

**City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2030**  
**Section III – Action Items**

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### Abbreviations

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

*System:* City of Fitchburg Park, Open Space, and Recreation System

WDNR: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The City of Fitchburg Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Plan – Action Items is Section III of a three-section Plan document. This section of the City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Park, Open Space, and Recreation Plan (hereafter “Plan”) identifies general goals and potential recommended action items to ensure adequate maintenance and enhancement of Fitchburg’s parks, open space, and recreation system (hereafter “system”) over the Plan horizon, from 2025 - 2030. This section is organized as follows:

- Action item framework
- Action items
- Plan monitoring, updates and amendment

## Action Item Framework

Recreation in public spaces can take many different forms. Conventional forms include basketball/volleyball courts, baseball/softball diamonds, play equipment, and nature activities such as walking or hiking. These conventional forms will always have a place on public spaces. This section of the Plan looks beyond these conventional forms and looks at recreation on public spaces through the following framework, **the Three S’s of Sociable, Solitude, and Seams**:

### SOCIABLE (Think: People)



What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people.” – William Whyte

### SOLITUDE (Think: Nature)



Solitude can include people...it’s more about surrounding environment and uses.

### SEAMS (Think: Transportation Corridors and Linkages)



Paths from home to “work” places (jobs, schools, etc.), paths from home to “errand” places (shopping centers, etc.) and paths from home to “play” places (parks, restaurants, etc.).

The following vision and seven goals support this framework and provide general direction for the City's *system* over the *Plan* horizon, from 2025 - 2030.

The vision and goals were developed from feedback gathered during the *Plan* update stakeholder engagement process, goals/objectives/policies contained in the 2015 – 2020 *Plan*, City staff expertise, and feedback from the Park Commission and Mayor.

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## Vision

The City of Fitchburg Park, Open Space, and Recreation System (hereafter "*System*") strives for an appropriate balance of passive and active recreational/social opportunities, and responsible preservation and sustainable stewardship of the City's natural environment and resources.

The *System* works to achieve these ideals through adherence to the City's Growth Principles of *Sustainable, Equitable, Vibrant, and Cooperative*, as contained in the City's Comprehensive Plan, as well as the *System's* Three S's Framework of *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*.

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- Goal 1: Distribute** Fitchburg's park, open space, and recreation lands, and uses and facilities therein, in an inclusive, accessible, and equitable manner that reflects existing and future recreational demands and trends and population demographics (including age, race, ethnicity, disability status, socioeconomic status, language, and gender)
- Goal 2: Protect** Fitchburg's natural, cultural, and historical resources
- Goal 3: Develop** Fitchburg's park, open space, and recreation lands, and uses and facilities therein, in a manner that provides identity and economic development opportunities for the City
- Goal 4: Integrate** Fitchburg's park, open space, and recreation land, and uses and facilities therein, with a comprehensive City-wide trail/path system, stormwater management system, quality tree canopy, and environmentally sensitive area system
- Goal 5: Provide** recreational program and services in an accessible and equitable manner that reflects existing and future recreational demands and trends and population demographics;
- Goal 6: Manage** Fitchburg's park, open space, and recreational lands, and uses and facilities therein, in an efficient and sustainable manner that optimizes benefit and minimizes cost
- Goal 7: Serve** as the face of Fitchburg's park, recreation, and open space system through public interaction and service

## Action Items

The following identifies recommended *Plan* action items, and associated tasks, for 2025 – 2030 that advance the **Three S’s framework** and goals for the City *system*. The action items were created to address issues identified in Section II of the *Plan*. The action items are categorized based on priority level and expected timeline of completion. Items identified as green are priority one, 1-3 years. Priority one actions include a potential funding source following the action. Items identified as yellow are priority two, 3-5 years. Items identified in orange are priority three, 5+ years. Items identified in blue are policies or ongoing actions.

City Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department staff will monitor implementation of this *Plan’s* recommended action items on an annual basis to assure sufficient implementation to meet Fitchburg’s park, open space, and recreation needs.

