

THE REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN— A BRIEF REVIEW AND STATUS REPORT

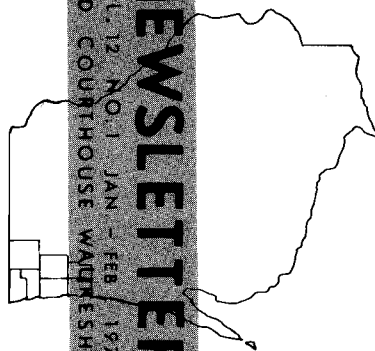
On January 19, 1972, the Commission and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development jointly sponsored a Conference on Land Use Policies and Regional Growth Strategies in Southeastern Wisconsin. The Conference was designed to inform local public officials and concerned citizens of the growing interest at the national and state levels of government in guiding and shaping land use development. Although decisions concerning land use development in Wisconsin traditionally have been delegated to the local level of government, the remarks made by several speakers at the conference indicate an increasing interest in such decisions at the state and national levels of government. The holding of a conference on land use development and growth strategies in the Region at this point in time provides an appropriate opportunity to review the status of areawide land use planning in southeastern Wisconsin, so that such efforts can be gauged against the land use policy implications rapidly becoming apparent at the state and national levels.

While land use planning has been carried on for many years by most local units of government in the Region, it was not until the Commission established its regional land use-transportation planning program in 1963 that the areawide basis essential to sound land use planning within a rapidly urbanizing region such as southeastern Wisconsin was provided. It was recognized that a regional land use plan was not only an essential

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN—continued

basis for the preparation of other functional regional plan elements, such as transportation, sanitary sewerage, drainage and flood control, and water supply plan elements, but also for the preservation and wise use of the underlying and sustaining natural resource base and for the preparation of meaningful local land use plans. After three and one-half years of very intensive work, the Commission adopted a regional land use plan on December 1, 1966. Thus, areawide land use planning and land use policy formulation efforts in southeastern Wisconsin predated not only the renewed interest at the state and federal levels of government in land use development decision-making, but also the recent efforts on the part of many governmental agencies and citizen groups to improve, protect, and sustain the overall quality of the environment.

