

Forward Fitchburg's
.....
Place-Based
Economic Development
Vision & Strategy
.....
2018 Update

CITY IN MOTION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS :

The City in Motion: Forward Fitchburg's Place-Based Economic Development Vision & Strategy is a culmination of a year-long effort led by the City of Fitchburg, Fitchburg Chamber Visitor & Business Bureau, and the Forward Fitchburg Steering Committee. The City engaged a team of consultants to complete a comprehensive update of the original 2012 document, incorporating progress made on previously identified strategic directions and items; changes within the local, regional, and national economies over the last five years; up-to-date economic and demographic data analysis; whitepapers; and focus groups.

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Fitchburg: An Evolving City Shaping Its Future



Introduction

The City of Fitchburg is a young, dynamic, and evolving community. Incorporated just 35 years ago, Fitchburg has successfully grown into a place known for attractive, family-oriented neighborhoods; a thriving technology-led business community; and well-designed, unique urban centers.

Fitchburg has grown intelligently and strategically with a focus on first-rate design, green space preservation, and economic development geared toward 21st Century industries. Substantial progress has been made in each of the Strategic Directions outlined in the original *City in Motion: Forward Fitchburg's Place-Based Economic Development Vision & Strategy* developed in 2012. With many good ideas in the works, Fitchburg has laid the groundwork to become a truly special place, and continues to build momentum towards realizing a long-term vision of becoming a full-service, equitable urban community.



However, Fitchburg is not there yet. The City is filled with promise, hope, zeal, and good ideas, but its personality is not fully-formed. While Fitchburg has diligently built its Civic Campus, brand and image over the past five years, it still lacks a strong and distinctive sense of place. The City features multiple nodes of activity and a diverse mix of land uses, but lacks the clearly defined central business district or municipal boundaries typical of older communities. Fitchburg's numerous strengths and features are not yet united to form a common whole.

Fitchburg is at a crucial moment in its evolution. Decisions made now will set the stage for the character of the economy and the success for decades to come. Fitchburg's public and private sector leaders are united behind a common vision for the City's future and a strategic framework for how to pursue that vision. Today and in the near future, Fitchburg has the opportunity to capitalize on its good ideas and youthful energy, while moving forward with strategic guidance and clarity of purpose.



How to Use This Report

This report is an update of the economic vision and strategic economic positioning framework for the City of Fitchburg and Fitchburg Chamber first developed in 2012.

The Fitchburg Chamber Visitor & Business Bureau, instrumental in the creation of the original document, has also worked closely with City staff to implement the 2012 framework and provide leadership for the advancement of Fitchburg's economic vitality and quality of life for our businesses, residents, and visitors. The document is intended to reflect the significant developments undertaken under each of the Initiatives and Actions recommended in the original document, as well as a snapshot of current conditions and Fitchburg's place in a rapidly expanding regional marketplace. It also provides both public- and private-sector leaders in Fitchburg with a view of Fitchburg's future and a roadmap for how to get there. For outsiders not familiar with the City – including prospective businesses, residents, and visitors – this document is intended to showcase Fitchburg's numerous existing strengths and assets, development directions, and economic opportunities.

This is not a land use plan with specific recommendations for real estate utilization. Nor is it a traditional economic development strategy focused solely on

recruiting businesses or influencing site selection decisions (though these topics are addressed). Rather, this report is a broad economic vision and series of targeted strategic directions focused on guiding Fitchburg's economic development choices over the next five-to-ten years. Many of the ideas build on key concepts and recommendations from the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Therefore, this document should be utilized in tandem as a strategic, action-oriented complement to the Comprehensive Plan's economic development section. It is a "living document" intended to be updated on a rolling basis every few years in order to stay relevant and function as a guide for impactful public policies, community-oriented initiatives, and sustained economic prosperity in the City of Fitchburg.



Part I: Fitchburg Today

Key Assets at Work

By most commonly-used quantitative measures of economic strength and quality of life, Fitchburg is an extremely successful community. The City is achieving high residential growth balanced by preserved farmland and green spaces. Fitchburg's economy is driven by a number of successful and growing companies – many in advanced industries like biotechnology, manufacturing, and information technology. The City has a number of high-quality development projects that include vibrant mixed-use employment centers, and well-designed residential neighborhoods. Strategically located just south of Madison with excellent access to regional amenities, the City is poised for continued growth and economic success. The new U.S. Highway 14/Lacy Road interchange, as well as incorporation of the remaining Town of Madison lands in 2022, present generational opportunities to create several large urban business districts with a complementary mix of residential and recreational opportunities.



FITCHBURG'S KEY EXISTING ASSETS INCLUDE:



- A young, diverse, and educated population
- High-skilled, tech-oriented workforce
- High-growth companies poised for long-term success
- A rich array of amenities, both within Fitchburg and nearby
- Racial and ethnic diversity
- Excellent access and location proximate to interstate, UW, and regional airport
- Outstanding bike trails and scenic open space
- High quality and diverse housing
- Thoughtfully-planned, with new neighborhoods, commercial nodes, and business areas forming a multi-centered City
- High population growth
- A progressive, forward-thinking City government that is both pro-business and flexible (reflected by the SmartCode, neighborhood plans, and detailed Comprehensive Plan)
- Strong agricultural heritage and economy

Key Data Indicators

In addition to Fitchburg's powerful assets, some key facts and figures on Fitchburg's population and economy, as well as trends within the larger region, further highlight Fitchburg's strengths and the City's economic role as a growing community with an increasingly vibrant economy, particularly coming out of the Great Recession. The following are a few key demographic, housing, and industry data points and indicators, including snapshots of how the City has continued to evolve since the 2010 Census.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC BENCHMARKS:

Fitchburg's population is growing, young, well-educated, and diverse

Fitchburg is achieving balanced and thoughtful population growth and is recognized as a great place to live for young and old alike. Based on 2010 and 2016 Census figures, Fitchburg's population is growing at a rate comparable with its regional peers, but ahead of the rate for Dane County and nearly eight times the statewide rate. Similar trends emerge for growth in total equalized tax base, housing units, and employment, with Verona a notable outlier largely due to the explosive growth of Epic Systems.

Fitchburg residents, with a median population age of 34.4 (up slightly from 2010), are on par with the County and significantly younger than the state average of 39.1. The City retains above-average racial and ethnic diversity compared with Dane County and Wisconsin, and is home to a large share of immigrants. Educational attainment in Fitchburg is also roughly equivalent with the County as a whole, and significantly greater than the statewide benchmarks. Looking at just a few key demographic indicators paints a picture of a population that combines youthful optimism, economic dynamism, intelligence, worldly sophistication, and vibrant diversity.

Growth Comparison	Population ¹			Tax Base (\$Billion) ²			Housing Units ¹			Employment ¹		
	2010	2016	% Change	2010	2016	% Change	2010	2016	% Change	2010	2016	% Change
Fitchburg	25,260	27,254	8%	\$2.525	\$2.831	12%	10,631	11,469	8%	13,614	14,724	8%
Madison	233,209	246,034	5%	\$22.212	\$24.596	11%	107,523	110,540	3%	132,623	143,294	8%
Middleton	17,442	18,707	7%	\$2.699	\$3.144	16%	8,727	8,853	1%	10,142	10,580	4%
Sun Prairie	29,364	31,721	8%	\$2.475	\$2.772	12%	11,674	13,221	13%	15,550	17,169	10%
Verona	10,619	12,113	14%	\$1.528	\$2.374	55%	4,122	4,854	18%	5,647	6,836	21%
Dane County	488,073	516,808	6%	\$50.661	\$56.551	12%	213,160	222,808	5%	272,016	292,242	7%
Wisconsin	5,686,986	5,754,798	1%	\$495.904	\$505.124	2%	2,624,358	2,649,597	1%	2,827,631	3,021,170	7%

1. U.S. Census Bureau: 2010 Census and 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates (2012-2016)

2. Wisconsin Dept. of Revenue

Key Demographic Indicators	Fitchburg			Dane County			Wisconsin		
	2010	2016	% Change	2010	2016	% Change	2010	2016	% Change
Population	25,260	27,254	8%	488,073	516,808	6%	5,686,986	5,754,798	1%
Median Age	32.9	34.2	4%	34.4	34.2	-1%	38.5	39.1	2%
Adults with a Bachelor's Degree	45%	46%	1%	45%	49%	4%	26%	28%	2%
White Persons not Hispanic	65%	64%	-2%	82%	81%	-1%	83%	83%	0%
Foreign Born Persons	14%	16%	2%	7%	8%	1%	5%	5%	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2010 Census and 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates (2012-2016)



HOUSING PROFILE :

Fitchburg has a diverse mix of housing ranging from affordable rentals to executive homes

In the first few decades of Fitchburg’s history, the City’s image was that of a bedroom community. Fitchburg was characterized as a City with a few new apartments and consisted mostly of subdivisions with high-end single-family homes. The recent housing data reveal a new reality. Fitchburg’s housing stock now includes a wide range of housing options. The City has an above-average percentage of rental units as well as an above-average median home value, trends for both of which have accelerated within the past decade. Housing opportunities in Fitchburg range from affordable apartments in seasoned multi-unit complexes, to higher-end rental units in vibrant new urban centers, to starter homes in cozy neighborhoods, to executive homes, to comfortable senior housing. However, as highlighted in the City’s recent Housing Affordability Study, the affordability of owner-occupied homes - particularly for younger and working-class buyers - remains a challenge as wages and prosperity rise in Fitchburg’s leading high-tech industry sectors and workers wish to live closer to work.

