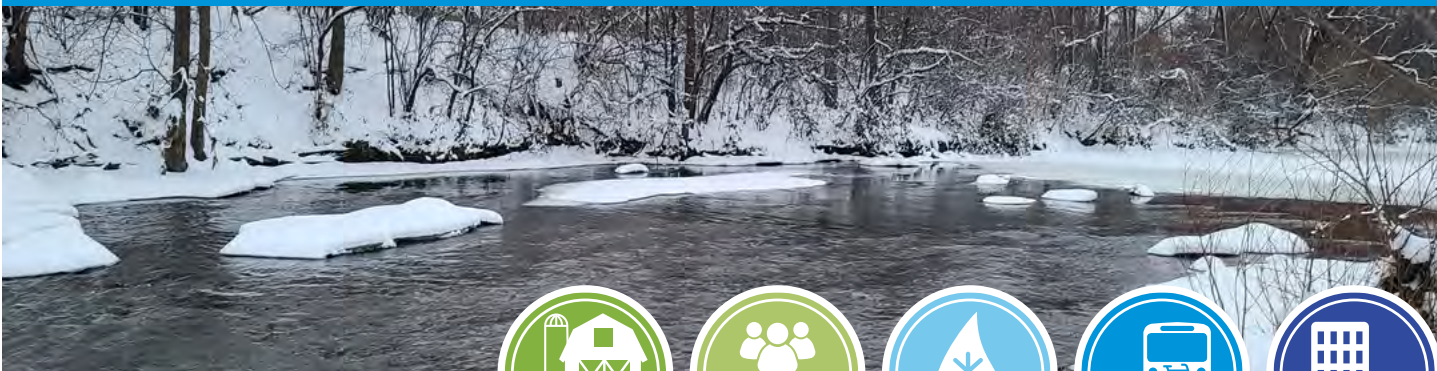


REGIONAL PLANNING NEWS

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



Volume 8 • Issue 4 • December 2021



SWITCH TO E-NEWS

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

SEWRPC Supporting Study of Last-Mile Transportation Options

In addition to working with UW-Milwaukee on a pilot on-demand shuttle that will transport Milwaukeeans to jobs in the Menomonee Falls area starting in early 2022, Commission staff is assisting MobilISE (formerly the Regional Transit Leadership Council) on a study to identify last-mile mobility solutions for accessing jobs at employment centers in Brookfield, Franklin, New Berlin, and Oak Creek. The study will explore the potential for a commute program to increase access to jobs in these communities, identifying best practices from across the country and developing a strategy for implementing a successful program. For more on this study and MobilISE, visit www.mobilisewi.org.



2 Discoveries on Lakes in Walworth County



4 In the Community

Feedback on SEWRPC Website

The Commission is in the process of updating its website! A survey was sent out in November to help determine what information is most beneficial to our website visitors. If you are interested in providing feedback concerning our website, the survey can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/r/LRGZ7GY.

Draft Milwaukee County Park and Open Space Plan

The Commission has assisted Milwaukee County Parks in developing a new long-range plan for the park system. The draft plan is now available for public review and comment at county.milwaukee.gov/EN/Parks/What-We-Do/Planning--Development.



Discoveries on Lakes in Walworth County

In cooperation with Walworth County Land Use & Resource Management (LURM) and local volunteers, Commission staff conducted water quality monitoring and meander surveys on Army Lake and Lake Wandawega in Walworth County during the summer of 2021. These lakes were chosen as both Commission and LURM staff expressed interest in collecting information and engaging volunteers on smaller lakes, which often receive less attention and funding than larger lakes. The goal of these surveys was to identify any new observations of aquatic invasive species (AIS), measure baseline lake water quality, and provide a brief report on these findings. This work was supported by the newly launched Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Lake Monitoring & Protection Network program.

Meander surveys are a great tool for rapidly assessing lake conditions and discovering previously unreported native and invasive species. For the surveys of Army and Wandawega lakes, Commission staff designated target sites around the shoreline of the lakes, which included the boat landings and beaches as sites with higher potential for AIS introduction. Working with local volunteers and LURM staff, each target site was thoroughly investigated for any invasive species. While traveling between target sites, Commission staff recorded observations of native plant and animal species as well as notes on water quality, lake sediment, and habitat conditions. As meander surveys are less intensive than other surveys, these surveys allowed more time for Commission staff to teach local volunteers about their lake and discuss opportunities to protect and manage these waterbodies.

