

**City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Plan:
2025 – 2030
Section II – Existing Conditions Report**

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Abbreviations

ADA: Americans With Disabilities Act (1990)

CARPC: Capital Area Regional Planning Commission

CIP: City of Fitchburg Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Plan: City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Plan: 2025 - 2030

Proposal: City of Fitchburg Conceptual Park and Open Space Proposal (2010)

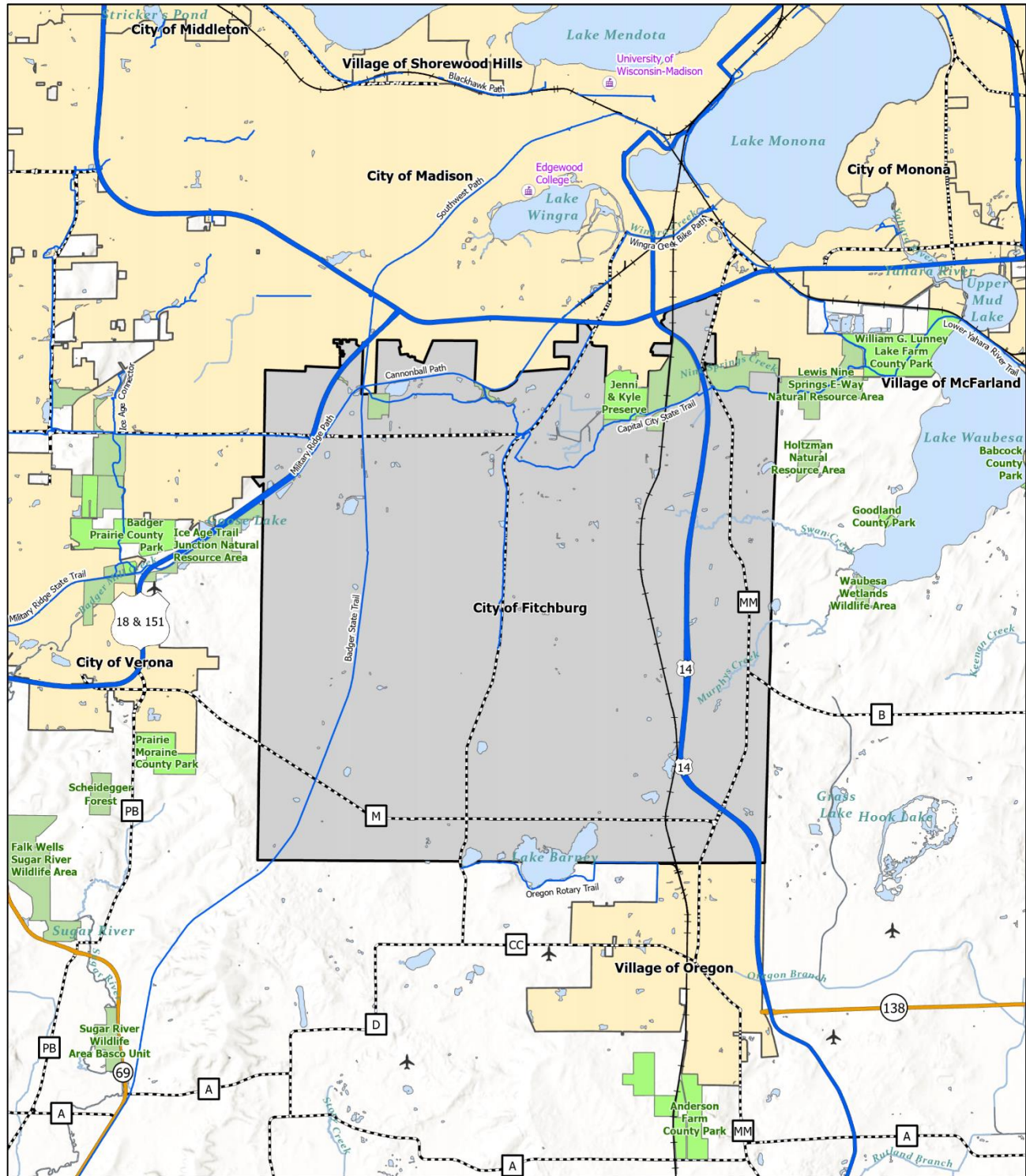
Report: Section II – Existing Conditions Report – City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2030

System: City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System

WDNR: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WisDOT: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Map 1: Fitchburg Vicinity and Location



Disclaimer: The City is not liable for any deficiencies in the completeness, accuracy, content or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any public data set, or application utilizing such data set, provided by any third party.

- City of Fitchburg
- City/Village
- Universities and Colleges
- Airports
- Bike Path
- Railroads
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Recreation Park
- Natural Resource Area
- Lakes and Ponds
- Rivers and Streams

Fitchburg Area

Date: 11/25/2024
 Source: City of Fitchburg, County of Dane, ESRI
 Created By: City of Fitchburg IT Department

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Plan Introduction

The City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Plan – Existing Conditions Report (hereafter “Report”) is Section II of a three-section Plan document. This Report provides an overview of existing conditions related to Fitchburg’s parks, open space, and recreation system (hereafter “system”), and is organized into the following categories:

- Fitchburg profile and demographic trends
- System stakeholder perceptions
- Trends in parks and recreation
- System classification and standards
- System assessment
- System inventory
- System implementation tools
- System issues

Fitchburg Profile and Demographic Trends

The City of Fitchburg is in southern Dane County, Wisconsin, and is intersected by U.S. Highways 14 and 18/151, and County Highways B, PD, MM and M. Fitchburg is southerly adjacent to the City of Madison, 76 miles west of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 135 miles northwest of Chicago, Illinois, and 273 miles southeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. **Map 1** identifies Fitchburg’s vicinity and location.

Fitchburg is located in the Lower Rock River basin and spans three watersheds: Yahara River and Lake Monona, Badfish Creek, and Sugar River. Fitchburg includes a small moraine created during the last ice age. Glacial deposits dammed up large pre-glacial valleys, forming a chain of large lakes and wetlands, including Lake Barney, located in the south-central portion of the City. As the glacier retreated, the Yahara River and its tributaries, including Nine Springs, Swan, and Murphy’s Creeks, were formed.

The area that is now Fitchburg was home to Indigenous peoples and is the ancestral territory of the Ho-Chunk Nation. According to oral history, Ho-Chunk people have been in this region since prior to two ice ages, occupying the area around Green Bay in Wisconsin, reaching beyond Lake Winnebago to the Wisconsin River and to the Rock River in Illinois.¹ The Madison area was known as Teejop (Four Lakes).² Fitchburg’s first territorial settlement occurred in 1837 and became the Town of Greenfield in 1847. The fertile soils deposited in the river valley contributed to the establishment of agricultural activities in the Fitchburg area during the mid-1800s. The town was renamed Fitchburg in 1853 after a city in Massachusetts. Early growth in Fitchburg took place at several locations, including the stagecoach and railroad stops formally named Oak Hall and Lake View.

Agriculture played a major role in the Town of Fitchburg’s development. Because of its proximity to Madison, the town grew rapidly after 1960. In 1983, the Town of Fitchburg incorporated as a City with a population of more than 12,000. Current employment in Fitchburg is balanced between manufacturing and retail in the City’s commercial-industrial districts near Highway 18/151 and Fish Hatchery Road. Agriculture continues to play a prominent role in the City with almost half of the land in the City, 11,000 acres, still remaining in agricultural

¹ Native American Tourism of Wisconsin: Ho-Chunk Nation. <<https://natow.org/tribes/ho-chunk-nation-people-of-the-big-voice/>> Accessed 11/11/2024.

² Wisconsin First Nations: American Indian Studies in Wisconsin <<https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/ho-chunk-nation>>. Accessed 11/5/2024.

use. City development plans concentrate growth within the urban service area and designated future urban growth areas.

Fitchburg's recent growth is part of a larger regional trend. The City's population has more than doubled in the past 30 years, while Dane County's population has increased at an accelerated rate as well. The City, with a population of approximately 35,124 in 2024, is expected to have a population of approximately 38,000 in 2030 and 44,000 by 2040. Recent population demographic statistics indicate a City with a diversity of income levels and ethnicities. Furthermore, Fitchburg's population consists of large segments of youths and seniors.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System – *Stakeholder Perceptions*

Fitchburg Planning and Zoning and Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Departments staff developed and coordinated a comprehensive public stakeholder engagement process to ensure appropriate feedback and input on development of the *Plan*. Major components of this process are as follows:

1. Presentation of overview of *Plan* update to Parks Commission – **June, 2021**;
2. Public open house and meeting – **9/30/2021**
3. Parks Commission Work Session #1 – **10/07/2021**
4. Parks Commission Work Session #2 – **11/04/2021**
5. Parks Commission Work Session #3 – **02/03/2022**
6. Presentation of draft *Plan* to Parks Commission and public – **09/07/2023**
7. Presentation of second draft *Plan* to Fitchburg committees and commissions and public – **March-April 2024**
8. Plan Commission recommendation – **11/09/2024**
9. Public hearing and Parks Commission recommendation – **12/05/2024**
10. Common Council adoption – **12/10/2024**



Public meeting and workshop
Source: City of Fitchburg

Major feedback components from the stakeholder engagement process included the following:

- Expand the user profile of the City's *system* through development of new recreational opportunities that reflect current trends and demands
- Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships on City *system* properties
- Accentuate Fitchburg's unique attributes, including trails/biking, natural resources, and agricultural lands, to enhance the City *system*

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- Ensure appropriate placement, size, and composition of new City *system* properties to derive maximum benefit
 - Ensure the multi-functional aspect of the City *system*, including both active and passive recreation opportunities
 - Address climate change, equity, and accessibility

Trends in Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation opportunities are an important part of why people choose a community in which to live. In addition to Fitchburg's rapidly growing population, participation in outdoor recreation has also been increasing on a national scale and this will increase the demands on Fitchburg's park and open space system. Increasing participation in outdoor recreation accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 through 2023, with increased interest in outdoor activities that were seen as safer as they allowed for physical distancing and became an alternative to indoor fitness centers. COVID-19 also changed how people participated in outdoor recreation, with many people spending more time exploring local parks and green spaces. The U.S. outdoor recreation participant base grew 2.3% in 2022 to a record 168.1 million participants, or 55% of the U.S. population ages six and older.³ This growth has occurred continuously since 2015, with 14.5 million additional participants between 2020 and 2023. The same report found that new and young outdoor recreation participants are significantly more diverse than the current outdoor base and overall U.S. population, but diverse ethnic and racial groups are still underrepresented among outdoor recreation participants. It is not known yet whether this spike in participation will return to pre-COVID levels.

The WI DNR's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) inventories and discusses trends in outdoor recreation in Wisconsin when it is updated every five years. The latest SCORP from 2019 shows increases in participation in nearly every category of outdoor recreation. The SCORP found that at County Park properties in the Southern Gateways region in which Dane County sits, there were strong increases in camping (RV and tent), canoeing/kayaking, recreational/rail-trail biking, use of picnic areas/day use areas/beach areas, paddle boarding, dog walking on trails, and hiking/walking/running on trails. The survey found moderate increases in winter/fat tire biking, mountain biking, riding ATVs/UTVs, fishing, motor boating, snowshoeing, bird/wildlife watching, nature photography, swimming in lakes/ponds/rivers, foraging, turkey hunting, small game hunting, and big game hunting. The same survey found that the only recreational activities that were available in the Southern Gateways area that declined were cross country skiing – on ungroomed trails, trapping, and snowmobiling.

In addition to increasing participation in outdoor recreation, recreation habits and needs may be influenced by the impacts of global climate change. For example, the increasing prevalence of extreme heat events may increase the reliance on public water facilities, including pools, splash pads, and cooling stations to help residents stay cool. This may be especially true for renters, residents of older housing, and low-income residents who are less likely to have functional air conditioning. At the same time, warmer winters may mean fewer opportunities for snow-dependent recreation, including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling.

Fitchburg's park system has grown tremendously since 2005, when there was 454 acres of parkland. By 2015 total parkland was up to 507 acres, and from 2015 to 2020 it increased by 44% to 729 acres. As of 2024, the City has 815 acres of parks. The COVID-19 pandemic also had a demonstrable local impact on recreation programs. Fitchburg's recreation-related revenue declined precipitously during 2020 due to the suspension of

³ Outdoor Industry Association, 2023. *2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Report*.

group and indoor recreation programs, however recreation program participation and revenue partially rebounded in 2021 and 2022.

The Role of Fitchburg Parks and Open Space in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Fitchburg parks and open space properties serve important functions for climate change mitigation and adaptation and ecosystem health. Open space and wooded areas of parks help to infiltrate stormwater, provide islands of habitat to assist in species migration and travel, reduce the urban heat island effect, serve as carbon sinks, and provide linkages for low/no-carbon transportation throughout the community. These benefits can be enhanced through strategic park location to create corridors and through utilizing native landscapes. Park structures and park lands may offer opportunities to locate renewable power generation infrastructure, such as solar photovoltaic panels, to reduce the City's carbon footprint. This should be carefully planned alongside the City's 30% tree canopy goal to avoid the shading of PV infrastructure by fully grown trees.

There are several expected impacts of climate change to Midwestern states that relate to parks and open space.⁴ Changing precipitation patterns and increased flood risks will increase stresses on stormwater management system and increases in extreme heat will exacerbate urban heat island effects. Species and ecosystems are at greater risks when climate stressors interact with land-use change, habitat loss, pollution, nutrient inputs, and invasive species. Restoration of natural systems, increased use of green infrastructure, and targeted conservation, especially of wetland systems can protect people and nature from some of these impacts.⁵ Open space and tree canopy in urban areas of Fitchburg that are most susceptible to the urban heat island effect can help to mitigate increases in extreme heat events.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System – *Classification and Standards*

Fitchburg is dedicated to providing a comprehensive *system* to diverse users. The City *system* is comprised of various park types, natural areas, special-use areas and civic spaces, undeveloped areas, trails/paths, and ecosystem management features (stormwater facilities and wetland buffers). The City's *Land Division Ordinance* requires the dedication of parkland for specified land division/development projects, assuring the City can acquire additional *system* properties necessary to serve its growing population. At least 2,900 square feet of land is required to be dedicated to the City for parkland purposes, for each proposed residential dwelling unit in a land division/development. Additionally, City ordinance requires park fees, to enhance the *system*, for any residential development entailing a rezoning of land, conditional use permit, or design review if fees have not been paid previously. In 1994, Fitchburg developed a plan to update the *system* restroom and shelter facilities to federal guidelines for persons with physical disabilities or handicaps. All future *system* facilities will accommodate persons with physical disabilities, including accessible restrooms, convenient parking, and hard-surfaced paths with suitable grades for facility access.

- Active Recreation – a structured individual or team activity that requires the use of special facilities, courses, fields, or equipment
- Passive Recreation - activities that do not require prepared facilities like sports fields or pavilions

The City also utilizes a classification system and standards to encourage desirable size, uses/facilities, and

⁴ USGCRP, 2018. *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Report-in-Brief*. Pg. 131.

⁵ *Ibid.* Pg. 132.

distribution of *system* properties throughout the City. Park system standards should be utilized as guiding principles to ensure the **minimum** desirable number of acres, and equitable distribution of park, open space, and recreation lands and facilities. As such, Fitchburg’s *system* standards provide general guidelines for providing land/facilities for recreational opportunities in the City and are subject to limitations resulting from the physical landscape, specific recreational demands, and other site-specific conditions.

The City’s policy for naming public park and open space land governs how newly dedicated parkland is named. This policy was adopted by Council as Resolution R-101-13 in 2013. Park names should provide an individual identity that may be inspired by natural features, historical significance or in honor of indigenous peoples and their lands. Names inspired by natural features, such as bodies of water, native vegetation, wildlife or landforms, can help preserve and emphasize Fitchburg’s natural heritage. Park names may reflect historical events, people or practices such as Fitchburg’s agricultural history. When possible, parks names may acknowledge the history and connection of Indigenous peoples to this land to honor their presence and contributions.

Fitchburg classifies its active parks as either community, neighborhood, or area, and utilizes a standard for uses and facilities in each classification category. Fitchburg also utilizes a service area standard to ensure equitable distribution of parks by the classification categories throughout the City’s urban service area. This standard is in place to guide decisions about future park locations in new developments, rather than determining if existing residential areas are deficient in parkland.

To our best understanding, Fitchburg has used a general standard of 12 acres of “active” parkland for every 1,000 people. Active parkland includes only community, neighborhood, or area parks. The following further identifies *system* classification categories and related standards, and does not include natural areas, special use/civic spaces, or undeveloped parks.

Community Parks

Community parks are intended to serve persons within a large area (2.5 miles) and provide facilities in addition to those provided in area and neighborhood parks. Community parks can serve as neighborhood and area parks if they are located within walking or bicycling distance of a residence. These parks are designed to serve both large and small groups, such as community events and festivals. Community parks should range in size from 50 to 100 acres, with a standard of 5 acres for every 1,000 people.



