



# Fitchburg

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## **CITY OF FITCHBURG**

**Assessment of Service and Staffing Needs, Funding Options**

February 2024

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## Background on the City of Fitchburg

The City of Fitchburg first incorporated as a town in 1847 and then as a city in 1983. Located in south-central Dane County, Wisconsin, 10 miles south of the state capitol in Madison, Fitchburg has a land area of approximately 35 square miles and a 2023 estimated population of 34,019. This includes land absorbed in October 2022 when the former Town of Madison was dissolved and a portion became a part of Fitchburg.

Fitchburg has operated under a Mayor-Council form of government since its incorporation as a City. Policymaking and legislative authority is vested in the City Council, which consists of a Mayor and an eight-member Council. This governing Council is responsible for, among other things, passing ordinances, adopting the budget, and hiring the City's Administrator. The City Administrator is responsible for carrying out the policies and ordinances of the governing Council and for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the City government. The Mayor is responsible for appointing committees, boards, and commissions, subject to the approval of the City Council. The Mayor and the Council are elected on a non-partisan basis. Council members are elected from within their respective districts to two-year staggered terms, while the Mayor is elected at large to three-year terms.

The City funds a full range of services including police, fire protection and emergency medical services; sanitation services; building inspections; the construction and maintenance of streets, highways, and other infrastructure; transit services; economic and neighborhood development; and supports recreational activities, including through a library, senior center, and the maintenance of parks. In addition to the general activities, the City Council exercises control over the wastewater, water, and stormwater utilities.

Over time, Fitchburg has grown in population and business has prospered. With its close proximity to Madison, Fitchburg continues to attract visitors, new businesses, and new residents with its natural beauty, favorable location, diverse and thriving businesses and industries, quality services, and year-round recreational activities.

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## A Growing Community

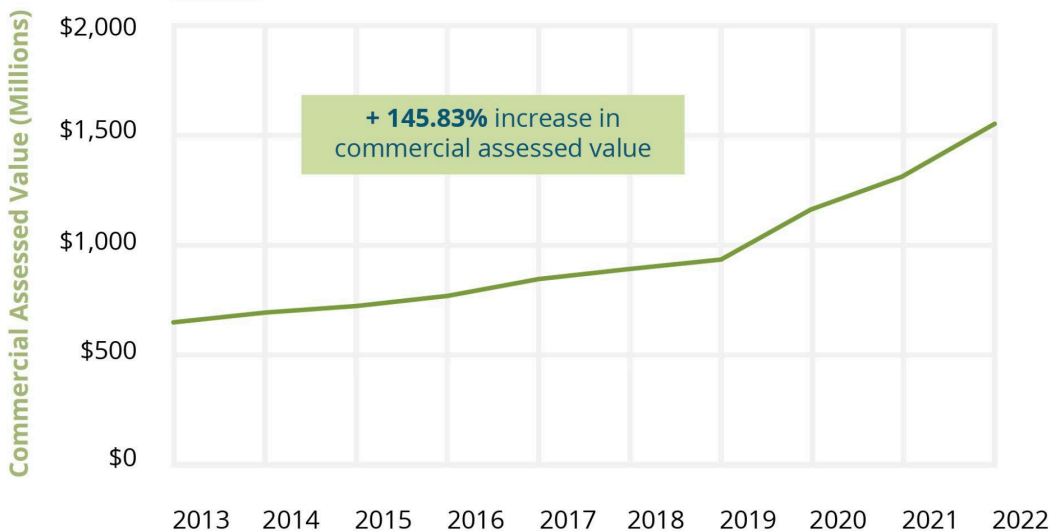
In the past ten years, Fitchburg has experienced increasingly rapid growth with additional growth expected in the near future.

### Commercial Development Growth in Fitchburg

A major component of this growth is commercial development in Fitchburg.

The City unveiled a major economic development initiative, The Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood, in 2001. This public/private partnership dedicated more than 2,000 acres for high-quality technology businesses in mixed-use commercial and residential settings connected by parks, open space and multi-modal transportation, creating the ideal place for technology companies to call home. The neighborhood consists of four developments: Fitchburg Center, Fitchburg Technology Campus/RDC Tech Lands, Novation Campus, and Uptown Fitchburg.

### COMMERCIAL ASSESSED VALUE OVER TIME



Each of these development areas has seen tremendous investment and growth – including in the last decade. Fitchburg’s recent development activity includes Promega Corporation’s Kepler Center expansion and construction of the Usona Institute, the General Beverage headquarters expansion, and other commercial projects including Encompass Health physical rehabilitation hospital, Kwik Trip convenience store/car wash, and Rutabaga Paddle Sports.

In total, **the City saw a 145.8% increase in commercial assessed value in the decade between 2013 and 2022.**

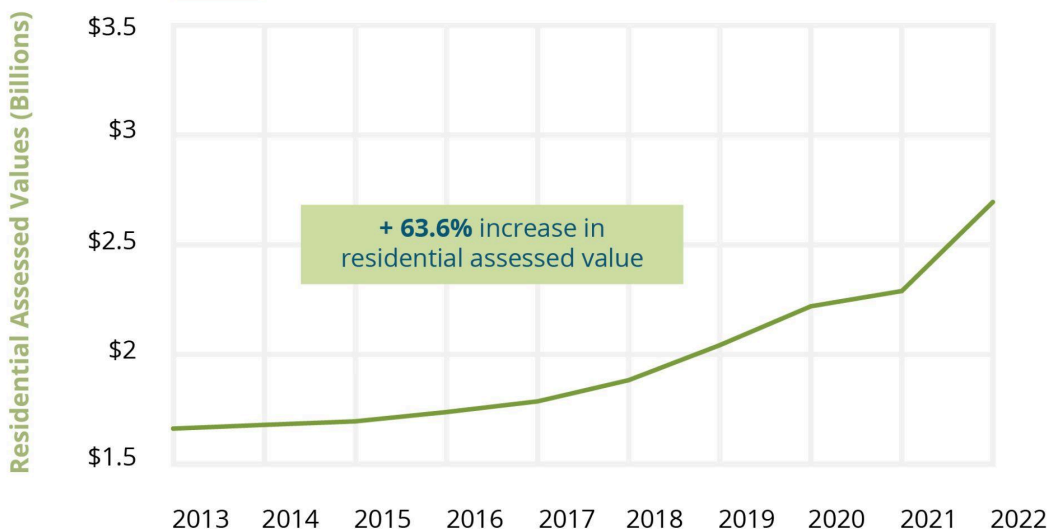
# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

## Residential Development Growth in Fitchburg

In addition to commercial growth, Fitchburg residential developments have added to the housing stock in the community, as evidenced by continued growth in the Fish Hatchery Road corridor and the Terravessa neighborhood along U.S. Highway 14.

