



Comprehensive Plan Update

Request for Proposals

Posting Date: January 30, 2026
Submission Deadline: March 6, 2026

Planning and Zoning Department
5520 Lacy Road
Fitchburg, WI 53711

A) Project Overview

The City of Fitchburg seeks a multidisciplinary consultant team to update its Comprehensive Plan. The most desirable consultant will possess a substantial portfolio of comprehensive plans, a complete understanding of the Wisconsin State Statutes related to comprehensive planning, a proven track record of innovative planning ideas, proven consensus building skills and necessary staffing to complete this update. The City is concurrently releasing an RFP to rewrite the City's zoning and sign code. Consultants are welcomed and encouraged to respond to both RFPs and the City will consider any cost efficiencies of selecting the same consultant for both projects. The City expects that the zoning and sign code rewrite will commence as the comprehensive plan update concludes.

The comprehensive plan update will:

- Conduct inclusive engagement with deliberate strategies to engage underserved communities, including Spanish language access, location accessibility, rural/agriculture focused engagement, and various times of day.
- Establish a community vision.
- Re-evaluate Future Urban Development Areas (FUDAs) via multiple growth scenarios/scenario planning.
- Evaluate farmland preservation and rural issues and priorities
- Incorporate existing plans.
- Develop implementation strategies.
- Produce an accessible, language-inclusive, and user-friendly interactive web plan and printable plan.

Background

The City of Fitchburg is in Dane County, adjacent to the City of Madison, and the City boundary includes approximately thirty-five square miles. Fitchburg is a rapidly growing community that includes a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural development patterns. Regional population projections show the City growing from roughly 36,000 in 2025 to 52,000 in 2050¹. Fitchburg is demographically very diverse, including socioeconomics, ethnicity and race, and primary languages. Fitchburg is one of the fastest growing communities in Dane County and the State of Wisconsin

Fitchburg is a unique community in the area that includes a spectrum of developed forms and characters, ranging from older mixed-use urban/suburban in the north, which often feels like part of Madison, to suburban bedroom community in the middle, and rural/agricultural in the southern two-thirds of the city. As a former rural town that was incorporated as a city in 1984,

¹ Regional Data Group, Dane County, Regional Data Group Releases New Dane County Population Projections – Capital Area Regional Planning Commission

Fitchburg does not have a traditional downtown that anchors a community identity. Farmland preservation has been an important priority for the City throughout its history. The City participates in the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program and maintains an exclusive agriculture zoning district to this end.

The comprehensive plan on which the current plan is based was adopted in 2009 and planned through 2060. The 2009 comprehensive plan was preceded by a multi-year process started in 2003 to determine the City's future urban development areas (FUDAs). The City adopted an updated comprehensive plan in 2020, *Growing Fitchburg 2030*, with a new structure and refreshed goals. In this update, the FUDAs remained the same as what was adopted in the 2009 comprehensive plan.

There are many components of *Growing Fitchburg 2030* that work well for the City. As such, the existing comprehensive plan does not need a complete overhaul. Other city plans have been updated or are in the update process (e.g. City of Fitchburg Housing Report and Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, City in Motion Economic Development Strategy) that will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan update to minimize any duplication of efforts.

B) Objectives

Core Values

Inclusivity, fiscal responsibility, sustainability, farmland/environmental protection, affordable housing, mobility choices, and high-quality parks/open space.

Major Issues to Address:

- What is Fitchburg's Community Vision? How do residents and businesses view Fitchburg? Is there a shared community identity? How does the perception of Fitchburg and community identity vary across neighborhoods? How does this inform vision and priorities for the future?
- Where should the City direct our future growth, where should development be limited?
- What level of growth can infill development accommodate?
- How do we increase flexibility of land uses (and potential income sources for farmers) in rural areas without compromising the goals of farmland preservation?
- How do we accommodate our expected growth while managing it in a way that leads to stable and sustainable city budgets, services and infrastructure maintenance, and maintains Fitchburg as a great place to live and work?
- Where should regional transportation connections be made to accommodate expected growth? E.g. should the City plan for an additional interchange along USH14, where can a stronger east/west connection be developed as the City grows to the south?

