

Responsible Land Use: Why Cottage Housing Is Not Sprawl

The Issue: Some Georgetown residents worry that allowing cottage housing will encourage sprawl or overdevelopment. This concern is understandable, especially in a fast-growing county like Sussex. The fear often comes from seeing large subdivisions or highway-oriented development spreading outward.

The Fact: Cottage Housing Developments are the opposite of sprawl. They use land efficiently, fit within existing neighborhoods, and redirect growth into Georgetown rather than pushing it further out into farmland and open space. They help the Town grow responsibly by placing modest homes in walkable, serviced locations.

Cottage Homes Use Land More Efficiently

Cottage communities provide right-sized, stick-built homes in a compact, well-planned layout. This approach:

- Places homes on underused or vacant parcels
- Uses and can improve existing water, sewer, and road infrastructure
- Reduces the need to extend utilities into rural areas
- Encourages walking, cycling, and short trips instead of long commutes

This is exactly the kind of infill development promoted across small towns in the United States to avoid sprawl.

Why Cottage Housing Fits Georgetown's Existing Pattern

Georgetown's traditional neighborhoods already include:

- Modest homes on small lots
- Walkable blocks near downtown and Market Street
- Homes close to schools, houses of worship, and local businesses

Cottage homes reinforce this pattern by placing modest housing where infrastructure already exists. This protects farmland and open space outside Town while giving local workers, young adults, seniors, and veterans homes close to essential services.

The Role of Infill Development

Infill development is the practice of building new homes within already developed areas. It is widely used across our country to:

- Strengthen town centers
- Reduce traffic from long commutes
- Lower infrastructure costs
- Support local businesses
- Reduce pressure to rezone rural land

Cottage Housing Developments help Georgetown follow these same principles. Instead of spreading outward, they invest in the Town's core.

What Cottage Housing Prevents

By directing growth into walkable areas, cottage housing helps prevent:

- Leapfrog development in rural areas
- Costly infrastructure extensions
- Loss of open space and farmland
- Long, sometimes dangerous vehicle commutes
- Automobile dependent subdivisions far from services

Responsible land use is not about stopping growth. It is about shaping growth so that it strengthens the community instead of stretching it thin.

The Bottom Line

Cottage Housing Developments are a responsible way for Georgetown to grow. They place modest, stick-built homes for local workers, young adults, seniors, and veterans within the Town core, close to jobs and services.

This approach protects rural land, maintains small town character, and ensures that growth happens in an orderly, efficient, and sustainable way.

There are more than 35 comparable cottage housing developments across the United States. The oldest opened in 2003. Cottage housing is normal, safe, and mature.

