



# Introduction



# Plan Purpose

This work represents the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Fitchburg and is accomplished to meet the requirements of the State of Wisconsin “Smart Growth” law, WI Stats 66.1001. While meeting the provisions of the “Smart Growth” law, the plan also addresses the unique characteristics of Fitchburg and provides a vision and model for sustainable and regenerative growth. Not simply addressing population and business growth, the plan provides for a development pattern that recognizes the preservation and regeneration, where necessary, of the natural systems often affected by human activity. From the start, the plan represents a framework to focus on development in forms and locations most suitable for the protection of critical resource systems. Human activity in general, and development in particular, always provides some type of impact and this plan recognizes the critical need for strategies to regenerate and mitigate impact for affected resource systems. This approach evolves around the comprehensive plan’s main focus as an environmental ethic.

It is recognized that while the United States, and the world as a whole, is seeing an era of declining resources, opportunities are present to create a development guide that will provide for wise use of the resource system base, resource protection and even enhancement of affected resource systems. The plan is predicated that an ethic of conservation will lead to efforts that respect energy, water and the natural systems. As President Theodore Roosevelt once said, “I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of this land...; but I do not recognize the right to waste, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.” This statement provides the solid foundation for which this smart growth comprehensive plan builds upon.

The Green Tech Village (GTV) Plan (2002) created a design framework for sustainable development within a 450 acre area of the City of Fitchburg. That plan area was created in 1998, through the Nine Springs Neighborhood Plan, and the GTV area added the sustainability component to the overall neighborhood plan. This plan differs from the GTV, in that the basic framework and locations for development are given consideration based on the effect on the natural systems.

In order to obtain up-to-date information about the views of Fitchburg residents and businesses on the future state of the community, the Survey Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in conjunction with UW Extension conducted a survey regarding land use issues within the City. Survey results, displayed in the City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Planning Survey Report, were used to guide the process in determining the future direction of the community and preparing this Comprehensive Plan. Between September and December of 2005, 10,673 Fitchburg households along with 527 businesses located in Fitchburg received a survey requesting input on land use issues. In general, respondents agree that new developments should occur next to areas that have already been developed. Not only do they prefer to see growth slow or be severely restricted, they also prefer compact development. Survey results are used throughout this plan where appropriate.

The first portion of the plan, the introduction, provides forecasts that were considered when determining the growth potential of the community. The second portion of the plan represents goals, objectives and policies for the comprehensive plan elements: land use, natural, agricultural, and cultural resources, housing and economic development, transportation, utility and community facilities, and intergovernmental cooperation. Next, an evaluation of existing issues and opportunities present a guide for directing human impacts. Finally, background information is provided for all elements presented within the goals, objectives and policies section of the comprehensive plan, along with an implementation section.

## Planning Area

The City of Fitchburg is located in southern Dane County and can be accessed by US Highways 14 and 18/151, and County Highways D, PD, M, and MM. The City adjoins Madison to the south, and is 76 miles west of Milwaukee, 135 miles northwest of Chicago, IL, 95 miles east of Dubuque, IA, and 273 miles southeast of Minneapolis/St Paul, MN.

