EQUITY ANALYSIS OF THE VISION 2050 LAND USE COMPONENT

APPENDIX L

INTRODUCTION

This appendix documents an evaluation of the potential impacts of the VISION 2050 land use recommendations on the Region's minority populations, low-income populations, and people with disabilities (environmental justice populations). Each of the VISION 2050 land use recommendations was evaluated based on the degree to which the Region's environmental justice populations (see Maps L.1 through L.5) would receive a proportionate share of benefits or a disproportionate share of adverse impacts compared to the Region's population as a whole.

FINDINGS

The land use recommendations focus on compact development within urban service areas, preserving environmentally significant lands, and preserving highly productive agricultural lands. The recommended plan would have numerous benefits to the Region's population, including:

- Encouraging and accommodating economic growth
- Positioning the Region to attract potential workers and employers
- Minimizing the cost of public infrastructure and services
- Minimizing impacts on natural and agricultural resources
- Minimizing impacts to water resources and air quality
- Promoting a variety of housing options near employment
- Promoting walkable neighborhoods that encourage active lifestyles and a sense of community
- Meeting the needs of the Region's aging population
- Increasing racial and economic integration throughout the Region
- Reducing the distance needed to travel between destinations
- Supporting public transit connections between housing and employment

The equity analysis concluded that all of the land use recommendations would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole and none of the recommendations would have an adverse impact on environmental justice populations. In addition, a number of recommendations would

have a positive impact on environmental justice populations. Findings regarding each of the 19 land use recommendations follow:

- **Recommendation 1.1: Develop urban service areas with a mix of housing types and land uses**
  VISION 2050 envisions that almost 90 percent of new residential development would occur in the Mixed-Use City Center, Mixed-Use Traditional Neighborhood, and Small Lot Traditional Neighborhood land use categories, which would support a mix of housing types, land uses, and public transit. The plan recommends that all local governments in urban service areas include these land use categories in their comprehensive plans as shown on Map L.6. This would allow for the development of multifamily housing and single-family homes on smaller lots that tend to be more affordable to a wider range of households than single-family homes on larger lots in areas of the Region that may have a shortage of affordable workforce housing. This would increase access to new job opportunities for low- and moderate-income households, which would have a positive impact on the Region's environmental justice populations.

- **Recommendation 1.2: Focus TOD near rapid transit and commuter rail stations**
  A significant number of jobs are envisioned to occur in TOD areas that would be in proximity to high-quality transit, providing increased access to job opportunities for populations that rely on public transit. TOD would also promote walkable neighborhoods and increase access to amenities for populations that do not drive. These characteristics of TOD would have a positive impact on the Region's environmental justice populations; however, there are concerns regarding gentrification associated with TOD. Local governments and developers are encouraged to employ mixed-income housing strategies to avoid adverse impacts on environmental justice populations (see Table L.1).

- **Recommendation 1.3: Focus new urban development in areas that can be efficiently served by essential municipal facilities and services**
  VISION 2050 recommends compact development within urban service areas because it can be served efficiently and cost-effectively with essential municipal services, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population has a whole. The compact development pattern would also support multifamily and modest single-family housing in areas of the Region that may have a shortage of affordable workforce housing, which would have a positive impact on the Region's environmental justice populations.

- **Recommendation 1.4: Encourage cluster subdivision design in residential development outside of urban service areas**
  VISION 2050 envisions accommodating the demand for homes in an open space setting on a limited basis through Rural Estate development where there would be no more than one home per five acres. Cluster subdivision design is recommended for Rural Estate development to minimize impacts on natural and agricultural resources, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

- **Recommendation 1.5: Limit low-density development outside of urban service areas**
  VISION 2050 recommends limiting Large Lot Neighborhood and Large Lot Exurban development outside of urban service areas to commitments made to such development through subdivision plats and certified survey maps approved at the beginning of the VISION 2050 planning process. Development of this nature is neither truly urban nor rural in character and generally precludes the provision of centralized sewer and water supply service and other urban amenities. Limiting this type of development would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

- **Recommendation 1.6: Provide a mix of housing types near employment supporting land uses**
  VISION 2050 recommends developing commercial land and business parks in mixed-use settings where compatible, or near a mix of housing types to avoid job-worker mismatches. This recommendation would promote accessibility between affordable workforce housing and jobs, which would have a positive impact on environmental justice populations.

- **Recommendation 1.7: Encourage and accommodate economic growth**
  Major economic activity centers are defined as areas containing concentrations of commercial and/or industrial land with at least 3,500 total employees or 2,000 retail employees. Over 60 centers have been identified that have either reached major center status or are anticipated to by 2050 based on existing employment levels and input from local governments (see Map L.7). VISION 2050 recommends continued

