

2010-2014
City of Fitchburg Transit Plan
April 13, 2010



Adopted May 25, 2010 by Resolution R-36-10

**Department of Public Works
City of Fitchburg
5520 Lacy Road
Fitchburg, Wisconsin 53711**

Introduction

The City of Fitchburg has a strong interest in providing a choice to all residents of Fitchburg as to how they travel within, throughout, and beyond the City of Fitchburg. This includes biking, walking, driving, or using public transportation. This interest is exemplified by the signing of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and the overall vision of the City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan to promote sustainable and regenerative growth. Investing in public transportation provides an opportunity to reduce fuel consumption (with a reduction in single-occupancy vehicles), thereby reducing the carbon-footprint of the City.

There are several advantages for preparing a transit plan for the City of Fitchburg. The first advantage is to develop a vision for the level of transit service that should be provided in Fitchburg. The second advantage is to allow the City to be better prepared for implementing improvements to the system. Changes to the contracted bus transit service can be a lengthy process including time for staff planning, public input, and route implementation. The third advantage is that a plan allows the City to be better prepared during the development of its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and budget. By having a vision and a plan for recommended transit improvements, the CIP and budget can be prepared with the appropriate funding to accommodate those service improvements. Lastly, new legislation has authorized the creation of the Dane County Regional Transit Authority (RTA), which will include all municipal jurisdictions that are located within the boundary of the existing Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. An adopted Transit Plan will be a useful tool to the newly-formed RTA Board when they begin to consider the local and regional transit needs of the Dane County area.

This transit plan is prepared in three sections. Section 1 focuses on the existing conditions of the transit service in Fitchburg. This includes a brief overview of the existing bus transit routes, the existing land use, planned growth throughout the City, and the results of the December 2008 Transit Survey. Section 2 identifies the transit-related goals, objectives, and policies that are included in the City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan. These policies provide the backbone for many of the recommended improvements. Section 3 outlines the general transit goals of this plan, the specific improvements that are recommended over the next five years, and some mid and long term recommendations that reach beyond this 5-year time frame. These recommendations are based on filling in the gaps where transit service is not readily available, addressing the trends noted from the 2008 survey, and planning for the future transit improvements that will be necessary to accommodate the planned growth areas as they develop.

Section 1 – Existing Conditions

Existing Transit Service

The City of Fitchburg contracts with Madison Metro Transit to provide bus transit service in select areas of the City. Map 1, Madison Metro Fitchburg Bus Service Map, illustrates the various routes that operate through Fitchburg along with the frequency of service that is associated with each route. As identified on the map, the areas served with the highest level of transit service include (from east to west):

- Properties located along/near Rimrock Road,
- Hasz subdivision (Greenway Cross, Coho Street)
- Hatchery Hill subdivision,
- Belmar subdivision,
- Jamestown subdivision, and
- The NW part of the Orchard Pointe subdivision (SuperTarget).

These areas, which are served with the highest level of transit service, are focused on transit service into Madison. This makes sense considering the commuting patterns that are present in Fitchburg. But there is a lack of transit service to connect areas within and throughout Fitchburg. For example, a resident of Jamestown has to travel through 2 transfer points (West Transfer Point and South Transfer Point), and would experience a one-hour trip, one-way, to get to City Hall. Additionally, this scenario is limited to peak-hour service only. This means that the residents of Jamestown would only be able to get to City Hall between the hours of 6-9 am and 3-6 pm.

Generally speaking, the transit service that operates on or south of McKee Road is very limited with service being provided only on weekends or peak hour only on weekdays. There is also a lack of east-west transit service available through the city.

Land Use

Land use is one of many factors used to determine when, where, and how frequently transit services should be provided to various parts of the city. Maps 2 and 3 illustrate the existing and future land use, as identified in the City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan. Map 4 provides a combined map to illustrate the existing transit routes with the Future Land Use mapping. It also identifies the locations of high-density residential areas and the top employers within Fitchburg.

Map 4 also indentifies a $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile radius buffer around the existing bus stops that include all-day, every-day transit service as well as a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile paratransit boundary. A $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile is considered a reasonable walking distance to access the transit service. The $\frac{1}{4}$ mile buffer does not take into account the walking path of those trying to reach the bus stop, so the boundary likely includes a larger area than what the actual $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walking distance would represent.

Planned Growth

Planned growth is another factor to consider when looking at improvements to the transit system. Map 5, Future Urban Growth Area Neighborhoods, illustrates the long-term growth boundary that the City has adopted for any further development in the City. The majority of the future development areas stretches along the eastern rail corridor within the City, but also with southern extensions of both the Fitchburg Commerce Park and Fitchburg Technology Campus. The intent for this future growth is to focus on the conservation of resources, the protection and even enhancement of natural resources, and promoting sustainable development. These concepts are further elaborated by the introduction statement of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Land Use element which states the following:

- The land use challenge for Fitchburg will be to maintain the coexistence of the urban and rural areas, to create attractive highly intensive transit oriented neighborhoods and to improve the quality of older areas through maintenance and redevelopment while maintaining the natural resources and high quality farmland that represents the history of the City.

It will be important for the City to plan for high-quality transit service to serve these future neighborhoods that are projected to include high density development.

2008 Transit Survey

In December 2008, the City of Fitchburg conducted a city-wide transit survey to determine the transit needs and wants of Fitchburg residents, businesses, and employees. A report was prepared to summarize the results of the survey and is included as Appendix 1 to this plan.

Overall, 71% of the total respondents were supportive of the city continuing to provide transit services to residents. Many of these people do not currently use the bus, but indicated that they would use it if the service was made available and/or more convenient to use. The overwhelming majority of respondents, approximately 50%, identified downtown Madison or UW Campus as their primary destination. The next highest category, ~ 24%, identified locations within the City of Fitchburg.

