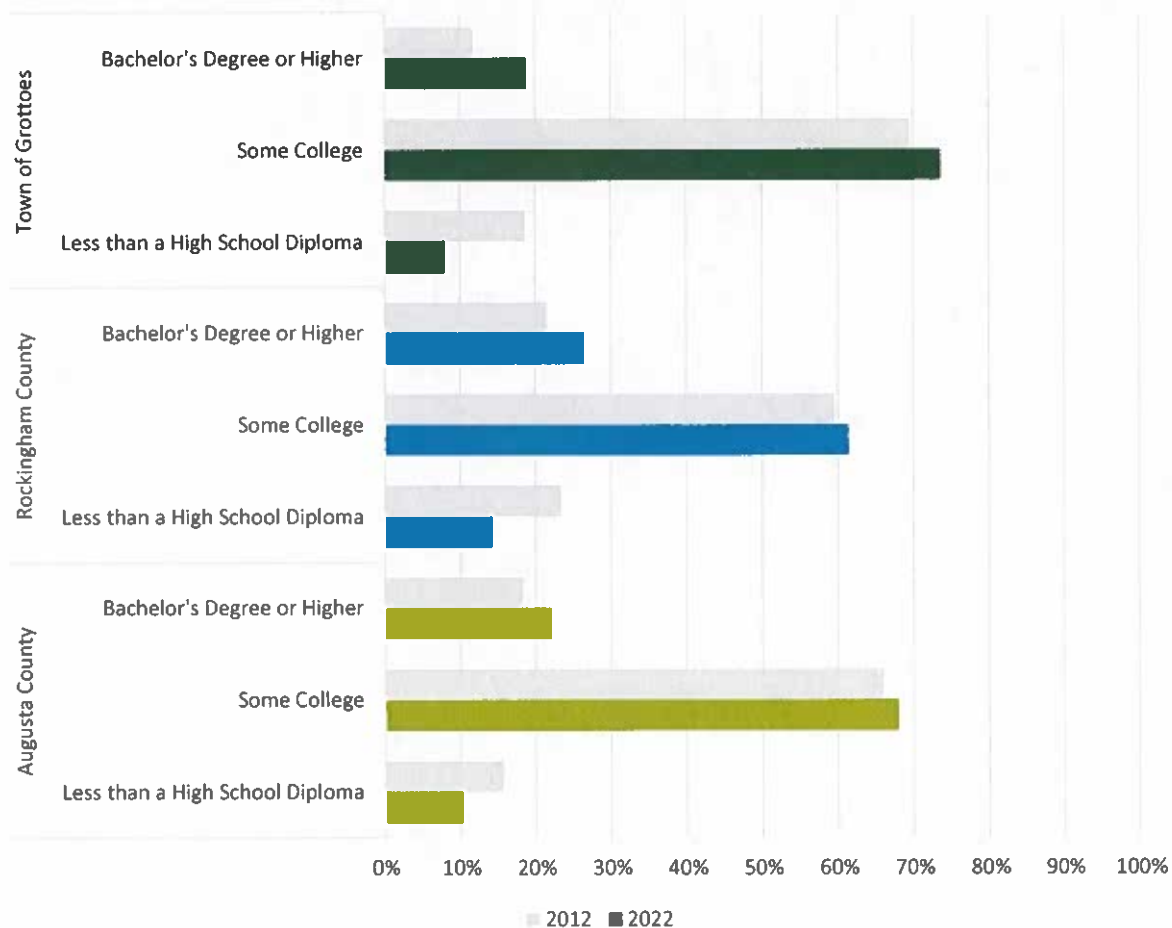


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B01001, 2022

## Education

According to the American Community Survey, the Town of Grottoes experienced an increase in the number and percentage of residents with a high school diploma or some college experience and the number and percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher from 2012 to 2022. The percent of residents with less than a high school diploma has decreased from 18.7% in 2012 to only 7.8% in 2022 (a decrease of 51.1%). The percent of town residents with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased from 11.8% in 2012 to 18.7% in 2022 (an increase of 87.0%). Figure 2.8 illustrates educational attainment for the Town of Grottoes, Rockingham County, and Augusta County from 2012 to 2022.