Table L.1
Mixed-Income Housing Strategies for TOD

Strategy	Description
Density Bonus	A density bonus is a flexible zoning regulation that allows additional residential units beyond the maximum for which a parcel is zoned in exchange for providing or preserving affordable housing units. Several local governments in the Region have adopted planned unit development (PUD) ordinances that allow for increased density as an incentive to provide public amenities. Local governments with rapid transit or commuter rail stations should develop density bonus programs or update existing PUD regulations to allow for increased density as an incentive for mixed-income housing.
Parking Regulations	Reducing the amount of required parking can lower construction costs for residential projects, and possibly be used as an incentive for including affordable housing units. A Transit Cooperative Research Program review of TOD case studies[a] found that personal vehicle trip generation was lower and transit use was higher than average for residents of TODs with high-quality transit service. The study found that the parking-to-housing-unit ratios could be lowered as much as 50 percent in TODs that have good transit connectivity to major employment centers. Lower parking ratios could result in an increase of 20 to 33 percent in the number of housing units and lower total construction costs, even with the additional units. Local governments should review parking-to-housing-unit ratio requirements for residential buildings, and consider alternatives such as shared parking with other uses in station areas.
Public/Private Partnerships	Public/private partnerships can be used as an incentive for developing mixed-income housing TOD through a number of options. Tax increment financing (TIF) can be used to publicly fund infrastructure such as parks, parking structures, and streetscape elements to encourage development. In addition, local governments can streamline rezoning and permitting processes. Land assembly and brownfields may also be issues within urban centers. Local governments can assist developers with land assembly and obtaining brownfield mitigation grants.
Targeted Funding	Government funding for affordable housing could be targeted to areas with rapid transit and commuter rail stations to encourage mixed-income TOD. An example would be to create a scoring category for the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) Qualified Allocation Plan that would provide an incentive to locate Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developments in station areas.

[a] *Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 128.*

Source: SEWRPC, 6/2024

development of the major economic activity centers in the Region to encourage economic growth, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

A focus of this recommendation includes continued development and redevelopment of long-established major centers located in areas of the Region with concentrations of environmental justice populations. Continued development and redevelopment of these centers would increase job opportunities in areas of the Region with concentrations of low-income households and high unemployment levels, which would have a positive impact on environmental justice populations. The plan also recommends a mix of housing types near outlying major centers to promote accessibility between affordable workforce housing and jobs. This would increase the potential for affordable workforce housing in areas with job opportunities that may have shortages of such housing, which would also have a positive impact on the Region's environmental justice populations.

➤ Recommendation 1.8: Provide new governmental and institutional developments in mixed-use settings

VISION 2050 envisions new governmental and institutional developments occurring in mixed-use settings to the greatest extent possible. This would increase access to populations that do not drive, which would have a positive impact on the Region's environmental justice populations.

➤ Recommendation 1.9: Provide neighborhood parks in developing residential areas

VISION 2050 recommends reserving land for parks as new residential neighborhoods are developed within urban service areas, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ Recommendation 1.10: Preserve primary environmental corridors

The Region's most important natural resources, such as lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and woodlands, among others, occur in linear patterns in the landscape. The largest and most well-connected of these linear patterns have been identified as primary environmental corridors. Preserving these corridors contributes to the health of the Region's natural resource base, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ Recommendation 1.11: Preserve secondary environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas

Other concentrations of natural resources have been identified as secondary environmental corridors or isolated natural resource areas. Preserving these areas also contributes to the health of the Region's natural resource base, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ Recommendation 1.12: Preserve natural areas and critical species habitat sites

Natural areas are tracts of land or water that contain plant and animal communities believed to be representative of the pre-European settlement landscape. Critical species habitat sites are other areas outside of natural areas that support endangered, threatened, or rare plant or animal species. The vast majority of natural areas and critical species habitat sites are located within environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas. Preserving these areas would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ Recommendation 1.13: Preserve productive agricultural land

Preserving productive agricultural lands has several benefits, including maintaining an important component of the Region's economic base, minimizing conflicts between farming operations and urban uses, and maintaining the cultural heritage of the Region. The compact development pattern recommended by VISION 2050 minimizes the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ Recommendation 1.14: Protect productive agricultural land through farmland preservation plans

The Farmland Preservation tax credit program provides an incentive for landowners to maintain lands in agricultural use. State law requires counties to adopt farmland preservation plans that identify farmland preservation areas for landowners to participate in the tax credit program. VISION 2050 recommends that areas identified in county plans as farmland preservation areas remain in agricultural use, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ Recommendation 1.15: Develop a regional food system

A number of census tracts in the Region with concentrations of environmental justice populations are "food deserts" where residents do not have access to a large grocery store. VISION 2050 recommends developing a regional food system that connects food producers, distributors, and consumers to ensure access to healthy foods throughout the entire Region. In addition to encouraging supermarkets and grocery stores near residential areas, the plan recommends that local governments consider allowing urban agriculture, such as community gardens on vacant lots, and support farmers markets as alternative sources of healthy foods. This would have a positive impact on the Region's environmental justice populations.

➤ Recommendation 1.16: Preserve areas with high groundwater recharge potential

VISION 2050 recommends preserving areas with high groundwater recharge potential because there are several benefits. Groundwater is the water supply source for about 40 percent of the Region's population. Over half of those with a groundwater supply obtain that supply from the shallow aquifer, which is directly replenished by recharge from precipitation. Replenishment of the groundwater in the shallow aquifer directly benefits those supplied by that groundwater source. In addition, groundwater benefits all parts of the Region by contributing cool water to the base flow of streams, rivers, and lakes, improving water quality and aquatic habitat. The regional water supply plan, adopted by the Commission in 2010, found that preserving areas with high groundwater recharge potential may largely be achieved through implementing the year 2035 regional land use plan. This is because the year 2035 regional land use plan recommended preserving primary environmental corridors, secondary environmental corridors, isolated natural resource areas, and prime agricultural land. VISION 2050 carries forward these recommendations, which would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ Recommendation 1.17: Reduce impervious surfaces and use environmentally sustainable development practices

The compact development pattern recommended by VISION 2050 would minimize total impervious surface coverage of new development in the Region. This development pattern in combination with required stormwater management measures would reduce future loads of pollutants delivered to the Region's streams, rivers, and lakes. This would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

➤ **Recommendation 1.18: Target brownfield sites for remediation and redevelopment**

The redevelopment of underutilized land can sometimes be constrained by contamination problems created by past industrial and commercial activities. This has given rise to the term "brownfields," which are underutilized or abandoned properties known or suspected to be environmentally contaminated. Brownfields sites, particularly abandoned properties, may have negative impacts on surrounding properties and tend to be concentrated in areas of the Region with concentrations of environmental justice populations. The focus of VISION 2050 on infill and redevelopment in these areas, including brownfield sites, would serve to revitalize underutilized or vacant properties, which would have a positive impact on the Region's environmental justice populations.

