

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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## **Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Planning Efforts for Milwaukee County**

**August 2021**

The following provides a summary of work recently completed or underway at the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, including both regional planning efforts and efforts for Milwaukee County and municipalities in the County.

### **EFFORTS AT THE REQUEST OF THE COUNTY OR A MUNICIPALITY WITHIN THE COUNTY**

#### **Transportation Planning**

- **North-South Transit Enhancement Study:** In May 2020, Commission staff initiated work for Milwaukee County on a transit enhancement study for the 27th Street corridor generally between Brown Deer Road (STH 100) on the north and Oakwood Drive on the south. The study corridor connects a racially and economically diverse set of communities and has involved a significant public involvement effort. It is expected to be completed by the end of 2021, and depending on the conclusions of the study, could lead to more detailed engineering and environmental review of the study's chosen alternative in the succeeding year(s).
- **Milwaukee County Jurisdictional Highway System Plan:** At the request of MCDOT, Commission staff initiated work on an update to the jurisdictional highway system plan for Milwaukee County, which was completed in the late 1960's. Because travel patterns within Milwaukee County and the Region have changed over the last 50 years, Commission staff will be reassessing the capacity needs of the arterial streets and highways in the County from a multimodal perspective. This will include the identification of roadways with extra capacity that could be rededicated to other uses and recommendations to reduce reckless driving through design and infrastructure solutions. This project is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.
- **25th-28th Streets Interchange:** At the beginning of 2021 and at the request of the Near West Side Partners and the Menomonee Valley Partners, Commission staff-initiated work on assisting the two neighborhood groups in evaluating improved connections—both transportation and land use—between the two neighborhoods along the I-94 corridor. This work is a collaboration of the two neighborhood groups, Commission staff, WisDOT, and the City of Milwaukee. During this quarter, Commission staff reviewed and discussed the existing crossings of I-94 with the various stakeholders at a meeting on February 10th. Based on input from the meeting, Commission staff developed alternative improvements to the 25th-28th Streets Interchange, including developing potential roundabout designs and multi-modal cross-sections along local

roadways. These alternatives are now being considered by WisDOT for potential inclusion in the I-94 East-West reconstruction project.

- **East-West Bus Rapid Transit:** Commission staff were heavily involved in multiple phases of study and design for the now under-construction East-West BRT project. On an as-requested basis, the Commission staff continues to assist County and MCTS staff with questions related to implementation of the East-West BRT within the larger MCTS and regional transit network.
- **W. Washington Boulevard:** In 2018, at the request of the Milwaukee County Parks, Commission staff initiated work on a traffic engineering study to address safety concerns related to the higher volumes and speeds of vehicles and poor sight distances along W. Washington Boulevard between STH 175 and W. Vliet Street in the City of Milwaukee. More specifically, the study will identify low-cost traffic engineering measures to improve the safety of motorists and pedestrians/bicyclists along, and crossing, W. Washington Boulevard. Commission staff met with County Parks staff in January 2019 to present a set of potential alternatives for the County to consider. Commission staff will prepare a more detailed analysis of any of the proposed alternatives upon request of the County Parks staff.
- **Traffic Forecasting:** In support of preliminary engineering for highway and transit projects, the Commission provides long-range traffic forecasts to municipalities, counties, and the State of Wisconsin. Recent work has included forecasts for the Milwaukee County East-West Bus Rapid Transit Line between the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center and Downtown Milwaukee; W. College Avenue (CTH ZZ) in the Cities of Franklin, Greendale, and Greenfield; S. 76th Street (CTH U) in the City of Franklin; S. 27th Street (STH 241) in the Cities of Franklin and Oak Creek; the IH 94 N-S reconstruction; the Zoo Interchange reconstruction; the IH 43 N-S corridor study; the IH 94 E-W corridor study; and the long-planned extension of 124th Street in the Cities of West Allis, Wauwatosa, and Brookfield, and Village of Elm Grove.

