



2023

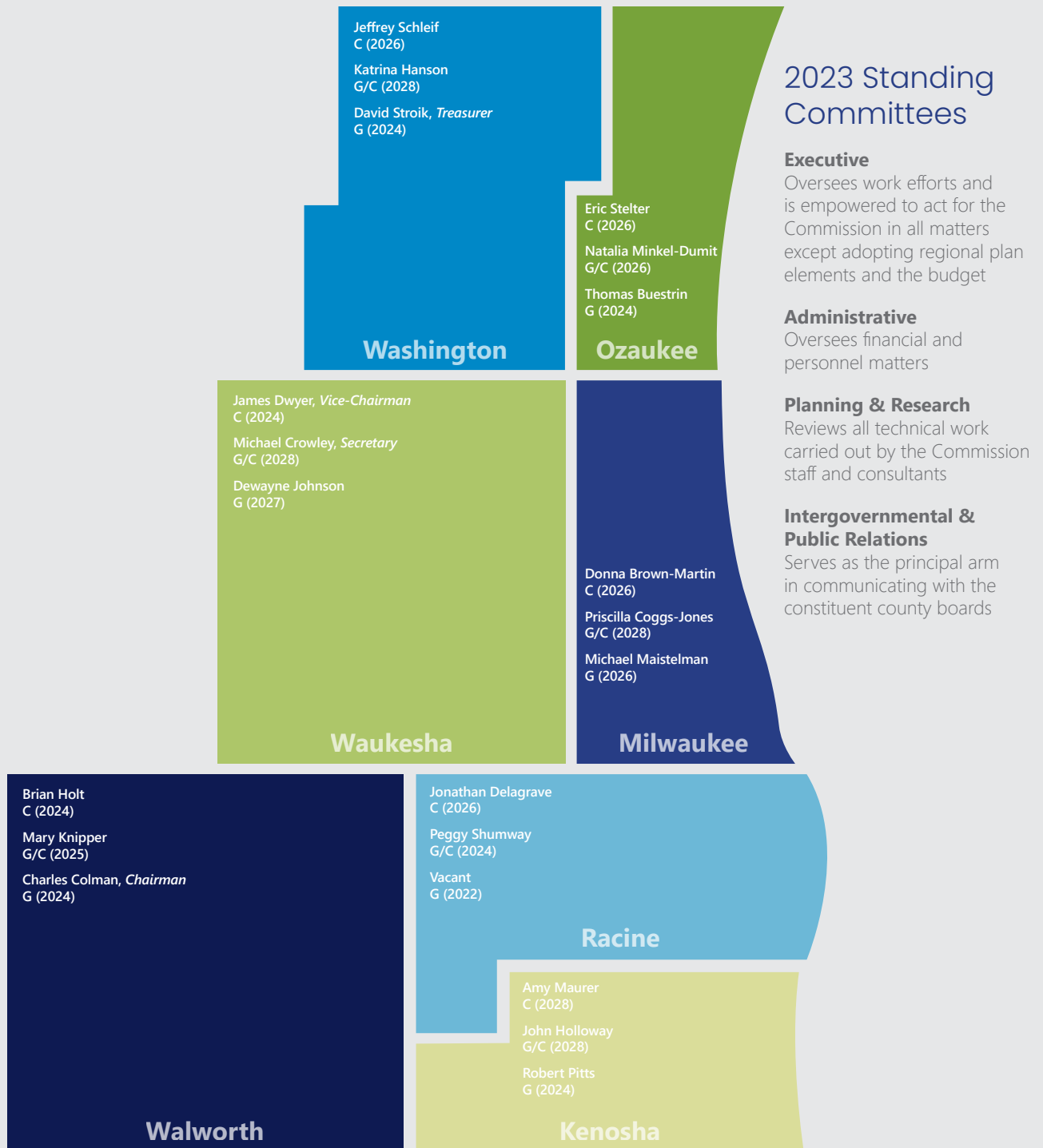
Annual Report

Commissioners and Committees in 2023

Under State law, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is governed by 21 Commissioners (three from each county):

- C Appointed by county board or appointed by county executive and confirmed by county board
- G/C Appointed by Governor from a county-supplied list of candidates
- G Appointed directly by Governor

Commissioners are appointed to six-year terms and can serve multiple terms. Term end dates are shown in parentheses.



2023 Standing Committees

Executive Committee

Charles Colman, *Chairperson*
Donna Brown-Martin
Thomas Buestrin
Michael Crowley
Jonathan Delagrave
James Dwyer
Robert Pitts
David Stroik

Administrative Committee

James Dwyer, *Chairperson*
Donna Brown-Martin
Thomas Buestrin
Charles Colman
Michael Crowley
Jonathan Delagrave
Robert Pitts
David Stroik

Planning and Research Committee

Michael Crowley, *Chairperson*
Donna Brown-Martin
Priscilla Coggs-Jones
Charles Colman
Jonathan Delagrave
Katrina Hanson
John Holloway
Brian Holt
Dewayne Johnson
Mary Knipper
Michael Maistelman
Amy Maurer
Natalia Minkel-Dumit
Robert Pitts
Jeffrey Schleif
Peggy Shumway
Eric Stelter
David Stroik

Intergovernmental and Public Relations Committee

Michael Crowley, *Chairperson*
Jonathan Delagrave
Brian Holt
Jeffrey Schleif

Message from the Chairperson

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Dear Southeastern Wisconsin,

Each year, we review the work the Regional Planning Commission accomplished in collaboration with our partners and share this work through the Commission's annual report. In 2023, we undertook many impactful efforts as you will read in the pages ahead. Preparing this annual report allows us and our partners to reflect on those efforts as we continually improve our service to Southeastern Wisconsin.

Pursuant to §66.0309(8)(b), "the regional planning commission shall make an annual report of its activities to the legislative bodies of the local governmental units within the region." As our agency formed in 1960, the 2023 annual report is our 63rd annual report. I encourage you to read on about the plans, projects, and studies that kept us busy during the year.

As always, contact us anytime you want to learn more about the Commission's work or get engaged in our efforts. Southeastern Wisconsin faces ever-evolving challenges and opportunities, and we help communities in our Region plan for and solve problems that go beyond their individual boundaries. To protect the Region's future, we look forward to continuing our service in cooperation with county and local governments, State and Federal agencies, and our many partners.

Very truly yours,



Charles L. Colman
Chairperson

About Us

The **Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission** is the official areawide advisory planning agency for Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties, and the metropolitan planning organization for the Region. The Commission was established in 1960 under Section 66.0309 of the *Wisconsin Statutes* in response to petitions submitted by each of the seven Southeastern Wisconsin counties. It is the largest of the nine regional planning commissions in Wisconsin in terms of staff, budget, and local governments served.

The Commission performs three basic functions to address regional issues:

- Provide basic regional data and analyses to federal agencies, State agencies, and entities throughout the Region
- Develop a framework of long-range areawide plans for the physical development of the Region, per State and Federal requirements
- Coordinate day-to-day planning activities in the Region

Why Know Us?

We focus on addressing issues that transcend the political boundaries and fiscal capabilities of individual communities. Our work ensures that the Region is generating economic, environmental, and social value now and in the future. We care about your ability to thrive in this Region. Simply put, our work matters because YOU matter.

Region Overview

- Local Governments:
29 Cities | 67 Villages | 51 Towns
- Area: **2,689** Square Miles | **5%** of State
- Population: **2.05** Million | **35%** of State
- Employment: **1.34** Million Jobs | **35%** of State
- Wealth: **\$295.9** Billion Equalized Valuation | **36%** of State

Kenosha
Milwaukee
Ozaukee
Racine
Walworth
Washington
Waukesha

7 Counties





REGIONAL PLANNING

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, as the areawide planning agency for Southeastern Wisconsin, is responsible for making and adopting a master plan for the physical development of the Region, including the use of land and supporting transportation and utility facilities. To accomplish this, the Commission prepares individual plan elements that together comprise the Region's comprehensive plan.

In this section:

- Chloride Impact Study
- Natural Areas
- Water Quality
- Housing
- VISION 2050
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Food System Plan

Chloride Impact Study

The Regional Chloride Impact Study is the foremost comprehensive study undertaken to identify significant sources and magnitudes of chloride (salt) in the Region's surface water and groundwater resources. Initiated in 2017, the extensive study examines several potential sources caused by human activity that contribute chloride to the environment, including road salt, water softener discharge, septic systems, and fertilizers. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff continues work with the Technical Advisory Committee to develop a plan that encompasses aspects from policy to alternative scenarios to help reduce the adverse effects of chloride on the Region's freshwater resources.

