

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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Staff Memorandum

VISION 2060: OVERVIEW OF PRELIMINARY PLAN CONCEPT AND PROCESS

January 26, 2026

INTRODUCTION

VISION 2060 is the major update to Southeastern Wisconsin's regional land use and transportation plan and is anticipated to build upon the regional dialogue and core recommendations established by previous generations of the plan, including VISION 2050. The planning process is now underway, with anticipated plan adoption in June 2028.

The updated plan is intended to be forward-looking in both content and presentation. While the fundamental recommendations will be similar to those of VISION 2050, Commission staff are proposing to develop a VISION 2060 plan structure that modernizes how recommendations are organized and communicated. The proposed concept emphasizes clarity, accessibility, and usability for a range of audiences. Rather than a multi-volume, data-heavy compendium, VISION 2060 will be presented in a concise primary planning report that emphasizes focused and visually driven recommendations. The plan will be accompanied by a coordinated set of related documents and supported by dynamic digital content.

The following sections describe the initially proposed plan organization and communication approach, including a Community Context framework for presenting recommendations, a preliminary plan outline, and a high-level timeline for the planning process. Collectively, this approach is designed to ensure VISION 2060 is accessible and engaging to regional stakeholders while maintaining the Commission's reputation for technical excellence.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

VISION 2050 was organized in sequential volumes detailing the planning process:

- Volume I documented the initial inventory data and analyses along with forecasts of future needs
- Volume II documented the plan development process
- Volume III documented the final plan and ways to implement the plan

While logical, Commission staff are seeking to improve this structure to make it easier for new readers to locate and identify plan recommendations, their connections to local and regional issues, and guidance for implementation.

VISION 2060 will be presented as a concise planning report accompanied by a series of separate companion reports organized by function and topic. The primary report will present the plan's core recommendations and is intended as a clear entry point for all audiences. The companion reports, which will be primarily available online, will present detailed research and technical analyses for those who wish for more detailed information on specific topics. The proposed VISION 2060 organizational structure is designed to more concisely communicate recommendations, make content easier to locate and interpret, and reduce the amount of duplicated content.

Plan Components

VISION 2060's proposed structure is designed to allow it to meet the needs of many audiences: public and non-technical readers can quickly find core recommendations in the primary plan while technical readers can access data and documentation as needed.

The report types presented here are an overview of publications that are expected to be produced during the planning process, organized by report type. Community engagement will be ongoing throughout the process and will include a mix of targeted approaches to refine the vision with community input, interspersed with traditional public engagement for draft plan documents.

Core Plan: VISION 2060 and VISION 2060 Implementation Guide

- The core plan is anticipated to be released in summer 2028 following Commission adoption.
- The main plan report will be visually rich, concise, and written in plain language.
- It will illustrate the story of Southeastern Wisconsin—past, present, and the vision—and arrange recommendations by community context so readers from rural areas to cities can better understand “what does this plan mean for me?”
- The companion Implementation Guide will advise government agencies and policymakers on how they can advance the VISION 2060 recommendations.
- A high-level preliminary outline of the core plan is included later in this memorandum.

Technical Reports

- Technical Reports, released throughout the process, are the analytic backbone of the plan's recommendations and will analyze existing conditions, present projections, evaluate transportation investment alternatives, fulfill Federal planning requirements, and document community engagement.
- Topics include system performance, updates to the travel demand model, developing and evaluating transportation alternatives, demonstrating fiscal constraint, etc.

Research Reports

- Research Reports, released early in the VISION 2060 planning process, will examine challenges and opportunities that could impact the Region's future.
- The reports will also be “best practice reviews” that ensure VISION 2060's foundation reflects the state of the planning practice.

- Potential topics include effects of artificial intelligence, autonomous/connected vehicles, data centers, solar/wind installations, and how the transportation system performs in urban, suburban, and rural contexts.

Policy Reports

- Policy Reports, released after significant plan development or plan adoption, will distill issues that require political action to implement the plan in a concise, unbiased manner.

PLAN PRESENTATION

To ensure VISION 2060's conclusions are clear, direct, and easy to find, Commission staff propose three guiding principles for all written materials.

1. **Use plain and accessible language.** All public-facing VISION 2060 materials will be written in clear, straightforward language to reach the broadest possible audience.
2. **Write for the least technical audience in each group.** Each report will identify the intended audience(s) at the beginning and write for the audience with the lowest subject-matter expertise among that group. For example: if a report is intended for both planners AND the public, it will be written for the public.
3. **Use formatting to emphasize the main points.** The main conclusion or idea should be easily visible. Supporting analyses, assumptions, and caveats will be available but visually de-emphasized or moved to supporting reports, so the primary message is not overshadowed.

Each VISION 2060 report will begin with a summary of its most important findings to help readers quickly understand main points and decide if they would like to explore the topic in more detail. The approach will vary by the type of report and its respective intended audience. Research and Technical Reports will open with an abstract or executive summary, while reports intended for the general public will highlight conclusions visually, supplanting the text with pull quotes, annotated figures, and graphic design elements.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT CONCEPT

Within the core plan, VISION 2060 will employ "Community Contexts" as a framework to organize its recommendations in a clear and relatable manner. While VISION 2050 presented land use and transportation recommendations in separate sections of the same chapter, the Community Context framework will allow VISION 2060 to present integrated land use, transportation, and environmental recommendations for each of Southeastern Wisconsin's natural and built environments along a rural-urban gradient (i.e. recommendations for the Region's suburban or rural town types). The approach is based on the concept of transect planning, which has been adopted by various agencies and communities nationwide. Commission staff are proposing an innovative approach to applying this concept on a regional scale with the objective of highlighting the most important plan recommendations for each Community Context and providing a clear framework for local implementation.