## Land Use Planning

- **County Park and Open Space Plan:** At the request of Milwaukee County Parks, the Commission is assisting the Department in the development of an update and extension to the year 2050 of the County Park and Open Space Plan. The 2050 plan will 1) include a description of existing population, households, employment, land use, natural resources, and park and open space sites; 2) address park system and facility use and preferences, provide composite park facility level of service information, and estimate the costs of capital maintenance of Milwaukee County parks and park facilities; and 3) include a needs analysis for park sites and facilities, a park and open space plan for the year 2050, and the actions needed to implement the plan. Work is completed on five chapters of the 2050 park and open space plan, which describe existing population, employment, land use, natural resources, and park and open space sites in the County, additional important factors that should be considered in the development of the County plan, including relevant County, local, State, and regional plans, and public input activities, and level of service standards and related park site and park facility needs. Work is nearly complete on the draft of Chapter 6, the recommended plan chapter, which includes recommendations regarding the open space preservation and the park and outdoor recreation elements of the plan, as well as plan implementation considerations. The Commission has, and will, participate in all public engagement efforts. It is hoped that the plan will be complete by the end of 2021 or soon thereafter.
- **Coastal Management Guidelines:** The Commission staff, in partnership with Milwaukee County Parks staff, completed the Coastal Management Guidelines study for Milwaukee County, which

were adopted by the Board of Supervisors in February 2021. The guidelines are intended to be used in developing a formal policy for use by the County to proactively manage its coastal properties with respect to vegetation and bluff buffers. The study has been published as SEWRPC Memorandum Report No. 248, *Milwaukee County Coastline Management Guidelines*.

- **Milwaukee County Land and Water Resource Management Plan:** At the request of the Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services, Environmental Services Unit, the Commission is assisting the Department with the preparation of an update of the County's land and water resource management plan. This plan, which is required by Section 92.10 of the Wisconsin Statutes, will be prepared consistent with the guidelines established by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP). This plan, once adopted by Milwaukee County and approved by DATCP, will serve as a program guide for local conservation efforts in Milwaukee County and will maintain the County's eligibility to receive conservation staff funding and cost-share grant monies. A preliminary draft of the plan has been completed and reviewed by the Advisory Committee created to oversee preparation of this plan, and a revised draft of the plan has now been completed for review by Milwaukee County staff and officials.
- **MKE Aerotropolis Planning:** The Commission staff continue to be involved in the efforts of the Milwaukee Gateway Aerotropolis Corporation (MGAC), a public-private partnership of business leaders and local representatives from Milwaukee County and nine communities in the County focused on promoting economic growth around Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport. In February 2017, the Commission staff completed a development plan for Aerotropolis Milwaukee. The plan, prepared with The Gateway to Milwaukee and MGAC, establishes a shared vision and coordinated effort to capitalize on the Airport to stimulate economic investment, promote job growth, and enhance the quality of life in the nine Aerotropolis Milwaukee communities. It is designed to be used as a reference tool for local governments and agencies to aid in decision making relative to future land use changes and strategic investments. Following the plan's completion, the Commission and Gateway staffs worked to obtain endorsement of the plan from the seven of the nine communities, and requested that the plan's recommendations be incorporated into their respective comprehensive plans, as appropriate. Staff has continued to support the ongoing implementation of the plan.
- **Housing Affordability Reports:** At the request of the City of Glendale, the City of Cudahy, and the Village of Whitefish Bay, the Commission has prepared Housing Affordability Reports for each of these communities. Pursuant to the requirements of Section 66.10013 of the Wisconsin Statutes, communities with populations over 10,000 people must prepare a Housing Affordability Report which reports on development activity within the community and analyzes the impact of the communities residential development regulations on the cost of developing new housing.
- **Comprehensive Plans:** At the request of the City of Cudahy, the Commission assisted the City with an update of its Comprehensive Plan. Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes require that comprehensive plans be updated every 10 years. The City adopted the plan update in August.

## **Economic Development Planning**

- Provided assistance to the Village of Shorewood in managing the Village's business incentive loan fund program.
- Provided unemployment and personal income data to the City of Cudahy for their use in applying for an EDA CARES Act grant.

- Provided Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) data to the City of Milwaukee for their use in updating *Growing Prosperity: An Action Agenda for Economic Development*.