**Figure 2.8. Educational Attainment (2012-2022)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

# APPENDIX A

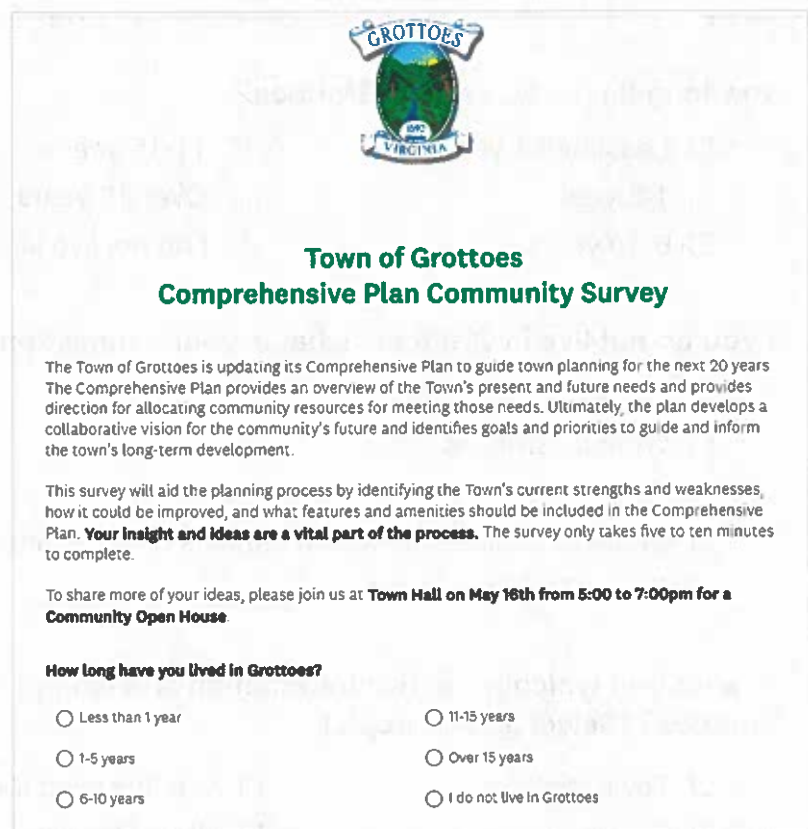
# GROTTOES COMMUNITY SURVEY

Citizen input for the comprehensive plan update was obtained through a community survey advertised on the Town's website and social media pages. A paper version of the survey was also made available at the Town Hall. The survey opened March 21, 2024 and closed June 8, 2024 and received 424 responses. As outlined below, this appendix provides a copy of the survey questionnaire and summarizes the multiple choice and short answer responses.

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey questionnaire was developed by Comprehensive Plan Committee and organized by the CSPDC. The questionnaire had 16 questions, two of which were short answer responses. These questions were intended to inform the comprehensive planning process by assessing current conditions, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and rating future needs and priorities.

The figure on the right provides a glimpse of the online version of the survey hosted on SurveyMonkey. The complete survey questionnaire starts on the next page.



The screenshot shows the title page of the survey. At the top is the Town of Grottoes logo, which features a globe with a green landmass and a blue ocean, surrounded by a banner that says "GROTTOES" and another that says "2024 VIRGINIA". Below the logo, the title "Town of Grottoes Comprehensive Plan Community Survey" is displayed in green. The main text explains that the town is updating its Comprehensive Plan for the next 20 years and that the survey will help identify current strengths and weaknesses. It also mentions that the survey only takes five to ten minutes to complete. At the bottom, there is a question "How long have you lived in Grottoes?" with five radio button options: "Less than 1 year", "1-5 years", "6-10 years", "11-15 years", and "Over 15 years". There is also an option "I do not live in Grottoes".

**Town of Grottoes**  
**Comprehensive Plan Community Survey**

The Town of Grottoes is updating its Comprehensive Plan to guide town planning for the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of the Town's present and future needs and provides direction for allocating community resources for meeting those needs. Ultimately, the plan develops a collaborative vision for the community's future and identifies goals and priorities to guide and inform the town's long-term development.

This survey will aid the planning process by identifying the Town's current strengths and weaknesses, how it could be improved, and what features and amenities should be included in the Comprehensive Plan. **Your insight and ideas are a vital part of the process.** The survey only takes five to ten minutes to complete.

To share more of your ideas, please join us at **Town Hall on May 16th from 5:00 to 7:00pm for a Community Open House.**

**How long have you lived in Grottoes?**

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 1-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ Over 15 years

☐ I do not live in Grottoes



# Grottoes Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

The Town of Grottoes is updating its Comprehensive Plan to guide town planning for the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of the Town's present and future needs and provides direction for allocating community resources for meeting those needs. Ultimately, the plan develops a collaborative vision for the community's future and identifies goals and priorities to guide and inform the town's long-term development.

