

REGIONAL PLANNING NEWS

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



Volume 7 • Issue 1 • July 2020



SWITCH TO E-NEWS

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



Know an employer struggling to get workers to the workplace? Tell them about the Workforce Mobility Team! The Team is here to work with any employers in the Region to help them address their workforce mobility challenges.

For more information:
[sewrpc.org/mobility](mailto:mobility@sewrpc.org)

To arrange a meeting:
mobility@sewrpc.org

EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance

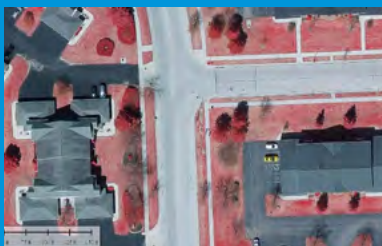
Applications are now being accepted for U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) CARES Act recovery assistance. More information regarding this opportunity is available on the EDA website (eda.gov/coronavirus), and on page 46 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (sewrpc.org/FY20PWEAANOFO). The CARES Act funds were appropriated under the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, and \$225 million was allocated for the Chicago Regional Office to distribute. Applications are being accepted for a wide variety of projects under this program, including construction of infrastructure and other economic development projects. It is also important to note that all counties and local governments are eligible for EDA CARES Act funding and the EDA generally expects to fund between 80 and 100 percent of eligible project costs. A key consideration in these applications will be an estimated number of jobs the project could create or retain. SEWRPC may be able to provide assistance with job creation estimates upon request. Please contact Ben McKay at bmckay@sewrpc.org or 262-953-3229 if you would like more information regarding SEWRPC resources that may help in submitting an application.

EMSI Data Available

Could your county, community, or economic development organization benefit from robust economic and workforce data, particularly during these uncertain times? Data available through the EMSI Developer web tool can be requested at sewrpc.org/EMSI-Request. To learn more, contact Chris Parisey at 262-953-3236 or email EMSI@sewrpc.org.

VISION
2050
One Region, Focusing on Our Future

2 2020 Review and Update Adopted



7 2020 Regional Imagery



8 2020 Federal Certification Review



2020 Review and Update Adopted

On June 17, the Commission adopted the 2020 Review and Update to VISION 2050, following approval by the Advisory Committees guiding the effort. The report documenting the 2020 Update, along with a Second Edition of VISION 2050, will be published this summer. The 2020 Update represents the first interim review and update of VISION 2050, which was originally completed and adopted in July 2016.

The 2020 Update assessed progress in implementing the original VISION 2050 recommendations, performance of the transportation system, year 2050 forecasts underlying the plan, and changes in recent years that impact the plan. Following review of this information and two rounds of public input, the Commission identified updates to the plan recommendations, which are described in the 2020 Update report. Visit the VISION 2050 website to learn more: vision2050sewis.org.

The 2020 Update was finalized during the first few months of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the Commission recognizes there could be long-term impacts from the virus. Staff will continue to monitor possible impacts and revise the plan as necessary. Despite the potential for changes, it remains important to implement VISION 2050 and achieve the substantial benefits the plan offers.