## Environmental Planning

- **Milwaukee City-County Task Force on Climate Change and Equity:** Commission staff are assisting the City and County on this effort through providing data, technical expertise, and policy advice as part of serving on three of the Task Force's Work Groups: Adaptation and Climate Resilience, Nature in the City, and Transportation and Mobility.
- **Floodplain Mapping Program:** Under the floodplain mapping program for the Milwaukee County Land Information Office (MCLIO) and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewerage District (MMSD), the Commission continued work on developing the hydrologic and hydraulic models for the Root River watershed. The project involves mapping the ten-, four-, two-, one-, and 0.2 percent annual-probability (10-, 25-, 50-, 100-, and 500-year recurrence interval) floodplains along 28 streams in the watershed, including the main stem of the Root River. Draft floodplain mapping has been completed for Hale Creek. This project involves lands in Milwaukee County Parks in the Cities of Franklin, Greenfield, Milwaukee, Oak Creek, and West Allis, and the Villages of Greendale and Hales Corners.
- **Menomonee River LOMR submittal:** Began preparation of a FEMA Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) submittal for streams within the Menomonee River watershed completed under the MCLIO effort. Floodplain work is first submitted to the WDNR for their review and then the analyses can be submitted to FEMA as a LOMR. Milwaukee County streams approved by the WDNR include Dretzka Park Tributary in the City of Milwaukee; Grantosa Creek in the City of Wauwatosa; Honey Creek in the Cities of Greenfield, Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, and West Allis; and Woods Creek in the City of Milwaukee. The Menomonee River mainstem upstream of North Avenue, Little Menomonee River, and Little Menomonee Creek in the Cities of Milwaukee and Wauwatosa have been submitted for WDNR review.
- **Fish Creek Floodplain:** Continued to coordinate with MMSD and WisDOT on modifications to the Fish Creek floodplain as a result of modifications to IH-43. Draft floodplains were completed for Fish Creek as part of the MCLIO effort. Work impacts the Villages of Bayside and River Hills.
- **Beaver Creek Watercourse System Plan:** Continued work on a Beaver Creek watercourse system plan for MMSD. The plan will address flood mitigation in the Village of Brown Deer. Alternatives include daylighting of a portion of the creek, structure floodproofing, and structure removal.
- **Schoonmaker Creek Watercourse System Plan:** Completed the final report for the Schoonmaker Creek watercourse system plan for MMSD in December 2020. The plan includes conveyance, storage, open channel, and tunnel alternatives to address flood mitigation in the Cities of Milwaukee and Wauwatosa.
- **Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan:** Continued technical work for the Oak Creek Watershed Restoration Plan in the Cities of Oak Creek, South Milwaukee, Franklin, Milwaukee, Cudahy, and Greenfield. Plan draft Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 have been completed and work continues on Chapter 6. The plan focuses on water quality, recreational access and use, habitat conditions, and targeted stormwater and flooding issues. It is expected to be completed this year.

- Continued to provide technical assistance to MMSD and its consultant for the implementation plan for the third-party total maximum daily load (TMDL) study for the Kinnickinnic, Menomonee, and Milwaukee River watersheds and the Milwaukee Harbor estuary.
- Continued to provide technical assistance to the MMSD initiative to improve aquatic habitat and ecological connectivity within the Milwaukee River between Capitol Drive and Bender Road.
- Completed work on Schlitz Audubon Nature Center stormwater management/ravine stabilization project near the Lake Michigan shoreline. Continued to provide technical assistance and advice to Schlitz Audubon Nature Center regarding a riparian restoration project (Clever Property) along the Milwaukee River in the Village of River Hills.
- Continued to provide technical assistance with the Army Corps of Engineers, MMSD, and MMSD's consultants regarding naturalization and reestablishment of relict wetland seiche habitat in the western portion of the Burnham Canal within the Milwaukee Harbor Estuary.
- Continued to serve on the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern (AOC) Fish and Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee.

## **Environmental Field Work**

Upon request, Commission staff provide wetland and environmental corridor delineations for public lands, projects, and on private property (if requested by a unit of government).