➤ **Recommendation 1.19: Preserve significant historic and cultural heritage sites**

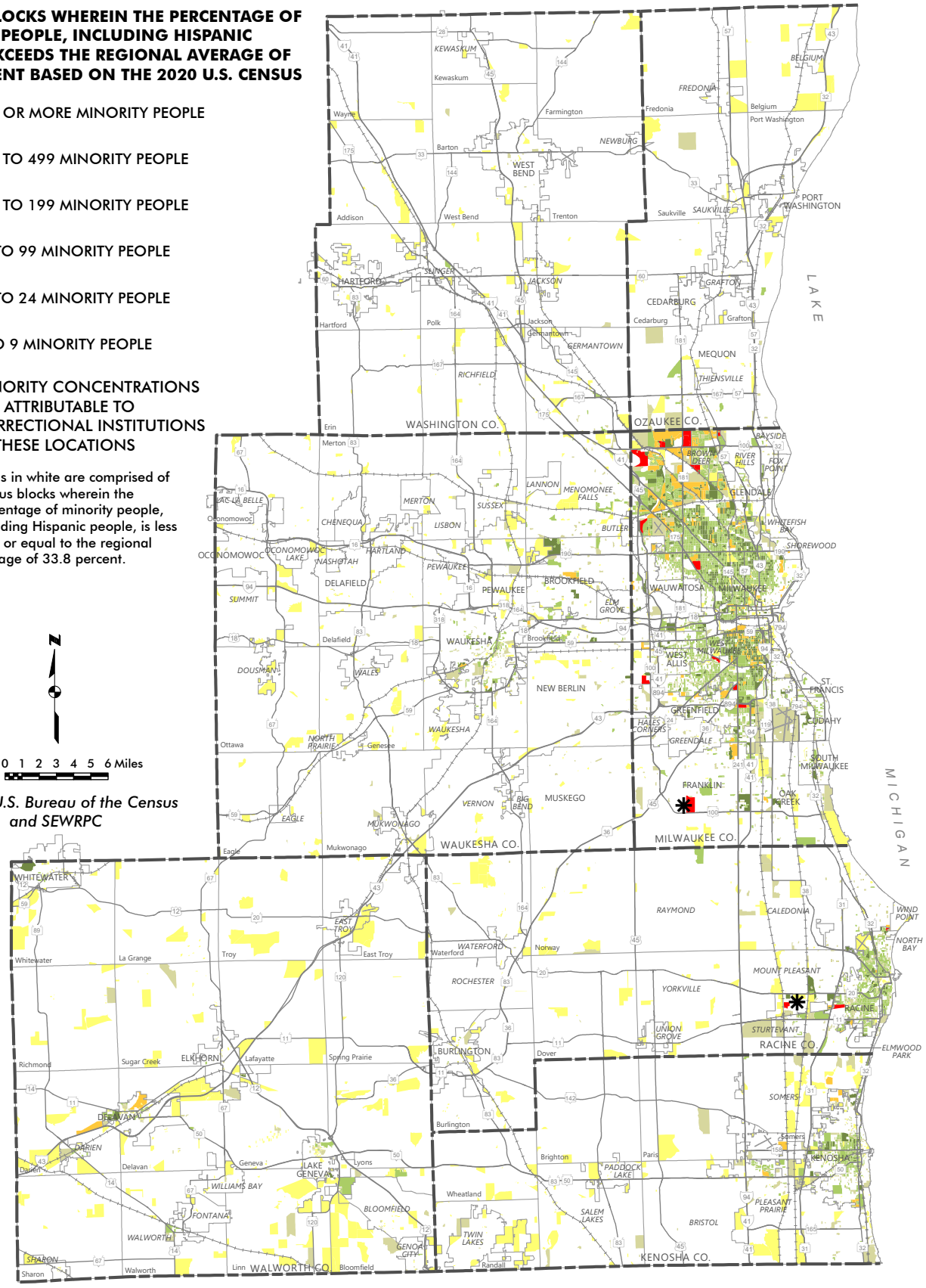
Preserving significant historic and cultural heritage sites can contribute to heritage, economy, and quality of life of communities throughout the Region. Preserving these sites would have a positive impact on the Region's population as a whole.