This survey will aid the planning process by identifying the Town's current strengths and weaknesses, how it could be improved, and what features and amenities should be included in the Comprehensive Plan. **Your insight and ideas are a vital part of the process.** The survey only takes five to ten minutes to complete. The survey can also be taken online: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GrottoesPlan>

To share more of your ideas, please join us at **Town Hall on May 16<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 7:00pm for a Community Open House.**

## 1. How long have you lived in Grottoes?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 years        | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 15 years             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years       | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not live in Grottoes |

## 2. If you do not live in Grottoes, what is your connection to the town?

- ☐ N/A – I live in Grottoes
- ☐ Work in Grottoes
- ☐ Travel through Grottoes for work/school
- ☐ Come to Grottoes for social reasons or amenities
- ☐ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. How do you typically receive information and emergency updates from the Town of Grottoes? (Select all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town Website                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly town newsletter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Social Media            | <input type="checkbox"/> Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center (HRECC) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): _____ |  |



4. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following town services:	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
Town water and sewer services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire protection and emergency services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Library services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parks & recreation facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trash collection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visual appearance of Grottoes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Branding and promotion of Grottoes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town Communication (events, news, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental sustainability initiatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall town/government effectiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**5. Which of these additional community services and amenities would you like to see in Grottoes? (Select all that apply)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career / Training center                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Gym                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public / Community transportation                             | <input type="checkbox"/> A community pool              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative / Maker's Space                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Curbside recycling collection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food pantry / Thrift resources                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional playgrounds        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanded walking and biking trails                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Community gardens             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved sports facilities (fields, courts, etc)              | <input type="checkbox"/> Community center              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor spaces for community events, concerts, and gatherings |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____                                  |  |

6. Please rate the following aspects of Grottoes' housing stock:	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
The quality of housing options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The affordability of housing options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The variety of housing options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



7. What types of new development would you most like to see in Grottoes in the next 10-20 years? (Select the three you would most like to see)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single-family residential | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial (retail, restaurants, office, etc.)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Townhomes/Duplexes        | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial (manufacturing, warehouses, etc.)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apartments                | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational (parks, trails, community center)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modular homes             | <input type="checkbox"/> Renovation of existing buildings and facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior housing            | <input type="checkbox"/> No new development                              |

8. What types of businesses or industry would you like to see come to Grottoes? (Select the three you would most like to see)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail / Shopping     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants / Cafes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Daycare / Preschool   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels / B&Bs                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |  |

9. Which of the following features should the town prioritize over the next 10-20 years (Select the three you would most like the Town to prioritize)

- ☐ Historic preservation of town locations & structures
- ☐ Community events and activities
- ☐ Town branding & promotion
- ☐ Main street and town appearance
- ☐ New shops and businesses
- ☐ Greater quantity and variety of housing options
- ☐ Parks and recreation facilities
- ☐ Transportation & pedestrian improvements
- ☐ Environmental sustainability initiatives (green spaces, recycling or composting programs, events, etc.)
- ☐ Local leadership and government services

10. Please rate the following aspects of Grottoes transportation system:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Condition of Roadways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traffic Flow	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traffic Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pedestrian and Bicycle Friendliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town Wayfinding and Directional Signage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**11. What improvements would you most like to see in Grottoes transportation infrastructure?**  
(Select the three you would most like to see)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional sidewalks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wayfinding signage  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bike lanes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public transit or micro-transit service                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repaving roadways   | <input type="checkbox"/> Bike-share program  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intersection safety improvements<br>(additional traffic lights, turn lanes, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic calming (reducing speed<br>limits, speed humps, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____  |  |

**12. How old are you?**

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24    | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34    | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-75   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44    | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 75 |

**13. Which of the following best describes you? (Select all that apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other              |

**14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school diploma or equivalent  | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma or equivalent            | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/Technical Degree or Certification | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree or higher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college                                 |  |

**15. What is your favorite thing about Grottoes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**16. If you could change one thing about Grottoes, what would it be:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You for Your Help!**

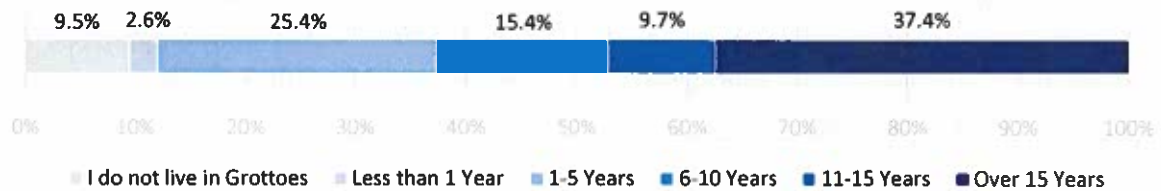
Please Return the Completed Survey to The Town of Grottoes

