

# REGIONAL PLANNING NEWS

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Nagawicka Lake  
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## 2024 Review and Update Adopted

On June 12, the Commission adopted the 2024 Review and Update to VISION 2050, Southeastern Wisconsin's long-range regional land use and transportation plan. This is the second interim review and update of VISION 2050 and was guided by the Commission's Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use and Transportation Planning. The update keeps the plan current while addressing federal requirements.

# 2024

## REVIEW & UPDATE

OF VISION 2050

The report documenting the 2024 Update will be published this summer and a Third Edition of VISION 2050 will be published later this year—providing an updated regional land use and transportation plan to guide implementation efforts. The Commission will be initiating a major update to the long-range regional land use and transportation plan in 2026. Learn more on the VISION 2050 website: [www.vision2050sewis.org](http://www.vision2050sewis.org).

## Federal Certification Review

This July, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a federally required quadrennial certification review of the Commission's metropolitan transportation planning process for the Milwaukee Urban Area. In coordination with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), local transit operators and local units of government in the Southeastern Wisconsin area, the Commission is responsible for conducting a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning program in accordance with provisions of Federal Law. The certification review will be based on: routine FHWA and FTA interaction with the Commission over the past four years in day-to-day operations; a review of our agency's planning products and processes; a review meeting with staff from the Commission, WisDOT, and local transit operators; an online survey; public comment; and a public hearing. Please check the Commission website for updates ([www.sewrpc.org](http://www.sewrpc.org)).



## Continuing Our Work on Lead in Drinking Water

Lead is a toxic metal that can cause major health problems in both children and adults. One way that people can be exposed to lead is through its release into drinking water supplies by corrosion of lead water service lines and other plumbing materials. In 2019, the Commission published a white paper on lead in drinking water in Southeastern Wisconsin (view at [www.sewrpc.org/leadinwater](http://www.sewrpc.org/leadinwater)). The paper presents information on how lead is released from plumbing materials, the health effects of lead, and ways of addressing lead in drinking water.

Commission staff recently reviewed inventories of lead service lines in reports submitted by water utilities to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission for the years 2021 through 2023. As of the end of 2023, there were 111,622 municipally owned service lines and 115,247 privately owned service lines that contained or were suspected to contain lead in Southeastern Wisconsin. Communities reporting the highest numbers of service lines include the Cities of Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Wauwatosa, and West Allis, and the Villages of Shorewood and Whitefish Bay. These inventories include only lead service lines; they do not include plumbing within buildings.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Individual buildings are connected to distribution mains by water service lines, illustrated in the figure to the left. Typically the service line includes three parts:

- A pipe that runs from the water main to the curb stop
- The curb stop, a control valve for the water supply to a building
- A pipe that runs from the curb stop into the building

The curb stop is usually located between the sidewalk and curb. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), service lines that were installed before 1951 were often made of lead. This includes the pipes on both sides of the curb stop.

Nationally, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing \$15 billion towards replacing lead service lines. This money will provide grants and loans through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. In Wisconsin, this funding is available through the WDNR Safe Drinking Water Loan Program. Wisconsin is expected to receive about \$83 million in funding to identify and replace lead service lines.

Some water utilities in Southeastern Wisconsin are still developing inventories of lead service lines. The Federal Lead and Copper Rule requires that these inventories be completed by October 16, 2024.



## Fox River Watershed Mitigation Plan

Last fall, the Commission published the Fox (Illinois) River Watershed Mitigation Plan. Developed at the request of the Waukesha County Department of Emergency Management, the plan is the first of its kind in the State, focusing on mitigation on a watershed level versus a specific county or city.

The Fox River Plan covers parts of Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, and Waukesha Counties, which contain 98% of the Wisconsin portion of the Fox River watershed. In July 2017, up to eight inches of rain fell in the watershed over two days. These extreme flood conditions resulted in flooded buildings, blocked roads, power outages, and sewer backups, and catalyzed the mitigation plan.

The plan quantifies risk levels and recommends mitigation measures to help reduce the severity of this type of future flooding. As part of the planning process, the Commission formed a local planning team to brainstorm ideas, collect feedback about the plan, and encourage communication between entities within the watershed.

For the plan, Commission staff inventoried major natural features in the watershed, including stream networks, lakes, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater, and manmade features like major roads, dams, and monitoring gages for streams, lakes, and rainfall. In addition, the plan quantifies the total number of structures and roadways that would be vulnerable to flooding during a 1-percent-annual-probability flooding event.

The plan also recommends removing flood-prone structures, protecting at-risk roadways, preserving flood storage areas, and increasing the number of rain and stream gages to reduce flood hazard risks. In addition, staff reviewed available records for dams and dam failures in the watershed to provide recommendations for dam management to prevent future dam failures. Finally, staff inventoried historical droughts in the Region, and reviewed available data about subsequent economic losses. The plan recommends protecting high groundwater recharge potential areas, and provides various agricultural practices to help mitigate the economic losses of drought.

Historically, hazard mitigation plans have addressed a county or city; however, rivers, streams, and watersheds often cross multiple municipal boundaries. For that reason, mitigation planning by watershed can provide a more robust analysis of natural water systems. This first-of-its-kind plan provides an example for potential future mitigation plans by watershed in the State.

Learn more about hazard mitigation planning and read the full report at [www.sewrpc.org/hazardmitigationplanning](http://www.sewrpc.org/hazardmitigationplanning).

Commission staff examined the primary concerns of flooding, dam failure, and drought through the following:



### Flooding

Staff documented the number of structures that would experience flood damages during a 1-percent-annual-probability flooding event, identified critical facilities at risk, and identified major roadways that could be at risk of overtopping during a 1-percent-annual-probability flooding event. Staff also inventoried available condition ratings for major roads and dams.



### Dam Failure

Staff researched historical dam failures within the watershed and inventoried dam work, operating ranges, operators, and known dam impairments.



### Drought

Staff researched major historical drought periods, inventoried baseflows in the Fox River as a means to document historical drought periods, and inventoried records of the economic cost of crop loss during drought.



## Wisconsin Policy Forum Viewpoint Luncheon

Commission Executive Director Stephanie Hacker joined a panel of local leaders, including Milwaukee County Transportation Director and Commissioner Donna Brown-Martin, discussing our Region’s critical transportation issues at the Wisconsin Policy Forum’s Viewpoint Luncheon on May 1. Learn more at [www.wispolicyforum.org](http://www.wispolicyforum.org).

## Did You Know?

Rustic Road 126 in Walworth County was recently added to Wisconsin’s Rustic Roads Program, that highlights scenic routes throughout the state. The route crosses Honey Creek in Walworth County and passes what was once a one-room schoolhouse. There are a total of 126 Rustic Road routes in the state, with 22 in Southeastern Wisconsin.