Housing Indicators	Fitchburg			Dane County			Wisconsin		
	2010	2016	% Change	2010	2016	% Change	2010	2016	% Change
Total Housing Units	10,631	11,469	8%	216,022	222,808	3%	2,624,358	2,649,597	1%
Owner Occupied Housing	53%	50%	-6%	60%	58%	-2%	68%	67%	-2%
Renter Occupied Housing	47%	50%	7%	40%	42%	3%	32%	33%	3%
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	\$270,800	\$276,200	2%	\$230,800	\$236,000	2%	\$169,000	\$167,000	-1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2010 Census and 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates (2012-2016)

WORKFORCE AND INDUSTRY CLUSTERS:

The Madison Region's Economy Continues to Grow at a Rapid Pace

Dane County was responsible for 56% of Wisconsin's job growth between 2001 and 2015,¹ and boasts one of the ten lowest regional unemployment rates in the nation.² It is one of America's top five locations for information tech jobs, with IT employment growth of 31% from 2010-2015,³ and robust annual growth of 5.1% in gross regional product from 2010-2016.⁴ The housing market is particularly tight; the area had an extremely low multi-family rental housing vacancy rate of just 3.15% in late 2017,⁵ with the median price of a Dane County home at \$266,000 in January 2018 - 4th highest in the state, and significantly above the Wisconsin median of \$168,500.⁶



¹ Connect Madison, 2017.

² Madison MSA - Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2017.

³ Forbes, 2014.

⁴ Federal Reserve, 2017.

⁵ Madison Gas & Electric service territory data, Q4 2017.

⁶ Wisconsin State Journal, February 20, 2018.

“Big Picture” Trends and Challenges

Fitchburg has contributed greatly to the Madison Region’s status as a nationally recognized hub for high tech business and knowledge-based employment – the 5th largest concentration in America behind only Silicon Valley, Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, DC.⁷ In addition, the Madison metro region gained the greatest percentage of 22-to 34-year-old workers from 2001 to 2016 of any metro in the country.⁸ However, a robust economy and rapid population growth in Fitchburg, and throughout Dane County, have exposed numerous challenges that must be consciously addressed through the City’s economic development efforts:

- Awareness and increased efforts to reduce economic, racial, and education disparity
- Skilled labor shortage, particularly in the trades and other “blue-collar” occupations
- Affordable housing challenges, gentrification, and minimizing displacement
- Increased traffic congestion and operating pressure on public transportation (Madison Metro)
- Millennials and Generation Z market influence and impact
- Decentralization of economic activity and growth of “destination districts” outside of traditional downtowns

The Madison area’s strength in science, research, information technology, and related industry clusters is clearly rooted in the University of Wisconsin-Madison. However, Madison’s science and technology leadership stretches well beyond the boundaries of the UW campus and the City of Madison. Peripheral communities in the region have spawned some of the most advanced and fastest-growing technology companies in the state.

Fitchburg is home to several of these companies, the largest of which include Promega Corporation, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Placon Corporation, Sub-Zero/Wolf Appliance, OneNeckIT Data Center, and Saris Cycling. These companies are innovators and leaders in niche, growing industries. They are globally-connected, export-oriented, and require talented personnel. They continue to prosper in Fitchburg, with Promega’s June 2018 announcement of a \$190 million, 270,000-square-foot research and development center being just the latest example of the commitment of “home-grown” industries to Fitchburg and the City’s economic position in the region. The City is committed to supporting and assisting its companies as they continue to grow and succeed, as business attraction and retention are critical to Fitchburg’s long-term economic development and provide anchors around which new companies may locate.

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017.

⁸ Forbes, 2017.

What has been accomplished since 2012?

Significant and quantifiable progress has been made in each of the previously identified Strategic Directions and specific Initiatives over the past five years, including growth in business and startups, tax base, hotel rooms, employment, population, and resident diversity. A brief summary is below; a more detailed list of accomplishments can be found as an appendix to this document.

Brand and Identity

- Revamped City’s webpage and created social media pages
- Updated logos, streetscape and entrance signage
- Creation and implementation of marketing campaigns for target markets, featuring Fitchburg assets and events
- Adoption and implementation of City-Wide Agricultural Plan

Build Places, Create Economic Centers & Strengthen Neighborhoods

- Development progress in Uptown, Terravessa, RDC TechLands, Fitchburg Center, Orchard Pointe
- Lacy Road/U.S. Highway 14 Interchange opened
- New residential and commercial developments in West Fitchburg, Fish Hatchery Road corridor, and US Hwy 14
- Engagement with the Latino and Black Chambers of Commerce, including relocation of Latino Chamber to Fitchburg
- Neighborhood Resource Teams, Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative, Citywide Housing Assessment

Support the Innovation Lifecycle

- Membership in Wisconsin Innovation Network, support for and attendance at entrepreneurial and high-tech industry events
- Bike the Burg Tour, targeted ads, Bring Meetings Home campaign, FCVBB designated as Fitchburg’s tourism entity

- Significant increase in hotel room availability from facility openings and expansions, as well as room tax revenues (raised to 7%)
- New Venture Center incubator, co-location of start-ups with existing manufacturers, connecting entrepreneurs to state and local small business resources

Position Sites to Accommodate Business Expansion and Attraction

- Marketing of Fitchburg sites and properties on electronic platforms such as Locate in Wisconsin and at regional economic development and real estate broker forums
- Major business expansions including Saris, Sub-Zero, Madison Group, Certco, Benjamin Plumbing, General Beverage, Promega, Cameca
- Maintain balanced, customer service focused approach to the land use system and project approval process

Collaborate and Leverage Regional Resources

- Ongoing discussions with school district administrations (Oregon, Verona, MMSD)
- Dane County Bus Rapid Transit Study
- Development of specialized training for large employers (Sub-Zero, Wisconsin Dialysis)
- Establishing Fitchburg branded events, larger campaigns geared toward corporate and leisure visitors
- Partnership with state / regional organizations to expand Fitchburg’s tourism economy

Input on Strategic Directions and Initiatives

As part of this update process, Fitchburg and its consultant partners convened three meetings with Forward Fitchburg, a group of leading citizens, business and non-profit leaders and community stakeholders, with the expressed purposes of gathering input and feedback on Strategic Directions, Initiatives, and Action Items (final versions of which are presented in greater detail in Part III). In addition, a Steering Committee comprised of six Forward Fitchburg members from both the public and private sectors was also convened for more detailed discussion of draft planning objectives throughout the process, prior to presentations to the larger group.