### ***Transportation – 1 Project***

- W. Drexel Avenue proposed rehabilitation project between a point 380 feet west of 13th Street and Howell Avenue (City of Oak Creek) – Wetland Delineation

### ***Park Sites – 2 Projects***

- Honey Creek Headwaters proposed restoration project between W. Layton Avenue and S. 43rd Street (City of Greenfield) – Wetland Delineation
- Lincoln Park proposed restoration effort associated with the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern (City of Milwaukee) – Wetland Delineation

### ***Residential/Commercial Development Parcels – 5 Projects***

- Nicole Buske property at 9250 S. 46th Street (City of Franklin) – Wetland Delineation
- Dan Fuss property at 8260 S. 116th Street (City of Franklin) – Wetland Delineation
- Anthony & Anne Kraus property at 10233 W. Oakwood Road (City of Franklin) – Wetland Delineation
- Eric Kuiper Property at 10920 Ryan Road (City of Franklin) – Wetland Delineation
- Judith Schneidewent Property at 7213 W. Drexel Avenue (City of Franklin) – Wetland Delineation

## **Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Assessments – 32 Site Visits**

- Bike Trail Marsh (Village of Greendale)
- Mission Hills Wetlands (City of Franklin)
- Root River Low and Upland Woods (Village of Greendale)
- Root River Parkway Sedge Meadow (Village of Greendale)
- Mangan Woods (Village of Greendale)

- Whitnall Park Woods - North (Village of Hales Corners)
- Root River Bike Trail Woods (City of Franklin)
- Fitzsimmons Woods (City of Franklin)
- 60ths Street Woods (City of Franklin)
- Falk Park Woods (City of Oak Creek)
- Barloga Woods (City of Oak Creek)
- Root River Wet-Mesic Woods - West (City of Franklin)
- Root River Canal Woods (City of Franklin)
- Root River Parkway Prairie (City of Franklin)
- Brown Deer Park Woods (Village of Brown Deer)
- Bradley Woods (City of Milwaukee)
- Wil-o-way Woods (City of Wauwatosa)
- Grootemaat Woods (City of Greenfield)
- Wedge Woods (City of Oak Creek)
- 15th St Woods (City of Oak Creek)
- Oak Creek Low Woods (City of Oak Creek)
- Grobschmidt Park Woods and Wetlands (City of Franklin)
- Whitnall Park Woods - South (City of Franklin)
- Glenwood School Woods (City of Greenfield)
- St. Francis Seminary Woods (City of St. Francis)
- Cambridge Ave Woods (City of Milwaukee)
- Downer Woods (City of Milwaukee)
- Root River Wet-Mesic Woods - East (City of Oak Creek)
- Mission Hills Wetlands (City of Franklin)
- Lincoln Park Low Woods (City of Milwaukee)
- Kletzch Park Woods (City of Glendale)
- Schlitz Audubon Center/Doctors Park Wetland, Woods, and Beach (Village of Bayside)

## **Surveying and Mapping Assistance**

The Commission has, since its inception, provided and supported surveying and mapping services to Milwaukee County. As a part of such services, the Commission has, since 1984, provided a County Surveyor for Milwaukee County. The County Surveyor is responsible for perpetuating corners of the U.S. Public Land Survey System that may be subject to disturbance, removal, or burial through construction or other activities, and for maintaining a record of the surveys required for such perpetuation. The U.S. Public Land Survey corners, as monumented, provide the basis for land and engineering surveys within the County. The Commission will reset approximately 50 corner monuments annually. Importantly, the Commission not only resets these disturbed corners as necessary, but establishes the State Plane Coordinates and elevations for those corners through the conduct of geodetic surveys. This makes the resulting control survey network invaluable for public works, engineering, and land surveying.

Also pursuant to State Legislation, a copy of each land survey plat prepared by a land surveyor must be filed with the County Surveyor, and through that office made available to other surveyors, engineers, realtors, assessors, and the public in general. Approximately 900 to 1,000 such plats are filed annually with the County Surveyor.

In addition to meeting the statutory responsibilities of the County Surveyor, the Commission provides related technical assistance in survey and mapping in response to County requests. Most recently, the

Commission has, at County request, provided special surveys to evaluate the horizontal and vertical accuracy of the orthoimagery and LiDAR data captured in 2020 to ensure the mapping services by the aerial contractor met the expected accuracy.

- **Orthophotography:** Since 1995, the Commission has assisted Milwaukee County in the acquisition of digital orthophotography as part of the Regional Orthophotography Program with the latest acquisition occurring in the spring of 2020. The Commission also assists the County by providing Federal planning funds for a portion of the orthophotography and by reviewing the delivered orthophotography to ensure that it is consistent with the specifications of the regional project. During the past year, the Commission has coordinated with the County on the new acquisition of aerial imagery in 2022. The Commission has been working with County to increase the acquisition intervals to ensure up-to-date aerial imagery.