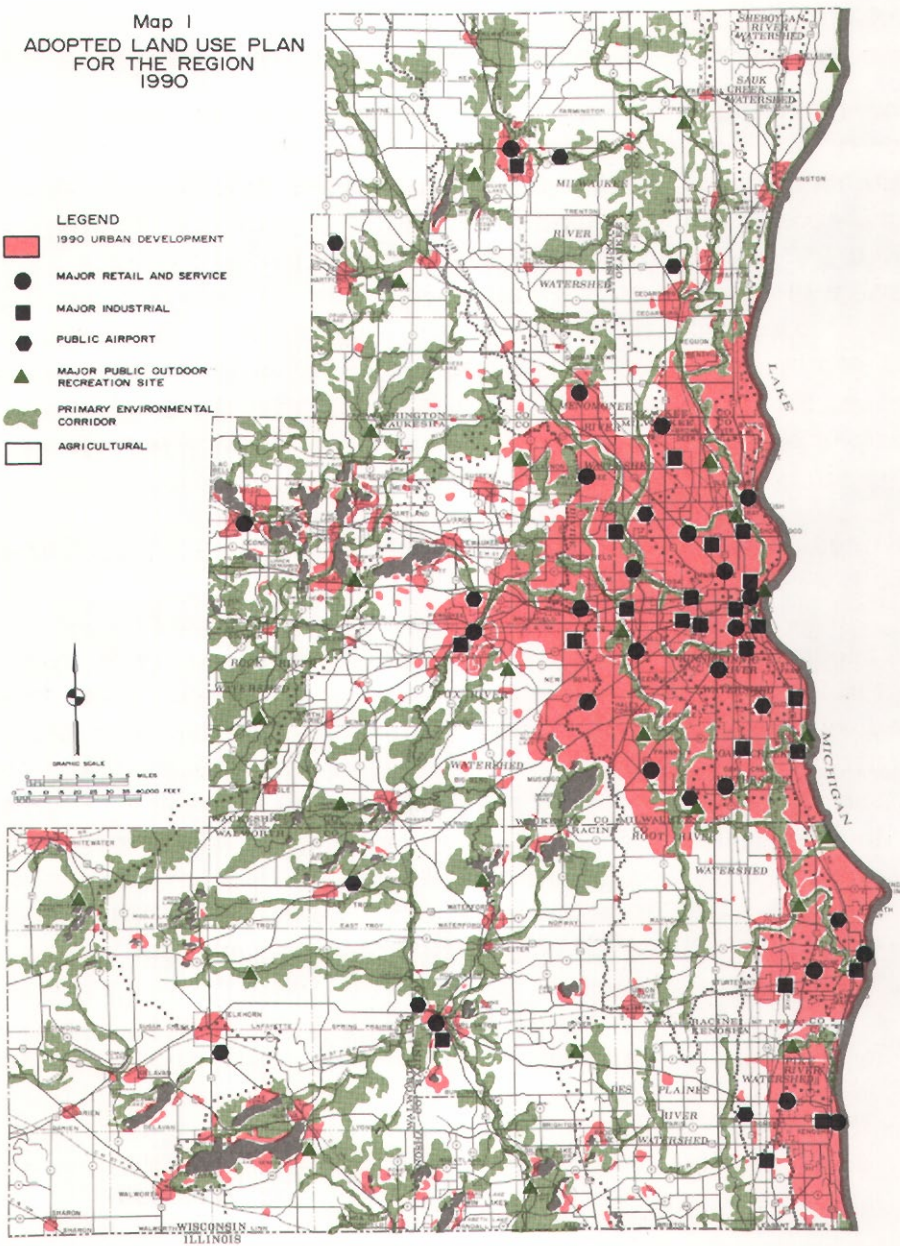
Regional Land Use Plan—1990

The adopted regional land use plan reflects a conscious continuation of historic development trends within the Region, with urban development proposed to continue to occur outward from existing urban centers within the Region (see Map 1). The adopted plan, as a controlled existing trend plan, was selected after consideration of several other alternatives, including a corridor plan, a satellite city plan, and an unplanned "urban sprawl" alternative. The plan was prepared by the Commission through the use of advisory committees, including representatives from local and state governments and from private interests from throughout the Region. The adopted plan places heavy emphasis upon the continued effect of the urban land market in determining the location, intensity, and character of future development within the Region. It does, however, propose to regulate the effect of this market on development in order to provide for a more orderly and economical regional land use pattern and to avoid intensification of areawide developmental and environmental problems.

The land use plan seeks to meet the physical, economic, and social needs of the Region by allocating sufficient land to each of the various land use categories to satisfy the known and anticipated demand for each

Map 1
ADOPTED LAND USE PLAN
FOR THE REGION
1990

- LEGEND
- 1990 URBAN DEVELOPMENT
 - MAJOR RETAIL AND SERVICE
 - MAJOR INDUSTRIAL
 - PUBLIC AIRPORT
 - MAJOR PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION SITE
 - PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR
 - AGRICULTURAL



REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN—continued

use, incorporating to the extent possible proposals contained in existing community development plans and zoning ordinances. The plan proposes to accommodate the forecast growth in employment and population through the conversion of approximately 200 square miles of land from rural to urban use during the 25-year planning period ending in 1990, or an average of about 8 square miles per year. The population density within the developed urban area of the Region would, following recent trends, continue to decrease, but at a significantly slower rate than during the period 1950 to 1963, decreasing from a density of about 4,800 persons per square mile in 1963 to about 4,300 persons per square mile by 1990.

The adopted regional land use plan contains, quite simply, four very basic policy recommendations:

1. The guidance of future urban development into those areas of the Region which are both covered by soils well-suited to such development and which can readily be provided with essential urban services, particularly gravity drainage sanitary sewer and public water supply services. These areas are, in general, located in the red areas shown on Map 1. The areas recommended for urban growth are adjacent to existing concentrations of urban development within the Region, concentrations now served by essential public utilities and community facilities. Thus, these existing utility systems could readily be extended to serve new urban development. In this way, not only can maximum advantage be taken of the existing public utility systems in the Region and of the large capital investments made therein, but other public facilities and services, such as schools, libraries, parks, and police and fire protection can be readily provided through the expansion of existing systems.
2. The preservation and protection of the primary environmental corridors of the Region in order to enhance the overall quality

REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN—continued

of the regional environment, lend form and structure to urban development, and facilitate attainment of a balanced outdoor recreation program. These primary environmental corridors contain the best remaining potential park and related open-space sites; the best remaining woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat areas; many of the scenic, historic, scientific, and cultural sites; and all of the surface water resources of the Region and associated undeveloped shorelands and floodlands. The preservation of these primary environmental corridors in essentially natural open uses is absolutely essential to the preservation and wise use of the natural resource base; to the enrichment of the physical, intellectual, and spiritual development of the resident population; to the enhancement of aesthetic values; and to the maintenance of a sound ecological balance within the Region.

3. The protection and preservation of the best remaining prime agricultural areas within the Region for agricultural and related open-space use. This policy recommendation recognizes that agricultural areas in an urbanizing Region serve not only an important economic function, but also contribute significantly to maintaining the ecological balance, lend form and structure to urban development, and provide an important land reserve for presently unforeseen urban and rural development needs.
4. The development of the urban areas of the Region as a series of recognizable neighborhood units rather than as a formless urban mass. Thus, new urban development in the Region would not only be properly served by essential public utilities, such as sanitary sewer and water supply service, but would also contain within the immediate vicinity of each dwelling unit the full complement of public facilities needed by the family in its daily activities, such as elementary school and church, local park, and convenience shopping facilities. The efficient provision of community

REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN—continued

facilities and services to recognizable neighborhood units would provide for the development of stable residential areas containing a wide range of housing types, designs, and costs, and would provide a most desirable environment for family life. This policy recommendation is partly a matter of providing a quiet, safe, healthful, and attractive residential environment; partly a matter of providing convenience in living and traveling within the urban area; partly a matter of recognizing and supplying public services and facilities more efficiently and economically; and partly a matter of bringing the size of an area in which an urban family lives into a human scale, within which the family and its individual members can feel at home, and within which the individual can take a more active part in community affairs.