Other Key Considerations:

- The City prioritizes meaningful public engagement across the entire community for this update, especially engaging underrepresented residents and those not typically involved in the local government processes.
- The consultant shall be familiar with previously adopted plans and studies.
- We expect that the comprehensive plan will also lay the foundation for an overhaul of the City's zoning code (beginning as the comprehensive plan concludes). The selected consultant shall coordinate work for efficiency and consistency between the two efforts.
- The consultant shall ensure that the plan meets the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning law (s.66.1001)

C) Anticipated Scope of Work & Tasks

This RFP puts forth expectations and ideas for the project, but respondents are encouraged to propose alternatives if those alternatives provide additional value or enhance potential success. Phases proposed below may occur simultaneously.

Phase 1 — Project Initiation, Data & Existing Conditions

1. Project Management Plan
2. Establish Oversight Framework (with City Staff)
3. Review existing comprehensive plan to determine where updates occur and inform the public engagement goals. Describe how the comprehensive plan update may dovetail with the City's zoning code rewrite. What will the comprehensive plan do to help inform the zoning code rewrite?
4. Community Engagement Plan – The consultant shall prepare the community engagement plan in collaboration with staff that intentionally addresses equity. The community engagement plan shall be reviewed by the Community Equity Advisory Committee and Plan Commission and adopted by Common Council. Note that the response to this RFP shall include a preliminary outline of a Community Engagement Plan for staff review. Data and Plan Inventory (land use, zoning, subdivision, utilities including lift station policies, transportation, parks/open space incl. CPOSP & Moraine Edge Park, environmental corridors, floodplains, housing, employment, prior neighborhood plans such as Greenfield).
 - Review of existing relevant plans (list may not be all-inclusive, plan reviews will be finalized by City staff and the consultant)
 - [Greenfield Neighborhood Plan](#)
 - [South Stoner Prairie Neighborhood Plan](#)

- [McGaw Park Neighborhood Plan](#)
- [Northeast Neighborhood Plan](#)
- [Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative Strategic Plan](#) (update underway in 2025-2026)
- [Parks and Open Space Plan](#)
- [Fitchburg Sustainability Plan](#)
- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) (update underway)
- [Fitchburg Housing Plan](#) (update underway in 2025-2026)
- [City in Motion Economic Development Strategy](#) (update underway 2026)
- [Fitchburg Strategic Plan](#) Draft (in progress 2025-2026)
- [North Fish Hatchery Road Opportunity Analysis](#)
- [Southdale Neighborhood Plan](#)
- [Fitchburg Opportunities in Agriculture Report](#)
- [Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan and Fitchburg Farmland Preservation Plan Map](#)
- [Dane County Regional Housing Strategy](#)
- [Capital Area Regional Planning Commission Regional Development Framework](#)
- [Connect Greater Madison 2020 Regional Transportation Plan](#)
- Other approved plans: <https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/264/Approved-Plans-Studies>
- Neighboring Community Plans
 - [City of Madison Southwest Area Plan](#)
 - [City of Madison Comprehensive Plan](#)
 - [City of Verona Comprehensive Plan](#) (update underway)
 - [Town of Verona Comprehensive Plan](#)
 - [Town of Dunn Comprehensive Plan](#)
 - [Village of Oregon Comprehensive Plan](#)
- Fitchburg Water System Master Plan
- Syene Interceptor Design Report (and updates) and other sanitary utility plans

5. Baseline Demographic & Housing Projections (revise assumptions; establish growth projections for scenario planning). Incorporate recently updated data from the *2025 Fitchburg Housing Study and Action Plan*.
6. Incorporate recently updated relevant City plans to the extent feasible, to reduce cost and duplication of work. The following list may not be all-inclusive.
 - Fitchburg Sustainability Plan
 - 2025 Comprehensive Park and Open Space Plan

- 2025 Comprehensive Housing Study and Action Plan (update underway in 2025-2026)
- City in Motion Economic Development Strategy (to be updated in 2026)
- Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative Strategic Plan (update underway in 2025-2026)
- City of Fitchburg-Village of Oregon Planning Study

Phase 2 – Community Visioning

The community vision shall reflect core community values, address emerging trends and issues, imagine a preferred future, and envision future action. The consultants and staff will define a process that allows engagement with citizens, business interests, community groups, local organizations, and elected officials.