Splash pad at McKee Farms Park (Community Park)

Source: City of Fitchburg

Area Parks

Area parks are intended to serve persons within bicycle distance (0.5 miles) and provide facilities for both young and adult users. Area parks serve a dual role, as a neighborhood park for immediate residents and also as an expanded facility to serve the needs of larger groups within the City. As such, area parks contain a wider variety of facilities than neighborhood parks since they must provide both away-from-home recreational opportunities for youth, and also serve as a focal point for organized activities such as little league, softball, picnics, soccer, and tennis. These parks should be located adjacent to elementary schools or natural areas, if feasible. Area parks should range in size from 10 to 20 acres, with a standard of 4 acres for every 1,000 people.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve persons within walking distance (0.25 miles) and provide facilities for both young and adult users. These parks provide children with an away-from-home play area and serve as a gathering location for persons of all ages and should be located adjacent to elementary schools or natural areas, if feasible. Neighborhood parks should range in size from 5 to 10 acres, with a standard of 3 acres for every 1,000 people.

Table 1 summarizes Fitchburg *system* standards for “active” parkland, including community, area, and neighborhood parks. However, it should be noted that these standards have not been updated since before 2015 and they should be reviewed to ensure that any standards reflect the goals of the *system*.



Baseball/softball diamond at McGaw Park
Source: City of Fitchburg



Tennis courts at McKee Farms Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

Table 1: City of Fitchburg Community, Area, and Neighborhood Park Standards

Fitchburg Park and Open Space Standards					
	Neighborhood Park*	Area Park	Community Park	Other Civic Space	Natural Areas
Acres/1,000 population	3 acres	4 acres	5 acres	n/a	n/a
Service Area	1/4 mile radius	1/2 mile radius	2 1/2 mile radius	n/a	n/a
Desirable Size	5-10 acres	10-20 acres	50-100 acres	1/2 - 8 acres	n/a
Desirable Site Facilities	Junior play apparatus	All age apparatus	All age apparatus	Lawn, Tree and shrub plantings	Tree and shrub plantings
	Softball diamond	Softball diamonds	Softball diamonds (lighted)		
	1/2 basketball court	Basketball court	Basketball court	Pavement in plazas	Shelter
	Area for lawn and field games	Area for lawn and field games	Area for lawn and field games	Other facilities and forms as may be prescribed in a form-based district/code	Recreation trails use paving with discretion.
	Open area for general play	Open area for general play	Open area for general play		Natural areas
	Volleyball area	Volleyball area	Volleyball courts (lighted)		Motor vehicle parking area (if not detrimental to environmentally sensitive areas)
	Soccer field	Soccer field	Soccer fields		Off-road biking area
	Tree and Shrub planting	Tree and Shrub planting	Tree and Shrub planting		Frisbee golf course
	Picnic tables and benches	Picnic tables and benches	Picnic areas, including grills		
	Drinking fountain (size permitting)	Drinking fountain	Drinking fountain		
	Shelter (size permitting)	Shelter (with restroom if not provided in school)	Year-round shelter with restrooms		
	Accessible path system (size permitting)	Accessible path system	Accessible path system		
	Natural areas	Natural areas	Natural areas (lighted)		
		Motor vehicle parking area where necessary	Motor vehicle parking area		
		Tennis court	Tennis /pickleball courts (lighted)		
		Outdoor education area	Outdoor education area		
		Sledding slope (according to insurance recommendation)	Sledding slope		
		Horseshoe pits	Horseshoe pits (lighted)		
		Bicycle parking	Botanical sculpture garden		
			Swimming pool/splashpad		
		Indoor recreation center			
		Food and drink			
		Lacrosse field			
		Baseball diamond (lighted)			
		Bleachers for athletic facilities			
		Frisbee golf course			
		Bicycle parking and public bicycle repair stand and air pump			
Existing size	0.25 - 15.8 acres	5.4 - 19.3 acres	2.2 - 78.5 acres	1.2 acres	0.2 - 42.6 acres
Existing number	25	8	5	1 (Nevin Village Green)	16 (designated natural areas)

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Recreation Facilities

The City also utilizes standards for recreation facilities normally found in “active” parkland, summarized in **Table 2**. Again, these standards have not been updated since before 2015, are missing key recreational facilities (e.g., pickleball), and should be considered for updates.

Natural Areas

Natural areas contain plant and wildlife habitat or have significant and unique features worthy of protection and preservation. In some instances, these areas can be used for passive recreation such as hiking, biking, cross country skiing, and nature study. After community, area, or neighborhood park needs have been met, in accordance with the standards, the City may allow for remaining parkland dedication, per the City’s *Land Division Ordinance*, in the form of a natural area. The City does not have size, use/facilities, or location/distribution standards for natural areas.



Dunn’s Marsh

Source: City of Fitchburg

Special-Use Areas and Civic Spaces

Special-use areas include lands and facilities designed to provide for unique recreation opportunities not normally accommodated in parks, including indoor classes and meetings, golf, and special events. The City does not have size, use/facilities, or location/distribution standards for special-use areas.

Civic spaces are park and recreation lands that are created as a result of development in the City’s SmartCode Zoning District. The SmartCode Zoning District is a form-based district which offers greater land-use flexibility, focusing on the development form and design. This zoning district encourages development on a more human scale, focusing on high-quality design, walkable streets, and access to community amenities, and also provides development parameters. Civic spaces may also fall under the natural areas or neighborhood park classification categories. The City does not have set standards for civic spaces, but utilizes **Table 3** as a general guideline when developing said spaces.

Trails/Paths

Trails/paths provide outdoor recreational opportunities and an active transportation option. The City does not currently have standards for recreational trails, but it has made a concerted effort in the recent past to develop a comprehensive trail/path system with the *City of Fitchburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* (2017).

Ecosystem Management Features (Stormwater Facilities and Wetland Buffers)

Stormwater facilities (consisting primarily of detention ponds and drainageways) and wetland buffers, collectively termed herein as ecosystem management features, are also included in the City’s *system*. Stormwater facilities may also contain recreation elements such as trails/paths. The City’s Public Works Department utilizes various regulatory mechanisms and standards to ensure sufficient stormwater facilities in the City.

Additionally, the City’s *Comprehensive Plan* (2020) sets forth 300-foot wetland buffers to better protect and enhance biological and water quality components of wetlands. Land uses allowed within the buffers are to generally follow guidelines established by the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission. Generally, it is not the intent of the buffers to prevent or obstruct the necessary maintenance, expansion, or construction of stormwater facilities, major underground utilities, or major transportation facilities. Encroachment into the buffers should be limited, with high-level erosion control and native vegetation restoration.

In the City’s urban areas, best management practices dictate the first 100 feet of a 300-foot wetland buffer be native vegetation, such as prairie grass with related oak openings. Buffers at 100 feet or less in width should utilize native vegetation as long as it does not conflict with other facilities. Existing woodlots within the buffer are to remain with enhancement encouraged by removal of invasive species and other forest management or restoration methods. Agricultural production is allowed within buffers, but it is preferred that the activity be organic.

The City may consider whether portions of a 300-foot wetland buffer could be used to fulfill parkland dedication requirements, per the City's *Land Division Ordinance*. Park shelters, access structures, and trails/paths may be allowed in 300-foot wetland buffers. If there is a park shelter or trail/path in a buffer, the trail should be located as far from the wetland as practicable and not within 75 feet of the wetland edge. In buffers of 300 feet or more, such facilities are to be located to not cause damage to the wetland and be at least 150 feet from the wetland edge, if feasible.

Table 2: City of Fitchburg Recreation Facility Standards

ACTIVITY / FACILITY	SIZE & DIMENSIONS	SPACE REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED ORIENTATION	LOCATION NOTES	
BASEBALL	Official	Baselines - 90' Pitching dist. - 60.5' Foul lines - min. 320' Center field - 400' +	3.0 - 3.85 Acres minimum	Locate home plate so pitcher is not throwing across sun, and batter is not facing it. Line from home plate through pitchers mound to run east-northeast.	Lighted fields part of community complex
	Youth	Baselines - 60' Pitching dist. - 46' Foul lines - min. 200' Center field - 200'-250'	1.2 Acres minimum		
BASKETBALL	Full Court	50' x 84'	5040 - 7280 sq.ft.	Long axis north-south	Active recreation areas in area and community parks
	1/2 Court	42' x 50'	2520 - 3640 sq.ft.	Long axis east-west	Active recreation area in neighborhood parks
GOLF	9-hole	Avg. length 2,250 yd.	50 Acres minimum	Majority of holes on north-south axis	9-hole course can accommodate 350 people per day
	18-hole	Avg, length 6,500 yd.	110 Acres minimum		18-hole course can accommodate 500-550 people per day
ICE SKATING	4000 sq. ft.				
ICE HOCKEY	85' x 185' min.	22,000 sq. ft. including support area	Long axis north-south		Best as part of multi-purpose facility
PICKLEBALL PLAY EQUIPMENT SOCCER	150' x 175' (8 courts) 50' x 75'	1 acre 1.5 Acres	Long axis east - west		125 feet from open water when feasible
	195'-225' x 330'-360' w/ 10' min. clearance on all sides	1.7 - 2.1 Acres	Long axis north-south		Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks.
SOFTBALL	Baselines - 60' Pitching dist. - 40' (women), 45' (men) Fast pitch field radius from plate - 225' Slow pitch field radius from plate - 250' (women), 275' (men)	1.5 - 2.0 Acres	Same as baseball		Slight difference in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. may also be used for youth baseball.

ACTIVITY / FACILITY	SIZE & DIMENSIONS	SPACE REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED ORIENTATION	LOCATION NOTES
SWIMMING	Teaching-min. 25yd x 45' even depth of 3-4' Competitive-min. 25m x 16m Min. of 25 sq. ft. water surface per swimmer. Ratio of 2:1 deck to water	Varies on size of pool and amenities, initial 1-2 Acres	None. Although care must be taken in siting lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	Pool for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive, and recreational purposes with enough depth to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.
TENNIS	36' x 78' w/ 12' clearance on both ends	Min. of 7,200 sq. ft. single court area (2 acres per complex)	Long axis north-south	Located in groups of 2-4 courts.
VOLLEYBALL Sand	60' x 60' w/ 6' min. clearance on all sides	4,000 sq. ft. minimum	Long axis north-south	All neighborhood parks should have a volleyball area (grass or sand)

Table 3: City of Fitchburg Civic Space Guidelines

SmartCode Civic Spaces -- Amenity Guidelines*					
a. Conservancy (8 Acre Minimum)		b. Neighborhood Park - Special District (5 Acre Min.)		c. Neighborhood Park (4-5 Acres)	
Required	Desired	Required	Desired	Required	Desired
All Amenities Group D Bike Parking Kiosk/Posting Area Park Signage Benches	Bathrooms Drinking Fountain Parking Area - if feasible Gazebo or Shade Feature	Amenities Group A 4 From Amenities Group B 3 From Amenities Group C 4 From Amenities Group E w/ at least 3 from Subgroup A	Prairie Areas as appropriate	Amenities Group A Except bathrooms may not be required 3 From Amenities Group B 3 From Amenities Group C 4 From Amenities Group E w/ at least 2 from Subgroup A	Prairie Areas as appropriate
d. Green (1/2 Acre to 8 Acres)		e. Square (1/2 Acre to 5 Acres)		f. Plaza (1/4 Acre to 2 Acres)	
Required	Desired	Required	Desired	Required	Desired
Kiosk/Posting Area Bike Parking Walking Path Benches Park Signage Trees (4 per Acre Min.)	Gazebo or Shade Feature Picnic Areas & Tables Game Tables (Desired features are required for Greens Over 4 Acres Possible drinking fountain Prairie Area	4 From Amenities Group F Kiosk/Posting Area Bike Parking Benches Park Signage Lighting/Electrical Access Water Supply Drinking Fountain Trees	Gazebo or Shade Feature	Patterned Paver Units Shade Trees (Tree Wells) 4 Other Amenities Group F Lighting Kiosk/Posting Area Bike Parking Water Supply Drinking Fountain Lighting/Electrical Access	Gazebo or Shade Feature
g. Playground (No Size Restriction)		h. Community Garden (No Size Restriction)		General Requirements	
Required	Desired	Required	Desired	Selected amenities shall be complementary to provide diversity of experience opportunity through varied amenities and appropriate geographical distribution. Recreational trails/boardwalks shall be installed as necessary regardless of civic space type. Recreational trails are constructed as part of the street improvements. Desired rain gardens in all classifications if applicable.	
4 From Amenities Group E of which at least 2 are from Subgroup A Drinking Fountain Bike Parking Benches, Picnic Table(s) Trees (4 per Acre Min.)	Gazebo or Shade Feature Note: Decorative fencing may be required	Community Gardens Water Supply Kiosk/Posting Area Bike Parking Tool Shed Fencing for Animal Control	Gazebo or Shade Feature Slide/Multi-play Set		

*Refer to City of Fitchburg Code of Ordinances, Title II, Chapter 23 for requirements related to SmartCode civic spaces.

Amenities						
Amenities Group A	Amenities Group B	Amenities Group C	Amenities Group D	Amenities Group E	Amenities Group F	
The Basics	Active Recreation	Group Activities	Conservancy Specific	Children's Activities	Urban Spaces	
Open Air Shelter Bathrooms Water Supply Drinking Fountain Lighting/Electrical Access Kiosk/Posting Area Benches Bike Parking Walking Paths Parking Area - If Practical Park Signage Trees (4 per Acre Min.) Other Landscaping	Volleyball Courts Sand Volleyball Courts Tennis/Pickleball Courts (Min.2) 1/2 Court Basketball Ball Field w/Backstop Horseshoe Pits (Min. 2 Sets) Disc Golf Course Shuffleboard Soccer/Multi Sport Field Ice Skating Rink Lawn Bowling	Picnic Areas & Tables Barbeque Pits Game Tables Gazebo or Shade Feature Community Gardens Tool Shed	Formal Trail Areas Trail Signage Nature Viewing Area Boardwalks if Wetland Prairie Establishment	<p>Subgroup A</p> Playground Climbing Equipment Swing Sets Slide/Multi-play Set Jungle Gyms	<p>Subgroup B</p> Physical Activity Stations Areas for Crafts	Outdoor Performance Space Game Tables Public Art Formal Landscaping Raised Landscape Beds Fountains Walkways Required for Plazas: Patterned paver units Shade Trees (Tree Wells)
*Refer to City of Fitchburg Code of Ordinances, Title II, Chapter 23 for requirements related to SmartCode civic spaces.						

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System – Assessment

This section of the *Report* assesses Fitchburg’s *system* as it relates to standards identified in the previous section. As noted above, the standards provide general guidelines for providing land/facilities for recreational opportunities. The following assessment is intended to offer insights for potential improvements rather than to serve as a tool for final decision-making.

Total Parkland

According to the standard identified in the previous section, the City aims for 12 acres of “active” park (community, neighborhood, and area parks) per 1,000 people. **Table 4** identifies existing and projected future Fitchburg total “active” park acreage, per the standard. Existing parkland totals 815 acres as of 2024, 386 acres of which are considered “active.” Fitchburg’s existing parkland well exceeds the median parkland per capita data collected by the National Recreation and Park Association’s *2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review*, which shows a median of 11.2 *total* acres per 1,000 people in communities with populations between 20,000 and 49,999, or 393.4 acres for Fitchburg’s 2024 population of 35,125. This NRPA metric includes both maintained parks and accessible open space areas such as green spaces and courtyards. If natural areas, special use/civic spaces, and undeveloped parks are included Fitchburg has 22.4 acres/1,000 people, which exceeds the upper quartile of 18.0 acres/1,000 people identified by the NRPA.⁶

Table 4: Existing and Future City of Fitchburg “Active” Park Acreage

Year	Estimated City Population*	System Land Required To Meet 12 Acres/1,000 People	Additional Parkland Required to Meet 12 Acres/1,000 People
2020	29,609*	355.3 acres	N/A
2024	35,125^	421.5 acres	35.5 acres
2030	37,971**	455.7 acres	69.7 acres
2040	43,821**	525.9 acres	139.9 acres

Population Data Sources: *2020 U.S. Census, ^2024 WI DOA Population Estimates, **population projections prepared by City of Fitchburg Planning and Zoning using Growing Fitchburg 2020 Comprehensive Plan and updated DOA population estimates

The City has met this standard in the past. **Table 4** indicates the City needs an additional 36 acres of parkland to meet the 12 acres/1,000 people standard for total “active” park acreage for its 2024 population. To maintain 12 acres/1,000 people based on population projections, the City will need approximately 70 more acres of active parkland by 2030 and 140 additional acres by 2040. **Table 5** identifies existing Fitchburg *system* property by category, as it relates to the previously identified standards for each type of park.

Table 5 indicates the City has a surplus of park land to meet its community park and neighborhood park standard, but is deficient in the area park category. The City does not utilize acreage standards for the natural area, special-use area, or undeveloped area categories. Some community parks have similar amenities to neighborhood and area parks and can function as those parks for residents within the area park and neighborhood park service areas.