Various types of housing stock – a mixture of single-family homes, multi-family housing units, condominiums and apartments – have been constructed in several developments, including: Highfield Reserve, Quarry Vista, Fahey Fields, Stoner Prairie, Renaissance on the Park, The Crossing, Waterford Glen, the Oak Meadow Subdivision, and Nobel Ridge Condominiums.

### RESIDENTIAL ASSESSED VALUE OVER TIME

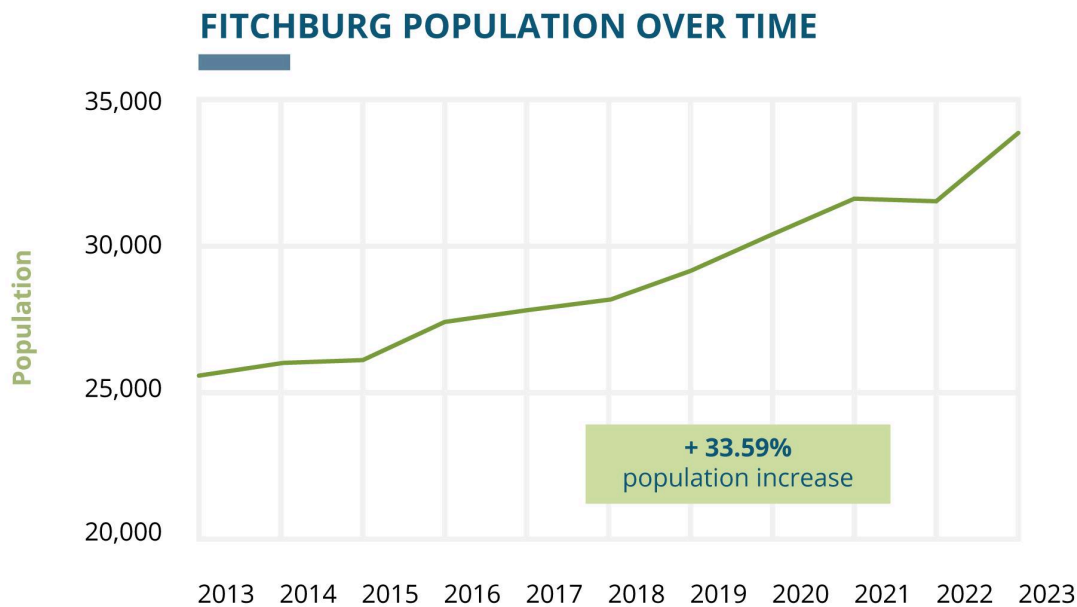


**There was a 63.6% increase in residential assessed value in Fitchburg** between 2013 and 2022, with more units planned or under construction currently. Residential developments have been a necessary addition to Fitchburg and Dane County at large – the Madison area is experiencing a significant housing supply shortage and new housing stock is in demand.

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## Population Growth in Fitchburg

With increased housing opportunities, and commercial development both in and around Fitchburg bringing additional employment opportunities to the community, the number of residents in Fitchburg has increased.



**The City saw a 33.59% increase in population between 2013 and 2023** – significantly outpacing population growth in the State of Wisconsin as a whole, which hovered around 3% over the same period of time.

## Intentional Planning for Future Growth

The City recognizes that balancing urban and rural interests is necessary for growth to be orderly. Fitchburg’s [Comprehensive Plan](#) is used to manage and direct growth in areas identified in the plan as desirable for future urban development. Neighborhood Plans, which analyze and plan for all elements of the built environment, are adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan, and the detailed neighborhood plans, guide community development decisions by City officials.

The City’s Zoning Ordinance is one regulatory tool to implement the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In 2010, Fitchburg became the first municipality in the state of Wisconsin to adopt SmartCode zoning, a form-based zoning district used to create Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). The code works to maximize efficiency in land use by allowing for increased

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density as well as diverse types of building forms and uses within a walkable area, and also works to create an environment that is pedestrian and bike friendly.

The City annually updates and adopts a ten-year capital improvement plan. This plan focuses on the strategic initiatives of the City and addresses the City's capital needs over ten years. A Financial Management Plan is also presented by the City's financial advisors and includes estimated impacts of both capital and operating needs over ten years and the impact on the City's tax rate. These documents assist the Council in setting the priorities of the City as well as determining how we will finance the needs of the City in the future.

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## Growing Community Needs Outpace City Capabilities

As the Fitchburg community has grown, the demand for City services – including public safety and other core municipal services like infrastructure development and maintenance, oversight of City-led programs and regular administration of zoning, permitting and assessment-related processes – has also increased.

**This increased demand for City services has surpassed the growth of City resources, in particular staffing, to support the service needs of the growing Fitchburg community.**

The City of Fitchburg prides itself on providing the Fitchburg community with the high-quality services it deserves. To clearly identify and address the gap between service abilities and needs, the City of Fitchburg engaged Baker Tilly to conduct an Operational and Organizational Review and required each City department to review its current and projected future workload. Following those reviews, each department submitted relevant personnel requests for consideration – outlining a total projected need for more than 50 additional City staff members, at a cost of approximately \$6,081,000 million, over the next five years.

## Some Service Improvements Budgeted for in 2024

In the 2024 Adopted Budget, the City of Fitchburg was able to leverage one-time budget increases from the closure of TID #4 and increased state aids – due to changes to the State’s shared revenue structure and the redirection of state aids from the attachment of the Town of Madison – and a modest increase in the City’s tax levy to add four full-time employees and one limited term employee, including:

- ❖ Two additional full-time Firefighters,
- ❖ One new Community Development / Services Specialist,
- ❖ One new Housing Initiatives and Finance Specialist, and
- ❖ One additional Master Plumber – as a limited term employee (LTE).

Other budget adjustments in 2024 reclassified two Police Lieutenant positions to Police Captain positions and provided funding for existing staff to spend more time on priority services, including: increasing staffing for election facilitation, adding more summer outreach from the library, and opening the Splash Pad at McKee Farms Park over Memorial and Labor Day Weekends.

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## Additional Service Improvements, Staffing Needed

While the City intends to develop a Strategic Plan to intentionally guide the future growth of Fitchburg and help prioritize investments – including in staffing – **there are additional needs that must be urgently addressed in order to maintain and/or improve services in Fitchburg.**

### Public Safety Services

The City of Fitchburg funds police, fire protection, rescue and emergency medical services – core public safety services that support the wellbeing of the Fitchburg community. **With calls for service increasing faster than the City can increase the number of emergency responders on staff, it is becoming increasingly challenging to meet current public safety needs.**

### Fitchburg Police Department Called More, Response Times Increasing

The Fitchburg Police Department responds to emergency calls requiring police presence and provides services to enhance the safety and security of Fitchburg residents and visitors alike, covering a total jurisdiction of nearly 35 square miles.