The foregoing policy recommendations contained in the adopted regional land use plan are simple, yet fundamental. Implementation of these policy recommendations by the many units and agencies of government having authority in southeastern Wisconsin to make urban and rural land development decisions can only result in a more economic, efficient, healthful, and satisfying living environment. The precise urban land use pattern which would eventually evolve from carrying out these very basic policy recommendations cannot be precisely determined in advance. For this reason, the regional land use plan, as depicted in graphic form on Map 1, provides a recommended pattern of future land use that is general in nature. The plan is and should be a flexible guide to the making of development decisions within the Region on a day-to-day basis. More detailed community and neighborhood unit land use planning, following the spirit of the four basic policy recommendations described above, are the essential means for ultimately determining precise locations for land use development within the Region and its various subareas.

Land Use in Southeastern Wisconsin—1970

As part of its continuing comprehensive planning effort, the Commission updated in 1970 the regional land use inventory in order to record

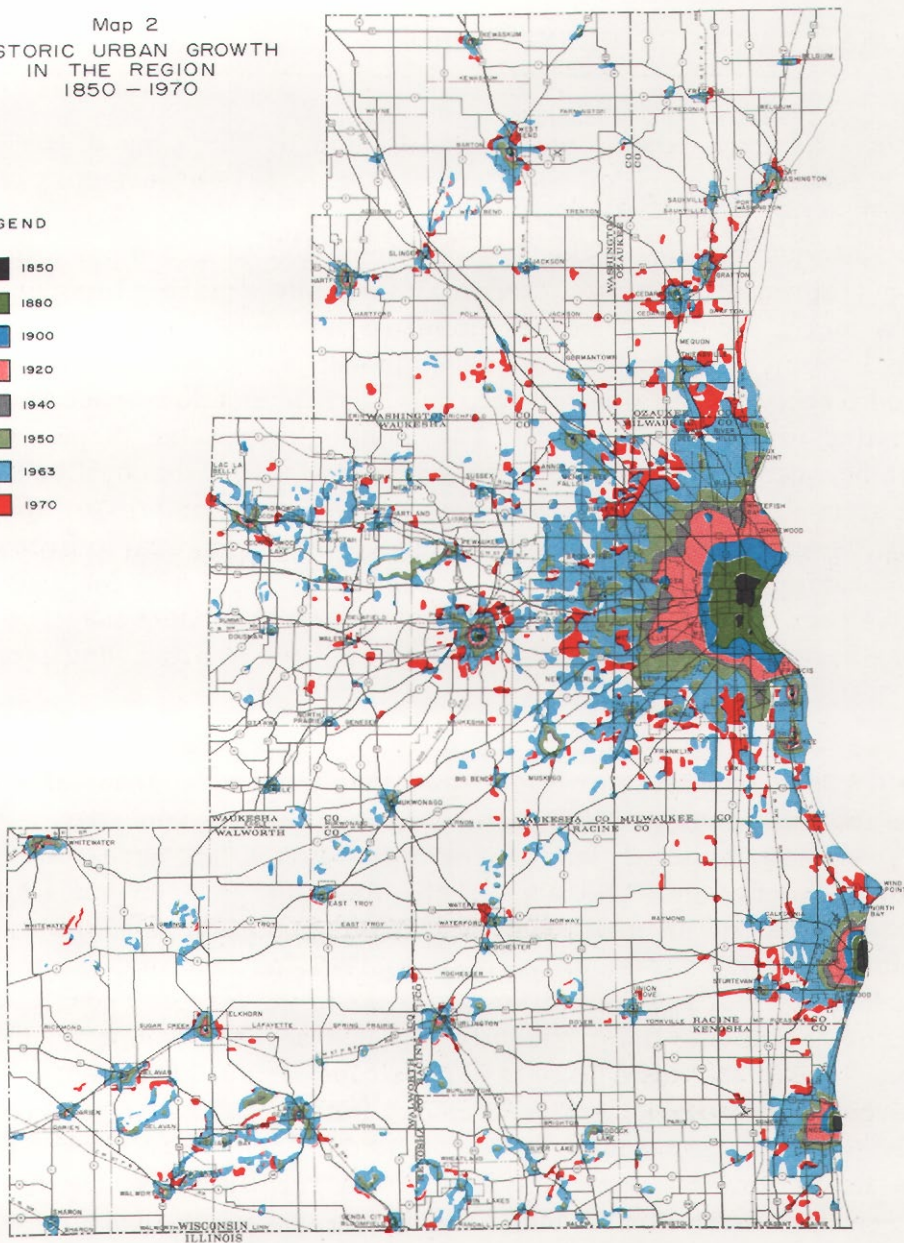
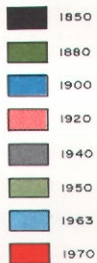
REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN—continued

land uses as they existed within the Region at the time of the 1970 U. S. Census of Population and Housing. This 1970 reinventory of land use within the Region indicated that, between 1963 and 1970, approximately 96 square miles of land were committed to urban use within the Region, representing a rate of approximately 14 square miles per year. Of this total, about half were committed in areas contiguous to, and outward from, existing urban development as recommended in the adopted plan; with the other half committed in locations noncontiguous to existing urban development. The location within the Region of the growth between 1963 and 1970 is shown on Map 2. Of the total 96 square miles of land committed to urban use between 1963 and 1970, approximately 80 square miles were actually converted from rural to urban use; and approximately 16 square miles remain in rural or open land uses but have been surrounded or encroached upon to the extent that they must be considered to have been effectively committed to urban development.

