



THE VISION 2050 PROCESS

Developing VISION 2050 involved substantial work over a five-year period, culminating with the Regional Planning Commission adopting the plan on July 28, 2016. The process was guided by the Commission’s Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use Planning and Regional Transportation System Planning, with input also provided by the Commission’s Environmental Justice Task Force, Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committees for each county, and VISION 2050 Task Forces on key areas of interest (see the *Acknowledgments* section for more information).

- 2 regional advisory committees guided the process
- 5 rounds of public involvement were held
- 7 county committees provided input
- 9 task forces considered key issues
- 82 total workshops were held
- 1,400+ people used the interactive web tools
- 1,500+ residents responded to a telephone preference survey
- 1,600+ residents attended a workshop
- 30,000+ residents participated in a travel survey



Workshop with Milwaukee Urban League in Fall 2013
Credit: Milwaukee Community Journal

GROUNDWORK FOR VISION AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Commission staff began by collecting and analyzing information on the existing and historic land use and transportation system in the Region. Staff then prepared forecasts of future needs for resources, land, and transportation based on the data. This information was vital in establishing a basis for preparing a technically sound plan.

Inventory

Collecting relevant data was the first step in the process, and was crucial for preparing accurate forecasts and selecting alternative courses of action. Staff collected major inventories of the population, economy, land use, natural resource base, public utilities, and local comprehensive plans in the Region. Staff also collected major transportation inventories, including extensive travel surveys and the characteristics and use of highway and transit facilities. The inventory step also involved reviewing implementation of the previous year 2035 regional land use and transportation plans.

As part of the inventory process, staff compared the Milwaukee metropolitan area to other metro areas in the Midwest and throughout the Nation. The comparison, found in SEWRPC Memorandum Report No. 221: *A Comparison of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area to its Peers*, examined how well the four-county metro area compares with other areas in a number of key measures, including population growth and characteristics, the economy, and transportation. It also examined how the City of Milwaukee compares to the principal city in each metro area, and the differences that exist within each metro area—specifically differences between the principal city and the remainder of the metro area. The findings highlight a number of critical issues facing the Milwaukee area: slower population growth and greater job loss than nearly all other metro areas; disparities between white and minority populations (in regards to education, income, and poverty levels) that are more pronounced than nearly all other metro areas; and a well-performing highway system compared to other metro areas, but a transit system that has experienced more severe declines in ridership and service levels than nearly all other metro areas. These findings provided valuable information to consider while developing VISION 2050.



Some of the Region's Many Natural Resources Inventoried for VISION 2050
Credit: Jenna Rosenfeldt

Analyses and Forecasts

Inventories provide factual information about the present situation, but analyses and forecasts are necessary to provide estimates of future needs for resources, land, and transportation. Analyzing the inventory data helped staff understand the existing situation, trends of change, and the factors influencing those trends. Staff used the findings, along with year 2050 population, household, and employment projections developed early in the planning process, to forecast future demands for land use and travel.

DEVELOPING THE VISION AND PLAN

Commission staff conducted a visioning and scenario planning process to prepare VISION 2050. The purpose was to develop a shared long-range vision of future land use and transportation in Southeastern Wisconsin that is understood and embraced by the Region's residents. It involved extensive public outreach to obtain residents' input at each step of the process, as well as expanding public knowledge on the implications of existing and future land use and transportation development in the Region.

Staff engaged residents in a variety of ways, including five rounds of interactive workshops held during the process to obtain input from the public at every step. During each round, the Commission hosted one workshop in each of the Region's seven counties, with eight community organizations partnering with the Commission to hold individual workshops for their constituents. These partnerships were designed to reach and engage certain groups that have traditionally been underrepresented—in particular, minority populations, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals—and encourage them to participate and provide input. Feedback from all workshops was summarized and made available on the VISION 2050 website (www.vision2050sewis.org), along with information about the process and how to get involved.

Visioning

VISION 2050 included substantial resident engagement designed to develop a shared vision for the future. The initial phase of this visioning occurred through a variety of activities and surveys, including the first two rounds of workshops during fall 2013 and winter 2013-14. The result was an initial vision comprised of a set of VISION 2050 Guiding Statements, which generally describe the desired future direction of growth and change in the Region with respect to land and transportation system development. *Guiding the Vision*, published in June 2014, presents this initial vision.



Telephone Preference Survey

One visioning activity was a telephone survey of over 1,500 randomly selected residents, asking them about their preferences for future types and styles of housing and development, as well as their preferences for future transportation investment in the Region. The statistically significant survey, conducted in fall 2013 by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Center for Urban Initiatives and Research (CUIR) and Department

of Economics, provided great insight into the general preferences of residents from each of the seven counties. Over 300 additional residents responded to a companion online questionnaire, which asked the same questions as the telephone survey. The survey results can be found on the VISION 2050 website and are referenced throughout this summary.



