



**MEMORANDUM**

**City of Fitchburg  
Planning and Zoning Department**

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TO: Plan Commission  
FROM: Wade Thompson, Community Development Planner and Sonja Kruesel, City Planner/Zoning Administrator  
DATE: September 12, 2019  
SUBJECT: **2019-2020 Comprehensive Plan Update – Plan “Re-Framing”**

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The following provides further detail on a potential “re-framing” of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, as a component of the 2019-2020 plan update. **Per Council direction, this re-framing would not entail substantive change to the existing plan and similarly fits in to the “refresh” update process, also as directed by Council.**

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The City’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan was its first completed under the 1999 Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (Statute 66.1001). Similar to many other municipalities that were developing their first Comp Plans under this law, the City utilized a “formulaic” approach for plan content, including the following components:

- Voluminous amounts of background data/text, including much extraneous data/text that wasn’t analyzed to create policy direction
- Abstract policy direction and implementation mechanisms, with the general exception of the Land Use Chapter

The resulting plan was a thorough one that served the City well over the past decade, particularly the process used to identify future urban development areas (FUDA) on the Future Land Use Map. However, generally speaking, the plan is somewhat inaccessible to the public and City officials, little used by City staff outside of the Future Land Use Map and related land use policies, and lacks in articulating a concise, measurable direction for the City’s future. **Staff believes an effective Comp Plan should be accessible and usable, and specific and measurable in its policy direction.**

As such, staff is proposing a “re-framing” of the plan, entitled “Growing Fitchburg”, with “Growing” encapsulating various positive connotations. This proposed re-frame entails a re-organization of the existing Plan in to four chapters, with associated chapter elements. **The re-frame builds on existing, relevant City plans** and is premised on the concept of an integrated and holistic Plan (as opposed to the more “silo-ed” nature of the current Plan), which recognizes the overlapping nature of required Plan elements, per State Statute. Said re-frame addresses all of these required elements. The re-frame is further premised on developing a succinct and user-friendly Plan. **To**

**this point, the existing plan contains 36 maps. The re-frame would contain approximately 10 maps, with no loss of substantive content.**

Re-frame chapters (numbered below) and elements (lettered below) are outlined as follows:

**1. HOW will Fitchburg grow?**

- a. Sustainably
- b. Equitably
- c. Vibrantly
- d. Cooperatively

**2. What are the PILLARS of Fitchburg's growth?**

- a. Housing
- b. Education and Jobs
- c. Recreation

**3. What are the TOOLS Fitchburg needs to maintain its growth pillars?**

- a. Transportation
- b. Utilities
- c. Government

**4. WHERE will Fitchburg grow?**

- a. Greenfield
- b. Grayfield
- c. Farmfield

Generally speaking, Chapter 1. would entail creation of new content, with Chapters 2., 3., and 4. entailing updating/modifying, re-organizing, and winnowing down of existing Plan content, all as gleaned from the following:

- Relevant, existing City plans
- Input via Comp Plan update public survey and public meetings
- Analysis of new data, including trends, conditions/inventories, and projections

The following provides further detail on each of the proposed chapters:

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**1. HOW will Fitchburg grow? (i.e. growth principles)**

- a. **Sustainably** (i.e. developing, maintaining, enhancing, and allocating “resources” in a **sustainable** manner....resources implies those social, economic, and environmental)
- b. **Equitably** (i.e. developing, maintaining, enhancing, and allocating resources in an **equitable** manner)
- c. **Vibrantly** (i.e. developing, maintaining, enhancing, and allocating resources in an **attractive/appealing** manner)
- d. **Cooperatively** (i.e. an developing, maintaining, enhancing, and allocating resources in an **efficient, transparent, and collaborative** manner)

In reviewing and analyzing the City's mission and its various existing binding agreements, plans, ordinances, and staffing allocations, the above a. – d. appear to be common themes running

through these agreements, plans, ordinances, and staffing allocations. Additionally, a. – d. serve as tenets of “good planning”, generally speaking.