The consultants will facilitate the Community Visioning process as part of the Community Engagement Plan consisting of public meetings, focus groups, open houses, and other outreach forums.

The desired outcome is a Community Vision that will guide the comprehensive planning process. The results of the Community Visioning shall be presented to Plan Commission in a Visioning Engagement Report, documenting a clear, community-supported vision.

Phase 3 — Growth Framework & Scenario Modeling

1. Develop criteria for selecting FUDAs
2. Potential growth scenarios based on criteria, Community Vision and population/housing projections (to be refined with Staff & and working groups), options may include:
 - Continue current FUDAs.
 - Add and adjust FUDAs based on newly developed criteria for selecting FUDAs
 - Further concentrate growth in the urban service area; strategically adjust existing FUDAs.

Scenarios should include a high-level analysis on impacts to City services and long-term fiscal impacts, infrastructure costs and maintenance liabilities, sustainability, housing affordability, neighborhood quality, sanitary sewer service implications, equity and public health, and other criteria as determined by City staff, committees/working groups, and the consultant. Scenario evaluation should include a review of underutilized parcels to better understand the scale of growth that infill development can accommodate.

3. Develop scenario criteria development: place types; activity centers & corridors; new urban service area amendments vs. infill; BRT and other bus route extension opportunities; TOD emphasis along BRT); rural subdivisions; farmland/open space preservation; environmental corridors; street types.

4. Modeling & visualization: capacity (low/medium/high density), timing/phasing, utilities/service and lifecycle costs, infrastructure needs; illustrative neighborhood/FUDA character sheets.
5. Phase 2 community engagement and Community Engagement Summary and Report

Phase 4 — Goals, Strategic Initiatives, Policies

1. Develop implementation recommendations
2. Examples: Housing initiative (e.g. preapproved plan sets; incentive pathways; anti-displacement areas/preservation bonuses); Community identity strategy; development code roadmap; agriculture and farmland preservation support/rural development code recommendations. Each initiative includes steps, lead/partners, near term actions, funding options, and metrics.
3. Phase 3 public engagement and Public Engagement Summary and Report

Phase 5 — Draft Plan, Plan Review, Adoption & Implementation

1. Draft & Final Plan: interactive site + printable PDF; Spanish translation of entire document, translation of executive summary and key sections in other prominent languages as decided by city staff and consultant team; ADA/WCAG 2.1 AA accessible. All document materials provided to City in editable formats. City has an InDesign license.
2. Plan review by public and committees and commissions (consultant to prepare materials and update plans based on feedback. Staff will attend committee/commission meetings).
3. Adoption support: Plan Commission and Common Council public hearings, meeting presentations, revisions, finalize adopted plan.

D) Community Engagement

Principles

Clear questions; transparency on how input will be used; meet people where they are; tailor for underserved communities; integrate across phases.

Staff & Board Oversight

The City of Fitchburg Planning and Zoning Department includes a City Planner/Zoning Administrator, Community Development Planner, and Associate Planner. The Community Development Planner will serve as the project manager for the City and will be the main point of contact with the consultant. Further, the Departments of Public Works, and Economic and Community Development will be actively involved in this project. Many other City departments have interest in the project and will participate throughout the process where appropriate and beneficial.

The City is considering alternatives to a traditional steering committee model and invites the consultant to recommend innovative approaches for public guidance and oversight of the project. We are considering using subject area working groups that could consist of expert staff, members of related city committees, plan commissioners, interested citizens, and alders. The Plan Commission will provide high-level oversight and assistance in preparing a recommendation for the Common Council. However, we do not expect that the Plan Commission will have a primary role in driving the project. Staff will keep the Plan Commission updated and seek feedback from them throughout the process as appropriate. The consultant may be expected to attend some Plan Commission meetings. Virtual attendance is an option.