Some of the most useful information from the survey can be gathered from the specific comments that people provided. The majority of the comments can be grouped into 5 categories including:

- Specific route comments (39 comments),
- Travel time on the bus (16 comments),
- Transferring buses and/or transfer points (12 comments),
- Rail/train transit service (10 comments),
- Comments from those who do not support bus transit or any expansions thereof (10 comments).

The most frequently requested corridor for added service was McKee Road. The existing land use along McKee Road does not lend itself to effective transit service. However, service on McKee Road would provide an east-west transit corridor to connect the west side of the City to the “civic center” (City Hall, Municipal Court, Community Center, Senior Center, future library) and destinations located on or near the McKee Road corridor.

Besides requests for specific routes, the two most prevalent comments were related to travel time on the bus and safety concerns for using the bus. More specifically, people commented that the bus takes too much time compared to driving their own vehicle. Several individuals commented that they have investigated the option of taking the bus to work but decided against it because it took too much time (60+ minutes one-way) and would require at least one transfer.

All 12 comments regarding transferring buses suggested concerns with safety at the South Transfer Point (STP). All of the comments requested direct/express service to the downtown area to avoid going through that transfer point. Several folks indicated that they don't use the bus at all because they don't feel safe having to get off the bus or wait at the STP.

If the City wants to attract more riders to the transit service that is provided in Fitchburg, it will be necessary to improve travel time on the bus to be more competitive with the automobile. It will also be necessary to address the safety concerns that are present, or perhaps perceived, at the existing transfer locations.

Section 2 – City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan

To further guide the development of a 5-year transit plan, it is important to consider and comply with the transit-related goals, objectives, and policies that are included in the City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan. Outlined below are the transit-related goals, objectives, and policies that are included in the Transportation Element of the City of Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Transportation Element

Goal 1: Develop and maintain a coordinated land use and transportation system

Objective 1: Develop and maintain a coordinated land use and transportation system.

- Policy 2: Encourage Transit Oriented Developments (TOD's) that include a train station and intermodal transfer points as the prominent feature of town centers with high-density, high-quality development within a 10 minute walk circle surrounding the train station and all qualities of a Traditional Neighborhood Design as described in Policy 1 (above).

Goal 2: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that allows for the convenient movement of people and goods

Objective 3: Maximize the use of the existing transportation investments.

- Policy 4: Encourage developers to develop in ways to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips (transit, bike parking, showers, etc.)
- Policy 5: Encourage freight and passenger use of the Fitchburg-Oregon rail line to maximize the rail upgrades and investments of the line.

Goal 3: Develop and maintain a multi-modal transportation system that reduces automobile dependency and increases transportation choice

Objective 4: Promote an efficient and reliable transit system that offers convenient alternatives to private vehicle travel.

- Policy 1: Continue to work with Madison Metro Transit (Metro), or its successor, to develop more efficient bus service and increase ridership.
- Policy 2: Where demand exists, improve existing bus stop conditions with the addition of amenities such as bus shelters, trash receptacles, sidewalks, and accessible concrete bus pads.
- Policy 3: Annually develop a 5-yr transit improvement plan that designates and maps potential future bus routes and transfer points.
- Policy 4: Preserve, where feasible, rail corridors in Fitchburg, in coordination with neighboring communities, for future transportation needs including rail.
- Policy 5: To coordinate potential rail with existing and future transit routes.
- Policy 6: Support the development of a regional transit authority to plan and implement opportunities for regional transit service.
- Policy 7: Identify and promote paratransit services to meet the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Policy 8: Provide transportation options which will be available to the seniors of the City in the most cost effective manner.
- Policy 9: Examine dedicated bus ways if rail-based options are not fully feasible.

Objective 6: To initiate passenger rail-based service along the Fitchburg-Oregon rail line.

- Policy 1: Promote and support the Transport 2020 initiative and the extension of a start-up system to provide commuter rail service to the City of Fitchburg along the Fitchburg-Oregon rail line.
- Policy 2: Adopt and implement transit-oriented developments to support rail-based passenger transit along the Fitchburg-Oregon rail corridor.
- Policy 3: Coordinate transit stops within a reasonable distance to maximize the convenience of the service.

Section 3 – Recommended Transit Improvements

This section provides (1) an overview of the general goals of this transit plan, (2) a list of specific recommendations for the next five years, and (3) a broader vision for transit service in Fitchburg including mid-term and long-term transit recommendations.

Map 6, Future Transit Service Map, illustrates transit recommendations in all of these time frames; specific, mid, and long-term. Map 6 is conceptual and is not intended to illustrate specific roads or directions of service for the proposed route concepts. It is intended to illustrate where and how transit service would function, city-wide, in Fitchburg.

General Transit Goals for 2010-2014

The recommendations in this transit plan are primarily based on the following general goals:

- Reduce single-occupancy vehicle miles traveled (VMT) within and through Fitchburg.
- Provide multiple transportation options.

- Provide mobility to those who don't drive.
- Improve intra-City-of-Fitchburg transit service.
- Provide strong connections between the transit system and other modes, including bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

These general goals support Goal 3, Objective 4 of the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element:

Goal 3: Develop and maintain a multi-modal transportation system that reduces automobile dependency and increases transportation choice

Objective 4: Promote an efficient and reliable transit system that offers convenient alternatives to private vehicle travel.

To reduce single-occupancy VMT in Fitchburg, the City needs to ensure that the transit service that is provided is convenient, comfortable, direct, and safe. To make the transit service more convenient, the City should recognize the various modes that are used to access the transit system. Depending on their situation, some transit users will walk to the nearest bus stop, some will ride bikes, and others will drive to the nearest bus stop or transit connection point. Each of these users should be accommodated by the transit system, as illustrated by these examples. To accommodate bicyclists, new transit vehicles should be equipped with bike racks or allow bikes to be on-board with the passengers. Additionally, the City should encourage the development of bus and bike or rail and bike lots that would allow someone to store their bike at the bus or rail station and complete their trip by biking to their final destination. For pedestrians, the City should implement the recommendations of its 2008 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and complete a continuous pedestrian transportation network that includes transit stops. For motorists, the City should consider on- or off-street parking needs at bus stops or transit connection points.