In 2023, Commission staff worked on the following components of the Study:

- Technical Report No. 61, *Field Monitoring and Data Collection for the Chloride Impact Study*
- Technical Report No. 62, *Impacts of Chloride on the Natural and Built Environment* (Three chapters: Introduction, Physical and Chemical Impacts, Impacts to Built Environment)
- Technical Report No. 64, *Regression Analysis of Specific Conductance and Chloride Concentrations* (Draft)
- Technical Report No. 67, *Legal and Policy Considerations for the Management of Chloride* (Draft)

Since 2018, the Chloride Impact Study has yielded the following outputs:

- More than 3,000 historical chloride data points collected for more than 160 lakes, reservoirs, and ponds in the Region
- More than 98,000 historical data points compiled for streams in the Region
- Over 400 assessment reaches (sections of rivers that have a sufficient amount of chloride data for us to evaluate) will be evaluated for the stream data
- Over 100 communities in the Region will have deicing data collected

As work continues on the Chloride Impact Study, the strong influence of development on chloride levels in our waters is becoming more apparent.





Natural Areas in 2023

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is frequently asked by municipalities and other local units of governments (lake districts and sanitary sewerage districts) as well as county, state and federal governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations such as conservancies, land trusts, lake and/or river associations to conduct comprehensive field inspections to identify, evaluate, and delineate wetlands, environmental corridors, natural areas, and critical species habitats. Fieldwork in 2023 included:

Special Environmental Inventories, Assessments, and Evaluations in 2023 (first number)

Commission staff worked on a total of 61 projects involving fieldwork in 2023. Projects included 47 wetland delineations, seven combined wetland & environmental corridor delineations, five environmental corridor determinations, a vegetation survey, and a critical species survey.

Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Sites in 2023 (second number)

Commission staff also completed 56 Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Sites site visits.

Water Quality

Since the enactment of the Federal Clean Water Amendments in 1972, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has served as the water quality management planning agency for the seven-county Region. An important element of our Regional Water Quality Management Plan is providing recommendations for wastewater treatment plants and the wastewater conveyance systems that flow to those plants.

In 2023, the Commission continued to work with local units of government to prepare detailed local sewerage facilities plan updates designed to meet Federal Clean Water Act and Wisconsin Clean Water Fund requirements.

Facility Plan Reviews and Sewer Service Area Plan Amendments

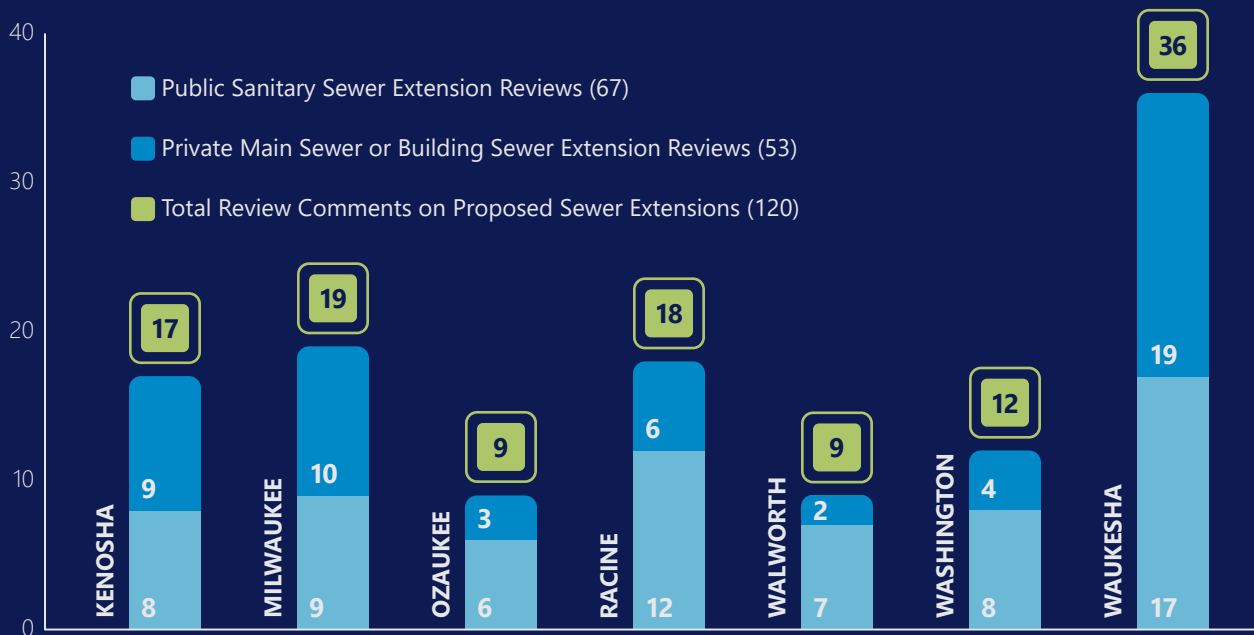
Commission staff undertake the update or amendment of local Sewer Service Area plans previously prepared by the Commission. There was one amendment completed for the Village of Germantown Sewer Service Area Plan. Also in 2023, two facility plan reviews were completed: a partial review of the City of Cedarburg Facility Plan, and a full review of the Village of Newburg Facility Plan.

Sanitary Sewer Extension Reviews

Commission staff also review and comment on sanitary sewer extension requests for new developments that are submitted to the Commission by a local community or specific property owner/developer. The review is required by the State and entails a determination of consistency with the Commission's regional plans, and the local Sewer Service Area plan.

2023 Regional Water Quality Management Plan Activities

Undertaken by the Commission





Major Topic Areas of the Regional Housing Plan

The Plan includes 50 recommendations organized by major categories that include:

- Affordable Housing
- Fair Housing/Housing Discrimination
- Job/Housing Balance
- Accessible Housing
- Subsidized and Tax-Credit Housing
- Best Housing Practices



Housing

Housing access and affordability are key goals of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Regional Housing Plan.

In 2023, activities supporting the Regional Housing Plan and regional housing efforts included:

- Prepared *Housing for a Healthy Walworth County* in coordination with the County's Community Health Improvement Plan Committee. Staff presented the report and related information at the Walworth County Housing Summit, led by the Walworth County Economic Development Alliance.
- Made presentations on the Regional Housing Plan to the Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors, Metropolitan Builders Association of Greater Milwaukee, Waukesha County Center for Growth, and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Department of Urban Planning.
- Initiated a housing prospectus for the Hartford Area Development Corporation and the City of Hartford to communicate housing development opportunities aligned with the Regional Housing Plan.

VISION 2050

VISION 2050 is the long-range land use and transportation plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. It was originally adopted by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2016, was updated in 2020, and was revisited starting in summer 2023 for the pending 2024 Review and Update. It makes recommendations to local and State government to shape and guide land use development and transportation improvement to the year 2050 and was developed with extensive input from residents, stakeholders, and the Commission's Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use and Regional Transportation Planning. The plan's transportation component is essential to ensure that State, county, and local governments maintain eligibility to obtain highway and transit funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Funding the VISION 2050 Transportation System

VISION 2050 outlines a transportation system that will meet the Region's needs in 2050. Public transit would be improved and expanded, with bus, commuter rail, and intercity rail lines providing access to employment and amenities throughout the Region. Roadways would be kept in good repair and congestion reduced. Active transportation would be encouraged through a well-connected network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

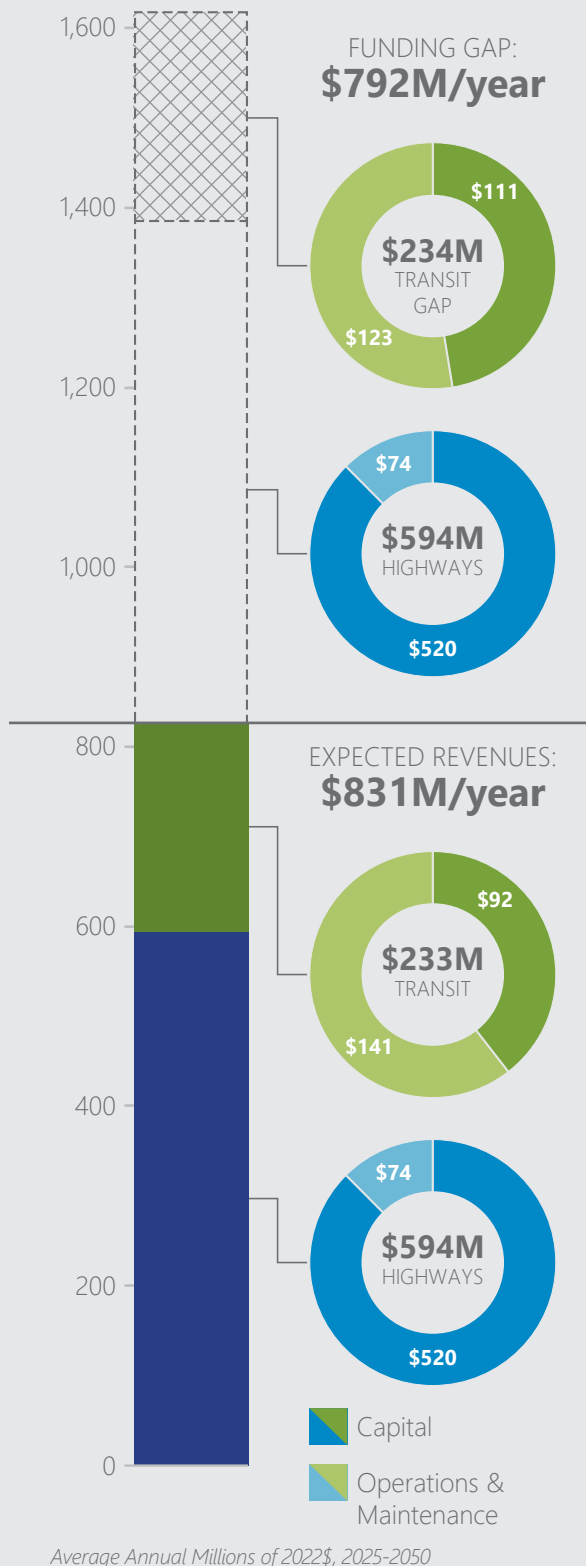
However, VISION 2050 identifies a significant gap in the funding needed to build and maintain that system. Many factors contribute to this gap, but two of the most significant are the lack of a dedicated funding source for transit and the State of Wisconsin's eroding ability to raise monies through the "gas tax," its largest source of transportation revenue. This erosion is due to inflationary pressures and projected decreases in gasoline use due to increases in fuel efficiency and the number of electric or alternative fuel vehicles.