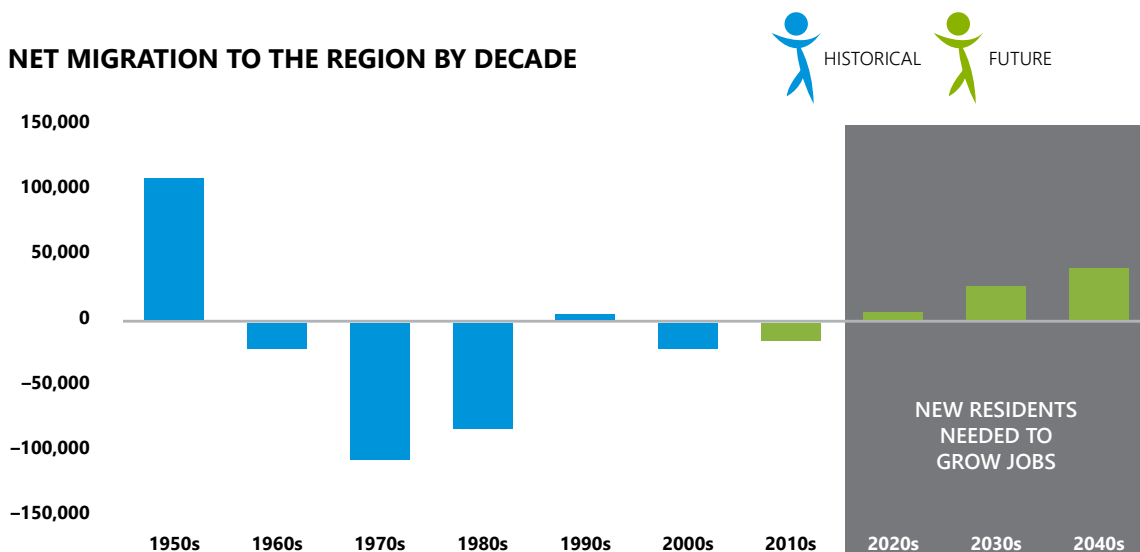


VISION 2050 recommends a long-range vision for land use and transportation in the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region. It makes recommendations to local and State government to shape and guide land use development and transportation improvement, including public transit, arterial streets and highways, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, to the year 2050.

Trends in Economic Growth and the Need to Attract New Residents

The 2020 Review and Update re-affirmed that Southeastern Wisconsin has reached a pivotal point in its development. Specifically, population is growing at a slower pace than jobs, which means there will not be enough workers to fill additional, new jobs. To grow the economy, we will need to compete with other parts of the country and the world to attract new residents.

NET MIGRATION TO THE REGION BY DECADE





Funding the Plan: Updated Financial Analysis

The 2020 Update includes an updated financial analysis for the transportation system recommended in VISION 2050, which confirmed a funding gap for the recommended system and identifies an updated fiscally constrained transportation system (FCTS). The FCTS includes the portions of the recommended system that can be implemented given existing and reasonably expected future funding and the current limitations on State and Federal funding. The 2020 Update then identifies possible ways to address the transportation funding gap so that VISION 2050 can be fully implemented.

Updated Equity Analysis

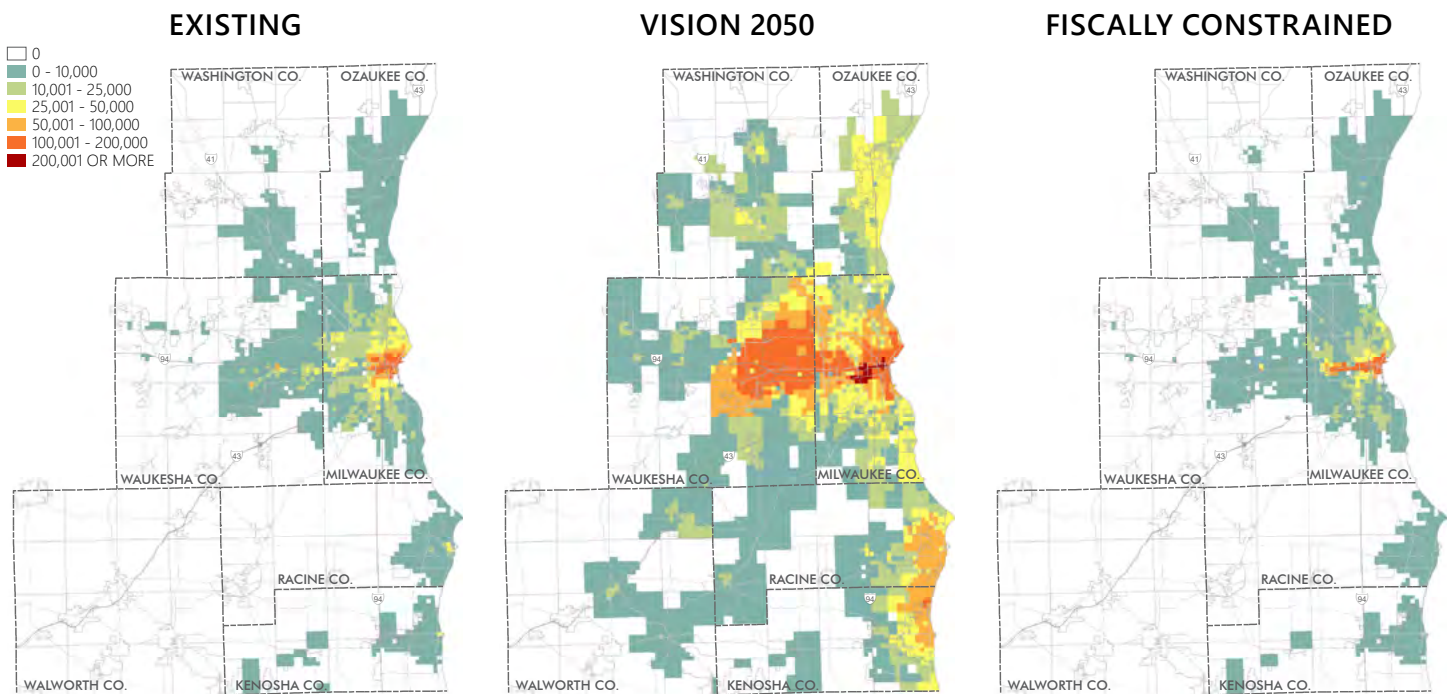
The 2020 Update also includes updated equity analyses, which evaluate the potential benefits and impacts to people of color, low-income populations, and people with disabilities related to the updated land use and transportation components of VISION 2050. Notably, the equity analysis of the transportation component concluded that without additional funding to implement the VISION 2050 public transit element, a disparate impact on these population groups is likely to occur.



