

## In This Issue

1. [Inflation Reduction Act – saving money AND helping the planet!](#)
2. [Healthy Neighborhoods Grant Cycle Open](#)
3. [Sustainability Plan Budgeted for 2023](#)
4. [Mayor’s Proposed TID/ARPA Closure Investment Plan Update](#)
5. [Plant Dane 2023 Native Plant Orders](#)
6. [February-March Observances](#)

## Inflation Reduction Act – saving money AND helping the planet!

<https://www.edf.org/article/8-ways-inflation-reduction-act-can-save-you-money>

Last year’s Inflation Reduction Act, signed by President Biden in August, promised over \$500 billion in investments in everything from climate and energy measures to lower prescription drug prices to tax reform to deficit reduction. Now, several months out from the initial flurry of communications surrounding this bill, a clearer picture of the specifics of the bill is taking shape, as state and local governments learn how they may take advantage of provisions and consumer advocates have had time to process more direct benefits.

The Environmental Defense Fund, a national nonprofit that engages in everything from legal actions to advocacy work to public awareness campaigns, put out an early primer last September highlighting some of the top benefits homeowners could expect to see from this bill:



1. **In the driveway** – tax credits for EVs
2. **At your thermostat** – lower energy bills are expected as the cost of solar decreases and renewable energy typically offers less price volatility than fossil fuels
3. **In the utility room** – new rebates for high-efficiency HVAC and water-heating equipment, as well as preparing the house for future all-electric transitions
4. **In the kitchen** – rebates to help consumers upgrade from gas to electric stoves and ovens, which can also benefit your indoor air quality and reduce GHG emissions.

5. **In the insulation** – new rebates for improving your home’s insulation and air sealing, one of the most impactful ways you can start working to save energy at home
6. **In the laundry room** – rebates for heat-pump clothes dryers, popular in Europe and big energy savers
7. **At the AC unit** – new rebates for heat pumps as your primary source of winter heat
8. **On the roof** – new tax credits for rooftop solar

More recently, the nonprofit [Rewiring America](#) put together an [online tool](#) you can use to get a more comprehensive estimate of what rebates and tax credits you may be eligible for (based on household information, zip code, renter/owner status, and income). Check out their IRA Calculator and start thinking about ways to decrease your carbon footprint and your monthly energy bills at the same time!



## Healthy Neighborhoods Grant Cycle Open

Text from <https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1934>

*The City of Fitchburg’s Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative announces the 2023 grant cycle. Healthy Neighborhood grants are intended to strengthen and enhance Fitchburg’s Priority Neighborhoods using innovative approaches that will have a long-term impact on residents, businesses and/or the physical environment. Program focus areas include:*

- *Youth mentoring*
- *Youth education*
- *Adult education/workforce development*
- *Food security*
- *Neighborhood/community-building and engagement*

*The Priority Neighborhoods include:*

- *Verona Road West*
- *Belmar/Renaissance on the Park*
- *North Fish Hatchery Road*
- *Southdale*

*The maximum of any one grant will be limited to \$15,000. Interested applicants should go to the City of Fitchburg’s Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative [website](#) for the grant guidelines and application. Applications are due on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, by 4:00 pm. Applications should be submitted to Deanna Schmidt, [deanna.schmidt@fitchburgwi.gov](mailto:deanna.schmidt@fitchburgwi.gov) Applications will be reviewed and funding recommendations made to the Healthy Neighborhoods Advisory Committee and Common Council. Final decisions will be announced in late March 2023.*

*For further information contact Deanna Schmidt, City Planner, at [deanna.schmidt@fitchburgwi.gov](mailto:deanna.schmidt@fitchburgwi.gov).*

## **Sustainability Plan Budgeted for 2023**

<https://gabriellagerhardt.com/blog/2023-budget-amendments>

Fitchburg’s Common Council approved funding for a municipal sustainability plan in the 2022 budget. Last November, with some budget available due to staff vacancies, Council [approved a Resolution](#) to increase the available funding for a plan, with the goal of expanding the plan’s scope and community engagement process. Staff are in the process of procuring a consultant to help guide this process for Fitchburg, after which more details about the plan’s creation process and timeline will be known.

Look for updates in the next few months as the sustainability planning effort moves forward, especially if you would like to participate over the coming year!

## **Mayor’s Proposed TID/ARPA Closure Investment Plan Update**

<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/1998/Financial-Records-Reports>

Last year, Mayor Richardson and the Common Council approved an initial investment plan for a pool of onetime funding available thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the closure of two Tax Incremental Districts in 2022 and 2023. This past week, the Mayor released an investment plan update for 2023, given project cost changes and updates to funding for some of the intended projects.

The updated plan still maintains a strong focus on improving sustainability elements in Fitchburg, starting with over \$400,000 for items specifically identified as “sustainability initiatives”:

- matching dollars for a bike-share program in Fitchburg
- building light upgrades to LEDs
- additional bus shelters
- City fleet conversion to electric and hybrid vehicles
- UniverCity Year partnership.

Further projects of note with likely environmental and/or equity impacts include:

- adding bicycle racks to more City parks
- an urban tree canopy study
- replacing trees damaged by emerald ash borer
- park and ride planning to help remove single-occupant vehicles from the roads
- stormwater projects
- beginning to implement signage for a Fitchburg greenway system
- Healthy Neighborhood Initiative grants
- bike lanes on remainder of Whalen Rd

Note: because of ongoing cost changes and an asymmetry between available funding and desired projects, this plan represents a series of priorities for the City, rather than specific spending commitments. The plan will continue to be updated moving forward as more details are known and other changes occur.

## Plant Dane 2023 Native Plant Orders

Text from <https://ripple-effects.com/Plant-Dane>

*Convert some of your lawn into a native garden this spring. Not only are native plants beautiful, but they provide important ecosystem services such as habitat for pollinators and wildlife and improved water quality.*

*Native gardens act as sponges helping rainwater to soak into the ground preventing stormwater runoff from draining into our lakes, rivers and streams.*

*The Plant Dane Program provides Dane County residents access to native plants at the discounted price of \$2.75/plant, about half the normal retail price. It's open to schools, non-profit organizations (lake and neighborhood associations, youth groups, faith centers, clubs, etc.), municipalities and individual residents in Dane County, Wisconsin.*

Go to <https://ripple-effects.com/Plant-Dane> to find links for a list of available plants and the online order form.

**NOTE:** Due to the continued success of this program, plant sales will be limited in 2023. A total of 30,000 plants will be available for purchase.



## February-March Observances

The Cornell Lab 

 Audubon

 BIRDS CANADA  
OISEAUX CANADA



February 17-20



**WORLD  
WILDLIFE DAY**  
3 MARCH



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Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at [phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov](mailto:phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov) or (608) 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

