

REGIONAL PLANNING NEWS



A publication of the **Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

Volume 2, Issue 6, November 2015

LOOK ONLINE

Find new and updated information at www.sewrpc.org and www.vision2050sewis.org.

Reports and Resources

*VISION 2050
Draft Plan Chapters*

*Preview VISION
2050 Alternatives*

*VISION 2050
Brochure #4*

Guiding the Vision

*Sign Up for the VISION 2050
E-Newsletter*



SWITCH TO E-NEWS

Help save paper, printing, and mailing costs. Sign up to receive this newsletter by email at www.sewrpc.org/news.

Please contact us at sewrpcnews@sewrpc.org

VISION 2050 Alternatives Public Feedback Opportunity

The Regional Planning Commission staff has prepared **three alternative visions of future regional land use and transportation** for VISION 2050 and will seek the public's feedback about them at **seven interactive workshops** in November. The alternatives are the focus of the fourth planning stage in the development of the VISION 2050 long-range land use and transportation plan for Southeastern Wisconsin.

The public will be able to compare a "Trend" projection of future land use and transportation to two alternative plans representing departures from the Trend. The purpose of this round of public feedback is to help Commission staff prepare a preliminary recommended plan, which will be presented to the public next spring.

The VISION 2050 public workshops are scheduled for November 9-19 in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties. Information about the workshops, registration, and the alternatives is available at www.vision2050sewis.org. Each workshop will include the same information and materials. Please register in advance so that we know how many people to expect.

The alternatives are an outgrowth of the feedback SEWRPC received in fall 2014 regarding the VISION 2050 "scenarios," which conceptually showed how the Region might look and function in the future.

The Trend and Alternative Plans

The alternatives were approved for public comment by SEWRPC's Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use Planning and Regional Transportation System Planning in September. Summarized below, the three alternatives for the Region include greater detail than the conceptual scenarios from the previous step.

The Trend alternative provides a baseline to compare to the other two alternative futures, and represents a continuation of trends in the Region since 1990 in land use and transportation. More development would occur at lower densities and public transit service would continue to decline under the Trend. The bicycle network would continue to expand and reconstruction of the arterial street and highway system would continue with added capacity and some new facilities constructed to address congestion.

Alternative Plan I would reverse the trend of declining development density, and include transit-oriented development, enhancement of bicycle facilities, and a significant increase in public transit service, including fixed-guideway transit (commuter rail and rapid transit). As in the Trend, reconstruction of the arterial street and highway system would continue, with added capacity and some new facilities to address congestion.

Alternative Plan II would focus more new development as transit-oriented development, enhance bicycle facilities and public transit similar to Alternative I, and invest in more fixed-guideway transit corridors than Alternative I. Reconstruction of the arterial street and highway system would continue as in the Trend and Alternative I, but capacity improvements would primarily be limited to the rural and low-density suburban areas not served by fixed-guideway transit.

continued on page 4



**2 Jackson Creek
Watershed Plan**
a practical guide for communities

Jackson Creek Watershed Protection Plan Focuses on Water Quality Recommendations

Commission staff are in the process of finalizing a water quality protection plan for the Jackson Creek watershed in Walworth County. The plan was initiated in 2012 at the request of the Kettle Moraine Land Trust and is being prepared in cooperation with the Delavan Lake Improvement Association, Delavan Lake Watershed Initiative, Delavan Lake Sanitary District, University of Wisconsin Extension, and local municipalities including the Town of Delavan, City of Elkhorn, and Walworth County. Key stakeholders will review a draft of the plan, which is expected to be completed in the near future.

The *Jackson Creek Watershed Protection Plan* is intended to be a practical guide for communities in the watershed and vicinity — including Jackson Creek, Turtle Creek, Delavan Lake, and the Rock River — to work together to protect and improve land and water resources and meet water quality requirements for phosphorus and sediment in the watershed. Fertilizer pollution can cause phosphorus and sediments to build up and can “feed” toxic strains of algae that deplete the oxygen and sunlight needed for native plants and animals to thrive. Erosion caused by the lack of, or removal of, shoreline vegetation and erosion-prone agricultural and/or construction practices can cause sedimentation, affecting both water quality and water supply.

Under the Jackson Creek plan, protection of the watershed is focused on human needs and the hydrologic and ecological integrity of the water system, which ultimately contribute to a healthy economy. The plan is intended to provide recommendations for measures that would: 1) minimize further degradation of the surface water; 2) reduce nonpoint agricultural runoff and urban runoff; 3) encourage the preservation of natural resource connections for wildlife; and 4) promote stewardship of the watershed.