**As such, this chapter would define a. – d. and identify them as Fitchburg’s “growth principles”, providing a lens through which Fitchburg would grow.** Each of these principles, to the degree feasible, would form the basis for, and be integrated in to, general and specific policy direction identified in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Put another way, all policy direction in the aforementioned chapters would support and/or advance one or more of the growth principles.

The chapter would also identify and define two “geographies” through which these growth principles would be applied, as follows:

- a. Neighborhoods/Districts
- b. City (i.e. integrating existing and new individual neighborhoods/districts to create the City as a whole)

This chapter is envisioned to be 6-8 pages.

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## **2. What are the PILLARS of Fitchburg’s growth?** (i.e. the “three spaces” concept of live, work, play)

The three most basic spatial and temporal aspects of modern society, and the communities that compose them, consist of shelter, work (employment or schooling), and leisure. In planning jargon, this is often phrased as the “three spaces” concept of live, work, and play. **As such, this chapter would identify these aspects/concepts generally as “growth pillars”, and specifically as elements in a. – c. below:**

- a. **Housing**
- b. **Education and Jobs**
- c. **Recreation**

This chapter is envisioned to be 10-15 pages.

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## **3. What are the TOOLS Fitchburg needs to maintain its growth pillars?**

The aforementioned growth pillars of housing, education and jobs, and recreation (live, work, and play) require various support/maintenance components to ensure that communities/individuals can develop, maintain, enhance, and access them in a manner that advances societal goals and adheres to social norms. Commuting to a job on a well-maintained and uncongested roadway, ensuring potable water comes out of the tap, and that one has a level of comfort in walking alone in their neighborhood at night are all examples of these support/maintenance components. **As such, this chapter would identify these components generally as “growth tools”, and specifically as elements in a. – c. below:**

- a. **Transportation**
- b. **Utilities**
- c. **Government**

This chapter is envisioned to be 10-15 pages.

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#### 4. WHERE will Fitchburg grow? (i.e. growth sectors)

Fitchburg's unique geography offers multiple areas in which to grow and develop, including on farmland located on the developed fringes and within those areas already developed. Furthermore, Fitchburg has the opportunity to accommodate both of these types of growth, while concurrently "growing" its agricultural industry in its rural areas, to take advantage of new market trends and demands. **As such, this chapter would identify these areas generally as "growth sectors", and specifically as elements in a. – c. below:**

- a. **Greenfield** (i.e. New land development on the urban fringes.)
- b. **Grayfield** (i.e Re-development of land in existing developed areas.)
- c. **Farmfield** (i.e Supporting and enhancing the City's agricultural industry in its rural area.)

This chapter would culminate in a Future Land Use Map, with major Map and accompanying text components to include:

- a. Greenfield Future Development Areas (existing FUDAs), to include area/land use descriptions and neighborhood planning concepts
- b. Grayfield Future Development Areas (proposed infill areas within current Urban Service Area), to include area/land use descriptions and neighborhood planning concepts
- c. Farmfield Future Development Areas (rural lands outside of existing FUDAs and Urban Service Area), to include area/land use descriptions and planning concepts

This chapter is envisioned to be 10-15 pages.

