

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Advisory Committee on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area

FROM: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Staff

DATE: March 23, 2026

SUBJECT: REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLIC STREETS AND HIGHWAYS WITHIN THE YEAR 2020 ADJUSTED MILWAUKEE URBANIZED AREA

Federal law requires that public streets and highways in the State be functionally classified as arterial, collector, or local facilities based upon the manner in which they function.¹ The functional classification of roadways is primarily used for determining project eligibility under various Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) transportation funding programs, such as the FHWA Surface Transportation Program (now Surface Transportation Block Grant) funding allocated to the Milwaukee urbanized area. The functional classification of a roadway can also be used in determining the appropriate design for the roadway.

Utilizing detailed criteria,² the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has functionally classified all public streets and highways throughout the State. Typically, about every 10 years, following the completion of the

¹ Arterial streets provide a high degree of travel mobility, serving the through movement of traffic and providing transportation service between major subareas of an urbanized area or through the area. Together, the arterial streets should form an integrated, areawide system. Access to abutting property may be a secondary function of some types of arterial streets and highways, but it should always be subordinate to the primary function of traffic movement.

Local, or land access, streets are defined as streets and highways which are intended to serve primarily as a means of access to abutting properties, principally serving the residential areas of a community.

Collector streets are defined as streets and highways which are intended to serve primarily as connections between the arterial system and the land access street system. In addition to collecting traffic from, and distributing traffic to, the land access streets, the collector streets usually provide the same principal function as land access streets, that of providing access to abutting property.

² WisDOT's criteria for functionally classifying streets and highways are available on the Department's website (<http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/data-plan/plan-res/jc-criteria.pdf>).

adjustment of the U.S. Census-defined urbanized area boundaries, WisDOT and the Commission review and update the functional classification of public roadways within the adjusted urbanized areas within Southeastern Wisconsin. The functional classification of public roadways within the adjusted urbanized area is reviewed and updated based on: 1) changes in the urbanized area boundary from the current and previous adjusted urbanized area; 2) changes in land use and traffic volumes; and 3) the need to classify new streets and highways. In addition, Commission staff reviews the proposed functional classification of the roadways within the urbanized area for consistency with the regional transportation plan (VISION 2050). The most recent review and update of the functional classification of public roadways within the Milwaukee urbanized area was completed in 2015 for the year 2010 adjusted urbanized area, as shown on Map 1.