Credit: VISIT Milwaukee

Over **90%** of participants said they would support increasing funding for public transit

Jobs Accessible Within 30 Minutes via Transit



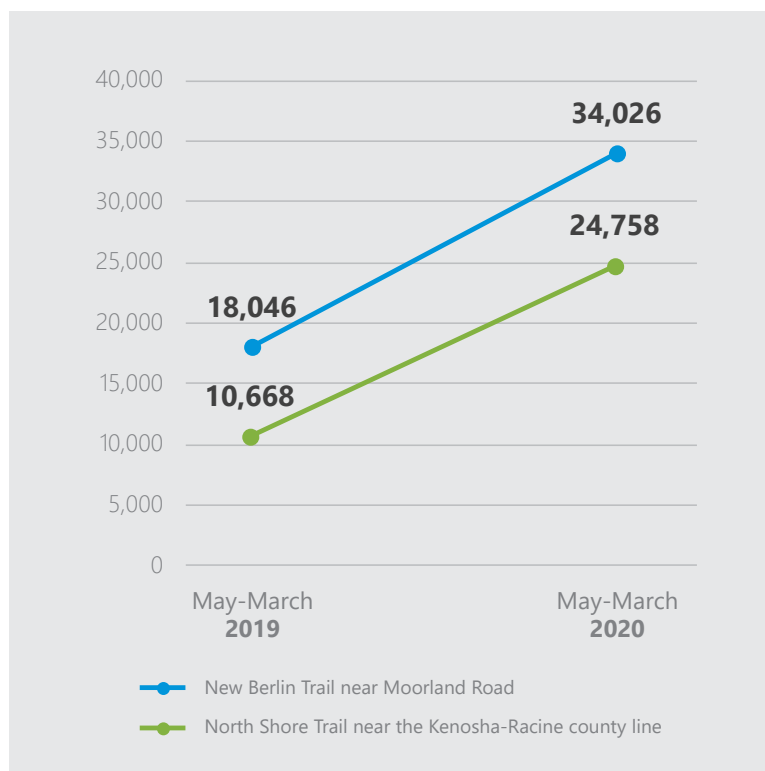


Non-Motorized Count Program

In early 2020, Commission staff completed count summaries for 18 short-term locations that were counted between September and November 2019. Staff also prepared 2019 annual count summaries for the four permanent sites managed by the Commission and assisted the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties by developing 2019 annual count summaries for their permanent sites. All of these count summaries are available on the interactive map on the Commission website at sewrpc.org/nmcounts. Staff began its 2020 short-term count season in late March and anticipates conducting two-week counts at 49 locations through November.

As the coronavirus pandemic impacted the nation and states issued stay at home orders in March and April, there were several reports nationally that highlighted significant increases in people using trails. When comparing volumes in March-April 2020 to volumes in March-April 2019, trails in Southeastern Wisconsin also experienced higher use. For example, the Commission's permanent counter on the New Berlin Trail near Moorland Road had a 90 percent increase in volume and its permanent counter on the North Shore Trail near the Kenosha-Racine county line had a 130 percent increase in volume. Even as stay at home orders were eased or lifted in May, the change in volume at these locations when comparing volumes in May 2020 to May 2019 remained relatively consistent: an 87 percent increase on the New Berlin Trail and a 134 percent increase on the North Shore Trail. Commission staff will keep monitoring trail volumes this summer and compare them to the same time periods from last year to see if these trends continue.