Community Engagement Outline

A response to this RFP should include a preliminary community engagement outline developed by the consultant. The consultant is encouraged to suggest successful public engagement models that have been successful in other communities. The community engagement plan will be refined and finalized after project kickoff selected consultants and the City. As part of the proposal, the consultant shall identify a robust public engagement strategy that will reach broad groups of people including non-English speakers, and in the rural and agricultural community.

The response should also include the opportunity for stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and meetings as appropriate. Stakeholders may include landowners, developers, community businesses, University resources (e.g. an agricultural economist), the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC), Dane County, the Town of Verona, the Town of Oregon, the Village of Oregon, the City of Verona, the City of Madison, the Town of Dunn, the Verona Area School District, the Oregon School District, the Madison Metropolitan School District, the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, and Metro Transit.

Illustrative program:

- Public oversight - element working groups - land use & modeling; utilities & environmental; transportation; housing; employment.
- Plan Commission: touchpoints in addition to regular staff level updates
- Community Diversity and Equity Committee - Briefing and feedback opportunity on Community Engagement Plan (CEP).
- Partnership and resources to engage community leaders and underserved communities. Identification of tactics remove barriers for participation.
- Identification of tools for online engagement with outlines for social media content.
- Open houses - distinct events tailored to project phases in multiple locations.
- Stakeholder interviews and focus groups
- Popup outreach - e.g. Parks Alive, Fitchburg HUB, Pop-Up Library, City parks, Community Night Out, and Farmer's Markets. Consultant expected to prepare materials and programming, consultant attendance not necessarily required.
- Surveys: online surveys (with Spanish option); consider statistically valid pulse (e.g. FlashVote or similar).

- City leaders workshop
- Staff element working groups

Engagement materials and access: Documents that can be automatically translated, plain language summaries; visuals; childcare considerations at key events; ADA/Title VI compliance; WCAG 2.1 AA digital accessibility. Consultant provision of services preferred, but City may contract for services within the plan budget for services that are not provided by the consultant.

E) Deliverables Summary

Deliverables will be finalized during scope refinement and contract negotiations.

- Project management plan
- Community engagement plan
- Community engagement materials and programs
- Outline of solutions to the problems identified in the public outreach. Develop a working outline of the updated comprehensive plan.
- Growth scenario planning materials and associated visualizations (maps, criteria, dashboard, neighborhood/FUDA sheets)
- Engagement reports (“what we heard” and “how it’s used”)
- Draft plan sections and subject matter reports as appropriate.
- Maps and graphics – provide maps and graphics for the comprehensive plan that assist both staff and the public in easily understanding the elements.
- Complete draft & final plan including web and PDF. The document shall conform to the requirements of Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001. Document should conform to ADA/WCAG.
 - Spanish version of plan. Automatic translation may be considered if the output quality is adequate (the City may contract this task using the budgeted funds if the consultant does not provide translation services).
 - Executive summary and key sections in other languages as determined by city staff/consultant
 - This includes revisions to the draft plan based on staff and committee/commission feedback.
- Adoption – the consultant will deliver presentations to the Plan Commission and Common Council, and make any revisions requested after those meeting. The consultant will attend the final adoption meetings to assist city staff.

F) Schedule & Milestones (illustrative; to be refined by City staff and selected consultant)

- Jan 30, 2026 — RFP issue
- Feb 11, 2026 — Questions due
- Feb 18, 2026 – Question responses posted
- Mar 6, 2026 — Proposals due; selection process
- April 2026 – Consultant selection
- May - June 2026 — Kickoff; CEP adoption; begin phase 1
- Summer 2026 — Begin phase 2 - visioning
- Fall-Winter 2026 – Begin phase 3 - scenario planning
- Spring-Summer 2027 – Begin phase 4 – goals and strategies
- Fall 2027 - Spring 2028 — Phase 5 - draft plan; public and committee/commission review.
- Summer 2028 — Adoption (PC hearing; Council action); final plan/dashboards.

G) Budget & Not-To-Exceed (NTE)

The City has budgeted **\$250,000 to \$275,000** for the comprehensive plan update. The total contract for the Comprehensive Plan update, including all incidentals, shall be **not-to-exceed \$275,000**. If the consultant submits a proposal for both the comprehensive plan update and the zoning code rewrite, the consultant may propose a combined budget for both projects.