The 1970 land use inventory indicated that the predominant land uses within the Southeastern Wisconsin Region are still nonurban in character, with agricultural land use totaling 1,039,635 acres, or more than 60 percent of the total area of the Region, and open lands totaling 343,139 acres, or an additional 20 percent of the Region. Urban land uses total 338,326 acres, or approximately 20 percent of the total area of the Region, with residential land uses being the largest areas of urban land uses, occupying approximately 156,000 acres, or 9 percent of the Region. In 1963 the residential land uses totaled 129,000 acres, or about 7.5 percent of the Region. The inventory further indicated that approximately six of the 693 square miles of prime agricultural land existing in the Region in 1963 were converted from rural to urban use by 1970, representing a reduction of one percent, and that more than 11.8 square miles of woodlands and 1.4 square miles of wetlands were converted from rural to urban use in the seven-year period, a reduction of 5.8 and 1.2 percent of such uses, respectively.

Map 2
HISTORIC URBAN GROWTH
IN THE REGION
1850 - 1970

LEGEND



REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN—continued

Plan Implementation—Major Regional Centers

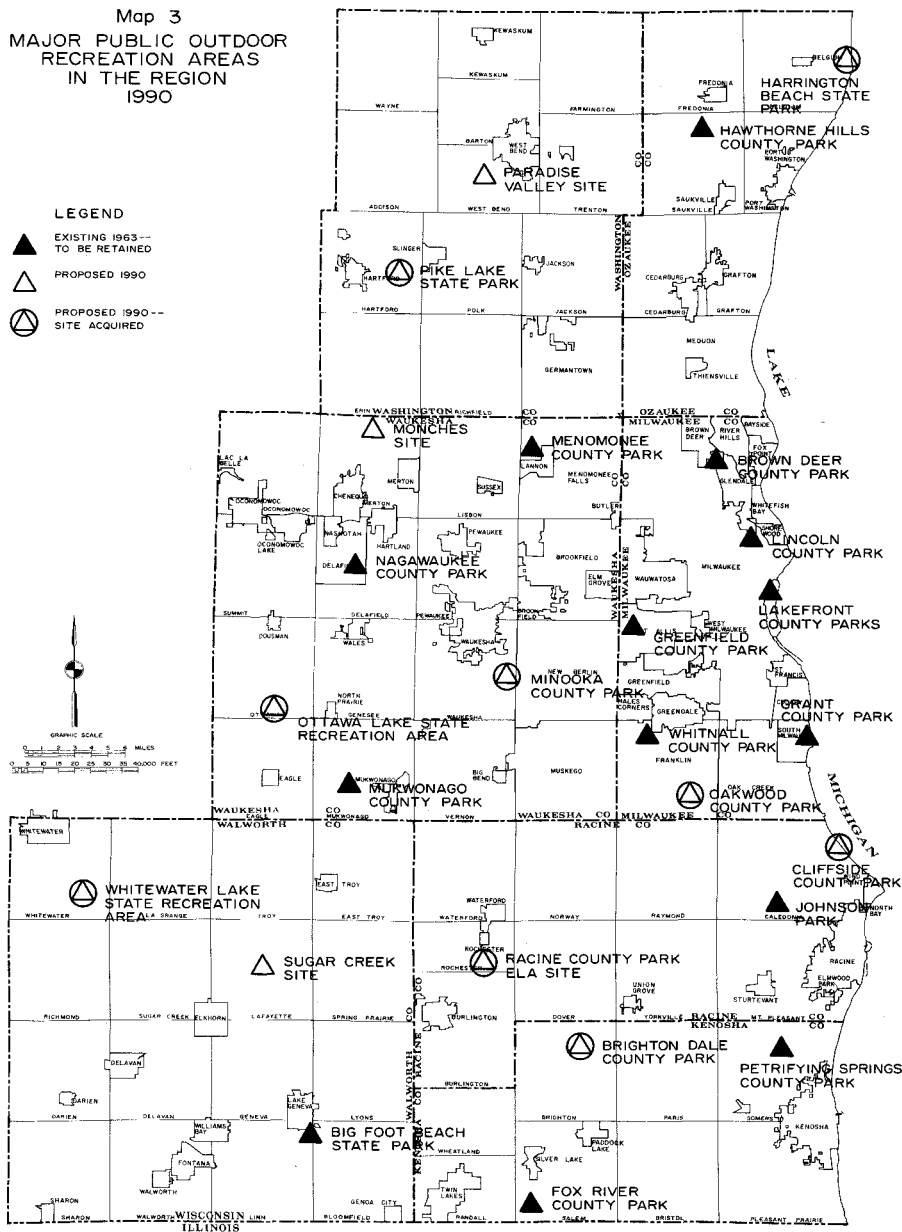
The Commission is currently analyzing the results of the 1970 existing land use reinventory in order to provide a firm base upon which to determine the extent of actual land use plan implementation, particularly with respect to the spatial allocation of land uses within the Region. Although the full analysis of the 1970 land use reinventory is currently pending, preliminary analyses permit comments at this time regarding the status of the major retail and service, major industrial, and major outdoor recreation sites which are of regional significance and which have been included in the 1990 regional land use plan.