On January 30, 2018, Forward Fitchburg was tapped for an initial presentation of this document's Strategic Framework, asked to prioritize proposed Initiatives among a list of sixteen options, and participated in facilitated small group discussions to provide more context for their priority decisions. The subgroup Steering Committee also provided initial input into the Framework prior to the meeting. Among the approximately 50 attendees, plus 13 additional online responses, the following Initiatives received the most "votes" from Forward Fitchburg membership:

- **Redevelopment Toolbox & Proactive Implementation** (19)
- **Schools and Education Vision** (18)
- **North Fitchburg / South Madison Area** (16)
- **Set Proactive Approach for Major Business Prospects** (11)
- **Improve Transportation Connections Between Underserved Neighborhoods and Adjacent Job Centers** (10)
- **Partner on Workforce Development** (10)
- **Performing Arts & Cultural Attractions** (9)
- **Housing Affordability** (8)
- **Expand Economic Opportunities and Work-Based Training for Youth and Young Adults** (7)

From this list, three broad issue groups were selected for more detailed discussion at a series of roundtables held on May 15, 2018, with subject matter experts from Forward Fitchburg and throughout the region. These roundtables consolidated several top Initiatives from the January meeting, while focusing on topics that are not otherwise being addressed by ongoing City planning processes (such as Verona Road, North Fitchburg/ Alliant Energy Center, etc.) These included:

- **Talent Development and Career Pathways to Raise Economic Opportunities (Partners and Employers)** – work with workforce development partners and employers to provide jobs and training for youth and young adults; connect low-income neighborhoods with better transit access and eliminate barriers to employment
- **Growing Arts and Cultural Opportunities** – celebrate Fitchburg's diversity; build capacity for additional arts, sports and cultural programming, and potential facility development
- **Schools and Educational Vision** – explore potential opportunities for Fitchburg-based schools within existing multi-district system

Following several hours of discussion, each roundtable group provided a summary report of discussion topics and proposed actions to the larger Forward Fitchburg group, which were incorporated into the Strategic Framework within this document.

Overall, these meetings reflected that there are numerous Initiatives ripe for implementation in the coming years, but that careful planning is needed to ensure that community resources are properly allocated toward actions that will bring about meaningful progress among the areas of greatest importance to the community.

Part II: Fitchburg Economic Vision

How to shape the City in Motion?

Fitchburg has laid a foundation for success by cultivating a strong local economy, building carefully-planned neighborhoods, and achieving numerous high-quality development projects and initiatives. However, as a “City in Motion” where new ideas are continually brought to the table, Fitchburg’s identity and economy are not fully-formed. Fitchburg needs a bold vision that unifies the City behind a common path while forging a strong identity and sense of community.



evolving • fresh •
vibrant • tech hub
• learning •
business-nurturing
• bikeable
• connected



Snapshot 1: What's In Motion Today

Fitchburg's assets are powerful. The City enjoys high growth, successful businesses, a number of commercial nodes, a talented workforce, well-positioned industry clusters, and excellent amenities. The City is home to some of the region's most cutting-edge companies. **Fitchburg offers convenient access** to bustling urban amenities, combined with scenic farmland and tranquil, preserved green space.

As an evolving City still shaping its economy and character, Fitchburg's challenge is connecting its assets into a cohesive whole. With unclear edges and no defined economic center, the City as a whole lacks a memorable sense of place. The City is young – therefore, Fitchburg's economic development vision and strategy must focus on **creating a stronger and more unified identity**, building memorable places, and providing an atmosphere in which all people can realize their full economic potential.

Snapshot 2: Fitchburg Economic Vision

Known as a dynamic, youthful, and diverse city, Fitchburg is centrally-located, with a fresh vibe and a lively urban business districts. Young professional talent, families, and business leaders are attracted to Fitchburg's energy, convenience, inclusiveness, and natural surroundings.

Fitchburg is a continuously evolving technology-driven community fueled by the growth of several global and home-grown companies. Business executives and entrepreneurs take pride in leading a powerful, tight-knit business ecosystem.

Now a well-defined community, Fitchburg has a distinct identity, with a unified and celebrated educational network.

As a City of memorable places and mobile workforce, the City's string of thriving business and neighborhood centers are conveniently connected by bike, car, and transit. It is known as a Bike Friendly City, designed with parks, prairies, trails, and the Madison Region's largest greenway.



Part III: Strategic Framework



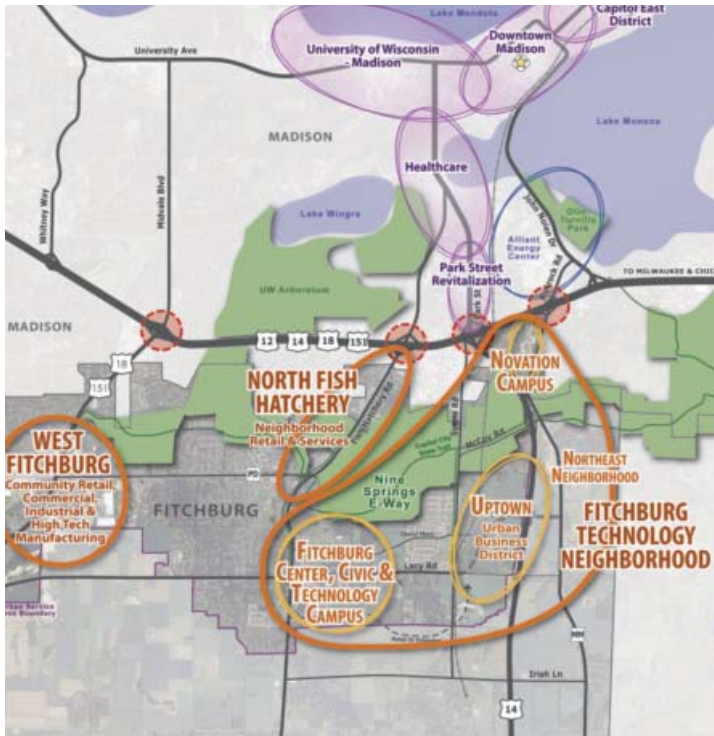
In a fast-moving knowledge-based economy, place matters

Fitchburg’s existing place-based assets provide the foundation for a powerful economy. The preceding Vision offers a picture of Fitchburg’s future, and a target to guide Fitchburg’s assets and competitive advantages toward a prosperous tomorrow. The Strategic Framework that follows in this section creates the roadmap to get there; a tool to guide economic development actions, areas of focus, and specific initiatives over the next 3-5 years.

The Strategic Framework is organized into a three-layer hierarchy consisting of:

- **“Strategic Directions”** – The four Strategic Directions provide a “superstructure” to categorize and organize economic development focus areas and goals
- **“Initiatives”** – Each Strategic Direction includes more specific and tactical areas of focus
- **“Action Items”** – Each Initiative includes a number of Action Items that guide day-to-day implementation between City staff, the Chamber, partner organizations, and the community





The Initiatives and detailed recommendations that fall under the Strategic Directions have been adjusted since the 2012 plan to respond to new challenges, while honoring the original intent of having an overarching set of goals and directions that will guide the City's economic decision making in the coming years. The City, Fitchburg Chamber Visitor & Business Bureau, and partners should continue to sequence and prioritize these items on a rolling basis, as well as identify the proper entities and roles to achieve each as efficiently as possible.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

1. Enhance Economic Centers, Build Places, and Strengthen Neighborhoods

Build the engaging places that attract talent and business, and empower neighborhoods in need with targeted investment

2. Build on Fitchburg's Identity, Brand, and Sense of Community

Explore new cultural opportunities and market niches that build on the City's ongoing branding efforts, to create a stronger, more unified sense of community

3. Cultivate Inclusive Culture and Improve Access & Opportunities

Create a welcoming atmosphere for current residents and visitors, as well as equitable access to City and regional workforce, transportation, and governmental resources

4. Leverage Location, Innovate, and Collaborate

Utilize Fitchburg's strategic location as an asset, and collaborate with regional partners and neighboring communities for efficient implementation

Strategic Direction 1. Enhance Economic Centers, Build Places and Strengthen Neighborhoods

Fitchburg needs to clearly articulate the economic use and function of specific places and areas within the City. This includes both “clean slate” development sites (e.g. the Lacy Road interchange area) as well as established neighborhoods and corridors. Fitchburg is a City of distinct places. Each of these places is unique and has its own character and economic function. City staff, the Chamber and private sector community should

focus on developing and improving Fitchburg’s neighborhoods, corridors, and centers so they each contribute something to the image and function of the City as a whole and its economy. Fitchburg not only needs a common overarching vision for the community, but multiple unique visions for the distinct places within the City, and a strong set of economic development tools to help realize those visions.