Without additional revenue, the VISION 2050 transportation system will not be possible. This will affect everyone in the Region, but historically underserved groups such as people of color, people with disabilities, and low-income people are expected to be impacted most due to anticipated declines in the transit system.

The Commission maintains a list of potential revenue sources to facilitate the discussion on how the Region and State could fill the gap, stop the decline in transit service, and implement VISION 2050. When evaluating any revenue source or combinations of revenue sources, policy makers need to consider equity concerns and the impacts of inflation on the value of the revenue sources.

INVESTMENT NEEDED FOR VISION 2050
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM:

\$1.623B/year



Estimated Annual Revenue from Potential Revenue Sources to Address the Transportation Funding Gap

based on analysis by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission



* Sales tax estimates would involve an increase in existing county sales tax rates and are independent of the sales tax increase authorized for Milwaukee County under 2023 Wisconsin Act 12

Transportation Improvement Program

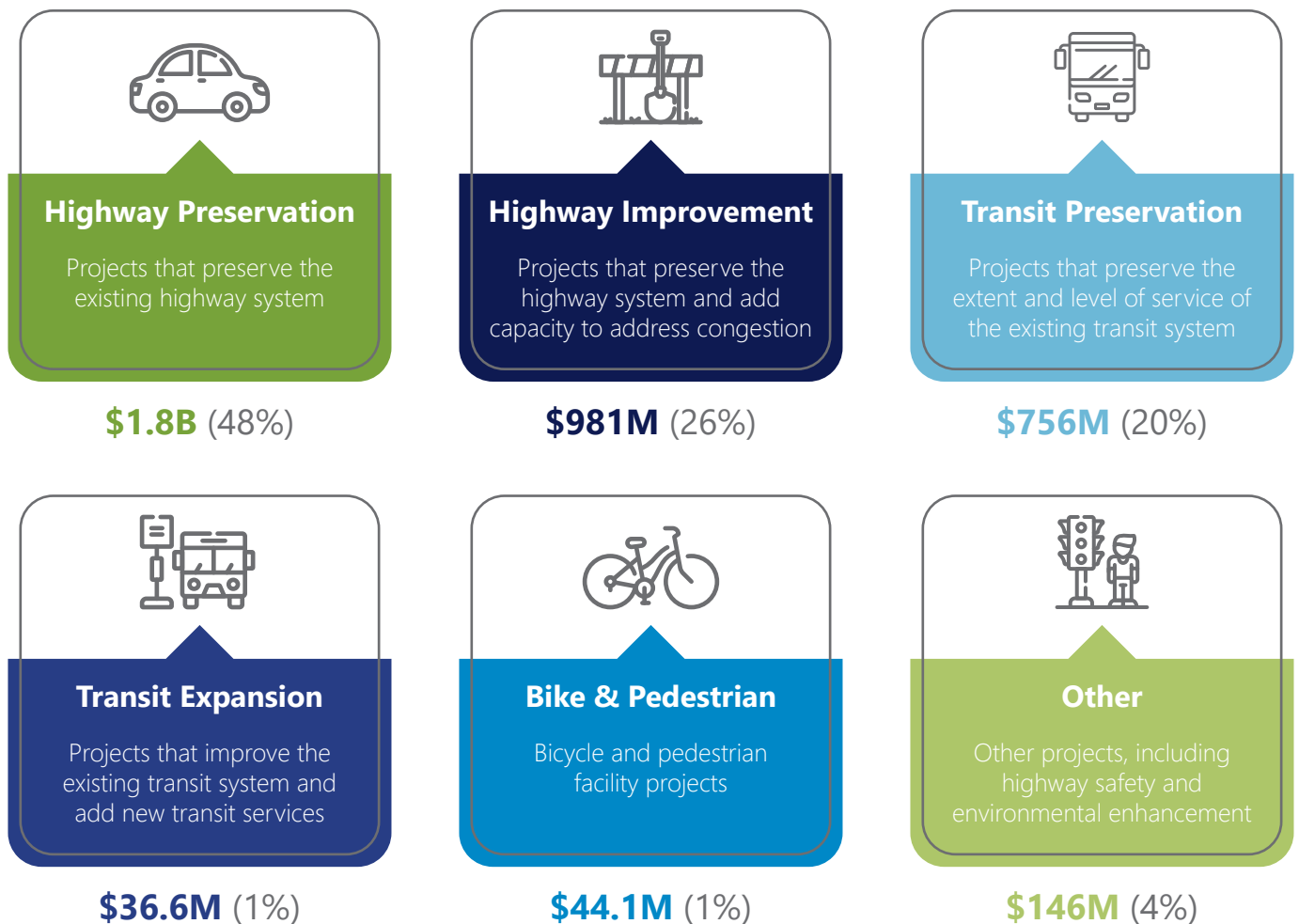
What is the TIP?

In 2023, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff implemented the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a listing of all arterial highway, public transit, and other transportation improvement projects proposed to be carried out over a four-year period by county and local governments and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) in the Region. Arterial highway and public transit projects proposed to be funded with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding must be listed in the TIP.

How is it Developed?

The Commission develops the TIP working with WisDOT staff, area transit operators, and county and local units of government in the Region. The Commission's TIP Committees (one for each of the Region's five urban areas) guide the TIP. These Committees are made up of local elected officials and staff, including all of the area transit operators. The TIP is occasionally amended to add or remove projects, or to account for changes in project scope, costs, and/or sources of funding.

The 2023-2026 TIP includes **621 projects**, as amended through 2023, representing a **total potential investment of \$3.8B**:



Nonattainment Areas in the Region



Plan Consistency for Air Quality Standards

The TIP for Southeastern Wisconsin must be consistent with VISION 2050 and conform to State of Wisconsin air quality implementation and maintenance plans for specified national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS), given the presence of nonattainment and maintenance areas for ozone and particulate matter in the Region.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets NAAQS for six criteria pollutants common in outdoor air that are considered harmful to public health and the environment: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide.

Areas not meeting the NAAQS for one or more of the criteria pollutants are designated as “nonattainment” areas by the EPA. Areas previously in nonattainment that subsequently meet the NAAQS are called “maintenance” areas.



Food System Plan

To support VISION 2050 recommendations, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff has been working on a Regional Food System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. The Plan will address the various aspects of the food system—the complex web of activities and actors involved in the production, processing, aggregation, distribution, transport, consumption, and disposal of food products—and will address the effects of our current food system on our environment and communities.

In 2023, Commission staff continued refining Chapter 2, *The Food System*, and Chapter 3, *Consumers*, of the report. Chapter 2 presents background information about several components of the regional food system, including agricultural production, food and beverage manufacturing, distribution, retail, and food waste. Chapter 3 includes background information about the Region's population, economy, health and nutrition, food literacy, and food security and access. Commission staff hosted the second Regional Food System Plan Advisory Committee meeting, where staff focused on sharing information on Chapter 2 and received input and comments on the ongoing planning effort.

Other public outreach events where staff focused on the Regional Food System Plan included:

- 2023 Kenosha Expo
- MKE Juneteenth 2023
- 7th Annual Green & Healthy Schools Conference
- Hmong American Friendship Association Back to School Expo
- 2023 Sustainability Fair
- 2023 Tosa Summit
- 2023 Silver City International Festival
- 2023 Aurora Children's Health Fair
- 2023 Social Development Commission Poverty Summit





LOCAL PLANNING

Since its inception in 1960, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has assisted county and local governments with a wide range of plans related to land use, parks, transportation, and natural resources.