The Commission also worked with the County and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District in support of a supplemental contract that used the existing high-density LiDAR collected in 2020 to reprocess the above ground LiDAR points in the establishment of 3D buildings. Furthermore, the Commission assisted the County in developing 1ft Contours from that same 2020 high-density LiDAR data set.

- **Redistricting:** Consistent with County ordinance, Commission staff are providing mapping services and technical assistance to the Independent Redistricting Committee, which, as of the writing of this memo, is currently in the process of developing a Tentative Supervisory District map for the consideration of the County Board of Supervisors. This effort will also include assistance six municipalities in the County with municipal ward and district development, analysis, and mapping.
- **Survey Datum Conversion Project:** Milwaukee County entered into an agreement with the Commission to proceed with the conversion of the legacy horizontal and vertical datums to the new Federal datums. In 2018, the Commission completed the horizontal conversion with each monumented USPLSS corner throughout Milwaukee County now containing coordinates referenced on both NAD27 and NAD83/2011, and in July 2019, the Commission completed the Region wide vertical conversion from NGVD29 to NAVD88.

The Commission continues to assist the Milwaukee Land Information Office with conversion procedures and techniques that would allow transformation of the existing base mapping data layers to the new Federal datums.

## **REGIONAL OR MULTI-COUNTY EFFORTS THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT MILWAUKEE COUNTY**

### **Transportation Planning**

- **General Metropolitan Planning Functions:** Continued to serve as the Region's Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO), including preparing and maintaining the up-to-date, Federally-required regional transportation plan and transportation improvement program, and ensuring all necessary Federal transportation planning and programming requirements are met to permit the continued use of U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) funds on Milwaukee County streets and highways and MCTS. USDOT funding expenditures within Milwaukee County are approximately \$100 to \$300 million annually, and increased dramatically during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-recovery aid provided to MCTS.

- **Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan:** VISION 2050, the long-range land use and transportation plan for Southeastern Wisconsin, was originally adopted by the Commission on July 28, 2016. The periodic (approximately every 10 years) major reevaluation of the regional transportation plan, incorporating new U.S. Census population, employment, and travel survey data and maintaining a minimum 20-year future timeframe, is required for State and local governments to continue to obtain highway and transit project funding from the USDOT. An interim review and update is also required every four years. Since the plan was first adopted, the Commission has adopted three needed plan amendments and, on June 17, 2020, adopted the 2020 Review and Update (the first interim review and update of the plan).

As updated in 2020, VISION 2050 makes recommendations to local and State government to shape and guide land use development and transportation improvement. In addition to recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, streets and highways, and freight facilities, the transportation component recommends a more than doubling of transit service in the Region; recommending increasing the speed, frequency, and reach of transit services. The plan also identifies possible ways to address an ongoing funding gap for both transit and streets and highways so that VISION 2050 can be fully implemented, although State legislative action would be required.

The initial process to develop VISION 2050 was guided by the Commission's Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use Planning and Regional Transportation Planning, with input also provided by the Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF), Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committees for each county, and VISION 2050 Task Forces on key areas of interest. Broad public input from thousands of residents was also incorporated during a three-year visioning and scenario planning process, intended to identify a long-range future vision for land use and transportation for the Region. The Commission also partnered with eight community organizations during the public input process, with these partnerships designed to reach and engage people of color, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals.

The Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use Planning and Regional Transportation Planning again guided the 2020 Review and Update process, with input from the EJTF. This 2020 Update assessed the progress in implementing the original VISION 2050 recommendations, the performance of the transportation system, year 2050 forecasts underlying the plan, and changes in recent years that impact the plan. The 2020 Update identified plan changes based on review of this information and two rounds of public input, which included engaging constituents of the Commission's now nine community partners. The 2020 Update includes an updated financial analysis for the recommended transportation system, which confirmed a funding gap for the recommended system, and a gap to continue to operate the existing transit system over the long term. It also includes updated equity analyses, which include evaluations of potential benefits and impacts to people of color, low-income populations, and people with disabilities related to the plan's updated land use and transportation components. Notably, the transportation equity analysis concluded that without additional funding to implement the VISION 2050 public transit element, a disparate impact on these population groups is likely to occur.