INITIATIVES

1.1 Redevelopment Toolbox and Proactive Implementation

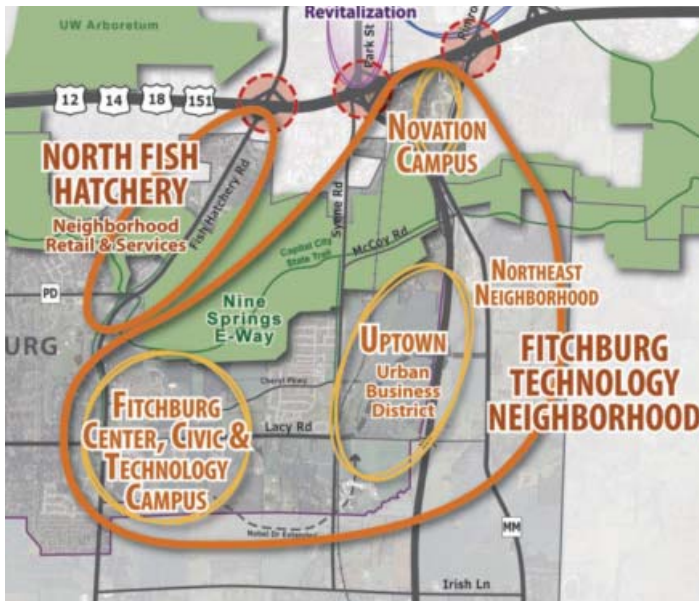
Adopt and deploy proven tools for proactive redevelopment/infill in key areas of the City including legacy sites to achieve plans, long-term vision, and Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative recommendations: targeted land acquisition, tax increment financing, statutory redevelopment districts, infrastructure investment, etc.

Recognize key obstacles to redevelopment and potential opportunities, develop a refined approach to securing resources and public/private partnerships to accomplish targeted objectives, and help ensure high-quality, economically diverse housing options while minimizing displacement.

Why do it?

Key blighted corridors are controlled by numerous property owners, making site assembly difficult. As a result, a proactive approach by the City and a wide range of tools are needed to unlock highest and best use of underdeveloped sites, stimulate (re)investment in struggling or underserved neighborhoods, and encourage residential and business development that meets local and regional needs.





1.2 Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood

Advancing development and redevelopment in the City's aging retail and commercial areas has emerged as a top priority in recent years, but encouraging additional development activity within the Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood (FTN) is also central to Fitchburg's place-based economic development efforts. This includes advancing multiple components of the neighborhood: Fitchburg Center, Fitchburg Technology Campus, Uptown Fitchburg, Novation Campus, RDC Tech Lands, and the Northeast Neighborhood. The City should take the lead and partner with all parties to optimize the development of a cohesive, innovative, and seamlessly integrated urban technology neighborhood maximizing job, resident, employee, and tax base intensity. The FTN also should be transit-oriented and incorporate forward-looking energy generation and transportation technologies. Opportunities also may exist to reboot existing partnerships for early stage tech acceleration through the New Venture Center.



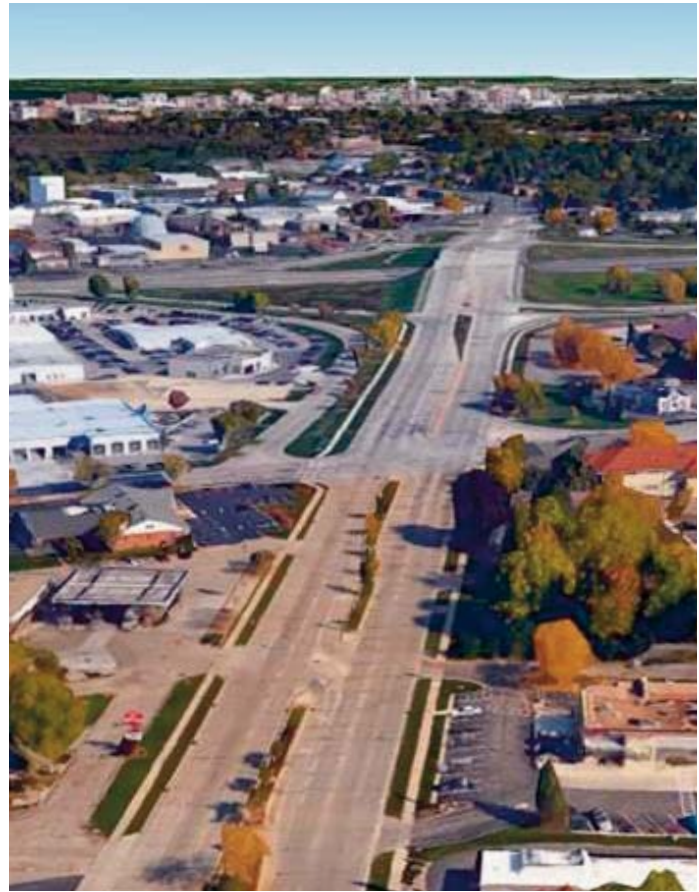
Why do it?

Each area is an anchor employment center that through well-coordinated growth can fulfill the larger vision of the Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood. The City should continue advancing and supporting development and investment in each as they continue to evolve into a unique, well-designed technology business campus, retail/housing district, and civic heart of the City.

1.3 Prioritize Gateway Redevelopment Corridors

The look and feel of the City’s most visible and heavily traveled gateway corridors along Fish Hatchery, Verona, and Rimrock Roads shape many visitors’ first impressions of Fitchburg. The quality of development in each of these areas should represent the enhanced sense of place and positive image that the City looks to build.

While the Fitchburg Center, Fitchburg Technology Campus, and Hatchery Hill have each emerged as successful mixed-use neighborhoods, the visual image of the Fish Hatchery Road corridor is less appealing as it extends north toward the Beltline. The area between Post Road and the Beltline is currently an aging, utilitarian commercial corridor. The City has already buried overhead power lines, improved infrastructure, and enhanced landscape throughout the corridor, including extensions of Post and Index Roads. However, with significant investment being made in South Madison and on the Fitchburg side of the Beltline, the time is ripe to build upon the strategies identified in the 2003 North Fish Hatchery Road Opportunities Analysis and update its site-specific recommendations to address current conditions.





In addition, the north side of the Verona Road corridor between Raymond and McKee Roads also should have a more prominent presence as a gateway to Fitchburg. Southbound motorists on Verona Road should have visual cues that they have left Madison and entered Fitchburg. This area should continue to support a mix of employment, functional retail, and entertainment uses. The fact that numerous local and regional bike paths converge in this area (Capital City Trail, Badger State Trail, Military Ridge State Trail, the SW Commuter Path, and the Cannonball Trail) should also be highlighted as an important asset.



Finally, with the addition of former Town of Madison lands into the City in 2022, the Rimrock Road corridor just south of the Beltline also will become an increasingly prominent gateway. Continuing to facilitate buildout of the Novation Campus and other development in this area, particularly as large-scale improvements are made to the Alliant Energy Center area immediately north, will be critical to ensuring that the northeast part of the City remains a desirable location for new and sustained growth for both residential and commercial uses.

“Everything we do at Pike Technologies is driven by talent. We have no problem with hiring. I attribute this to the cultural offerings of a big city without the problems, along with the very family-friendly community.”

– Liz Brierly,
Comptroller
Pike Technologies

Why do it?

As important gateways into Fitchburg, the City should strive to improve the physical appearance of the right-of-way in these areas, and should create and/or update existing plans for targeted redevelopment that would dramatically improve the quality and intensity of development that meets the needs of surrounding neighborhoods. The City also should work to minimize adverse effects on business sales during major construction projects such as Verona Road, prevent isolation of existing businesses and residences after completion, and seize new development opportunities.

1.4 Housing Diversity, Ownership, and Affordability

Develop programs and policies to actively partner with the private sector to improve existing rental housing stock, and build new owner occupied single family and rental units for low and moderate-income workforce proximate to existing and planned major employment areas: single family detached, multi-family housing, townhouses, duplexes, and other attached or higher density units.

Why do it?

Diversifying housing types proximate to job centers improves conditions and access for lower-income residents, removes barriers to entry for working-class and young families looking to locate near Fitchburg area employers, and expands appeal to a wider variety of demographic and economic groups.