To encourage more people to use the transit system, and thus reduce VMT, the City should work to improve directness of existing routes to make them more attractive to choice riders. More direct routes reduce travel time for all transit users, making transit more competitive with the automobile.

To the extent possible, the City should make transit service available in new neighborhoods at the time of first occupation. Lifestyle decisions are made when selecting the location and features of a home or when looking for work. Some people are making a decision for where they live or work based on the availability of transit to meet some, or all, of their transportation needs.

The complexity with that goal, however, is that the cost of transit service in new neighborhoods combined with low initial utilization makes early service cost-prohibitive. There is no guaranty that people will use the provided transit service, or how quickly the new neighborhood will become occupied to take advantage of that transit service. However, Fitchburg should market plans for future transit service and should provide transit service as early as possible to these new neighborhoods to facilitate a lifestyle that will utilize transit as an integral transportation option.

Specific Transit Recommendations for 2010-2014

The following specific transit improvements are recommended over the next five years. They fall into three basic categories: route improvements, policy development by staff, and on-going transit coordination and planning. In each category, the recommendations are listed in order of priority.

Route Improvements

1. Add a Fitchburg Multi-Modal Connection Point (MCP) in Hatchery Hill to:
 - improve directness of service and reduce travel time to the campus/isthmus area,
 - allow for the future expansion of transit service further south into Fitchburg, and
 - allow for the future expansion of peripheral routes in Fitchburg to connect residential areas to the MCP.
2. Serve the civic center along the Fish Hatchery Road corridor, and connecting with the rest of the Metro Transit System, to meet the needs of the users within the civic center at the time of the opening of the library (currently projected to be June 2011) or as soon thereafter as possible.
3. Develop an east-west bus route to connect the east and west sides of the city to the existing transit service along the Fish Hatchery Road corridor.

Policy Development by Staff

1. Develop a snow-removal ordinance specific to bus stops.
2. Develop criteria to determine and prioritize bus stop amenities (concrete boarding pad, sidewalks, shelter, trash receptacle, etc.).
3. Develop minimum standards, or criteria, for the multi-modal connection points in Fitchburg (concrete boarding pad, shelter, sidewalks, bike racks, parking, security measures, etc.)
4. Establish a framework or design standards for transit route efficiency to be incorporated into new neighborhood designs.

On-going Transit Coordination and Planning

1. Coordinate with the Dane County Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to ensure consistency in local and regional transit planning efforts.
2. Encourage the City of Madison to improve security at the South and West Transfer Points
3. Coordinate transit service to the four new neighborhoods that are planned to include traditional neighborhood design, transit-oriented development, and transit-ready densities (in order of probable development: Southdale, Green Tech Village, McGaw, Northeast Neighborhood).
 - Designate transit corridors/routes to serve those neighborhoods.
 - Utilize the railroad corridor for high quality, high capacity transit services (rail or bus rapid transit, BRT).
 - Consider the placement of park and ride, or park and bike, lots within these neighborhoods to be integrated with the proposed transit service.

Mid Term Transit Recommendations

1. Complete a feasibility study of the Fitchburg-Oregon rail line, in cooperation with neighboring communities, for the potential of establishing high capacity transit and the integration of this corridor with regional transit plans (e.g., Transport 2020).
2. Investigate a flexible, convenient, demand-responsive, shared-ride taxi program for destinations within Fitchburg (Star Cinema, McKee Farms Park, Farmer's Market, civic center, etc.) to:
 - Reduce VMT,
 - Expand the service area in Fitchburg,
 - Provide a new transportation option for residents, and
 - Improve transportation options for the elderly, disabled, and youth riders.
3. Study/evaluate a premium, express transit service (e.g., BRT) on Fish Hatchery Road.
4. Develop park and ride lots in Fitchburg that are served by express bus service. The appropriate location for park and ride lots should be further evaluated.
 - A potential site within the urban service district has been identified at the weigh station located on USH 18/151.
 - Park and ride lots should also be located south of the urban service area to capture commuters who would otherwise drive single occupancy vehicles (SOV's) through Fitchburg, yet not impact the ridership of future neighborhood feeder bus routes. Example locations: CTH B at east edge of the City, CTH D at south edge of the City, Whalen Rd east of Verona Rd in the Town of Verona.
 - Park and ride, or park and bike, lots should also be considered in new developments and neighborhoods that are planned to include high levels of transit service.
5. Expand bus service to ensure that bus stops are located within a quarter-mile walk of areas of high employment (e.g., Hatchery Hill). Provide runs to meet the shift times or working hours of the employees.
6. Expand bus service to ensure that bus stops are located within a quarter-mile walk of all units in high density residential parcels.

Long Term Transit Recommendations

1. Develop Multi-modal Connection Points (MCP) in the northwest, northcentral, and east parts of Fitchburg that would operate direct transit service to downtown Madison and the UW campus as well as peripheral routes to the adjacent neighborhoods. Transit would also operate between the MCP locations to connect residents to all parts of the city. The location of the MCPs should be equidistant from each other and should be located to accommodate 30 minute headways between each other and 15 minute headways for residential service to the connection point. The MCPs along the rail corridor should be located to provide convenient bicycle and pedestrian access to the future commuter rail service.
2. Invest in commuter rail along the eastern rail line. Develop MCPs in McGaw, Greentech Village, Southdale, Greenfield, and Southeast neighborhoods and encourage the development of an MCP in the Village of Oregon. Alternately,

BRT may be utilized in the interim and may be operated within this corridor or on an alternate parallel route utilizing the street network.