It should be noted the community parks such as the Nine Springs Golf Course and Sunnyside Dog Park have more specialized uses than other community parks. Additionally, many of the undeveloped parks listed in this *report* are planned to be developed into neighborhood or area parks. **Map 2** identifies City *system* service area

⁶ National Recreation and Park Association. *2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review*.

<<https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/research/2024-agency-performance-review.pdf>> Last access November 8, 2024.

standards for community, area, and neighborhood parks, and recreation facilities located within these parks. These standards are used to guide decisions for the location of new parks and facilities.

Table 5: Existing City of Fitchburg System Acreage by Category

Category	Land Required Per 1,000 People Standard (acres)	System Land Required To Meet Standard (acres)	System Acres	System Land Surplus or Deficiency, Per Standard (acres)
Community Park	5.0	175.6	176	0.4
Area Park	4.0	140.5	86.3	-54.2
Neighborhood Park	3.0	105.4	123.8	18.4
Natural Area	N/A	N/A	206.4	N/A
Special-Use Area/Civic Spaces	N/A	N/A	102.6	N/A
Undeveloped Area	N/A	N/A	119	N/A

The City has approximately 53.88 miles of shared use paths/trails within its borders. Some of these trails/paths are managed by the City, while others are managed by other governmental entities, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, the City requires adequate acreage to be designated as stormwater facilities and wetland buffers, where applicable and in accordance with City ordinances. Sometimes these facilities are included within parks, but many are standalone facilities outside of the park system.

Community Parks

Map 2 indicates the service area for Fitchburg's community parks (2.5 miles) covers almost all residential areas in the City, with the exception of a rural sub-division along County Highway M. The only residents to have expressed concern over a deficiency in their neighborhood are those who live in the N. Fish Hatchery Road neighborhood. The City is in the process of addressing this deficiency through development of a new community park.

Area Parks

Map 2 indicates the service area for Fitchburg's area parks (0.5 miles) covers many residential areas in the City but there are service area gaps including the northern portion of Fish Hatchery Road, north of Schumann Drive, various areas near Verona Road, and various rural sub-divisions. Community parks, having the same amenities as area parks, can also serve as area parks for residents who are within 0.5 miles of the park. Some residences that are not in an area park service area are near City-owned natural areas. However, these areas do not provide the types of active recreation facilities typically provided in an area park.

Neighborhood Parks

Map 2 indicates the 0.25-mile service area for Fitchburg's neighborhood parks does not cover several residential areas. These gaps include the northern portion of Fish Hatchery Road, north of McKee Road, and various areas near Lacy Road, Fish Hatchery Road, Verona Road, parts of the Southdale neighborhood, and near the intersection of South Fish Hatchery Road and Whalen Road. **Map 2** also indicates a deficiency of neighborhood parks in the developing Terravessa and Crescent Crossing neighborhoods, however there are undeveloped parks in these neighborhoods that are planned to be neighborhood parks.

Some areas that are not within the service area of a neighborhood park are within ¼ mile of an area park, which typically provide the amenities of a neighborhood park in addition to those of an area park. For residences within ¼ mile these area parks can serve as a neighborhood park. Some residences that are not in a neighborhood park service area are near City-owned natural areas. However, these areas do not provide the types of active recreation facilities typically provided in a neighborhood park. The City should analyze the

service areas of playgrounds and park facilities and identify gaps, then consider evaluating opportunities in areas that are not within a ¼ mile of any neighborhood park amenities, whether those amenities are provided in a neighborhood, area, or community park.

Recreation Facilities

Table 6 evaluates Fitchburg's existing recreation facilities as they relate to other Park and Recreation agencies identified through the *2024 NRPA Agency Performance Report*.



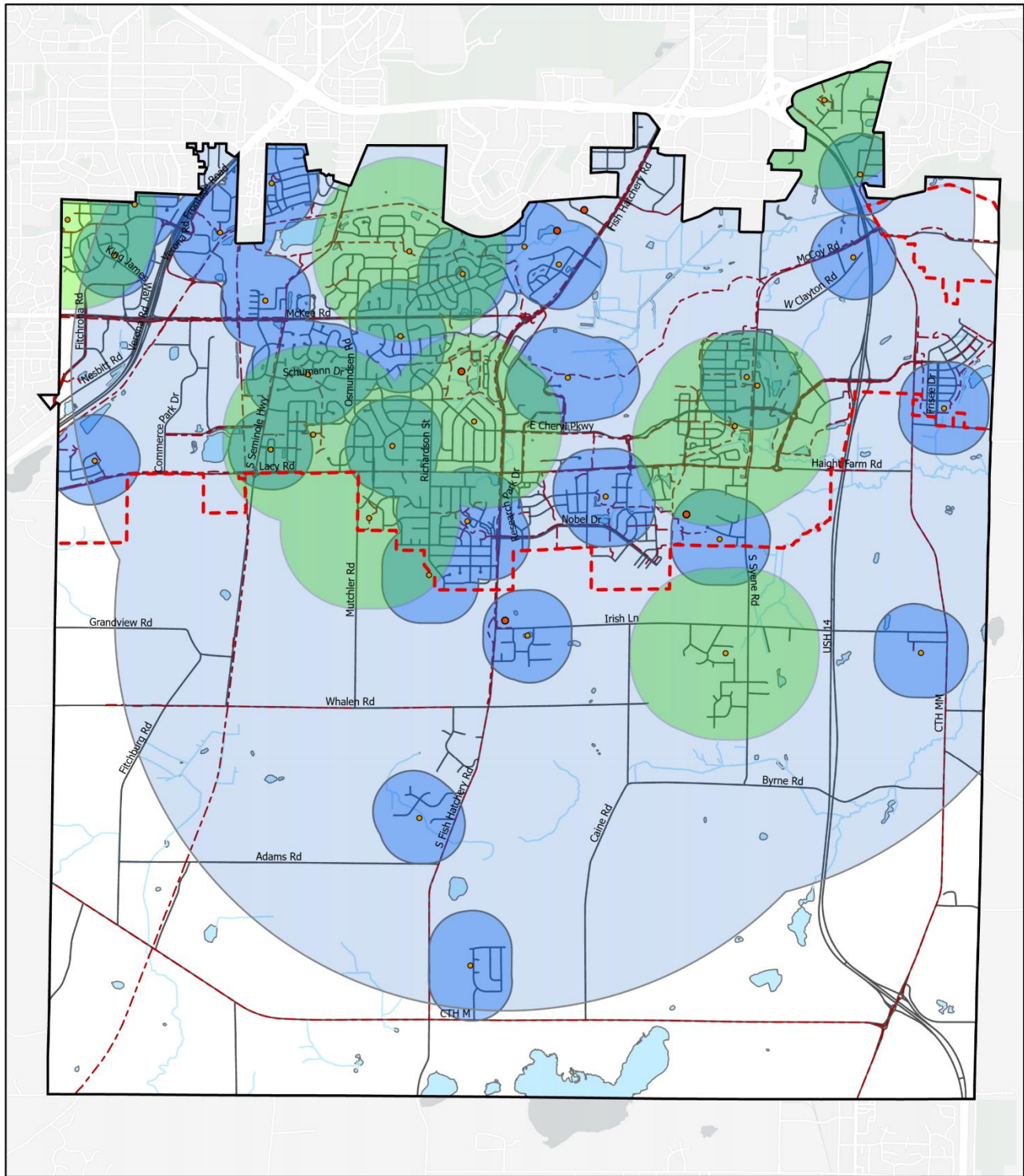
Shelter and playground at Oak Meadow Park

Source: City of Fitchburg

Existing *system* facilities meet current demand based on public requests for facilities. **Table 6** indicates Fitchburg potentially has sufficient population to support the development of an official baseball field and swimming pool, although community groups have not expressed a need for them and the development, maintenance, and operation requirements would need significant study before development.

The City should reevaluate park facility standards to ensure they meet the goals of the *system* and the fit within the City's capacity for upkeep and maintenance. This is explained further in the issues and opportunities section.

Map 2: Fitchburg Park Service Areas



Disclaimer: The City is not liable for any deficiencies in the completeness, accuracy, content or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any public data set, or application utilizing such data set, provided by any third party.

Legend	
— Urban Service Area	● Community Parks
— Streets	● Neighborhood and Area Parks
— Streams	■ Park Service Area - 2.5 miles
■ Open Water	■ Area Park Service Area - 0.5 miles
— Bike Facilities	■ Community Park Service Area - 2.5 miles
— City Limits	■ Park Service Area - 0.25 miles

Park Service Areas

Date: 11/25/2024
 Source: City of Fitchburg, County of Dane
 Created By: City of Fitchburg IT Department

0 0.5 1 Miles

N

Table 6: City of Fitchburg Existing Recreation Facilities

Facility	Existing Facilities	Percent of all agencies that have facility	Median Number of Facilities Among Similar Size Communities in US*
Diamond fields		85%	11.68
Official baseball	0		
Softball/youth baseball	13		
Basketball		84%	4.68
Full-court	7		
Half-court	21		
Community gardens	5 locations, 129 plots	52%	1.29
Disc golf course	1	20%	1.19
Dog playgrounds	1		
Dog park	1	68%	1.28
Golf course			
9-hole	1	29%	0.92
18-hole	0	14%	1.07
Ice rink	2	19%	1.78
Multi-use court (tennis/pickleball)	8	37%	2.70
Pickleball court	8	42%	4.54
Rectangle field (soccer, la crosse, field hockey)	11	83%	10.54
Splash pad	1	23%	1.15
Swimming pool	0	49%	1.30
Tennis court	6	72%	6.43
Volleyball court		23%	2.46
Grass	7		
Sand	4		

*Source: 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Report. Median is calculated only for communities that have a facility. Calculations based on 2024 DOA population estimate of 35,125.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System – *Inventory*

Fitchburg's *system* consists of over 788 acres of parks and open spaces, recreation programs and associated facilities, and 54 miles of shared use trails/paths. This section of the *Report* inventories Fitchburg's *system* utilizing the following categories:

- Community parks
- Area parks
- Neighborhood parks
- Natural areas
- Special-use areas
- Undeveloped areas
- Trails/paths
- Ecosystem management features
- Programs and services

The numbers utilized to identify *system* category components in the following correspond to those utilized on **Map 3 – City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System**.

Community Parks

Fitchburg has five community parks, one of which (The Hub) is expected to be constructed in 2024. The City underwent a master planning process for the Terravessa Agriculture Park in 2023-2024, which is expected to be classified as a community park after it is developed.

1. McGaw Park (78.5 acres) – 5236 Lacy Road

This park is the largest in Fitchburg and is well-suited for organized league activities such as youth ball, adult softball, and soccer, and community events such as softball tournaments. The park contains four lighted softball diamonds, youth ball field, lacrosse field, shelter with restrooms, picnic tables, two tennis courts, four sand volleyball courts, full-court basketball, play equipment, multi-use path, three parking areas, two park identification signs, eight pickleball courts, bicycle parking, a bike share station, and landscaping. The shelter can be reserved for picnics and gatherings for up to 200 people. A 30-acre woodland includes a 1.5-mile-long natural surface trail. The park also has a two-acre prairie area located near the northern entrance and various tallgrass areas. S. Johnson Park is adjacent to the east side of McGaw Park.

The *McGaw Park Natural Resources Management Plan* was developed in 2016, and implementation was partially approved by the Common Council in 2018. The natural resources management plan divided the woodlands of McGaw Park into five management areas. The Common Council passed Resolution R-17-18 approving the management plan in areas one and five with a five-year implementation plan. The resolution specifies that further approval and implementation of the management plan in areas two, three, and four requires Park Commission and Common Council review and approval.

2. McKee Farms Park (58.8 acres) – 2930 Chapel Valley Road

This park is well-suited for larger community events, youth ball, and soccer leagues. The park includes an inclusive playground, a splash pad with changing rooms, multi-use shelter with restrooms, library walk, picnic tables, a mile-long multi-use path system, large parking areas (152 car capacity), two softball diamonds, seven soccer fields, one full-court basketball, four play equipment areas (including Kid's Crossing and the inclusive Playground for All), six lighted tennis courts, two sand volleyball courts, an area for seasonal ice skating, benches, bicycle parking, a bike share station, a fitness course, and landscaping. The park also has five acres of tall turf grass scattered throughout.

The indoor shelter can accommodate 30 people and could potentially be used as a warming shelter during the winter season. The outdoor shelter can accommodate 250 people. The Playground for All includes chimes for musical expression, a variety of swings and rockers, in-ground merry-go-round, pull up bars, arched monkey bars, imagination play panels, and serenity spot.

Portions of the park facilitate stormwater drainage, including four detention ponds (5.83 acres), two waterways, and a greenway. The waterways are typically dry. Two ponds are located on the northern side of the park. The McKee Farms wet pond acts as stormwater detention for McKee Farms Park Greenway and the Chapel Valley neighborhood. The McKee Farms dry pond acts as a holding pond for the McKee Farms wet pond. Two ponds are also located on the eastern side of the park, acting as stormwater detention for the Mickelson Woods neighborhood. One of these ponds contains an aerator. The park also has a depression that has been used as a skating rink that also acts as a dry pond to capture stormwater in times of heavy rainfall.



Nine Springs Golf Course

Source: City of Fitchburg

3. Nine Springs Golf Course (31.2 acres) – 2201 Traceway Dr.

This area is a nine-hole executive golf course with a clubhouse and maintenance facilities. Operation and maintenance are leased to a private party. An 18-hole disc golf course and bicycle parking are also located on the property. Nine Springs Creek, an intermittent waterway, travels along the southern portion of the area from west to east. The southern perimeter of the area contains an acre of tallgrass area, and the northwestern portion has a 3.5-acre stormwater detention area.

4. Sunnyside Dog Park (5.4 acres) – 5554 Irish Lane

Sunnyside is Fitchburg's first dog park. The Sunnyside dog park offers a drinking fountain, waste bag stations, and a rain garden.

This park is 5.3 acres with ADA accessible walking trails. A former home site and commercial greenhouse growing area, Sunnyside was developed as a dog park in 2017. It contains the following:

- 21 parking spaces, including 2 accessible spots
- Accessible surface paths, made from recycled asphalt
- 5' fencing – including double gate at entry
- Informational kiosk
- Waste bag stations, refuse and recycling cans
- Benches and picnic table for seating
- Bicycle parking
- Solar safety lights
- Drinking fountain
- Stormwater facilities

5. The Hub (2.2 acres) – 2220 Traceway Drive

The Hub is an upcoming community park on Traceway Drive, west of Fish Hatchery Road. Phase I of the project will contain one community building, a playground, a bike playground, basketball courts, pickleball courts, bicycle parking and repair station, a bike share station, and a picnic area on the north side of Traceway Drive.

The Hub is envisioned as a neighborhood and regional gathering place, consisting of indoor and outdoor space providing sociable, recreational, cultural, learning, and resource opportunities. With programming by additional

city staff or third parties, the project is designed meet the social and recreational needs of residents of the North Fish Hatchery Road Neighborhood and enhance their quality of life and access to opportunities. It intends to serve as a catalyst to assist in “stabilizing” the neighborhood, spurring new investments. It is envisioned to be a space that’s “on” every day, year-round, and provides something for everyone. It is intended to meet the needs of current/future neighborhood residents, the Fitchburg community, and attract visitors.

The Hub has multiple phases identified on both sides of Traceway Drive. The second phase is on the south side of Traceway Drive adjacent to the Nine Springs Golf Course. Initial concepts for the second phase included amenities such as a community building and all-ages putting green. Winter recreational activities such as ice skating, cross-country skiing, and sledding could be explored for the Hub and Nine Springs Golf Course.

Area Parks

6. Chicory Meadows Park (14.9 acres) – 5772 Auburn Dr.

This park, located along the Capital City State Trail, contains a soccer field, ball field, two tennis courts, full and half-court basketball, two sets of playground equipment, shelter, picnic tables, sledding hill, multi-use path connecting the state trail to Auburn Drive, and landscaping. A four-acre grassland area is in the eastern portion of the park. The central portion of the park has a 1.5-acre wooded area extending north and south.



Chicory Meadows Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

7. Greenfield Park (10.8 acres) – 5187 Greenfield Park Road

Greenfield Park, located in the Greenfield neighborhood, is one of Fitchburg’s oldest and historically served as a community park due to its size, parking, and access. The park continues to accommodate moderate levels of league play for softball, youth ball, and picnic gatherings. The park includes a two-acre woodland with large oak trees reminiscent of the oak savannas that once dominated the landscape. An intermittent drainageway and a two-acre tallgrass area extend through the southern portion of the park. The park also contains a shelter, restrooms, drinking fountain, picnic tables, grills, play equipment, half-court basketball, volleyball area, five horseshoe pits, two softball diamonds, park identification sign, and landscaping. The shelter can accommodate up to 175 people.