The Commission's local planning assistance promotes coordination between regional and local plans, helps county and local governments implement plans, and encourages the sound physical development of the Region. Services are available to all county and local governments that participate in and financially support the regional planning program.

In this section:

- Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Floodplain Management
- Lake and Stream Management
- Coastal Management Planning
- Comprehensive Planning
- Park and Open Space Planning
- Farmland Preservation Plans
- Bluemound Road Transit Enhancement Study

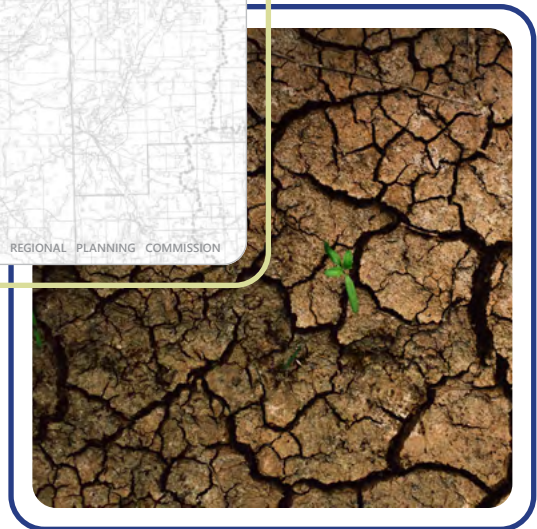
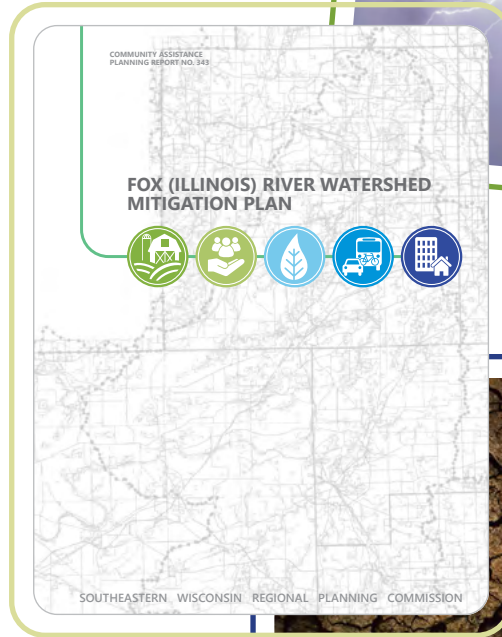
Hazard Mitigation Planning

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission assists counties and local governments with preparing hazard mitigation plans aimed at minimizing the impact of disasters.

In 2023, Commission staff assisted Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Washington Counties with updating their hazard mitigation plans. These plans include long-term and equitable strategies for protecting people and property by minimizing the impact of natural disasters, including flooding, coastal bluff failure, tornadoes, extreme temperature events, and severe winter storms. The plans also fulfill requirements by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), assuring communities are eligible to apply for federal funding for hazard mitigation projects.

Fox River Watershed Hazard Mitigation Plan

In 2023, Commission staff completed a hazard mitigation plan for the Wisconsin portion of the Fox (Illinois) River watershed, at the request of the Waukesha County Department of Emergency Management. Extreme flooding experienced by the City of Burlington in July 2017 catalyzed this plan. The plan covers portions of Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, and Waukesha Counties, which contain 98% of the Fox River watershed area in Wisconsin. Focused on the hazards of flooding, dam failures, and drought, the plan provides mitigation strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and protect area communities from future hazard events.



Flood Management

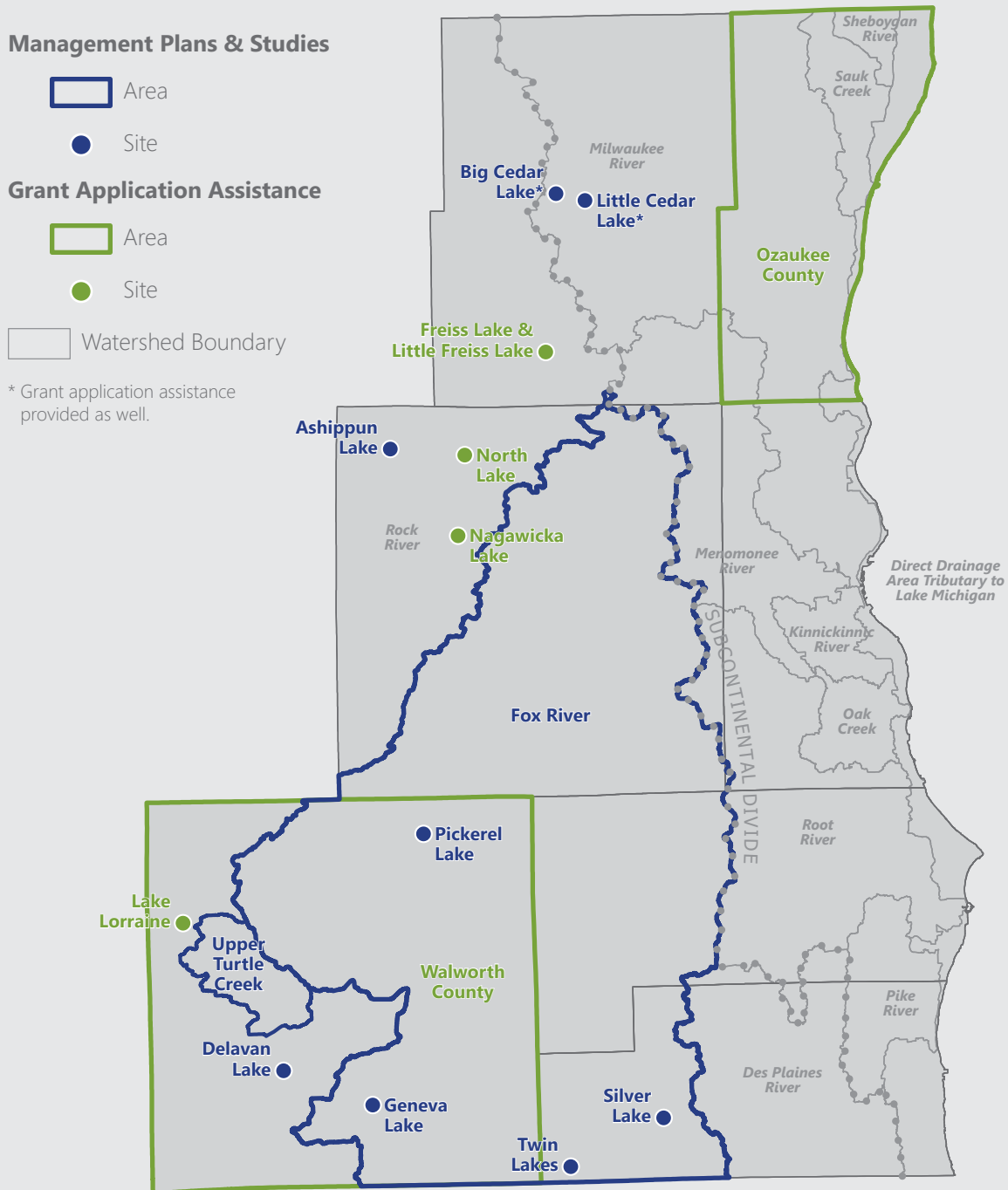
The Commission maintains a continuing program to address stormwater and floodplain management issues, applying our significant expertise in hydrologic and hydraulic modeling to plans across the Region.

From 1966 through 2003, staff prepared comprehensive plans for most of the Region's watersheds. Each plan included development of hydrologic and hydraulic computer simulation models and detailed flood profiles and floodplain maps of streams and rivers within each watershed. That information, refined and updated over time, serves as the basis for local floodplain zoning and federal flood insurance mapping throughout much of the Region.

In 2023, Commission staff efforts involved updating floodplain boundaries on multiple streams in the Region. These include the Root River and tributaries in Milwaukee County, Southwick Creek in Walworth County, and the South Branch Pike River and tributaries in Kenosha County.

Lake and Stream Management

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources work with local lake and stream community organizations, including lake management associations, river associations and commissions, and public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, to prepare lake and stream management plans. The map below illustrates major lake and watershed work efforts by the Commission in 2023.



Coastal Management Planning

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission works in partnership with the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program to improve and enhance the ecological, economic and aesthetic assets of Lake Michigan and its coastal communities. We provide technical, educational, and procedural services for coastal-related activities to support planning and/or project implementation for local units of government.

