

Fitchburg Park & Open Space Proposal

Public Hearing: Thursday, March 6, 2008

Scenic Resource Inventory: Friday, March 28, 2008

In 1970, the City of Fitchburg had over 18,880 acres of rural and agricultural land. In 2000, that acreage had been reduced to about 12,000 acres. As Fitchburg develops, it becomes increasingly critical to plan for the preservation of its open space and natural areas. There is an opportunity, as the community grows, to preserve parcels of land that contain significant environmental and historical/cultural resources. By linking these resources through environmental corridors, we can create a greenway system of parks, open space, and preserved land that will further protect and enhance the natural areas of Fitchburg for future generations. We can protect wildlife corridors and groundwater recharge areas, and at the same time, provide diverse recreational opportunities for the community.

To identify these areas of environmental and cultural importance, the City of Fitchburg's Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department developed a resource-based planning proposal by collecting and mapping all known relevant resources. Environmental resources that have been considered include wetlands, water features (streams, open water, drainage ways, springs), woodlots, rare plant habitat, groundwater recharge areas, hydric soils, productive soils (farming), steep topography, and public lands. Many heritage oak trees, estimated to be at least 200 years old, have also been inventoried.

Fitchburg also has a rich cultural heritage and many historic buildings still remain. The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department has also identified these resources. They include five places on the National Register of Historic Places and other historic places, buildings, and schoolhouses. Various archaeological relics also have been identified in the area and these include trails, camps, and mounds. In addition, Fitchburg has a significant industrial and agricultural history that has included lead mining, stone quarrying, and farming.

All of these aforementioned resources have been mapped so that the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department, the Planning & Zoning Department, and the Parks Commission could work together to determine the most sensitive areas, which are critical for protection outside of Fitchburg's urban service area. To view the resource-based proposal map refer to the Parks & Forestry home page (http://www.city.fitchburg.wi.us/parks_forestry/). The City staff has presented these findings to the Plan Commission, Resource Conservation Commission and the Committee of the Whole. They have also given the public the opportunity to give feedback at the Land Use Element Open House on December 12, 2007. The public has another opportunity to provide feedback on the Park and Open Space Proposal at a public hearing scheduled for 7pm on Thursday, March 6, 2008.

There are a few ways that any interested individuals can get involved. The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department is extending the deadline for the scenic resource inventory. It is asking the public to submit photographs of the places they find most aesthetically pleasing within the city limits. To be included in the proposal, photographs must be submitted by March 28th. For further instruction, please refer to the Parks & Forestry home page or contact Dana Dentice at 270-4287. As residents of Fitchburg, each of us must decide how we want this community to develop. Your ability to affect your surroundings is a privilege; your participation is a necessity. To learn more or to submit a comment or suggestion, call or email any of the following Parks, Recreation & Forestry staff:

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