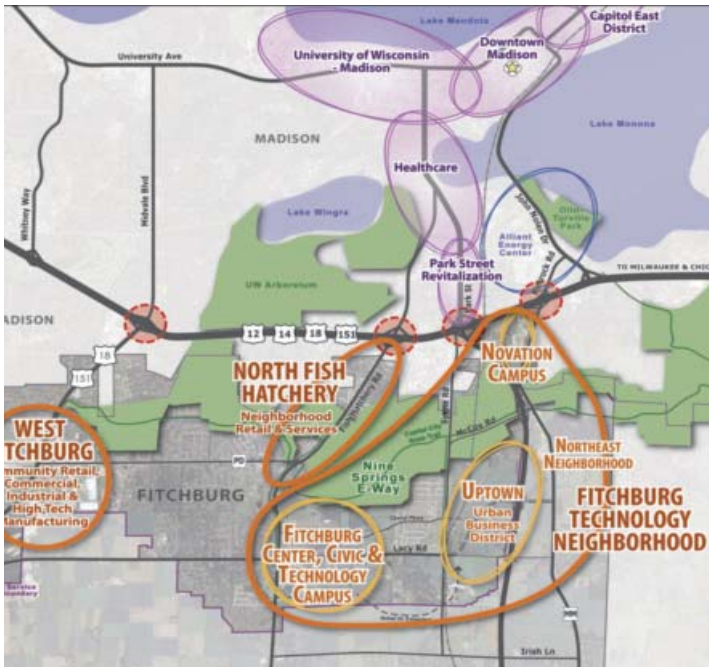


1.5 Build Upon and Communicate Advantages of City’s Multiple Economic Centers

Given Fitchburg’s location, overall size and relatively brief period as an incorporated City, it lacks a single, centralized downtown area that stands out as the historic “heart” of the community. The City’s widespread growth over the past several decades has instead fostered the development of multiple nodes of activity that each fulfill the economic, social, and civic functions of a traditional downtown, but cementing these areas in residents’ and visitors’ minds as individually recognizable districts within a larger web remains a challenge. Overcoming negative perceptions will require a concerted effort to connect and communicate the benefits of having multiple economic subareas – for example, a variety of experiences, less crowding, proximity and ease of access for most of the population versus a single area, walkable scale and mix of uses in lower-density neighborhood settings - while celebrating the unique character of each.

Why do it?

Turns a common negative perception into a positive commentary on the City’s modern and continually evolving urban form. Provides greater visibility for existing and planned economic nodes while enhancing thematic connections and overall sense of place throughout the community.



Strategic Direction 2. Build on Fitchburg’s Identity, Brand, and Sense of Community

The City has made significant strides in rolling out the updated Fitchburg “brand.” This includes defining the edges of the City with gateway signage and road sign toppers deploying Fitchburg-specific streetscape elements, using a unique landscaping palette, and incorporating the new logo on City facilities, vehicles, benches, park signs, infrastructure, etc. The contemporary design of these branding elements is consistent with Fitchburg’s emerging aesthetics – fresh, contemporary, and high-tech.

Fitchburg has now reached the point in its evolution that its brand should become even more content-based, and focus on expanding upon its

tech/employment hub identity by developing a larger array of civic, cultural, sports and recreational opportunities, and institutions that have the potential to become enduring hallmarks of the community. Leaders and residents must decide: what do we want to be known for within the region and beyond?

For example, cultural and performing arts, local foods, and sports and recreation are significant and growing aspects of the Madison-area economy, supporting jobs in a wide variety of industries and generating significant economic benefits to resident incomes, tax base, job creation, and overall quality of life enhancements.



Good idea!





As a young and growing City that has rapidly built upon its civic institutions and fostered a strong economy built upon STEM-intensive and advanced industries, a greater emphasis on locally-developed cultural programming, foodways, and entertainment may represent the next logical step in the Fitchburg's evolution into a full-service community with a distinct sense of place.



The lack of a unified school system that allows children to receive a K-12 education entirely within the City limits also represents a challenge for logistical and community cohesion purposes. With over 7,200 residents 19 years old or younger and a total population of nearly 30,000, Fitchburg is the largest municipality in Wisconsin without a public high school within its corporate limits. As a young and growing City, the time has never been better to articulate a vision for a holistic, comprehensive education system and the types of schools and locations needed to sustain the City's rapid growth and ensure the community's interests are properly represented by its existing districts. A vision would lay the groundwork for more detailed discussions around potential opportunities for Fitchburg-based public schools, which will allow students to both live and learn in their hometown and help solidify the community's identity among current and future residents.

INITIATIVES

2.1 Expand Identity As a Science and Technology-Driven Community

Continue to position Fitchburg as one of the region's high-tech cities through messaging, data tracking, and working with major local science and tech companies.

Why do it?

Building on the presence of large concentration of major high-tech manufacturing employers provides a critical means to further identification of the City as a destination for new companies and talent. The most successful economic development strategy focuses on business retention and expansion, in addition to new business attraction.

“The connection to UW-Madison is key to Promega’s success.”

– Bill Linton, Founder and CEO
Promega Corporation





2.2 Performing Arts and Cultural Attractions

Build upon growing arts tourism impacts in the region by exploring ways to expand local arts, history, and culture. Work with local partners and regional cultural organizations to grow performing arts, including building and funding opportunities for a dedicated venue with community enrichment and accessible children’s programming.

Why do it?

The City is currently home to arts organizations including Madison Opera, Madison Music Foundry, Children’s Theater of Madison and SOSONIC, with local momentum and leadership already in place for new opportunities. Creativity is critical for problem solving, enriches life and opens doors.

“When we relocated in 2016, we had a number of locations we could of moved to. We chose Fitchburg because of the many local services available to us, and still being able to feel part of the community.”

– Dale Benjamin
President
Benjamin Plumbing, Inc.

2.3 Local Food Vision Implementation

Work with food entrepreneurs, major corporations, developers, restaurants and farm to table producers, and advance key agriculture, food, and beverage business opportunities outlined in the recently adopted Fitchburg Agriculture Plan. Position Fitchburg as a leader in integrating locally produced food, helping to grow new businesses, and maximizing the economic impact of culinary tourism opportunities.

Why do it?

Specialized local assets (producers, Sub-Zero, Fitchburg Center, Catholic Charities Culinary Creations Catering, Badger Rock, Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee, etc.) and a growing market for locally grown products create opportunities for supply chain connections for culinary entrepreneurs, connections to semi-rural community identity, improved quality of life, and enhanced destination travel market.





2.4 Schools and Education Vision

Develop a Fitchburg Education Vision that sets a long-term course for building Fitchburg-based schools incorporating the City's current enrollment/anticipated growth projections with input from the school districts.

Why do it?

Schools are a critical component of community identity. There is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to plan before the window is lost to serve youth and families closer to home, unite the community, and help attract talent.



“Fitchburg has great employers, nice subdivisions, good condominium development, flexibility, and the ability to choose your school district.”

– David Stark, President
Stark Company
Realtors



2.5 Sports/Recreation Role and Destination

Explore Fitchburg’s potential roles within the Madison Region’s emerging status as a destination for large-scale sporting and fitness events. Test unfilled market/event niches, infrastructure and specialized athletic facilities, visitor hospitality, retail and dining options.

Consider programming and funding/operational models for public or privately owned, four-season indoor/outdoor tournament sports and training complex in Fitchburg.

Why do it?

Leverages proximity to large events, existing bike/fitness culture, and infrastructure to attract talent and visitors.



Strategic Direction 3. Cultivate Inclusive Culture and Improve Access & Opportunities



Local and regional unemployment are low, but portions of the Fitchburg population struggle to find meaningful work while local employers report unfilled jobs. The Fitchburg economy is increasingly driven by firms in science, technology, health and human services. In order to sustain growth in these advanced industries and the broader economy, the City needs a long-term approach to connecting residents of all ages and backgrounds with employment opportunities in the community. This includes access to career pathways, “upskilling” and talent development resources, as well as highlighting opportunities for entrepreneurship among women and minority groups that meet local employment needs in the industries that are the future of Fitchburg’s economy.

With a collective impact mindset for multisector, collaborative efforts with a particular emphasis on equity and social justice, the City looks to expand its relationships with regional workforce entities and major institutions to help address the needs of employers by assisting underemployed residents develop skills to qualify for jobs in Fitchburg’s primary industry clusters. Related strategies include connect with partners providing direct career pathway programming for youth and young adults with local employers, as well as exploring options to improve public transit and other emerging modes to strengthen routes between underserved neighborhoods and regional job centers.

The City also aspires to be a community where everyone can feel at home and feel that their voice is being heard at the highest levels of government. Transparency and access to City resources and personnel, as well as conscious efforts to engage underrepresented groups in public processes, will help strengthen Fitchburg’s commitment to providing a culture that celebrates diversity and is inclusive of all backgrounds.

INITIATIVES :

3.1 Expand Economic Opportunities and Work-Based Training for Youth and Young Adults

Partner with public and private entities to develop and expand career pathways and education for Fitchburg area youth and young adults including internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, mentoring, STEM training, GED preparation courses, increased access to technology, etc.