The adopted regional land use plan recommends that 12 entirely new major regional parks be established within the Region by 1990. Each of these recreation areas are recommended to have a minimum site area of 250 acres and are to be located where high value recreational resources suitable for multi-purpose outdoor recreational use are found. By the end of 1970, nine of the 12 recommended new regional park sites had been acquired by public agencies, with significant development having been undertaken at seven of the nine sites. Perhaps the most significant of these new regional park sites is the Harrington Beach State Park, being developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at the Quarry Lake potential park site on Lake Michigan in Ozaukee County, a site which was identified in a 1964 Commission inventory as the best remaining park site in the Region. The location and status of each of the 12 proposed new major regional parks in the Region is shown on Map 3.

The adopted regional land use plan recommends the development of 10 new major retail and service centers within the Region by 1990. Each of these centers would be located on a site at least 70 acres in area with good arterial street access. By the end of 1970, three of these 10 sites were either fully developed or under development as major shopping centers. Of the remaining seven sites, four have been properly zoned for future major commercial development by the local units of govern-

Map 3
MAJOR PUBLIC OUTDOOR
RECREATION AREAS
IN THE REGION
1990

- LEGEND**
- ▲ EXISTING 1983 --
TO BE RETAINED
 - △ PROPOSED 1990
 - ⊙ PROPOSED 1990 --
SITE ACQUIRED



REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN--continued

ment concerned. The 1970 reinventory of land uses within the Region revealed, furthermore, that no incompatible urban development had intruded upon any of the remaining seven designated regional commercial sites. One major retail and service center, however, has been developed at a site in the Village of Greendale approximately four miles north of a site recommended in the adopted plan. Map 4 shows the location and status of all new regional retail and service centers in the Region.

The adopted regional land use plan recommends that six new major industrial centers be developed within the Region by 1990. Each of these centers would be at least 640 acres, or about one square mile, in area. By the end of 1970, significant industrial development had already occurred at each of the six designated new sites. A total of 6,430 acres of land has either been developed for industrial land use, prepared for such development, or set aside for such use in the local zoning ordinance at the six designated sites. Of this aggregate total, 1,148 acres were actually developed for industrial and related land uses as of April 1970. The location of all existing and proposed major industrial centers in the Region is shown on Map 5.

SEWRPC NOTES

ELECTION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS

Pursuant to Commission By-laws, the annual election of Commission Officers was held at the Commission Quarterly Meeting on December 2, 1971, in the Milwaukee County Courthouse. The Commission unanimously approved the election of the following Officers for calendar year 1972: Mr. George C. Berteau, Racine County, who was reelected to his 11th term as Chairman; Mr. James F. Egan, Ozaukee County, who was reelected to his third term as Vice-Chairman; Mr. Richard W. Cutler, Milwaukee County, who was reelected to his eighth term as Secretary;

