

CRITERION 1.1.1: NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN WALKABLE AREAS**KEY CONCLUSIONS**

- Alternative Plan II would result in the largest improvement to walkability in the Region, with Alternative I improving walkability more than the Trend.
- Alternative II would have the most people living in walkable areas (863,000)—12 percent more than Alternative I (770,000) and 19 percent more than the Trend (725,000).
- Alternative II would also have the most developed land in walkable areas (75,000 acres)—17 percent more than Alternative I (64,000) and 27 percent more than the Trend (59,000).

The term “walkable” refers to the ease by which people can walk in an area to various destinations such as schools, parks, retail services, and employment. Developing walkable neighborhoods can have numerous positive benefits to the health and vibrancy of communities in the Region. It can encourage residents to walk or bike rather than drive and can increase community cohesion by encouraging more social interaction with neighbors. Many participants in the VISION 2050 process, recognizing these types of benefits, have expressed a desire for more walkable neighborhoods.

- **Estimating Walkability:** To estimate walkability for the alternative plans, the first step was to estimate existing walkability. Commission staff received existing “walk scores” for all 2,374 internal travel analysis zones (TAZs) in the Region directly from WalkScore® (www.walkscore.com), a private company that specializes in estimating walkability. These scores represent ratings of the walkability of an area on a scale of 0 to 100 using a methodology developed by WalkScore®. The method uses a propriety algorithm to estimate scores based on pedestrian friendliness metrics (such as population density, block length, and intersection density) and walking distance to destinations (such as schools, parks, retail services, and employment). For the purposes of comparing the alternative plans, scores greater than 50 were considered “walkable,” which is consistent with the WalkScore® categories of Somewhat Walkable (scores of 50-69), Very Walkable (70-89), and Walker’s Paradise (90-100).

The alternative plans do not have the detailed data to estimate future walkability in the way that WalkScore® estimates existing walkability, so Commission staff used the variability in household density and presence of TOD to estimate future walkability. In general, increasing household density will result in improved walkability because destinations are more likely to be in proximity to residents. Higher density areas also tend to be more pedestrian-friendly environments because they tend to include sidewalks and shorter block lengths. Many TOD areas, which are located within easy walking distance to/from a fixed-guideway transit station, tend to include development with a mix of destinations that are within walking distance for the area’s residents. The design and layout of a TOD area also tend to be more pedestrian-oriented, for example, curb bump-outs at crosswalks.

The household density variable was first employed by determining the statistical relationship between the existing walk score and existing 2010 household density for each TAZ. The change in household density from 2010 to 2050 for each TAZ for each alternative was then estimated and applied to the existing walk scores. Lastly, staff identified all the TAZs considered to be included in a TOD area for Alternatives 1 and 2, respectively, and estimated the additional walkability of those TAZs based on the type of development likely to occur.

- **Evaluation Results:** Table F-1 and Maps F-1 through F-4 present the estimated walkability under the existing development pattern, as well as under the Trend and Alternatives I and II. A more compact development pattern tends to be more walkable, and the evaluation showed that the Trend, which includes more lower density development than Alternatives I and II, is the least walkable option. Alternative I includes higher density development than the Trend and some TOD areas, which results in additional areas identified as being walkable. The Trend would have more people living in walkable areas (724,600) than under the existing development pattern (702,600). Alternative I would improve on the Trend, with 769,500 people living in walkable areas. Alternative II, with its extensive focus on TOD, would have the most people living in walkable areas (863,100)—12 percent more than Alternative I and 19 percent more than the Trend. Similarly, Alternative II would have the most developed land in walkable areas (75,000 acres)—17 percent more than Alternative I (64,000) and 27 percent more than the Trend (59,000).
- **Sidewalk Connectivity:** Well-connected, accessible sidewalks provide a safe place for people to walk separated from motor vehicles. They are particularly important for people with disabilities and children, and provide improved mobility and access to various destinations. The alternative plans envision that sidewalks will be designed and constructed consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements to accommodate people with disabilities. Primarily due to data availability issues, the analysis for this criterion (and as well the method used by WalkScore® to estimate existing walk scores) does not explicitly consider sidewalk presence. The analysis instead focuses on the destinations that are likely to be within walking distance of the Region's residents. However, sidewalks are important to encouraging walking trips and would be envisioned in most new land developments under any of the alternative plans, with the exception of those in the Large Lot Exurban and Rural Estate categories. Sidewalk connectivity—direct links that connect people to other homes in their neighborhood, shopping, schools, parks, and other destinations—would likely be highest in walkable areas. As a result, Alternative II would be envisioned to have the most sidewalk connectivity of the three alternative, followed by Alternative I.