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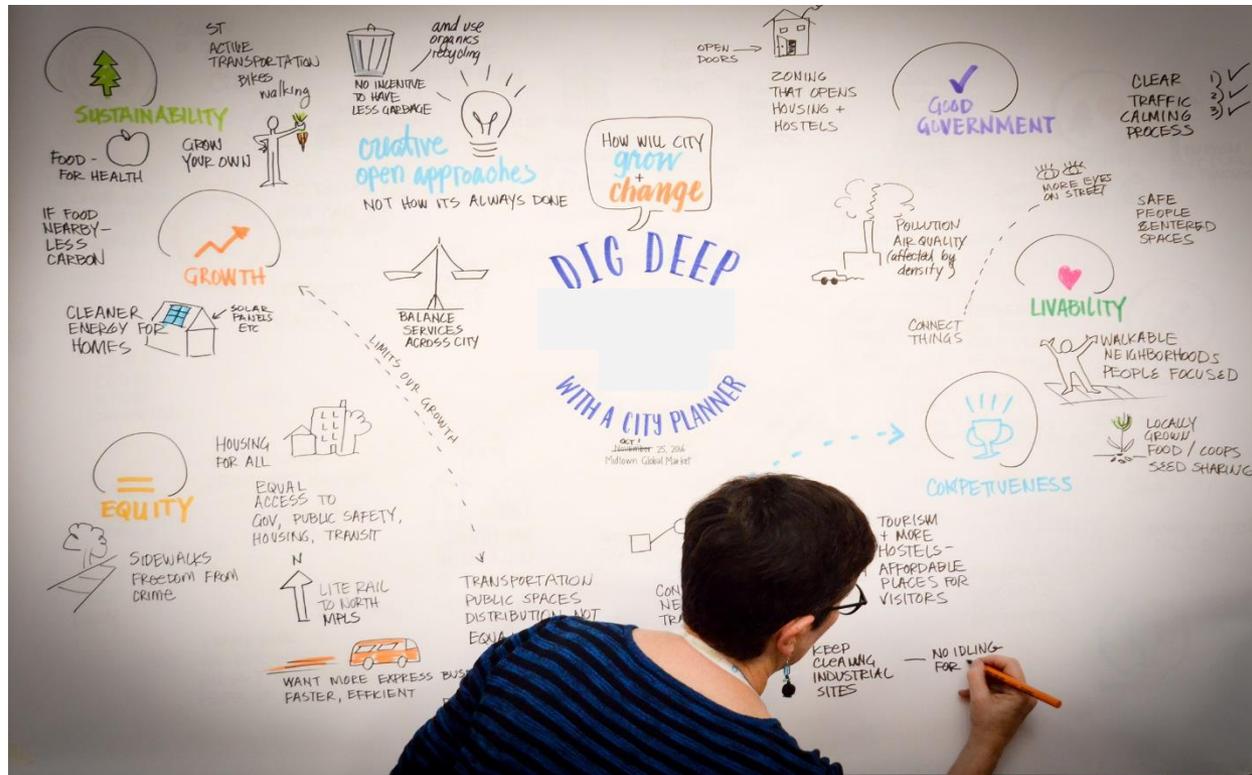
Each element of Chapters 2. – 4. would contain and be formatted in the following manner:

1. Brief text introduction
  2. Various tables, graphs, maps, and images that visually and succinctly portray data, including basic trends, existing conditions/inventories, and projections
  3. Cursory (i.e. bulleted, dialog boxes, etc.) analysis of trends, existing conditions/inventories, and projections
  4. General and specific policy direction formulated in a consistent format and reflecting the City's growth principles and geographies, with associated implementation framework, as gleaned from the following:
    - a. Relevant, existing City plans
    - b. Input via Comp Plan update public survey and public meetings
    - c. Analysis of trends, conditions/inventories, and projections
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# City of Fitchburg Comp Plan Update 2020

1

## Potential Plan “Re-Frame” – September 2019



# City of Fitchburg Comp Plan Update 2020

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- Tonight
  - A potential new “frame” for the Plan update
    - Why?
    - What?
      - The “meat” of the update.....Goals, Policy Direction, and Implementation

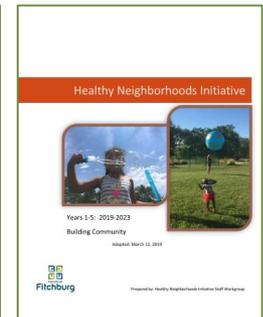
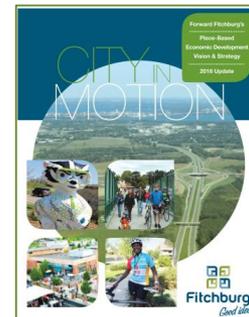
Why a new frame?