#### Police Department Staffing Model

In 2024, the City has budget for 55 sworn police officers, plus 12.5 non-sworn clerical and dispatch personnel, along with four on-call dispatchers and two limited term civilian employees (LTEs) who assist with organizational responsibilities. Dispatch personnel provide emergency and non-emergency communications services to the Police Department and coordinate responses with relevant partners across Dane County, including the Fitchburg Fire Department.

FPD deploys three patrol shifts daily – each shift consists of a minimum of four Officers on duty, with one Sergeant to supervise. During fully-staffed patrol shifts, seven Officers and two Sergeants are on duty.

#### Police Department Staffing Levels

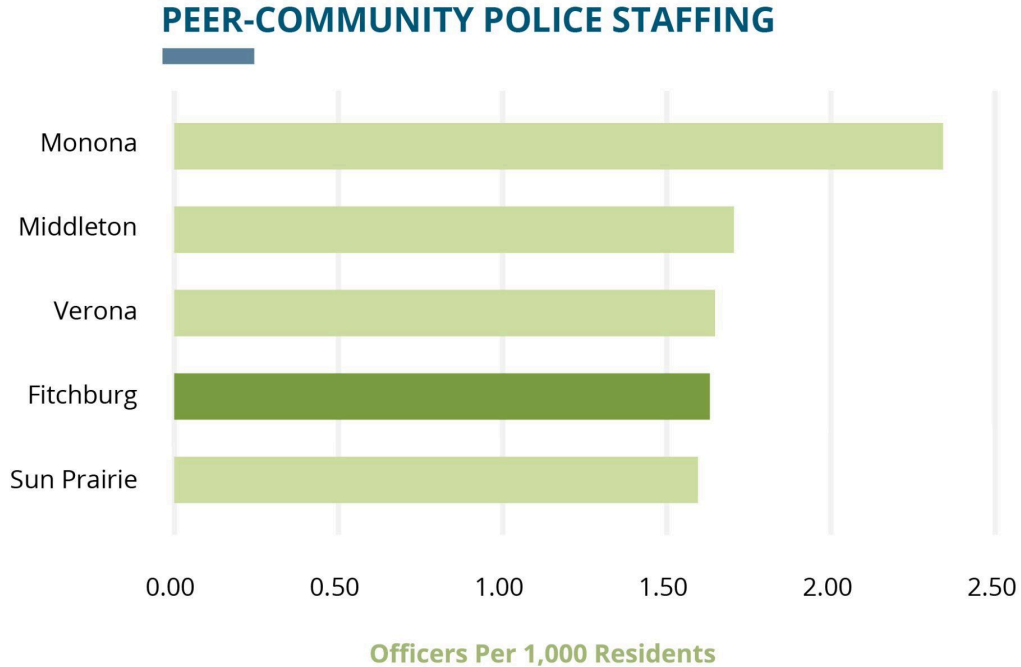
**Fitchburg Police Department staffing levels are below average** when compared to peer<sup>1</sup> communities' ratio of officers per capita.

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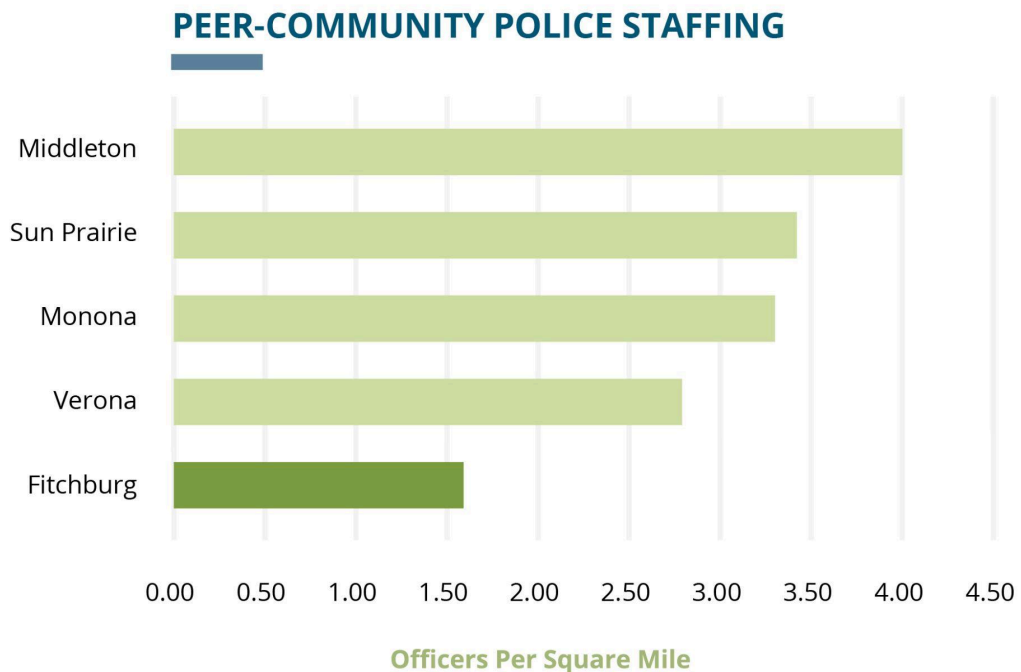
<sup>1</sup> Peer communities selected as Fitchburg's consortium partners in records management, computer-aided dispatch and other technologies as part of the Multi-Jurisdictional Public Safety Information Systems (MPSIS) Commission.

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FPD has just 1.62 officers per 1,000 residents – the second-lowest ratios among its peers.



This comparison becomes even more stark when you consider the areas each department is required to provide service to.

