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Fitchburg Sustainability Plan Kicking Off – Survey Coming Soon!

Keep an eye on <https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/142/Green-Fitchburg>

Fitchburg is embarking on an exciting journey towards a more sustainable future by commencing a comprehensive sustainability plan process. The City is contracting with Pale Blue Dot LLC, a company based in Maplewood, MN that has conducted sustainability and climate action plans for dozens of other municipalities around the Midwest and throughout the country.



The sustainability plan process in Fitchburg will encompass various key areas of the city's influence, including energy efficiency, waste management, transportation, land use, water conservation, and more. By addressing these various issue areas, Fitchburg aims to reduce its ecological footprint, promote renewable energy adoption, enhance alternate transportation, encourage sustainable development practices, and safeguard its natural resources.

The city's commitment to sustainability not only benefits the environment but also offers social and economic advantages. By implementing sustainable practices, Fitchburg will look to foster a healthier and more resilient community, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create green job opportunities. The sustainability plan may also help attract businesses and investors who prioritize environmentally and socially conscious practices, boosting the local economy and enhancing the city's reputation as a sustainable and desirable place to live, work, and visit.

This Sustainability Plan will be developed over the next 12-18 months. We will soon launch an online survey to collect input from residents and businesses. This survey is designed to help us identify perceptions, needs, opportunities, priorities, and issues for the City to address in the Sustainability Plan.

To help us better understand the comments we receive, we will ask for you to identify if you live and/or work in the City of Fitchburg; however, all are welcome to take this survey wherever you live and work.

We want to hear from you!

Responses to the City of Fitchburg’s Sustainability Survey will help shape our sustainability priorities. Please share the survey with your neighbors, friends, and family.

Look for the survey soon at: <https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/142/Green-Fitchburg>, or subscribe to Green Fitchburg “Notify Me” alerts on the City’s website to receive a notice when the survey is ready.

Fitchburg Renews As A Silver Bicycle-Friendly Community

From Bike Fitchburg’s 5/31/23 Media Release

This past week, the League of American Bicyclists (Bike League) honored the efforts of Fitchburg to build better places for people to bike by renewing its silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) award for another four years. Fitchburg is one of 506 communities across the country in the movement for safer streets and better bicycling for everyone. The award recognizes Fitchburg for its continuing commitment to creating transportation and recreational resources that benefit its residents of all ages and abilities while encouraging healthier and more sustainable transportation choices. Fitchburg earned a bronze award in 2012 and silver in 2015 and 2019.



The League of American Bicyclists’ Bicycle Friendly America program sets the standard for how communities build and benchmark progress toward making biking better. In 2022, the League made major updates to add and integrate equity and accessibility into the program’s application and emphasize the importance of building and connecting low-speed and low-stress bike networks.

The award will be presented at a brief ceremony at the beginning of the Fitchburg Common Council meeting at 7:30 p.m. on June 13 by Steve Arnold, Secretary of the Board, Wisconsin Bike Fed. Mayor Julia Arata-Fratta will accept the award. According to Arnold, Bicycle Friendly America is more than a certification program. It guides work at all levels, year-in and year-out to develop safe, fun, and healthy transportation and recreation opportunities across five action areas: engineering, education, equity, encouragement, and evaluation. BFC awards are made for four-year terms.

“We are thrilled to receive this recognition after four more years of relentless work to make Fitchburg a great biking destination,” said Mayor Arata-Fratta, who accepted Fitchburg’s last silver BFC award in 2019 when she was Common Council representative to the city’s Bicycle Committee. “We have been working in all these areas to make Fitchburg a healthier, safer, more sustainable, and more vibrant place to live, work and visit by bike. This award shows that those efforts are paying off.”

Fitchburg’s application was submitted by Bike Fitchburg, Inc., the non-profit local bike advocacy organization for Fitchburg. Bike Fitchburg was supported by its partners, the City of Fitchburg government and the Fitchburg Chamber Visitors+Business Bureau. Together, the three entities were recognized in 2018 as a Wisconsin Active Together community for just this kind of cooperation.

No-Mow May Results and Follow-Up

<https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/2861/No-Mow-May>

The calendar has flipped to June, which means Fitchburg’s first citywide participation in No-/Low-Mow May has come to an end. This past month we had over 75 participating residential properties registered, as well as an entire condo association. An estimated 36 acres of land was covered by these properties, with about 28 acres of green space on those registered parcels. We saw and heard a lot of enthusiasm around the city, as well as dozens of signs out advertising the observance and many more yards giving pollinators some additional foraging options. Hopefully these all helped to spread awareness related to pollinator-friendly practices we can all take on a more regular basis.