During the latter part of 2020, staff prepared the final 2020 Review and Update report and summary for publication, along with a second edition of Volume III of VISION 2050, which contains the full recommended plan as updated. Staff also updated the VISION 2050 website ([www.vision2050sewis.org](http://www.vision2050sewis.org)) to include the updated plan recommendations, plan report, and interactive map applications for several main elements, including land use, public transit, the bicycle network, arterial streets and highways, and freight transportation.



During the past year, staff has also continued concerted efforts to communicate the plan and its recommendations across the Region, including wide distribution of a fact sheet and *VISION 2050 Summary* report for the original plan and the new summary for the 2020 Update, and maintaining an active Facebook page and Twitter account for SEWRPC and the plan. The complete three-volume report for the original plan, published in July 2017, was sent to each affected unit and agency of government requesting their consideration and endorsement. The Commission distributed the second edition of Volume III of that report, along with the 2020 Update report and summary, in December 2020.

- **Transportation Improvement Program:** In December 2020, the Commission adopted the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP lists transportation projects intended to be undertaken by State, County, and local governments in Southeastern Wisconsin. The preparation of a TIP every two years, and amendments as necessary, is needed so that State, County, and local governments to obtain project funding from the USDOT Federal Highway and Transit Administrations. Through July 2021, Commission staff has processed 5 TIP amendments, including an amendment to incorporate updated Federally required transit safety performance targets, for Milwaukee County and 36 amendments for municipalities in the County.
- **Surface Transportation Block Grants:** In January 2020, Commission staff assisted the Advisory Committee on Transportation Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area (Milwaukee TIP Committee) in the evaluation, prioritization, and recommendation of candidate projects for \$85.4 million in available years 2023-2025 MUA STP funding. This federal funding source can be used for transit capital and arterial street and highway capital projects, at up to 80% federal cost share. Approximately \$56.7 million of the available funds during this most recent round were awarded to fully or partially fund projects located within Milwaukee County. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is currently soliciting STP-M candidate projects for years 2026-2027 STP-M, with applications due on October 15, 2021. The Commission staff will also be working with the Milwaukee TIP Committee in the consideration of potential changes to the process utilized to evaluate and prioritize STP-M projects ahead of WisDOT's deadline.
- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Grants:** In Spring 2020, the Commission staff, working with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), completed the evaluation and recommendation of projects for 2023-2024 CMAQ funding, which can be used for certain transportation projects that are intended to reduce congestion and air pollution emissions. Milwaukee County received \$22.2 million in 2023-2024 CMAQ funds for 8 highway, transit and bicycle pedestrian projects, and Milwaukee County municipalities received 8 projects totaling \$8.9 million. In Summer 2021, WisDOT has solicited new projects for years 2025-2026 CMAQ funding. Commission staff will be working with WisDOT, WDNR, and FHWA to evaluate and prioritize the candidate projects for CMAQ funding throughout the Fall and Winter 2021/2022.
- **Transportation Alternatives Grants:** In October 2019, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) solicited projects for Federal Highway Administration Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding, including projects applying for TAP—Milwaukee Urbanized Area (TAP-MUA) funding. TAP funding can be used for bicycle and pedestrian projects, and the Commission is responsible for project selection in the Milwaukee Urbanized Area. There were two City of Milwaukee projects that were selected for a total of \$1,454,409 in 2023-2024 TAP-MUA funding. The remaining 12 projects, including 9 within Milwaukee County, were prioritized and sent to the WisDOT for consideration in the Statewide project selection. The next solicitation for TAP funding is expected to occur 2021. WisDOT is expected to solicit projects in late 2021 for 2025-2026 TAP funding, with applications due early 2022.

- Federal Transit Administration Funding:** The Commission works with the transit operators in the Milwaukee urbanized area (MUA) to distribute Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) Section 5307/5340 formula program funds among the transit operators in the Milwaukee urbanized area—Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties, and the Cities of Milwaukee and Waukesha. A total of \$21,258,936 in Section 5307/5340 funds were allocated to the area as part of the 2021 annual apportionment. In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), which included significant funding to support capital and operating expenses for transit with no required local match. CRRSAA provided \$60,271,997 and ARPA provided \$93,202,863 in Section 5307 funds to the urbanized area. The funds were largely distributed among the designated recipients/transit operators based on annual transit ridership and service data—revenue vehicle miles of transit service, revenue vehicle hours of transit service, revenue passengers, and passenger miles—reported by each transit operator to the FTA and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, with 25 percent of the urbanized area apportionment distributed using each criterion. The formula used has a “floor” that ensures that no transit operator in the urbanized area receives less from the local distribution formula than the incremental amount of funding that their transit service brings to the urbanized area through the FTA formula. Milwaukee County received \$155,573,150 and the City of Milwaukee received \$1,727,077 in Section 5307 funds in 2021 across all three federal acts (FFY2021 Appropriations, CRRSAA, and ARPA).