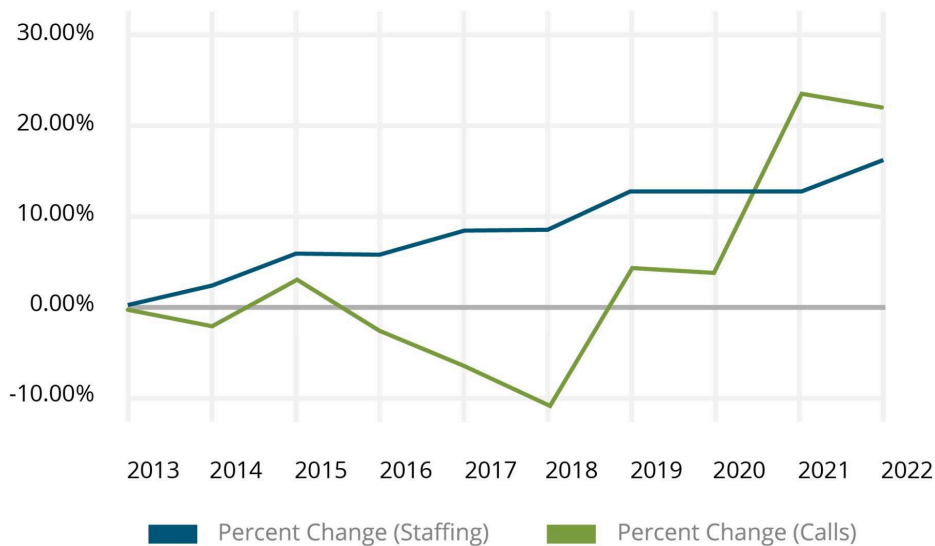


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## Growth in Calls for Service

While staffing levels are comparatively low, **calls for service to the Fitchburg Police Department have disproportionately increased over time compared to the number of sworn officers able to respond to those calls.**

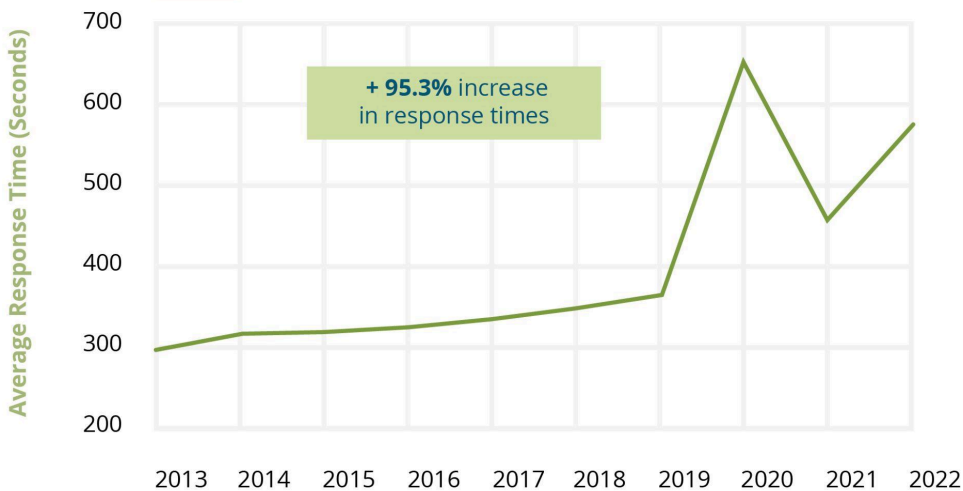
### INCREASING DEMAND FOR FPD SERVICE



Between 2013 and 2022, **FPD saw a 22.6% increase in calls for police services.**

In the same time period, **average response time for FPD to provide service increased by 95.3%** – which may have a negative impact on outcomes in an emergency situation.

### INCREASING FPD RESPONSE TIMES



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## Additional Officers, Resources Required

To improve public safety in Fitchburg, the Police Department is recommending the addition of:

- ❖ Three (3) Police Lieutenants<sup>2</sup>,
- ❖ One (1) Detective Bureau Sergeant,
- ❖ One (1) Property and Evidence Room Specialist,
- ❖ One (1) Police Detective,
- ❖ Three (3) Police Dispatchers, and
- ❖ Nine (9) additional Police Officers.

The recommendations above are listed in priority order.

**With sufficient staff in the Department, FPD could assign a full array of staff members to the third shift and fully cover peak service hours** (7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.). Additional officers will also enable FPD to practice additional community-oriented policing practices. Additional Lieutenants will relieve Sergeants of some supervisory responsibilities and allow those Sergeants to focus on the operational responsibilities – a best practice that will help pave the way for FPD to meet certain accreditation standards. Adding a Detective Bureau Sergeant will similarly enable the Captain who is currently overseeing that bureau to apply their time and energy to command responsibilities.

The Fitchburg Police Department has received a COPS Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to temporarily fund five (5) additional police officers for three years; the grant requires Fitchburg to provide two-thirds of the funding for each officer and requires those officers to be fully funded by the City for at least one year after grant funds expire. Including the grant requirements, the ongoing budget increase to maintain all 18 of these additional Police Department positions would be \$2,512,000 each year.

**Without additional funding, FPD will likely need to turn down the grant and will not be able to hire the five (5) officers that could be partially funded through federal COPS Grant dollars.**

Further, to account for increasing needs as identified in the [2015 study of Police Department Space Needs](#), the City of Fitchburg has planned for the construction of a new Police Services Facility. Construction is set to begin in 2024 and be complete in 2026, at which time additional non-sworn personnel will be necessary to maintain and ensure the smooth operations of the facility and Police Department. As such, the City has identified a need for an additional \$551,000

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<sup>2</sup> Position recommended by both Fitchburg Police Department and Baker Tilly study.

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to fund annual Police Facility operations and utilities, including to hire a custodian, to cover maintenance expenses and to prepare for regular building systems replacements that will likely be necessary in the future.

## **Fitchburg Fire Department Called More, Paid-on-Call Personnel Decreasing**

The Fitchburg Fire Department provides 24/7 service to the Fitchburg community, and responds to emergency calls for fire suppression, rescue and medical support in the City of Fitchburg. In addition to providing emergency services in Fitchburg, FFD also provides fire inspections and conducts public education outreach regarding fire safety.

FFD also participates in emergency responses in neighboring communities as needed through the statewide “Mutual Aid Box Alarm System” network.

### Fire Department Staffing Model

Fitchburg Fire Department leverages a combination staffing model. In 2024, the City has allocated the budget for 19 full-time Fire Department personnel, in addition to approximately 43 part-time paid-on-call or paid-on-premises (POX) firefighters who typically have a full-time job outside of the Department, provide assistance on an as-needed, as-available basis. Six interns currently support FFD.

Career / full-time firefighters work in three shifts, rotating 24 hours on duty in a fire station followed by 48 hours off duty. Each shift includes nine operational staff, four per station and one officer in charge (OIC).

If there are multiple overlapping incidents or an emergency call requires more than one piece of Fitchburg Fire Department apparatus to be dispatched (as is necessary in cases of a structure fire or motor vehicle crash), on-duty career firefighters cannot provide a complete response alone. They must rely on paid-on-call staff to support a response.