With the end of May, the City’s lawn maintenance ordinance is once again in effect (see [the ordinance here](#) for details), so we ask you to take steps to bring your property back into compliance. Keep in mind that mowing too much of your grass at once (typically just up to 1/3 at a time is recommended) can damage the lawn, so you may want to still set your mower to its tallest deck setting for at least the first post-May mowing and then come back to it again a little sooner, rather than cutting it too short immediately. Small amounts of grass clippings can be left on your lawn as mulch, while larger amounts (greater than 1.5 to 2 inches in length could smother your lawn) can be composted or taken to the City’s yard waste and recycling drop-off site at 2373 S Fish Hatchery Rd.

So what to do now that No-Mow May is over? Check out these articles for some tips on how you can keep the pollinator-friendly spirit alive beyond just May, and remember that the additional actions you selected in your registration can be followed throughout the warmer months of the year!

- Berkshire Eagle (Pittsfield, MA): [How to help pollinators after No-Mow May is done](#)

- Bee City USA: [Lessons Learned From No-Mow May](#)
- A reminder of the ways to participate in No-Mow May from the March-April Green E-News, and that short of letting your lawn grow beyond 8 inches, everything else on this list is applicable throughout the year!



Madison Bike Week

<https://www.madisonbikes.org/events/bikeweek-2023/>

The League of American Bicyclists celebrates the month of May as [National Bike Month](#) each year, but here in Wisconsin we celebrate Bike Week the first full week in June. This year, that's June 3-10, with events taking place throughout the week around Fitchburg and the whole Madison area.

Check out [the Madison Bikes page](#) for a full list of events to find some that work for you; or just start by checking out these great local events:

- Tuesday, June 6: Bike Fitchburg morning commuter station at the Bike Roundabout ("Velo UnderRound"), co-hosted with the Fitchburg Chamber and City of Fitchburg, 7am-9am ([info here](#))



- Wednesday, June 7: Wisconsin DNR and Friends of Military Ridge State Trail commuter station, on the Military Ridge trailhead at Cottonwood Drive, 7am-9am ([info here](#))
- Wednesday, June 7: monthly “Ride for Joe,” meeting at the Fitchburg Senior Center at 9:30am, ride from 10am-11:30am ([info here](#))
- Thursday, June 8: Race Day Events and Griessmeyer Law morning commuter station on the Badger State Trail at Sub-Zero Parkway, 7am-10am ([info here](#))
- Thursday, June 8: Trek Bikes group rides: Madison Lake Loop Ride 3pm-5pm, meeting at Delta Beer Labs ([info here](#)), and Mountain Bike group ride at Quarry Ridge 3pm-4:30pm ([info here](#))
- Thursday, June 8: Delta x Trek special beer release launch party at Delta Beer Labs, 5-7pm following the two Trek Bikes group rides ([info here](#))
- Thursday, June 8: Fitchburg Resource Conservation Commission annual educational event, “Is the E-Bike for You?,” at the McKee Farms Park shelter, 6:30pm-7:30pm ([info here](#))
- Friday, June 9: Thermo Fisher morning commuter station, on the Military Ridge State Trail at the Discovery Path just SW of the bike roundabout, 7am-9am ([info here](#))

Lake Waubesa Lake Management Plan Survey

From Fitchburg Environmental Engineer Ben Schulte

The Lake Waubesa Conservation Association (LWCA) was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Wisconsin DNR to create a Lake Management Plan (LMP)

An LMP is a formal strategy for protecting and potentially improving the lake. Typically, riparian landowners, lake associations and local municipalities take on the task of preparing an LMP. If there is no local initiative, it probably won't get done!

In Wisconsin, an LMP helps to get matching funds for financing lake improvement projects. This can include improvements to our boat launch facilities, creating fish cleaning stations, establishing a water quality sampling program, upgrading navigation features on the lake and enhancing ongoing education programs focused on the lake.

A typical plan addresses in-water, shoreline, and watershed conditions. An LMP generally includes a focus on:

- Water quality
- Aquatic plants, organisms and fish
- Shoreline erosion, runoff
- Sources of pollution on the land surrounding the lake
- Stakeholders, partners, & community input

- Organizational capacity and readiness to plan

The LWCA needs your input and feedback to guide this planning effort. A survey has been created to assist in this effort. So, What do you think about Lake Waubesa?