**Table 7** will assist in monitoring, by providing a “priority level” designation to all action items.

**Table 7. Action Item Prioritization**

| Priority Level  | Action Items   |
|---|--|
| <b>Priority one</b> – Substantial progress or completion within 1-3 years of Plan adoption        | 3a., 3.c., 4.a., 8.a., 10.a., 10.e., 11.c., 12.c., 13.a., 15.c.  |
| <b>Priority two</b> - Substantial progress or completion within 3-5 years of Plan adoption        | 2.b., 4.a., 5.d., 6.a., 7.b., 12.a., 12.b.   |
| <b>Priority three</b> - Substantial progress or completion in five or more years of Plan adoption | 2.a., 4.a., 4.b., 5.c., 7.a., 8.b., 11.b., 15.a.   |
| <b>Policy/ongoing action</b> – Substantial progress or completion as demand dictates              | 1.a., 2.a., 3.b., 3.d., 5.a., 5.b., 6.b., 8.c., 8.d., 8.e., 8.f., 9.a., 10.b., 10.c., 10.d., 10.f., 10.g., 11.a., 13.b., 13.c., 14.a., 15.b. |

1. Designate **Signature Themed Parks** that focus on one or a few related uses and amenities in specific City parks as identified below, to provide identity for the City and its system, and attract users from throughout the region: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

a. Develop *City Signature Themed Parks* based on **Table 8**.

**Table 8. Proposed Signature Theme Park**

| Signature Theme*  | Location   | Potential Uses, Facilities, and Amenities  |
|---|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Agriculture</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: City of Fitchburg</i></p> | <p><b>Terravessa<br/>Agriculture Park</b></p>  | <p>Facility to host farmers market and other events, community gardens and small-scale agriculture, edible landscapes, agriculture/local food classes, and food/drink opportunities;</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Biking</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: City of Fitchburg</i></p>     | <p><b>Dawley Conservancy<br/>(west of Seminole Highway)</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Quarry Ridge<br/>Recreation Area</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>N. Fish Hatchery<br/>Road Hub</b></p> | <p>Enhanced bike hub and bike “waystop”, bike trails;</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: City of Fitchburg</i></p> | <p><b>N. Fish Hatchery<br/>Road Hub</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>McKee Farms Park</b></p>   | <p>Event/activity space, festivals, concerts, fairs, and food/drink opportunities;</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>History</b></p>    | <p><b>Old Fitchburg**</b></p>  | <p>Museum and food/drink opportunities;</p>  |

**Table 8. Proposed Signature Theme Park**

| Signature Theme*  | Location   | Potential Uses, Facilities, and Amenities   |
|---|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Nature</b></p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>McCoy/West Clayton Road Open Space</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>McGaw Park</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dawley Conservancy</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Nine Springs Creek water trail “trailhead”, arboretum, environmental interpretive center, and “natural” playground;</p>      |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sport Fields/Courts</b></p>    | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>McKee Farms Park</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>McGaw Park</b></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;">Tennis and pickleball courts and baseball/softball, lacrosse, and soccer fields;</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Winter</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: City of Fitchburg</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>N. Fish Hatchery Road Hub</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Nine Springs Golf Course</b></p>   | <p style="text-align: center;">Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, ice-skating, winter festivals, warming house, and food/drink opportunities;</p> |

\*Signature Themes, as identified above, are conceptual and subject to change based on further research and development of the City of Fitchburg Parks - Signature Themed Park Concept Proposal. Other uses commonly found at City parks (play equipment, ball fields, etc.) and outdoor recreational areas (trails, etc.) are not precluded from potential Signature Themed Parks.

\*\*Old Fitchburg refers to historic resources along a portion of the Badger State Trail and is not currently owned by the City of Fitchburg. The Badger State Trail is currently owned by Wisconsin Department of Transportation and managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Establishing a theme along Old Fitchburg will require partnerships. There may be other locations that could serve as a park with a historical theme or host a museum.

2. **Develop partnerships with private entities**, including but not limited to those that could provide for food and drink opportunities on *system* properties, to provide financial returns to the *system*, expand the *system's* user profile, and promote the concept of City Parks as sociable “3<sup>rd</sup> Spaces”: *Sociable*

a. Continue to explore opportunities for food carts, farmers markets, and other local food/drink opportunities in appropriate City Signature Themed Parks.

b. Explore potential for an external “community garden manager” to oversee community gardens and related uses/facilities at applicable *system* properties.

3. **Explore revision of the *system* classification and standards, parkland dedication/open space requirements for development projects, and process to identify future *system* properties**, so as to encourage optimal and efficient land use premised on the appropriate placement, size, and uses of *system* properties and private open spaces: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

a. Develop a *City Park and Open Space Classification and Standards Study* to include alternative options for *system* classification and standards, identification of desirable SmartCode – New Community zoning district “civic spaces”, and opportunities for placement of useable, recreational open space in private developments. Funding source: Include funds in CIP

b. Include adequate Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)-recommended bike parking in parks and open space properties; consider providing public bicycle repair stands and air pumps in area and community parks.

c. Evaluate parkland dedication, fee-in-lieu of dedication, park impact fees, and funding for long-term maintenance, management, and replacement of amenities. Funding source: Include funds in CIP

d. Consider regulation size 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.

