



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release: July 26, 2022

For more information, contact:

Steve Arnold, Treasurer, Bike Fitchburg, (608) 278-7700, steve.arnold@fitchburg.wi.us

Bike Fitchburg Weighs in on City Capital Plans

Fitchburg, Wis. – Ahead of a public hearing before the Common Council tonight, Bike Fitchburg has taken a stand to **oppose Amendment 3**, by Ald. Julia Arata-Fratta, and **support Amendment 4**, by Ald. Randy Udell, to the city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Amendment 3 would remove funding to pave the shoulders of Irish Lane between S Syene Road and Fish Hatchery Road when the road is resurfaced in 2026, counter to recommendations by city staff. People both driving and riding bikes benefit from the greater safety and convenience of separate space for bicycle and motor traffic.

Irish Lane is a primary bicycle route from urban Fitchburg to points south and east, including Oregon, Stoughton, and Dane county parks. It is also important access to urban Fitchburg for residents of the Greenfield neighborhood. Fitchburg has already paved two westbound, uphill stretches in the project area to improve safety of people on bikes.

Ald. Arata-Fratta cites conflicts with plans for the Moraine Edge Park concept, loss of heritage trees, and cost.

The Moraine Edge Park plan is unlikely to ever bear fruit, as previous Councils have removed all funding for it from prior CIPs. Even now a residential subdivision is being built in an area previously proposed for the park. Furthermore, paved shoulders do not conflict with the multi-use path imagined in the park plan, as paved shoulders and multi-use paths serve different users operating at different speeds. Heritage trees can be preserved in most cases by deviating the center line of the road, a technique that also promotes safety by calming traffic. Paving shoulders extends the life of the pavement, saving money in the long run. The amendment also doesn't recognize the high probability of federal safety grant funding for 80% of the cost.

Ald. Udell's amendment recognizes the importance of paved shoulders on another primary bicycle route, Whalen Road between central Fitchburg and Verona. The amendment moves up the completion of shoulder paving west of Fish Hatchery Road to 2023 to obtain better bid prices, enhance the opportunity for Federal ARPA funding, and most importantly, deliver needed safety benefits a year earlier.

Fitchburg has an uneven record in improving Whalen Road for all users by paving shoulders. Initially only uphill stretches were paved, leaving conflict points where people on bicycles must merge back into a single travel lane. This design mistake was not repeated in later phases but

efforts to retrofit paved shoulders to complete the route have been halting. Bike Fitchburg welcomes Ald. Udell's proposal to complete in 2023 paved shoulders all the way from the south end of the Fish Hatchery Greenway to the Town of Verona.

The Bike Fitchburg board of directors took these positions by unanimous votes. Bike Fitchburg urges all who live, work, and/or bike in Fitchburg to urge Alders and the Mayor to plan to make these safety important improvements as soon as possible, to make all road users safer and to be the best stewards possible of city funds. Council members may be addressed by e-mail at Council&Mayor@fitchburgwi.gov or in person at City Hall at 7:30pm this evening.

(Bike Fitchburg notes that "bike lanes" are urban infrastructure accompanied by curb and gutter. The features discussed in these amendments are most properly called "paved shoulders". Paved shoulders are multi-use, serving those who bike and walk and providing a safe place for disabled and maintenance vehicles. They are most often used in rural areas and with drainage swales.)

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About Bike Fitchburg, Inc.

As the local bicycle advocacy group for Fitchburg, Wisconsin, Bike Fitchburg works with the mayor, council, and city staff to make biking of all kinds and walking easier, safer, and more fun. It also educates people who bike and the public on bicycle matters and serves as an information clearinghouse. Bike Fitchburg is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all-volunteer organization governed by a board of directors. Everyone who lives, works, or rides a bike in Fitchburg is invited to add their voices to ours by visiting our website and following us on social media. <https://bikefitchburg.org>

About the City of Fitchburg

Fitchburg is a six-mile-square city of about 30,000 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. Recognized as a Silver level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2015, 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. Fitchburg's commitment to biking and walking is described in its Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, adopted in 2017. <https://fitchburgwi.gov>