Office Location: 601 Dogwood Ave, Grottoes, VA 24441

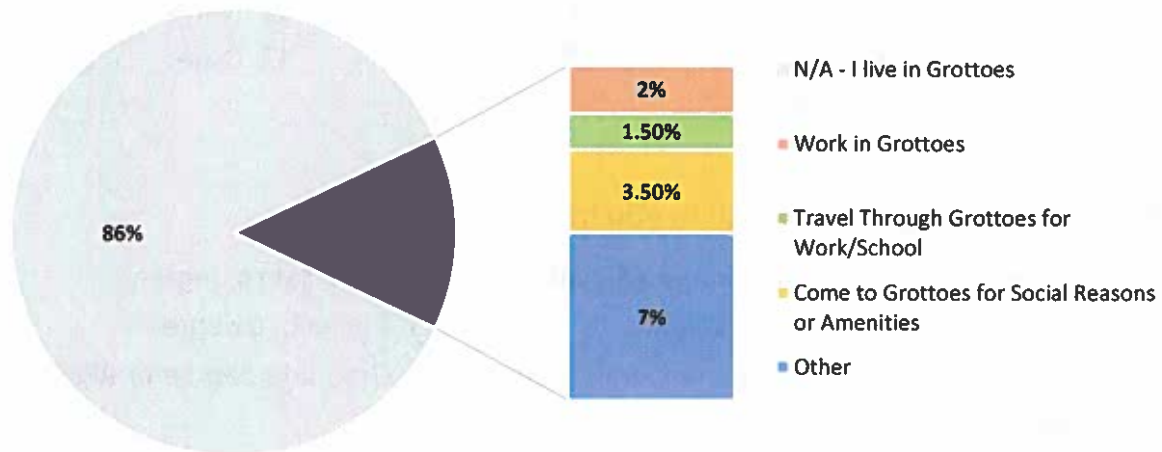
Email: [jeremy@cspdc.org](mailto:jeremy@cspdc.org)

## Survey Responses

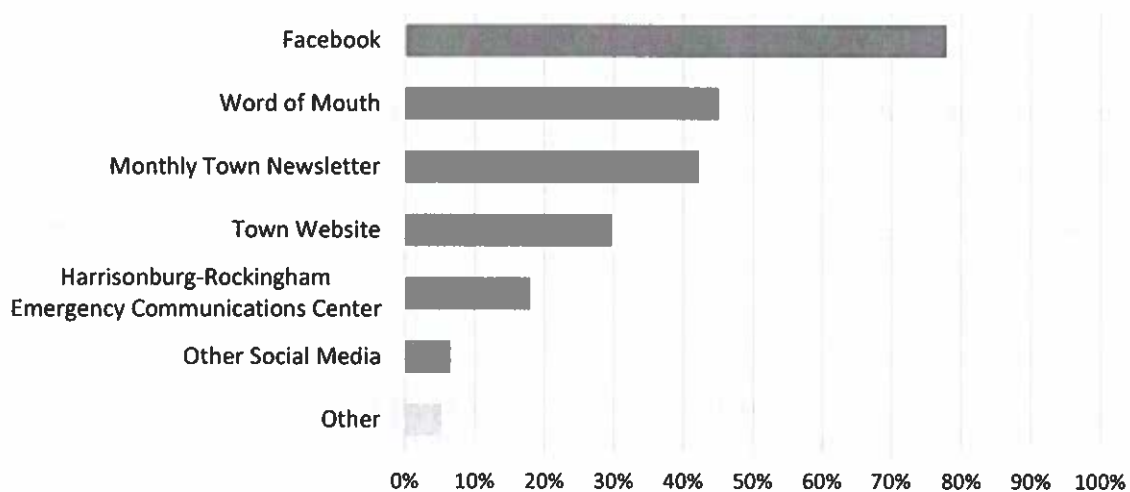
### 1. How long have you lived in Grottoes?