8. Huegel-Jamestown Park (9.0 acres) – 5810 Williamsburg Way

This park in the Verona Road West Neighborhood is jointly maintained by the City of Madison (7.8 acres) and Fitchburg (9.0 acres). The park contains a large three-season shelter, drinking fountain, play equipment, two tennis courts, full basketball court, softball diamond, soccer field, volleyball area, sledding hill, ice skating rink, paved path, community gardens, bicycle parking, and landscaping. The park has adequate street access to permit league softball, youth ball, and youth soccer. A 1.5-acre tallgrass area is in the northeast portion of the park.

9. Southdale Park (5.4 acres) – 160 Deer Valley Road

A new addition to the City of Fitchburg parks system in fall of 2022. This park was acquired during the attachment of the Town of Madison. This park contains a full basketball court, multi-use path, picnic tables, a playground, shelter, soccer field, bicycle parking, a public bicycle repair stand and air pump, and community

gardens. The community gardens in Southdale are planned to be incorporated into the City's community garden program. Since the City took over Southdale park in 2022 it has been working on deferred maintenance projects in the park. The City is creating a master plan for Southdale Park to help determine neighborhood needs and desires. This master plan will consider the potential of extending water service to the park and the addition of a splash pad.

10. Stoner Prairie Park (10.39 acres) – 5905 Veldt Dr.

Stoner Prairie Park in the North Stoner Prairie Neighborhood consists of two areas that are adjacent to Stoner Prairie Elementary and Savanna Oaks Middle Schools. The northern portion of the park contains play equipment, a bench, picnic table, and landscaping. The southern park area has a ball field that can be used for league play. A paved path connects the two park areas. Additional play equipment, basketball courts, and play fields are available on the school grounds.

Stoner Prairie Park was recently designated an area park and completed a master planning process in 2023 to identify additional park improvements to serve the growing North Stoner Prairie Neighborhood and surrounding area. Additional planned amenities include a play structure, open air shelter, bicycle parking, a public bicycle repair stand and air pump, and native prairie restorations. Restrooms and a possible attached shelter are planned for an adjacent public works property (0.46 acres).



Stoner Prairie Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

11. Swan Creek Park (19.3 acres) – 5175 E. Cheryl Dr.

This park, located in the Swan Creek neighborhood along the north branch of Swan Creek, has playground equipment, a shelter with water fountain and restrooms, picnic tables, full-court basketball, two tennis courts, paved paths with bridges, tallgrass areas, landscaping, bicycle parking, a bike share station, a community fruit orchard and community gardens. The fruit orchard is primarily pear and apple trees. Two rain gardens are located on either side of the playground.



Swan Creek Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

12. Tower Hill Park (4.5 acres) – 5610 Cheryl Dr.

This park contains a shelter, restrooms, drinking fountain, play equipment, half-court basketball, softball and soccer fields, volleyball area, picnic tables, bicycle parking, and landscaping. The park has excellent access due to substantial street frontage, allowing for moderate youth league soccer and youth ball use. The ball field is too small for adult league play. The shelter can accommodate up to 100 people, but gatherings must be limited in size because of the proximity of homes to the shelter.

13. Wildwood South Prairie Park (13.0 acres) – 2629 Stanbrook St.

This park contains a youth softball field, two soccer fields, play equipment, half-court basketball, two tennis courts, small shelter, drinking fountain, benches, park identification sign, paths, and landscaping. The park has substantial street frontage, allowing for youth ball and youth soccer leagues. A paved multi-use path connects facilities within the park and lies adjacent to a three-acre tallgrass area. A pond and natural waterway on the southern end of the park provide stormwater drainage and detention for the Wildwood South neighborhood.



Wildwood South Prairie Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

Neighborhood Parks

14. Arrowhead Park (6.1 acres) – 2431 Chalet Gardens Court.

This park is located along the Capital City State Trail in the Lewis Nine Springs E-way. The park contains play equipment, half-court basketball, and landscaping. There are also two detention ponds that reduce peak flow and reduce sediments within stormwater entering Dunn's Marsh. The ponds act as stormwater detention for the Nakoma Heights, Chalet Gardens, and Western Hills neighborhoods.



Belmar Hills Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

15. Belmar Hills Park (4.2 acres) – 4601 Jenewein Road

This park is located adjacent to the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County. The park contains play equipment, half-court basketball, ball field, a path with lighting, a picnic table, a community fruit orchard, and landscaping. The fruit orchard is primarily apple and pear trees.

16. Briarwood Park (3.9 acres) – 1870 Derby Dr.

This park contains play equipment, a half-court basketball, benches, picnic tables, ball field, small soccer field, volleyball area, community gardens, and a 1.3-acre prairie. League play is not recommended on the ball and soccer fields due to their small size.

17. Byrne Park (7.8 acres) – 2535 Richardson St.

This park, located at the edge of Byrnewood Neighborhood, has an expansive view of Fitchburg farmland. The park contains play equipment, benches, a half basketball court, picnic tables, a small shelter, ball field, and a drinking fountain. The ball field can accommodate limited youth league play. A three-acre tallgrass area is in the western portion of the park and has a mowed walking trail. A barn swallow nesting structure was recently

added to provide nesting area for barn swallows near the stormwater retention area. This structure will facilitate moving swallows that are currently nesting in the park shelter.

18. Clayton Park (0.5 acres) – 4992 West Clayton Road

This small park is one of the City's older parks and contains play equipment, half-court basketball, bench, and a small area of open turf grass and newly planted trees.

19. Country Vineyard Park (2.6 acres) – 2136 Vintage Dr.

This park, located in a wooded area in the Country Vineyard Neighborhood, has play equipment, half-court basketball picnic tables, and landscaping. The southern portion of the park contains a tallgrass area and a two-acre area adjacent to the park serves as a drainageway. The park has limited street access.

20. Crescent Crossing Dog Playground (1.22 acres) – Minong Lane

This park is a dog playground in the Crescent Crossing neighborhood.

21. Crescent Crossing Park (11,913 square feet) – Spark Street, Minong Lane, Wildcat Drive

This park is a neighborhood park serving the Crescent Crossing neighborhood. Amenities include a playground with swings and landscaping.

22. Fitchburg Springs Park (1.8 acres) – 3333 Leopold Way

This park is considered a part of the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way and is adjacent to the Nine Springs Golf Course. The park contains play equipment, a bench, a 1.5-acre wooded area, and Nine Springs Creek.

23. Gunflint Trail Park (13.1 acres) – 5420 Gunflint Trail

This park is a part of the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way and is located next to Eagle School, a private school for kindergarten through eighth grade. The Capital City State Trail passes through the northern portion of the park. The eastern portion of the park (1.96 acres) was dedicated for conservancy purposes. The park has a backstop for youth ball, open greenspace, a cricket pitch, and some landscaping. Parking is available along the street.

24. Hatchery Hill Park (2.7 acres) – 3035 Cahill Main

This park contains a ball field, play equipment, benches, a small shelter, picnic tables, paved access path, a bike share station, and landscaping. There are also two dry ponds, located to the north of the playground, that provide stormwater detention for the area.

Hawk Ridge Park (1.5 acres) – 5740 Wilshire Dr.

This park is part of the public open space that is situated directly behind homes in the Seminole Ridge Neighborhood. The park contains play equipment, picnic tables, benches, a small gazebo, drinking fountain, landscaping, and a path that extends into a greenway that is both open and wooded.



Hawk Ridge Park Playground

Source: City of Fitchburg

25. Hillside Heights Park (3.5 acres) – 2419 Kathleen St.

This park contains play equipment, half-court basketball, volleyball area, and landscaping. A 1.5-acre detention pond in the park manages stormwater for the Hillside Heights Neighborhood. Areas surrounding the pond are left to grow in a natural state.

26. King James Way Park (0.25 acres) – 2919 King James Way

A former home site, this pocket park has play equipment, a half-size basketball court, a bike repair station, picnic tables, garbage/recycling bins, bicycle parking, a public bicycle repair stand and air pump, and landscaping.

27. Nannyberry Park (5.1 acres) – 5165 Nannyberry Dr.

This park, located in Swan Creek Neighborhood, contains play equipment, a small shelter, picnic tables, paved multi-use paths, open turf grass area, and half-court basketball. A rain garden is located near the park sign and is maintained by the neighborhood association.

28. Oak Meadow Park (13.6 acres) – 2610 Targhee St., 5636/5637 Old Oak Dr., 2625 Placid St.

This park consists of multiple areas divided by neighborhood streets that include a large open turf grass area, play area, and wooded upland area. The play area contains a shelter, picnic tables, a half-court basketball, playground equipment. A paved multi-use path runs throughout the park. A heritage red oak tree that is over 200 years old is in the park.

29. Perry J. Schappe Park (4.4 acres) – 4879 Maple Ave.

This park contains a ball field, picnic table, play equipment, half-court basketball, and landscaping. Organized activities such as youth ball and soccer leagues could create parking and traffic problems along Maple Avenue and are not recommended due to limited access.

30. Pine Ridge Park (2.7 acres) – 2980 Pineway Trail.

This park contains play equipment, a ball field, half-court basketball, benches, small shelter, picnic tables, and landscaping.

31. Quarry Hill Park (9.1 acres) – 5425 Quarry Hill Dr.

This park contains a ball field, shelter, picnic tables, play equipment, half-court basketball, paved path, community gardens, and landscaping. The southern 2.4-acre portion of the park was dedicated with the Fitchburg Technology Campus development and remains undeveloped.

32. Quarry Vista Park (1.6 acres) – 6260 Quarry Vista Drive

This park serves the Quarry Vista neighborhood and contains a half basketball court, playground, drinking fountain, shelter, picnic tables, and paved path.



Quarry Hill Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

33. Rimrock Park (0.3 acres) – 2992 Rimrock Rd.

This small park contains playground equipment, half-court basketball, picnic table, and landscaping.

34. Rosecommons Park (3.0 acres) – 5640 Longford Terrace

This park is centrally located within the Highlands of Seminole Neighborhood. Situated on top of a hill, the park contains play equipment, benches, a small shelter, paved path, and landscaping. The hill can provide for sledding opportunities, with other park facilities not recommended on the hill due to its relatively steep slope.

35. S. Johnson Park (7.1 acres) – 5201 Wildheather Dr.

This park is adjacent to McGaw Park and includes both open and densely wooded areas. The park contains play equipment, swings, and a nature/deer trail that runs east to west through the woods. The forest has a drainageway and large shagbark hickory trees that can be viewed along the trail.

36. Seminole Glen Park (15.8 acres) – 5872 Schumann Dr.

This park contains play equipment, a shelter, picnic tables, drinking fountain, half-court basketball, ball field, volleyball area, and landscaping. This park also contains about five acres each of woodland, turf grass, and lowland surrounded by tallgrass/prairie areas. A paved multi-use path network connects three entry points, providing access to the interior of the park. The paths also provide routes to the adjacent Seminole Pool and Tennis Club and Stoner Prairie Elementary School. A footpath through the woods provides additional access to the park and an opportunity for passive recreation. Two wet detention ponds are also located within the park, totaling two acres. League activities are not recommended because of the limited street access to the park, potential parking problems, and proximity to adjacent homes.

37. Syene Road Park (0.9 acres) – 2837 No Oaks Ridge

This park contains a playground, drinking fountain, bench, and paved path. It is located between S. Syene Road and No Oaks Ridge.

38. Terravessa Neighborhood Park (4.0 acres) – 2788 Frisee Drive

The Terravessa Neighborhood Park is a neighborhood park for the developing Terravessa neighborhood. The park has play equipment and a path connection.

39. Western Hills Park (2.8 acres) – 2499 S. Whitney Way

This park contains playground equipment, ball field, a full all-weather basketball “Dream Court”, volleyball area, picnic tables, drinking fountain, landscaping, and a paved path that extends east to west. The park has excellent street access on three sides, but the ball field is located very close to adjacent homes and league play is not recommended.

40. Wildwood Park (5.2 acres) – 5768 Barbara Dr.

This park contains playground equipment, a ball field, half-court basketball, volleyball area, shelter, drinking fountain, picnic tables, a small hill for potential sledding use, a sugar bush of sugar maple trees, and landscaping. The ball field is located close to adjacent homes and league ball play is not recommended.

Natural Areas

41. Anderberg Drive Natural Area (0.2 acres) – Anderberg Dr.

A small unnamed natural area in the Southdale neighborhood.

42. Black Walnut Preserve (0.3 acres) – 5176 Buttonbush Dr.

This is a small undeveloped area between two houses in the Swan Creek Neighborhood containing a large black walnut heritage tree estimated to be 230 years old. This preserve borders Bluestem Park and houses a Little Free Library.

43. Bluestem Park (14.4 acres) – 2801 Big Bluestem Pkwy

This predominately tallgrass area is in the Swan Creek Neighborhood along Big Blue Stem Parkway and Buttonbush Drive. It is adjacent to Black Walnut Preserve and natural land owned by the WDNR. The area contains a paved multi-use path that extends throughout the length of the site and connects to Nannyberry and Swan Creek Parks.



Black Walnut Preserve
Source: City of Fitchburg

44. Commerce Park Hillside (1.9 acres) – 2891 Commerce Dr.

This is a wooded area on a steep hillside in the Fitchburg Commerce Park development, containing many mature hickory and oak trees.

45. Curry Court (0.4 acres) – 2316 S Syene Rd.

This is an open natural area that consists of four parcels in the Greenfield neighborhood. It is frequently wet.

46. Dawley Conservancy (38.9 acres) – 3040/3041 S. Seminole Hwy.

This area is part of a larger system of public conservation land. There are woodlands on both sides of Seminole Highway, and grassland and prairie adjacent to Dunn’s Marsh on the west side of said road. An

intermittent stream draining from McKee Road/County Highway PD and Seminole Highway runs through the wooded area west of Seminole Highway and proceeds under the Capital City State Trail. The park includes the Dawley Bike Hub, which has motor vehicle and bicycle parking, a public bicycle repair stand, a bike share station, bike information kiosk, restrooms, and observation deck overlooking Dunn's Marsh. It serves as a hub and resting spot for Capital City State Trail and Cannonball Path users. There may be future opportunities to partner with the Capital Off Road Pathfinders (CORP) to expand the adjacent Seminole Trails mountain bike trails into the Dawley Conservancy.

47. Dunn's Marsh (North) Natural Area (7.8 acres) – 4523 Crescent Road

This area, connecting to a larger parcel of land owned by the City of Madison, was dedicated to the public for park, water retention, and other public purposes. This area consists of a two-acre marsh area, serving both as a nesting area for wildlife and stormwater detention basin. There is also a five-acre wooded area located along the northern borders of the marsh.

48. Dunn's Marsh – The Preserve (1.4 acres) – 4431 Crescent Road

This area has a beautiful view of Dunn's Marsh and was dedicated with the condition that it may not be built upon or changed except to restore pre-settlement conditions for improved environmental, conservation, and water quality purposes.

49. Harlan Hills Prairie and Natural Area (6.4 acres) – 5760 Ballina Pkwy., 5837 Dawley Dr.

This area serves as a 5.12-acre park for the Harlan Hills Neighborhood and overlooks the University of Wisconsin Arboretum. This area has mowed walking trails and a prairie with ongoing restoration. In the southwest corner of the subdivision, along Seminole Highway, there is a 1.25-acre wooded area dedicated for park purposes.

50. Mickelson Woods (4.0 acres) – 2850 Mickelson Pkwy.

This small oak-hickory wooded area is located east of McKee Farms Park between Fish Hatchery Road and Mickelson Parkway. The northern portion of the site consists of a mowed area with a paved multi-use path that connects the Fish Hatchery Road multi-use path to McKee Farms Park. A walking trail system is planned for the wooded area.

51. Nannyberry Wetland (2.4 acres) – Across from 2830 S. Syene Road

This area was dedicated as open space/environmental corridor as it contains a wooded wetland. The area also contains paved paths that are a part of the Swan Creek multi-use path system.

52. Nobel Woodlot (5.1 acres) – 2620 Research Park Dr.

This area is a managed woodlot in the Fitchburg Technology Campus Neighborhood that was dedicated for park purposes. A partially complete walking trail system runs through the site.

53. Orchard Pointe Natural Areas (2.8 acres) – Fitchrona Road

Three areas in the Orchard Pointe development were dedicated to the City for park purposes. The first is a wooded area adjacent to the City's municipal boundary, the second is a rock outcrop area along Fitchrona Road, and the third is a small area located adjacent to Nesbitt Heights Pond on Nesbitt Road. The wooded area contains a paved multi-use path that runs along Fitchrona Road and connects to residential areas to the west.

54. Tower Hill Greenway (5.4 acres) – 2820 Lyman Ln.

This natural area has a multi-use path connecting McKee Farms Park to the Fish Hatchery Road multi-use path. There is a wooded area south of the path.

55. Uptown Natural Area 1 (1.3 acres) – Unassigned

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

56. Uptown Natural Area 2 (4.6 acres) – Unassigned

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

57. Uptown Natural Area 3 (8.9 acres) – Unassigned

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

58. Uptown Natural Area 4 (3.1 acres) – Unassigned

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

59. Uptown Natural Area 5 (0.7 acres) – Unassigned

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

60. Uptown Natural Area 6 (17.0 acres) – Unassigned

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

61. Uptown Natural Area 7 (42.6 acres) – Unassigned

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

62. Uptown Natural Area 8 (4.6 acres) – 5118 East Lacy Road

There are eight unnamed natural areas of various sizes in the Uptown Crossing/Nine Springs area totaling 82.8 acres.