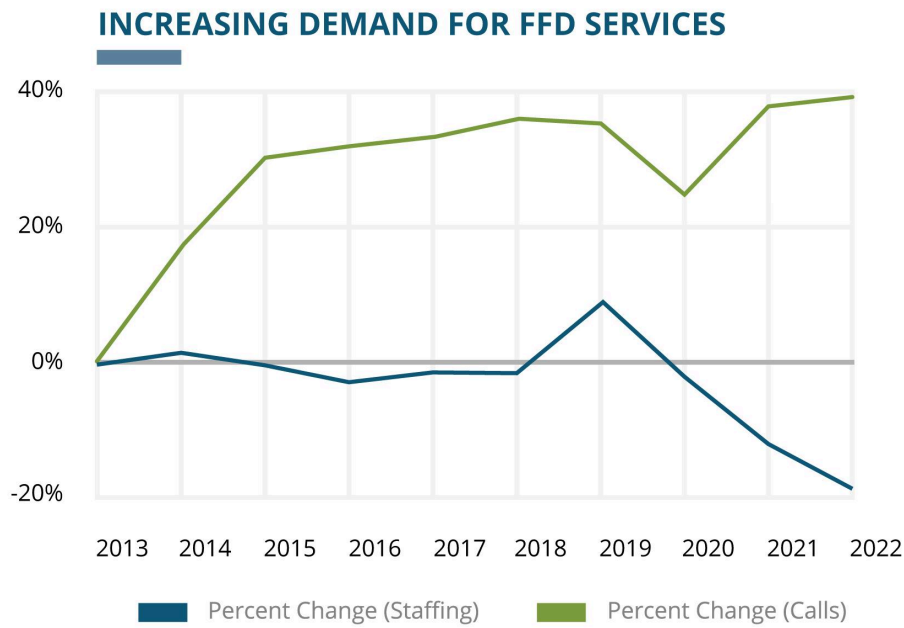
### Fire Department Staffing Levels

The Fitchburg Fire Department has seen a decline in staffing levels as the number of paid-on-call or paid-on-premise staff willing and able to lend their time decreases. In the decade between 2013 and 2022, **FFD saw an 18.6% decrease in staffing – primarily due to a decline in part-time POX staff active with the Department.** With this decrease, responses to emergencies have been challenged and full-time staff have experienced fatigue as they’ve been required to work more overtime hours to meet the service needs of the Fitchburg community.

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## Growth in Calls for Service, Longer Response Times

Adding to FFD's challenges is a sharp increase in calls for service: **between 2013 and 2022, calls increased by 39.8%.**



Further, as the number of calls increased – and the staffing declined<sup>3</sup> – the **average response time increased from 5 minutes and 15 seconds in 2013 to 7 minutes and 45 seconds in 2022**. Longer response times can be attributed in part to an increased reliance on mutual aid. When mutual aid is required, Departments in neighboring communities help provide a response – increasing the amount of time between when a call is placed and when help arrives.

## Additional Career Staff Required

To improve Fitchburg Fire Department's ability to respond to emergencies, FFD is recommending the addition of:

- ❖ Six (6) full-time firefighters, and
- ❖ Two (2) Division/Battalion Chiefs<sup>4</sup>.

The Fire Department is also recommending additional funding to increase base wages for paid-on-call/paid-on-premise firefighters to ensure all POX staff earn at least \$15/hour as they

<sup>3</sup> Total staffing numbers are not available for 2017 and 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Position recommended by both Fitchburg Fire Department and Baker Tilly study.

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provide emergency services to the Fitchburg community. FFD anticipates this compensation adjustment will also help retain POX staff and help stem the decline of POX support.

Adding more career firefighters to the Department will address staffing vacancies caused by the downward trend of applications received for part-time / POX firefighters, and will assist in reducing overtime and overreliance on existing staff – improving the reliability of staffing levels. The addition of higher-level staff with supervisory responsibilities will allow for appropriate guidance and coordination at the operations level.

The ongoing budget increase to maintain these additional Fire Department positions and to provide base wage increases for POC staff would be \$1,170,000 each year.

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## Emergency Medical Service Demands Increasing

Founded in 1977, Fitch-Rona EMS provides the highest-level emergency medical services to the Fitchburg and Verona communities. The Department operates three ambulances and consists of 21 full-time paramedics in addition to temporary paramedics as necessary.

### Growth in Calls for Service

Between 2013 and 2022, **Fitch-Rona EMS saw a 61.2% increase in calls for service.** As a result of this increased demand, Fitch-Rona EMS is seeking to hire seven (7) additional paramedics. These additional paramedics would enable Fitch-Rona EMS to staff four ambulances 24/7 and meet service needs of the community.

Based on the Department's funding formula, the City of Fitchburg's annual portion of the cost for these additional paramedics would be \$482,000.

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## Non-Public Safety Services

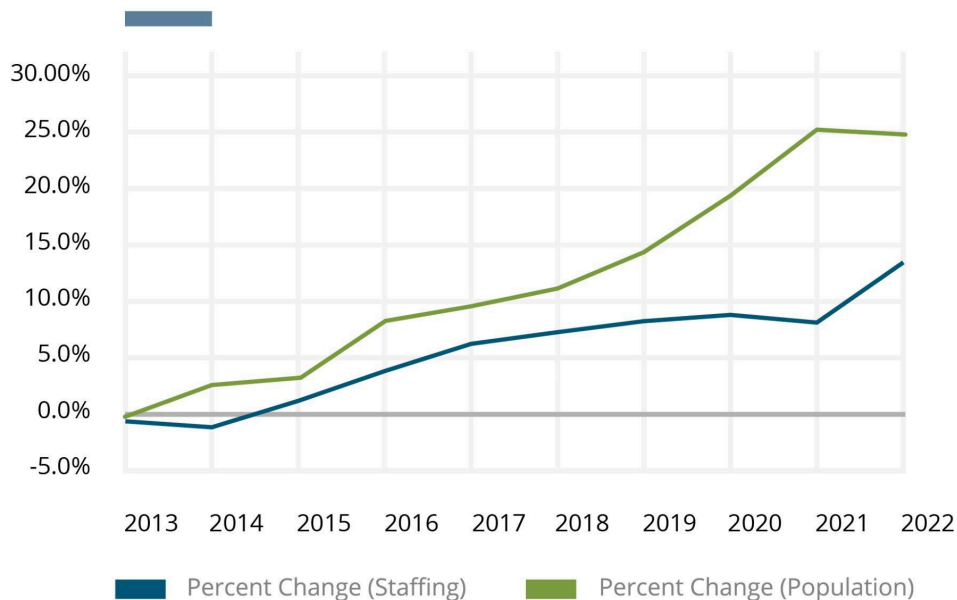
In addition to demonstrable needs to increase staffing in public safety departments in order to improve public safety services in Fitchburg, the City provides a number of additional core services to the Fitchburg community. Demands in those service areas are also increasing as the community grows.

## Third-Party Study Identifies Increasing Service Needs, Recommends Staff Adjustments

As part of Baker Tilly's Operational and Organizational Review of the City of Fitchburg, it identified several challenges and recommended a number of changes. The City has already incorporated<sup>5</sup> several of those recommendations, and seeks to address the remaining challenges.