Conclusion

The implementation of this plan, and associated annual updates, will create a strong public transportation system. It is a key component towards implementing the Transportation Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan and a key element towards fulfilling the objectives of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. A strong public transportation system will promote sustainable and regenerative growth and provide an opportunity to reduce fuel consumption; thereby reducing the carbon-footprint of the City. By developing a vision for transit service in Fitchburg, the City will be better prepared to prioritize and implement transit service improvements. Along with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and plans for the street and road network, future updates to Fitchburg's transit system will insure that residents and visitors will have safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation options that meet their changing needs.

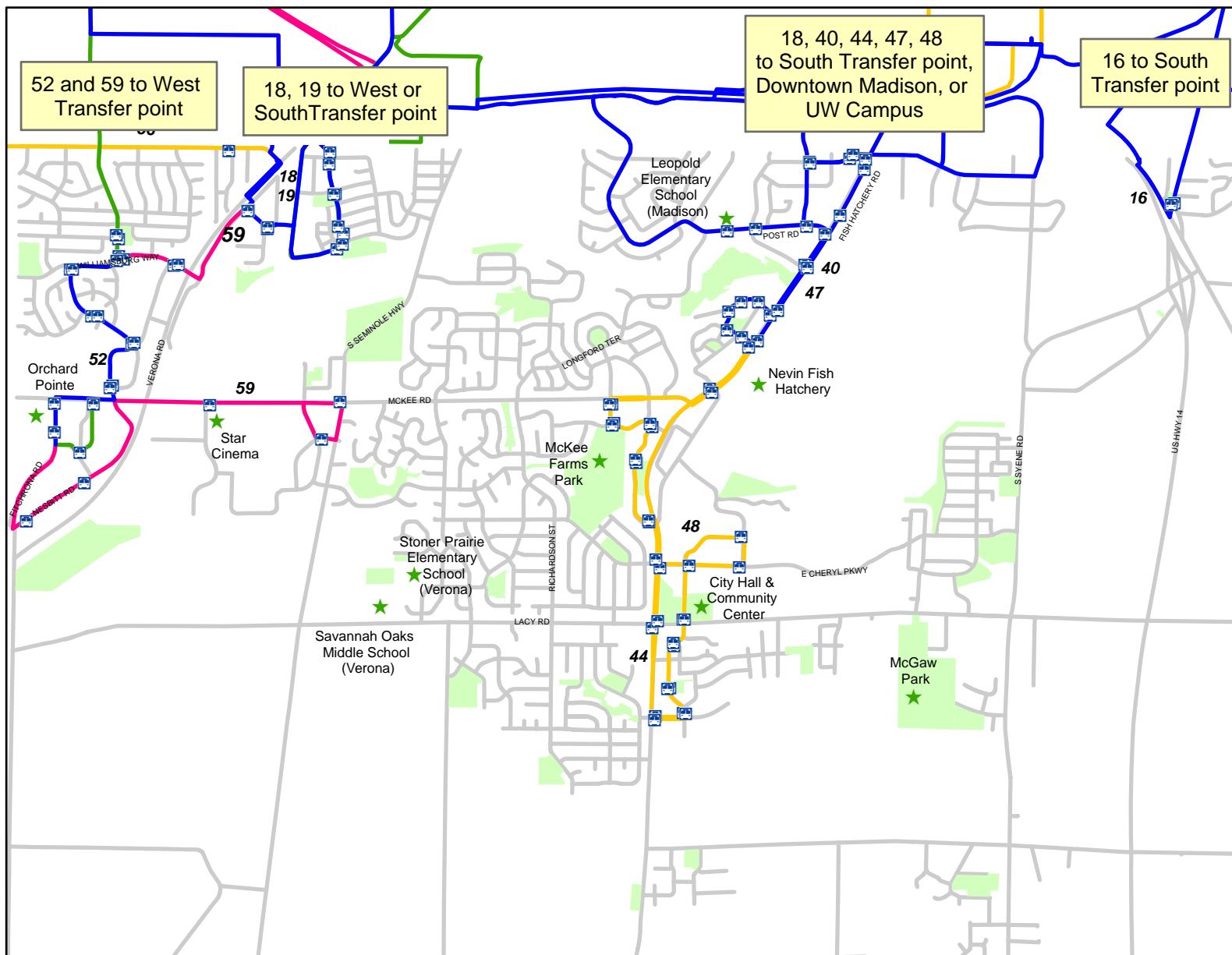
Maps

Map 1 – Madison Metro Fitchburg Bus Service Map
Map 2 – 2007 Existing Land Use Map
Map 3 – Future Land Use Map
Map 4 – Existing Transit Service with Land Use
Map 5 – Future Urban Growth Area Neighborhoods
Map 6 – Future Transit Service Map