63. Wildwood Kettle (2.9 acres) – 2661 Osmundsen Rd.

Wildwood Kettle is a low-lying natural area in the Wildwood neighborhood, south of Lacy Road. Many trees on this property have died since 2015 and much of the area has been restored to native open space through replanting, reseeding, and annual burns. This natural area includes a stormwater management feature.

Special-Use Areas

64. Community/Senior Center (9.4 acres) – 5520/5510 Lacy Rd.

This area is a multi-use facility, designed to accommodate City meetings, senior citizen activities, civic groups, private and business gatherings, community events, and recreational activities. There are reservable meeting rooms inside the building, bicycle parking and bike share stations at each entrance to the building, and a patio behind the building that was completed in 2023. Areas around the Community/Senior Center include native plantings, prairie restoration areas, and a community fruit orchard consisting of primarily apple and pear trees. The Center is on the Civic Campus, which also includes City Hall and the Fitchburg Public Library.



Fitchburg Community/Senior Center
Source: City of Fitchburg

65. Gorman Wayside Veterans Memorial Park (0.5 acres) – 2373 S. Fish Hatchery Road

This area contains a veteran's memorial, a picnic table, monument, and landscaping, and provides an attractive view of Fitchburg farmland. A 2-acre oak savanna is located to the north of the site, one of Fitchburg's last remnants, as are open fields used for public works purposes. A private group, the Fitchburg Veterans Park Committee, has partnered with the City to add additional improvements to the Veteran's Memorial Park, including a gazebo, paved walking paths, war memorial, and memorial benches.

66. Nevin Village Green (1.2 acres) – 3001 Cahill Main

This area in the Hatchery Hill Neighborhood includes a gazebo, drinking fountain, picnic tables, paved walking paths, landscaping, and benches.

67. Oak Hall Cemetery (8.9 acres) – 5868 County Highway M

The area had its territorial era beginnings as a cemetery in 1853 near the site of one of the original territorial settlements in Fitchburg (Oak Hall). Early territorial settlers and Civil War soldiers are buried here, along with a few recent burials. A 5-acre grassland area is located directly north of the main cemetery area.



Quarry Ridge Recreation Area
Source: City of Fitchburg

68. Quarry Ridge Recreation Area (64.1 acres) – 2740 Fitchrona Road.

This area provides direct access to the Military Ridge State Trail and has off-road biking and walking trails. The City has a partnership with the Capital Off Road Pathfinders (CORP) non-profit that builds and maintains the off-road bike trails. This area is a regional draw as it provides diverse trails that range from beginner to expert.

It contains a shelter that can accommodate up to 75 people, restrooms, picnic tables, information kiosk, bicycle and motor vehicle parking, and a public bicycle repair stand and air

pump. The site includes a wooded area, an abandoned gravel pit with very steep inclines, and an 11-acre wet detention/infiltration pond that collects stormwater from the Jamestown Neighborhood.

69. Seminole Hills Open Space (1.0 acres) –
2968 Osmundsen Road

This area includes three small parcels along McKee Road that were dedicated to the City through the Seminole Hills Estates development. The eastern-most parcel at 2968 Osmundsen Road has a booster station. Some of the area is forested, with a sidewalk extending along the area's southern boundary.



Quarry Ridge Recreation Area
Source: City of Fitchburg

Undeveloped Areas

Fitchburg has various undeveloped areas as follows:

70. Castlebar Park (0.3 acres) – 2544 Notre Dame Drive

A small open space parcel at Notre Dame Drive and Nobel Drive. There are no plans for development.

71. Fahey Park (1.5 acres) – 2514 Cobbler Road

Open space in the Highfield Reserve neighborhood spanning between Cobbler Road and West Fahey Glen. There are no plans for development.

72. Farmstead Park (0.7 acres) – 2680 Blaney Road

An undeveloped park dedicated as part of the Hartung development in 2024.

73. Fitchburg Center (9.9 acres) – 5540 Lacy Road

This area, located across Research Park Dr. from the Fitchburg Public Library, consists of a 5-acre wooded and grassland area located in its northern portion, which supports tallgrass and hickory and oak trees. The area also has a 75-foot-wide open space/greenway easement running north to south containing a waterway that provides stormwater drainage for the surrounding area. The area is currently undeveloped, and the southeast portion of the site is planned for a new police station.

74. Gold Addition (17.1 acres) – Old Indian Trail

This area in the south of the Greenfield Neighborhood is undeveloped and the City is considering developing it as a natural area with walking paths. It is frequently wet, and such is difficult to maintain.

75. Goodland Park Road (1.4 acres) – 4878 Goodland Park Road

This area is undeveloped and has no planned use.

76. Hartung Park (0.7 acres) – 2687 Botanical Drive

An undeveloped park dedicated as part of the Hartung development in 2024.

77. Kyle Stiegert Greenway (0.7 acres) – 3060 Yarmouth Greenway Drive

This 0.7-acre parcel contains the Capital City State Trail and Capital City-Cannonball Connector Path and is adjacent to Yarmouth Greenway Drive. It is planned to include bicycle parking, a public bicycle repair stand and air pump, benches, a memorial, and restored prairie and native plantings.

78. McCoy/West Clayton Open Space (29.2 acres) – East of 5062 W. Clayton Road

This area, consisting of a wooded lowland, is undeveloped and has no planned use.

79. Monks Park (2.3 acres) – 2512 Tullamore Street

A planned neighborhood park in the Highfield Reserve neighborhood.

80. North Park (1 acre) – Lacy Road and S. Syene Road

This park is designated as a civic space within a SmartCode zoning district. It is located next to the Addison Apartments at the corner of Lacy Road and S. Syene. There are no plans for development.

81. Perennial Park Greenway (26.6 acres) – Haight Farm Road

A natural area located off of Haight Farm Road dedicated as part of the Hartung development in 2024.

82. Pinnacle (2.7 acres) – 1351 Post Road

This area, consisting of former farmland, is near a large complex of newer multi-family residences, and is just northwest of the Jenni & Kyle Preserve, owned by the Dane County Parks System. The site is undeveloped and has no planned use.

83. Techlands (2.3 acres) – Nobel Drive

Techlands includes a paved multi-use path that connects Lacy Road and paths north of Lacy Road to paths throughout the Highfield Reserve Subdivision.

84. Terravessa Agriculture Park (22 acres) – Goodland Park Road

A large park at the southeast corner of Terravessa that is focused on the production of food. This community space is envisioned to enhance recreational, ecological, and social benefits. Terravessa Agriculture Park underwent a master planning process in 2023-2024.

85. Terravessa Natural Area North (12.0 acres) – 4890/4884 Brassica Road

The Terravessa Natural Area North is undeveloped and is planned to be a natural area in the Terravessa neighborhood. There is a path connection through the park between the County Highway MM path and the Forest Edge Elementary School.

86. Terravessa Natural Area South (3.7 acres) – 2779 Frisee Drive

The Terravessa Natural Area North is undeveloped and is planned to be a natural area in the Terravessa neighborhood. There is a path connection through the park between Frisee Drive and Spinach Drive

87. Terravessa Neighborhood Park 2 (0.2 acres) – 2902 Mizuna Drive

This is a neighborhood park that is planned to include a playground in the Terravessa neighborhood.

88. Terravessa Neighborhood Park 3 (4.0 acres)

A planned neighborhood park in the Terravessa Neighborhood.

89. Tipperary Park (1.3 acres) – 2527 Notre Dame Drive

Linear open space along Notre Dame Drive in the Highfield Reserve neighborhood. There are no plans for development.

90. Uptown Crossing (1.9 acres) – 2914 Humes Ln.

A park in the Uptown Crossing neighborhood. The park area is adjacent to a wetland/open space. There is no planned use.

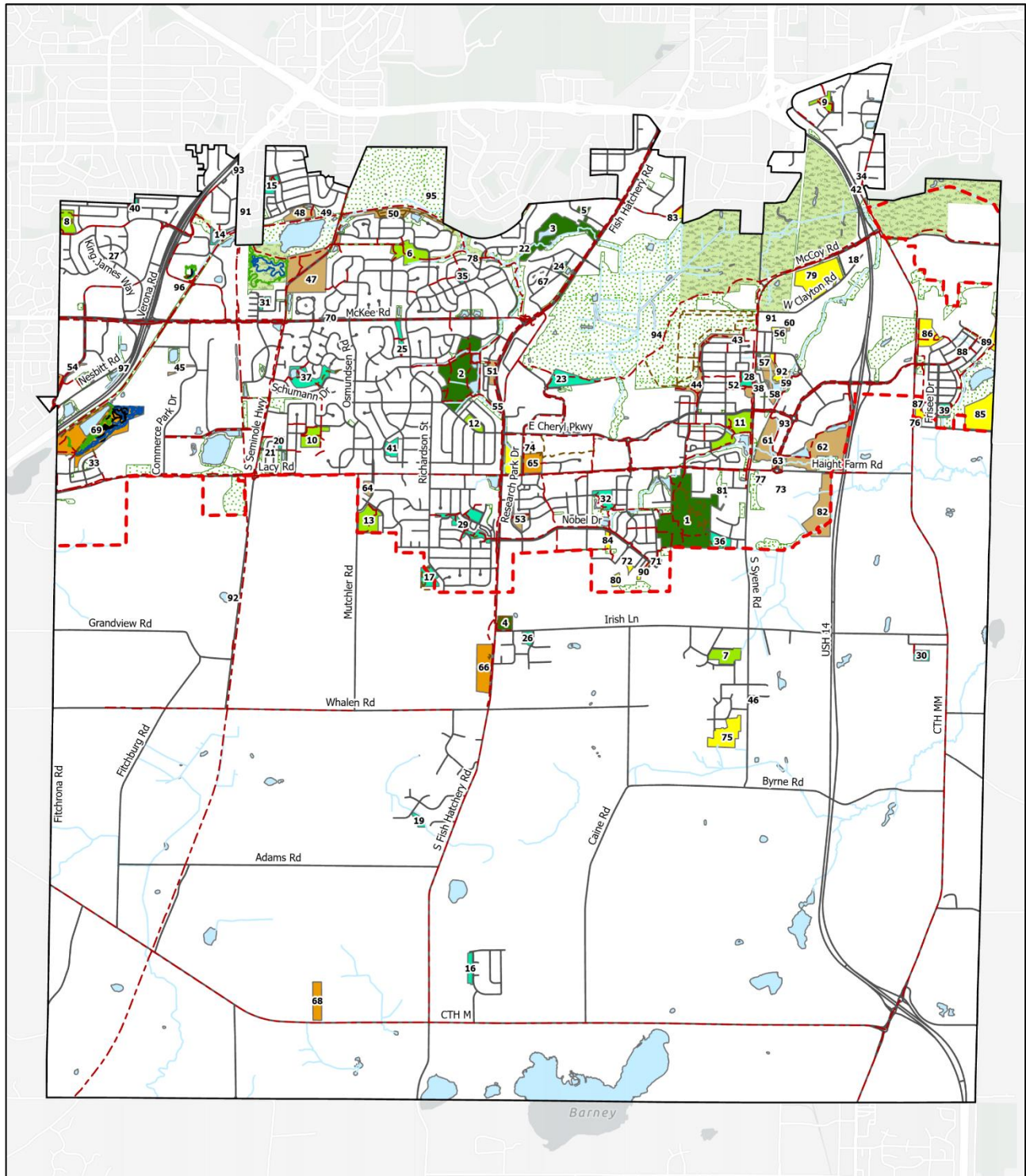
91. Uptown 1 (3.9 acres)

An unaddressed, undeveloped parcel in the Uptown area.

92. Uptown 2 (0.7 acres)

An unaddressed, undeveloped parcel in the Uptown area.

Map 3: Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System



Disclaimer: The City is not liable for any deficiencies in the completeness, accuracy, content or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any public data set, or application utilizing such data set, provided by any third party.

The numbers on the map match those in the inventory portion of Section II - Existing Conditions Report.

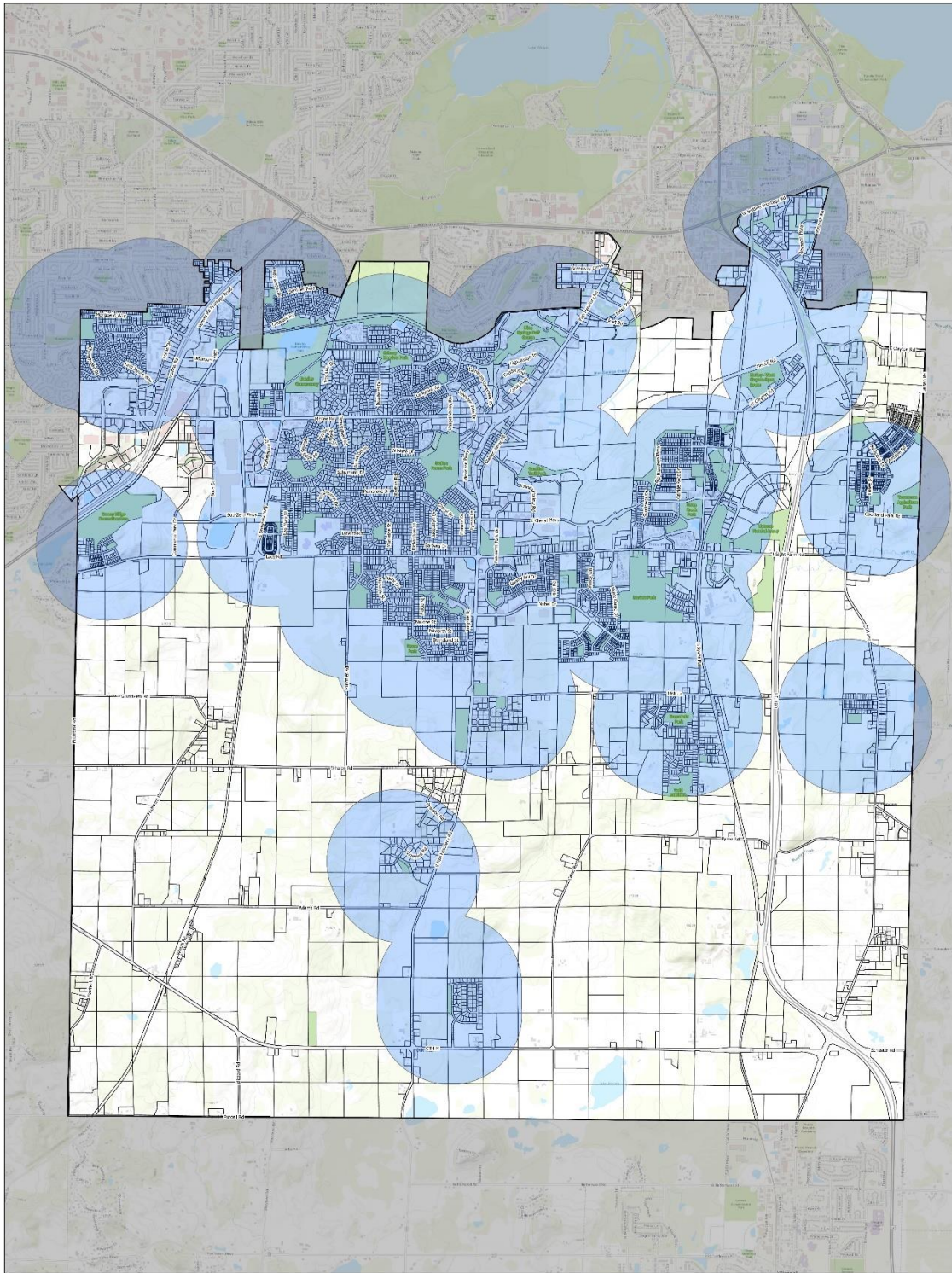
- - - Urban Service Area
- Streets
- Streams
- Open Water
- Environmental Areas
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Easiest
- More Difficult
- Most Difficult
- Dane County Parks
- Community Park
- Area Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Natural Area
- Undeveloped
- Special Use
- - - Bike Facilities

Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System

Date: 01/16/2025
 Source: City of Fitchburg, County of Dane, ESRI
 Created By: City of Fitchburg IT Department

0 0.3 0.5 1 Miles

Map 4: Fitchburg Parks Half-Mile Radius

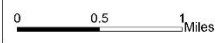


Disclaimer: The City is not liable for any deficiencies in the completeness, accuracy, content or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any public data set, or application utilizing such data set, provided by any third party.

- 10 Minute Walking Distance (1/2 Mile)
- Parks
- Parcels
- City Boundary

Park Service Areas

Date: 8/22/2024
Source: City of Fitchburg, County of Dane
Created By: City of Fitchburg IT Department



Trails/Paths

While the words “trail” and “path” are often used interchangeably, the Cities of Fitchburg and Madison have adopted a convention for naming their facilities: the word “path” denotes a facility that does not require a state trail pass, and the word “trail” denotes one that *does* require a State or County trail pass.