In addition, Commission staff worked with the transit operators in the Milwaukee urbanized area to distribute FTA Section 5310, FTA Section 5337, and FTA Section 5339 formula program funds among the transit operators. FTA Section 5310 funding, of which the urbanized area received \$1,252,963 in 2021, was distributed using a competitive selection process managed by the Commission staff, in collaboration with Milwaukee County. This program is intended to support transit services that are specifically targeted at seniors and people with disabilities, and go above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The CRRSAA and ARPA also allocated Section 5310 funds to the Milwaukee urbanized area, in the amounts of \$217,149 and \$217,152, respectively. FTA Section 5337 funding for capital projects, of which the urbanized area received \$479,818 in 2021, was distributed to Waukesha County because the funds were allocated to the urbanized area due to the exclusive bus lanes located on W. Bluemound Rd. in Waukesha County. FTA Section 5339 funding for bus and bus facility capital projects, of which the urbanized area received \$3,824,599, was distributed among the designated recipients/transit operators based on revenue vehicle miles of transit service, revenue vehicle hours of transit service, revenue passengers, and passenger miles, which are reported by each transit operator to the FTA and WisDOT, with 25 percent of the urbanized area apportionment distributed using each criterion.

- Air Quality Standards:** Continued work with local governments and counties along the lakefront in response to a new lower national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for ozone. This work includes assisting with the development of data regarding the sources of ozone-causing pollutants, which largely are generated outside of the Region and the State of Wisconsin, and briefing local officials on the impacts of US EPA decisions regarding attainment or nonattainment of NAAQS standards.
- Workforce Transportation:** Commission staff continued to support the work of the Regional Transit Leadership Council (RTLCL), which formed in November 2016 to address regional connectivity challenges and achieve a multimodal transportation system. Staff serves on the RTLCL’s Executive Advisory Committee.

In July 2018, the Workforce Mobility Team was created to assist Southeastern Wisconsin employers in identifying ways to better connect workers to jobs. The Team is staffed by the Commission and was developed cooperatively with the RTLC in response to concerns from employers in the Region who experience challenges retaining and attracting workers as a result of those workers having limited or no commuting transportation options. The Team has met and communicated with a number of employers or employer groups since its creation and maintains a webpage with workforce mobility resources.

In 2020 and 2021, new transportation solutions were developed in the Region, with a partnership initiated by the Milwaukee Urban League to provide transportation service to partner companies, including Stella & Chewy's in Oak Creek. Commission staff met with key staff at the Milwaukee Urban League to learn more and offer assistance. Lastly, Commission staff assisted professors at UW-Milwaukee with an application for a National Science Foundation CIVIC grant to study first-last mile options between the City of Milwaukee and businesses in the Village of Menomonee Falls. The Workforce Mobility Team continues to research innovative solutions nationwide and track local efforts to provide relevant assistance and recommendations to employers in the Region.

## Land Use Planning

- **Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan:** VISION 2050, the long-range land use and transportation plan for Southeastern Wisconsin, was adopted by the Commission on July 28, 2016. More information on the plan, including a description of efforts completed over the past year, is included in the previous section titled Transportation Planning.
- **Inventories:** On a regular basis, Commission staff work on updating the Region's inventory files of land uses and environmental features. This past year, staff continued working on the creation of digital files for use in evaluating historic trends. These files include environmental corridors for the years 1963 (completed) and 1980 (completed) and historic urban growth (underway). In addition, during 2021, Commission staff initiated work on the year 2020 regional land use inventory.
- **Regional Food System Plan:** Work has begun on a Regional Food System Plan. The Plan, the development of which is a recommendation of VISION 2050, will address the food system from a regional planning perspective and is aimed at identifying how to achieve several objectives concerned with ensuring accessible and affordable healthy and fresh food options for all residents, reducing economic and health disparities, supporting locally owned and sustainable farming operations, and preserving productive agricultural land and sensitive natural resources. Virtual Kick-Off meetings were held in August to introduce attendees to the regional food system and obtain input on topics that should be included in the plan. In addition, an online survey has been developed and SEWRPC staff are visiting sites such as farmers markets to conduct direct public outreach with County residents,