March-May Trail Counts: 2019 vs. 2020



Transportation Demand Management

VISION 2050 recommends implementation of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies intended to reduce and shift vehicular travel to alternative times and routes. These strategies aim to maximize traveler choice, allowing for more efficient use of the existing capacity of the transportation system and reducing traffic volume, congestion, air pollutant emissions, and fuel consumption. To assist with implementation of TDM strategies, SEWRPC has hired staff to coordinate with businesses, transit agencies, and communities to provide free services for employers, including researching best practices, conducting employer consultations, and providing trip planning.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some commuters are working from home and transit agencies are adjusting service to limit the number of passengers on buses. The TDM program has also adjusted to the current commuting situation. For example, staff are researching additional mobility services and new transportation strategies to promote biking and walking such as the Active Streets program (activestreets.mailchimpsites.com) created by Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee, where certain streets are closed to through traffic to allow anyone who lives or works in the surrounding neighborhoods to enjoy outdoor activities while social distancing. In addition, staff are preparing summaries of best practices and current mobility options for businesses and communities to assist with future transportation needs. As always, staff are available to conduct focused outreach and assist with travel planning for businesses and communities in the Region. Please contact Brandon Matthews at bmatthews@sewrpc.org to learn more about the TDM program or request assistance.

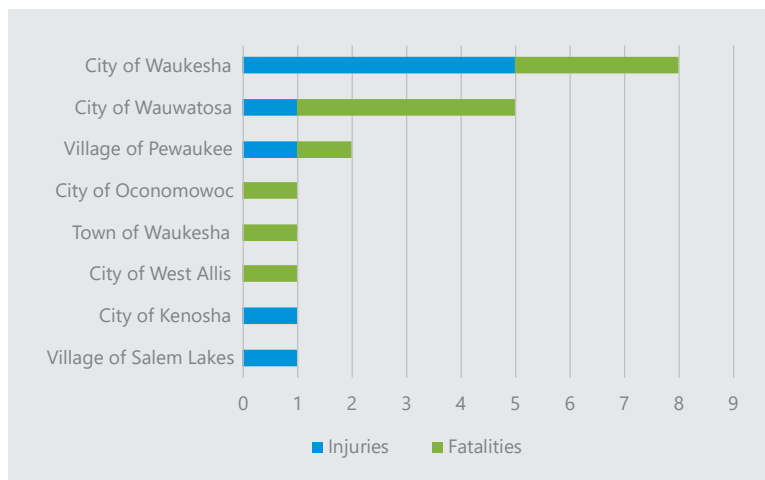


Research on Pedestrian/Bicyclist Casualties at Public Railroad-Roadway Grade Crossings

At the request of the Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF), Commission staff recently prepared a brief paper analyzing incidents of trains striking pedestrians and bicyclists at public railroad-roadway grade crossings in Southeastern Wisconsin. Specifically, staff identified the locations of the incidents, the grade crossing control and warning devices installed at these locations at the time of the incidents, the speed of the trains at the time of the incidents, the type of casualty (injury or fatality), and the pedestrian or bicyclist actions during the incidents.

From January 2000 through June 2020, a total of 20 pedestrian and bicyclist casualties—including 11 fatalities and nine injuries—occurred at public grade crossings in the Region. The largest concentrations occurred in the Cities of Waukesha and Wauwatosa. Nearly all casualties occurred at crossings with active traffic control and warning devices (including gates, flashing lights, and bells), and more than half involved trains traveling at speeds less than 40 mph. Learn more about our research on pedestrian and bicyclist casualties at public grade crossings at sewrpc.org/crossingsafety.

Pedestrian/Bicyclist Casualties at Public Grade Crossings: 2000-2020



Waukesha TDP

At the request of the City and County of Waukesha, SEWRPC is preparing a short-range transit development plan (TDP) for the years 2021 through 2025. The TDP includes both Waukesha Metro and Waukesha County Transit and will evaluate the current systems and analyze potential transit alternatives to meet the needs of the community. The plan, anticipated to be completed in winter 2020, will propose a set of recommended service changes for the transit systems and identify the forecast ridership, service levels, and operating expenses that would be expected from implementing the changes.