Those challenges are primarily driven by Fitchburg's growth. As with any organization, administrative and operational demands have increased as the City of Fitchburg has grown and new programs have been added. Staffing has not kept pace with the City's expanding responsibilities.

### CITY STAFFING NOT KEEPING PACE WITH COMMUNITY GROWTH



<sup>5</sup> Baker Tilly recommendations previously addressed include hiring a Deputy City Administrator, funding new positions (two additional full-time Firefighters; one new Community Development / Services Specialist; one new Housing Initiatives and Finance Specialist), and providing funding for existing staff to spend more time on priority services.

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While the **population of Fitchburg increased 33.59% between 2013 and 2023**, City staffing increased by just 18.6% (not including public safety departments).

## Some Service Areas Lack Dedicated Staff

In some cases, Baker Tilly identified that no dedicated staff existed to perform certain functions, including providing transparent and consistent communication with the public about City meetings, resources or programs. The same is true for the Finance Department – where no dedicated staff exist to support grant procurement or grant management and where no dedicated staff exist to assist the Finance Director in creating and maintaining budget processes or to provide general budgetary assistance.

Finally, Baker Tilly identified a number of opportunities to improve the Human Resources Department and further support recruitment and retention of City employees. Currently, the Human Resources Department relies on just one full-time Human Resources Director, one full-time staff member and another part-time colleague to manage all talent acquisition, employee relations and general human resources duties. No dedicated staff exists to implement changes or enhance internal processes critical to the Department’s functioning.

## Service Quality Impacted by Staffing Restrictions

Services dedicated to supporting seniors and services that provide recreational opportunities for individuals and families in Fitchburg are currently operated out of the Fitchburg Community Center, however, the Senior Center and Community Center do not have compatible systems for scheduling events in the spaces they share – leading to regular challenges with double booking. Similarly, there is no liaison or process that would provide knowledge-sharing between the Center and department and little opportunity to collaborate to develop innovative programming and services.

Baker Tilly recommends moving Parks and Forestry under the Public Works Umbrella and combining the Senior Center with Recreation, potentially creating a new Community Services Department to help create necessary synergy and smooth service delivery to seniors, individuals and families.

To mitigate increasing demands for non-public safety City services, as highlighted above, Baker Tilly also recommends the addition of:

- ❖ One (1) full-time City Communication Director,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Community Services Director,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Talent Acquisition Specialist,

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- ❖ One (1) full-time Senior HR Generalist,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Budget Analyst, and
- ❖ One (1) full-time Finance Assistant.

The ongoing budget increase to maintain the additional positions recommended by Baker Tilly would be \$848,000 each year.

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## Departmental Reviews Uncover Additional Challenges

When each City department reviewed current and projected future workloads, department heads identified a number of service areas that could be improved if staff capacity was increased further in the coming years.

### Building Inspection Department

In recent years<sup>6</sup>, **the Building Inspection Department has seen a 118.6% increase in permits issued.** Due to steady increases in building permits submitted to the City of Fitchburg, the **demands on existing staff have exceeded their capacity** to handle all permit submissions and work with relevant parties to issue permits or manage inspection requests in a timely way. The Department is recommending the addition of one (1) full-time Permit Technician.

### Clerk's Department

Population increases have **increased the need for election administration work, licensing, receipting of citations, requesting bilingual assistance from other departments and generally providing customer service** to community members who seek to access City resources – duties that fall on the Clerk's Department.

The Deputy Clerk currently provides some front counter / receptionist duties, **limiting their ability to address these increasing needs.** The Clerk's Department is recommending the addition of one (1) full-time Receptionist, the first additional staff person requested since 2007, to enable the Deputy Clerk to relocate from the front counter and focus their attention on projects that directly benefit the City and its residents.

### Information Technology (I.T.) Department

As the City of Fitchburg has grown, it has prioritized leveraging data-driven approaches to decision-making and technology to benefit the community – including through the innovative Multi-Jurisdictional Public Safety Information System (MPSIS) that allows the Fitchburg, Middleton, Sun Prairie, Monona, and Verona police departments to seamlessly communicate and provide data redundancies for each other.

Currently, **insufficient time is dedicated to coordinating police technology or managing effective operation of existing systems.** The I.T. Department is recommending one (1) full-time MPSIS Administrator be added to the Department to focus on growing and expanding on data-driven policing, technology, and implementing additional evidence-based approaches. This

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<sup>6</sup> Between 2012 - 2022, the most recent decade in which full statistics are currently available.

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additional staff person would further benefit I.T. functions of the City by freeing up capacity for the I.T. Director.

Additionally, the City's virtual and physical server systems are currently being coordinated by several staff members, **as time allows**. The I.T. Department is also recommending one (1) full-time Systems Administrator who could help develop and review all back-up and disaster recovery procedures, manage system integrity and performance, and perform proactive maintenance for the server systems.

## Legal Department

**The volume of municipal and circuit court cases, in addition to tax assessment litigation, has steadily increased** as the City of Fitchburg has grown. The Legal Department is recommending one (1) full-time Assistant City Attorney to help manage this increased workload, which may also include drafting ordinances and reviewing resolutions for the Common Council, drafting contracts and agreements for City departments, providing advice regarding governmental procedures, representing the City in administrative hearings and providing legal counsel to the Common Council, Mayor, Administrator and department heads, among other duties.

## Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department

The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department **anticipates additional park and public facilities maintenance needs** as new facilities – including Stoner Prairie Park, Terravessa Agriculture Park and the Hub – are built and open.

To meet this need, the Department is recommending one (1) additional full-time Park Maintenance Worker. This staff member could also be assigned to assist with utility or street maintenance, perform snow removal or repair roadways as needed.

## Public Works Department

Fitchburg's **growing community has meant growing infrastructure, and thus more infrastructure to build, maintain and repair**. It has also meant an **increase in the number of vehicles and pieces of equipment or heavy machinery in the City's fleet** – all of which require regular inspections, maintenance and repair.

To address these growing public works needs, the Public Works Department is recommending one (1) additional full-time Public Works Maintenance Worker and one (1) additional full-time Mechanic.

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Additionally, the Department **does not currently have the capacity to provide adequate custodial services in anticipated new facilities**, including the Hub. One (1) additional full-time Custodian is recommended to address this need, which would also enable Public Works maintenance crews to focus on their core duties rather than providing cleaning assistance as they are currently doing.

## Senior Center

As has been experienced by other City Departments, Fitchburg's growth has **impacted the Senior Center's demands and ability to provide high-quality services**. As a result, the Senior Center is recommending (1) full-time Bilingual Activity Assistant to plan and host special programs for members of the senior community, and to help develop and lead lunch hour programming and support presenters and participants – including the growing number of Spanish-speaking older adults who are utilizing the Senior Center.

