Shaping the region's future in the 21st century

Welcome to our quarterly update on the regional comprehensive planning process. Since the last edition of *Rapport*, we have completed Milestone Report 1: *The State of the Region* and have begun to work on Milestone Report 2: *Issues, Opportunities, and a Regional Vision.*

Major Phases of the Regional Comprehensive Planning Process

← Public Participation →

Study Design	State of the Region	Issues / Opportunities and Visioning	Goals and Strategies for Action	Plan for Implementation	Monitoring and Review
(Oct. 2001)	(Jan. 2003)	(Oct. 2003)	(Oct. 2004)	(Jan.2005)	

2000 → **2005** →

We are here

What's New?-Milestone Report 1: State of the Region

The *State of the Region Report (Jan 2003)* presents baseline information for the region. It explores current and future trends, as well as issues in seven categories: demographic and socioeconomic data; economic development; housing; transportation; community facilities; cultural resources; and land use (information on agricultural and natural resources will be available shortly). The information provides a foundation for both local and regional comprehensive planning efforts.

Some of the key findings, in terms of where we are now and what is likely to happen in the region during the next 20 years, are summarized below. To view a full copy of the report, please check out our web site at http://www.eastcentralrpc.org/planning/compplan/milestone1/StateOfRegion.htm

Demographic and Socioeconomic Data

The east central region's population grew by more than 240,000 people between 1950 and 2000 (a 66% increase). The majority of this growth occurred in the four urban counties of the region: Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, and Winnebago. Between 1990 and 2000, however, there were also significant population increases in some of the rural recreation areas of Waupaca, Waushara and Marquette counties.

The region's population is aging. Since the 1970's rural counties, with the exception of Menominee, have tended to have much older populations than the urban counties and the state. Currently the largest age group within the region is the "babyboom" generation.

While the region experienced a large increase in its non-white population from just fewer than 6,000 in 1970 to just under 33,000 in 2000, the region's population is still quite homogeneous; whites comprised 94.6% of the region's population in 2000. Native Americans comprise the largest nonwhite racial group (1.74%). The Hispanic-origin population, which may be of any race, comprised 1.9% of the region's population in 2000.

Household size within the region has been decreasing since 1970. One and two person households have increased from 45% of all households in 1970, to 60% in 2000. While all counties in the region experienced an increase in median household and median family income between 1989 and 1999, the gap between urban and rural counties for both measures increased.

Looking to the future, the region's population is expected to increase by approximately 9% by 2030. At the same time the number of households in the region is expected to rise by 23%. It is anticipated that the average household size will continue to decrease. Due to the aging of the babyboom generation and the region's ability to attract retirees, it is projected that the elderly population may double during the planning period. This will have a significant impact on housing and service sector needs.

Economic Development

The region's labor force continues to increase and reached 370,903 in September of 2002. Data indicate that manufacturing, which accounted for approximately 25.4% of total non-farm employment in 2002, provides the largest share of employment in the region. The service industry sector is the second largest employer in the region. The retail trade sector is the third largest non-farm employment sector, accounting for 17.7% of total employment. Agriculture and agriculture-related industries employ a very small share of workers in the region, 1.4% as of 2000. The data indicate that, in some cases, agriculture and agricultural-related services industries are experiencing small levels of growth.

All counties within the region experienced increases in their average weekly wages for all industries between 1990 and 2000. The greatest concentration of higher paying industries falls within the manufacturing sector while the lowest paying jobs are in the retail trade and services sectors. Although regional income figures increased each year, it is important to note that they still lag behind both state and national income levels.

In terms of future trends, the forecast for manufacturing employment is continued weakness. The strongest growth in the future is expected in the finance, insurance, and real estate sector, and in the services sector.

Housing

Single family housing dominates the region's housing stock, although the share of multi-family housing and mobile homes is increasing. Rental housing is not distributed equitably throughout the region, so while the region as a whole had an adequate number of vacant rental units in 2000, many local communities had very tight rental markets.

Owner-occupied housing values have increased significantly over the last 30 years. While the largest increase in housing values occurred in the 1970's, housing values also rose significantly in the 1990's. Urban counties have a larger share of high-end housing than rural counties in the region.

Access to affordable housing is a significant issue in our region. Rental households, in particular, have great difficulty finding affordable housing. In 2000, 27% of renters were paying a disproportionate share of their income (more than 30%) for housing, compared to 15% of homeowners. Counties with the greatest homeowner affordability issues are rural, recreation counties.