The City has approximately 53.88 miles of shared-use trails and paths within its borders. In addition to local shared-use paths that are part of the City *system*, six major trails/paths and their junction are located in the City:

91. The Dunn’s Marsh Bike Roundabout (AKA The Velo UnderRound)



The Dunn’s Marsh Bike Roundabout

Source: Bike Fitchburg, Inc.

A confluence of regional and local trails, the Dunn’s Marsh Bike Roundabout is a two-level, half-diamond, bicycle interchange of the five trails/paths described next. The Roundabout is a junction of the Capital City State Trail, the Cannonball Path, Military Ridge Path, Southwest Commuter Path, and the Badger State Trail. The Roundabout has a small shelter, a kiosk with maps of the regional connections, a trail pass vending machine operated by Dane County Parks, a bench, bicycle parking, and wayfinding signage. It also serves as a trailhead for Seminole Trails, a mountain bike park located in Fitchburg on Dane County land.

The Roundabout is not accessible by motor vehicle, except for authorized emergency and maintenance vehicles. There is nearby motor vehicle parking at the Dawley Bike Hub. While it is within the City of Madison, Fitchburg has maintenance responsibility for the Roundabout under an intergovernmental agreement.

92. Badger State Trail

This trail is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (hereafter “WisDOT”) and managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (hereafter “WDNR”). The trail is 40 miles long and connects Fitchburg and the Madison metropolitan area to the Jane Addams Trail in Illinois at the Wisconsin/Illinois state line along the former Illinois Central Railroad. The Jane Addams Trail connects on to Freeport, Illinois. The trail’s northern terminus is at Madison’s Southwest Path just north of the Dunn’s Marsh Bike Roundabout. The trail is paved throughout the City. This trail requires a state trail pass for bicycling by all people aged 16 or older.



Badger State Trail in the City of Fitchburg

Source: City of Fitchburg

93. Southwest Commuter Path

This trail is owned and managed by the City of Madison. The southern terminus is at the Capital City State Trail near the Dunn's Marsh Bike Roundabout. The trail continues north into Madison on the old Illinois Central roadbed, crossing under Verona Road (U.S. Highways 18/151) and over the Beltline (U.S. Highways 12/14). The trail is paved throughout the City. No state trail pass is required for bicycling.

94. Capital City State Trail

This trail is predominately owned by WisDOT and managed in Fitchburg by Dane County Parks under an agreement with WDNR. Fitchburg owns a 2.66-acre portion of the trail corridor (dedicated with the Seminole Hills Estates Neighborhood). The trail traverses the southern portion of the Madison metropolitan area, from east to west, running through the City of Madison, Fitchburg, and the town of Blooming Grove. The Trail travels the length of the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way, a seven-mile environmental corridor envisioned by UW-Madison Professor of Landscape Architecture Phil Lewis. The trail is paved throughout. East of Fitchburg, the Capital City State Trail also connects to the Lower Yahara River Trail, which spans Lake Waubesa and connects to the Village of McFarland. This trail requires a state trail pass for bicycling. As of 2023, Dane County provides subsidized state trail passes for people who use the Capital City State Trail primarily for commuting.

95. Cannonball Path

The western portion of this path is owned and managed by the City of Fitchburg. It runs along the former Chicago and Northwestern Railway corridor from the Dunn's Marsh Bike Roundabout to the City of Madison boundary, between the University of Wisconsin Arboretum and the Arbor Hills Neighborhood. The path continues east over the Beltline (U.S. Highways 12/14) in the City of Madison to Fish Hatchery Road. The path is paved throughout, and the Madison portion is lighted. No state trail pass is required for bicycling.

The Capital City Trail and Cannonball Path are routed near the Dawley Bike Hub, which has a bike repair/maintenance station and bike "kiosk", as well as a restroom facility with observation deck. The Dawley Bike Hub also serves as an access point for the Seminole Trails mountain bike system in the City of Fitchburg.



Restroom and observation deck at Dawley Bike Hub

96. Military Ridge Path

This path is owned and managed by the City. It continues west from the Dunn's Marsh Bike Roundabout along same the Chicago and Northwestern Railway corridor that hosts the Cannonball Path to the WDNR trailhead south of Cottonwood Drive. It is paved throughout and includes a tunnel under Sprocket Drive and a bridge over McKee Road. There is a water fountain, bench, public bicycle repair stand and bike parking at the top of the north ramp up to Sprocket Drive. No state trail pass is required for bicycling.

97. Military Ridge State Trail

This trail is owned by WisDOT and managed by WDNR. The trail's eastern terminus is located at the WDNR trailhead south of Cottonwood Drive, where it turns into the Military Ridge Path. The trail traverses west along the old Chicago and Northwestern rail corridor through Verona, Mount Horeb, Blue Mounds, and Dodgeville. The trail is paved throughout the City and is crushed gravel between Verona and Dodgeville. This trail requires a state trail pass for bicycling.

Ecosystem Management Features (Stormwater Facilities and Wetland Buffers)

Fitchburg has numerous facilities designed to manage stormwater in the City, including wet/dry ponds and greenways. Some parks include stormwater management and ecosystem management facilities.

The City requires wetland buffers of either 75 feet or 300 feet. The City does not inventory wetland buffers.

Programs and Services

Fitchburg organizes and administers a wide range of recreation programs and services reflecting current demand and trends. These programs and services utilize the Fitchburg Community/Senior Center, Fitchburg parks, and public-school facilities located in the City. Many of these programs and services are provided by third-party contractors, with City recreation staff providing oversight and administrative services.

Additional recreation programs and services are administered by local schools and associated organizations, including Madison School and Community Recreation, the public recreation provider of the Madison Metropolitan School District. Fitchburg is home to three school districts (Madison Metropolitan, Verona Area, and Oregon). As of 2023, the City has partnerships with the Verona Area School District and Oregon School District for the use of facilities for recreation programs/services, including Stoner Prairie Elementary School and Savanna Oaks Middle School. These schools are located adjacent to each other and include facilities such as gymnasiums, game fields, and playgrounds.



**Youth flag
football league**
Source: City of
Fitchburg

City parks and facilities also serve as a space for other program and service providers. The Fitchburg Public Library has hosted pop-up libraries in Leopold Park (City of Madison) and Southdale Park. The Hub will have both indoor and outdoor space that will be available for programming and services.

The City operates a community garden program with garden plots available for rent in four parks, Swan Creek Park – 5175 E. Cheryl Parkway, Quarry Hill Park – 5425 Quarry Hill Drive, Huegel-Jamestown Park – 5810 Williamsburg Way, and Briarwood Park – 1851 Derby Drive.



Pack'n the Park event – McKee Farms Park
Source: City of Fitchburg

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System – *Implementation Tools*

This section of the *Report* identifies various tools to potentially be utilized to maintain and enhance the City *system*, and implement the recommended action items contained in Section III of this *Plan*. The tools are organized into the following categories:

- Regulatory
- Acquisition
- Funding
- Partnerships and inter-governmental cooperation

Regulatory

City regulatory tools most relevant to the City's *system* include the *Land Division Ordinance* and the *Zoning Ordinance*.

City Land Division Ordinance

Per the City's *Land Division Ordinance* specified land divisions and related developments within the City are required to dedicate land to provide adequate park and recreational lands to meet the needs created by the land division/development. For each proposed residential dwelling unit in the land division/development, at least 2,900 square feet of land is required to be dedicated to the City for parkland purposes.

If there is no land suitable for parkland dedication within the proposed development area, or the Park Commission determines that a cash contribution will better serve the public interest, said Commission may require the subdivider/developer pay monies in lieu of the required parkland dedication. Monies in lieu of parkland are placed in a separate, non-lapsing fund to be used by the City for acquisition and or development of parkland. The *Land Division Ordinance* also requires a subdivider/developer to pay a parkland improvement fee to be utilized for the construction/maintenance of park facilities, as well as dedication of street frontage for dedicated parkland.

City Zoning Ordinance

Zoning, as originally conceived, was primarily designed to separate incompatible land uses. Present-day zoning incorporates many more objectives. The City's *Zoning Ordinance* places all lands within the City's border into zoning districts, with lands in these districts subject to use standards and requirements for that district. All land dedicated to or owned by the City for park or recreational purposes is designated in the Park and Recreation (PR) zoning district.

Zoning can also protect environmentally sensitive areas. The City's wetland and floodplain overlay zoning districts protect areas unsuitable for development, and thereby retain open space immediately adjacent to lakes, rivers, and streams.

Acquisition

Acquisition tools most relevant to the City's *system* include dedication, donation, eminent domain, fee title, conservation easements (non-fee title), private land conservation organizations, and tax delinquent property.

Dedication

Dedication is the most common means of acquiring park, open space, and recreation land, as identified previously under the Regulatory – City Land Division Ordinance section in the preceding paragraphs.

Donation

Donation is the least expensive means of acquiring park, open space, and recreation land. Donations can be in the form of a lease or easement as well as outright title to land or property. The donor can use the value of the donation as a tax deduction.

Eminent Domain

Eminent Domain is the power of a governmental body to condemn private land for public purposes upon payment of just compensation. Eminent domain is used only as a last resort when the land is considered essential for park/recreational purposes and after all other acquisition techniques have been exhausted.

Fee Title

Fee title is the complete transfer of title and property rights through outright purchase/sale, donation, or transfer of land.

Non-Fee Title (Conservation Easements)

Non-fee title is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and nonprofit organization or government agency, permanently limiting a property's use to protect its conservation values. A conservation easement can help protect water quality and natural resources and allow for public use, depending on the agreement between the parties. Easements may be donated or purchased/sold.

Private Land Conservation Organizations

Private land conservation organizations may purchase land and hold it for a local government until adequate funding has been obtained.

Tax Delinquent Property

Properties where the owner has failed to pay property taxes for several years may be acquired by Dane County. Upon failure to pay, the property transfers to Dane County ownership. If the City wishes to acquire the property, Dane County Board approval of the purchase/sale is required.

Funding

Funding tools most relevant to the City's *system* include grants and City resources.

Grants

- **Federal – Land and Water Conservation Fund:** This grant program was established by the U.S. Congress in 1965 to provide funding for the acquisition of land for park or open space preservation purposes, as well as development of outdoor recreation facilities. Congress allocates a certain amount of funding to the State of Wisconsin every year, with program funds administered by the WDNR. Applicants may be reimbursed for up to 50% of project costs.
- **Federal – Recreational Trails Program:** This grant program provides funds for maintenance, development, rehabilitation, and acquisition of land for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. The program is administered by the WDNR. Program funds may only be used on trails which have been identified in, or which further a specific goal of, a local, county or state trail plan, or on trails that are included or referenced in a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Applicants may be reimbursed for up to 50% of project costs.
- **WDNR – Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant Program – Acquisition and Development of Local Parks:** This grant program provides funds for land or easement acquisition and development or renovation of local park and recreation area facilities for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes. Applicants compete for funds on a regional basis and may be reimbursed for up to 50% of project costs.

- **WDNR – Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant Program – Acquisition of Development Rights Grants:** This grant program provides funds for easement acquisition for protection of natural, agricultural, or forestry values that would enhance outdoor recreation. Applicants compete for funds on a statewide basis and may be reimbursed for up to 50% of project costs.
- **WDNR – Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant Program – Urban Rivers Grants:** This grant program provides funds for land acquisition adjacent to rivers flowing through urban or urbanizing areas, to preserve or restore the scenic and environmental values of riverways for nature-based outdoor recreation. Applicants compete for funds on a statewide basis and may be reimbursed for up to 50% of the total project costs.
- **WDNR – Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant Program – Urban Green Space Grants:** This grant program provides funds for land or easement acquisition in urban or urbanizing areas to preserve the scenic and ecological values of natural open spaces for nature-based outdoor recreation, including non-commercial gardening. Applicants compete for funds on a regional basis and may be reimbursed for up to 50% of project costs.
- **Dane County – Conservation Fund Grant Program:** This grant program provides funds to non-profit organizations and local government agencies for acquisition of lands identified in the Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan, or for lands in buffer areas immediately adjacent to existing parkland. Standard grants are based on 25% of the project costs. If a WDNR Stewardship grant is involved, the grant award is based on the WDNR certified appraised value. Grant requests for more than the standard grant amount are considered but cannot exceed 50% of project costs.
- **Dane County – PARC & Ride Bicycle Grant Program:** This program provides grants to Dane County municipalities for expanding bike trail connectivity throughout Dane County. The 2015 Dane County Budget includes up to \$750,000 for eligible projects. Grants are awarded for capital projects that expand bike trail interconnectivity, create destination-oriented regional bike trails, and improve bike safety. Applicants may be reimbursed for up to 50% of project costs.

City Resources – Existing and Potential

- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** This program is a five-year plan which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule, and identifies options for financing the plan. The CIP also allows the City to monitor and implement specific *system* acquisition projects.
- **Park Improvement Fees:** These fees, utilized to enhance the *system*, are required from any applicant proposing a residential development entailing a rezoning of land, conditional use permit, or design review, in accordance with the *City's Land Division Ordinance*.
- **General Obligation Bond:** A general obligation bond is a bond secured by a state or local government's pledge to use legally available resources, including tax revenues, to repay bond holders. Funds are made available when a referendum or legislative act has authorized sale of such bonds. Often the debt is repaid by the levy of a property tax and secured by the local unit of government.
- **Revenue Bond:** Revenue bonds are issued by a public agency and paid back by means of revenue derived from operation of the resulting recreational projects, such as a golf course, swimming pool, or community center.

- **Special Tax:** A special tax levy, usually included in the property tax, allows local units of government to collect revenue to support outdoor recreational projects.
- **User Fee:** The City can charge fees for use of certain *system* facilities to help offset the cost of acquisition, development, and maintenance.

Partnerships and Inter-governmental Cooperation

Fitchburg has successful relationships and agreements with its municipal neighbors, private sector entities, other public entities, and nonprofits to provide residents with necessary high-quality services, in an efficient and economical manner. These services include public schools, transportation, utilities, and safety.

Various other governmental entities own prominent outdoor recreational lands in the City and the City has partnerships with non-profit organizations for management of some aspects of park and recreation, including the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way owned and managed by Dane County and WDNR, the Nevin State Fish Hatchery owned and managed by the WDNR, and the Seminole Mountain Bike Trails owned by Dane County and managed by the Capitol Off-Road Pathfinders (CORP). The City also has a partnership with CORP to build, manage, and maintain mountain bike trails in the Quarry Ridge Recreation Area.

Some partnerships include the promotion, marketing, and funding of programs/services related to Fitchburg's parks and open space. For example, the Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Bureau has promoted bicycling in Fitchburg, including work to highlight bicycling assets and develop maps and chosen rides that help to promote bicycling by making it easier for visitors and residents to choose a ride or learn about the system. The Chamber sponsored the expansion of B-Cycle in Fitchburg. Bike Fitchburg, Inc., a local bike advocacy organization and the Chamber have also led a business outreach program to encourage businesses to provide amenities that encourage bicycling.

City of Fitchburg, Fitchburg Chamber, and Bike Fitchburg have partnered through Active Wisconsin, a program of the non-profit 1000 Friends of Wisconsin. The three partners work together on many projects to promote bicycle tourism and enhance bicycle infrastructure and programming throughout the *system*.

Other City partnerships related to parks and recreation include those with Destination Madison and the Madison Area Sports Commission.

Related Plans

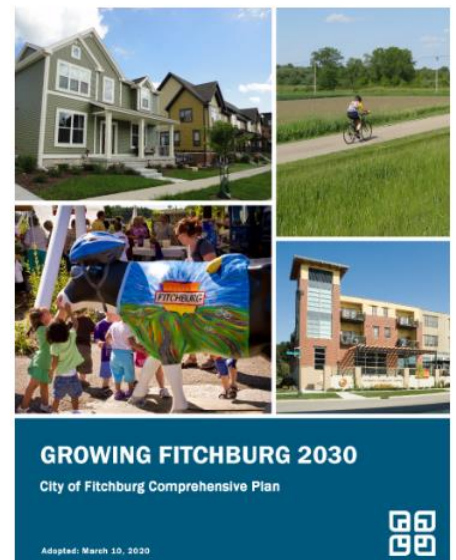
Various City, county, and state planning documents are relevant to the implementation of this *Plan*. This *Plan*, where applicable, is consistent with these documents. Partnerships can be an important component of implementing this plan, can expand opportunities for residents, and can create greater efficiency of programs/services.

City of Fitchburg – Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2017)

This plan serves to guide maintenance and enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian transportation options in the City, including sidewalks, trails, paths, and bicycle lanes/routes.

City of Fitchburg – Growing Fitchburg 2030 Comprehensive Plan (2020)

This plan addresses the unique characteristics of Fitchburg and provides an overall vision and model for sustainable and regenerative growth in the City. The plan contains data and background information on numerous City resources and services, including land use, economic development,



natural, cultural, and agricultural resources, housing, public facilities and utilities, and transportation. The plan also identifies goals, objectives, and policies that will help determine the City's use of resources and guide decisions for future land development and preservation. All City land use actions need to be consistent with this plan.