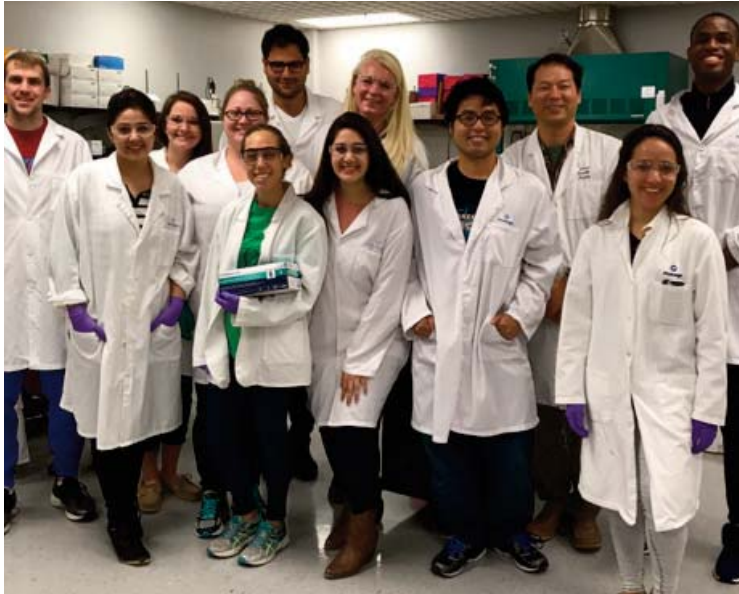
Why do it?

Making it easier for students to access existing youth resources (through school districts, Boys & Girls Club, United Way and other organizations), and for local businesses to establish their own programs (e.g. the K-12 programs sponsored by Promega/ BTCI) or participate in a Citywide initiative will help fill short-term workforce needs and develop longer-term live/work opportunities for younger residents.

“There is a very good talent pool to pull from, and productivity and work ethic are also very high.”

– Dave Flynn, Director
CDW





3.2 Foster an Inclusive Leadership Culture

Undertake specialized training, multilingual communications, and other conscious efforts to ensure that City staff, elected officials and Fitchburg residents can effectively engage with and understand the needs of an increasingly diverse community.

Why do it?

All citizens of Fitchburg, regardless of background, should be afforded equal access to City resources and decision-making processes.

“Fitchburg is growing and a great home for our family business corporate HQ. The City has been supportive and helpful, allowing us to expand and grow in Fitchburg.”

– Joel Minkoff
Executive VP of Operations
General Beverage and
General Beer

3.3 Support Diversity in Entrepreneurship Development

Connect current and prospective entrepreneurs, particularly women and minority-owned firms, to regional business development ecosystem and engage underserved neighborhoods regarding necessary and desired business mix and availability of resources to scale-up businesses within Fitchburg.

Why do it?

Diversity – both in business type and ownership – provides a greater variety of employment, shopping and service options, greater income opportunities, and contributes to a welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors.





3.4 Improve Transportation Connections Between Underserved Neighborhoods and Adjacent Job Centers

Work with Madison Metro, private sector partners, and community organizations to identify public transit improvements and other emerging modes (shuttles, ride sharing, etc.) to strengthen routes between underserved neighborhoods, areas of high unemployment, and local/regional job centers.

Why do it?

Access to convenient and efficient transportation is often a limiting factor for the kinds of employment available to low-income residents. Connecting unemployed and underemployed residents with jobs throughout Fitchburg and the broader region can reduce unemployment, improve quality of life, and reduce strain on City resources.



“Our goal was to keep our headquarters in Fitchburg. The location is perfect for access; the City staff is responsive and easy to work with; and our employees love the options for living in both urban and rural areas nearby.”

– Kim M. Lobdell, P.E.
President, KL Engineering, Inc

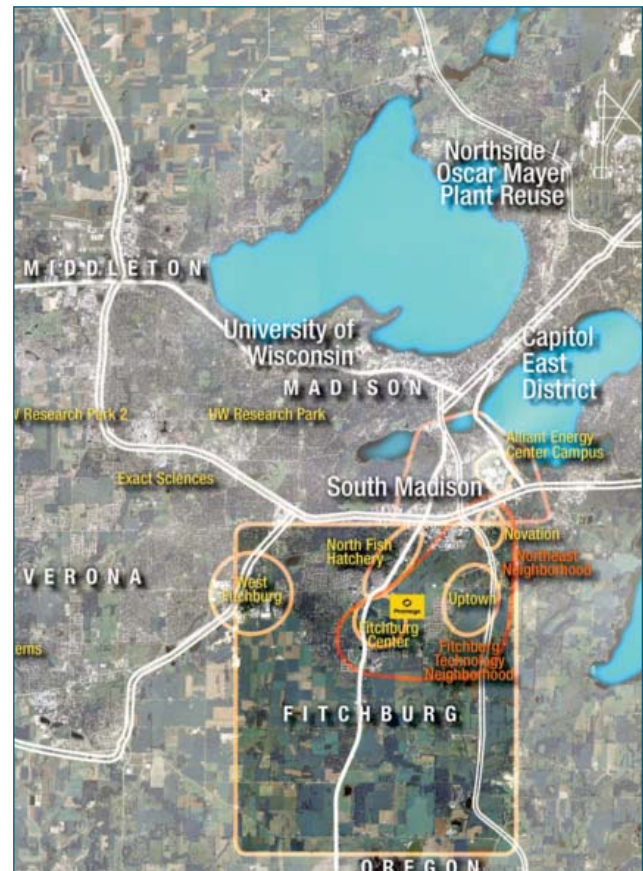
Strategic Direction 4. Leverage Location, Innovate, and Collaborate



the right locations in the City. Fitchburg should not take a “shotgun” approach of recruiting and prospecting, but rather a focused “grow-your-own” approach that: first, helps existing businesses expand; second, helps attract new companies that build on Fitchburg’s existing strengths and industry clusters; and third, points new business development toward real estate sites and buildings most appropriate for that use. Fitchburg should build on its real estate platform that allows for new companies to locate in the City, meets the needs of specific companies, and matches the right business to the right site.

Fitchburg’s location is one of its key competitive advantages. The City is located a quick 10 minutes from Downtown Madison, the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, and other key regional visitor destinations, recreational sites, companies, and convening centers. Fitchburg’s north/south corridors all have interchanges with Madison’s Beltline Highway for convenient access to virtually anywhere in the region, including Interstates 39/90/94; and 70% of Dane County’s population lies within a 10-mile radius of the U.S. Hwy. 14 Lacy Road interchange. It is one of Fitchburg’s most distinctive aspects that you can be in Fitchburg and overlook an idyllic farm or tranquil greenway, yet be 10 minutes away from the bustling center of Madison.

In Fitchburg, business recruitment should be strategically targeted, guided by building on the City’s existing industry clusters, and focused on driving business growth and new business development into





INITIATIVES :

4.1 North Fitchburg / South Madison Area

The Beltline currently serves as a major physical barrier between Madison and Fitchburg, as well as a hard edge with development on both sides that generally does not provide a welcoming atmosphere nor meet the needs of residents and visitors to either city. Collaboration with City of Madison leadership will be essential in order to transform these neglected edges into a new multijurisdictional economic center, engage major institutions/communities near the City's northern border, and integrate and leverage emerging opportunities including improvements to the Alliant Energy Center, construction of the Madison College Goodman South Campus, and the incorporation of the Town of Madison lands. Each of these actions will involve further development of public-private partnerships and investment, strengthening intergovernmental efforts surrounding workforce development, and improving transit access to key destinations.

Why do it?

With significant changes and investment on the horizon, there are opportunities to overcome jurisdictional boundaries and expand economic opportunities.



4.2 Set Proactive Approach for Major Business Prospects

Enhance the ease and response time for major business prospects by creating predictable, flexible assistance packages to efficiently address prospect company proposals according to scale/value, employment potential, industry cluster alignment, etc. and proactively partner with MadREP and WEDC.

Why do it?

Improve City's competitive advantage and regional market position by improving response time for development inquiries and strengthen reputation for ease of doing business.

“Fitchburg is open for business: it has less red tape, more land, good demographics, and a pro-business attitude.”

– Tom Thayer, CEO
Tri-North Builders





4.3 Partner on Workforce Development

Grow the relationships with regional workforce entities and major institutions (WDBSCW, UW, Madison College, United Way, Urban League, etc.) to help underemployed residents develop skills to meet emerging jobs and connect employees to Fitchburg's growing companies.

Why do it?

Although regional unemployment is low and companies are growing, underemployed residents need access to skills and jobs.



“We chose to build our data center in Fitchburg for proximity to the university and access to a highly-talented and professional skill base. The City is respectful of our need to grow our mission.”