The Center is also recommending two part-time positions to support the delivery of services, including one (1) part-time Bilingual Case Manager to help seniors remain independent for as long as possible and provide support to the growing number of Spanish-speaking seniors in the Fitchburg community. Finally, the Center is recommending the addition of one (1) part-time Nutrition Site Coordinator to oversee nutrition programs and home meal delivery, including providing oversight to the growing number of volunteers who help prepare and deliver meals to senior Fitchburg citizens.

Together, the Departmental recommendations include:

- ❖ One (1) full-time Permit Technician,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Receptionist,
- ❖ One (1) full-time MPSIS Administrator,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Systems Administrator,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Assistant City Attorney,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Park Maintenance Worker,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Public Works Maintenance Worker,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Mechanic,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Custodian,
- ❖ One (1) full-time Bilingual Activity Assistant,
- ❖ One (1) part-time Bilingual Case Manager, and
- ❖ One (1) part-time Nutrition Site Coordinator.

The ongoing budget increase to maintain the additional positions recommended by City Departments would be \$1,197,000 each year.

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## **Demand for Transit Services Increasing, Expansion Needed**

Community growth has also increased pressure on traffic and the need for additional transit services. In line with the City of Fitchburg Transit Plan adopted in 2022, Fitchburg has identified a need to invest in improved intracity transit service, including between residential areas, City facilities such as City Hall, the Senior Center, and Library, and job centers. The City has been contacted by business owners and employers who support additional transit options to ensure employees, particularly shift-based employees, can travel to work.

To address this service demand, the City of Fitchburg is analyzing opportunities to improve east/west transit and to expand Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from McKee Road to the City Campus on Lacy Road. The east/west expansion would connect two existing Metro lines and increase access, including for those who require paratransit support. It would also connect the City's Verona Road West and Southdale Neighborhoods to other areas of Fitchburg, including retail centers, job centers, and the City Campus, including City Hall, Senior Center, and the Library, among other destinations. A BRT investment could extend the BRT route further south and provide access to the City Campus.

The City estimates that an annual investment of \$565,000 toward transit is necessary to improve services and meet the community's needs.

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## Funding Service Needs

The City of Fitchburg recognizes that, while it is important to provide high-quality services in all areas, the City needs to carefully prioritize resources and that it would not be fiscally reasonable to fund all improvements at once.

To prioritize investments, the City of Fitchburg and the Fitchburg Common Council have considered third-party, departmental and community input and identified several potential paths forward. Each potential option would require the City to include a referendum on an upcoming ballot.

### Why Referendum?

The City's ability to respond to changes in the demand for its services is inhibited by external forces. In Fitchburg, as is true for all communities in Wisconsin, the City's revenue growth is restricted by state legislation – limiting tax levy increases to the percent increase in equalized value from net new construction<sup>7</sup>, or else requiring the City to seek permission from voters through a referendum to exceed levy limits.

### What Would a Referendum Fund?

Services and additional staff included in a future referendum will be determined with community input. As examples, the City has identified several potential options for a referendum, which are outlined on the following pages.

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<sup>7</sup> While the City of Fitchburg has experienced growth resulting in net new construction, the corresponding increase in levy must often be used to maintain existing services - including compensation and equipment for existing staff members - which are all impacted by inflationary pressures.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## Potential Option A

The first option would allow the City to prioritize primary public safety needs, including staffing and facility needs, and to address increased transit demands to ensure the growing Fitchburg community is able to effectively commute to destinations including places of employment.

This option could see the City of Fitchburg increasing annual funding to:

- ❖ Add five (5) Police Officers,
- ❖ Add six (6) Firefighters,
- ❖ Fund East/West transit improvements (\$250,000/year), and
- ❖ Fund Police Facility operations (\$551,000/year).

These additions would address minimum staffing increases necessary to provide ongoing public safety services to the Fitchburg community, ensure the City's ability to improve critical transit services, and ensure the City's ability to accept federal funding through the COPS Grant that provides partial funding for five Police Officers.

The total investment required by Potential Option A would be \$2,203,000/year.

This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$48 annually, or \$4 per month, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. The impact to an average Fitchburg home valued at \$381,900 would be an increase of an estimated \$183 annually or \$15 per month.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## Potential Option B

The second option could include all changes presented in Potential Option A, and would also help the City prioritize some of the emergent needs identified by Baker Tilly and by the Fire Department.

This option could see the City of Fitchburg increasing annual funding to:

- ❖ Add five (5) Police Officers,
- ❖ Add six (6) Firefighters,
- ❖ Fund East/West transit improvements (\$250,000/year),
- ❖ Fund Police Facility operations (\$551,000/year),
- ❖ Add one (1) Communication Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) Community Services Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Talent Specialist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Finance Assistant, and
- ❖ Provide base wage increases for Fire Department paid-on-call and paid-on-premise staff.

These additions would address minimum staffing increases necessary to provide ongoing public safety services, ensure the City's ability to accept federal funding through the COPS Grant, provide the City an opportunity to apply to and perhaps secure additional grants, ensure the City's ability to improve critical transit services, improve the City's ability to recruit and retain staff (including at the Fire Department), improve the City's ability to provide transparent communication, and improve the City's ability to provide quality of life services for senior citizens and recreational programming for Community Center users.

The total investment required by Potential Option B would be \$2,878,000/year.

This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$63 annually, or \$5 per month, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. The impact to an average Fitchburg home valued at \$381,900 would be an increase of an estimated \$239 annually or \$20 per month.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## Potential Option C

The third option could include all changes presented in Potential Option B, and would also help the City prioritize some additional needs identified by Baker Tilly and an emergent need from the Senior Center.

This option could see the City of Fitchburg increasing annual funding to:

- ❖ Add five (5) Police Officers,
- ❖ Add six (6) Firefighters,
- ❖ Fund East/West transit improvements (\$250,000/year),
- ❖ Fund Police Facility operations (\$551,000/year),
- ❖ Add one (1) Communication Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) Community Services Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Talent Specialist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Finance Assistant,
- ❖ Provide base wage increases for Fire Department paid-on-call staff,
- ❖ Add two (2) Police Lieutenants,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Generalist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Budget Analyst, and
- ❖ Add one (1) part-time Nutrition Site Coordinator.

These additions would address staffing increases necessary to provide ongoing public safety services, ensure the City's ability to accept federal funding through the COPS Grant, ensure the City's ability to improve critical transit services, improve the City's ability to recruit and retain staff (including at the Fire Department), improve the City's ability to provide transparent communication, improve the City's ability to provide quality of life and food delivery services for senior citizens, and improve the City's ability to secure additional grant funding.

The total investment required by Potential Option C would be \$3,598,000/year.