**Table F-1:
Number of People Living in Walkable Areas**

Alternative	Population in Walkable Areas	Total Population	Percent of Total Population in Walkable Areas	Developed Land that is Walkable (Acres)	Total Developed Land (Acres)	Percent of Developed Land that is Walkable
Existing - 2010	702,600	2,020,000	34.8	56,400	467,000	12.1
Trend - 2050	724,600	2,354,000	30.8	59,200	568,400	10.4
Alt I - 2050	769,500	2,354,000	32.7	64,000	529,600	12.1
Alt II - 2050	863,100	2,354,000	36.7	75,000	524,600	14.3

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For staff use

Table F-1: #224299 (Tab 1.1.1)

Map F-1: I:\COMMON\VISION 2050\Alternative Plans\1.1.1 Walkability\Walk Score - Existing.mxd

Map F-2: I:\COMMON\VISION 2050\Alternative Plans\1.1.1 Walkability\Walk Score - Trend.mxd

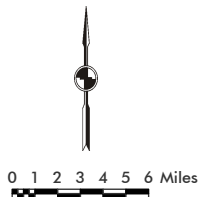
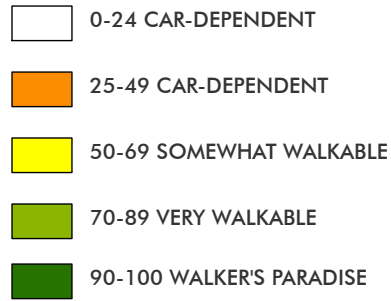
Map F-3: I:\COMMON\VISION 2050\Alternative Plans\1.1.1 Walkability\Walk Score - Alt 1.mxd

Map F-4: I:\COMMON\VISION 2050\Alternative Plans\1.1.1 Walkability\Walk Score - Alt 2.mxd