– Hank Koch, Senior VP, Data Centers
OneNeck IT Solutions

4.4 Broadband Access and Expansion

Expand and/or improve fiber optic/broadband internet access through local and state funding opportunities, particularly in the City's underserved and outlying, undeveloped areas. Promote availability of broadband connectivity to prospective developers, business owners, and residents.

Why do it?

High-speed internet access is critical to business growth and innovation. Expanded service will allow rural and underserved urban areas of the City to take advantage of the economic and educational opportunities available in the region.



Strategic Framework Matrix

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:
1. Enhance Economic Centers, Build Places and Strengthen Neighborhoods
2. Build on Fitchburg’s Identity, Brand, and Sense of Community
3. Cultivate Inclusive Culture and Improve Access & Opportunities
4. Leverage Location, Innovate, and Collaborate

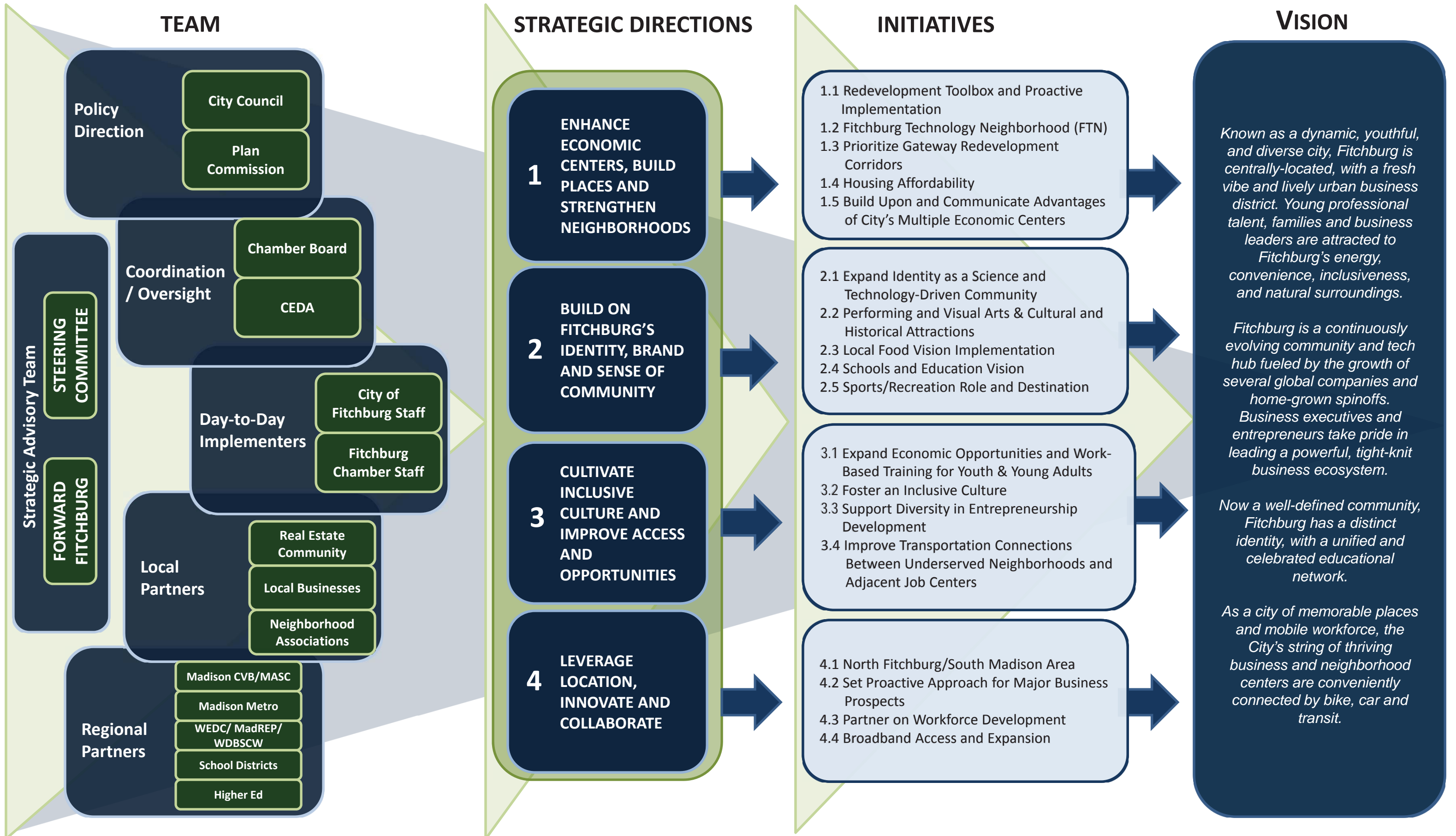
The four Strategic Directions form the broad goals and overall direction to guide economic development decision-making in Fitchburg

Within each of these Strategic Directions and Initiatives, the following Action Items provide more detailed recommended tasks and steps. Together, the Strategic Directions, Initiatives, and Action Items form the “Strategic Framework.” Going forward, this Framework will guide the policy-level decisions of Fitchburg’s leadership as well as the specific actions and work plan of the Fitchburg Chamber Visitor & Business Bureau staff and partnering organizations. The four Strategic Directions should remain constant as the overarching “superstructure,” but the Initiatives and particularly the Action Items can and will likely change and evolve as opportunities present themselves. In fact, many of the Actions presented here were first introduced in the original plan and have been adapted to respond to current trends and conditions in the City and region.