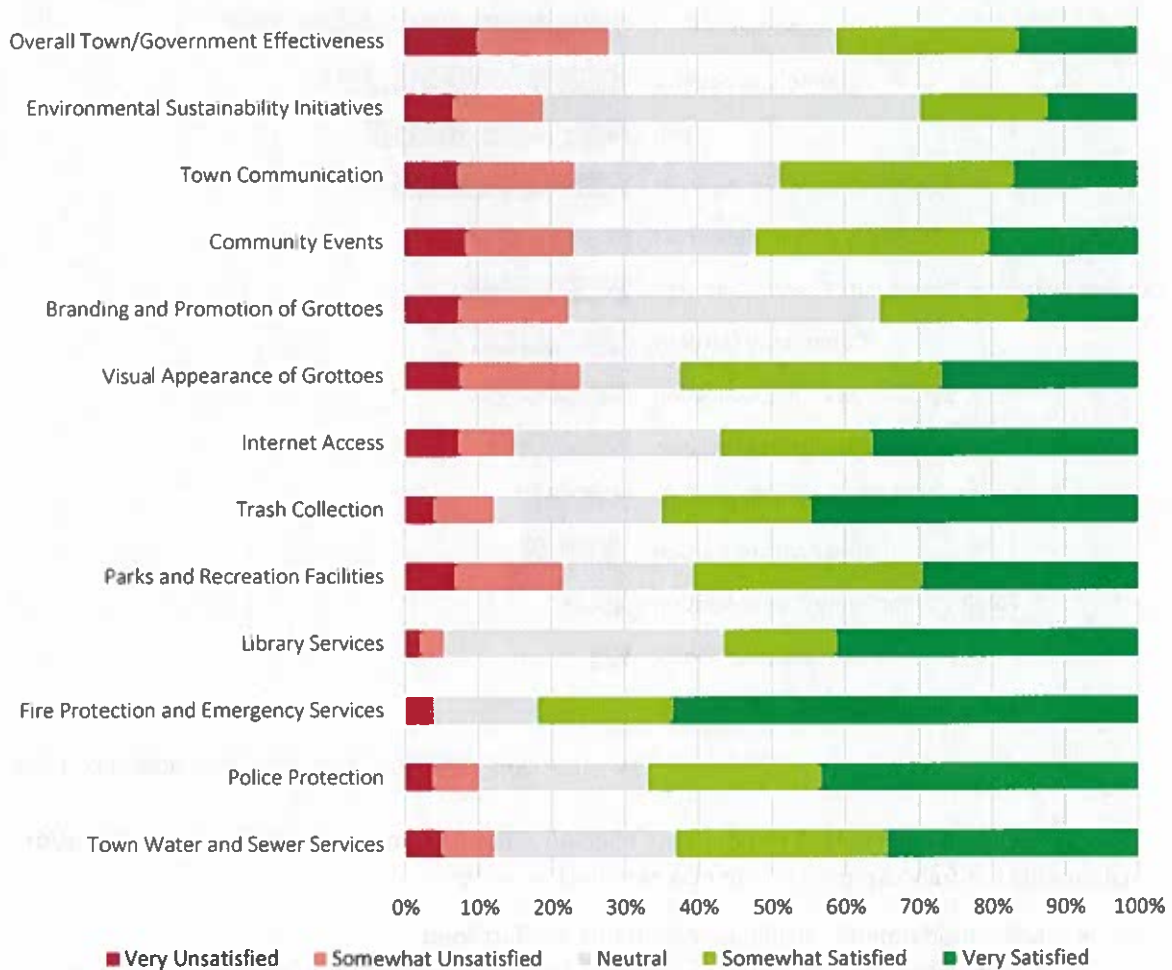
### 2. If you do not live in Grottoes, what is your connection to the town?



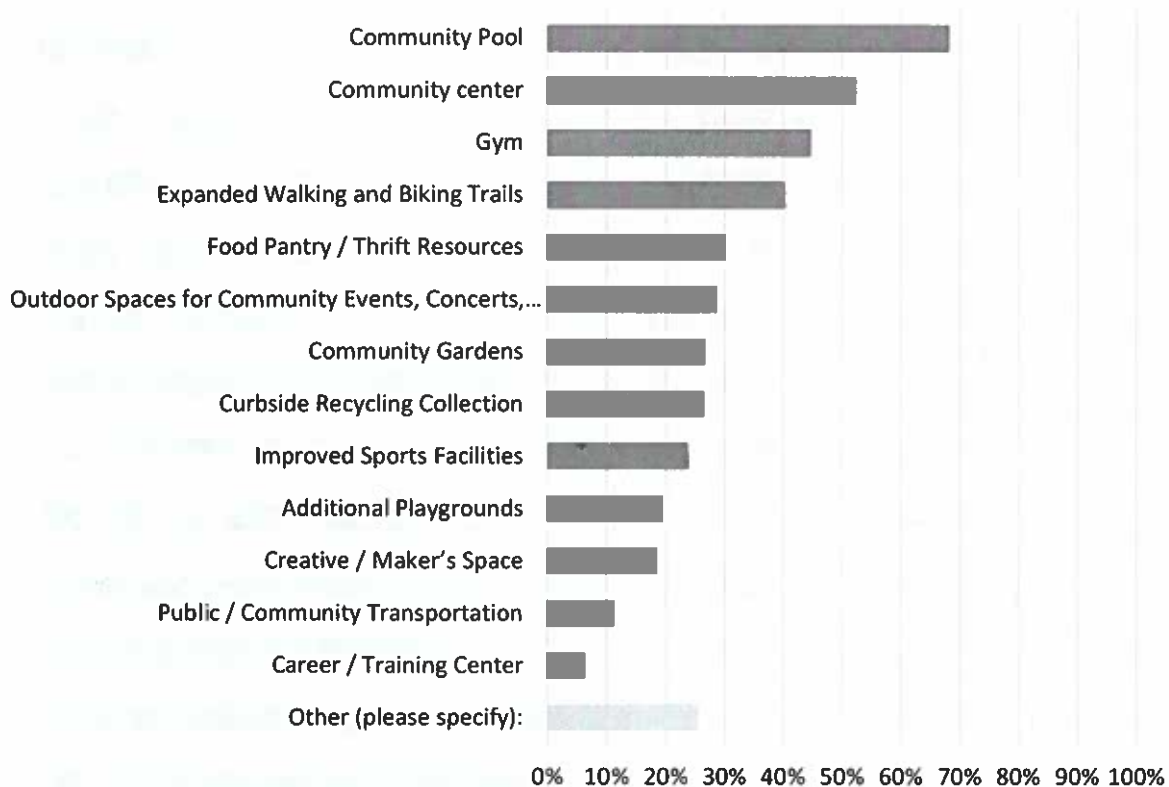
### 3. How do you typically receive information and emergency updates from the Town of Grottoes? (Select all that apply)