Map 1

MADISON METRO FITCHBURG BUS SERVICE MAP

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 23, 2009



Legend

Frequency, Service Days

- All Day, Everyday
- All Day, Weekday
- Peak Only, Weekday
- All Day, Weekend

FITCHBURG PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

\ / ROADS

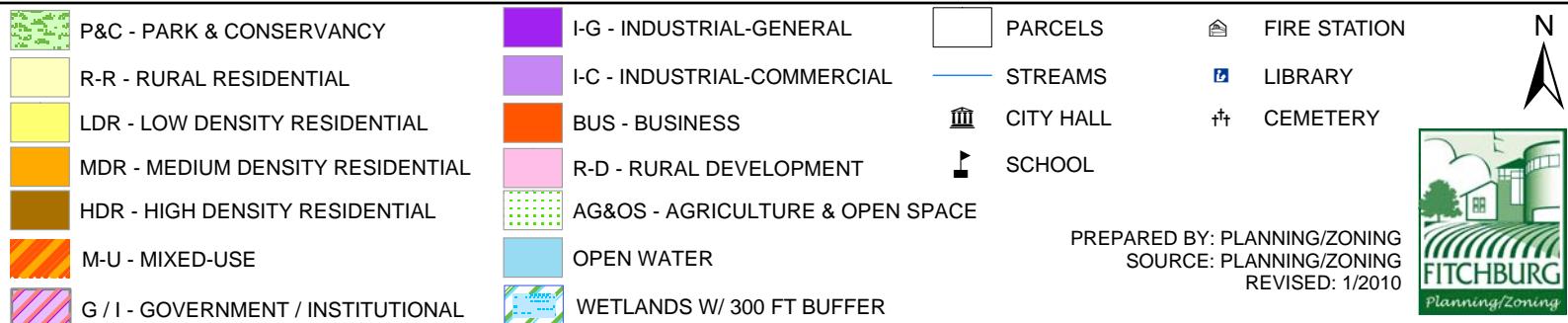
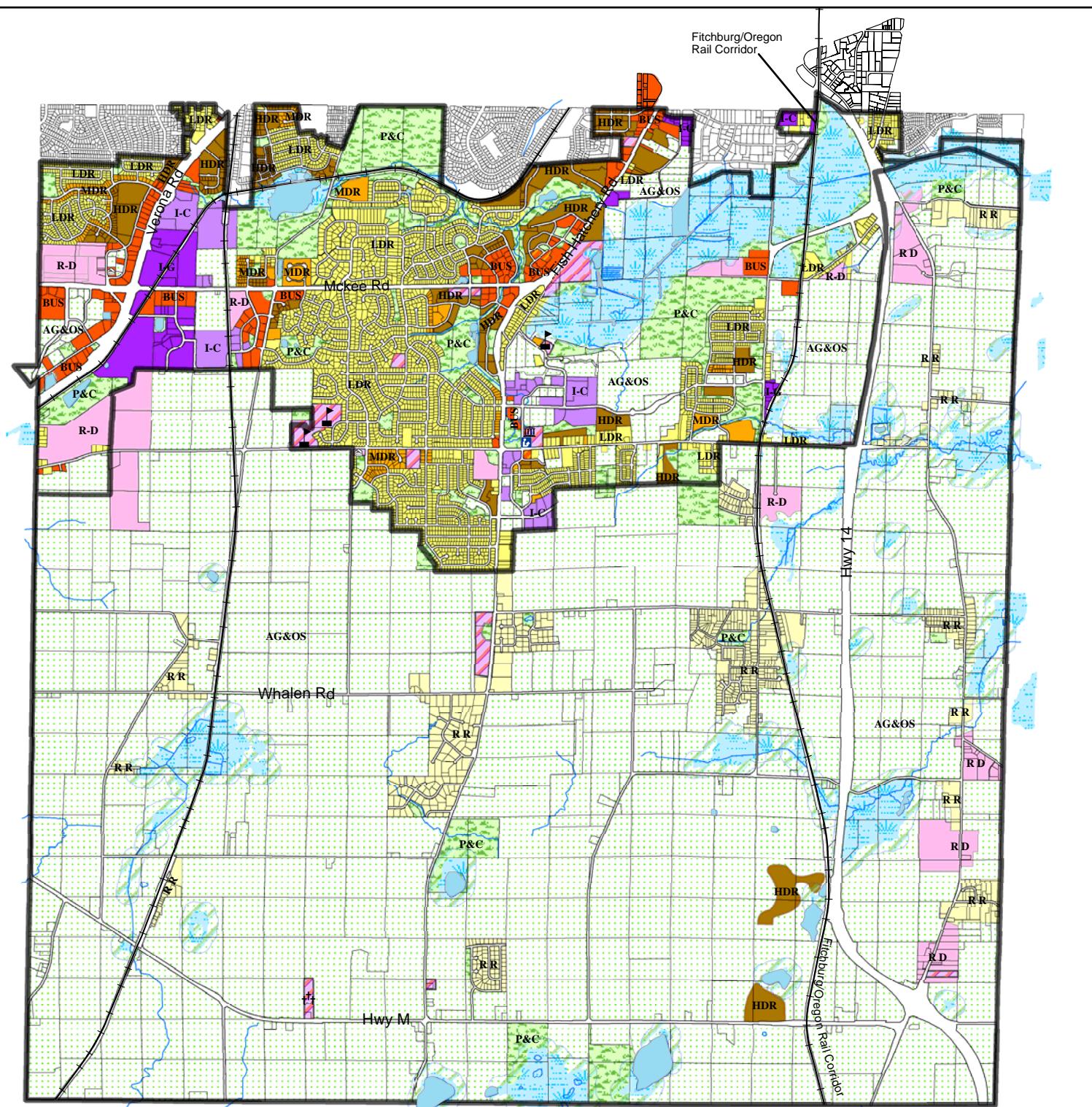
■ BUS STOPS