Credit: Waukesha Metro

The Waukesha TDP is guided by an Advisory Committee comprised of concerned and affected public officials and citizen leaders. The Advisory Committee recently reviewed a list of potential transit alternatives to help address the performance evaluation and unmet transit service needs identified during the initial planning process. The potential transit alternatives could help increase efficiency of service, offer workforce transportation options, and identify service options for areas lacking transit service. Commission staff will further develop and evaluate the transit service alternatives for Waukesha Metro and Waukesha County Transit for review and consideration by the Advisory Committee, the City of Waukesha, and Waukesha County. Public outreach is anticipated to occur this fall to gather input on the potential transit alternatives. With review and input from the public and the Advisory Committee, Commission staff will prepare a recommended transit service improvement plan for consideration by the City of Waukesha and Waukesha County.

If you are interested in learning more about the TDP or providing comments, please visit sewrpc.org/WaukeshaTransit. To be added to our contact list to receive information about future public meetings, please send an email to waukeshatdp@sewrpc.org or call us at (262) 547-6721.

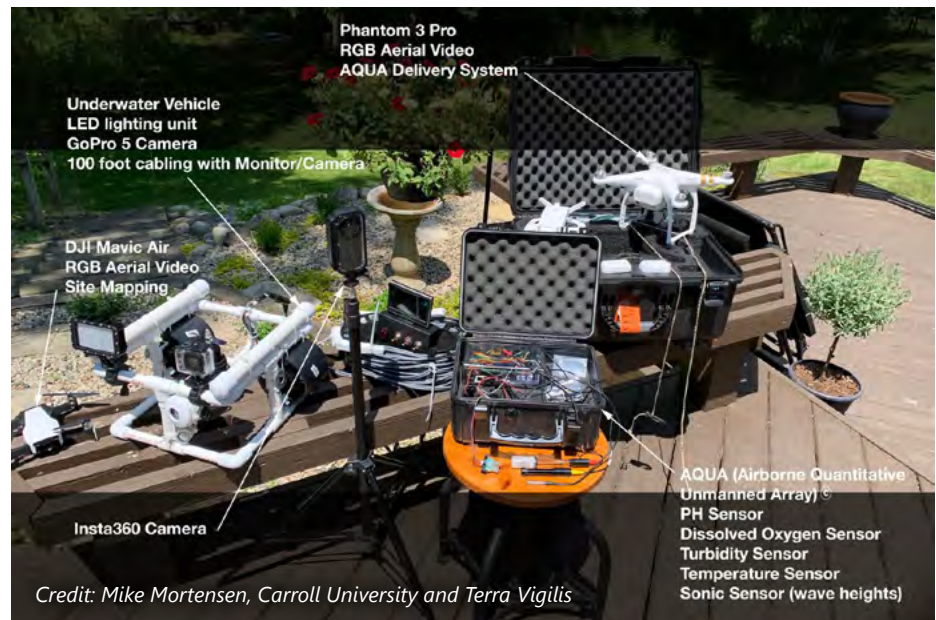


Credit: James Bushey and Bill Thummel

Using Drones for Lake Monitoring

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as “drones”, are more frequently being used for surveying, mapping, and environmental monitoring. These small flight systems can be equipped with cameras and sensors to record video and capture physical and biological data over large areas in a fraction of the time it would take on-the-ground observers.

Commission staff have recently begun partnering with lake groups on North Lake in Waukesha County and Delavan Lake in Walworth County to explore how monitoring data and imagery acquired by UAVs can inform lake management. A primary example is monitoring of recreational boating, where UAVs can record the number, types, and activity of boats much more quickly and over larger lake areas than would be possible for a small team of on-shore observers. Lake districts and municipalities can gather information on the types and patterns of boating activity in their lakes and plan accordingly. UAVs can also provide information on changes in water quality, sediment disturbance and transport, and wave propagation on lakes. Using UAVs to monitor river inlets following storms or evaluate shoreline erosion could provide a visual confirmation of trends observed in water quality data. Many opportunities for efficient, rapid monitoring that informs lake management will become possible as the UAV technology advances.