Proposers must submit a task level fee breakdown showing:

- A list of tasks by phase
- Community engagement outline
- Data/GIS/web plan development (include any community engagement platforms you intend to use, e.g. Konvio, Social Pinpoint, Granicus, etc.)
- Incidentals

Optional alternatives may be proposed. A range of total costs may be provided if multiple alternatives have been included in the scope, but the alternative costs should be clearly tied to choices in the scope or approach. Any accepted alternate must be accommodated within the not-to-exceed unless the City issues a written amendment.

Change management: Any scope change requires prior written authorization; the not-to-exceed cannot be exceeded without Council approval and contract amendment.

Invoicing schedule tied to deliverables/milestones.

H) Team Qualifications

The preferred lead planning firm will have expertise in agriculture/farmland preservation; transportation/transit & TDM; economics/fiscal & pro formas; multilingual engagement preferred (Spanish preferred); GIS/web visualization, civil engineering expertise.

Include key résumés: e.g. project manager, engagement lead, modeler, agriculture specialist, mobility lead, utility lead, urban designer, economist, GIS/web specialist.

I) Proposal Format & Submittal

Proposal Submission Requirements

Final proposals shall be delivered in PDF format either via email at brad.sippel@fitchburgwi.gov or via USB storage drive at 5520 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, WI 53711. All submissions shall be received by EOD on March 6, 2025. The City may reject any proposal that is not submitted by this deadline.

Length: ≤30 pages (excluding résumés/appendices). Submit tagged, accessible PDF (WCAG 2.1 AA).

Cover Letter

Provide a one-page cover letter on your letterhead that includes the address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the contact person(s). List the name and title of each person authorized to represent the consultant in negotiations. Include the signature(s) of the person(s) legally authorized to bind the firm to a contract.

Unless the consultant is an individual, all proposals must be signed with a firm/company/partnership/entity name and by a responsible officer or employee indicating that officer or employee's authorization to commit the consultant to the terms of the proposal. Obligations assumed by such signature must be fulfilled.

Proposal Content

All proposals should include the following information, presented in a clear, comprehensive, and concise manner, to illustrate the firm's capabilities and technical approach to the work. Information required of respondents:

1. Description of the Firm – Firm name, business address, telephone, and contact information. Include history, size, and statement of ability to perform the work.
2. Summary of the proposal – Provide a summary of the proposal. Include a brief description of any proposed engagement services or software, web-based services, plan feedback tools, etc. (E.g. Konvieo, Social Pinpoint, Granicus, etc.)
3. Team & roles - org chart; key résumés in appendix

4. Project understanding & approach – include outline of public engagement strategies and events
5. Proposed work plan & project schedule - tasks, deliverables, meetings; deliverables denoted by project phase.
6. Engagement strategy - Community engagement plan outline; focus on underserved communities; Spanish speaking community engagement; rural/agriculture area engagement)
7. Relevant projects - 3–5 with links, roles, outcomes. Include at least three similar comprehensive plan projects.
8. Project cost & fees (task-level breakdown) –
 - a. Provide the total “not to exceed” cost of the project. A range of total costs may be provided if multiple alternatives have been included in the scope, but the alternative costs should be clearly tied to choices in the scope or approach.
 - b. Provide the billing rates for the individuals that are expected to be involved with the project and estimated labor hours by task that clearly identifies the project team members, their hourly rate and the number of hours expected to complete each task.
 - c. Break down the costs of any proposed software or services that are included in the proposal.
 - d. The expected payment schedule and project milestones with which payments will be due. Payments shall be tied to identified performances criteria and not specific dates.
 - e. Include similar information for any subcontractors.
9. References – Please provide the names of at least three (3) references that you have worked with on similar municipal projects.
10. Claims, Licensure and Non-Discrimination Violations Against Your Organization - list any current licensure or non-discrimination claims against you/your organization and those having occurred in the past five years, especially any resulting in claims or legal judgements against you/your organization.