47 ROUTE



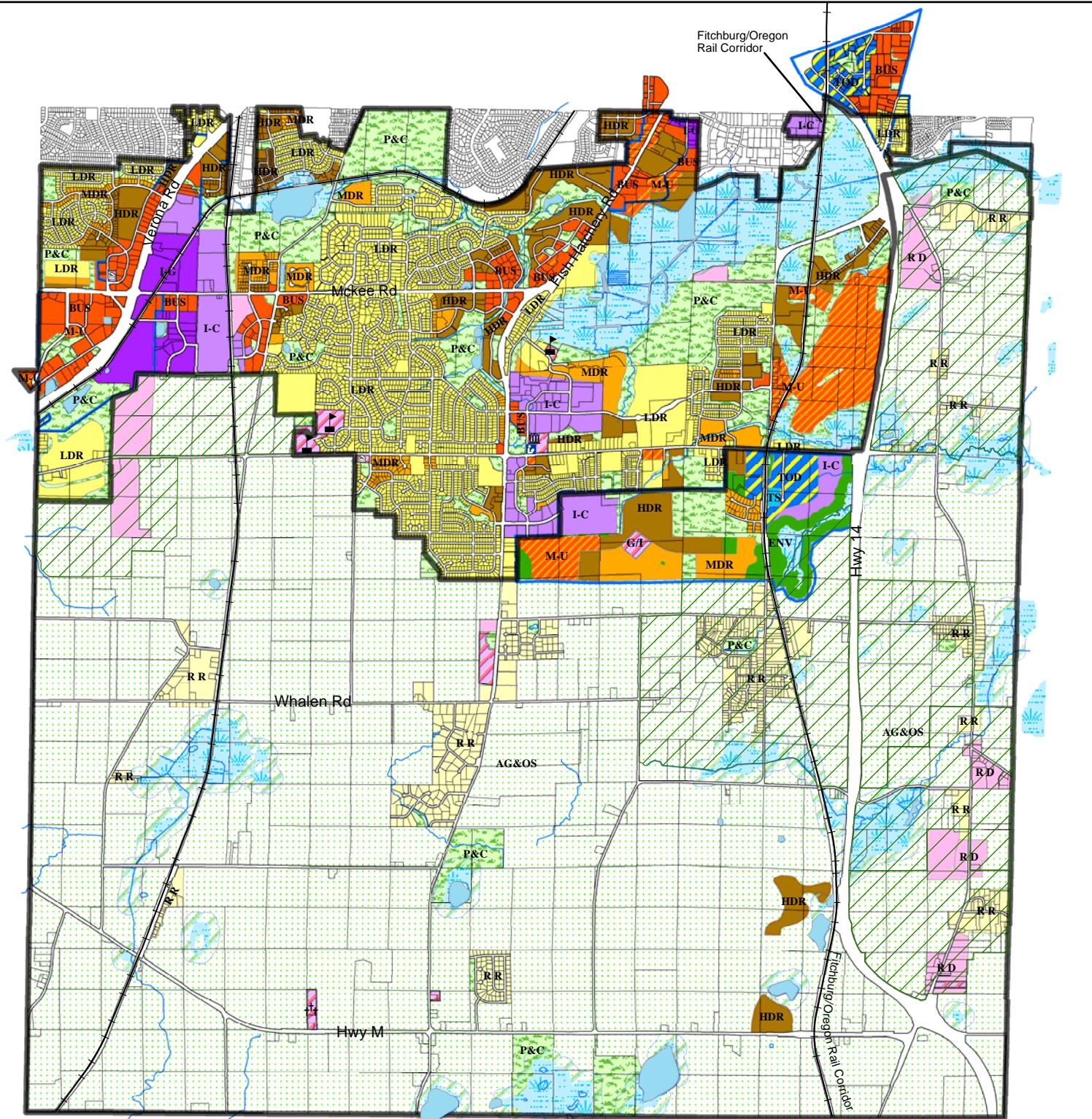
Map 2

2007 EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Map 3

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP



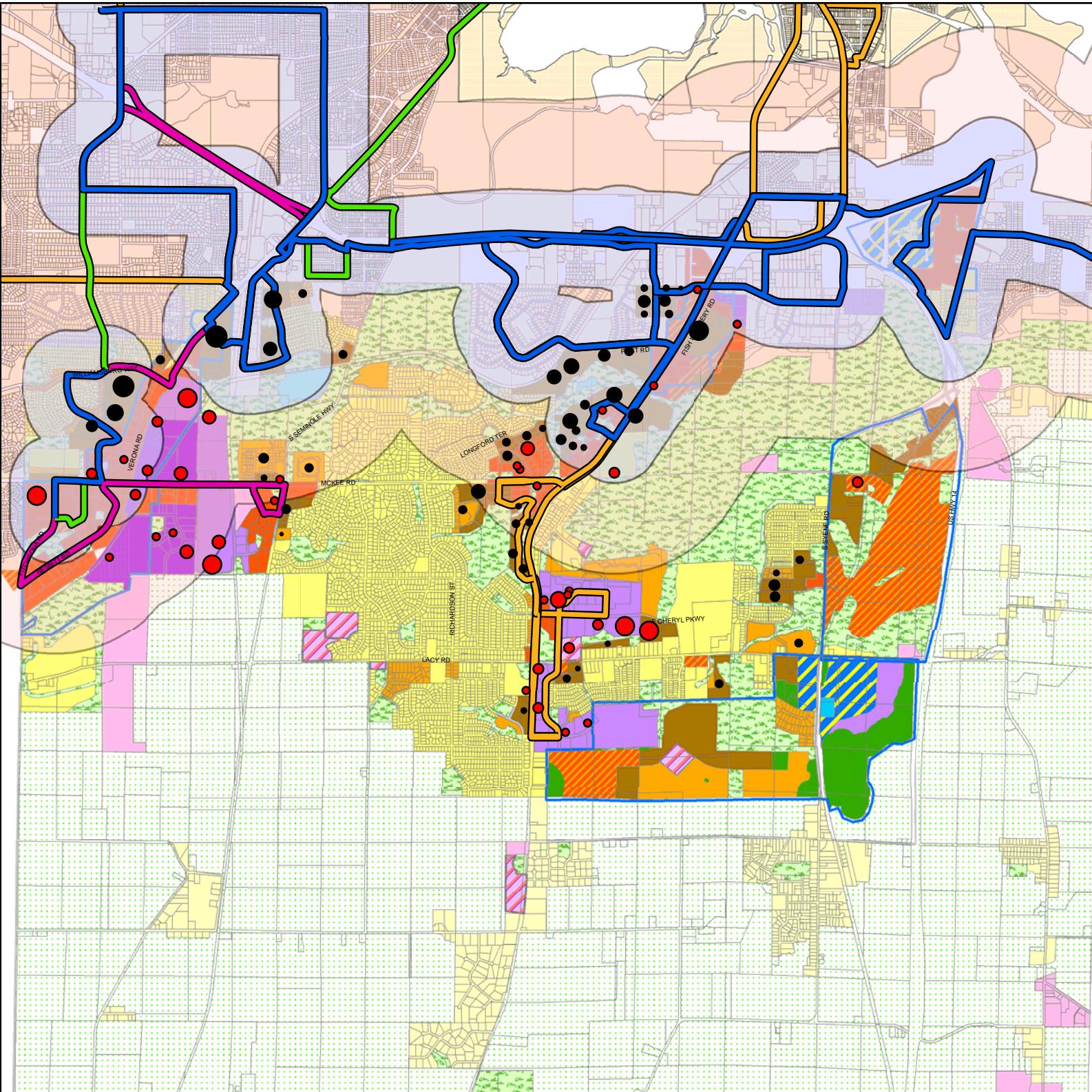
P&C - PARK & CONSERVANCY	ENV - ENVIRONMENTAL	PARCELS	FIRE STATION	CITY HALL
R-R - RURAL RESIDENTIAL	TS - TRANSIT STATION	OPEN WATER	CEMETERY	SCHOOL
LDR - LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	I-G - INDUSTRIAL-GENERAL	STREAMS	LIBRARY	
MDR - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	I-C - INDUSTRIAL-COMMERCIAL	WETLANDS W/ 300 FT BUFFER		
HDR - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	BUS - BUSINESS	AG&OS - AGRICULTURE & OPEN SPACE		
M-U - MIXED-USE	R-D - RURAL DEVELOPMENT	TOD - TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT		
G/I - GOVERNMENT / INSTITUTIONAL	COMPLETED STUDY AREAS	POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS		