4. **Continue planning and implementation of “community-scale” facilities and uses** on *system* properties, including but not limited to neighborhood/community center-type facilities in the City’s Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative (HNI) Priority Neighborhoods: *Sociable*

a. Implement Phase 1 of the N. Fish Hatchery Road Hub and continue consideration for Phase 2. Explore the potential for third-party partnerships and/or additional city resources and staff for programming and services at Hub.

b. Continue working with other departments to explore the feasibility of a community resource center to serve priority neighborhoods.



Drawing by student at Leopold Elementary

**Drawing by Aldo Leopold Elementary School student when asked “What would you like to see in your neighborhood?”**

Source: City of Fitchburg

5. **Assist in development and implementation of a comprehensive City trail/path plan and network**, premised on connecting residential areas with *system* properties and other “social” places such as restaurants, coffee shops, and community facilities: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

- a. Assist with updating the *City’s Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2017)*, as needed.
- b. Identify projects that are eligible for Federal, State, and County funding on an annual basis and apply for said grants, as staff capacity allows.
- c. Develop wayfinding signage for City parks along the City’s multi-use path system.
- d. Assess connectivity of low stress bicycle and pedestrian networks between *system* properties and residential areas, including assessments of barriers (e.g. crossing a busy street).



**Leopold Neighborhood Ride to Library**

Source: *Bike Fitchburg, Inc.*

6. **Encourage expansion of existing *system* community gardens and development of new gardens** on suitable *system* properties, subject to external management capacity: *Sociable and Solitude*

- a. Explore potential for an external “community garden manager” to oversee *system* community gardens and related uses/facilities.
- b. Require that a water service and a volunteer coordinator is available before the establishment of new community gardens.
- c. 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.



**Huegel-Jamestown Community Garden**

7. **Explore opportunities for addition of staff within the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department**, including but not limited to positions related to “park and urban forestry maintenance operations” and “neighborhood outreach/volunteer coordination”, and related, appropriate re-allocation of tasks/duties to other applicable City Departments: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

- a. As directed by Council, explore with other departments the feasibility of various Healthy Neighborhood Initiative (HNI) community facilities and services.
- b. Evaluate additional staffing needs for parks and forestry to serve the growing needs of the city and make staffing recommendations as appropriate.

8. **Design, landscape, maintain, and manage** City *system* properties in a manner that adds value to the City and its *system* to provide identity for the City and its *system*, expand the user profile of the *system*, and encourage optimal and efficient land use: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

a. Develop a *5-Year Park Master Plan Priority List*, identifying and prioritizing parks suitable for a new or revised master plan, over a 5-year period. Funding source: Internal staff project

b. Develop *City of Fitchburg Parks – Design and Landscape Criteria* premised on creating and encouraging the following:

1. A welcoming and inviting feeling to City parks
2. Appropriate Sociable, Solitude, and Seams uses
3. Universal accessibility and safety
4. Public art
5. Increase and support biodiversity through native species plantings and enhancements of native wildlife habitat including insects and pollinators
6. Reducing inputs (labor, fuel, fertilizer, water, etc.) needed for parks maintenance and carbon footprint of maintenance practices



**Volunteers constructing monarch way station at McKee Farms Park**

Source: City of Fitchburg

c. Improve language access for City of Fitchburg parks and recreation resources.

d. Acknowledge and honor Indigenous peoples, land, and culture through system properties. This may include protection of areas that are historically or culturally significant, interpretive signage for educational purposes, park naming, park amenities, and programming.

e. Explore opportunities for unique amenities and programming in new neighborhoods.

f. Install accessible playgrounds when equipment is replaced or added. Consider installing inclusive play equipment and features in new parks and when equipment is replaced. Funding source: Include in CIP

9. **Strengthen partnerships with existing City and other governmental/non-profit entities** that own or manage outdoor recreation land or facilities, provide outdoor recreation programs and services within the City, or support thereof, including but not limited to the City's Tree Advisory, Resource Conservation, and Bicycle Committees, Commission on Aging, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Dane County, and Madison School and Community Recreation, and friends groups, so as to identify common goals and deliver outdoor recreation programs and services in an efficient and economical manner: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

a. Identify projects that are eligible for Federal, State, and County funding on an annual basis and apply for said grants, as staff capacity allows.

