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NEWS RELEASE

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Fitchburg Reaffirmed as Silver Bike-Friendly Community

Fitchburg, Wis. -- Today, the League of American Bicyclists (Bike League) honored the efforts of Fitchburg to build better places for people to bike by renewing its silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) award for another four years. Fitchburg is one of 506 communities across the country in the movement for safer streets and better bicycling for everyone. The award recognizes Fitchburg for its continuing commitment to creating transportation and recreational resources that benefit its residents of all ages and abilities while encouraging healthier and more sustainable transportation choices. Fitchburg earned a bronze award in 2012 and silver in 2015 and 2019.

“When we build an America where bicycling is truly safer and easier for everyone, we are strengthening our nation’s economic vibrance, environmental welfare, and mental and physical well-being. That’s why we’re proud to celebrate the new and renewing Bicycle Friendly Communities in our movement to build a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone” said Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists. “This round of awards is a testament to the community leaders and local bike advocates who are joining the League in raising the standard of what it means to be a Bicycle Friendly Community.”

The League of American Bicyclists’ Bicycle Friendly America program sets the standard for how communities build and benchmark progress toward making biking better. In 2022, the League made major updates to add and integrate equity and accessibility into the program’s application and emphasize the importance of building and connecting low-speed and low-stress bike networks.

The award will be presented at a brief ceremony at the beginning of the Fitchburg Common Council meeting at 7:30 p.m. on June 13 by Steve Arnold, Secretary of the Board, Wisconsin Bike Fed. Mayor

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Julia Arata-Fratta will accept the award. According to Arnold, Bicycle Friendly America is more than a certification program. It guides work at all levels, year-in and year-out to develop safe, fun, and healthy transportation and recreation opportunities across five action areas: engineering, education, equity, encouragement, and evaluation. BFC awards are made for four-year terms.

“We are thrilled to receive this recognition after four more years of relentless work to make Fitchburg a great biking destination,” said Mayor Arata-Fratta, who accepted Fitchburg’s last silver BFC award in 2019 when she was Common Council representative to the city’s Bicycle Committee. “We have been working in all these areas to make Fitchburg a healthier, safer, more sustainable, and more vibrant place to live, work and visit by bike. This award shows that those efforts are paying off.”

New achievements by Fitchburg since 2019 that contributed to the renewal of BFC silver status include:

- New facilities, including an overpass for the Badger State Trail over McKee Road, addition of buffered bike lanes on McKee Road and Fahey Glen, more paved rural shoulders on Whalen Road, and multi-use paths in new subdivisions
- Expansion of the Madison BCycle electric bike share system to Fitchburg, with seven stations installed and a successful federal Transportation Alternatives grant to fund seven more this year
- An intensive campaign to recruit Bicycle Friendly Businesses, with all eleven applicants receiving awards, include two platinum and three silver
- Expansion of the Bicycle Benefits retail incentive program to more merchants
- Receipt of a Small Dollar, Big Impact grant from AARP Wisconsin to begin installing wayfinding signage for the Fitchburg Greenway System
- Training and certification of two new League Cycling Instructors who are now leading classes on safe cycling around Fitchburg
- Purchase and installation of automated infrared counters on Fitchburg’s main trails
- Receipt by Bike Fitchburg and Madison Bikes of the Bike League’s 2022 national Bikes Count! grant of technical assistance for advocacy organizations to measure biking and walking traffic
- Extensive planning for biking, including for the reconstruction of South Syene and west Lacy Roads, now in progress
- Equity initiatives such as a repair stand in Southdale Park and free Mobile Bike Repair clinics in Fitchburg’s Healthy Neighborhood Initiative areas

Fitchburg’s application was submitted by Bike Fitchburg, Inc., the non-profit local bike advocacy organization for Fitchburg. Bike Fitchburg was supported by its partners, the City of Fitchburg government and the Fitchburg Chamber Visitors+Business Bureau. Together, the three entities were recognized in 2018 as a Wisconsin Active Together community for just this kind of cooperation.

Among the many benefits of biking, Bike Fitchburg President Darryl Jordan cites cost savings, health benefits, and pollution reduction, creating more livable cities. “There are many ‘best-of’ lists and programs that one can pursue, but there are few better investments for a city’s health and economic prosperity than vigorously pursuing the Bicycle Friendly Communities awards.”

Fitchburg City Bicycle Committee Chair and BFC application co-author Mark Hamilton attributes Fitchburg’s progress to dedicated staff, contributions of funding partners and volunteers, and the vision of elected officials. “We could never have achieved these successes without the energy of Bike Fitchburg and the Fitchburg Chamber.” Hamilton says. “Biking has become an enduring part of Fitchburg’s identity.”

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Angela Kinderman, Executive Director of the Fitchburg Chamber Visitor + Business Bureau, says “We support biking in our community not only because it makes for happy and healthy citizens but also because biking is good business! Biking is a big part of our Fitchburg economy”.

Earning the silver award gives Mayor Arata-Fratta great satisfaction, but she pledges to continue to improve every aspect of living and working in Fitchburg. Gold-level recognition is her next goal for bicycling. “The bottom line is that we encourage people to get out and enjoy bicycling in and around Fitchburg and throughout Dane County.”

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About the **League of American Bicyclists**: The League leads the movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. With a history dating to 1880, the League is committed to engaging diverse communities and building a powerful, unified voice for change around protecting and promoting bicyclists’ rights. www.bikeleague.org.

About the **City of Fitchburg, Wisconsin**: Fitchburg is a six-mile-square city of about 32,000 residents in south central Wisconsin. The southern neighbor of the capital city of Madison, Fitchburg was a town before incorporating in 1983, and so is one-third urban and suburban, and two-thirds rolling glacial farmland and natural areas. The city is blessed with three state trails and two mountain bike parks, and has developed a dense bicycle transportation network of scenic rural roads, off-road paths, bicycle lanes, and quiet neighborhood streets. www.fitchburgwi.gov

About the **Fitchburg Chamber Visitor + Business Bureau**: The Chamber is a not-for-profit business membership organization with more than 375 members. The Chamber provides tools, resources and opportunities to support the success of our members. Chamber members have embraced Fitchburg's identity as a bicycling destination and support bicycle tourism with the Chamber’s [Bike the 'Burg](#) program. Chamber staff prepared Fitchburg's 2012 application for Bicycle Friendly Community, resulting in recognition at the bronze level. fitchburgchamber.com

About **Bike Fitchburg, Inc.**: As the local advocacy organization for all forms of bicycle transportation and recreation, Bike Fitchburg leads the city’s participation in the Bicycle Friendly America program. Founded in 2015, Bike Fitchburg’s mission is to make biking in Fitchburg safer, easier, and more fun. Bike Fitchburg volunteers drafted Fitchburg's 2015, 2019, and 2023 applications to be a Bicycle Friendly Community. bikefitchburg.org

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