PREPARED BY:
PLANNING/ZONING
SOURCE:
PLANNING/ZONING
REVISED: 1/2010

Map 4

Existing Transit Service with Land Use



Legend

Bus Route Frequency

- All Day, Everyday
- All Day, Weekday
- Peak Only, Weekday
- All Day, Weekend

1/4-mile Buffer All day, Everyday service

3/4-mile Paratransit service

Streets

Parcels

City of Madison

Residential Units

- 10
- 25
- 50
- 75
- 100

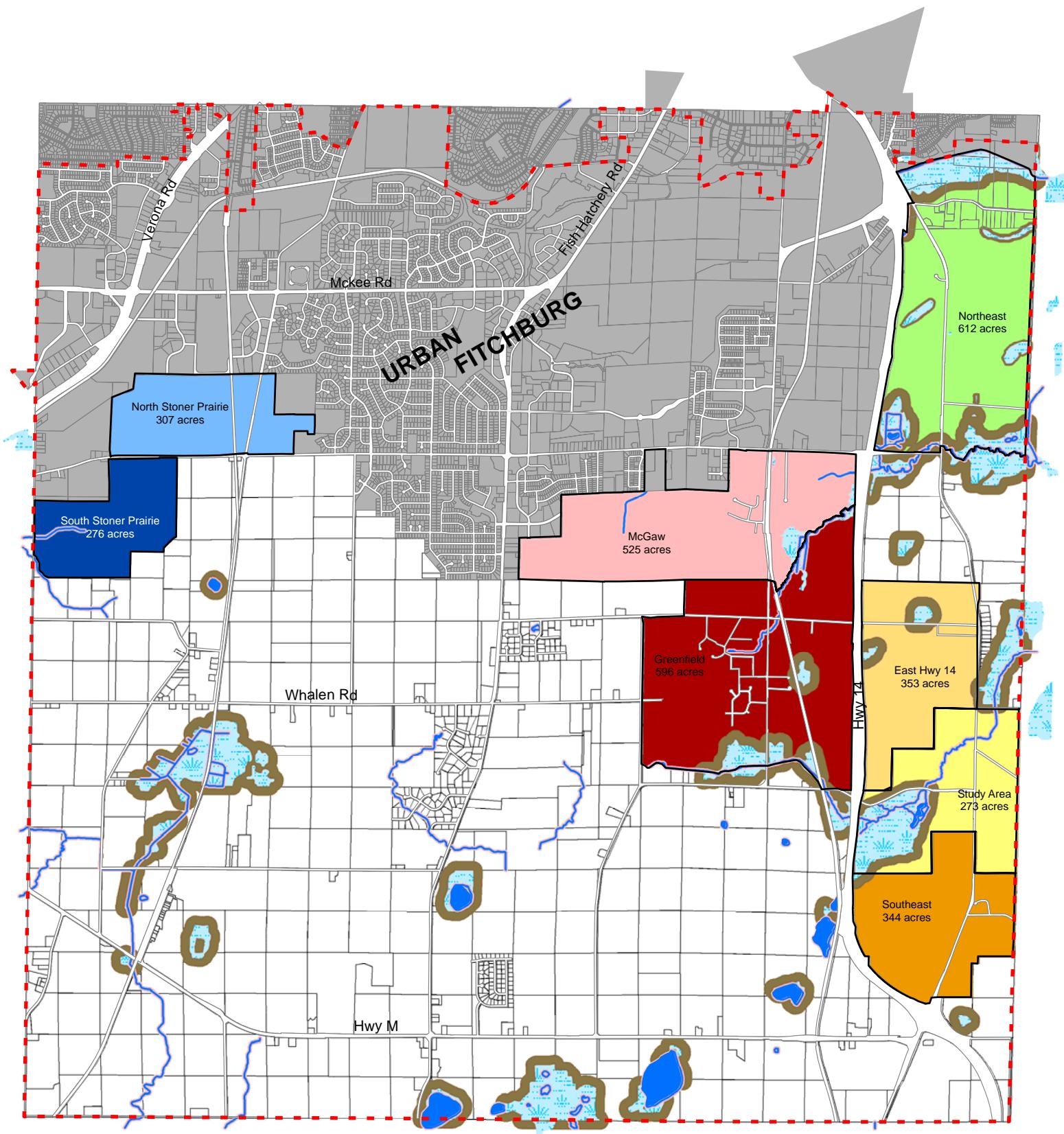
Employees

- 22 - 100
- 101 - 200
- 201 - 300
- 301 - 400
- 401 - 600

This map shows the land uses that are identified on the Future Land Use Plan Map (Map 3)