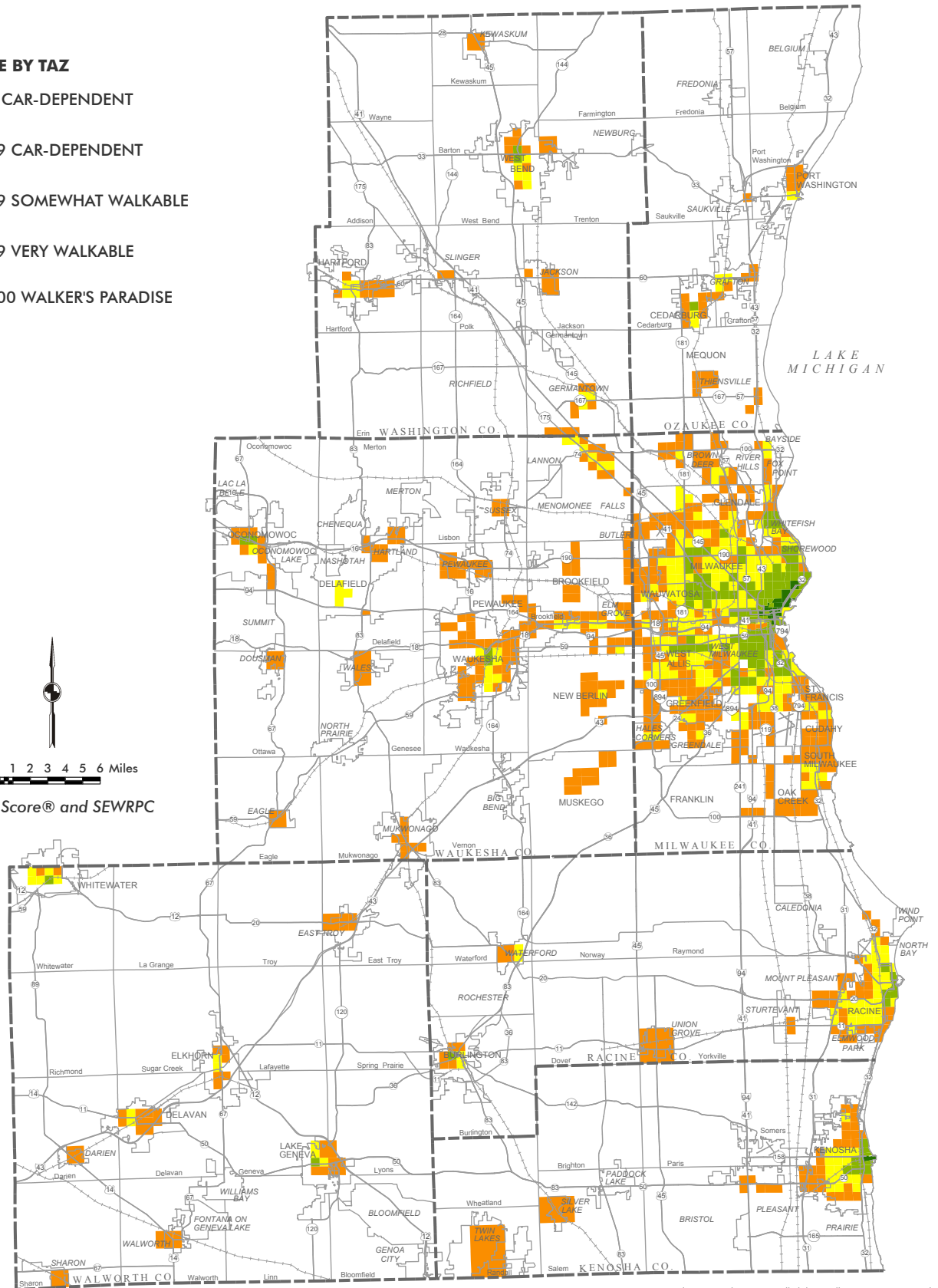
Map F-1

WALKABILITY IN THE REGION: EXISTING

WALK SCORE BY TAZ



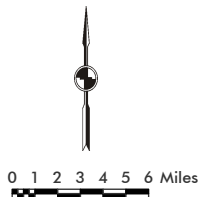
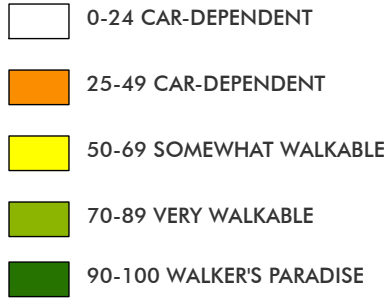
Source: Walk Score® and SEWRPC