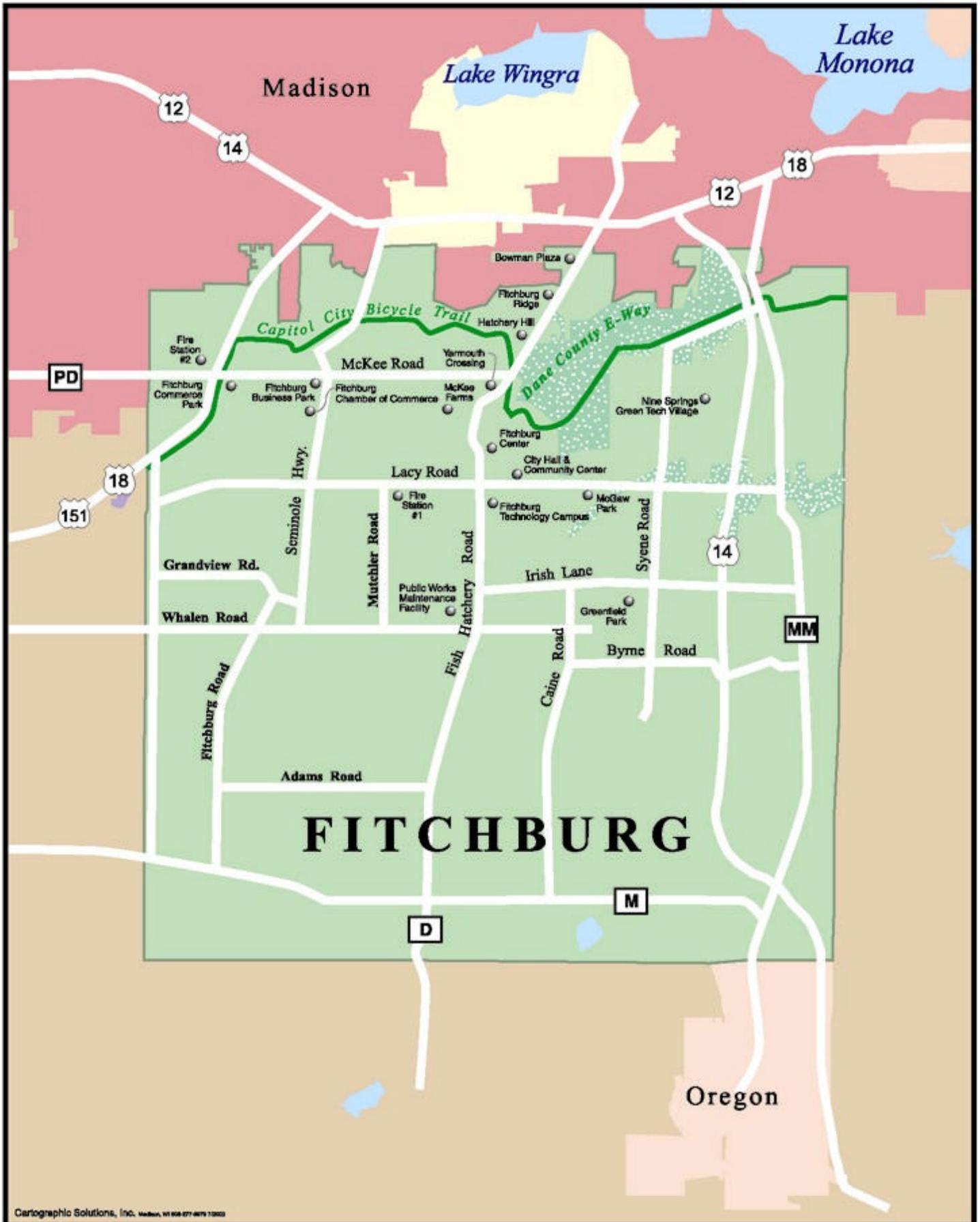
Fitchburg is located in the Yahara River Basin on moraine created during the last ice age. Here glacial deposits dammed up large preglacial valleys and formed a chain of large lakes and wetlands, including Fitchburg's Lake Barney. The glacier helped form many of the natural resources the City enjoys today. As the glacier retreated, the Yahara River and its tributaries, including Nine Springs, Swan and Murphy's Creeks, were formed. The fertile soils deposited in the river valley contributed to the successful establishment of agricultural activities in the Fitchburg area during the mid-1800s.

Settled in 1837, Fitchburg was first known as the Town of Greenfield in 1847. In 1853, the town was renamed Fitchburg after a City in Massachusetts. Early growth in the township took place at several locations, including the stagecoach and railroad stops of Oak Hall, Lake View, Fitchburg and Syene.

While agriculture played the major role in the town's early development, the town grew rapidly after 1960 due to its proximity to Madison. The population topped 4,000 in the late 1960s as residential and industrial development dominated. In 1983, the Town of Fitchburg became a City. At that time, Fitchburg had a population of more than 12,000. By 2000, the City had grown to a population of more than 20,500. Employment in Fitchburg is balanced between manufacturing jobs and retail-service jobs in the City's commercial-industrial districts along Highway 18/151 and Fish Hatchery Road. In 2002, the businesses within Fitchburg provided more than 5,500 jobs. Crop and pasture land continues to decline due to the advance of urbanization, and in 2000 made up about 53% of the City's area, and in 2005 about 51% of the City's total area.