Map 5

FUTURE URBAN GROWTH AREA NEIGHBORHOODS



Wetlands

Streams

City Boundary

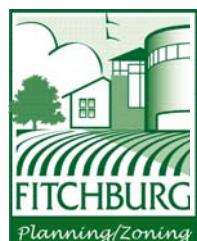
Wetland Buffer - 300'

Open Water

Parks

Water Buffer - 75'

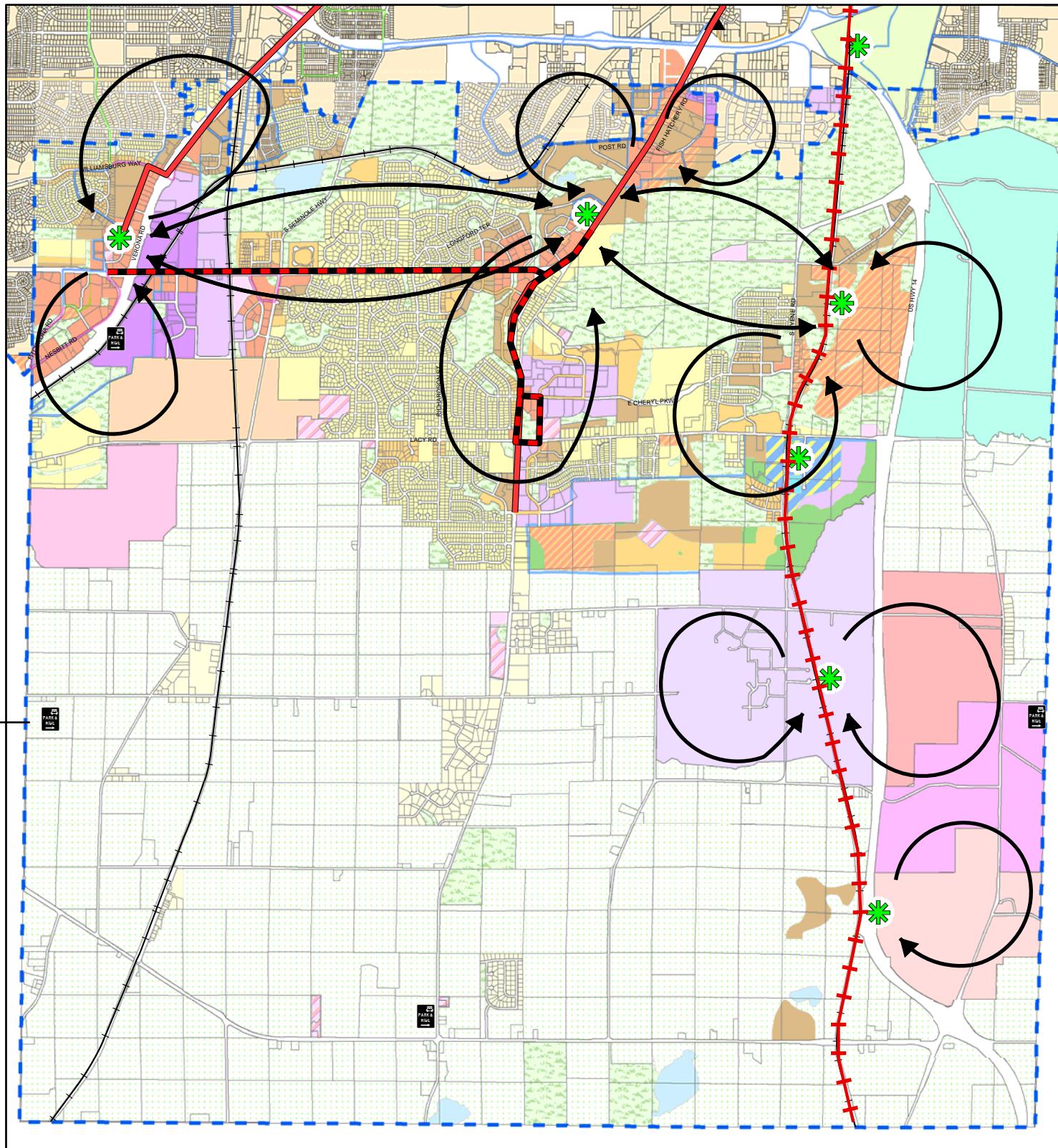
Prepared by: Planning/Zoning
Source: Planning/Zoning & Dane County LIO
Revised: 2/2008



* Acreage is exclusive of mapped natural resources, buffers and parcels less than 5 acres.

Map 6

Future Transit Service Map



Legend

- - - Fitchburg City Limits
- Prop. Bus Service
- Prop. Express Transit
- Prop. Commuter Rail
- * Proposed Multi-modal Connection Point
- [PARK & RIDE] Potential Park and Rides
- ↪ Proposed Route Concepts



Prepared by:
City of Fitchburg
Public Works Department
February 23, 2010

This map shows the land uses that are identified on the Future Land Use Plan Map (Map 3) and the Future Urban Growth Areas (Map 5)