Habitat in Jackson Creek is favorable for the rainbow darter, as long as chemical pollutants and silt are carefully managed. Source: John Lyons, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Spawning habitat and submerged stream-side vegetation make streams like Jackson Creek highly hospitable for the northern pike gamefish. Source: SEWRPC

Implementation program

The plan draft describes a recommended 10-year implementation program that includes best management practices, information and education activities, restoration practices, estimated costs, potential funding sources, responsible agencies, and methods to gauge success. Best management practice implementation focuses on agricultural land use (which represents 85 percent of the sediment and nutrient loading to Jackson Creek), wetland buffer areas, and urbanized land uses in order to reduce runoff. Absent the implementation of best practices related to development, continuing urbanization in the area would likely increase pollutant loads to the watershed and alter the hydrology, increasing the potential for more flooding.

Among the agricultural best management recommendations summarized in the draft are barnyard runoff management, cover crops, grassed waterways, nutrient management planning, and reduced till/no-till farming methods. Among the developed- and urbanized-area best management practices provided are recommendations that include green infrastructure improvements such as rain gardens, porous pavement, bioswales, and green roofs. Additional recommendations include remediation work such as re-meandering sections of the Creek that were previously straightened or ditched. Re-meandering would allow for a longer waterway and greater capacity to assimilate nutrient loads, reduce erosion, and restore the natural form and function of Jackson Creek and instream habitat.

The plan also recognizes that the protection of floodplains from encroachment, establishment of wetland vegetation buffers, preservation of groundwater recharge areas, and implementation of stormwater infiltration best practices are vital to mitigating negative impacts to water quality and wildlife in the watershed.

Despite challenging land use impacts in the area, the proposed plan describes the Jackson Creek watershed as resilient and able to sustain a fair- to high-quality macroinvertebrate (aquatic insect) and coolwater fishery community. Equally important, the plan notes the watershed has demonstrated the capacity to improve, provided that it is protected. Enhancements to the watershed would allow for reductions in nutrient loads and flooding; the maintenance of water quality that contributes to wildlife habitat, recreational use, and property values; and recharge to the shallow aquifer for both water supply and sustainable environmental flows.

For more information about watershed resource planning, visit www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/Environment/LegacyWatershedPlans.htm, or contact SEWRPC Chief Specialist-Biologist **Tom Slawski** at tslawski@sewrpc.org.



Jackson Creek hosts an excellent coolwater fish community, as evidenced by this high-quality riffle habitat in the creek. Source: SEWRPC

Town of Belgium Updates Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Belgium has completed updates to its zoning ordinance, zoning map, and comprehensive plan. The updates include changes to reflect the 2013 Ozaukee County farmland preservation plan — effectively codifying the Town's commitment to preserve farmland over the long term. The updates also maintain consistency between the Town's zoning regulations and comprehensive plan, and with the County farmland preservation plan.

The changes take into account the farmland preservation zoning requirements included in Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Statutes and make landowners eligible to voluntarily claim, or continue to claim, State farmland preservation tax credits provided that all other State requirements are met. They were the subject of a Town open house and public hearing on July 15, 2015, and were adopted by the Town Board at a public meeting later that day.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) assisted the Town, at its request, with these updates, and also assisted the County with the farmland preservation plan update completed in 2013. In addition, the Commission prepared an application for the Town so that the updated zoning ordinance and map could be reviewed by Ozaukee County and then certified by the State of Wisconsin as a "farmland preservation ordinance."

Zoning Ordinance and Map

Some of the key changes to the Town zoning ordinance include:

- Updating regulations for the retitled "A-1 Farmland Preservation District" to meet State requirements;
- Adding a new C-2 Upland Conservancy Overlay Zoning District with provisions for protecting upland portions of environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas;
- Adding provisions for accommodating water conservation systems and energy conversion systems, such as solar, wind, and geothermal systems;
- Permitting home occupations and professional home offices on farm properties in accordance with State requirements; and
- Adding provisions to allow modifications to requirements of the ordinance to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Significant changes to the Town zoning map include reflecting adopted zoning district changes through July 15, 2015; an update of the A-1 Farmland Preservation District to be consistent with the County farmland preservation plan; changes to the delineation of the C-1 District and addition of a C-2 District to protect natural resources such as surface waters, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat areas, and steep slopes.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The main purpose of the amendment to the Town comprehensive plan was to include recommendations from the County farmland preservation plan and to maintain consistency between the Town comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance and map. In addition, the amendment updates comprehensive plan data related to land use, agriculture, natural resources, and parks and open space sites in the Town of Belgium.