# A New “Frame”

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## □ PROBLEM:

- The existing plan is voluminous....bigger isn't always better.
- Much of the existing plan's policy language is abstract....how do we know if our plan is effective and achieving success?
  - Given the aforementioned, the plan is somewhat difficult for City policy-makers, staff, and residents to access and use.
- A lot of planning work has been done in past 5 years+ to support the Comp Plan...i.e. how do we build on, and not duplicate, all this work?



# A New “Frame”

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## ■ SOLUTION: A new “Frame”

- Staff’s goal is to ensure that the Plan is accessible, use-able, effective, and builds on previous work....and one that all of the aforementioned stakeholders want to access and use.
- Staff understands that a new frame will entail more work....but feels a new frame will be an improvement over the existing Plan frame, and will ultimately serve the City better.



**Existing Plan = 36 maps**

**New Plan Frame = 10 maps (approximate)...with no loss of substantive content**

# A New “Frame”

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## ■ SOLUTION: A new “Frame”

- The proposed new frame will not “water-down” the Plan update, nor make the update more “heavy-handed” or “flexible”.
- The proposed new frame fits within the “Refresh” Plan update direction given by Council to staff.

What is the new “Frame”?

# A New “Frame”

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## □ **GROWING FITCHBURG:**

□ Healthy communities “grow” .....

□ Growth implies many different things:

- Maintaining existing and developing new housing, businesses/jobs, roads, parks, etc.
- Maintaining and enhancing City government delivery of services to it's residents/businesses
- Maintaining and enhancing trust between City officials, staff, and residents/businesses



# A New “Frame” for the Update

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## □ **GROWING FITCHBURG:**

### □ 4 Chapters....**HOW, WHAT, AND WHERE?**

1. **HOW** will Fitchburg grow?
2. **WHAT** are the **pillars** of Fitchburg’s growth?
3. **WHAT** are the **tools** Fitchburg needs to maintain it’s growth pillars?
4. **WHERE** will Fitchburg grow?



# A New “Frame”

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## □ GROWING FITCHBURG:

### 1. **HOW** will Fitchburg grow?

Via growth principles....this means developing, maintaining, enhancing, and allocating “resources”:

■ **Sustainably**



■ **Equitably**



■ **Vibrantly**



■ **Cooperatively**



# A New “Frame” for the Update

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## □ GROWING FITCHBURG:

### □ Why these growth principles?

- All-encompassing and integrated
- Tenets of “good” planning, generally speaking
- Themes woven through existing City plans, policies, ordinances, agreements, facilities, committee/commissions, staff allocations, etc.



# A New “Frame” for the Update

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## □ GROWING FITCHBURG:

- Growth principles applied to two “geographies”:



- Individual Neighborhoods/Districts

Neighborhood A

Entertainment  
District

Business  
District

Neighborhood B

- City (i.e. integrating existing and new individual neighborhoods/districts to create the City as a whole)

Neighborhood A

Entertainment  
District

Business  
District

Neighborhood B

# A New “Frame”

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## □ GROWING FITCHBURG:



### 1. **WHAT** are the **pillars** of Fitchburg’s growth?

- **Housing (Live)**
- **Education and Jobs (Work)**
- **Recreation (Play)**

Think about your life and how and where you spend your time....does it fit in to one of the three components above?



# A New “Frame”

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## □ GROWING FITCHBURG:



3. **WHAT** are the **tools** Fitchburg needs to maintain its growth pillars?

- **Transportation**
- **Utilities**
- **Government**

The “nuts and bolts” of growth....



# A New “Frame”

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## □ GROWING FITCHBURG:



### 4. **WHERE** will Fitchburg grow? (Growth sectors)

- **Greenfield**...this means: New land development on the urban fringes.
- **Grayfield**....this means: Re-development of land in existing developed areas.
- **Farmfield**...this means: Supporting and enhancing the City’s agricultural industry in its rural areas.