Strategic Framework

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	INITIATIVES	ACTIONS
1 Enhance Economic Centers, Build Places & Strengthen Neighborhoods	1.1 Redevelopment Toolbox and Proactive Implementation	1.1a Assemble a comprehensive package of available local, state and federal redevelopment tools and incentives and match them to each priority project
		1.1b Consider targeted land acquisition and land banking for RFPs, and actively recruit developers for priority sites and projects
		1.2a Conduct biannual meetings with partners to discuss and advance development progress and collaborative opportunities
	1.2 Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood (FTN)	1.2b Develop and implement strategies for capitalizing on opportunities, including active recruitment of high-tech business development around Highway 14/Lacy Road interchange
		1.2c Encourage developers to update master plans and marketing materials within the Fitchburg Technology Neighborhood as needed to reflect ongoing development
		1.2d Continue to promote FTN to regional and state economic development partners
	1.3 Prioritize Gateway Redevelopment Corridors	1.3a Work with CEDA to more fully utilize their statutory authority to direct redevelopment in areas along northern community gateways (Verona, Fish Hatchery and Rimrock Roads)
		1.3b Update long range vision, roles and plans for priority redevelopment areas as needed, including catalytic projects, and consider creation of a private, nonprofit community development corporation to assist as needed
		1.3c Meet with property/business owners of opportunity sites identified in Anton Drive Plan to discuss their future intentions, consider relocation of inconsistent land uses, and have CEDA consider acquisition of key redevelopment sites
		1.3d Continue assisting Verona Road Business Coalition in promoting area businesses during times of limited access, and work with area legislators to ensure completion of the road reconstruction project remains a state funding priority
	1.4 Housing Affordability	1.4a Complete updated Affordable Housing Plan and implement recommendations
		1.4b Constitute a CEDA housing advisory board to evaluate the housing review process and impact fees to reduce impediments to affordable housing development
		1.4c In concert with Initiative 1.1, create an affordable housing tool kit and recruit affordable owner-occupied and rental housing developers
	1.5 Build Upon and Communicate Advantages of City's Multiple Economic Centers	1.5a Develop a communication strategy to connect and articulate advantages of Fitchburg's multiple nodes of community and economic activity in place of a traditional downtown, including proximity to surrounding neighborhoods
		1.5b Meet with developers and business owners in City's economic centers to develop strategies for enhancing and promoting the distinct attributes of each district and coordinate joint marketing efforts as appropriate
1.5c Engage residents to determine what kinds of retail and service offerings they would like to see in their nearest neighborhood commercial center(s)		
2 Build on Fitchburg's Identity, Brand and Sense of Community	2.1 Expand Identity as a Science and Technology-Driven Community	2.1a Explore potential opportunities and innovative future roles for New Venture Center, BTCI, and other foundational tech and startup infrastructure
		2.1b Further position creative/shared spaces as a model for business incubator and accelerator to foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem
		2.1c Maintain active presence in organizations and conferences promoting entrepreneurship and emerging technologies
		2.1d Widely disseminate marketing materials to site selectors and business prospects, and continue to deploy leading-edge technologies and electronic/social media for City communications
	2.2 Performing and Visual Arts & Cultural and Historical Attractions	2.2a Identify existing and potential facilities and organizational capacity for community enrichment and accessible children's programming
		2.2b Work with existing arts organizations to compile an inventory of working artists, arts organizations and related businesses
		2.2c Work with local partners and regional cultural organizations to build capacity and grow performing arts and cultural events
		2.2d Develop a Community framework for supporting arts through the creation of an arts-focused committee comprised of public/private partnerships and representatives
	2.3 Local Food Vision Implementation	2.3a Develop Fitchburg Farm to Fork and Farm the Fingers Programs that solidify a production/distribution relationship between ag producers and end-users, and utilize larger ag parcels for small, local food production
		2.3b Develop partnerships with private entities to provide for local food and drink opportunities on City park system properties
		2.3c Continue implementation of Fitchburg Agriculture Plan and Farm Preservation Plan to enhance existing and new agricultural "anchor enterprises" such as processors and finished food producers
		2.3d Increase access to healthy, local foods in North Fitchburg neighborhoods, including production, processing, and distribution (farmers market & fresh food carts/vending) capabilities
		2.3e Develop a "toolbox" of potential financial incentives, including USDA Rural Development and DATCP Wisconsin Foods Program grants and loans, to enhance and develop diverse agriculture-related enterprises in the City
	2.4 Schools and Education Vision	2.4a Create a committee to explore ways to provide a cohesive K-12 education option to meet the needs of City residents and analyze the long-range impact of the current three-district system
		2.4b Discuss potential for Fitchburg-based facilities with existing districts
	2.5 Sports/Recreation Role and Destination	2.5a Conduct a competitive scan and review of MASC inventory of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities with the County and Region to identify potential niches indoor and outdoor sports and sporting infrastructure
		2.5b Co-locate larger recreation facilities with hospitality businesses and other complimentary amenities
		2.5c Continue discussions with private development community on development of bike related infrastructure and niche markets in or near the Dawley Bike Hub or Quarry Ridge Recreation Area
2.5d Explore the development of tourism opportunities in the Nine Springs Creek Water Trail		
2.5e Consult with WDNR about potential use of the "Old Fitchburg Natural Area" site along the Badger State Trail and expand public use/education at the Nevin State Fish Hatchery		
3 Cultivate Inclusive Culture and Improve Access & Opportunities	3.1 Expand Economic Opportunities and Work-Based Training for Youth and Young Adults	3.1a Work with business community to market MadREP's Inspire Program to expose youth to different career paths and mentoring opportunities
		3.1b Work with Chamber and local employers to expand use of social media platforms to advertise job openings
		3.1c Work with partners, including schools, Madison College South Campus and WBDSCW to support and foster non-traditional work-force and career training opportunities
	3.2 Foster an Inclusive Culture	3.2a Conduct training for City and Chamber staff and officials on diversity and inclusiveness, and sponsor employer symposiums on recruiting and working with diverse employees
		3.2b Actively recruit minority individuals and businesses to participate on City and Chamber boards and committees
		3.2c Support the work of organizations like the Urban League, Leadership Greater Madison, Black and Latino Chambers in their efforts to expand economic opportunities for all, and explore multi-Chamber opportunities
	3.3 Support Diversity in Entrepreneurship Development	3.2d
		3.3a Connect with local women & minority-owned businesses and regional organizations to identify barriers, opportunities for growth, national best practices, and programs for stimulating start-up activity
	3.4 Improve Transportation Connections between Underserved Neighborhoods and Adjacent Job Centers	3.3b In concert with Initiative 3.1, foster role model and mentor opportunities for youth to encourage entrepreneurship
		3.4a Request that Madison Metro or the Metropolitan Planning Organization conduct neighborhood surveys to determine residents' primary work locations throughout the region
3.4b Review existing bus routes and usage with Metro to identify potential service changes and upgrades		
4 Leverage Location, Innovate and Collaborate	4.1 North Fitchburg/South Madison Area	3.4c Evaluate success of Fitchburg Rideshare Program and explore potential for expansion/integration with Metro
		4.1a Leverage and market proposed redevelopment projects in the North Fish Hatchery Road corridor to spark additional interest in available sites and opportunities within the corridor
		4.1b Prepare and update plans for redeveloping and stabilizing the area south of the Beltline between Rimrock Road and Highway 14 to be annexed from the Town of Madison
		4.1c Evaluate potential housing, workforce and service demands that may be generated in Fitchburg by new Madison College Goodman South Campus
	4.2 Set Proactive Approach for Major Business Prospects	4.1d Participate in the Alliant Energy Center Master Plan and companion Destination District Strategy, as well as future City of Madison area plans, to identify related opportunities for the Rimrock Road/North Fitchburg corridors
		4.2a Maintain communication with area employers about future plans and opportunities to co-locate suppliers and customers
		4.2b Refine approach and policies for development incentives, prioritization criteria for key areas and sites, and framework for rapid decision making and responses to site selector RFI's
	4.3 Partner on Workforce Development	4.2c Maintain coordination with WEDC and MadREP to promote business location options in the City, including promotion of Certified In Wisconsin and Gold Shovel Programs
		4.3a Work with partners and Madison College to develop a clearinghouse of information on all workforce development programs and track referral outcomes
		4.3b Develop a comprehensive list of employer-based recruitment services for distribution to area businesses
	4.4 Broadband Access and Expansion	4.3c Work with partners to assess skills and interests of underemployed residents to match them with employers, engage the neighborhood associations to help disseminate local job openings and market other employment options
		4.4a Maintain current maps and data on broadband infrastructure and continue to work with providers to extend/improve service and possibly become an early adopter of 5G network coverage
4.4b Seek public and private funding opportunities to expand broadband capacity in underserved and rural areas by allowing the flexibility to utilize public infrastructure such as streetlights and water towers		
4.4c Evaluate adding free public wi-fi services in primary public spaces and low-income neighborhoods		

Implementation Team & Strategy Overview



Implementation Team and Strategy Overview

Fitchburg's economic development efforts are driven by an exceptional team of individuals and organizations focused on advancing the City's economy, as well as a number of businesses and residents that regularly participate in civic affairs and contribute to the City's economic development efforts. From the Mayor, City Council, Forward Fitchburg and City staff, to the Chamber and innovative businesses, to the real estate community, to residents, Fitchburg's leadership is characterized by a collegial, forward-thinking, and collaborative idea-sharing atmosphere not seen in many communities. It will take all parties to continue to work together to achieve the Vision over time, and to determine the proper role of each as a convener, collaborator, connector, and/or leader to advance specific Initiatives and Action Items. The Implementation Team and Strategy Overview (opposite) outlines teams and the structure to move forward.



Part IV: Moving Forward

The Initiatives and Action Items in the Strategic Framework give specific focus areas and recommendations. However, it's a long list. The City of Fitchburg, Fitchburg Chamber, and other community and economic development partners have limited time and resources to take on all of the items identified in the Strategic Framework immediately. The Priority Actions listed below call out a few key short-term steps and recommendations. Drawn from the Strategic Framework, as well as the roundtable discussions summarized in Part I, these are a few manageable areas in which to place time and resources in the near term to continue building momentum for the future.



Priority Actions

- 1 SCHOOLS.** Create a committee to explore ways to provide a cohesive K-12 education option to meet the needs of City residents and analyze the long-range impact of the current three-district system
- 2 NORTH FISH HATCHERY CORRIDOR.** Prepare a vision and proactive implementation strategy to optimize potential redevelopment opportunities along the North Fish Hatchery Road corridor
- 3 SPORTS, ARTS AND RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE.** Conduct a competitive scan and review of existing recreation facilities within the county and region to identify potential niches for indoor and outdoor sports and sporting infrastructure, and work to advance the proposed youth performing arts center project
- 4 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.** Work with workforce development partners and local businesses to expand skills training and resources for youth and underemployed citizens to access the increasing number of job opportunities in the community
- 5 TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS.** Identify service improvements and integration of existing Metro and Fitchburg Rideshare transit networks to provide more direct connections between underemployed neighborhoods and regional employment centers and remove barriers to access
- 6 MULTI-CENTERED COMMUNITY.** Develop a communication strategy to connect and articulate advantages of Fitchburg's multiple nodes of community and economic activity in place of a traditional downtown and develop strategies for enhancing and promoting the distinct attributes of each district
- 7 LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY.** Actively recruit minority individuals and businesses to participate on City and Chamber boards and committees

evolving • fresh •
vibrant • tech hub
• learning •
business-nurturing
• bikeable
• connected



For more information about Forward Fitchburg's Place-Based Economic Development Vision and Strategy, please contact:

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