In Army Lake, Commission staff observed seven native aquatic plant species and four AIS, including three species that had not been previously recorded by the WDNR for the lake: Chinese mystery snails (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*), zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), and spiny naiad (*Najas marina*). On Lake Wandawega, Commission staff found 17 native plant species and five AIS, including three species that had not been previously recorded for the lake: Asiatic clam (*Corbicula* sp.), banded mystery snails (*Viviparus georgianus*), and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). These observations, photos, and specimens were provided to WDNR. Neither lake appeared to be suffering from AIS overabundance and both lakes support several beneficial native species. Both lakes had good to excellent water clarity and had water temperatures and dissolved oxygen concentrations within healthy ranges for fish and other aquatic organisms. Nearshore and shoreline habitat for fish, birds, amphibians, and other wildlife was abundant in both lakes.

If you are interested in learning more about preventing the spread of AIS and/or applying for grant funding to survey for AIS, you can find more information at the following links:

- AIS Resources:
dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Lakes/AIS/Monitoring.html
- Surface Water Grant Program:
dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/SurfaceWater.html





Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Enacted in November

In November, the U.S. Congress and the President enacted the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) consisting of a \$1.2 trillion investment in the Nation's transportation system, water infrastructure, power-grid system, and broadband network. The IIJA funds and reauthorizes the Federal core surface transportation programs for another five years, increasing funding levels beyond its predecessor—the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). In total, the IIJA provides over \$560 billion more funding over the next five years than would have been available if previous programs were continued as-is. About half of this new funding is designated for the transportation system (roads, bridges, public transportation, airports, and ports) and the rest for various other infrastructure systems.

Transportation

The IIJA largely keeps unchanged the core Federal surface transportation programs, but includes substantial increases in funding:

- 48% increase in the formula transit grant programs, including increases in Urbanized Area Formula Grants, State of Good Repair Grants, and funding for Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities.
- 22% increase for the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), which funds projects to maintain the National Highway System (NHS).
- 15% increase for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP), which funds highway, bridge, transit, and other transportation-related projects. The funding suballocated to urbanized areas is also being increased.
- 29% increase for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), which funds projects to improve roadway safety.
- 69% increase for Transportation Alternative projects, such as bicycle and pedestrian, safe routes to school, and recreational trail projects.

The IIJA also created a number of new formula-based (funding allocated directly to States) and discretionary-based (US DOT evaluates and selects projects) programs. The new formula-based programs include additional funding for improving bridge condition, expanding electric vehicle charging stations, reducing transportation-related pollution, and improving transportation system resilience. The discretionary programs funded by the IIJA cover a broad spectrum of transportation projects.

Other Infrastructure Funding

In addition to transportation funding, the IIJA includes investments in broadband, water infrastructure, the power grid, resiliency, and addressing legacy pollution. The IIJA includes:

- \$54 billion for water infrastructure, including funding for lead service line replacement and addressing PFAS (chemicals that breakdown slowly over time) in the environment.
- \$65 billion for power and grid reliability and resiliency.
- \$46 billion for resiliency, including funding for cybersecurity to protect infrastructure, flood and wildfire mitigation, ecosystem restoration, and weatherization.
- \$21 billion for addressing legacy pollution, including providing funds for the cleaning up of brownfields and superfund sites and reclaiming abandoned mines.

Keep on the Look Out for Future Updates

The full impact on funding levels and availability within Southeastern Wisconsin is unknown at this time, but Commission staff will provide updates to the Region's counties and municipalities as more details on the funding programs and other details of the IIJA become available.

In the Community

In an effort to support the Regional Food System Plan (RFSP) and the North South Transit Enhancement Study (NSTES), Commission staff had a booth at the Fondy Farmers Market in Milwaukee in September and October. The Commission's booth was there 2-3 times per week, giving us the opportunity to discuss both major projects with the community.

On October 15, Commission staff participated with the Washington Park Partners and United Methodist Children's Services of Wisconsin, Inc., in their Annual Community Chili Cook-off. This event not only allowed staff to show off their culinary skills, but also gave us the opportunity to engage with the community about the RFSP, NSTES, VISION 2050, and the Regional Chloride Study.



Did You Know?

The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company home office located on East Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Milwaukee is built on a lake. Construction on the building began in 1905 directly over the lake, called Lake Emily. 3,000 virgin wood pilings were drilled down to the bedrock and capped with concrete. Lake Emily is still maintained by Northwestern Mutual employees who periodically add water to the Lake when needed, so that the wood pilings do not rot.

W239 N1812 ROCKWOOD DRIVE
PO BOX 1607
WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN 53187-1607



FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 645