Map 4
MAJOR RETAIL AND
SERVICE CENTERS
IN THE REGION
1990

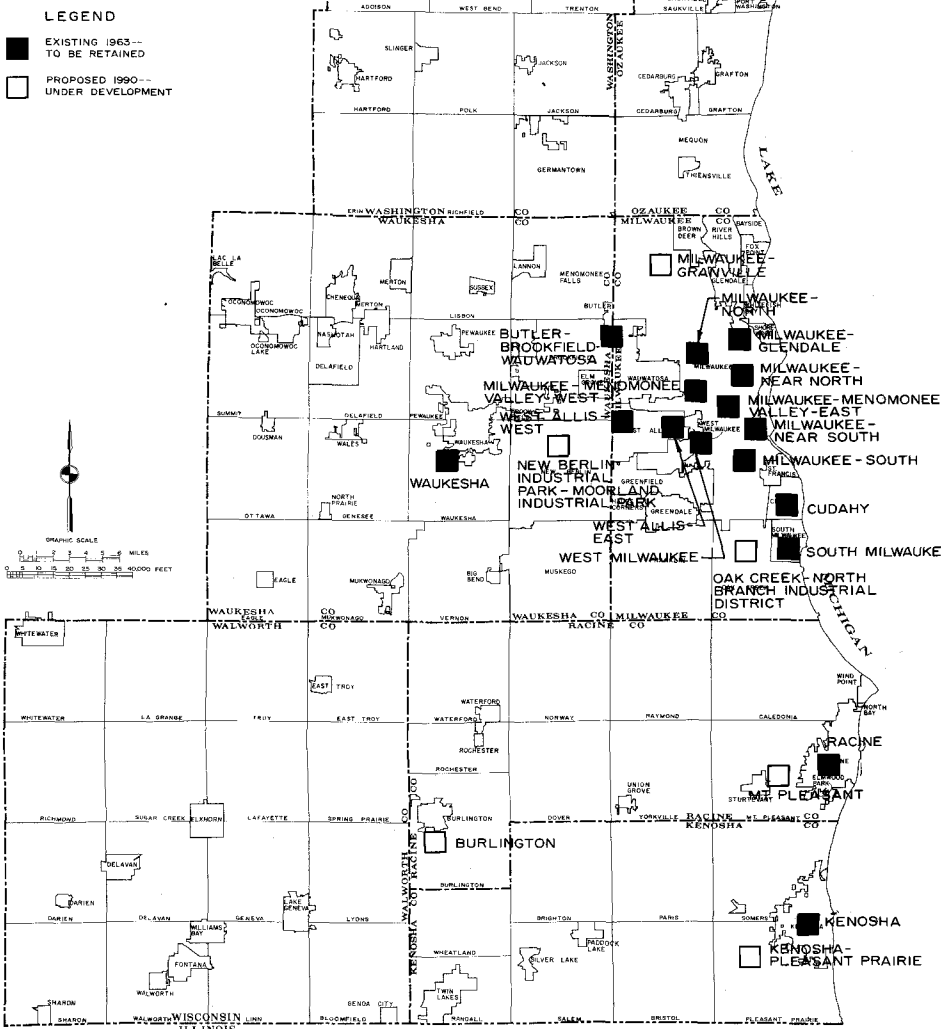
LEGEND

- EXISTING 1963 --
TO BE RETAINED
- ◐ EXISTING 1963 --
NOT TO BE RETAINED
- PROPOSED 1990
- △ PROPOSED 1990 -- DEVELOPED
OR UNDER DEVELOPMENT
- ◑ EXISTING 1970 --
LOCATION NOT IN
CONFORMANCE WITH
REGIONAL LAND USE
PLAN

GRAPHIC SCALE
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 60 70 80 90 100 FEET

Map 4 displays the distribution of major retail and service centers in the region for the year 1990. The map includes a legend defining the symbols used: solid black circles for existing centers to be retained, grid-patterned circles for existing centers not to be retained, open circles for proposed 1990 centers, triangles for proposed 1990 centers under development or development, and circles with a horizontal line for existing 1970 centers not in conformance with the regional land use plan. The map shows a concentration of centers in the Milwaukee area, with labels for West Bend, Racine, Kenosha, Burlington, and various locations in the Milwaukee and Madison areas. The map also shows county boundaries and major roads.

MAJOR INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
IN THE REGION
1990



and Mr. Joseph A. Schmitz, Washington County, who was reelected to his fourth term as Treasurer. Appointments to the four standing committees of the Commission—Executive, Planning and Research, Administrative, and Intergovernmental and Public Relations—will be announced early in 1972.

COMMISSION CHANGES ANNOUNCED

Two members of the Commission—Mr. Milton F. LaPour, Racine County and Mr. Henry S. Lauterbach, Walworth County—have recently resigned from the Commission. Mr. LaPour, who was one of former Governor Gaylord A. Nelson's original appointees to the Commission at the time of its creation in 1960, resigned his gubernatorial appointment to the Commission effective December 31, 1971, for personal reasons. Mr. LaPour, an engineer by education, began his professional career in 1925 in the real estate brokerage business. In 1932 he joined the staff of the Federal Home Owners Loan Corporation and progressed with that agency to the position of Deputy Assistant General Manager with offices in Washington, D. C. In 1940, he resigned from federal service to return to private business in the Racine area, and has since then been a prominent civic leader, appraiser, realtor, land developer, and mortgage banker in the Racine area. Mr. LaPour has been very active in civic affairs, devoting approximately one-third of his time to such affairs. He provided the citizen leadership for the formulation of the Racine Unified School District, and serves on the boards of directors of private educational institutions in the Racine area. With his extensive experience in land development and mortgage banking, Mr. LaPour brought to the Commission during the past 11 years invaluable knowledge and experience which were instrumental in shaping many of the basic concepts and principles embraced by the Commission, and which were reflected in the plan preparation and implementation processes adopted by the Commission. With his considerable business acumen, Mr. LaPour also provided sound administrative guidance to the Commission, serving as Chairman of the Administrative Committee for 10 years. During that

time he played the leading role in the establishment of fiscal and personnel policies of the Commission, in its accounting and office practices, and in the selection and maintenance of its physical quarters, and thereby provided the foundation upon which the Commission could build its work program.

Mr. Lauterbach, President and Chief Executive of Sta-Rite Products, Inc., Delavan, also resigned his gubernatorial appointment to the Commission on December 31, 1971, because of the press of personal business. Commission Chairman George C. Berteau, who has represented Kenosha County on the Commission since its inception, was appointed by Governor Patrick J. Lucey to fill the unexpired term from Racine County of Mr. LaPour. Mr. Berteau resigned his appointment to the Commission from Kenosha County, having moved his law practice to Racine County. No appointments have yet been made to fill the Commission vacancies created in Kenosha and Walworth Counties.