This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$78 annually, or \$7 per month, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. The impact to an average Fitchburg home valued at \$381,900 would be an increase of an estimated \$299 annually or \$25 per month.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## Potential Option D

The fourth option includes all changes presented in Potential Option C, and would also help the City prioritize one additional Fire Department need identified by Baker Tilly, more complete investments in transit improvements and address some operational challenges identified by the I.T. and Public Works Departments.

This option could see the City of Fitchburg increasing annual funding to:

- ❖ Add five (5) Police Officers,
- ❖ Add six (6) Firefighters,
- ❖ Fund East/West transit improvements (\$250,000/year),
- ❖ Fund Police Facility operations (\$551,000/year),
- ❖ Add one (1) Communication Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) Community Services Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Talent Specialist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Finance Assistant,
- ❖ Provide base wage increases for Fire Department paid-on-call staff,
- ❖ Add two (2) Police Lieutenants,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Generalist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Budget Analyst,
- ❖ Add one (1) part-time Nutrition Site Coordinator,
- ❖ Add one (1) Fire Department Battalion Chief,
- ❖ Fund BRT Expansion operations (\$315,000),
- ❖ Add one (1) I.T. Administrator,
- ❖ Add one (1) Custodian, and
- ❖ One (1) Street Maintenance Worker.

These additions would address staffing increases necessary to provide high-quality public safety services, ensure the City's ability to accept federal funding through the COPS Grant, ensure the City's ability to improve and expand critical transit services, improve the City's ability to recruit and retain staff (including at the Fire Department), improve the City's ability to provide transparent communication, improve the City's ability to provide quality of life and food delivery services for senior citizens, improve the City's ability to secure additional grant funding, improve the City's use of technology – including to support police technology, and improve the maintenance and repair of City infrastructure.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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The total investment required by Potential Option D would be \$4,330,000/year.

This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$94 annually, or \$8 per month, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. The impact to an average Fitchburg home valued at \$381,900 would be an increase of an estimated \$360 annually or \$30 per month.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## Potential Option E

The fifth option includes all changes presented in Potential Option D, and would also help the City prioritize some additional needs within the Police Department.

This option could see the City of Fitchburg increasing annual funding to:

- ❖ Add five (5) Police Officers,
- ❖ Add six (6) Firefighters,
- ❖ Fund East/West transit improvements (\$250,000/year),
- ❖ Fund Police Facility operations (\$551,000/year),
- ❖ Add one (1) Communication Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) Community Services Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Talent Specialist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Finance Assistant,
- ❖ Provide base wage increases for Fire Department paid-on-call staff,
- ❖ Add two (2) Police Lieutenants,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Generalist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Budget Analyst,
- ❖ Add one (1) part-time Nutrition Site Coordinator,
- ❖ Add one (1) Fire Department Battalion Chief,
- ❖ Fund BRT Expansion operations (\$315,000),
- ❖ Add one (1) I.T. Administrator,
- ❖ Add one (1) Custodian,
- ❖ Add one (1) Street Maintenance Worker,
- ❖ Add one (1) Police Sergeant,
- ❖ Add one (1) Property and Evidence Room Specialist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Police Detective, and
- ❖ Add two (2) additional Police Officers.

These additions would address most staffing increases necessary to provide high-quality public safety services, ensure the City's ability to accept federal funding through the COPS Grant, ensure the City's ability to improve and expand critical transit services, improve the City's ability to recruit and retain staff (including at the Fire Department), improve the City's ability to provide transparent communication, improve the City's ability to provide quality of life and food delivery services for senior citizens, improve the City's ability to secure additional grant funding, improve the City's use of technology – including to support police technology, and improve the maintenance and repair of City infrastructure.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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The total investment required by Potential Option E would be \$5,022,000/year.

This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$109 annually, or \$9 per month, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. The impact to an average Fitchburg home valued at \$381,900 would be an increase of an estimated \$417 annually or \$35 per month.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## Potential Option F

The sixth and final option includes all changes presented in Potential Option E, and would also help the City prioritize the additional staffing recommended by the Clerks, I.T., Legal and Public Works Departments and the Senior Center.

This option could see the City of Fitchburg increasing annual funding to:

- ❖ Add seven (7) Police Officers,
- ❖ Add six (6) Firefighters,
- ❖ Fund East/West transit improvements (\$250,000/year),
- ❖ Fund Police Facility operations (\$551,000/year),
- ❖ Add one (1) Communication Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) Community Services Director,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Talent Specialist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Finance Assistant,
- ❖ Provide base wage increases for Fire Department paid-on-call staff,
- ❖ Add two (2) Police Lieutenants,
- ❖ Add one (1) HR Generalist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Budget Analyst,
- ❖ Add one (1) part-time Nutrition Site Coordinator,
- ❖ Add one (1) Fire Department Battalion Chief,
- ❖ Fund BRT Expansion operations (\$315,000),
- ❖ Add one (1) I.T. Administrator,
- ❖ Add one (1) Custodian,
- ❖ Add one (1) Street Maintenance Worker,
- ❖ Add one (1) Police Sergeant,
- ❖ Add one (1) Property and Evidence Room Specialist,
- ❖ Add one (1) Police Detective,
- ❖ Add one (1) Assistant City Attorney,
- ❖ Add one (1) Receptionist,
- ❖ Add one (1) additional Custodian,
- ❖ Add one (1) Bilingual Activity Assistant,
- ❖ Add one (1) part-time Bilingual Case Manager,
- ❖ Add one (1) Parks Maintenance Worker, and
- ❖ Add one (1) additional I.T. Administrator,

These additions would address most staffing increases necessary to provide high-quality public safety services, ensure the City's ability to accept federal funding through the COPS Grant,

## CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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ensure the City's ability to improve and expand critical transit services, improve the City's ability to recruit and retain staff (including at the Fire Department), improve the City's ability to provide transparent communication, improve the City's ability to provide engaging and consistent quality of life and food delivery services for senior citizens – including for those who speak Spanish, improve the City's ability to secure additional grant funding, further improve the City's use of technology – including to support police technology, improve the maintenance and repair of City infrastructure, and ensuring the Clerk's Department is able to address its increasing election administration and other administrative duties.

The total investment required by Potential Option F would be \$5,759,000/year.

This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$125 annually, or \$10 per month, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. The impact to an average Fitchburg home valued at \$381,900 would be an increase of an estimated \$478 annually or \$40 per month.

# CITY OF FITCHBURG OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

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## **Public Input Sought to Identify Path Forward**

In the coming weeks and months, the City of Fitchburg – in partnership with local residents – will determine the best path forward to address expanding service demands on the City as the community continues to grow.

All households in Fitchburg will receive a survey designed to help elected leaders determine which funding option to pursue and/or which services to prioritize.