Map L.1
Concentrations of Total Minority Population in the Region: 2020

CENSUS BLOCKS WHEREIN THE PERCENTAGE OF MINORITY PEOPLE, INCLUDING HISPANIC PEOPLE, EXCEEDS THE REGIONAL AVERAGE OF 33.8 PERCENT BASED ON THE 2020 U.S. CENSUS

- 500 OR MORE MINORITY PEOPLE
- 200 TO 499 MINORITY PEOPLE
- 100 TO 199 MINORITY PEOPLE
- 25 TO 99 MINORITY PEOPLE
- 10 TO 24 MINORITY PEOPLE
- 1 TO 9 MINORITY PEOPLE
- * MINORITY CONCENTRATIONS ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THESE LOCATIONS

Note: Areas in white are comprised of census blocks wherein the percentage of minority people, including Hispanic people, is less than or equal to the regional average of 33.8 percent.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and SEWRPC

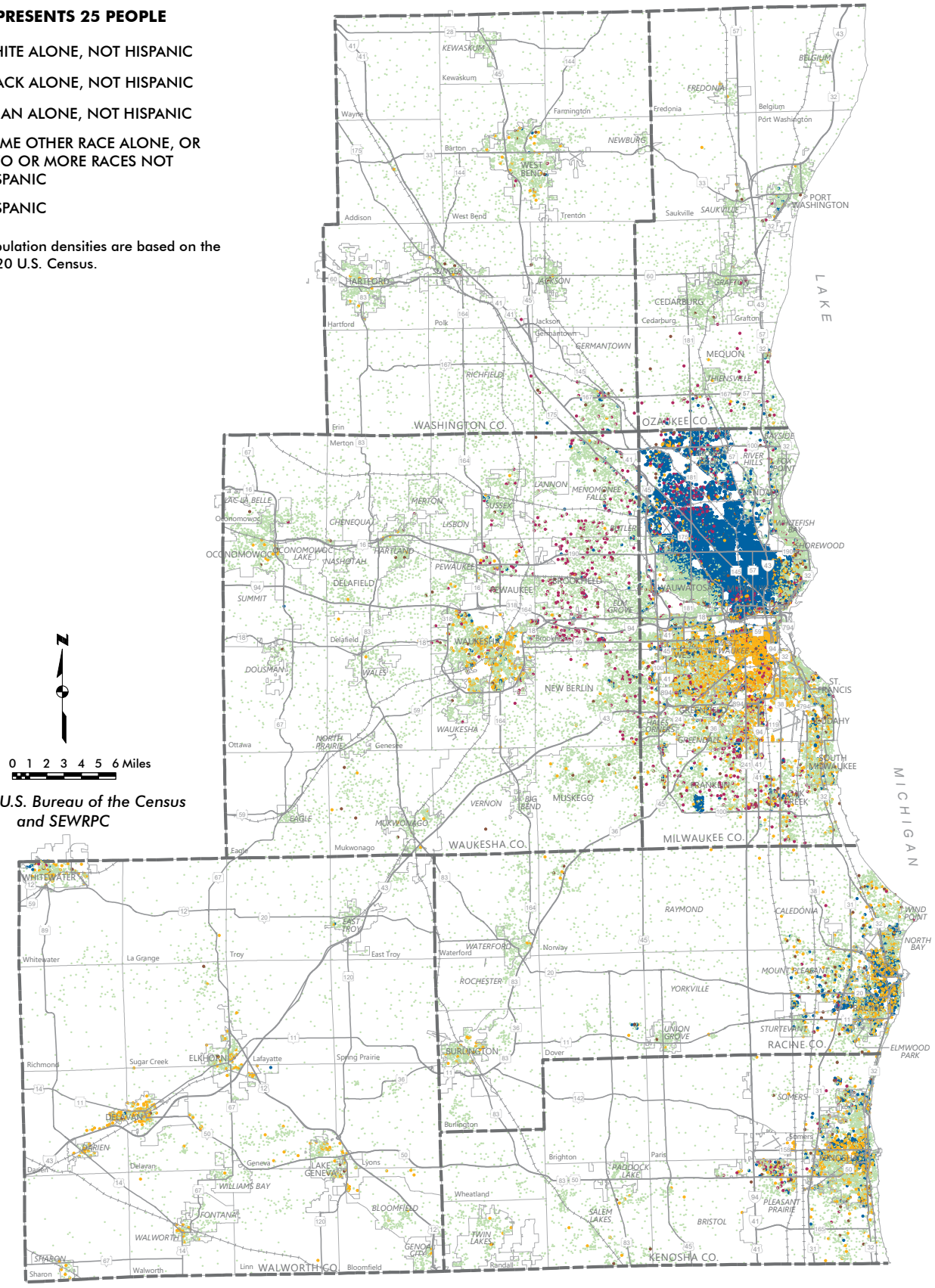
6/2024

Map L.2
Concentrations of Year 2020 Races/Ethnicities

1 DOT REPRESENTS 25 PEOPLE

- WHITE ALONE, NOT HISPANIC
- BLACK ALONE, NOT HISPANIC
- ASIAN ALONE, NOT HISPANIC
- SOME OTHER RACE ALONE, OR TWO OR MORE RACES NOT HISPANIC
- HISPANIC

Note: Population densities are based on the 2020 U.S. Census.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and SEWRPC