Credit: Mike Mortensen, Carroll University and Terra Vigilis

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

New CEDS Initiated

The Commission is continuing a regional partnership to prepare a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southeastern Wisconsin. This partnership, which includes the Milwaukee 7 (M7), Regional Economic Partnership (REP), and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), produced the Region's first CEDS in 2015. The CEDS brings the public and private sectors together to develop a strategic plan to diversify and strengthen the Region's economy. It provides for a more widespread understanding of the ongoing economic development work program in the Region, which draws heavily from the work of the M7, and makes county and local governments with EDA-defined economically distressed areas eligible to apply for certain EDA grants. More information on the current CEDS is available at sewrpc.org/ceds. Stay tuned for opportunities to provide input on the new CEDS later in 2020.



2020 Regional Imagery

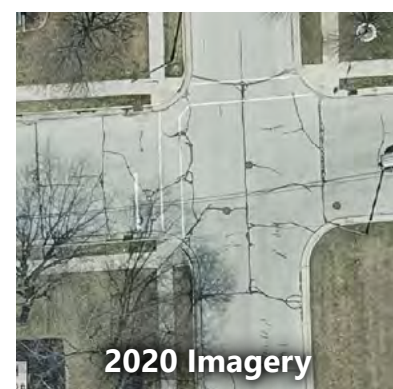
The Commission assisted the Region's counties with acquiring new Orthoimagery for 2020. Orthoimagery combines the image characteristics of an aerial photograph with the geometric qualities of a map. Orthoimagery is a uniform-scaled image where corrections have been made for scale variation caused by terrain relief, sensor geometry, and camera tilt. Mathematical equations based on the digital camera lens, control positions, and a digital elevation model are applied to each image pixel to rectify the aerial image and obtain the geometric qualities of a map.

Orthoimagery allows users to accurately measure visible ground features in their true geographic position. This allows users to make accurate distance and area calculations and measure the true position of any feature observed in the orthoimage. Orthoimagery is the foundation for GIS, forming the base layer from which many additional geospatial data layers are created.

Orthoimagery can vary greatly in both accuracy and pixel resolution. Pixel resolution refers to the actual distance on the ground each pixel represents in the orthoimagery. For example, one-foot pixel resolution means each pixel in the image covers one foot on the ground. Typically, programs are flown using three-inch, six-inch, and one-foot resolution. The higher the resolution (i.e., three-inch), the greater the visible detail. This year's image acquisition saw an increase in the image resolution. Most of the counties in the Region elected to go with six-inch imagery in previous years, but this year all of the counties elected to go with three-inch orthoimagery. On the right is a sample of the difference between six-inch (2015 Imagery) and the imagery that was just flown in support of the 2020 program.



2015 Imagery



2020 Imagery

In addition to the increase in resolution for the 2020 acquisition, five counties elected to work with the Wisconsin Regional Orthoimagery Consortium (WROC) to include a fourth band as part of the final tiled color orthoimages. This fourth band was color infrared (CIR). CIR imagery's main advantage is identifying vegetation. Utilizing this additional band, a geospatial professional can extract impervious and non-impervious surfaces in support of stormwater run-off calculations using semi-automatic techniques. The example below shows how this fourth band looks when one replaces the blue band (color is based on three-band: red, green, blue) with CIR and how vegetated features are highlighted.





2020 Federal Certification Review of Regional Transportation Planning in Southeastern Wisconsin

This year, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Highway and Transit Administrations are again conducting a quadrennial planning certification review of the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in Southeastern Wisconsin. All individuals and organizations are invited to comment on the regional transportation planning carried out by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, local transit agencies, and local units of government in the greater Milwaukee area.

A Virtual Public Meeting is being held Tuesday, August 25, 2020, starting at 6:00 pm. This meeting will begin with a brief introductory presentation by USDOT representatives followed by an opportunity for participants to provide written or oral comment in real time. Those interested in participating in the meeting will need to register in advance.

More information on the Virtual Public Meeting and on how to register can be found at sewrpc.org/2020CertReview.

Individuals without internet access can register by calling the Commission's office Monday-Friday between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm at 262-953-3252. Written comments may also be submitted to USDOT staff but must be received **no later than September 24, 2020**.

Planning Certification Review
Federal Highway Administration
525 Junction Road, Suite 8000
Madison, WI 53717
Fax: 608-662-2121
E-mail: Michael.Batuzich@dot.gov