The “meat” of the update frame....  
Goals, Policy Direction, and Implementation

# Goals, Policy Direction, and Implementation

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- The “meat” of each chapter:
  - 1. Definitions of growth principles (goals)
  - 2., 3., and 4. Policy direction and an implementation framework that supports and advances the growth principles, and previous relevant planning work (Chapter 4 to also include **future land use map**, as policy direction/implementation framework.)



# Goals, Policy Direction, and Implementation

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**Implementation**



**Policy Direction**



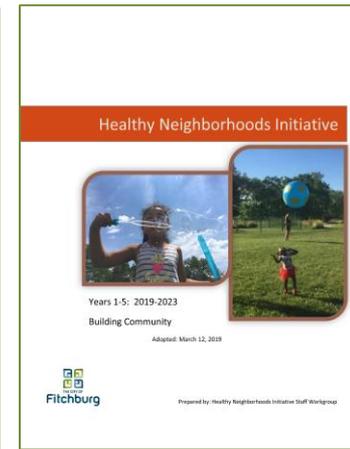
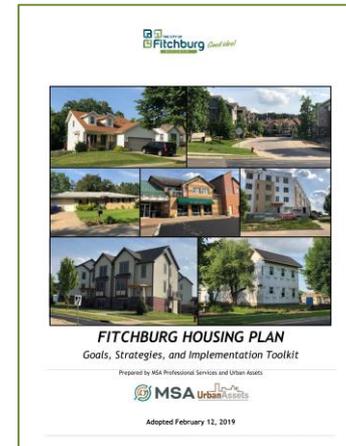
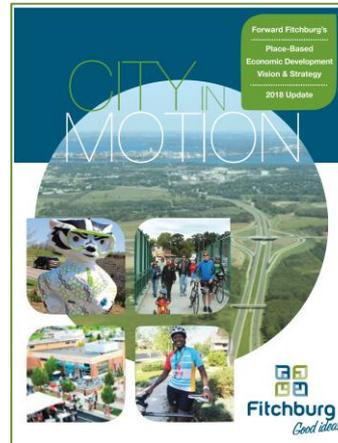
**Goals**



- Existing sub-plans
- Resident, City Committee, and Council feedback
  - Data and best planning practices
  - Staff analysis

# Goals, Policy Direction, and Implementation

The City has approximately 15 different “sub-plans” that do, or should, inform the Comp Plan.



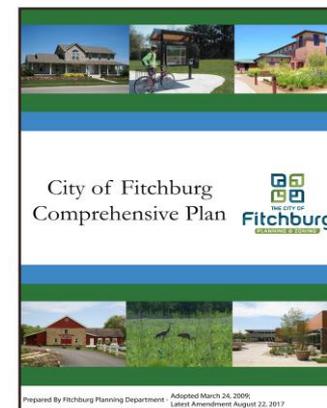
□ **PROBLEM:**

The City has approximately 15 different “sub-plans” that do, or should, inform the Comp Plan.

How does the GOAL, POLICY DIRECTION, and IMPLEMENTATION framework of the Comp Plan update build upon, not replicate, and stay consistent with all these recent plans?

AND

How does the Comp Plan become more of a “living/working” Plan?