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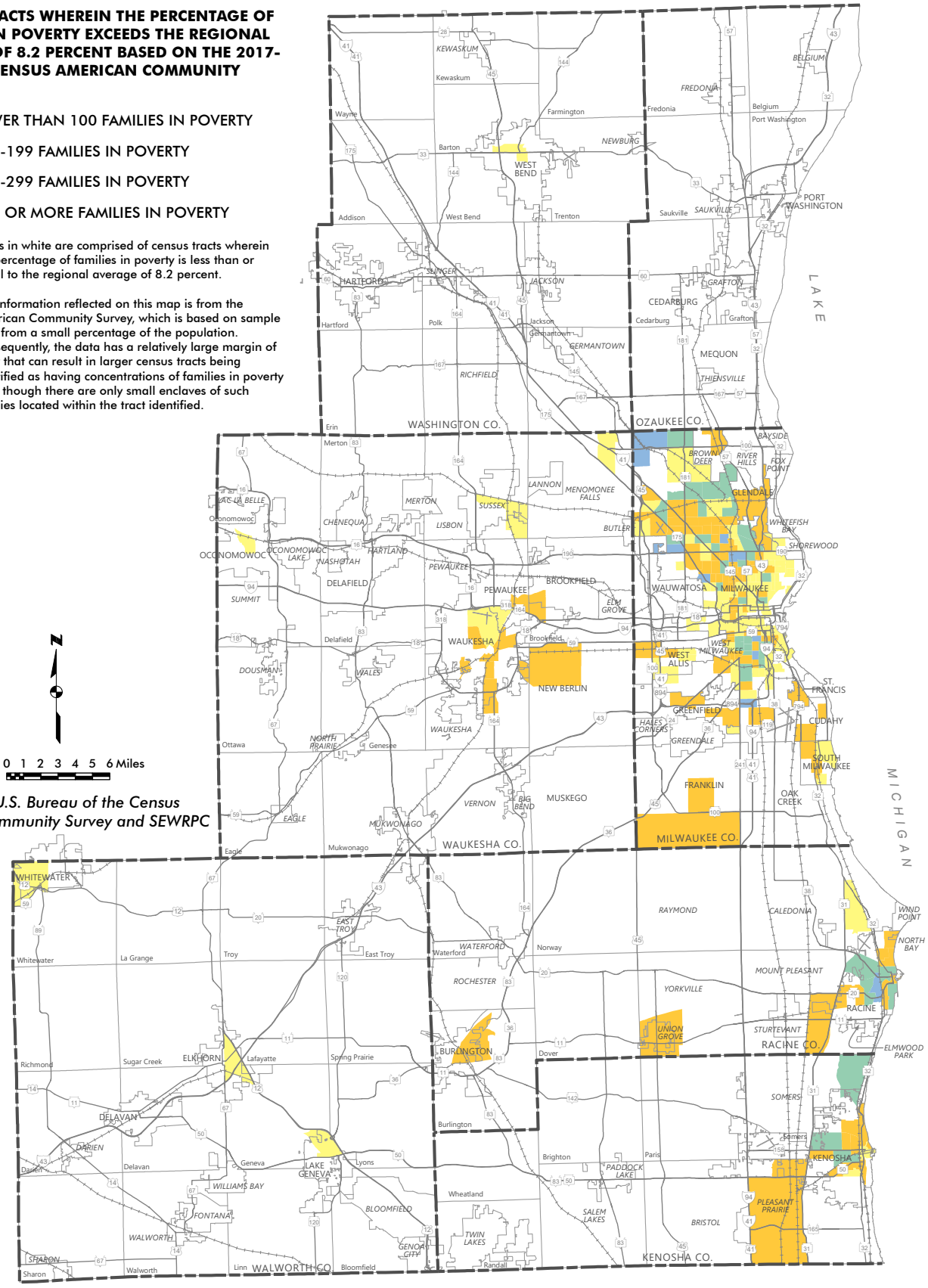
Map L.3
Concentrations of Families in Poverty in the Region: 2017-2021

CENSUS TRACTS WHEREIN THE PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES IN POVERTY EXCEEDS THE REGIONAL AVERAGE OF 8.2 PERCENT BASED ON THE 2017-2021 U.S. CENSUS AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

- FEWER THAN 100 FAMILIES IN POVERTY
- 100-199 FAMILIES IN POVERTY
- 200-299 FAMILIES IN POVERTY
- 300 OR MORE FAMILIES IN POVERTY

Notes: Areas in white are comprised of census tracts wherein the percentage of families in poverty is less than or equal to the regional average of 8.2 percent.

The information reflected on this map is from the American Community Survey, which is based on sample data from a small percentage of the population. Consequently, the data has a relatively large margin of error that can result in larger census tracts being identified as having concentrations of families in poverty even though there are only small enclaves of such families located within the tract identified.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census American Community Survey and SEWRPC

