

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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## STAFF MEMORANDUM

### RECORD OF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON UPDATED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN: 2025

DECEMBER 12, 2025

#### INTRODUCTION

This memorandum documents the record of community engagement for the update of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Community Engagement Plan in 2025. This plan outlines the Commission's approach to engaging constituents and encouraging people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in planning for Southeastern Wisconsin's future and serves as the MPO-required public participation plan with respect to public participation and outreach requirements identified in 23 CFR 450.316.

The Community Engagement Plan (CEP) explains the Commission's efforts to communicate, conduct engagement, and incorporate community feedback in regional planning efforts. It was developed to achieve the three-part goal to:

- Ensure early and continuous public notification about regional planning efforts;
- Provide meaningful information concerning regional planning efforts and include all residents in the regional planning process, particularly those who have traditionally had lower levels of participation; and
- Incorporate community input to regional planning efforts.

The plan identifies several opportunities to better reflect our current practices and ideas for the future. There is no federally specified period between updates of the CEP, but it is the Commission's practice to conduct an internal review every four years as part of federal certification preparation. The Commission's existing Public Participation Plan was last updated in January 2017. This update to the plan, renamed the Community Engagement Plan, was initiated in 2024.

This update incorporates several opportunities to better reflect our current practices and ideas for the future, including the addition of information on virtual engagement practices. The updated plan also streamlines information previously presented in three documents – the plan, Appendix A, and Appendix B – into one document that reflects the regional planning efforts of the entire agency. The required

contents of Appendix A and B related to regional transportation planning and programming, and the regional transportation consultation process, are reflected in the CEP.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON DRAFT PLAN

The draft update of the Community Engagement Plan was available for review and comment from October 7, 2025, through November 21, 2025. Formal announcement of the plan update and comment period was provided through paid notices appearing in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* on October 7 and the *Milwaukee Community Journal* on October 8. A copy of these notices is included in Attachment 1.

The draft plan was available on the Commission's website and publicized on Facebook, LinkedIn, and an e-blast to the Commission's mailing list. Comments on the draft plan could be submitted via email, comment form on the website, or U.S. mail.

The Commission conducted additional outreach to notify and engage residents of the plan update, including:

- **Community Partner meeting.** The Commission held a meeting for Community Partners on October 23. Five organizations were represented and received information on the draft CEP.
- **Community Engagement and Benefits Task Force.** The Task Force received a presentation on the effort to update the plan on March 11, while the draft plan was being prepared. Staff also emailed the Task Force on the first day of the comment period informing them of the availability of the draft plan update and inviting them to comment on the draft plan update. Task Force members were invited to comment on the draft plan update and share it with their networks.
- **Notification to Primary Organizations.** Primary Organizations are partners that the Commission engages with to directly understand the challenges encountered by the communities the Primary Organizations represent. The Commission's 71 Primary Organizations also received an email briefly describing the purpose of the CEP, informing them of the availability of the draft plan update, and inviting them to comment on the draft plan. The Commission staff also offered to meet individually with each group.
- **Events and One-on-One Meetings.** The Community Engagement Division attended numerous events and discussed the draft CEP one-on-one with various stakeholders in the Region. These events and meetings are identified in Appendix 2.

## COMMENTS RECEIVED

Three individuals or groups submitted input on the draft plan during the comment period. The Southeast Wisconsin Health Officers submitted feedback via email and two individuals from a Community Partner, Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin (UEDA), submitted feedback through the online comment form. The comments appear in Attachment 3. Feedback was generally complimentary of the draft plan and expressed support for the variety of tools the Commission is using to obtain public input, described the plan as comprehensive and clear, and appreciated the graphics.

Two of the comments pointed to specific sections and suggested clarifications, additions, or changes. These comments were individually considered by staff and incorporated as appropriate. For example, two

comments recommended including the practice of using community organizations to share information with their networks. Staff edited the plan to highlight ways the Commission can continue to use community organizations as trusted resources to share information with the public.

One comment recommended that the Commission take proactive steps in terms of translation or interpretation services. For major efforts or for projects impacting areas with known limited English proficiency (LEP) populations or individuals that are deaf or hard of hearing, the Commission does take proactive steps to provide translators or interpreters and translate written materials. Commission staff maintain relationships with community organizations to stay informed of general best practices for accessibility. Any request for accommodation received at any time during the regional planning process will be met to the best of our ability. In general, the Commission appreciates advanced notice to organize accommodation.

\* \* \*

EDL/DMS  
#279342

Attachments (3)

## Attachment 1

### COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DRAFT CEP

# PUBLIC NOTICES

## Govt Public Notices



Southeastern  
Wisconsin  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission

### DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN NOW AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

*Share your feedback on our approach  
to community engagement*

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission invites you to review and comment on a draft of our recently updated Community Engagement Plan. This plan is intended to guide the Commission in engaging constituents to enrich regional planning. It explains how we communicate, conduct engagement, and incorporate community feedback in regional planning efforts.

The draft Community Engagement Plan is available for review on the Commission's website and comments are welcome through **Friday, November 21, 2025**. Comments can be provided via online comment form on our website, email, or U.S. mail:

**Website:** [www.sewrpc.org/Draft-CEP](http://www.sewrpc.org/Draft-CEP)  
**Email:** [engage@sewrpc.org](mailto:engage@sewrpc.org)  
**Mail:** P.O. Box 1607  
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

WNAXLP  
October 7 2025  
LWIX0382716

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

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- **Website:** [www.sewrpc.org/Draft-CEP](http://www.sewrpc.org/Draft-CEP)
- **Email:** [engage@sewrpc.org](mailto:engage@sewrpc.org)
- **Mail:** P.O. Box 1607  
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607





## Share Your Feedback!

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission invites you to review and comment on a draft of our recently updated Community Engagement Plan. This plan is intended to guide the Commission in engaging constituents to enrich regional planning. It explains how we communicate, conduct engagement, and incorporate community feedback in regional planning efforts.