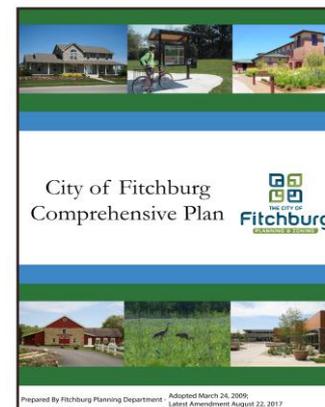
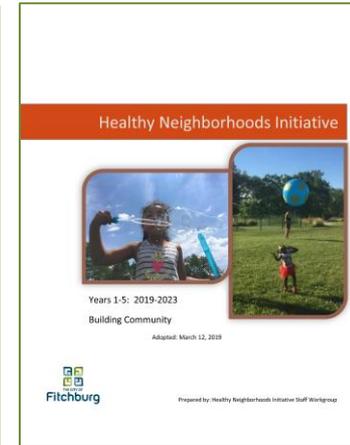
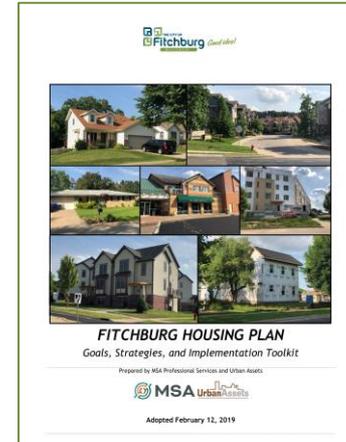
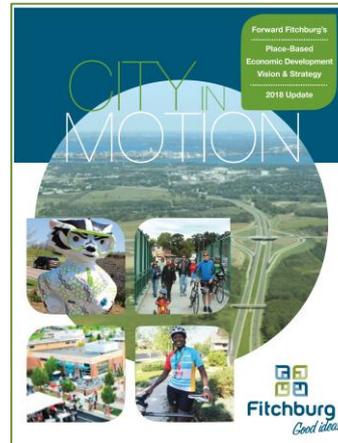
# Goals

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## □ SOLUTION – GOALS:

1. Review of sub-plans and policies, and identify prominent, over-arching “themes”
2. Identify themes as Growth Principles, define Growth Principles, and utilize them as “Goals”...i.e. **Fitchburg will grow:**

- **Sustainably**
- **Equitably**
- **Vibrantly**
- **Cooperatively**

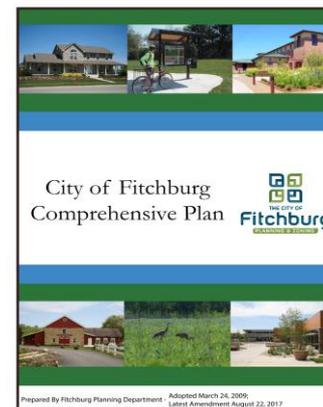
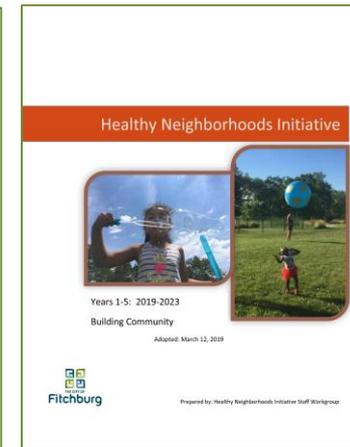
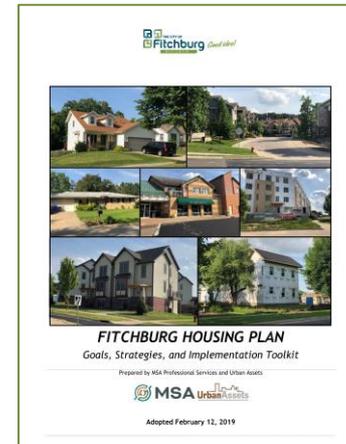
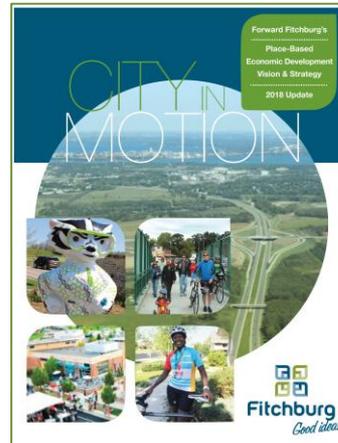