How Should
New Development
in the Region Occur?

92%

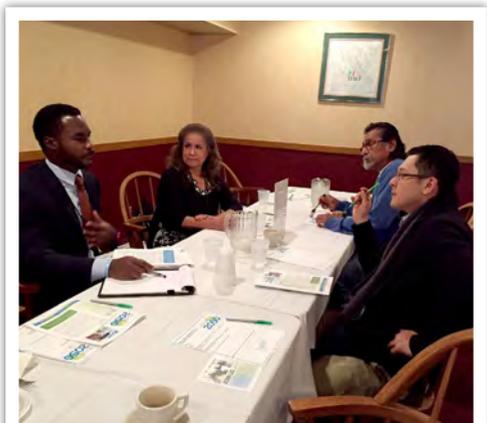
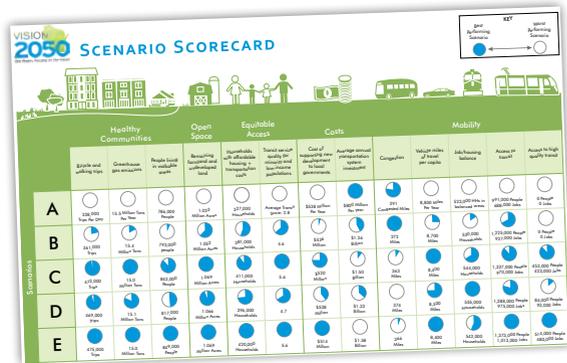
OF RESIDENTS SUPPORTED
REDEVELOPMENT AND INFILL
DEVELOPMENT IN EXISTING CITIES & VILLAGES



Public Workshop in Milwaukee in Fall 2014
Credit: SEWRPC

Conceptual Scenarios

Initial visioning feedback led into a scenario planning effort. This step involved comparing a series of five conceptual land use and transportation scenarios. Among the scenarios was a baseline scenario representing a continuation of current trends, along with four additional scenarios representing a wide range of possible futures for land use and transportation that could achieve the initial vision. A series of 13 basic criteria were employed for the comparison, which became the focus of the third round of workshops in fall 2014.



Workshop with Racine-Kenosha Urban League in Fall 2015
Credit: SEWRPC

Alternative Plans

Following input on the scenarios, a series of three detailed land use and transportation alternatives were prepared and thoroughly evaluated and compared. Two alternative plans were designed to meet a series of plan objectives developed during this step. A “trend” alternative, representing a continuation of recent trends, was also developed as a baseline against which the alternative plans were compared. A series of 50 evaluation criteria were identified and used to evaluate how well each alternative met the plan objectives.

The alternatives and their evaluation were the focus of the fourth round of workshops in fall 2015.

Draft Plan

Input on the detailed alternatives was considered as staff prepared a preliminary recommended regional land use and transportation system plan, referred to as the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan included a proposed land use development pattern and transportation system, together representing a desired future vision for the Region. Staff also proposed specific land use and transportation recommendations.

Like the alternatives, the Draft Plan was thoroughly evaluated based on the plan objectives and 50 associated criteria, comparing the Draft Plan to existing conditions and the Trend developed in the alternatives stage. Following Federal guidelines, staff also compared the estimated costs and reasonably expected revenues for the Draft Plan's transportation system. This analysis identified a funding gap for the public transit element, resulting in the need to identify a "fiscally constrained" version of the transportation system in compliance with Federal requirements. The fiscally constrained transportation system would include a reduction in transit service in the Region rather than the significant improvement proposed under the Draft Plan. Staff identified possible ways to address the transit funding gap so that the Draft Plan could be fully implemented.

The fifth and final round of workshops was held in spring 2016 to obtain public comment on the Draft Plan as well as the fiscally constrained transportation system.

Final Plan

The five-year effort to create VISION 2050 was completed in the summer of 2016. The input received on the Draft Plan was considered during the final step of the VISION 2050 process, as staff prepared a final recommended year 2050 land use and transportation system plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. The final plan, simply referred to as VISION 2050, includes changes to the Draft Plan based on feedback received on the Draft Plan. VISION 2050 and its recommendations are presented throughout this summary, including the actions needed to implement the plan and the parties responsible for carrying out those actions.



Workshop with Southside Organizing Committee in Spring 2016

Credit: SEWRPC

As with the Draft Plan, staff compared the estimated costs and reasonably expected revenues for the recommended transportation system and identified a funding gap for the public transit element, resulting in the need to identify a fiscally constrained version of the recommended transportation system in order to meet Federal metropolitan transportation planning requirements. This Fiscally Constrained Transportation Plan (FCTP) includes a reduction in transit service in the Region (other than committed projects) rather than the significant improvement recommended under VISION 2050. It then identifies possible ways to address the transit funding gap so that VISION 2050 can be fully implemented. More information on the FCTP and the transit funding gap can be found in the *Funding the Plan* section.