<https://arcq.is/XbmT5>

Dane County Reaches 100% Renewable Energy

Text from a 4/18/23 Dane County [Press Release](#)

To celebrate Earth Week, County Executive Joe Parisi joined Alliant Energy and SunVest Solar representatives at the newly constructed Yahara Solar Project today to highlight Dane County becoming the 4th county in the U.S. to reach the milestone of using 100% renewable electricity at all county facilities. The completed installation of 33,000 solar panels at the 90-acre solar farm site on county-owned land in the Town of Cottage Grove will reduce climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those produced by more than 5,000 cars.

“Achieving our goal of powering our buildings with 100% renewable electricity is a landmark achievement in our fight against climate change,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “Dane County is not only the first county government in the state to achieve 100% renewable electricity status, but just the 4th county in the nation to reach the 100% goal.” Dane County is a member of U.S. EPA’s Green Power Partnership program that tracks the renewable energy progress of hundreds of municipalities across the county.

The 17-megawatt solar project will produce more than 36 million kilowatt-hours of renewable electricity per year — enough to power more than 3,000 Dane County homes. The 33,000 solar panel array utilizes the latest bifacial panel technology that produces energy from both sides of the panel, which increases energy production as sunlight reflects off the ground, especially when snow-covered, and as they track the sun throughout the day.

“Guided by our purpose to serve customers and build stronger communities, we’re honored to help Dane County and all of our customers achieve their clean energy goals,” said JP Brummond, Vice President of Customer and Community Engagement for Alliant Energy. “The Yahara Solar Project, and all of our renewable energy projects across our footprint, diversify energy generation on the grid so it more reliably delivers energy when our customers need it most.”

Alliant Energy selected SunVest Solar, headquartered in Pewaukee, Wisconsin to build, operate, and initially own the project. Construction of the Yahara Solar Project began in June of last year. Pieper Electric, with headquarters in New Berlin, is the installation contractor working with multiple local unions.

“SunVest is proud to have partnered with Alliant Energy, Dane County, Pieper Electric, and all of the people and organizations involved in the Yahara Solar Project,” said Kirk Kindred, President of Business Development at SunVest Solar. “Dane County is advancing clean energy and leading by example. We hope other municipalities across the nation are inspired to follow suit.”

Alliant Energy will deliver the power generated to its customers, and Dane County, in return for leasing the land to the project, will receive the renewable energy credits (RECs). Under an innovative deal structure, the County continues to own the land, and the project company leases the land, with payment made in RECs. This allows the County to reach its renewable energy goals for decades to come without any increase in energy costs.

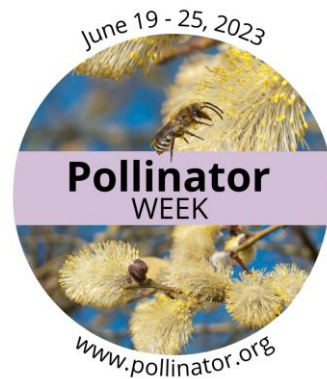
The RECs will offset the County’s greenhouse gas emissions, helping the County to achieve its goal of 100% renewable electricity two years ahead of schedule. The project also contributes to the County’s broader goal of cutting countywide emissions in half by 2030 under its Climate Action Plan.

The construction of the solar farm relied on the skilled work and craftsmanship of local union operating engineers, carpenters, laborers, and electricians increasing the project’s positive economic impact. The solar project created approximately 70 jobs during peak construction last fall.

Converting over 90 acres of agricultural land previously used for growing corn and soybeans to solar energy production and additional acreage on the site to prairie grass plantings will produce additional environmental benefits. Transforming the land to energy production will cut water runoff volume by about 325,000 cubic feet or roughly 3.5 Olympic-size swimming pools, reducing phosphorus runoff to area waterways by 370 pounds annually. Not tilling the land will boost habitat for dwindling pollinator populations and sequester 72 tons of soil carbon or the equivalent emissions of over 8,000 gallons of gasoline burned annually.

The current 2023 County budget funds the significant climate goal of having all County facilities and fleet be carbon neutral by 2030. Achieving the initial 100% renewable electricity goal will reduce the county’s emissions by 63% or 24,500 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents annually compared to 2020.

June-July Events and Observances



NOAA National Ocean Month



CRITERIUM • 25 MILE RIDE • 5K RUN/WALK • 1 MILE RUN



July 8, 2023



July 15, 2023

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