# Goals, Policy Direction, and Implementation

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## □ Solution – POLICY DIRECTION:

1. Review of sub-plans and their policies, group in to chapters/chapter components as identified in the “Growing Fitchburg” frame:....i.e. Housing, Transportation, Education and Jobs, etc.
2. Identify prominent “themes” in the aforementioned policies.
3. Utilize themes to develop general policy direction



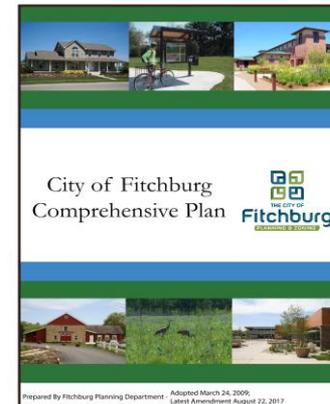
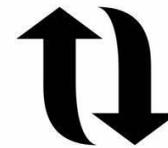
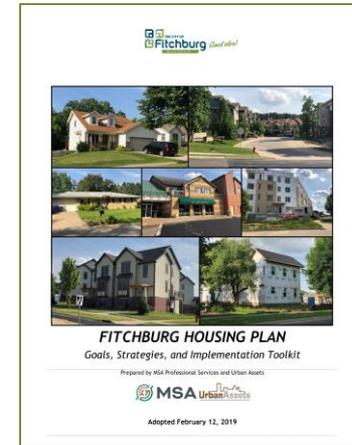
# Policy Direction

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- Using **Housing** as an example:
  - Housing Study: 22 action items
  - Existing Comp Plan: 2 goals, 5 objectives, and 20 policies