The draft Community Engagement Plan is available for review on the Commission's website and comments are welcome through **Friday, November 21, 2025**. A print copy of the plan is also available for review at the Commission office between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., by appointment.

### Learn More and Share Your Feedback!

Comments can be provided via online comment form on our website, email, or U.S. mail:

- Website: [www.sewrpc.org/Draft-CEP](http://www.sewrpc.org/Draft-CEP)
- Email: [engage@sewrpc.org](mailto:engage@sewrpc.org)
- Mail: P.O. Box 1607, Waukesha, WI 53187-1607



Southeastern  
Wisconsin  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission



Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission: Serving the  
Counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth,  
Washington, and Waukesha

P.O. Box 1607 | Waukesha, WI 53187 US

## Attachment 2

### SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS ATTENDED

Date	Organization or Event	Type
Sun 10/19	Common Ground - Assembly	Tabling
Thur 10/23	Community Partner meeting	Meeting
Fri 10/24	Southside Organizing Center	One-on-one meeting and Centro Latino community meeting
Tues 11/04	Ozaukee Economic Development - Business Series	One-on-one meeting
Mon 11/10	Racine Unified School District (RUSD) - SEE your Future event	Tabling
Tues 11/11	Hoan Group - Coffee & Chat	Meeting
Wed 11/12	UW Parkside - Nonprofit Leadership Conference	One-on-one meeting with Interfaith Caregivers and Threshold Incorporated
Thurs 11/13	Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition	One-on-one meeting
Tues 11/18	UEDA - Brown Bag Lunch & Learn	Meeting
Wed 11/19	Walworth County Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA) - Annual Meeting	One-on-one meeting

### Attachment 3

#### COMMENTS RECEIVED

**FirstName:** Debbie

**LastName:** Knepeke

**Organization:** UEDA

**Address:** 1915 N. Dr Martin Luther King Drive

**City:** Milwaukee

**State:** Wisconsin

**Zip:** 53212

**Comments:** Incredibly impressed with this plan. It is obvious much time and energy has gone into thinking through each aspect. I particularly like the thoughtfulness that went into the different engagement levels. It is good to offer a wide variety of touchpoints, for example, I learn best through interacting so I would attend a public meeting (with a presentation using non-technical language followed by Q&A), and would also like to see what's most current via emails and social media posts with videos. Thank you!

**FirstName:** Kristi

**LastName:** Luzar

**Organization:** Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin (UEDA)

**Address:** 1915 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, Suite 260

**City:** Milwaukee

**State:** WISCONSIN

**Zip:** 53212

**Comments:** I appreciate the CEP's comprehensive and clear look at the different ways the Commission engages with the Public. The graphics and photos were helpful to get a sense of the many ways the CEP can be implemented. I did not feel any major components of community engagement were missing from the plan. However, I did notice the following: Page 11 - is the Advisory Committee public comment period 15 minutes or possibly 15 days? Page 18 - Document Availability & Notification: Consider adding a bullet point related to asking Community Partners to share information with their networks. While this section talks about distribution, I think SEWRPC goes an extra step with the partner agencies. Lastly, as I read through the CEP, I thought about how the Commission is committed to continuous engagement overall. Perhaps a stronger statement about that could be included on page 4 with the approach section. The Communication & Engagement Methods graphic is nicely done!



Southeast  
Region



November 12, 2025

Dear SEWRPC,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide commentary on your community engagement plan. As local health departments representing the southeast region of Wisconsin, we have a vested interest in ensuring our communities are involved and have a voice in the policies and plans that impact their health. We appreciate the statement of the value and need for coordinated planning across the region and the acknowledgement of the need for resident perspectives to be central in the planning process.

Overall, we are supportive of the strategies outlined in the process. We have a few recommendations for your consideration in the plan.

In 'Our Approach to Community Engagement' (pg. 4), we encourage you to consider going beyond enabling to empowering resident participation. This may be a helpful frame to consider as you implement the plan. By empowering, you acknowledge the value of residents and commit to removing barriers to their full engagement in the process.

There could be a specific call out to local health departments in the 'Community Engagement Goals' section (pg. 5) as this work aligns closely with the missions of Community Health Assessments and Improvement Plans. This would move planning and public health one step closer to coordinated alignment, which is a recommended best practice by the American Planning Association.

The number of different strategies utilized to solicit participation is appreciated. As you work through this process, we would encourage you to ensure you're considering barriers to participation; such as transportation to town hall meetings, ability to take off work, access to childcare during meetings, and literacy level and language. Whenever possible we encourage you to consider how trusted community messengers can be used to support community input. You should also consider how you leverage trusted community partners to help spread the word about community meetings, other events, and messaging about the value in providing input as residents. Trusted community partners are a strong way to increase feedback from populations that typically have not been included in these types of conversations. This also represents an opportunity to increase the number and depth of your community partnership to more closely represent the diversity of the communities of southeast Wisconsin.

In the section on limited English proficiency (pg. 13), we recommend it be standard practice in areas with a significant LEP population that translation be provided, versus requiring a request for LEP services at least three days in advance. This represents a significant and potentially unnecessary barrier to participation. Additionally, we recommend that all meetings always be held in ADA accessible spaces. We would also encourage you to explore what technology solutions may be available to provide accommodations at a moment's notice, rather than requiring a three-day advanced notice.

In 'Broad Notification' (pg. 17), we recommend that social media and community partners be included in the strategies.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations and we look forward to working with you to improve the communities of the southeast region.

Respectfully,

Southeast Wisconsin Health Officers