COMMISSION STAFF CHANGES ANNOUNCED

Two key Commission staff members—Mr. William E. Creger, Chief Transportation Planning Engineer, and Mr. Eugene E. Molitor, Chief of Planning Research—have recently resigned their positions with the Commission to accept highly responsible jobs outside the Region. Mr. Creger has accepted the position of Urban Transportation Planning Engineer with the Iowa State Highway Commission. Mr. Molitor has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Western Wisconsin Health Planning Organization, Inc., LaCrosse. Both Mr. Creger and Mr. Molitor have played important Commission staff roles since the initiation of the regional land use-transportation study in 1963.

Mr. Mark P. Green has been appointed Chief Transportation Planning Engineer to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Creger's resignation. Mr. Green, who has a BS in civil engineering from Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, has been associated with the Commission

staff since 1963, and has been a Senior Transportation Engineer in the Commission's Transportation Planning Division. The functions formerly carried out under the direction of Mr. Molitor have been separated into two Commission staff divisions. Mr. Michael J. Keidel has been appointed Chief of Planning Research and will be responsible for those functions dealing with population, economics, and public financial resource analyses. He has a BS in economics from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Mr. Bruce P. Rubin has been appointed Chief Housing Planner and will be responsible for carrying out Commission functions relating to housing. The creation of a new staff division to deal exclusively with the housing problems of the Region reflects the growing importance assigned by the Commission to that function. Mr. Rubin has a BBA in marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

In addition, Mr. Donald N. Drews has been appointed Administrative Officer with responsibility for Commission functions of a housekeeping nature. Mr. Drews has a BBA in accounting from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Mr. Sheldon W. Sullivan, formerly Administrative Officer, has been appointed Chief of Data Collection for the Commission with responsibility for the conduct of a new major trip origin-destination study to determine travel habits and patterns within the Region, a survey proposed to be conducted by the Commission in 1972 in cooperation with the State and Federal Departments of Transportation.

AROUND THE REGION

FLOODLAND ZONING ORDINANCES ADOPTED

Actions designed to prohibit the intrusion of incompatible urban land uses into the floodlands of the Fox River have been taken by the Villages of Rochester and Waterford in Racine County and the Village of

AROUND THE REGION—continued

Menomonee Falls in Waukesha County. These important community actions meet the floodland and shoreland zoning requirements of the State Water Resources Act of 1965, and serve to implement the adopted comprehensive plan for the Fox River Watershed prepared by the Commission in 1970.

The Village of Rochester, on August 3, 1971, adopted its first zoning ordinance, which included the floodland regulations. The Village of Waterford on June 14, 1971, adopted a new zoning ordinance which also included the floodland regulations. On July 19, 1971, the Menomonee Falls Village Board amended its existing zoning ordinance to include the floodland regulations. The Commission assisted all three communities in preparing the regulations.

QUESTION BOX

HOW MANY UNITS AND AGENCIES OF GOVERNMENT HAVE ADOPTED THE REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN?

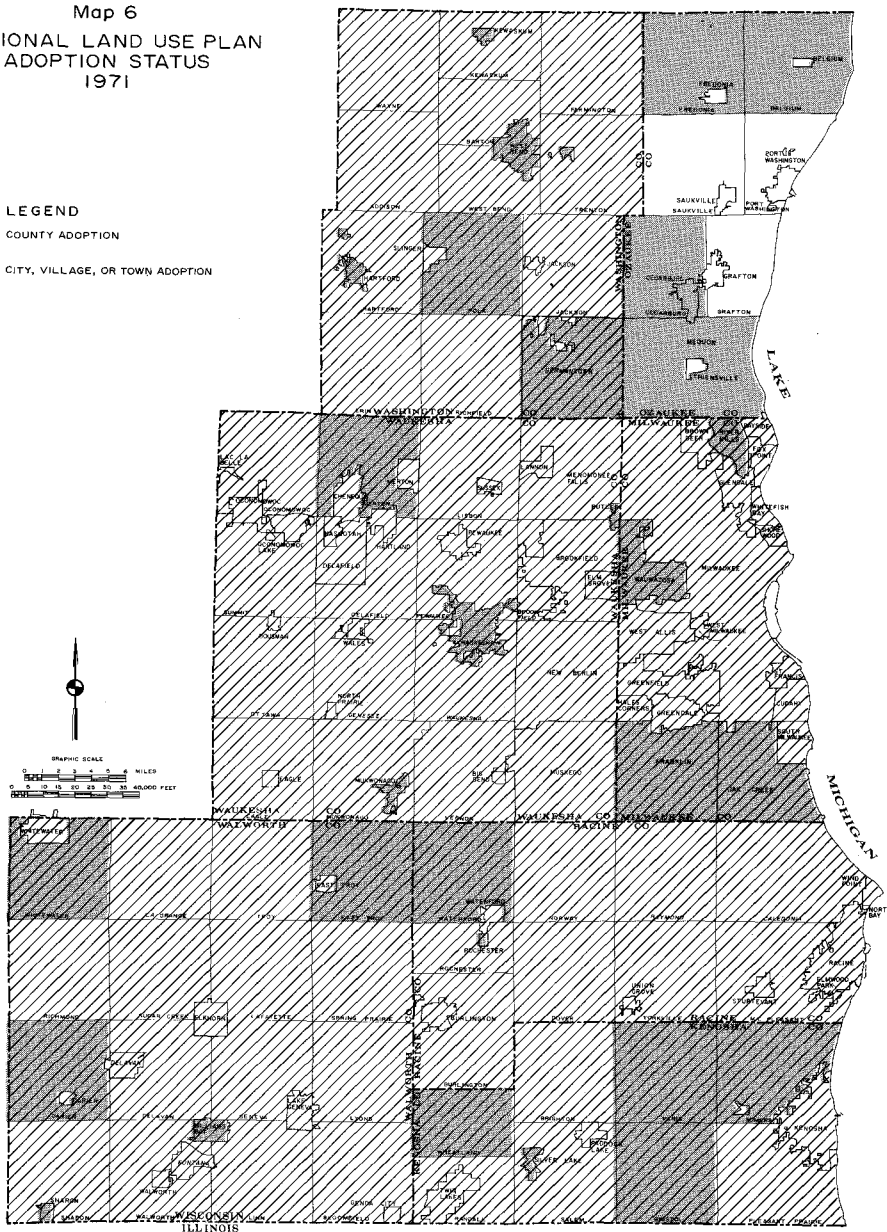
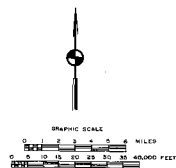
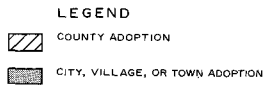
The Commission has recommended that the constituent county and local units of government, as well as certain local, areawide, and state agencies of government, formally consider and adopt any regional plan elements, including the regional land use plan, upon certification of the completion and adoption at the regional level of the various plan elements. While plan adoption does not per se result in plan implementation, it is important that implementing units and agencies of government formally consider and adopt plan elements in order to provide a proper framework for the making of community development decisions, not only by public officials but also by private investors within the Region. Adoption of a plan element by a governing body signifies to all