Commission activities include:

- Conducting field investigations of wetlands and other sensitive lands in the coastal management area
- Reviewing proposed sanitary sewer extensions in the coastal management area
- Assisting counties, local units of government, and non-governmental organizations with programs that improve near-shore water quality and habitat value
- Briefing the Wisconsin Coastal Council on Commission planning activities under the coastal zone management program

Comprehensive Planning

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has been helping counties and communities prepare and update comprehensive plans since Wisconsin passed the “Smart Growth” law in 1999. The legislation provides a framework for developing and updating comprehensive plans by regional planning commissions and county, city, village, and town units of government. As part of the law, comprehensive plans must be updated at least once every 10 years.

The law also includes a consistency requirement, so that local zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances are consistent with the local comprehensive plan. Additionally, the Commission encourages that plans promote coordination between regional and local plans.

In 2023, the Commission continued work on an update of the Kenosha County Multi-Jurisdictional Plan, and completed updates to plans for the City of Cudahy Redevelopment Districts #1 and #2 to ensure consistency with the City's comprehensive plan. Staff also continued work on plans for the City of Waukesha, Village of Salem Lakes, Village of Somers, and Town of Cedarburg.

Park and Open Space Planning

The Commission adopted the Regional Park and Open Space Plan in 1977. The plan recommends preserving environmentally significant open space lands and providing sites and facilities for major resource-oriented outdoor recreation activities throughout the Region. Over time, the plan has been amended on a county-by-county basis, with Commission staff assisting in most county plan updates and the Commission adopting them as amendments to the Regional Park and Open Space Plan. Staff also prepares park and open space plans for communities upon request.

In 2023, Commission staff began work on an update of the Village of Sussex plan, and re-initiated work on an update of the Ozaukee County plan, both anticipated to be completed in 2024.



Farmland Preservation Plans

Commission staff aid in efforts to preserve lands with our most productive soils so they may continue to support agricultural uses.

Commission studies have shown that agricultural land use in the Region has decreased significantly over the past several decades. Despite this, nearly half the Region remains in agricultural use—about 43%—and agriculture remains an important component of the regional economy.

During 2023, Commission staff initiated work on the Racine County Farmland Preservation Plan and the Washington County Land Evaluation and Site Assessment.



Bluemound Road Transit Enhancement Study

At the request of Waukesha County, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff completed the Bluemound Corridor Transit Enhancement Study in August 2023, which provides recommendations for an incremental investment approach to implementing transit improvements. The study recommends implementing transit enhancements that include bus rapid transit (BRT) features and pedestrian improvements along the existing Waukesha Metro Route 1 corridor. The recommended enhanced Waukesha Metro transit service would link to CONNECT 1, the Region's first BRT line, opened in June 2023, that connects the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center to downtown Milwaukee via Bluemound Road and Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee County. The study was coordinated with the Waukesha Area Transit Development Plan.



Credit: Waukesha Metro Transit

2023 Origin-Destination Transit Survey

Beginning in April 2023, Commission staff began work on an Origin-Destination (OD) Transit Survey. This survey is conducted once every ten years to correspond with the U.S. decennial census. The transit survey is an onboard survey where transit users are approached during their trip and given a survey form onboard the transit vehicle that asks questions about their current trip. Some examples of questions on the survey include: starting location, ending location, where they live, and other questions about their demographic characteristics.

The transit survey form was redesigned during the summer of 2023 in collaboration with the 14 transit operators in Southeastern Wisconsin, allowing the survey form to be returned by mail or filled out online using a QR code printed on the surveys. The survey was conducted in September and October 2023 and over 2,600 surveys were filled out. Final results will be shared with each transit operator in 2024.

The results from the surveys are used by Commission staff to prepare travel forecasts, develop the long-range land use and transportation plan, and develop short-term transit development plans.



INFORMATION, DATA, AND SERVICES

Our partners across Southeastern Wisconsin regularly look to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission as a resource for accurate data and objective information to assist with planning and decision making.

Commission staff provide a variety of services, primarily to local and county governments, in support of their various planning efforts.

In this section:

- Climate Pollution Reduction Grant
- CommuteWISE
- Environmental Partnerships and Collaborations
- Economic Development
- Surveying, Mapping, and Land Information
- 2020 Regional Land Use Inventory
- 2020 Environmental Corridor Inventory
- Public Involvement and Outreach
- Environmental Justice Task Force
- Staff
- Publications
- Funding

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

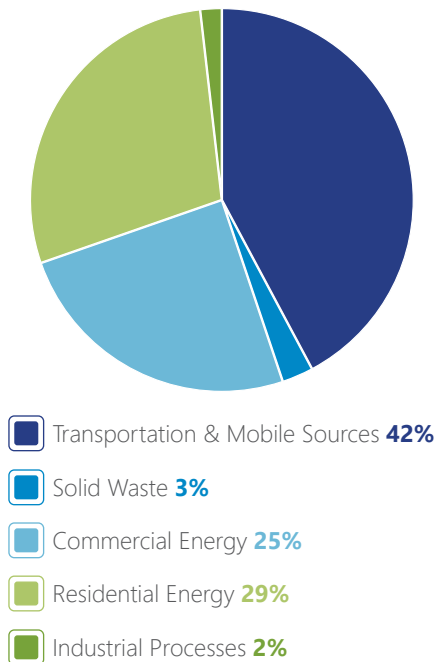
Connecting Silos to Reduce Air Pollution

In June 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program provided the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission with \$1 million in grant funding to develop plans for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other harmful air pollution for the four-county Milwaukee-Waukesha Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The foundational document is the Milwaukee Climate and Equity Plan, which outlines 10 Big Ideas for Action to reduce GHG emissions and improve racial equity. This grant gives Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties an opportunity to build a regional plan that identifies strategies for long-term benefits, particularly for communities overburdened by pollution and high energy costs.

This multi-year process will explore actions to pursue transformative change that result in significant air emissions reductions, equitable development, family-supporting jobs, and improved public health. The three grant deliverables include a Priority Action Plan due in March 2024 to identify priority reduction measures; a Comprehensive Action Plan due in December 2025 that will include a refined GHG inventory and projection, an analysis of community benefits, a review of funding opportunities, and a workforce planning analysis; and a Status Report on implementation efforts in mid-2027.



Percentage of GHG Emissions by Sector in the Four-County MSA



Note: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Creating a Priority Pollution Reduction Action Plan

The initial greenhouse gas inventory for the Priority Action Plan found that most of the emissions in the MSA result from building energy use and transportation, with several communities having plans and strategies in place that address climate pollution, such as energy efficiency programs.

Plan deliverables will be built on input collected from local community partners, the Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force, and a workgroup comprised of the four counties in the MSA, supporting agencies, and those communities that signed a letter of support for the grant, including the Counties of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha; the Cities of Milwaukee, Mequon, Muskego, Waukesha, Wauwatosa, and West Allis; the Villages of Bayside, Shorewood, and Whitefish Bay; and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District and the State of Wisconsin Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy.

The action plan for the MSA will serve as an opportunity to integrate sustainability into future long-range land use and transportation plans for the seven-county Region.