Also included in the planning area, but not currently part of the City of Fitchburg, is a portion of the Town of Madison that will go to Fitchburg under a joint agreement between the City of Madison, Town of Madison and City of Fitchburg. The land areas to come to Fitchburg at the end of the protected period (2022) is the

Figure 1 - 1: City of Fitchburg



Cartographic Solutions, Inc., Madison, WI 608 277-4879 7/2003

area of the Town of Madison between Rimrock Road and USH 14 south of the Beltline Highway, and a portion of land area at the northwest corner of the Fish Hatchery Road—Greenway Cross intersection. This land area is substantially urban, although some vacant parcels exist, and some urban redevelopment is occurring. Additionally, there are areas where redevelopment should be a factor within the timeline of this plan. The Northeast Neighborhood is currently one proposed area for future development within the City. This proposed area is in keeping with the 1984 and 1995 Land Use Plans, which identified the Northeast Neighborhood as a possible area of future urban service area expansion and potential development. The Northeast Neighborhood plan will reflect the goals of the Future Urban Development Areas (FUDA) study and this Plan to provide sound and cost effective areas for urban development.

## Public Participation

The Public Participation Plan was created to ensure comprehensive public involvement in drafting the comprehensive plan. The adopted January 2003 plan called for 34 public meetings; however the Common Council amended the Public Participation Plan to add additional meetings, open houses, and charrettes as necessary to ensure that members of the public and specialized committees were given several opportunities to comment and help direct the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan.

By the adoption of this Plan, the city held 13 public open houses, three charrettes, over 70 committee meetings, five Citizen Advisory Committee meetings, and seven public hearings.

## Forecasts

### Demographics

In order to plan adequately for housing production and employment needs in the City on a long-term basis, future demand must be accounted for. City forecasts were developed using data from the Wisconsin Department of Administration - Demographic Services Center population projections for Dane County from 2000 to 2030. The Dane County Regional Planning Commission report was also used to obtain and project these factors into the future.

**Figure 1 - 2: Forecasts (2000 - 2030)**

	2000	2010	2020	2030
Population	20,501	25,477	30,431	35,386
Labor Force (> 18 years old)	12,340	15,495	18,392	20,625

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Wisconsin Department of Administration and Dane County Regional Planning Commission

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## Land Use

The following table displays estimated land use demands for the City through 2030. It should be understood that the numbers presented here are only estimates. Actual land use demand will vary based on overall market conditions as well as management tools that the City may enact to ensure that the community grows in accordance to community services. Estimated land use demand provides a stronghold for the vision of the community and guides the goals and policies upon which this smart growth plan is created.

**Figure 1 - 3: Forecasted Land Use Demand**

	2006 - 2009	2010 - 2014	2015 - 2020	2021 - 2025	2026 - 2030	<b>Total</b>
Residential (du*)	802	1123	1138	959	951	<b>4973</b>
Residential (acres)	115	160	163	137	136	<b>711</b>
Business (acres)	70	69	70	79	79	<b>367</b>
Communication/ Utility/Inst. (acres)	10	11	12	12	12	<b>57</b>
<b>Subtotal (acres)</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>1135</b>
Street (acres)	49	52	51	58	57	<b>267</b>
Storm Water (acres)	10	9	11	13	12	<b>55</b>
Park and Recreation (acres)	46	74	68	76	79	<b>343</b>
Total (2010 - 2030)		375	375	375	375	<b>1500</b>
5 year flexibility factor						<b>375</b>
2010 available land in USA**						<b>-787</b>
Land required for expanded Urban Service Area (acres)						<b>1088</b>
Remaining Agricultural/ Vacant Land ***	15,940	15,565	15,190	14,815	14,440	

\* Dwelling Units (du)

\*\* 787 acres as of 2010 based off of projections from the 2005 land use inventory. Urban Service Area (USA)

\*\*\* Includes 5 acres annexed in 2006.

Source: Dane County Regional Planning Commission and the City of Fitchburg Planning Department

## Statement of Vision and Goals

The City of Fitchburg is a residential and employment hub of Dane County with an active agricultural community. Urban Fitchburg provides housing opportunities for all people and supports a diverse economy. Rural Fitchburg supports an active economy of agriculture and ag-based businesses. Fitchburg is a growing community

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and recognizes that balancing urban and rural interests will require a focus on infill and redevelopment opportunities while planning for managed and orderly growth.

Respectful of its past, its unique natural areas, and its agricultural heritage, Fitchburg's government recognizes the values of the community - our citizens. Fitchburg desires to develop its sense of place, through both the design of its urban form and the development of places that encourage our citizens to interact. Fitchburg recognizes that the movement of people between these gathering places, homes, and businesses is important to vital community. Fitchburg will strive to minimize the traffic impacts from development and encourage multiple forms of transportation throughout our community.

The goals, objectives and policies from each element of this Comprehensive Plan help guide the vision and provide policy guidance that the Common Council, Plan Commission, residents, developers and other interested groups need to guide the future preservation, development, and redevelopment of Fitchburg for years to come.

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