6/2024

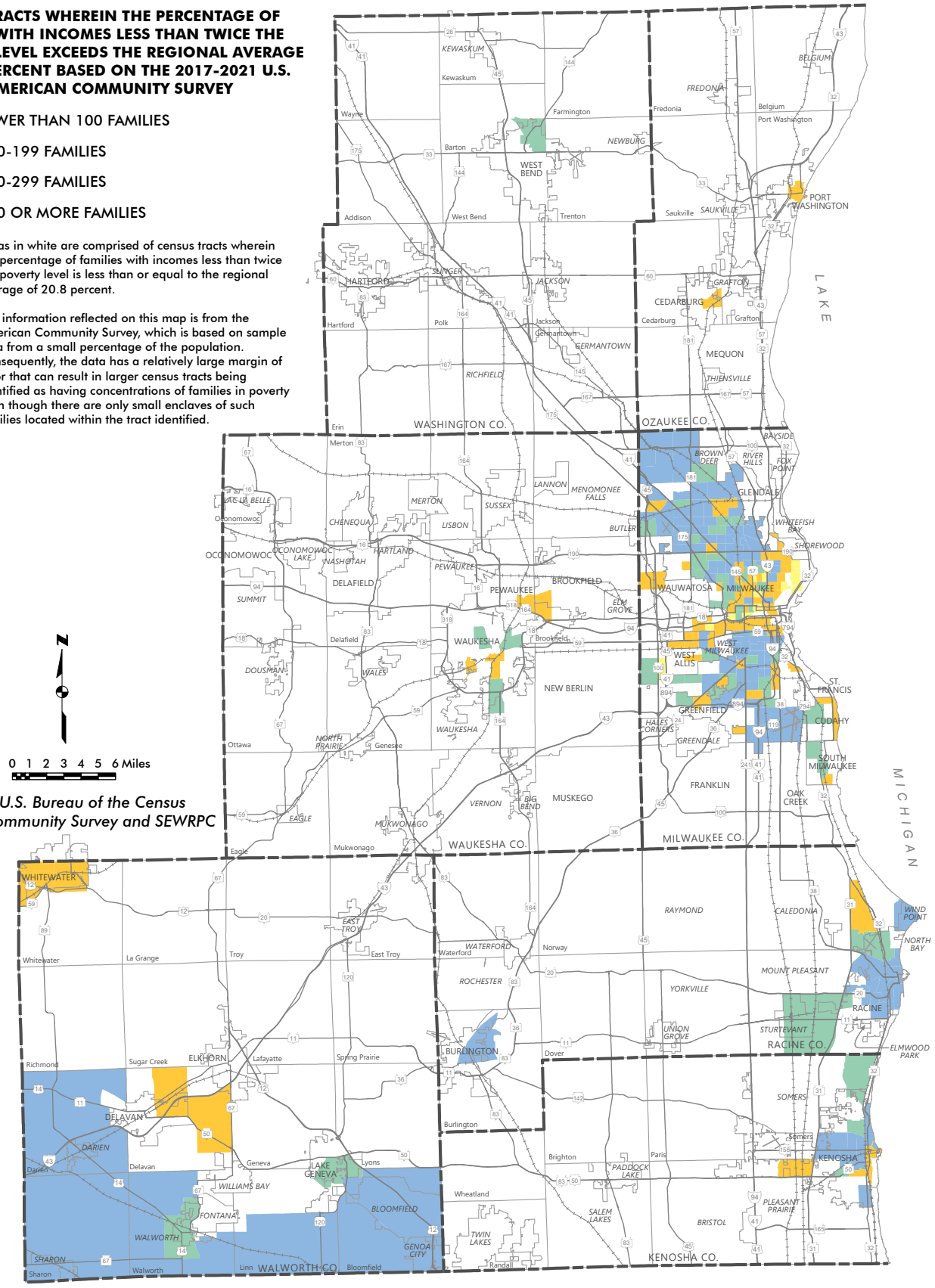
Map L.4
Concentrations of Families with Incomes Less Than Twice the Poverty Level: 2017-2021

CENSUS TRACTS WHEREIN THE PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WITH INCOMES LESS THAN TWICE THE POVERTY LEVEL EXCEEDS THE REGIONAL AVERAGE OF 20.8 PERCENT BASED ON THE 2017-2021 U.S. CENSUS AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

- FEWER THAN 100 FAMILIES
- 100-199 FAMILIES
- 200-299 FAMILIES
- 300 OR MORE FAMILIES

Notes: Areas in white are comprised of census tracts wherein the percentage of families with incomes less than twice the poverty level is less than or equal to the regional average of 20.8 percent.

The information reflected on this map is from the American Community Survey, which is based on sample data from a small percentage of the population. Consequently, the data has a relatively large margin of error that can result in larger census tracts being identified as having concentrations of families in poverty even though there are only small enclaves of such families located within the tract identified.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census American Community Survey and SEWRPC

6/2024

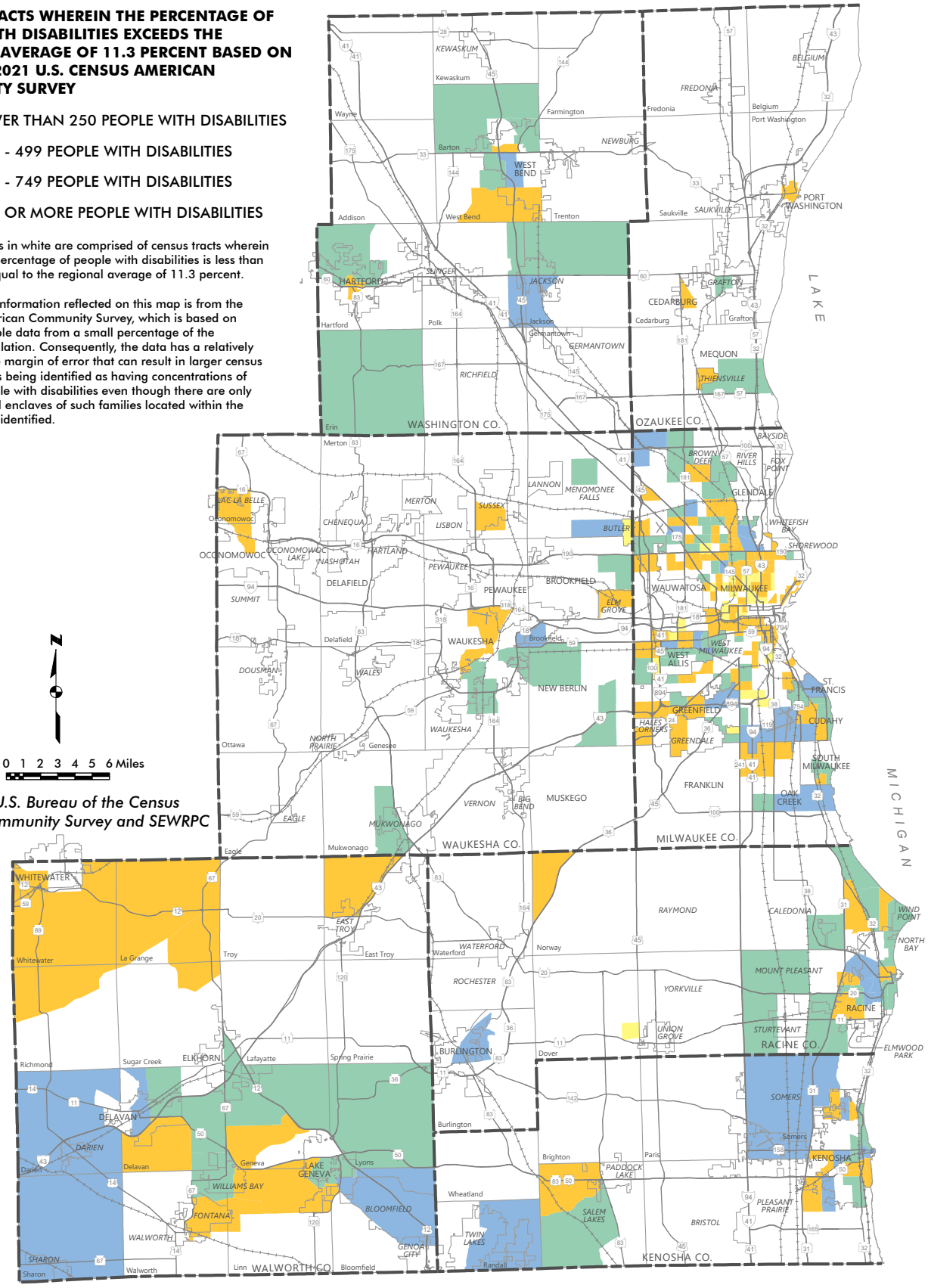
Map L.5
Concentrations of People with Disabilities: 2017-2021