CommuteWISE

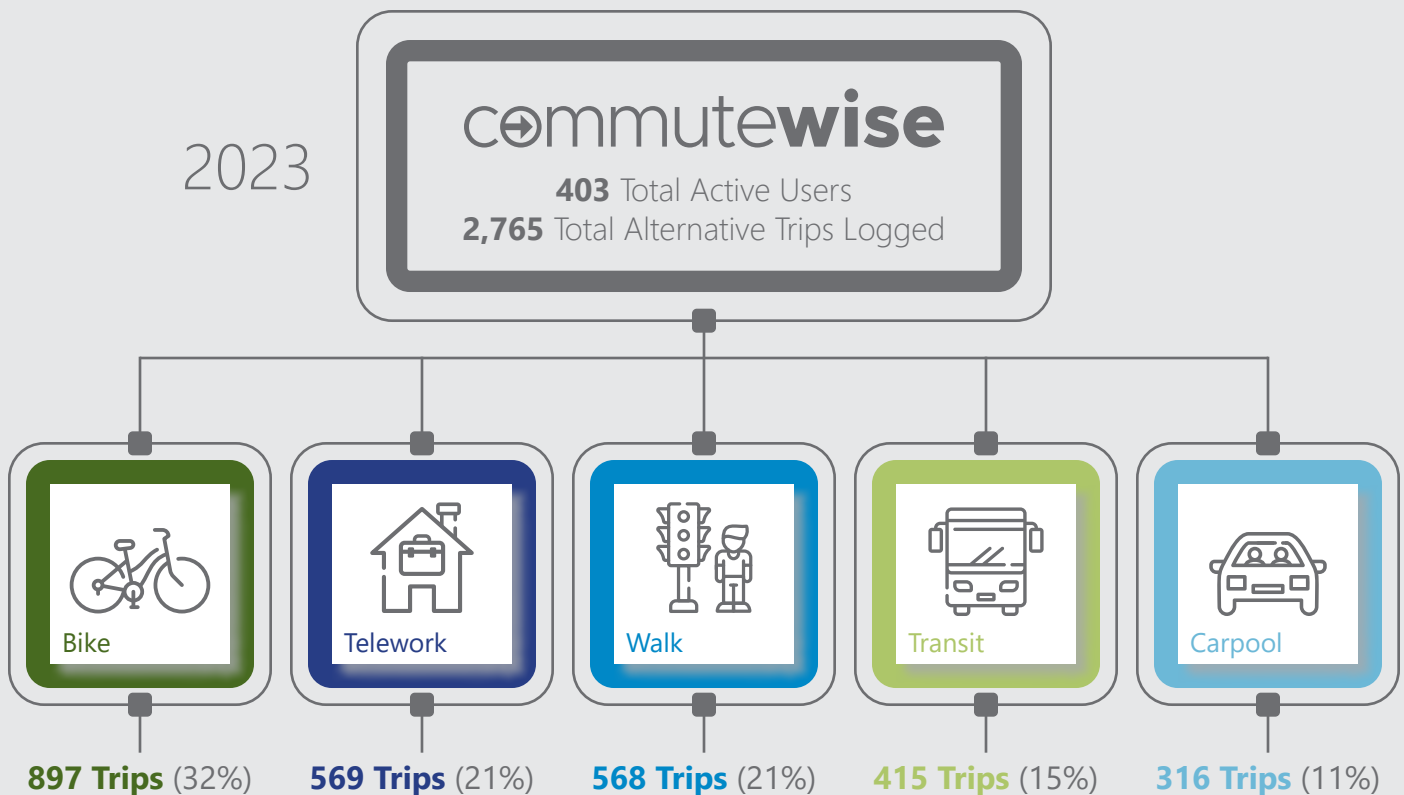
CommuteWISE is a Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission initiative that provides tools and resources for people to explore cost-effective and sustainable commute options. Through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, the program aims to enhance mobility by connecting workers to job opportunities, providing transportation options, reducing traffic congestion, and improving air quality.

TDM is a set of policies, strategies, and supportive programs that help people change their travel behavior by avoiding a trip entirely, using alternative travel modes, traveling at different times of day, or using different routes. The launch of CommuteWISE in 2023 implemented a VISION 2050 recommendation for a coordinated TDM program that includes education, marketing, and promotional events to encourage alternatives to drive-alone personal vehicle travel.

CommuteWISE provides resources, incentives, and services to decrease single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel while encouraging alternative modes. The program also provides consultation to employers to assist organizations that are interested in promoting alternative modes to their employees. During the year, CommuteWISE reached over 10 organizations with information on TDM in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha Counties.

The CommuteWISE online platform, which encourages multimodal transportation options such as ridesharing, biking, and transit, grew to 403 users in its first year. This helped reduce CO₂ emissions by 8.6 tons—or the equivalent of 127 tree seedlings grown for 10 years—and saved users \$8,700.

In September, the Try It! Challenge asked users to try a new way of getting around. A total of 92 users participated and logged over 1,400 trips that avoided over 7,500 miles of drive-alone vehicle travel.



Environmental Partnerships and Collaborations

Within Southeastern Wisconsin, many water-related initiatives require ongoing partnerships and collaborations. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, in addition to specifically serving the Region's counties and municipalities, regularly participates in a number of important initiatives across the Region with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and community organizations, including lake and stream management associations, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, conservancy groups, and land trusts. Staff has actively participated in organizational events and activities at local, regional, and statewide scales, including attending meetings, supporting event logistics, serving on committees/boards, providing environmental outreach/education, and giving presentations to share information and management alternatives. In 2023, staff participated in events and activities with the following:

- Lake management districts, associations, committees, protection and rehabilitation districts, and sanitary districts, including:
 - Ashippun Lake
 - Big Cedar Lake
 - Delavan Lake
 - Freiss Lake & Little Freiss Lake
 - Geneva Lake
 - Lake Lorraine
 - Little Cedar
 - Nagawicka Lake
 - North Lake
 - Pickeral Lake
 - Silver Lake
 - Twin Lakes
- Higher Education Institutions: Carroll University, UW-Whitewater, and Wisconsin Lutheran College
- Cedar Lake Conservation Foundation
- Geneva Lake Environmental Agency
- Geneva Lakes Conservancy
- Healthy Lakes Conference
- Lake Shore Natural Resource Partnership
- Mid-Kettle Moraine Partners Group
- Mukwonago River Watershed Initiative
- Oconomowoc River Watershed Protection Program
- Ozaukee Treasures Network
- Ozaukee-Washington Land Trust
- Pewaukee River Partnership
- Riveredge Nature Center
- Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network
- Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
- Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission
- Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc.
- Tall Pines Conservancy
- The Nature Conservancy
- Ulao Creek Partnership
- Walworth County Lakes Association
- Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake
- Watershed Protection Committee of Racine County
- Waterway Restoration Partnership (Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern)
- Wisconsin Lakes and River Partnership
- Wisconsin Association for Floodplain, Stormwater, and Coastal Management
- UW-Extension Lakes and Wisconsin Lakes

Partnership with Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD)

Commission staff participated in several initiatives in 2023 that are integral to or aligned with MMSD's efforts, including:

- Kinnickinnic River rehabilitation and flood mitigation project technical support
- Lincoln Park aquatic and riparian habitat enhancement/rehabilitation projects
- Milwaukee River dam management and channel manipulation in the Estabrook/Lincoln/Kletsch Park reach
- Reforestation and Wetland Restoration Project within the Greater Milwaukee watersheds



Featured Training and Notable Projects

In 2023, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission worked on the following training programs and projects of note:

Retzer Nature Center, Waukesha County

Led a Primary Environmental Corridor training workshop.

Riveredge Nature Center, Ozaukee County

Taught the identification and management of willow species in Southeastern Wisconsin, including both a classroom and field identification workshop for students and county, municipal, and non-profit conservation organization staff in attendance.

Sheridan Park, Milwaukee County

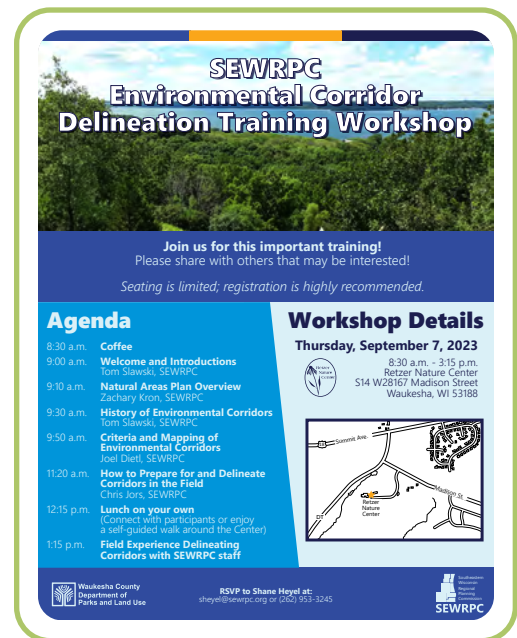
Completed a comprehensive vegetation inventory and natural area assessment at the clay bluffs along Lake Michigan within Sheridan Park. Large portions of the bluffs met Critical Species Habitat (CSH) criteria due to the presence of several rare species and will be included within the proposed Oak Leaf Trail Habitat Area CSH.

WDNR, Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation

Completed surveys at several bog relict and southern tamarack swamps classified as Natural Areas by the Commission. Data were shared with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and will be used to develop Regional Condition Benchmarks for Southeastern Wisconsin's Natural Communities.

WDNR, Bureau of Wildlife Management

Taught a field course on management of remnant wetland plant communities and plant identification to incoming wildlife biologists at the WDNR.



Annual Fox River Summit

The annual Fox River Summit brings together a wide range of Federal, State, county, community, nonprofit organization, and private sector interests. The Summit gives residents, environmental and conservation groups, businesses, and local governments the ability to discuss issues of concern, share resources, and work toward common goals associated with protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural resources in the Fox River watershed. Commission staff actively participate in this effort and helped the Southeast Fox River Partnership and Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission, along with the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership, Fox River Study Group, and Friends of the Fox, to organize and coordinate the 11th Annual Fox River Summit. This annual event brings together watershed organizations in Wisconsin and Illinois for a one-day discussion of common interests and possible opportunities for future cooperation, which has led to significant partnerships, projects, and funding in this part of the Region.

Economic Development

Economic development in Southeastern Wisconsin is conducted by county and local economic and community development organizations, including economic development corporations or agencies established by each of the seven counties in the Region. Regionally, the Milwaukee 7 (M7) provides a cooperative economic development platform for the seven counties.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission serves as a resource through its staff, data, and plans to support county economic development organizations and M7 as they work to maintain and expand the regional economy.