**4. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following town services:**



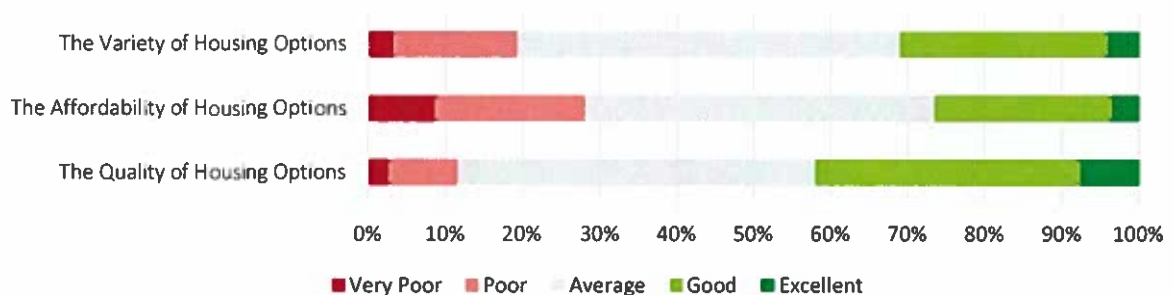
**5. Which of these additional community services and amenities would you like to see in Grottoes?  
(Select all that apply)**



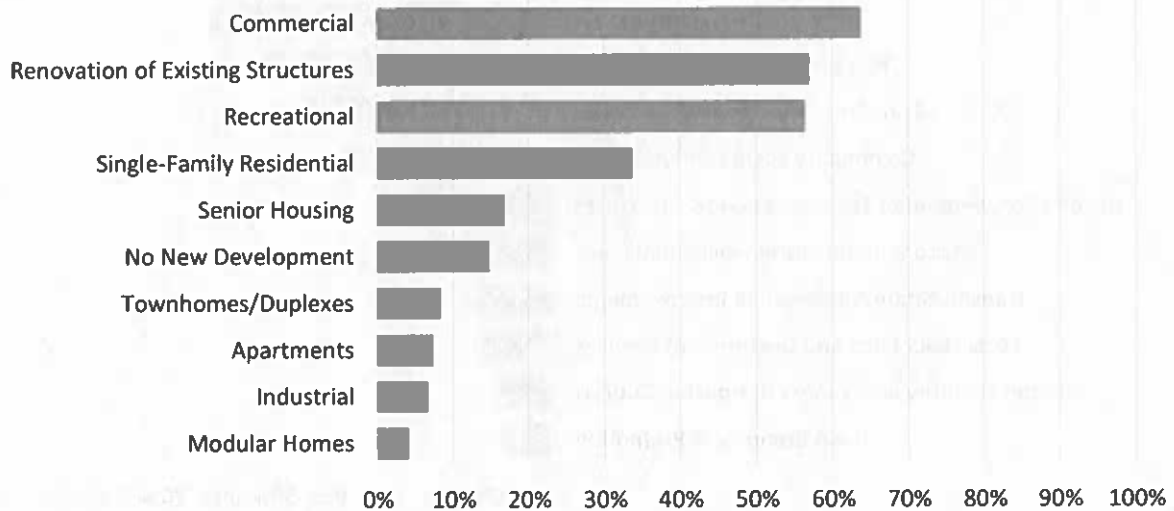
Nearly twenty-five percent of respondents selected 'Other.' The most common comments and/or comments not fully captured by the original selection were:

- More food options, including restaurants and fast food
- Street improvements, including additional signage and expanded crosswalks/sidewalks
- Expanding small-business/commercial use