City of Fitchburg Neighborhood Plans

These plans analyze the natural environment, and identify desired future land use, transportation, stormwater management, and public utilities in designated future development areas in the City. These plans are intended to provide a rational basis for decision-making by the City when development is proposed in these areas. Additionally, Fitchburg incorporates completed neighborhood plans into its *Comprehensive Plan*. System concepts and recommendations identified in these plans must be consistent with neighborhood plans.

Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan 2018-2023

This plan identifies significant cultural, historical, and natural resources that should be considered for possible protection, preservation, or restoration for a five-year plan horizon. The plan also seeks to identify county-wide recreation needs and Dane County's role in providing facilities to meet anticipated demands.

Capital Springs State Recreation Area – Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (2010)

This plan, developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, in conjunction with the Dane County Parks Department, identifies a desired land use and management plan for the Capital Springs State Recreation/Lewis Nine Springs E-Way, running through the City's northeast portion. Major aspects of the plan include developing and enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat.

Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-2023 (SCORP)

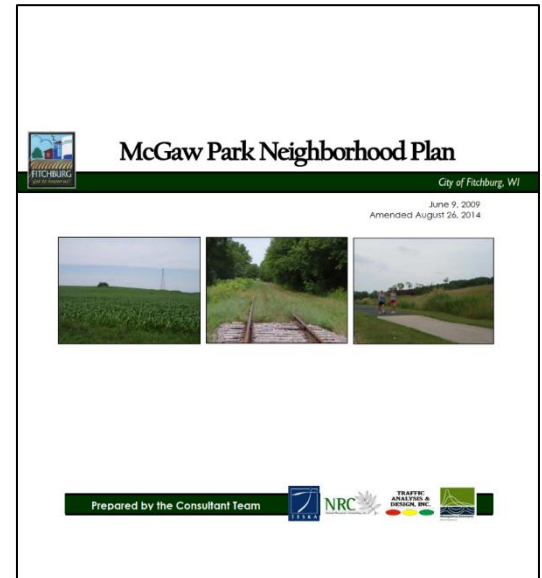
This plan classifies, measures, and ultimately provides for the preferences and needs of a statewide recreating public. This plan identifies essential issues that affect the future of Wisconsin outdoor recreation, presents goals and actions to aid recreation providers in developing an adequate supply of recreational lands and facilities, and promotes conservation of natural resources.

Wisconsin DNR Recreation Opportunities Analysis (2018)

This analysis identified recreational needs and opportunities for the eight regions of Wisconsin. Fitchburg and Dane County are part of the Southern Gateways region. The analysis focuses on recreational facilities that could be provided on DNR properties identifies DNR managed properties that may be well-suited to meet recreation needs. However, it notes that partners in the private sector and governments from local to federal levels all play important roles in providing outdoor recreation opportunities.

Dane County Bicycle Wayfinding Manual (2016)

This manual provides a step-by-step process for planning for and installing wayfinding signs on bikeways in Dane County. It was developed with the expectation that the agencies and organizations who will undertake wayfinding signing plans will not have a background in traffic engineering or sign design.



Parks, Open Space, and Recreation System – *Issues and Opportunities*

This section of the report identifies Fitchburg *system* “issues”. Issues were identified from an analysis of the previously identified existing conditions. *System* issues are as follows:

- Future Park Uses
- Future Park Sizes and Locations
- Trails/Paths
- New Recreation Programs and Services
- User Groups
- Upland Resources
- Water Resources
- Facility/Landscaping Maintenance and Improvement
- Deficiencies
- Past Uncompleted Initiatives
- Partnerships
- Financial Resources

Future Park Uses

City Attributes and Park “Themes”

Fitchburg has various attributes that provide identity for the City, including bicycle/pedestrian trails/paths, natural resources, agriculture, and proximity to the City of Madison. Additionally, a handful of existing City parks have use “themes”, indicating a primary use at said parks, including sport fields/courts at McGaw and winter activities at Nine Springs Golf Course.

The City should explore accentuating these attributes and enhancing park “themes” at large, prominent City system properties to enhance the City’s *system*, expand the user profile of the *system*, and attract users from throughout the region. Themes for several parks have been identified in Section III: Action Items.

Food/Drink Opportunities and Public/Private Partnerships

Social interaction through food and drink opportunities are a catalyst for social interaction and community building. Urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg, in his book *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (1991), states that “third places, where people can gather, put aside the concerns of work and home, and hang out simply for the pleasures of good company and lively conversation, are the heart of a community’s social vitality...”

Additionally, public/private partnerships, in which private entities provide for or manage a use that provides a community benefit, are becoming a more common undertaking on public park land. **The City should explore food and drink opportunities that encourage social interaction, at designated system properties**, serving to expand the user profile of the *system* and attracting users from throughout the region.



**Bike kiosk at
Dawley Bike Hub**
Source: City of Fitchburg

Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens

Urban agriculture, including community gardens, offers an opportunity for development of a local food system, social interaction, green neighborhoods, and outdoor recreation. Community gardening, typically organized by non-profit organizations or volunteers, utilize a parcel of land divided into separate garden plots and gardened by individuals or groups.



Community gardener
Source: *The Farley Center*

The City has a policy to allow community gardens on *system* properties, and currently manages four gardens at *system properties* throughout the City. The use of third-party community garden management may assist the City in continuing to provide or expand community garden and urban agriculture opportunities. **The City may consider expansion of community gardens if there is a volunteer coordinator available for the new gardens and water is available at the site.**

The City should explore continuing to locate urban agriculture elements, including community gardens, at City *system* properties, expanding the user profile of the *system* and attracting users from throughout the region.

The City has four community fruit orchards and a sugar bush. Fruit at these orchards often goes unpicked. Improving information about the orchards both on the City's website and through signage may improve utilization of this community amenity. If expansion or additional orchards are considered, the following trees and shrubs are appropriate

- Wild plum (*Prunus armericana*)
- Service berry (tree or bush form) (*Amelanchier* spp.)
- Prairie fire crab apple (*Malus* x 'Prarifire')

These species have fruit that provides value to both humans and wildlife, are low maintenance, and are not invasive.

The City should consider improving the available information about existing community fruit orchards, possibly through installing signage at the orchards and/or posting information on the City website.

Future Park Sizes and Locations

Fitchburg's *system* meets most of its standards. However, it should be noted that these standards do not specifically address quality of service, nor specific trends in population demographic or recreational use patterns.

Additional *system* properties will need to be acquired and developed as the City grows. The City's *Land Division Ordinance* requiring parkland dedication, or fee-in-lieu of dedication, will continue to serve as the City's primary *system* property acquisition tool. Previous plan stakeholder engagement processes indicated *system* users more often use community or area parks, as neighborhood parks often do not provide for the recreational opportunities they seek. Similarly, small, isolated parks within individual subdivisions, as reflected in the City's neighborhood park category, generally tend to be expensive to maintain and do not serve large segments of the population. If only small, isolated acreages are available for parkland dedication and the neighborhood is already served by active parkland within ¼ mile the City should consider fees in lieu of parkland, with said fees applied to enhance larger *system* properties. Similarly, future parkland should build on

existing parkland to create larger parks. Finally, future park size and use profiles should reflect existing and projected recreational use trends and patterns and population demographics.

The City may consider environmental corridors, buffers, flood plains, and other areas unsuitable for development for parkland dedication only under the following conditions:

- The areas are suitable for active outdoor recreation
- The neighborhood in which the area is located is adequately served with developed active parkland
- The areas have a priority environmental/ecosystem protection value

The City should explore revision of the City's *system* classification categories and standards, as well as parkland dedication requirements and park impact fees, to ensure optimal future *system* property and private open space location, distribution, size, and use, and align resources with public expectations and City capacity for long term maintenance and replacement. Policies, classifications, standards, and requirements should be considered tools to direct resources to meet the *system* goals and the expectations of the public.

The classifications and standards have not been updated recently and do not reflect recent or emerging recreation priorities, such as pickleball. Based on public involvement in past iterations of this plan, these standards do not uniformly align with public expectations and desires for the *system*, e.g. the City standards indicate a deficiency in soccer fields with a standard of one field per 1,000 residents, while public perception would indicate that soccer facilities are adequate for the current population. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) performance report indicates that the median number provided by member agencies is one soccer field per 10,775 residents, which the City exceeds. Additionally, the City has been using the park theme concept to concentrate specialized facilities (e.g. tennis and pickleball) at specific park locations, which reduces maintenance costs and allows the City to provide enhanced facilities at those parks, e.g. lighting for tennis courts.

Some specialized community parks such as Sunnyside Dog Park and Nine Springs Golf Course do not fit clearly into the existing standards for community parks, despite intentions for these parks to serve the broader community. In revisiting these standards, the City should consider how standards or guidelines can work for parks in urban, suburban, and rural contexts that exist within the City of Fitchburg. The NRPA has recently moved away from the use of standards and has since compiled data showing the breadth of park and recreation offerings from its member agencies. In reviewing the City of Fitchburg's classifications and standards, the City should consider its existing *system* relative to peer communities and *system* goals.

The City should consider the role of regulation size athletic facilities in the park system and evaluate whether future athletic facilities should be designed to be regulation size, whether as part of a new park or renovation of an existing park. In considering the creation of regulation size facilities, the City should evaluate the source of funding, who the park/facilities should serve, the additional costs of regulation facilities (if any), potential partners, and economic development potential.

Parkland dedication requirements should be reviewed to ensure that land dedication requirements are aligned with the City's capacity to develop and maintain parkland. The City should also ensure that it is only accepting parkland that furthers the City's goals, and is not accepting parcels merely because they are undevelopable. The City should also consider developing a policy for accepting park and open space land outside of the parkland dedication process to ensure that the City can fairly act on opportunities to acquire parkland that is not part of a new development.

Park impact fees should be reviewed and evaluated to ensure they are aligned with and linked to the long-term replacement, maintenance, and staffing capabilities of the park improvements that are funded by those park impact fees.

Trails/Paths

The City's trail/path system, consisting of neighborhood shared-use paths, six major trails/paths, and the Dawley Bike Hub, provides identity to the City as well as recreation, economic development, and transportation opportunities. Furthermore, this *Plan's* stakeholder participation process indicated *system* users think the City's bicycle/pedestrian trails/paths are the feature that most makes the City unique. The City should consider opportunities to enhance the path system where applicable, including adding "shred-to-school" trails where appropriate. The City of Madison developed a shred-to-school trail along the Cannonball Trail near Leopold Elementary School in 2022.

Elementary and middle schools often serve as park-like facilities outside of school hours. Safe and low-stress connections to schools are an amenity for some residents as much as connections to park properties. Multiuse paths and trails in the City are well positioned to serve elementary and middle schools proximate to City residents, including Leopold Elementary School, Stoner Prairie Elementary School and Savannah Oaks Middle School, Forest Edge Elementary School, and Eagle School. Schools can often serve as park-like facilities outside of school hours and safe connections are an amenity for residents.

The Cannonball and Military Ridge Paths provide connections to the Seminole Trails and Quarry Ridge Recreation Area mountain bike parks via a low-stress route suitable for supervised children. **The City could consider establishing recreation programs that use these paths/trails to connect residents of historically underserved neighborhoods with *system* facilities.**

The City could consider designating, inventory, map, provide identification and wayfinding signage for its extensive network of multi-use paths to provide transportation options to/from parks, expand the user profile of the *system*, and attract users from throughout the region. Steps could include development of a master plan with an inventory of segments, development of a wayfinding signage plan, develop funding sources for eliminating gaps and bottlenecks and expanding the system into underserved neighborhoods, and maintaining the system in a sustainable way

New Recreation Programs and Services

Fitchburg's population has grown significantly over the recent past. Similarly, the City's population has become very diverse, consisting of a large diversity of incomes, as well as large segments of minorities, youths, and seniors.

The City should explore opportunities for new recreation programs and services to meet existing and future population demographics, and changing recreation demands and trends, serving to expand the user profile of the *system* and attracting users from throughout the region. In exploring these programs and services the City should identify opportunities for partnerships, joint uses, and third parties to provide projects, programs, and initiatives.



Aldo Leopold Elementary School students
Source: Asma Easa

As part of this effort the City should evaluate the cultural relevance of its park amenities and recreation programs and strive towards offering programming that appeals to the City's diverse residents and is accessible to them. One way to consider cultural relevance in parks and recreation is when "all [residents] can

establish a personal connection to the park and/or park programs and find meaning and value in the experiences because it relates to them in a way that helps them better understand what is being offered.”⁷

User Groups

Youth

The City should consider development of additional youth recreational uses/facilities, including but not limited to play equipment, soccer fields, ball fields, winter recreation facilities (i.e. open skating, hockey, warming houses, and sledding hills), “shred-to-school” trails, all-ages bike park/pumptrack, and a City-wide trail/path system. Additionally, the City should consider development of a **youth center**, possibly within a multi-use facility, to provide additional recreational opportunities. The City recently opened its first inclusive playground at McKee Farms Park. **The City should consider installing inclusive playgrounds anytime a playground is installed or replaced.**

Adults

The City should consider development of additional adult recreational uses/facilities that reflect user demands and trends, including but not limited to sport fields, ice skating facilities, horseshoe pits, sand volleyball courts, a City-wide trail system, and cross-country skiing opportunities.

Elderly

The City should consider development of additional senior friendly recreational uses/facilities and amenities that reflect user demands and trends, including but not limited to convenient parking and access, restrooms, accessible walking paths suitable for mobility devices, shaded areas and frequent seating, lighting, and tables and benches.

For all of these age groups, the City should ensure that the facilities in parks reflect the needs of the diverse residents they are intended to serve, which may differ from neighborhood to neighborhood due to differences in demographics or cultural backgrounds. This could include providing different sports fields or facilities or installing multi-language park signs.

Upland Resources

Numerous forest, prairie and grassland natural areas are located on City *system* properties. **The City should maintain these properties according to best management practices and any management plans developed by the City.**

Additionally, forest and prairie restoration and management plans provide options for resource management based on an assessment of the site, including vegetation, habitat classification, topography, hydrology, and wildlife. These plans identify specific operations, a maintenance schedule, and resources for completion of a management prescription. The plans also set forth long range goals for site management and maintenance. Furthermore, feedback from this *Plan’s* stakeholder engagement process indicated *system* users are interested in the potential of an arboretum at a *system* property.



Mickelson Woods
Source: City of Fitchburg

⁷ “Changing the Narrative.” *Parks and Recreation Magazine*. April 6, 2018. National Recreation and Parks Association.

The City should develop forest management plans for all City-owned woodlots, with Dawley Conservancy receiving the highest priority. Additionally, the City should implement vegetation management plans for all City-owned prairies. The City should also evaluate underutilized mowed grassy areas for additional opportunities to expand or create new prairies.

Water Resources

Lewis Nine Springs E-Way

The City should continue to support Dane County and WDNR in land acquisitions in the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way, and explore opportunities for City acquisitions. Acquisition emphasis should be placed on completing the upland linkages, to ensure a continuous connection from Dunn's Marsh through the Nine Springs wetland complex.



Nine Springs Creek
Source: City of Fitchburg

Environmental Corridors

As defined by the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC), "Environmental corridors are continuous systems of open space in urban and urbanizing areas, that include environmentally sensitive lands and natural resources requiring protection from disturbance and development, and lands needed for open space and recreational use." Environmental corridors are based mainly on drainage-ways and stream channels, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and other resource features, and are part of a county-wide system of continuous open space corridors. Corridors can provide for a system of greenways, buffer areas, and other open space land to manage stormwater, provide trail linkages, and to buffer environmentally sensitive lands. Environmental corridors in the City are identified on maps provided by CARPC. Most lands in the corridors are undevelopable lowland areas.

The City should continue to acquire environmental corridors that link existing corridors, when feasible.

Wetlands and Floodplains

The City should continue to pursue acquisition of wetlands and buffer zones, when feasible, to provide a potential outdoor recreation benefit, with the highest priority acquisitions being those wetlands identified in the Dane County Wetlands Inventory and those most likely to be negatively impacted by development.

Shoreland

Vegetated buffers along shorelands may slow habitat fragmentation or perhaps even allow for re-establishment of a connected natural landscape. Current state standards for shoreland protection require structures to be set back at least 75 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of navigable waters.

The City should continue to utilize a buffer of 300 feet, when feasible, to protect and enhance lakes and streams.

Facility/Landscaping Maintenance and Improvement

Access

Streets, sidewalks, trails/paths, and bicycle lanes/routes should provide safe and convenient access to the City's *system*. Similarly, access to the City's *system* must be safe and convenient to those with special needs, including physical disabilities and handicaps, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1992) and the Accessibility Guidelines for the Public Right of Way (PROWAG). **The City should continue to enhance access to its *system* via streets, sidewalks, trails/paths, and bicycle lanes/routes, and for those with special needs.**

Basketball Courts

The City has adequate basketball courts to meet current demand. **The City should continue to monitor the need for new courts, and maintenance of existing courts.**

Cross-Country Skiing

The City should consider restoring trails in McGaw Park, and developing trails at Nine Springs Golf Course and along greenway areas in McKee Farms Park. The City should continue to monitor the need for new trail development.