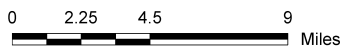
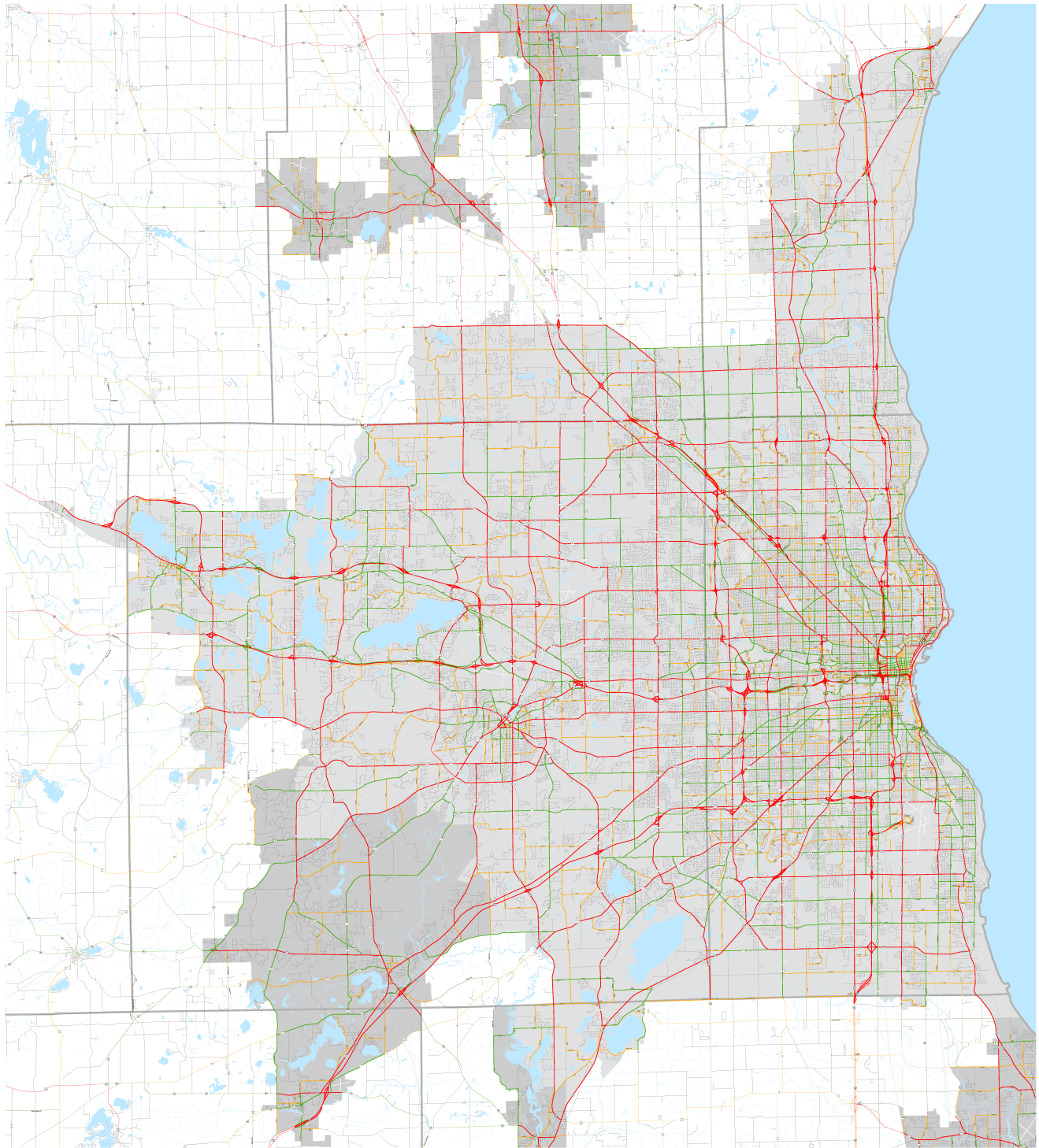
The adjustments to the year 2020 U.S. Census-defined Milwaukee urbanized area (shown on Map 2) were approved by the Advisory Committee on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area (Milwaukee TIP Committee) at a meeting held on March 4, 2024. WisDOT and Commission staffs have completed an initial review and update of the proposed functional classification of public roadways within the year 2020 adjusted Milwaukee urbanized area. The proposed functional classification of public roadways within the year 2020 Milwaukee adjusted urbanized area are shown on Map 2. Table 1 shows the comparison of the centerline miles for each functional classification category for the year 2010 adjusted Milwaukee urbanized area and as proposed for the year 2020 adjusted Milwaukee urbanized area.

Previously, WisDOT required only concurrence by Commission staff for functional classification changes within the adjusted Milwaukee urbanized area. However, WisDOT now requires the functional classification of public roadways to be reviewed and approved by the Milwaukee TIP Committee and by the Commission. Thus, the Commission staff is asking that the Milwaukee TIP Committee review and consider the proposed functional classification of public roadways within the year 2020 adjusted Milwaukee urbanized area. Following approval of the functional classification of the public roadways by the Milwaukee TIP Committee, and the subsequent approval by the Commission and WisDOT, WisDOT will forward the proposed functional classification of public roadways to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for its consideration and approval.

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Map 1 Approved Functional Classification for the 2010 Census-Defined Urbanized Area



addendum to Legend

MA	WISLR certified
MA	non-WISLR certified (not eligible for STP-U funding)
COL	WISLR certified
COL	non-WISLR certified (not eligible for STP-U funding)
LOC	WISLR certified
LOC	non-WISLR certified

Legend

Existing	Planned*	Other
Principal Arterial	Principal Arterial	Railroads
Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial	Lakes, Rivers, Streams
Collector	Collector	City/Village Boundary
Local	Local	Urban(ized) Area
		Other surrounding urban(ized) area
		Rural Area
		County Boundary

* NOTE: All planned route locations are approximations only.