The majority of households in the region are family households, although non-family households, (defined as households containing individuals that are not related by birth, marriage or adoption, as well as one-person households) are the fastest growing household type in the region. Rural counties, in particular, have a significant share of elderly one-person households.

Looking to the future, the number of household in the region is expected to increase by 23% by 2030. The number of housing units in the region will need to increase to accommodate these new households, many of which will consist of people living alone. Demographic trends and economic conditions will likely result in the need for a greater share of rental units. It seems likely that housing affordability problems will continue to grow.

Transportation

The time taken to travel to work continues to increase along with the distance traveled. Rural counties are out-pacing urban counties in increasing work trip travel time. Vehicle ownership continues to increase slightly, as fewer households are without a vehicle. Lower density development on the urban fringes and in rural areas has led to significant increases in the cost of both maintaining existing and developing new highway facilities.

The numbers of people using the urban bus system is on a very slight decline, after remaining nearly level through the 1990's. Urban paratransit services for persons with disabilities has seen significantly increased demand, while the per-trip cost of providing the service has also been increasing at a significant rate. Lower density development on the urban fringes has sparked a difficult challenge for urban systems to provide service. Rural services for the elderly and disabled are also more difficult to serve and continue to be in great demand.

Great strides have been made in the development of a regional trail system and a number of urban communities have begun to develop connections to the system. Nevertheless, sprawl development has presented difficulties, in the form of barriers, hazards, and trip length, to bicycle and pedestrian travel. In addition, many lower density residential and commercial areas have been developed without the facilities necessary to accommodate alternative (non-auto) types of transportation.

The primary modes of freight shipment are truck, rail and air. There is a significant difference in inbound and outbound freight traffic for the region, with outbound outweighing inbound by 20%. Truck movements account for 95% of all the region's freight. Rail freight movement equals 4%. Air freight accounts for less than one-tenth of a percent.

The future transportation system will be effected by shifts in the economy, the demands of the population, development patterns, and efficiency of the modes to serve them. It seems likely that highway congestion will continue to increase as trips become longer and vehicle ownership increases. It is anticipated that the demand for paratransit services will continue to increase as babyboomers age and lose the ability to drive their own cars. It is forecast that there will be a significant increase in the freight movement over the next 20-year period, with implications in terms of funding for maintenance of existing, and provision of new highways. Cars and light trucks are oil dependent, consequently, changes in the price and availability of oil could have major impacts on transportation. Computers and communications are increasingly central to the future of transportation. Many Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are coming on-line.

Community Facilities

There are 84 Wastewater Treatment Facilities (WWTF) in the region, 25% of which have some type of concern regarding the plants' capacity, or other ability to treat wastewater.

A number of regional efforts have been made within the region to control and manage stormwater runoff resulting from increasing urbanization. Many districts have begun to raise issues regarding the impacts of rural, scattered development and the cumulative impacts on water quality.

There are 12 active landfills within the region. It is estimated that these will provide adequate landfill space to meet the future needs of the region. Further consideration may, however, need to be given to the impacts of accepting waste from outside the region or state. Tipping fees continue to be lower in Wisconsin than in any of the surrounding states.

Wisconsinites recycled about 36% of the total waste in 1995. Recycling efforts are currently under pressure as a result of funding considerations. Winnebago, Outagamie and Brown counties have recently entered into a 25-year agreement to handle the disposal of solid waste and recycling in their respective counties. Consolidation of solid waste and recycling facilities will continue to be a viable option for counties to consider.

There are 73 municipal water systems in the region, which pumped an average of 59.7 MGD in 2000. Nine of the region's smaller systems do not have two fully developed water supply systems (one for backup). Approximately one third of the region's systems do not have sufficient storage capacity to provide continuous service in the event of a general power loss or equipment malfunction.

There are 29 existing and two approved power generating sites in the region. The five existing fossil fuel sites generate 77% of the power in the region, while the 22 hydroelectric sites provide about 21% of the total generating capacity. The remaining 1.5% of the total power that is generated in the region is from other sources: wind and biomass.

Summer peak demand and supply conditions ordinarily determine the need for either new electric generating stations or new transmission facilities. For summer peak demand, Wisconsin does not currently have enough generation capacity within the state to meet its demand and must rely on transmission lines to both meet demand and achieve the desired reserve margin. In the eastern part of the state, sufficient capacity exists in the natural gas system to supply future demands. However, the ANR pipeline that runs south from the Fox Cities on the west-side of Lake Winnebago is currently constrained; the pipeline on the east-side of Lake Winnebago has sufficient capacity for future needs. The experience of recent summers has highlighted constraints on the movement of power between western and eastern Wisconsin and between Illinois and eastern Wisconsin. The electric transmission network is interconnected; therefore a problem in one area could affect another area. The areas most affected by overloads include the Fox River Valley. Low voltages have been experienced between the Appleton and Oshkosh areas. Following national trends, natural gas usage is expected to increase dramatically over the next few years, as new generation plants will be fueled almost exclusively by natural gas.