Ice Skating

The City has adequate ice skating rinks to meet current demand. **The City should continue to monitor the need for future ice skating rinks.**

Golf

The City has adequate golf facilities to meet current demand. **The City should continue to monitor the need for new golf facilities.**

Landscaping

The City requires landscaping, including plantings, walkways, and benches, when new *system* properties are developed, or to enhance existing *system* properties. **The City should consider a comprehensive approach to landscaping *system* properties that takes advantage of property attributes and expands the user profile of the *system*.**

Mountain Biking

Through cooperation with Capital Off Road Pathfinders (CORP), the local affiliate of the International Mountain Biking Association, three outstanding mountain bike parks are located within the City: Quarry Ridge Recreation Area, Seminole Trails, and Saris Trails. These are groomed in winter for fat biking when snow conditions permit. The Seminole Trails are located on Dane County property, Quarry Ridge Recreation Area is owned by the City, and the Saris Trails are located on private property. All the mountain bike trails are accessible from and adjacent to regional trails. The City is working with CORP to expand the Seminole Trails into the Dawley Conservancy. There may be opportunities to develop linear mountain bike trails particularly to improve connectivity of natural surface trails among green spaces and mountain bike trails. An example along the Cannonball Path directly adjacent to Fitchburg is the Cannonball Bicycle Adventure Trail developed by the City of Madison next to Leopold Elementary (also known as "shred-to-school" trails). **The City may pursue additional opportunities to expand access to this popular sport, including linear mountain bike trails and shred-to-school trails.**

New Specialized Facilities

Recreation uses that have increased in popularity in recent years include gardening, mountain biking, winter/fat-tire biking, recreational bicycling, disc golf, dog parks, indoor ice rinks, swimming pools, roller skating areas, skateboard parks, and BMX bicycle tracks. **The City should continue to monitor the demand for new specialized facilities to accommodate these uses in its *system*.**

Pickleball Courts

The City added eight pickleball courts to McGaw Park in 2022. **These should be monitored for maintenance needs.**

Play Equipment

The City should continue to install ADA-accessible play equipment in future *system* parks, with equipment replaced as it becomes obsolete and undesirable. The City should consider installing inclusive play equipment any time equipment is installed or replaced. **The City should continue to monitor the need for play equipment maintenance and consider installing inclusive and accessible playgrounds anytime equipment is installed or replaced.**



Play equipment and shelter at Wildwood Park

Source: City of Fitchburg

Shelters and Restrooms

The City has adequate shelter/restroom facilities to meet current demand. Future shelters with restrooms, which can be reserved for public gatherings, should be considered in larger parks, and located in such a way as to minimally impact residential areas. Smaller shelters with no restrooms should be considered in neighborhood parks, subject to available funding. **The City should continue to monitor the need for new shelters or existing shelter maintenance/repair.**

Soccer

The City has an adequate supply of soccer fields to meet current demand. **The City should continue to monitor the need for new fields.**

Softball/Baseball

The City has adequate softball/baseball fields to meet current demand. **The City should continue to monitor the need for new fields, and maintenance of existing fields.**

Tennis

The City has adequate tennis courts to meet current demand. Several of the tennis courts need maintenance and are planned to be maintained using grants/donations. Concurrently, the six tennis courts at McKee Farms Park are being considered for replacement and enhancements, along with the establishment of a long-term replacement fund in the CIP. **The City should continue to monitor the need for new courts, and maintenance of existing courts, and seek external funding for court replacements that will not be covered by the McKee Farms Park tennis court replacement fund.**

Volleyball

The City has adequate volleyball facilities to meet current demand. **The City should continue to monitor the need for new volleyball facilities.**

Deficiencies

Fitchburg has an adequate amount of total parkland, and associated recreation facilities, to serve its present population, in accordance with *system* assessment tools currently utilized by the City. However, there are specific residential areas in the City that are deficient in parkland. As noted in the *assessment*, Fitchburg has far more land per capita than most other communities of similar size. However, Fitchburg's park and recreation

staffing levels are below the typical park agency at 8.9 FTEs per 10,000 residents. The City should revisit and update its assessment tools, park standards, and staffing levels to reflect recreation trends, the *system* vision and goals, and the City's capacity for upkeep and maintenance.

Additionally, the Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative identifies four neighborhoods in the City have barriers to opportunity (e.g. large youth populations, lower incomes, limited mobility, and higher public health risks.) The challenges facing priority neighborhoods should be considered in the planning and development of park spaces and recreation programming. The City should consider barriers to access when studying park service areas and needs (e.g. language barriers, transportation barriers) and should also consider how other communities have increased access to parks for populations with greater barriers to opportunity.

Finally, the City and its partners will continue to explore the long-term maintenance and operational liabilities of system facilities. Park fees and fee-in-lieu of dedication funds cannot be used for maintenance and operations, coupled with state-imposed levy limits may require the exploration of alternative funding sources to continue providing park amenities at the existing level of service. The City should also consider long term maintenance and staffing needs when adding park facilities and amenities.

The City should explore development of facilities and associated staff and funding for operations and maintenance, in partnership with other interested parties, to better address the system and neighborhood needs.

Past Uncompleted Initiatives – Conceptual Park and Open Space Proposal, Moraine Edge Park, and Heritage Circle Route

The following identifies three past uncompleted *system* initiatives, the *Conceptual Park and Open Space Proposal* (2010), Moraine Edge Park, and the Heritage Circle Route.

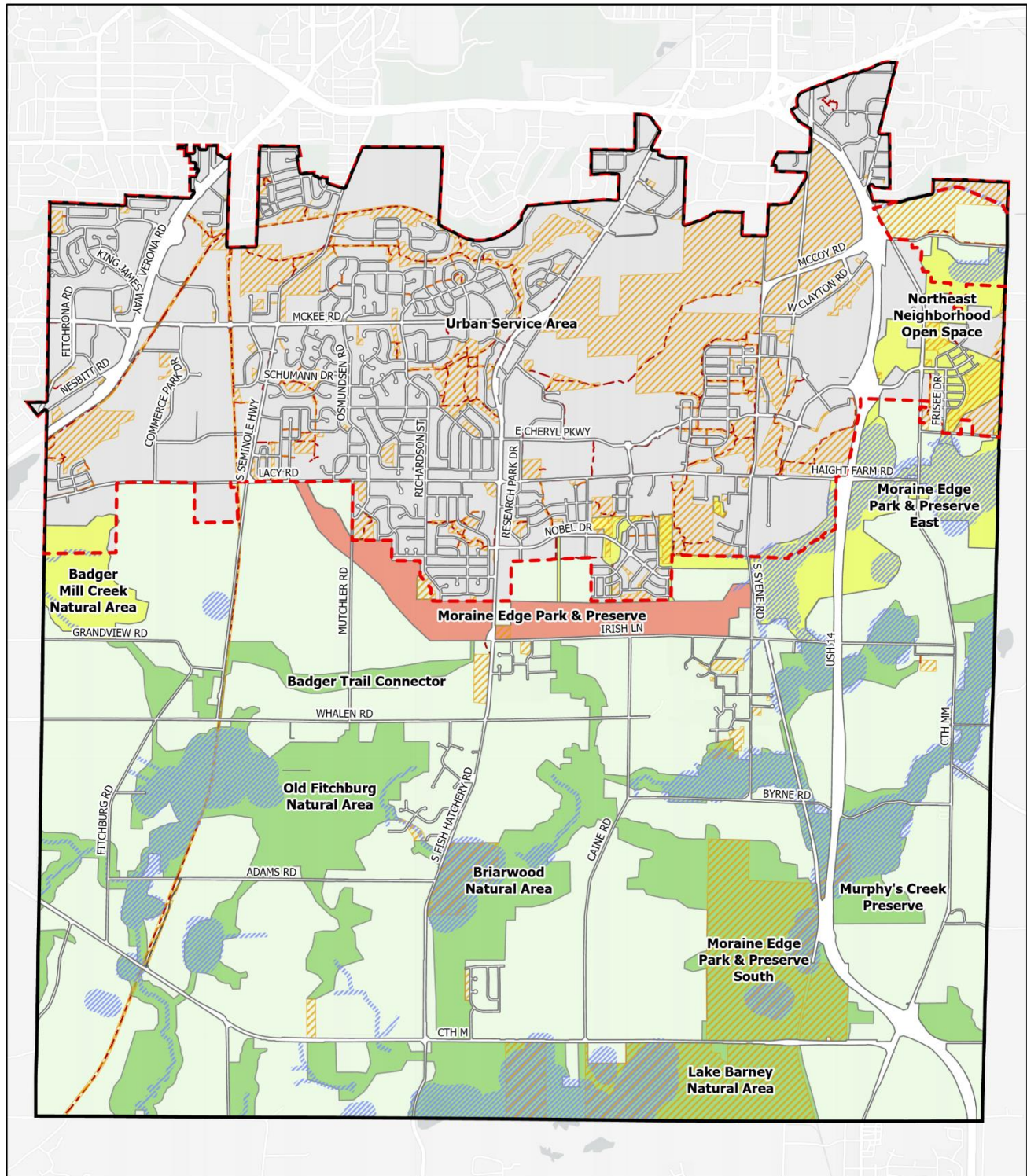
Conceptual Park and Open Space Proposal and Moraine Edge Park

The *Conceptual Park and Open Space Proposal* (hereafter "*Proposal*") began in 2007 as a comprehensive study of Fitchburg's natural, historical, and cultural resources. The *Proposal's* purpose and intent was to identify a system of linked parks and open space that protect Fitchburg's natural areas and create a buffer between current and future development, ultimately recommending areas to be considered for future parks/recreation facilities and protected open space. *Lands identified in the Proposal would be acquired only from those landowners who wish to sell or donate land or land rights.* Some designated areas in the *Proposal* could be protected through conservation easement, while remaining in private ownership. **Map 5** identifies the *Proposal* in further detail.

Areas of higher priority for *Proposal* implementation were designated as follows:

- Areas most feasible for expansion of the City's recreational facilities will receive higher priority in terms of land acquisition and park planning efforts.
- Future urban growth areas, especially those of near-term development, will become a priority in terms of further study, documentation of resources within the study area, and integration of the *Proposal* with the neighborhood planning process.

Map 5: Fitchburg Conceptual Park and Open Space Proposal



Disclaimer: The City is not liable for any deficiencies in the completeness, accuracy, content or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any public data set, or application utilizing such data set, provided by any third party.

- City Limits
 - Bike Facilities
 - ROW
 - Urban Service Area
 - Public Land
 - 75' Waterway Buffer/ 300' Wetland Buffer
 - Proposed Park & Open Space**
 - Priority 1
 - Priority 2
 - Priority 3
- *Waterways only shown within proposed park & open space boundary

Conceptual Parks and Open Space Proposal
 Date: 7/11/2023
 Source: City of Fitchburg, County of Dane, ESRI, WI DNR
 Created By: City of Fitchburg IT Department

0 0.5 1 Miles

The main feature of the *Proposal* was the creation of a greenbelt buffer, known as Moraine Edge Park and Preserve North, at the southern boundary of the City's urban service area. This proposed park, extending from Savannah Oaks Middle School to Syene Road, has been identified by the Parks Commission as the highest acquisition priority for implementation of the *Proposal*. The purpose of the park is to meet the recreational needs of the community, protect existing environmental resources, and provide agricultural education opportunities. The park is also intended to serve as an open space buffer from existing development, much like the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way. Moraine Edge Park and Preserve North could also offer both active and passive recreational opportunities such as bike trails, nature trails, picnic areas, and open space for general play and social gatherings.

The *Proposal* also identifies other major areas of importance due to their concentration of environmental and historical resources. These areas include Badger Mill Creek Natural Area, Old Fitchburg Natural Area, Briarwood Natural Area, Murphy's Creek Preserve, Moraine Edge Park and Preserve East, and the Badger Trail Connector. In drafting the boundaries for proposed park and open space, these larger open space complexes were connected to each other to form one extensive City-wide open space system that could allow for human, animal, and plant mobility. In 2009, the Common Council approved Resolution R-84-08, acknowledging the *Proposal* and Moraine Edge Park North as the priority area for acquisition. The Common Council has asked for further study of major planning issues such as project cost. As such, future planning tasks should include site analysis, cost assessment, and discussions with City commission/committees, staff, and landowners, and other public participation activities.

At the time of this *Plan's* adoption, the 2025-2034 capital improvement plan identified \$2 million for land acquisition in 2034 and refined the scope to create a potential "Moraine Edge Corridor," laying a foundation for feasible implementation of the *Proposal*. The modified Moraine Edge Park concept, preserving corridors linking green spaces together, is more akin to the concept of an Emerald Necklace by Frederick Law Olmsted in Boston, MA. Features could include a multi-use path, trees, mounds/berms, and wildlife and environmental corridors. This corridor could run from the western to eastern edges of the city, potentially connecting park and recreational amenities such as Quarry Ridge Recreational Area, Stoner Prairie Park, Wildwood South Prairie Park, Byrne Park, Gorman Wayside, McGaw Park, and the Terravessa Agriculture Park.

In addition to the east/west connection to park and recreational areas, the corridor could connect or highlight historical sites/locations/facts about Fitchburg, Fitchburg's agricultural history/facts/information, and a future farming museum. Future connections could be considered to other locations or areas of the city, such as a connection heading southwest to the Badger State Trail. The corridor could be implemented through a combination of land acquisition, parkland dedication, existing multi-use paths, and/or easements. The timeline for funding may change again since the City reviews its CIP on an annual basis.

Heritage Circle Route

In 2000, Fitchburg's City Planner, Tom Hovel, proposed a concept for a 19-mile path called the Heritage Circle Route, described as a "major linear recreation path linkage that would provide a circular recreation path around the City of Fitchburg." The Route would give users an opportunity to pass through the varied cultural and natural terrain of Fitchburg. The City's circular symbolic seal, with its fish, oak trees, farms, industry and homes serves as a conceptual representation of the Route.

The proposed Route consists of four segments. The north segment would utilize the Capital City Trail, the west segment the Badger State Trail, and the east segment within, or adjacent to, the former Chicago and Northwestern Railroad line. The south segment would



The City's Agriculture Past and Present Bike Tour on the FAR
Source: City of Fitchburg

require land acquisition, as it parallels County Highway M, until meeting the west segment. The Route concept recognizes the challenges that will need to be addressed, “given the desire and need to maintain rail presence” through the corridor and the adjacent land uses, including the Oakhill Correctional Institution.

The Route would traverse many natural features including Dunn’s Marsh, the Lewis Nine Springs E-Way, drumlins, a terminal moraine and other glacial features, oak openings, the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, and trumpeter swan nesting areas. Cultural features on the Route include Fitchburg’s first farm, various historic settlements, and the Nevin State Fish Hatchery, as well as many rural and urban neighborhoods. The Route also runs near four locations on the National Register of Historic Places, including the McCoy House, Haight Farmstead, the former Wisconsin Industrial School for Girls (now Oakhill Correctional Institution) and Fox Hall.

The City should continue to explore opportunities to implement the *Proposal*, and development of Moraine Edge Corridor and the Heritage Circle Route.

In 2015 the Oregon Rotary Trail opened between South Fish Hatchery Road and Cusick Parkway in the Village of Oregon. The eastern third of the trail is in the City of Fitchburg. (The facility would be called a “path” under Fitchburg’s and Madison’s naming conventions. No state trail pass is required.) A connection from the end of the path to Purcell Road at Storytown Road could serve as the south segment of the Heritage Circle Route, with the advantage of connecting the City to the Village.

The City may explore with the Village of Oregon the feasibility and environmental studies for extending a multi-use path.

Partnerships

Fitchburg has successful relationships and agreements with its municipal neighbors, private sector entities, and nonprofits to provide residents with necessary high-quality services, in an efficient and economical manner. These services include public schools, transportation, utilities, and safety.

Future partnerships could include management of certain aspects of parks and recreation offerings. The city could consider working more closely with the three school districts in Fitchburg to ensure residents have access to adequate park and recreation facilities without duplicating efforts.

The City should explore strengthening partnerships, to expand the user profile of the *system*, attract users from throughout the region, honor and acknowledge the history and culture of Indigenous peoples, and provide *system* programs/services in an efficient and economical manner. This could include friends of the park groups and homeowners associations.

Financial Resources

Various funding resources are available to the City to maintain and enhance its *system*, including “non-City” resources/options such as grants, and private sponsorship and advertising at designated *system* sites.

Park improvement fees and parkland dedication/fee-in-lieu of dedication are limited un use to land acquisition and new park improvements. These fees cannot be used for maintenance and operations. Park user fees are one of the few maintenance and operations funding tools, besides the general fund, available to Wisconsin communities.

The City should explore opportunities to utilize “non-City” funding resources/options to maintain and enhance its *system*.