Farmland Preservation

Changes to the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation law in 2009 require that counties update their farmland preservation plans as one of the conditions for continued landowner participation in the Farmland Preservation tax credit program. By the end of 2013, Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties in the Southeastern Wisconsin Region had prepared and adopted new farmland preservation plans with varying degrees of assistance from SEWRPC. All of the plans had been certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) by the end of 2013 as meeting Chapter 91 farmland preservation planning requirements.

The data updates to the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Belgium: 2035 indicate that about 78 percent, or 17,835 acres, of land in the Town was in agricultural use in the year 2010. Based upon the SEWRPC regional land use inventory, 43 percent, or about 740,000 acres, of the total area of the Region was in agricultural use in 2010. SEWRPC studies have shown that agricultural land use throughout the Region decreased by about 29 percent between 1963 and 2010. Despite this decrease, a large portion of the Region remains in agricultural use, and agriculture remains an important component of the regional economy.

For additional information, contact SEWRPC Principal Planner **Rick Kania** at rkania@sewrpc.org, or use the following links:

Town of Belgium zoning ordinance:

<http://www.town.belgium.wi.us/Ordinances/Zoning.pdf> and zoning map <http://www.town.belgium.wi.us/Zoning/Map.pdf>

Regional farmland preservation:

www.sewrpc.org/farmpreservation

Ozaukee County farmland preservation plan:

www.sewrpc.org/capr87 or <https://wi-ozaukeeconomy.civicplus.com/871/Farmland-Preservation-Plan>



Ozaukee County farm. Source: SEWRPC

Watch for Updates



WORKSHOP #4 SCHEDULE:

Monday, 11/9 @ 6PM
Racine Civic Center, Racine

Wednesday, 11/11 @ 6PM
Matheson Memorial Library and
Community Center, Elkhorn

Thursday, 11/12 @ 5PM
Kenosha Gateway Tech. College,
Kenosha

Monday, 11/16 @ 6PM
Waukesha County Tech. College,
Pewaukee

Tuesday, 11/17 @ 6PM
Ozaukee County Pavilion, Cedarburg

Wednesday, 11/18 @ 6PM
Washington County Public Agency
Center, West Bend

Thursday, 11/19 @ 5PM
Milwaukee County War Memorial
Center, Milwaukee

continued from page 1

Plan Objectives and Evaluating the Alternatives

VISION 2050 began with the definition of 15 Guiding Statements, which were intended to express a shared vision of the desired future direction of land use and transportation in Southeastern Wisconsin. Objectives were then subsequently defined to identify the more specific goals to be pursued if the Guiding Statements were to be achieved. The objectives are organized into four themes: 1) healthy communities, 2) equitable access, 3) costs and financial sustainability, and 4) mobility. Lastly, criteria were developed to measure the extent to which each objective would be achieved by the detailed land use and transportation alternatives. The objectives and criteria were developed by Commission staff with guidance from the Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use Planning and Regional Transportation System Planning, and the Environmental Justice Task Force.

The performance of the alternatives with respect to each of the 50 defined criteria has been estimated, allowing the comparison of each alternative's attainment of the defined objectives. At the workshops, the performance of each alternative with respect to the criteria and objectives will be reviewed.

Next Steps

Public input on the alternatives and their attainment of the plan objectives will help Commission staff prepare a preliminary recommended plan for VISION 2050. The goal of the preliminary recommended plan is to achieve a consensus vision for the regional land use development pattern and its supporting transportation system by considering the most effective elements of the VISION 2050 alternatives. Following public review of the preliminary plan at a series of public meetings in 2016, the Commission staff will develop a final recommended plan and vision.

If your group would like a presentation by Commission staff on the land use and transportation alternatives and their performance, and would like to have input on those alternatives, please contact vision2050@sewrpc.org to arrange a presentation for your group.

You can download a brochure about the alternatives, including November workshop dates and locations, at www.sewrpc.org/v2050brochure4. For additional information, visit www.vision2050sewis.org, email VISION2050@sewrpc.org, or call (262) 547-6721. Follow us on Twitter [@Vision2050SEWis](https://twitter.com/Vision2050SEWis).

REGIONAL PLANNING NEWS | Volume 2, Issue 6, November 2015