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WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development
PWMA Approval Date: 11/03/2016
PDF Created: 11/26/2016
Newscast

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation and SEWRPC (3/23/26)

Table 1
Comparison of the Functional Classification of Public Roadways
Within the Year 2010 and Year 2020 Adjusted Milwaukee Urban Areas

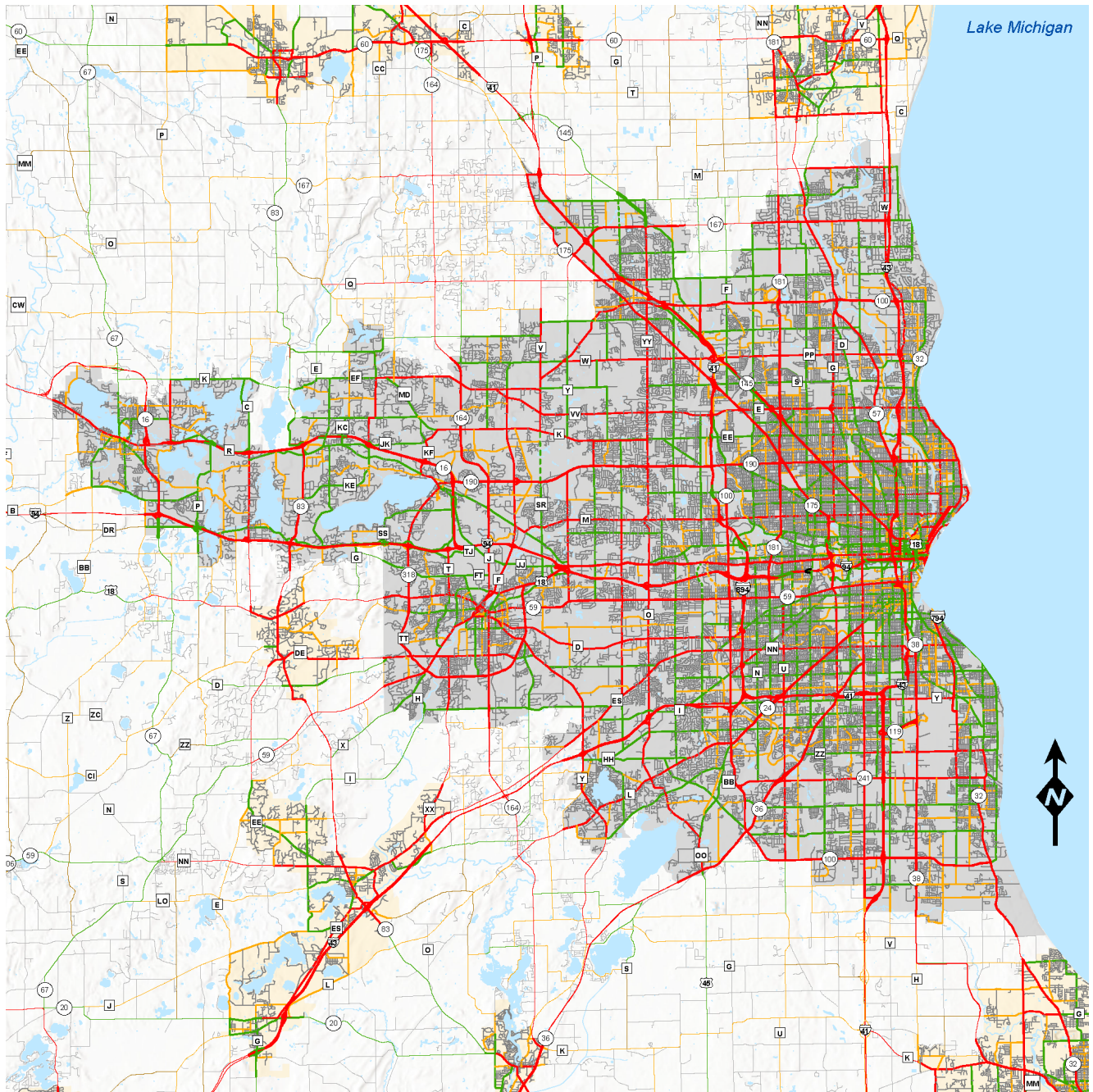
Functional Classification	Year 2010 Adjusted Urban Area		Year 2020 Adjusted Urban Area	
	Centerline Miles ^a	Percent of Total	Centerline Miles ^a	Percent of Total
Principal Arterial	849.3	12.8	661.4	12.0
Minor Arterial	798.6	12.0	704.5	12.8
Collector	624.1	9.4	439.1	7.9
Local	4,372.2	65.8	3,709.9	67.3
Total	6,644.2	100.0	5,514.9	100.0

^aCenterline miles of existing public streets and highways.

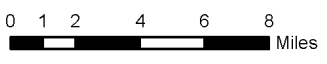
Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Map 2 Recommended Functional Classification for the 2020 Census-Defined Urbanized Area



- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Local
- Urban Area Boundary
- Other Nearby Urban Area
- Rural Area



WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development
FHWA Approval Date: xx/xx/xx

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