There are 12 general hospitals located within the region. In 2000, the number of hospital beds in the region totaled 1,046, of which 159 were in rural counties. The region has one hospital bed for every 583 persons, which is less than the state average of one bed for every 413 persons. Most residents within the region are within 30 minutes of an emergency room and all areas are covered by an ambulance provider.

There are 59 communities with police departments, in addition to a sheriff's office in each county. Nine out of the ten counties within the region have a county jail. There are 88 fire departments or districts within the region.

There are 60 public school districts, 7 vocational, technical, and adult education districts and 6 institutions of higher education in the region. Public school enrollment within the region has remained relatively constant since 1996. At the same time, enrollments within the individual counties have fluctuated from an from an increase of 14% in Outagamie County to a decrease of about 9% in Green Lake County. The largest increases in public school enrollment were found within districts that have experienced the largest amount of new single family development. Other educational facilities within the region include 57 public, 9 academic and, 23 special purpose libraries.

Cultural Resources

There are 198 buildings, structures, objects, sites and districts, within the region, which are listed on State and National Registers of Historic Places. The region is home to two National Historic Landmarks. There are 18 Preservation Commissions. Four communities have Certified Local Government status through the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office. Three communities currently have Main Street status. There are a number of local Historical Societies.

Land Use

Residential, commercial and manufacturing land uses in the region have expanded, agricultural land use has declined, and urban area boundaries have grown. The amount of residential and commercial land more than doubled between 1980 and 2000. Most of this growth occurred in urban counties, where the best farmland is located. Approximately 319,000 acres of farmland were lost during this time period; this represents an area larger than the entire area of Winnebago County. It is important to note that while the number of residential units in the region increased by 43% between 1980 and 2000, the amount of residential land increased by 173%. The largest increases in commercial land occurred on the edge of existing urban communities.

Between 1980 and 2000, equalized land values in the state increased by 164%, while equalized land values in the region increased by 83%. The largest increases in land values occurred in the swamp and wasteland real estate category, followed by residential and commercial real estate categories. Agricultural land was the only real estate class to see a decline in property values between 1980 and 2000. The decline in agricultural land values resulted from the change to use value assessment, which values land based on its current use rather than its development potential.

Land use within the region is regulated by zoning, which determines what can and can't be done on a particular parcel of land. All but 31 local jurisdictions in the region have zoning and all but four of these are located in rural counties

In the future, additional land will be needed to accommodate residential, commercial and industrial growth as well as the associated infrastructure. Accommodating this growth will require the conversion of existing agricultural, forest, swamp, waste and open space land to more intensive urban and exurban uses. The amount of land required will be determined by the amount of growth, coupled with policy decisions regarding net densities and intensties, and zoning ordinance requirements. Promoting redevelopment opportunities, and encouraging higher densities could reduce the amount of land needed.

What's Next? - Milestone Report 2: Issues, Opportunities and a Regional Vision

Developing a vision of our preferred future is the next step in the regional planning process. To help us clarify our aspirations for how we want the region to look in the future there are three questions that we will need to address - what do we want to preserve in the region? what do we want to change in the region? and what do we want to create in the region?

Once we envision the desired future, we will need to explore the impact of the trends identified in the State of the Region Report, specifically to identify the match or mismatch between the vision for the future and the likely future, given current and anticipated trends. This process will help us to determine the broad goals that will enable us to achieve the identified regional vision.

To move forward successfully will require close cooperation and partnership between the public, private, and voluntary sectors at the regional, county, and local levels. To facilitate this process, East Central will be establishing a series of **Advisory Committees**, composed of both technical experts and citizens, over the next month. Between April and September of this year, members of these advisory committees will focus on producing a series of thematic vision statements that will address economic development, housing, transportation, etc. They will explore the impacts of current and anticipated trends, and begin to identify goals to ensure achievement of the envisioned future. If you are interested in serving on an advisory committee, please contact Denise McShane at 920-751-4770, or by email at dmcshane@eastcentralrpc.org.

East Central will hold three **Public Information Meetings** throughout the region in May. The focus will be on seeking your input on what we've done so far. Details on location, time, and date will be made available in advance.