



Economic Development



Overview

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to guide public and private decisions that help promote the stabilization, and the retention or expansion of the economic base, and the creation of quality employment opportunities in the local community. As required by Wisconsin State Statute. 66.1001, this chapter of the comprehensive plan includes an assessment of new businesses and industries that are desired in the City, an assessment of the City's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and an inventory of contaminated sites.

Employment Status

According to the 2000 Census, the City of Fitchburg had 15,862 persons 16 years and over, of that 77.9% (12,363 residents) are participating in the labor force.

Labor Force

The City's labor force is the portion of the population that is employed or available for work. The labor force includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. As of 2000, the City had 12,363 persons in its labor force. Of those persons, 48.4% were female and 51.6% were male. In 2000, the City's unemployment rate was 3.6% and the county rate was 2.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, Dane County 2005 Workforce Profile).

The labor force is largely employed in what are typically referred to as "white collar" occupations. In 2000, Census data showed that 84.5% of its employees worked in professional, technical, or service related positions. This compares with 82.8% of the labor force in Dane County and 70.5% of the statewide labor force. The higher percentage for Dane County can be partially attributed to the presence of the center of state government and a major university. Figure 6-2 depicts the major employers within the City of Fitchburg.

Figure 9 - 1: State of Wisconsin Labor Force

	1990	1995	2000
Labor Force	217,063	247,984	262,802
Employed	212,610	243,566	258,427
Unemployed	4,453	4,418	4,375
Unemployment Rate	2.1%	1.8%	1.7%

Source: Forward Wisconsin Inc.

Jobs by Place of Work

Fitchburg's Verona Road (Hwy 18/151) and Fish Hatchery Road commercial – industrial districts have a major impact on local business. Retail trade and private service establishments located there, account for nearly half of the City's businesses. Fitchburg had a total labor force of 12,340 person in 2000, and that labor force is expected to grow to 20,625 by 2030. In 2000, it is estimated that there were 6,320 jobs in Fitchburg, with over 4700 persons coming into Fitchburg to work (Lewis, 2003).

Commuting Patterns

Data from the 2000 Census reveals that the mean travel time for persons age 16 and over in the City is 19.4 minutes, which suggests that most residents work in surrounding municipalities. Over 63% of the Fitchburg residents commuted to the City of Madison for their jobs.

Educational Attainment

92% of City residents possess high school diplomas or higher. This compares to 92.2% in Dane County and 85% statewide. 42.1% of City residents have a bachelor's degree or higher according to the Census 2000 data. Comparatively, the figure in Dane County is 40.6% and 22.4% statewide.

Wages

Fitchburg's median 1999 household income of \$50,433 is higher than the \$49,223 median income for Dane County and the \$43,791 for the state.

Land Availability

Please refer to the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 4) for information concerning land availability.

Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The Wisconsin DNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintain a list of contaminated sites, or "brownfields", in the state. The DNR defines brownfields as "abandoned or under-utilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination." Properties listed in the DNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing.

Figure 9 - 2: Major Employers in Fitchburg

Business Name	Employment in Fitchburg
Promega Corp.	567
Wolf Appliance	500
HospiceCare Inc.	468
Super Target	450
Thermo Fisher Scientific	450
CDW Berbee	315
Intercon Construction, Inc.	300
Placon Corporation	300
Sub-Zero Freezer Co. Inc.	250
Milio's Subs	205
Wingra Stone Co/Redi-Mix, Inc.	200
Tri-North Builders	175
WI Department of Natural Resources	165
Certco, Inc.	150
General Beverage Sales Co./Beer Distributors	150
City of Fitchburg	139
H & M Distributing Co., Inc.	134
Gordon Flesch Company	131
Saris Cycling Group	120
Bruker AXS	110
Clear Channel Radio - Madison	100
Electric Construction, Inc.	95
Group Health Cooperative	89
Citrus System Madison, LLC	78
Park Bank	75
Stark Company Realtors	74
First Weber	65
CUES	54
Payne & Dolan, Inc.	54
Coldwell Banker Sveum Realtors	50
Imago Scientific Instruments	50
Auxiant	46
Benjamin Plumbing	45
Wisconsin Hospital Assn.	42
Jenkins Research & Manufacturing	38
Oak Bank	29
Pike Technologies	23
Platypus Technologies	23
Sprint Print	22

Source: Economic Development Department, City of Fitchburg, 2008.

Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development

The City's strengths in fostering its desired economic focus in the future are its easy access to a regional transportation network and its proximity to the Madison metropolitan area. The numerous higher educational facilities (including the University of Wisconsin-Madison, MATC, Edgewood College) close to Fitchburg, offers a desirable location for high tech industries to locate with a close connection with college graduates.

The City's weaknesses in advancing its desired economic focus include the lack of Fitchburg having a designated downtown area. This results in the lack of attracting unique and creative entrepreneur commercial activities that thrive on the foot traffic of a downtown. Currently, Fitchburg also does not have the necessary land inventory to meet the various needs of existing businesses and recent requests for new businesses looking to locate in our community, especially for clean manufacturing, light industrial, and warehouse/distribution. The City of Fitchburg needs to view businesses and the development community as valued members of our community and our customers to recognize the benefits that businesses bring to the community including tax base, employment, payroll, wealth creation, while meeting the goals of this plan.

Forward Fitchburg

During the second quarter of 2009, the City of Fitchburg will embark on an economic development strategic plan and marketing analysis called Forward Fitchburg. The purpose of this process is to develop a forward looking Economic Development Strategies and Brand Architecture for the City of Fitchburg that will enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of our local economy within a regional, national and global market place for the next five to ten years. Business and government leaders of Fitchburg have joined together to charge the Fitchburg New Economy Team (FNET) with leading the creation and completion of this Economic Development Strategies and Brand Architecture Analysis for the Community & Economic Development Authority (CEDA) and the Fitchburg Chamber to implement through Action Plans. Through the review of the Comprehensive Plan and preparation of economic data, study reports and market research, it help us identify and seize upon unique opportunities that will propel Fitchburg's economy to the next level. The analysis should articulate a focused economic development strategy and brand positioning of Fitchburg's local economy within regional and State initiatives while preparing a specific action plan for CEDA and the Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce to implement.

The consultant hired will facilitate an economic development positioning and brand architecture analysis by engaging the Fitchburg New Economy Team (FNET), Fitchburg Common Council, Plan Commission, Community & Economic Development Authority (CEDA), other City Commissions, Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce, City Staff and the business and residential community through a collaborative process to create a consensus on a clear economic and brand vision.

Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood



The Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood, part of the Capital Ideas Technology Zone, dedicates over 2000 acres for live, work, play neighborhoods. Anchored by technology employment centers for science-based businesses in attractive mixed use commercial and residential settings they are connected by parks, open space and multi-modal transportation. The Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood is comprised of Fitchburg Center, Fitchburg Technology Campus, and Green Tech Village, providing places for innovation in the heartland. Specializing in biotechnology, nanotechnology, analytical and medical instrumentation, information technology and thermoforming, the Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood is home to innovative companies like Promega Corporation, Bruker AXS, Platypus Technologies, Imago Scientific Instruments, Phillips Medical, Pike Technologies, GenTel Biosciences, Thermo Fisher, BIOPONS, Neurendo Pharma, and United Vaccines. These companies operate in a global economy and are leaders within their industries.