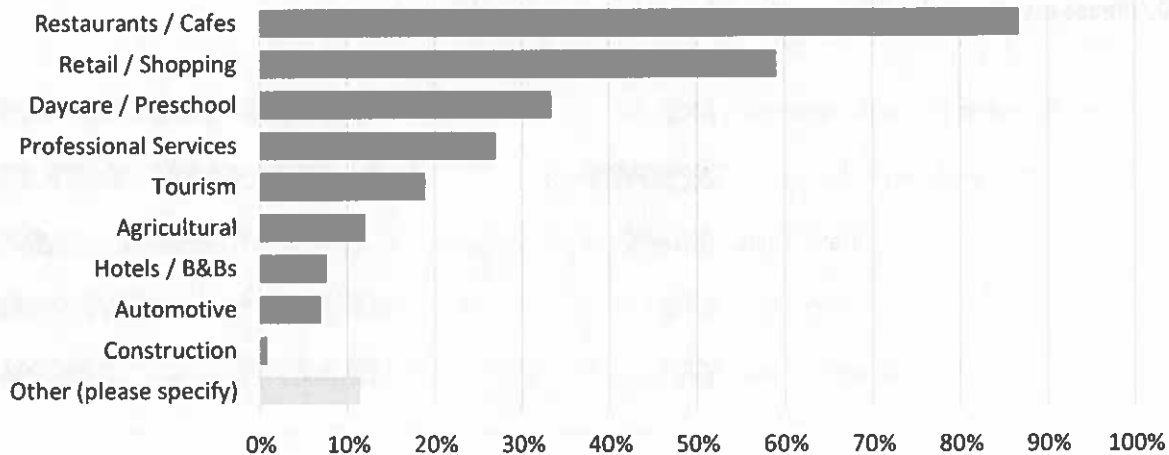
**6. Please rate the following aspects of Grottoes' housing stock:**



**7. What types of new development would you most like to see in Grottoes in the next 10-20 years? (Select the three you would most like to see)**



**8. What types of businesses or industry would you like to see come to Grottoes? (Select the three you would most like to see)**



Nearly twelve percent of respondents selected 'Other.' The most common comments and/or comments not fully captured by the original selection were:

- A gym or fitness center
- A community recreation center
- A center for arts and crafts

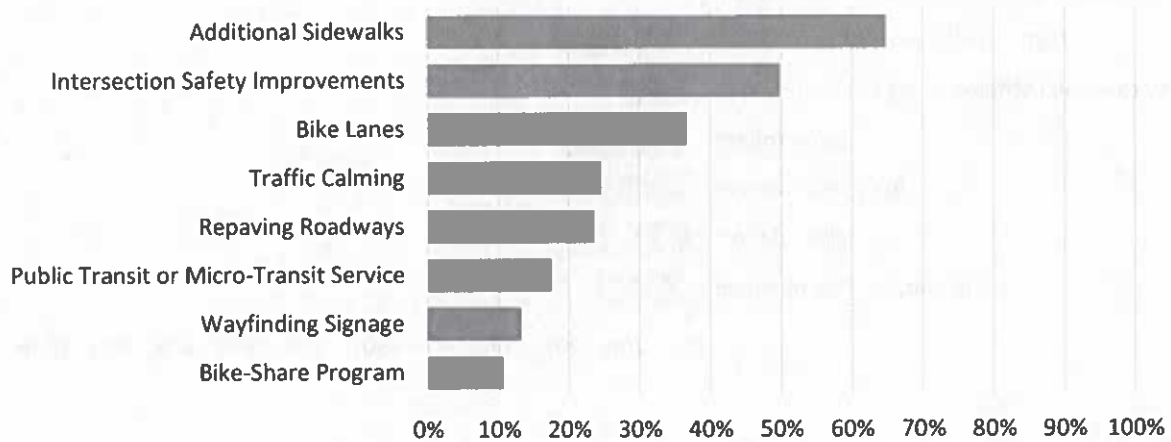
**9. Which of the following features should the town prioritize over the next 10-20 years (Select the three you would most like the Town to prioritize)**



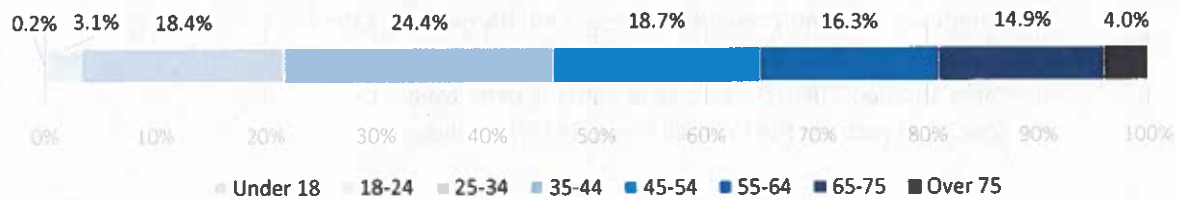
**10. Please rate the following aspects of Grottoes transportation system:**