QUESTION BOX—continued

concerned an intent to use the plan as a guide when considering various development proposals submitted to it on a day-to-day basis. It is important that plan adoption not be considered as creating an inflexible mold to which all future development must precisely conform. Rather, adopted plans should be regarded as a point of departure against which development proposals can be evaluated as they arise, and in light of which better development decisions can be made. In the case of regional plans, plan adoption is highly desirable in order to secure a common understanding of areawide development objectives and to permit necessary plan implementation work to be cooperatively programmed and jointly executed.

To date, the regional land use plan has been adopted by six of the seven counties in the Region—Ozaukee County being the single exception—and by 8 cities, 10 villages, and 13 towns (see Map 6). Thus, at the county level, a total of more than 2,454 square miles, or 91 percent of the area of the Region, containing 1,701,600 persons, or 97 percent of the population of the Region, is represented by counties which have adopted the regional land use plan. Supplementing these important county actions are local government plan adoptions representing about 620 square miles, or 23 percent of the area of the Region, and 223,000 persons, or 13 percent of the population of the Region. In addition, the regional land use plan has been adopted or endorsed by the State Highway Commission of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Conservation Commission (predecessor to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board), the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee (predecessor to the State Soil Conservation Board), the Milwaukee County Expressway and Transportation Commission, the Milwaukee County Park Commission, the Walworth County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Waukesha County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Kenosha County Park Commission, the Racine County Park and Highway Committee, and the Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission. The plan has also been endorsed by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce.

Map 6
REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN
ADOPTION STATUS
1971



QUOTABLE QUOTE.....

"Nature consists of interacting ecological systems which require certain continuities of space. Nature is not something that can be cut up into little pieces and passed around for private possession. If land ownership is seen in this light it will become clear that the current practice of subdividing outlying areas into two- or three-acre lots is the very worst kind of division of the land. It disrupts natural drainage by artificial grading of streets and building sites, destroys natural colonies of growth by clearing for lawns and cutting trees, and ruins the enjoyment of open country, whether plains, fields, or woodlands.

"Continuation of such subdivision development on a large scale forces the population growth that occurs to spread thinly over a large area ruining the terrain as open country. If the lots were larger, the opportunity for retaining the essential character of open country would be provided. If the lots were smaller, any given population increase would be housed in a much smaller total area, thus reducing the amount of open country taken over for urban expansion.

"When viewed from the vantage point of the individual township, a two- or three-acre lot size minimum appears to be a logical protection from urban population pressure. When seen in terms of its impact on the region as a whole, this provision is neither desirable nor economically efficient because it forces urbanization over too great an area.

"Suburbanites, as they rush into the open country in an attempt to secure a portion of nature, destroy the very quality they seek by fragmenting nature where it cannot be fragmented and still remain natural.

"From this we can conclude that if one seeks to own nature, one must own a plot of land large enough to assure that nature is not disturbed by the housing needs of the land owner. Minimum size of such a lot will vary according to the character of the terrain. Determination of the minimum size should be made scientifically in each area."

"7 Principles for an Urban Land Policy"

Edmund N. Bacon
Urban Land, Vol. 30, No. 4
April 1971

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