Figure 9 - 3: Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood

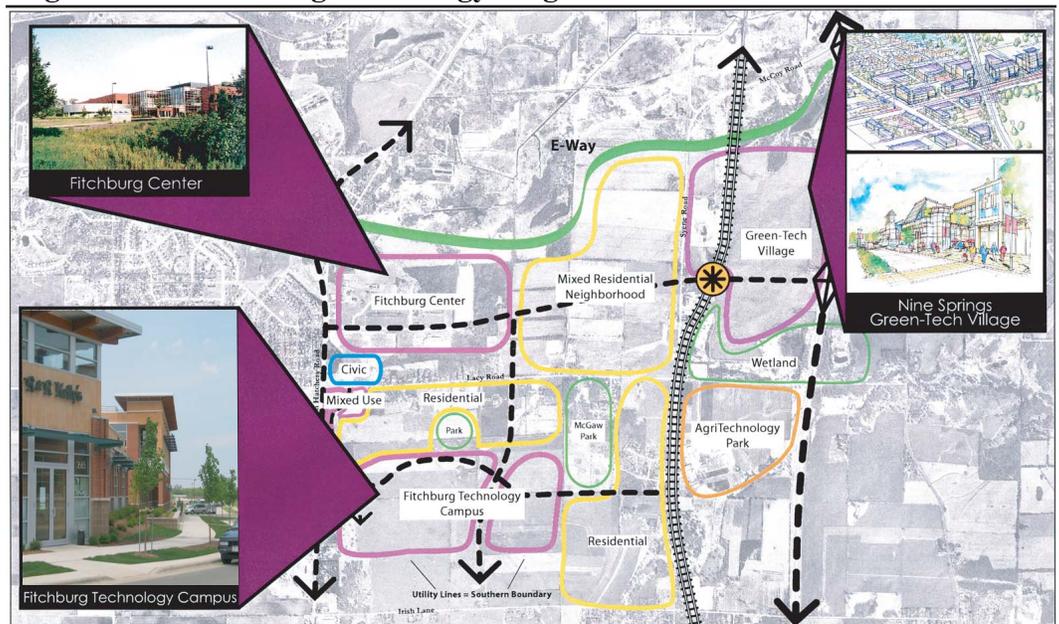
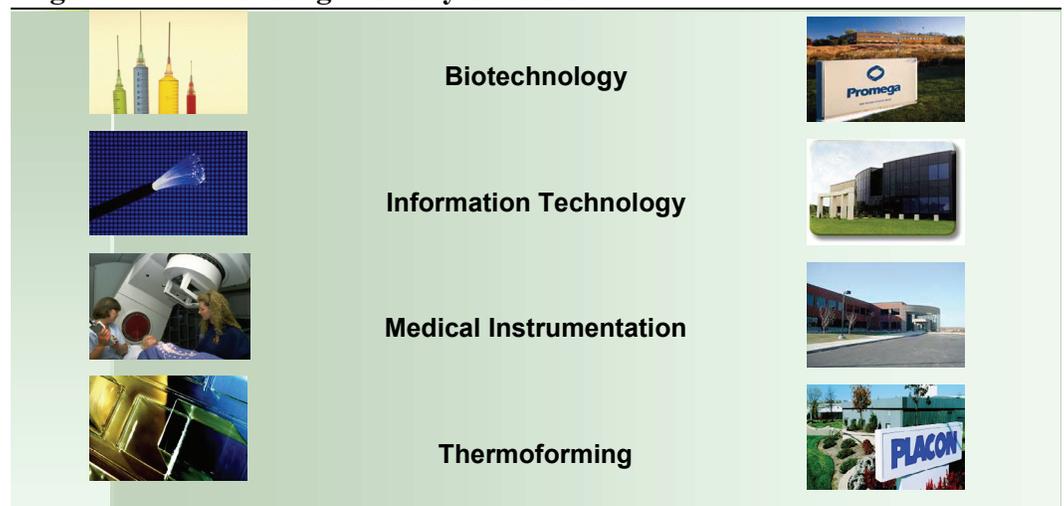


Figure 9 - 4: Fitchburg Industry Clusters



Source: Economic Development Department

Fitchburg Center is a mixed-use community located on over 400 prairie, woodland, and wetland acres. It offers exceptional integration of high technology businesses with civic, retail, educational, and residential opportunities. Protection of the environment, quality designed structures, community and sustainability are the staples of Fitchburg Center. Fitchburg Center residents will be able to shop, eat or congregate just a short walk from their front doors at the Agora in the Town Center Area. Commercial businesses will mesh with the retail marketplace to create a vibrant social center for the community.