J) Evaluation and Selection

The consultant selection process will include:

- Proposal Review – Proposals will be reviewed and scored by City Staff who will then select a “short list” of firms to advance in the selection process. Proposal review will be based on a comparative assessment and scoring of each document.
- Interviews – The short-listed firms will present their experience, proposed approaches, and personnel in an interview presentation to members of the City. Further instructions will be provided to the firms selected for interview presentations. The City will then review the presentations and references and select a consultant to advance in the selection process.

- Contract Negotiation – The selected consultant will submit the proposed scope of services, then work cooperatively with the City to develop the final scope, project cost, and contract. Development of a project management plan will be required at that time.
- Contract Approval – Contract will be proposed for Common Council approval.

Expected evaluation and selection timeline

1. January 30: RFP release
2. February 11, EOD: consultant questions due
3. February 18: question responses posted as addenda to RFP webpage
- 4. March 6, EOD: proposals due**
5. March: proposal evaluation
6. April: consultant selection and contract negotiations
7. June: Kickoff

Scoring (100 points)

- Approach and scope of work — 25 points
- Engagement & equity strategy — 20 points
- Team experience & project experience (including agriculture & farmland preservation expertise) — 20 points
- Overall cost, cost effectiveness, and value — 20 points
- Schedule & capacity — 10
- Quality of submittal – 5 points

The evaluation committee may consider any other criteria it deems relevant, and the evaluation committee is free to make any recommendations it determines to be in the best interest of the City. Inaccuracy of the information supplied within a proposal or other errors constitute grounds for rejection of the proposal.

The City of Fitchburg may require a preselection interview. Consultant must agree to appear at a pre- selection interview at no cost, if required. No reimbursement will occur for preparation costs by the responder or their sub-consultant(s). Note that the City reserves the right to evaluate proposals solely based on each responder’s written submission.

Rejection of Proposals – The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to divide responsibilities among one or more applicants or firms, to waive formalities, and to select the individual or firm which, in the City’s sole judgment, can best perform the scope of services required.

A debrief is available upon request after the award.

Questions & Addenda

Submit questions by the EOD on **February 11, 2026**, to Brad Sippel, Community Development Planner at brad.sippel@fitchburgwi.gov; subject: Comprehensive Plan RFP Questions.

Responses to questions will be posted via addenda on <https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/2031/Request-for-Proposals> by **February 18, 2026**.

K) Additional Terms and Conditions

All documents, graphics, and exhibits produced by the successful proposer as part of this planning project shall be provided to the City, become the property of the City of Fitchburg, and be available for use by the City in any manner the City deems appropriate.

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or portions thereof without stated cause. Upon selection of a finalist, the City by its proper officials shall attempt to negotiate and reach a final agreement with the finalist. If the City, for any reason, is unable to negotiate a final agreement with the finalist; the City then reserves the right to reject such finalist and negotiate a final agreement with another finalist who has the next most viable proposal. The City may also elect to reject all proposals and re-issue a new RFP.

The City is not bound to accept the proposal with the lowest cost, but may accept the proposal that demonstrates the best abilities and qualifications to meet the needs of the City. The selected consultant will need to provide proof of insurance. The City reserves the right to disqualify any proposal, before or after opening, upon evidence of collusion, intent to defraud, or any other illegal practice on the part of the consultant.

General Provisions

- Non-Discrimination Statement – The City of Fitchburg does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, marital or veterans' status, sex, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected status in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs or activities.
- Proposal Cost – The City shall not be liable for any costs incurred to prepare or submit a proposal for this project.
- Withdrawal of Proposals – The proposer may withdraw proposals upon submission of a written request.
- Compliance: Wis. Stat. §66.1001 comprehensive planning elements and adoption procedures; Title VI; ADA; City procurement policies.
- Open Records: All materials are public records unless exempt; City owns all work products; native editable files due at closeout.
- Conflicts of Interest: Disclose any actual or potential conflicts.

Technical & Data Standards

- GIS: ESRI file geodatabase/shapefiles + metadata; Dane County coordinate system.
- Documents/Graphics: InDesign (packaged), editable PowerPoint templates; PNG/SVG assets, MS Word documents.
- Web Plan: hosted by consultant or City; exportable static package at closeout; mobile friendly; WCAG 2.1 AA accessible.
- Open Records: All work products are City property and subject to WI open records; provide native files at project closeout.