CENSUS TRACTS WHEREIN THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES EXCEEDS THE REGIONAL AVERAGE OF 11.3 PERCENT BASED ON THE 2017-2021 U.S. CENSUS AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

- FEWER THAN 250 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- 250 - 499 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- 500 - 749 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- 750 OR MORE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Notes: Areas in white are comprised of census tracts wherein the percentage of people with disabilities is less than or equal to the regional average of 11.3 percent.

The information reflected on this map is from the American Community Survey, which is based on sample data from a small percentage of the population. Consequently, the data has a relatively large margin of error that can result in larger census tracts being identified as having concentrations of people with disabilities even though there are only small enclaves of such families located within the tract identified.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census American Community Survey and SEWRPC

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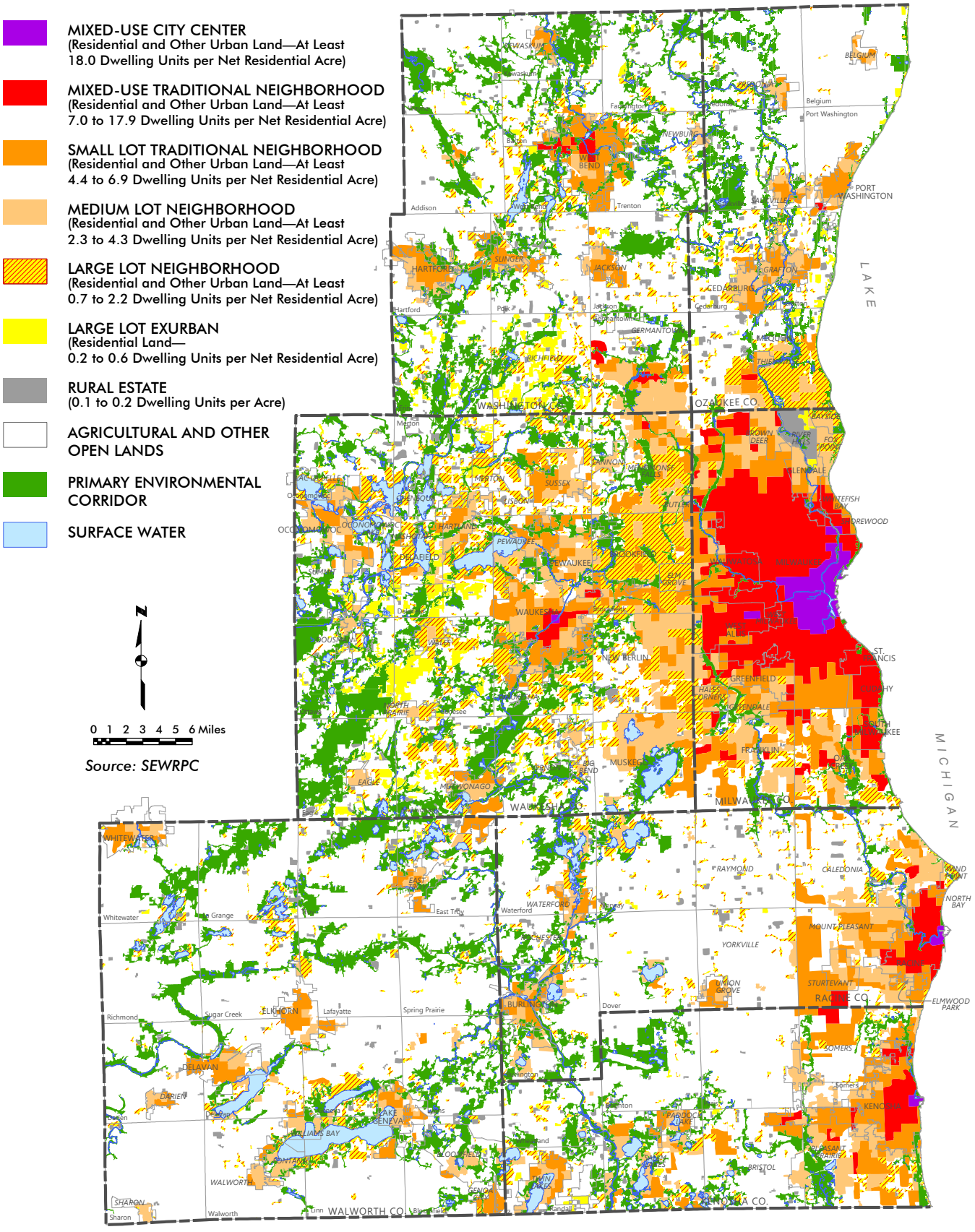
Map L.6
Land Use Development Pattern: VISION 2050