PRELIMINARY CORE PLAN OUTLINE

The core plan will be structured into three main sections, building upon each other to illustrate the development of the Region, current conditions and the opportunities that they create, and the recommended land use and transportation plan to address these opportunities and capitalize on the Region's assets. The preliminary proposed outline is presented below.

Introduction

- Presentation of the VISION 2060 framework and planning process
- How VISION 2060 will impact its audience and how it can be used
- Overview of plan organization and components

Part 1: Past

Brief overview of how the Region's natural resources and historical growth have shaped the built environment and development pattern.

- Highlights the environmental elements that need to be considered and addressed by the land use and transportation plan
- Presentation of historical urban growth
- Lays the groundwork for understanding issues and opportunities presented in the subsequent Present section and for the community contexts in the VISION 2060 section

Part 2: Present

Presents key trends and findings from the inventories (i.e. transportation facilities, prevalent land uses, natural areas), review of VISION 2050 plan implementation, and initial community engagement, organized by ~10 themes that will be created and refined through outreach. These themes may be based on elements in VISION 2050, such as the [Guiding Principles](#) that steered that plan's development or the [Plan Objectives](#) that reflect VISION 2050's desired future vision for the Region.

For example:

- One VISION 2050 objective calls for "reliable, efficient, and universal access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other important places."
- A section in Part 2 may present the current state of transportation accessibility, as measured by multimodal access within a reasonable amount of time to these important places and the trend since VISION 2050's adoption.

By identifying key, high-level themes of the Region's existing conditions, this section will also highlight existing strengths, opportunities, and challenges to be addressed through the recommended plan in Part 3.

Part 3: VISION 2060

Presents the recommended 2060 land use and transportation plan at both the regional and community level. This section will comprise the majority of the primary planning report.

- Regional land use and transportation plan
 - Similar to VISION 2050, illustrates the land use pattern and various transportation networks at a 20,000-foot view
 - Includes broad recommendations that apply throughout the Region

- Environmental considerations
 - Enhanced focus on how the built and natural environment are interrelated
 - Continue to incorporate recommendations from the Commission's environmental plans that should be considered in future development
- Community contexts (4-6 pages each)
 - Inspired by transect planning concept; categorizes prevalent rural, suburban, and urban development patterns to illustrate how the plan's recommendations apply within each
 - Refinement of VISION 2050 land use categories, but not tied directly to these as they will not align precisely
 - Intended to be highly visual, with renderings and photographs to illustrate
 - » Example: show what a 'complete street' looks like in a rural context, which is very different from a dense urban area, but the concept is still applicable
 - » Present a clear vision of how the plan's recommendations might be implemented and integrated effectively for each context
 - Goal is to provide a clear blueprint for individual communities to shape development and prioritize investments consistent with the regional recommendations
 - Highlight specific regional examples of Commission recommendations that have been implemented in each context, if applicable
- Discussion of policy considerations and implementation challenges (to be addressed in detail in separate Implementation Guide)

Conclusions

- Key conclusions
 - Connect back to Introduction, Past, and Present sections to highlight the connection of the plan recommendations to historical and current trends
 - Why is this plan important?
- Monitoring the plan
 - Note the Commission's role in monitoring forecasts that underlie the regional plan, progress on plan implementation, and transportation system performance
 - Depending on the element, monitoring will take place annually, at minor updates (every four years), at major updates (approximately every 10 years), or at all intervals
- Implementation overview
 - High-level discussion of policy considerations and implementation challenges, to be addressed in detail in separate Implementation Guide

PLANNING TIMELINE

VISION 2060 must be adopted by June 2028, four years after the Commission adopted the 2024 Review & Update of VISION 2050. Commission staff propose a five-phase process to create the plan detailed above in that timeframe, shown below with approximate activity dates of each phase.

- Inventory (Q3 2025 – Q3 2026)
- Develop and Evaluate Transportation Alternatives (Q4 2026 – Q3 2027)
- Develop and Release Preliminary Recommended Plan (Q3 2027 – Q4 2027)
- Develop Recommended Plan (Q4 2027 – Q1 2028)
- Final Adoption and Publication (Q1 2028 – Q2 2028)

By improving the plan's structure and how it communicates its findings, VISION 2060 can continue the Commission's 65-year history of regional planning excellence while creating a new plan that is accessible, meaningful, and useful to everyone who protects Southeastern Wisconsin's future.

Appendix 1

Preliminary List of Key VISION 2060 Reports

Report Type	Report Number	Report Title
Planning Report (Core Plan)	60	VISION 2060: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin
Planning Report (Core Plan)	60	VISION 2060: Implementation Guide
Technical Report	10	The Economy of Southeastern Wisconsin
Technical Report	11	The Population of Southeastern Wisconsin
VISION 2060 Technical Report	1	Review of the VISION 2050 Plan
VISION 2060 Technical Report	2	The Land Use and Resource Base of Southeastern Wisconsin (Land Use Inventory)
VISION 2060 Technical Report	3	The Transportation System of Southeastern Wisconsin (Transportation Inventory)
VISION 2060 Technical Report	4	Travel Habits and Patterns in Southeastern Wisconsin
VISION 2060 Technical Report	5	Travel Simulation Models of Southeastern Wisconsin
VISION 2060 Technical Report	6	VISION 2060 Transportation Plan Alternatives & Evaluation
VISION 2060 Technical Report	7	VISION 2060 Accessibility Analysis
VISION 2060 Technical Report	8	VISION 2060 Financial Analysis
VISION 2060 Technical Report	9	VISION 2060 National Performance Measures and Targets
VISION 2060 Technical Report	10	VISION 2060 Community Engagement and Record of Comments

Note: List of key deliverables is preliminary, does not include all related reports, and is subject to change during the planning process.

Source: SEWRPC, 1/2026

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