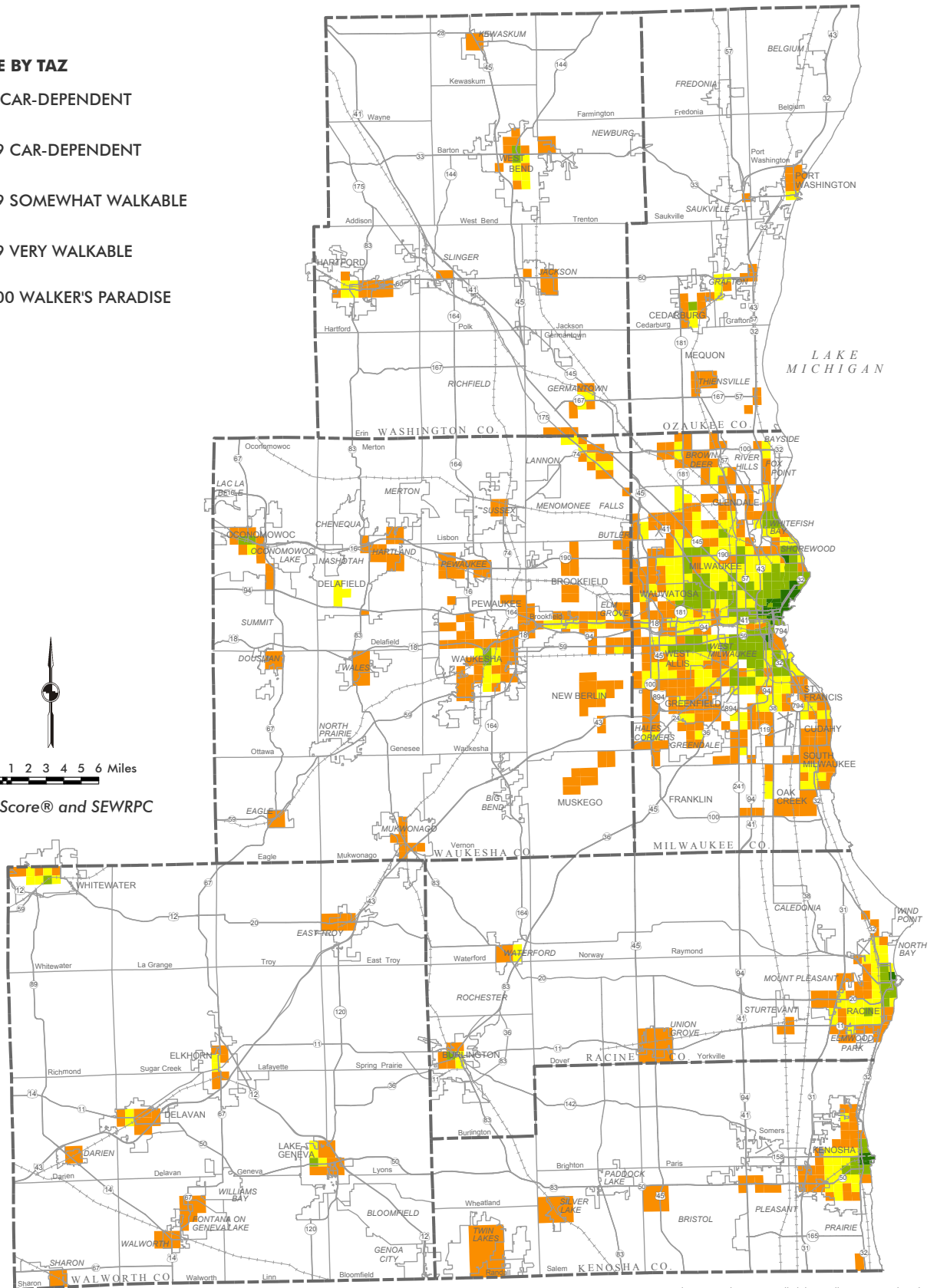
Map F-2

WALKABILITY IN THE REGION: TREND

WALK SCORE BY TAZ



Source: Walk Score® and SEWRPC



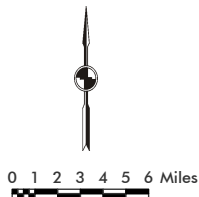
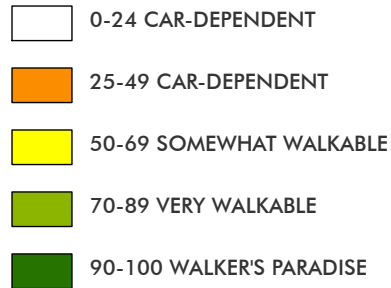
WALKABILITY IN THE REGION: ALTERNATIVE PLAN I



Map F-4

WALKABILITY IN THE REGION: ALTERNATIVE PLAN II

WALK SCORE BY TAZ



Source: Walk Score® and SEWRPC