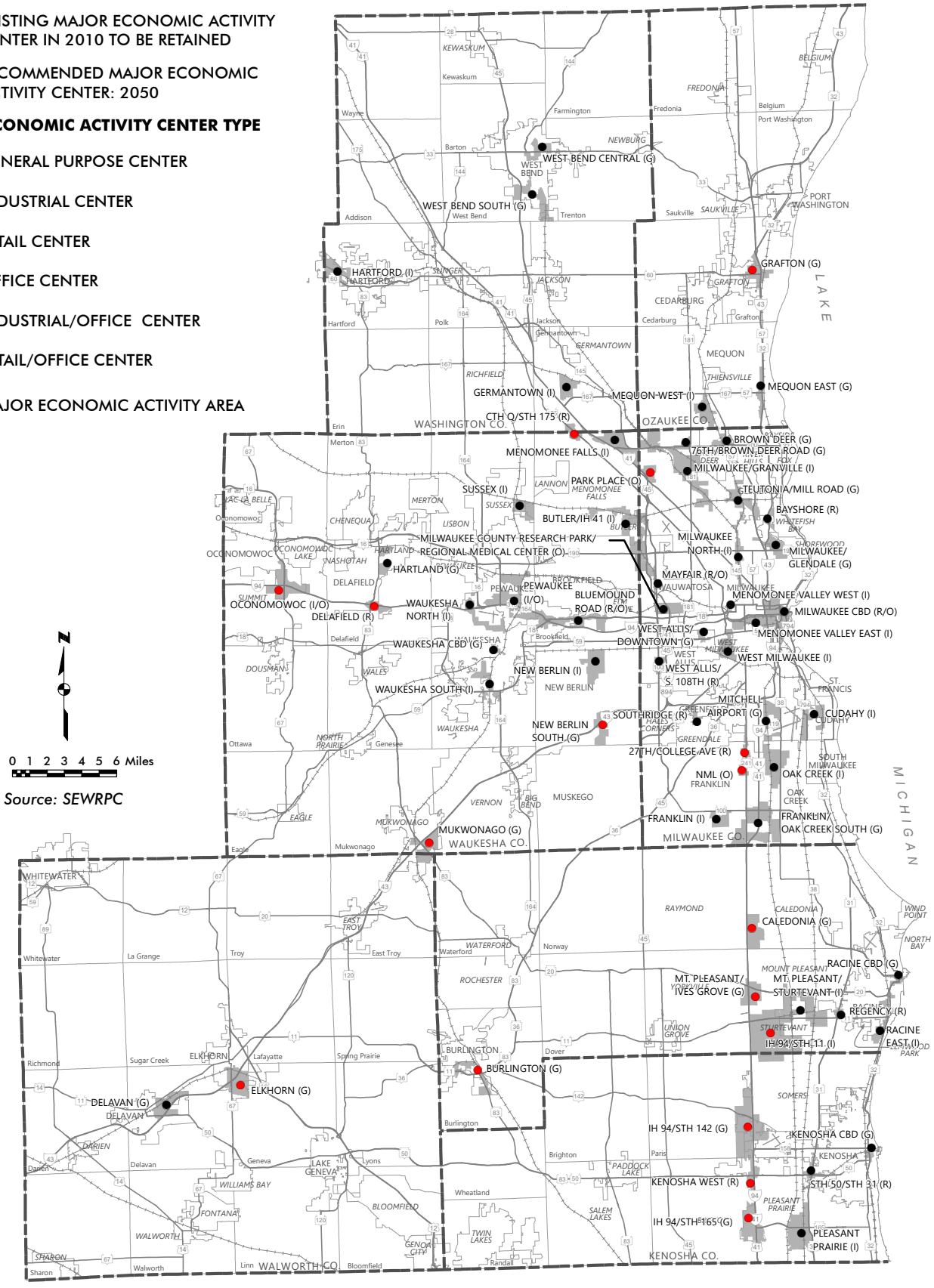
Map L.7
Major Economic Activity Centers: VISION 2050

- EXISTING MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CENTER IN 2010 TO BE RETAINED
- RECOMMENDED MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CENTER: 2050

MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CENTER TYPE

G	GENERAL PURPOSE CENTER
I	INDUSTRIAL CENTER
R	RETAIL CENTER
O	OFFICE CENTER
I/O	INDUSTRIAL/OFFICE CENTER
R/O	RETAIL/OFFICE CENTER

MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AREA



Source: SEWRPC

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