## Economic Development Planning

- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** In 2020 and 2021, the Commission continued to work with the Milwaukee 7 Regional Economic Development Partnership (M7) to prepare a new 2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Region, which was completed in late spring 2021. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires regions to update their CEDS every five years. The new CEDS includes an Action Plan with five goals, each with a set of strategies and actions to achieve the goals, along with ongoing and proposed economic development projects from across the Region. Numerous public and private stakeholders contributed to the plan, including guidance and input throughout the process from

M7's Regional Economic Partnership (REP) working group. Milwaukee County's representative on the REP is Aaron Hertzberg, Director of the Department of Administrative Services, who provided valuable input along with Donna Brown-Martin, Director of the Department of Transportation. The new CEDS was presented to each of the seven Southeastern Wisconsin counties for consideration over the summer of 2021. Milwaukee County considered and adopted the CEDS on July 29, 2021. The new 2021-2025 CEDS will replace the previously adopted 2015-2020 CEDS and has now been submitted to the EDA. County Board adoption of the CEDS makes the County and local governments in the County eligible to apply for EDA funding for infrastructure projects, revolving loan funds, and other business assistance programs that benefit economically distressed areas. EDA identifies economically distressed census tracts based on unemployment rates of 1 percent or more above the national average, or per capita incomes 80 percent or less than the national average. About 57 percent (168 of 296) of the census tracts in Milwaukee County meet these criteria. Adoption of the CEDS by each county and the Commission also enables the Region to apply to EDA for designation as an Economic Development District (EDD), which M7 and Commission staff will explore with EDA.

- **Business Park Inventory:** In late 2014, the Commission initiated work on an inventory of existing and proposed business parks in the Region for use in Commission land use, comprehensive, and economic development planning. The information compiled by Commission staff was provided to planning or engineering staff in each city and village in the county for review in coordination with staff meetings on the MMSD facilities planning work described in the following Environmental Planning section. The final inventory has been posted on the Commission website.
- **EMSI Development Tool:** The Commission, in cooperation with WEDC, has made Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) Developer software available to County and local governments and economic development organizations. EMSI Developer is a web-based economic development tool that includes extensive industry, occupation, and workforce data, and is used in business and industry analysis and attraction. County and local economic development organizations and units of government can request SEWRPC staff to apply the software to conduct analyses. The City of Milwaukee Department of City Development made 2 requests consisting of 16 reports during the last year.

## Environmental Planning

- **Regional Chloride Study:** As part of this major effort, the Commission continued to maintain and collect real-time 5-minute interval water level and conductivity data among seven sites within the County, including periodic seasonal chloride grab samples during melting/runoff events. The streams in Milwaukee County monitored for this effort include Honey Creek, Menomonee River, Oak Creek, Lincoln Creek, Underwood Creek, the Root River, and the Milwaukee River (at the Estabrook dam). The regional chloride study is a multi-year effort to determine the amount and proportion of chloride (salt) entering the Region's lakes, rivers, and streams from different sources, determine the impacts of that chloride on the Region, and to determine state-of-the-art practices that might decrease chloride use without decreasing safety or quality of life.
- **Region Natural Areas Plan Update:** The Commission is in the process of updating the Regional Natural Areas Plan, which identifies areas of the Region that are of particularly high environmental quality and are believed to represent the pre-European habitat and environment of the area. This year, the Commission staff continued to collect new information and conducted 32 site visits to natural area and critical species habitats within the County (see Environmental Field Work section for more details).

- **Sewer Extension Review:** As the areawide water quality management planning agency, the Commission staff reviewed and recommended approval of 4 public sewer service extension projects, all of which were determined to be consistent with the regional water quality management plan. Those projects were located in the Cities of Franklin (1), Milwaukee (1), and South Milwaukee (1), and the Village of Brown Deer (1). The Commission staff also reviewed 4 private sanitary sewer extensions. Those projects were located in the Cities of Greendale (1), Oak Creek (1), and West Allis (1), and the Village of Brown Deer (1).

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