Fitchburg Center, located along East Cheryl Parkway, east of Fish Hatchery Road, has over a half million square feet of technology development. This mixed use technology campus, adjacent to the Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area, is just ten minutes to downtown Madison, the University of Wisconsin campus, and the arts district. Fitchburg Center is home to high technology companies including:

- Promega Corporation - biotechnology
- CDW Berbee - information technology
- Bruker AXS - medical instrument technology



Figure 9 - 5: Fitchburg Technology Campus



Source: Economic Development Department

Economic Development Programs

Wisconsin Department of Commerce

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce is the State's primary agency for delivery of integrated services to businesses. Commerce's purpose is to:

1. Foster the retention and creation of new jobs and investment opportunities in Wisconsin;
2. Foster and promote economic business, export, and community development; and
3. Promote public health, safety, and welfare through effective and efficient regulations, and education and enforcement.

Example programs include: Community Development Block Grant – Economic Development (CDBG-ED), Community-Based Economic Development Program (CBED)

Forward Wisconsin, INC.

Forward Wisconsin, Inc. is a unique public-private state marketing and business recruitment organization. Its job is marketing outside Wisconsin to attract new businesses, jobs and increased economic activity to the state. In July 2000, Forward Wisconsin created a new division – Great Jobs Wisconsin – to recruit workers to Wisconsin from outside the state.

THRIVE

THRIVE is made up of eight county regions of South Central Wisconsin: Columbia, Dane Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk Counties. Their mission is to grow the Madison Region's economy in ways that preserve and enhance the quality of life. The regional scope, quality of life emphasis, target sector approach and grow-your-own strategy makes THRIVE's approach to economic development unique. Website: www.thrive.org

Capital Ideas Technology Zone

On July 1, 2002, the State of Wisconsin designated the counties of Dane, Jefferson and Rock and the City of Whitewater as the Capital Ideas Technology Zone. Under this program, the Zone has \$5 million in tax credits available to provide new and expanding high technology businesses in the region. The credit is taken against Wisconsin income taxes. Website: www.captital-ideas.org

Madison Development Corporation (MDC) Venture Debt Program

MDC's Venture Debt Program is designed to provide debt financing to emerging growth companies. The debt is structured with repayment forecast from the company's ability to reach cash flow break even with its existing liquidity or the company's ability to raise additional equity capital. The Fund is intended to be complementary to early stage equity sources of capital and stretch the ability of growth companies to access capital at predictable cost while giving up minimal ownership or control. Website: www.mdcorp.org

Economic Development

Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce

The Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit business organization dedicated to uniting and engaging its members to ensure the ongoing prosperity of our community as a whole. Founded in 1999, the Chamber has over 300 members. The Chamber provides these businesses with networking opportunities, marketing and promotional venues and business to business connections. The Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce is a strong resource for the business and residential communities in the area. We want everyone to know what long time residents of Fitchburg have known for years, working and playing in Fitchburg leads to an exceptional quality of life. Website: www.fitchburgchamber.com

Fitchburg Revolving Loan Fund

The Fitchburg Community Economic Development Authority, with the funds from the City of Fitchburg has established a revolving loan fund to assist existing businesses and prospects planning to locate in Fitchburg. This program is available to assist small businesses and start ups, target clean industries, attract new businesses to Fitchburg, and to promote a diverse mix of employment opportunities that offer excellent wages and benefits.

Fitchburg Room Tax

In 2001, the City of Fitchburg instituted the hotel room tax according to Wisconsin Statute 66.75. Under this law, 70% of the room tax collections must be used to market and promote tourism in our community. Fitchburg's ordinance has allowed the City to partner with the Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau. The City's Community Economic Development Authority (CEDA) oversees how the room tax dollars are spent on marketing and tourism to promote Fitchburg. The 2008 room tax rate is 5 percent.

Survey Results

Eighty percent of respondents favor mixed use developments that incorporate transit alternatives such as cars, buses, bicycles and walking. Additionally, respondents favor retail and commercial developments that meet community needs, promote tourism, and encourage redevelopment and higher density business developments. Research and technology is also a top priority as an economic development strategy; even farmers support building an economic development strategy around research and technology over one based on farming.