10. **Maintain and enhance the City's tree canopy, forests, savannas, and prairies**, so as to ensure protection and preservation of the City's vegetative resources and broader ecosystem: *Sociable and Solitude*

a. Develop a City Urban Forestry – Strategic Management Plan and forest management plans for city-owned woodlots. Funding source: Grant assisted internal staff project

- b. Plant diverse species of trees in system properties and City right of way and use park and open space properties to help implement the City's 30% urban service area tree canopy goal, including prioritizing preservation of existing mature trees in those properties. Work with other departments to preserve mature trees in City projects when feasible.
- c. Continue efforts to remove invasive vegetation and replace with native species/appropriate understory plants that encourage more wildlife interest/healthy habitat.
- d. Provide a variety of wildlife habitats in City natural areas including standing and fallen, dead and dying trees.
- e. Explore development of an arboretum and "tree-growing incubator" at suitable *system* properties. Funding source: CIP funded
- f. Evaluate opportunities to convert underutilized turf grass spaces in existing parks to native landscapes.
- g. Solar power generating infrastructure proposed on a *system* property will be reviewed for potential conflicts with existing and planned tree canopy. The 30% tree canopy goal for the urban service area should be considered when siting solar infrastructure on *system* properties. This applies both to infrastructure to serve the *system* property and infrastructure to provide power outside of the *system* property.

11. **Maintain and enhance the City's stormwater facilities and waterways** to ensure protection and preservation of the City's water resources and broader ecosystem: *Sociable and Solitude*

- a. Work with the City's Public Works Department to enhance stormwater facilities in City parks, including interpretive signage and viewing and use opportunities.
- b. Work with the Public Works Department to inventory *system* properties that have areas that also serve stormwater management functions that are not currently part of the stormwater management property inventory. Include these properties in the stormwater management property inventory to allow stormwater utility funds to be used for maintenance of the stormwater features.



**Harlan Hills Stormwater Pond**  
Source: City of Fitchburg

12. **Continue to explore opportunities for new recreation programs and services**, including but not limited to those related to fitness, classes, leagues, and other events, to expand the user profile of the *system* by meeting current demand and trends in recreational programs/services: *Sociable*
- a. Develop a strategy to gather input on existing and potential future recreation programs and services, including creating or enhancing culturally relevant recreational programming.
  - b. Evaluate resources and partnerships needed to provide potential future recreation programs and services.

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c. Incorporate recreation programs and services at the HUB and in all priority neighborhoods. Funding source: general operating budget.

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13. **Continue to manage and maintain the system** in a manner so as to provide identity for the City and its *system*, expand the user profile of the *system*, and encourage optimal and efficient land use: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

a. Evaluate opportunities to fill park and recreation gaps in neighborhoods that are not within ¼ mile of any neighborhood park amenities (whether provided by neighborhood, area, or community parks). Funding source: include in CIP

b. Explore funding sources for ongoing maintenance and operations.

c. Consider consolidating specialized facilities, both to improve the efficiency of managing those facilities and to allow more opportunity for amenities and enhancements for them (e.g. providing lighting for athletic facilities).

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14. **Monitor opportunities to implement system concepts, initiatives, and projects**, to maintain and enhance the *system*: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

a. Review future development proposals and City budget cycles as they relate to the *Conceptual Park and Open Space Proposal*, *Moraine Edge Park (CIP)*, and the *Heritage Circle Route*.

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15. Maintain adequate levels of City financial resources and **explore opportunities for “non-City” financial resources** to maintain and enhance the *system*: *Sociable, Solitude, and Seams*

a. Explore opportunities for private sponsorship and advertising at designated *system* properties.

b. Identify projects that are eligible for Federal, State, and County funding on an annual basis and apply for said grants, as staff capacity allows.

c. Explore third-party/non-profit partnerships to assist with fundraising, management, and/or coordination of *system* maintenance and improvement, e.g. the creation of an endowment fund for maintenance or a friends of Fitchburg parks group.

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## Plan Monitoring, Updates, and Amendments

This *Plan* will be updated every five years to maintain eligibility for State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources grant funding. As such, the next *Plan* update process should be completed by 2030 and be subject to a comprehensive public stakeholder engagement process. Any updates or amendments to this *Plan* will be reviewed by the Fitchburg Parks Commission, with recommendation, at a public hearing, to approve the update/amendment to the Common Council. The Common Council may adopt any *Plan* amendment/update after the public hearing.

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