9 Prominent Themes

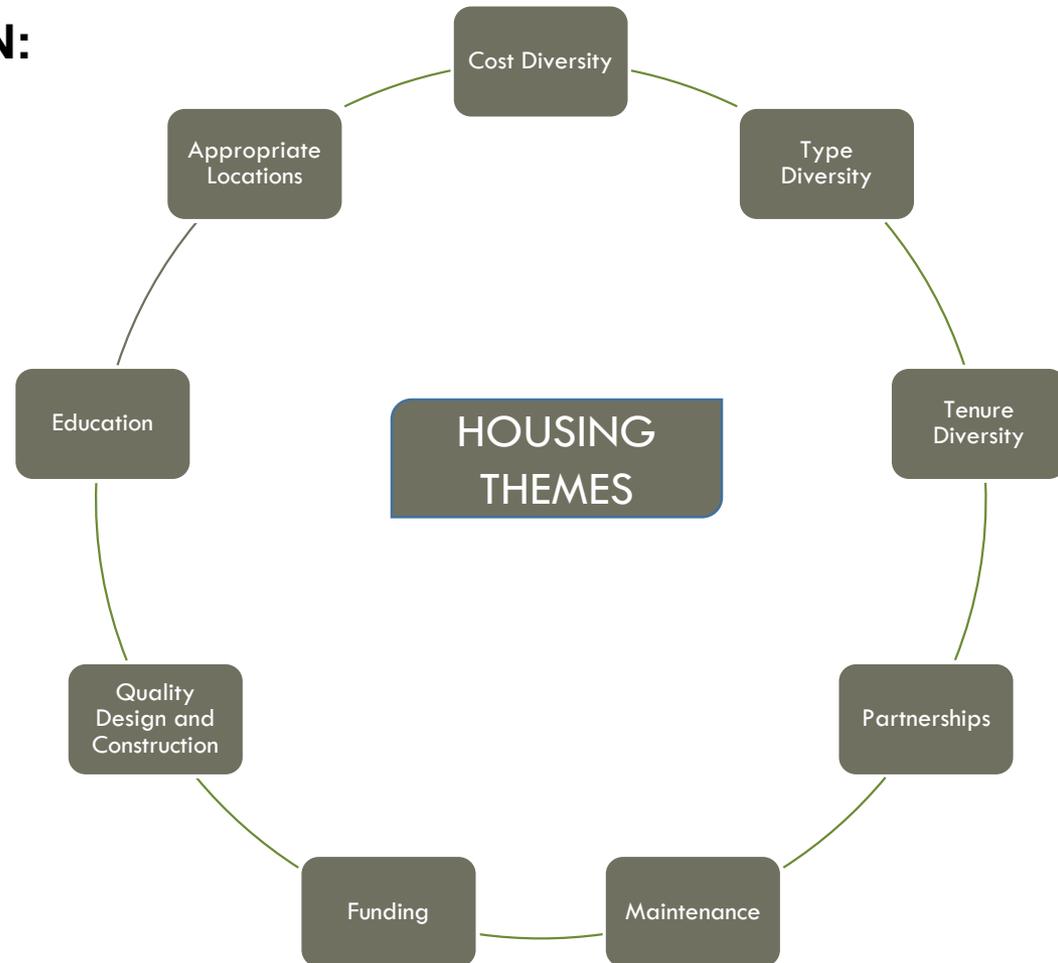


# Policy Direction

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## □ SOLUTION – POLICY DIRECTION:

2. Identify prominent “themes” in aforementioned policies.



# Policy Direction

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## □ SOLUTION – POLICY DIRECTION:

3. Utilize themes to develop general policy direction

### 2. GENERAL POLICY DIRECTION:

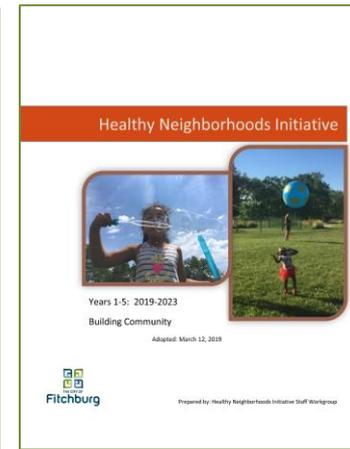
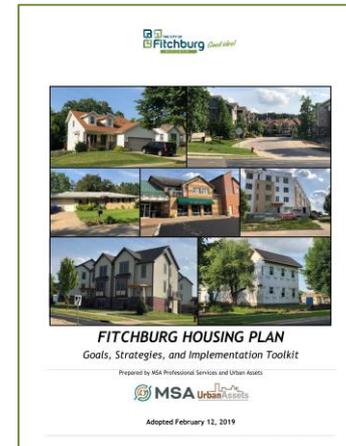
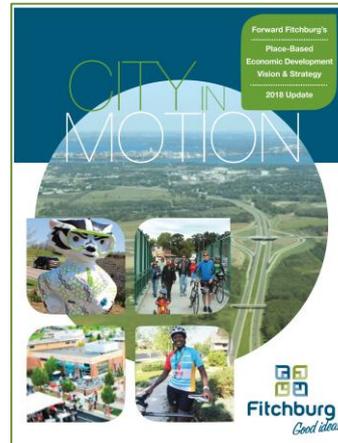
Work in *partnerships* to develop and maintain *high-quality* housing that is *diverse* in *cost, type, and tenure*, in *appropriate locations* throughout the City of Fitchburg.

# Implementation

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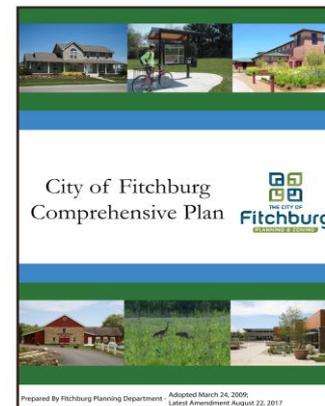
## □ SOLUTION – IMPLEMENTATION:

- Refer, and defer, to sub-plans for implementation “action”



### 3. SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS:

City of Fitchburg Housing Plan (2018), Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative (2019), and Forward Fitchburg 2019



# Discussion