One source of economic data the Commission can provide to communities in the Region is Lightcast (formerly EMSI). Learn more about these economic modeling data and access quarterly reports at www.sewrpc.org/Economic-Modeling.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

In 2021, Commission staff, in collaboration with M7, prepared the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which provides a strategic framework for economic development in the Region. Preparing a new CEDS every five years ensures that communities and organizations within the Region qualify for U.S. Economic Development Administration funding targeted at economically distressed areas.

The 2021-2025 CEDS includes a strategy-driven Action Plan focused around five goals:

- Goal 1 (Unity): Unite the Region around a comprehensive, equitable, and ongoing economic development agenda built around the three pillars of Growth, Talent, and Livability
- Goal 2 (Growth): Grow, expand, and attract businesses
- Goal 3 (Talent): Ensure a qualified workforce that meets the future needs of employers
- Goal 4 (Livability): Enhance the Region's quality of life and attractiveness to businesses, residents, workers, and visitors
- Goal 5 (Infrastructure): Modernize regional infrastructure to enhance efficiency, cost effectiveness, and connectivity



Credit: MRMG

Surveying, Mapping, and Land Information

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has long recognized the need for accurate base data layers depicting the shape of the land's surface and the precise location of its physical features, both natural and manmade. Since 1961, the Commission has been a resource for counties and communities regarding surveying and mapping practices.

In this role, the Commission prepared general purpose base layers of the entire Region in the 1960s and continues to recommend that they stay current for use in more localized planning efforts. To this end, the Commission has continuously worked with county and local governments to ensure the survey control system is maintained and to provide various geospatial recommendations.

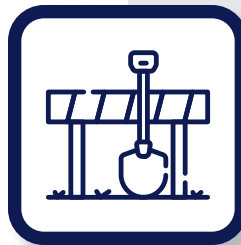
The recommended approach to surveying and geospatial services has provided a strong foundation for both the Region's county and local digital land information systems and public works management systems.

Foundational Data Layers



Corner Monumentation

The permanent monumentation of all U.S. Public Land Survey System (USPLSS) section, quarter section, and center of section corners in the Region.



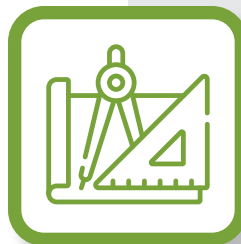
Control Surveys

Field surveys to enhance each monument as a station of a known horizontal and vertical position on both the USPLSS and State Plane Coordinate System, along with documentation of the entire control network.



Digital Cartography

Orthoimagery that combines image characteristics of an aerial image with the geometric qualities of a map and Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR). LiDAR is a remote sensing method used to examine the surface of the Earth.



Cadastral Mapping

Preparing companion, correlated real property ownership data layers and maps based on Commission-recommended standards.

2020 Regional Land Use Inventory

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission plays an important role in maintaining a current inventory of the Region's land use to support planning and decision-making processes across the Region.

In 2023, Commission staff completed a major update of the regional land use inventory to the year 2020. Staff undertake major updates to the regional land use inventory every five years. The inventory identifies existing land uses throughout the Region, using a classification system with more than 60 land use categories. The inventory is a valuable tool that county and local units of government can use in their own planning efforts, like comprehensive plans and park and open space plans. The inventory also serves as a foundation for the Commission's regional plans, including the regional land use and transportation plan, VISION 2050.

Land Use Category	2000	2020	Change
Agricultural and Other Open Lands	52.9%	48.4%	-4.5
Single-Family Residential	12.3%	13.6%	1.3
Wetlands	10.3%	11.7%	1.4
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities	7.5%	8.0%	0.5
Woodlands	6.9%	7.1%	0.2
Surface Water	2.9%	3.1%	0.2
Recreational	1.9%	2.1%	0.2
Governmental and Institutional	1.3%	1.4%	0.1
Industrial	1.2%	1.3%	0.1
Multifamily Residential	1.2%	1.3%	0.1
Commercial	1.1%	1.3%	0.2
Extractive	0.5%	0.5%	--
Landfill	0.1%	0.1%	--



Between 2000 and 2020, *Agricultural and Other Open Lands* had the greatest change in the Region's land use, declining 4.5%. *Single-Family Residential* and *Wetlands* saw the greatest increases among land use categories.

2020 Environmental Corridor Inventory

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has been identifying environmental corridors since the 1960s, when the environmental corridor concept was included in the Commission's first regional land use plan. Detailed Commission mapping of the key elements of the natural resource base serves as a basis for corridor delineation.

Environmental corridors are typically elongated areas in the landscape that encompass the most important elements of the Region's natural resource base. These important elements include the best remaining woodlands, wetlands, prairies, significant wildlife habitat areas, surface water and associated floodplains and riparian buffers, and natural areas and critical species habitat sites, together with many related historic, scenic, and recreational sites.

Delineating Corridors

Commission staff inventory natural resource features and delineate environmental corridors every five years using the best available orthophotography. Because of the importance of these environmental corridors, State, county, and local governments frequently call upon our staff to verify and stake in the field the boundaries of the corridors. Work to update the 2015 regional environmental corridor inventory to 2020 was initiated at the end of 2023 and is scheduled to be completed in 2024.

Categorizing Environmental Corridors

The Commission divides corridors into three categories: primary environmental corridors, secondary environmental corridors, and isolated natural resource areas.

489
square miles

Primary Environmental Corridors

Concentrations of significant natural resources at least 400 acres in area, at least two miles in length, and at least 200 feet in width.

Comprise **18%** of the Region

80
square miles

Secondary Environmental Corridors

Concentrations of significant natural resources at least 100 acres in area and at least one mile in length.

Comprise **3%** of the Region

72
square miles

Isolated Natural Resource Areas

Those remaining significant natural resources at least five acres in area and at least 200 feet in width.

Comprise **3%** of the Region

Public Involvement and Outreach

Public involvement is an important part of our regional planning efforts and implementation. We work across communities to engage residents and encourage everyone to participate in planning for Southeastern Wisconsin's future. We place a continual emphasis on effective outreach to residents of diverse communities, led by our Public Involvement and Outreach Division. We directly engage and provide updates to more than 75 Primary Organizations serving specific population subgroups, including nine Community Partners.

Our engagement techniques are constantly evolving and include in-person and virtual meetings and events, print and digital content and an open invitation for the public to discuss issues facing the Region with Commission staff.

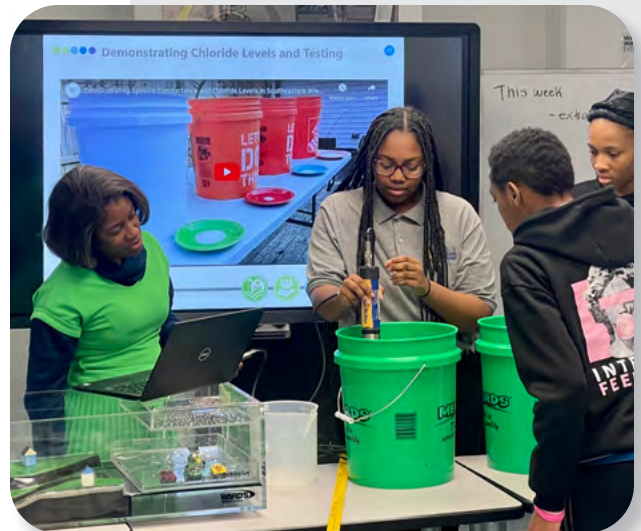
In 2023, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff developed project-based lessons that can be used in area schools to help students understand career opportunities in planning, civil engineering, and environmental sciences fields. Lessons focus on transportation and land use planning, the Regional Food System Plan, and floodplain modeling.

Our Community Partners

Since 2013, our staff has developed a strong partnership with nine community organizations, referred to as Community Partners, representing groups that have traditionally been underrepresented—in particular, people of color, people with disabilities, and low-income residents. The Community Partners play a valuable role in the Commission's public involvement and outreach, including providing input and feedback on outreach plans, hosting or co-organizing presentations about relevant Commission planning efforts or projects, and sharing information with their stakeholders through social media or newsletters.

The nine Community Partners include:

- Common Ground
- Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition
- Hmong American Friendship Association
- Independence First
- Greater Milwaukee Urban League
- Renew Environmental Public Health Advocates, Inc.
- Southside Organizing Center
- Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin
- Urban League of Racine and Kenosha



Commission Staff with our Community Partners

Five Basic Responsibilities

1

Involve and Participate

Facilitate the involvement of, and help ensure the full and fair participation of, EJ populations at all stages in relevant areas of regional planning

2

Address Relevant Issues

Make recommendations on, and help monitor, issues and analyses relevant to the needs and circumstances of EJ populations

3

Identify Benefits and Effects

Help identify potential benefits and adverse effects of regional planning programs and activities with respect to EJ populations

4

Advise and Recommend

Advise and recommend methods to a) prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits to EJ populations, and/or b) avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on EJ populations

5

Enhance Planning Awareness

Enhance awareness, understanding, appreciation, support, and implementation of plan recommendations and benefits, with emphasis on the needs of EJ populations

Environmental Justice Task Force

Environmental justice (EJ) prioritizes the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EJ populations include people of color, low-income populations, and people with disabilities.

