

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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February 24, 2015

Chairwoman and Members of the Milwaukee County
Board of Supervisors
c/o Mr. Joseph Czarnezki, Clerk
County Courthouse, Room 105
901 North 9th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

To the Chairwoman and Members of the
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors:

A draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has been completed for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region and is being provided to Milwaukee County for review and comment. A presentation on the draft CEDS has been scheduled before the County Board Committee on Economic and Community Development on Monday, April 13, 2015.

The CEDS is a strategic plan designed to strengthen the economy in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties. The CEDS was prepared by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and the Milwaukee 7 in cooperation with the Regional Economic Partnership (REP). The REP includes a representative from each of the county economic development organizations or staffs, the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development, the Milwaukee 7 (M7), We Energies, and SEWRPC. Staff from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation also assisted in preparing the plan. The recommendations in the CEDS are based on the "Framework for Economic Growth" prepared by the Brookings Institution for the M7 in 2013.

The CEDS identifies the business clusters comprising 1) energy, power, and controls; 2) water technologies; 3) food and beverage manufacturing; 4) finance and insurance services; 5) corporate headquarters and business services; and 6) medical technology and bioscience as having the best potential for economic growth, expansion, and attraction in the Region. Machinery manufacturing, which is related to several of the preceding clusters, was also identified as an important cluster.

The CEDS recommends that economic development efforts focus on enhancing the export capability of businesses in the Region; aligning workforce development with growth opportunities in the key clusters; enhancing innovation and entrepreneurship; continuing economic place-making in the central cities and strategic locations throughout the Region; modernizing regional infrastructure; and enhancing inter-jurisdictional cooperation.

Comments on the draft CEDS are being accepted through May 1, 2015. Notices of the comment period will be published in newspapers throughout the Region in early March. Following the close of the

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comment period and any updates to the plan needed to address public comments, SEWRPC will request that each County Board in the Region consider approval of the CEDS. Approval of the CEDS would make the County and its local governments eligible to apply for U. S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding to assist economically distressed areas. Approval by all counties could potentially lead to EDA designation of the Region as an Economic Development District, making it eligible to apply for funding for ongoing economic development activities.

Please do not hesitate to call on us if the Commission or its staff can be of any assistance to the County in its review of the draft CEDS. Please contact Nancy Anderson of the Commission staff at (262) 953-3212 or nanderson@sewrpc.org if you have questions about the CEDS or would like additional copies of the executive summary or the draft CEDS report.

Sincerely,



Kenneth R. Yunker, P.E.
Executive Director

KRY/NMA/lgh
Docs #223874

Enclosures

cc: Chris Abele, County Executive, Milwaukee County (w/enclosures)
Supervisor Patricia Jursik, Chair, Economic and Community Development Committee (w/enclosures)
David Cialdini, Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services
Pat O'Brien, President, Milwaukee 7