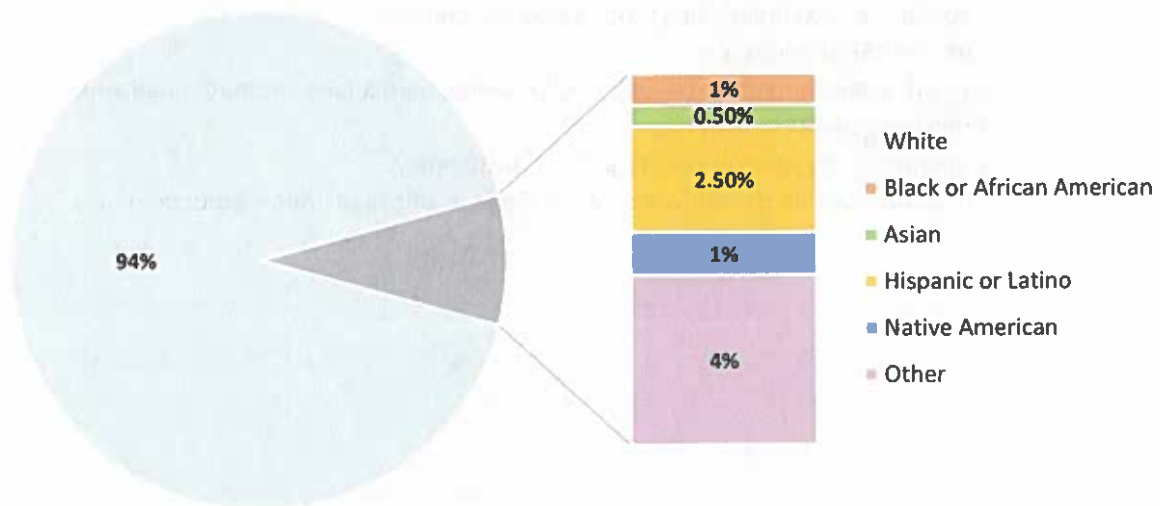
11. What improvements would you most like to see in Grottoes transportation infrastructure? (Select the three you would most like to see)



12. How old are you?

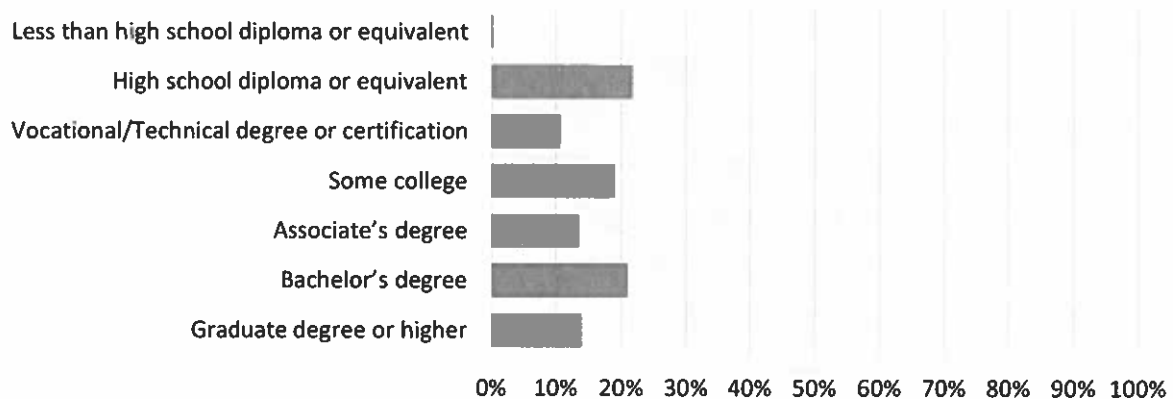


13. Which of the following best describes you?





**14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**



**15. What is your favorite thing about Grottoes?**

- a. Character: Small-town feel, quaint, quiet, peaceful, aesthetic charm
- b. Community: Friendly neighbors, close-knit, hometown, safety
- c. Location: Proximity to cities, access to nature, aesthetic charm
- d. Parks and Rec: Town parks, Grand Caverns park, trails
- e. Specific Mentions: the Pool, Lil Gus, Fire Dept. Chicken

**16. If you could change one thing about Grottoes, what would it be?**

- a. Aesthetics: Code enforcement, building facades
- b. More Amenities: Gym, recreation, community center
- c. Commercial: shopping variety, supporting small businesses/local markets
- d. Food: more restaurants, fast food, ice cream, choices
- e. The Pool: Fix it and reopen
- f. Growth Management: anti-"excessive" housing, particularly without added amenities; bring back small town feeling
- g. Community engagement, leadership + transparency
- h. Street improvements: sidewalks, street lights, traffic regulation + enforcement