The primary role of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) is to enhance the consideration and integration of EJ throughout the regional planning process. The EJTF consists of 15 representatives from throughout the Region who meet regularly to gain an understanding of the Commission's technical work program and to provide input to that program through the lens of environmental justice.

During its four meetings in 2023, the EJTF:

- Received updates from Commission staff, and provided input, on multiple planning efforts and topics:
 - 2024 Review and Update of VISION 2050
 - CommuteWISE Program
 - Economically Distressed Areas
 - Onboard Transit Survey
 - Regional Food System Plan
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grant
- Discussed and provided input on the Commission's public involvement and outreach efforts, including a review of the list of primary organizations targeted for outreach in 2024
- Provided input on a new document that guides the work of the EJTF, which was completed by Commission staff

Staffing

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission prepares an annual work program that is reviewed and approved by Federal and State funding agencies. This work program is then carried out by staff and supplemented by additional temporary staff and consultants as needed. At the end of 2023, the Commission staff totaled 66, including 63 full-time and 3 part-time employees.

Leadership

Stephanie Hacker, AICP, LEED AP, *Executive Director*

Benjamin McKay, AICP, *Deputy Director**

Elizabeth Larsen, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, *Director of Administration**

** Special acknowledgment to Mr. McKay and Ms. Larsen for serving as the agency's leadership staff in the first half of 2023.*

Administrative Services

Elizabeth Larsen, SPHR, SHRM-SCP,
Director of Administration

Alexa Carzoli, *Graphic Designer*

Megan Deau, *Senior Graphic Designer*

Robert Klatkiewicz, *Office Clerk*

Alina Panasiuk, *Accounting /HR Specialist*

Richard Wazny, *Print Shop/Building Supervisor*

Environmental Planning

Laura Herrick, PE, CFM,
Chief Environmental Engineer
Thomas Slawski, PhD, *Chief Specialist-Biologist*

Belynda Alberte, *Planning Technician*

Joseph Boxhorn, PhD, *Principal Planner*

Dale Buser, PE, PH, *Principal Specialist*

Jennifer Dietl, *Principal Specialist*

Shane Heyel, *Senior Specialist*

Karin Hollister, PE, *Principal Engineer*

Christopher Jors, *Principal Specialist*

Zachary Kron, *Senior Specialist*

Zijia Li, *Engineer*

James Mahoney, PE, *Engineer*

Nicklaus Neureuther, *Specialist*

Julia Orłowski, PE, *Senior Engineer*

Aaron Owens, *Senior Planner*

Justin Poinsett, *Principal Specialist*

Megan Shedivy, *Planner*



Land Use Planning

Joel Dietl, AICP, *Chief Land Use Planner*

Rochelle Brien, AICP, *Senior Planner*

Frank Fierek, Jr., *Senior Specialist*

Barry Gore, *Principal Planner*

Donald Heckel, *Senior Planner*

Kendall Johnson, *Research Analyst*

Richard Kania, AICP, RLA, *Principal Planner*

Gideon Oduro, *Specialist*

Miranda Page, JD, *Planner*

Robbie Robinson, *Senior Planner*

David Schilling, *Principal Planner*

James Siegler, *Planner*

Kathryn Sobottke, *Principal Specialist*

Bryan Walter, *Planner*

Staffing, Continued

Public Involvement and Outreach

Nakeisha Payne,
Public Involvement and Outreach Manager
Montre Moore, *Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist*

Special Projects

Eric Lynde, Chief Special Projects Planner
Christopher Parisey, *Senior Planner*

Surveying and GIS

Robert Merry, PLS, Chief Surveyor
Michael Gosetti, GIS Manager
Patricia Bouchard, *GIS Specialist*
Brennan DeSwarte, *Land Survey Assistant*
Timothy Gorseigner, *GIS Specialist*
Benjamin Johnson, *Land Survey Assistant*
Justin Kendall, *Systems Administrator*
Kaleb Kutz, *Planner*
Bradley Subotnik, *Senior GIS Specialist*
Andrew Traeger, *Certified Survey Technician*

Transportation Planning

Christopher Hiebert, PE, Chief Transportation Engineer
Ryan Hoel, PE, Deputy Chief Transportation Engineer

Gom Ale, PhD, *Principal Planner-Modeler*
Elizabeth Callin, AICP, *Senior Planner*
Carrie Cooper, *Principal Planner*
Joseph Delmagori, *Senior Planner*
Victor Helin, *Senior Planner*
William Henning, *Engineer*
Ethan Johnson, *Senior Planner*
Reginald Mason, *Research Analyst*
Samuel Mercier, *Planner*
Gabriel Rosenwald, *Engineer*
Xylia Rueda, *Senior Planner*
Jennifer Sarnecki, AICP, *Principal Planner*
Dana Shinnars, *Transportation Planner*
Cinthia Tellez-Silva, *Planning Technician*



Credit: Wisconsin Policy Forum





Publications

In addition to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Annual Report for 2022 and Overall Work Program for 2024, the following publications were published in 2023.

Community Assistance Planning Reports

- No. 84 – Sanitary Sewer Service Area for the Villages of Sussex and Lisbon, June
- No. 91 – Sanitary Sewer Service Area for the Village of Grafton (2nd Edition), December
- No. 145 – Sanitary Sewer Service Area for the Village of Bristol, Utility District No. 1, June
- No. 192 – Sanitary Sewer Service for the Village of Dousman and Environs (3rd Edition), September
- No. 336 – Waukesha Area Transit Development Plan: 2023-2027, June
- No. 340 – Milwaukee County North-South Transit Enhancement Study - Public Involvement Summary, January
- No. 340 – Milwaukee County North-South Transit Enhancement Study - Tier 3 Evaluation, January
- No. 343 – Fox (Illinois) River Watershed Mitigation Plan, September
- No. 344 – Bluemound Corridor Transit Enhancement Study, August

Memorandum Reports

- No. 177 – Aquatic Plant Management Plan Update for Whitewater and Rice Lakes (2nd Edition), February
- No. 262 – City of Cudahy Redevelopment District #1 Project Plan Update, June
- No. 263 – City of Cudahy Redevelopment District #2 Project Plan Update, June
- No. 267 – Assessment of Conformity of the Fiscally Constrained Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, January

Technical Reports

- No. 61 – Field Monitoring and Data Collection for the Chloride Impact Study, September

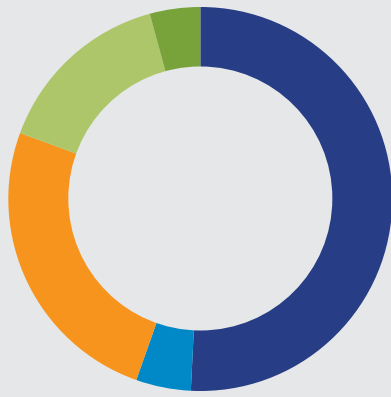
Other Reports

The Commission prepares a number of additional types of reports as needed. These report types include: planning guides, technical records, planning program prospectuses, study designs, regional planning conference proceedings, staff memorandums, public meeting minutes, planning program reports, and lake use reports.

Newsletters

- Volume 10, Issue 1, March
- Volume 10, Issue 2, June
- Volume 10, Issue 3, September
- Volume 10, Issue 4, December





2023 Revenues \$9,418,913

- **Federal Government \$4,783,886 (51%)**
 Federal Highway Administration (49%)
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1%)
 National Science Foundation (1%)
- **State Government \$435,754 (5%)**
 Wisconsin Department of Transportation (4%)
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (1%)
 Wisconsin Department of Administration (<1%)
- **Regional Tax Levy \$2,370,245 (25%)**
- **Service Agreements \$1,429,282 (15%)**
- **Miscellaneous* \$399,746 (4%)**



2023 Expenditures \$9,110,562

- **Transportation Planning \$3,219,192 (35%)**
- **Land Use Planning \$1,874,757 (21%)**
- **Environmental Planning \$1,710,395 (19%)**
- **Local Planning Assistance \$1,575,826 (17%)**
- **Administration \$730,392 (8%)**

*e.g., earned interest, purchased data, collected rental income, etc.

Source: 2023 Audit

Funding

Basic financial support for the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's work program is provided by a regional tax levy apportioned to each county on the basis of equalized valuation, which is supplemented by Federal and State aids.

In 2023, the regional tax levy rate of .00101% of equalized value remained significantly below the rate of 0.003% permitted in State law. Based on circumstances in prior years, the regional tax levy has remained static at \$2,370,245 since 2006. Staff anticipate revisiting the regional tax levy per State law in the coming two years.

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