

CHAPTER 3: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

Visioning is a process in which the public discusses what type of future it wants to achieve. The vision statements presented in this report describe a year 2030 view of the sort of region we want to live in, in terms of our community, our environment, and our economy.

The regional vision and thematic vision statements presented in this chapter are based on the input received at a number of public participation events including regional focus groups, public information meetings, and technical advisory committees. The professional contribution of the East Central planning staff is also incorporated. A summary of the format and process of the public participation events, including representation is available on-line at www.eastcentralrpc.org. In addition, a full report on public participation in the planning process will be produced in due course.

The vision statements presented below reflect the issues the region is facing. These include the challenges of an aging population, the global economy and the loss of manufacturing jobs, the perceived lack of affordable housing, the environmental, social and economic consequences of sprawl, poor quality drinking water, and the desire to preserve rural character and maintain a distinct sense of place.

Core Concepts and Recurring Themes

Five core concepts run through the thematic vision statements that have been developed: choice, economy, equity, environment, and quality. These ideas reflect the beliefs, values, and priorities of people living and working in the region. They will therefore inform every aspect of the regional plan.

A number of key recurring themes have also emerged that are relevant across all areas of the plan. These include: provision of education/raising public awareness, merits of improved coordination and collaboration, importance of intergovernmental, interagency, and public/private sector cooperation, requirement for better communication, recognition of local responsibility, need for efficient and cost effective service provision, importance of communicating consequences, the value of best practice examples, necessity of exploring alternative and creative funding options, potential of regionalism, need for integrated, proactive, and sustainable planning that takes account of future generations, and the absolute necessity for implementation and monitoring.

A Regional Vision

An overall regional vision is presented below, along with the thematic vision statements for each substantive area of the plan.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Regional Vision</p>	<p>In 2030, east central Wisconsin is a thriving, inclusive community. The region supports strong economic development while providing an excellent quality of life for all. The norms are consistent, balanced, and cost effective land use decisions, which promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the region and all of its citizens. Communities are smart about addressing growth issues in both urban and rural areas, and are successful in achieving a reasonable balance between individual property rights and community interests and goals.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">The Economy (Chapter 4)</p>	<p>In 2030, the region has diversified employment opportunities including well paid knowledge based jobs. The regional economy benefits from advances in research and technology, and supports entrepreneurialism and local business ownership. The region conducts collaborative economic development efforts across jurisdictional boundaries of governments, educational institutions, and other economic development entities. The preservation of natural resource amenities supports tourism opportunities, assists in attracting an educated workforce and enhances the quality of place for residents in the region</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Housing (Chapter 5)</p>	<p>In 2030, a dynamic housing market fosters community and neighborhood cohesion. Varied types of quality housing are integrated with community facilities and various transportation alternatives. This housing market meets the needs of urban and rural households of all types, ages, income, cultures, and mobility status.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Transportation (Chapter 6)</p>	<p>In 2030, an efficient regional transportation network provides options for the mobility needs of all people, goods, and services.</p>

Community Facilities (Chapter 7)

Efficient, cost effective community facilities are provided, which enhance the quality of life and ensure prosperity and economic stability for all. The emphasis in service provision is on cooperative planning, fostering collaboration, enhancing partnerships, sharing resources and transcending boundaries, as appropriate. In 2030, there are regional opportunities for the sustainable and safe management of solid waste and recycling, collection, processing and disposal activities. A well managed and planned public and private water supply provides for the region's citizens and industry. The region is served by a variety of well-functioning public and private wastewater treatment systems capable of accommodating future growth, while limiting the inherent conflicts caused by both urban and rural development patterns. Adequate, cost effective, environmentally friendly utility infrastructure exists to support industry and the general population. There are cost effective, efficient, quality, emergency and non-emergency services to ensure public safety. A variety of meaningful educational options and opportunities exist for all students. Children and adults in the region have access to educational, informational and recreational library services and materials. There is a collaborative regional forum to create and implement a strategic framework for the continuum of care for the health and well being of the residents of the region. Through cooperative efforts, park, open space, and recreational facilities and programs are protected and preserved and there are plans for new facilities. There are community facilities which meet the needs of various groups, including youth, elderly, and minorities, in a balanced and financially responsible manner.

Agricultural Resources (Chapter 8)

In 2030, agriculture is an important feature of the economy and lifestyle of the East Central region. Development pressures have been diverted away from farmland and ample, un-fragmented, agricultural districts exist. Farming is practiced on the most productive soils. A variety of farm types and sizes are operating successfully. The region's farming community supplies both local and global markets. Citizens, local officials, and farmers are aware of and continuously address interrelated economic and land use issues. The viable and stable farm economy, in terms of farm income and prosperity, reflects concerted efforts by the private and public sectors to balance free market forces and government programs for land conservation.

Natural Resources (Chapter 9)

In 2030, the importance of natural resources, including their link to the regional economy and quality of life is recognized. Natural resource planning is sustainable, consistent and coordinated. The region's ecological resources are planned for and protected; there is a strong sense of ecological place. The Winnebago Pool Lakes and the Fox/Wolf River systems are recognized as the backbone of the region's ecological resources. Geologic resources significant from an aesthetic, scientific, cultural, historic, educational, or commercial extraction purpose have been identified and inventoried, and many are preserved and protected. The region proactively addresses public access, recreation, and trail facilities in order to meet the needs of its citizens; enhance the quality of life and environment; realize tax savings and other economic benefits; and maintain and improve the region's tourism economy. The region is comprised of well-defined urban and rural spaces which improve the individual's perception of 'sense of place', while communities within the region have maintained their individual character. Within the region, surface water resources are planned for in a comprehensive, watershed-based manner that embraces and encourages the use of 'green infrastructure' concepts. There is proactive protection of natural features that not only contribute to water quality, but also to the long term sustainability and economic benefit of the region. The region is served by a variety of well-functioning public and private wastewater treatment systems capable of accommodating future growth while limiting the inherent conflicts caused by both urban and rural development patterns.

**Cultural
Resources
(Chapter 10)**

In 2030, the region is recognized as a leader in the state, for preservation of its cultural resources, by providing public access to resource protection tools, and the political advocacy necessary to ensure protection for, and appreciation of, our diverse ethnic heritage.

**Land Use
(Chapter 11)**

In 2030, efficient regional land use patterns foster healthy communities, individual community identity, and respect the natural environment.

Regionally Significant Feature Mapping

During the beginning stages of development for this report, a series of twenty (20) separate maps was prepared as a method to further refine, define, and discuss the 'regional land use issues' for each plan element and sub-element. The maps are not included in this report as they do not, at this time, serve to function as a reflection of the policies and recommendations contained in this report. The maps do, however; exist for viewing or use by others on the Commission's website (www.eastcentralrpc.org). Chapter 12 – Implementation discusses the need to refine and complete these maps as a method of communication and perhaps, one day, as more formal policy.

Simply put, the maps portray various resources, features, characteristics and special designations that are likely to be considered as being of 'regional significance' in our ten county area. These identified features are considered to be outstanding or unique from a regional perspective and currently do, or will, play a role in the overall development of the region. The maps were prepared to better assist citizens and officials visualize the overall context of the region's resources and how their particular community may, or may not, fit within this framework. The regional context portrayed by these maps should be considered in some fashion for both short and long-term land use decisions made by counties and local units of government.

For each plan element and sub-element outlined in Milestone Report #1, a set of selected features have been developed and displayed. Thirteen different mapping themes and 20 separate maps have been (or are being) developed based on the nine elements (and sub-elements) listed in the smart growth planning statutes.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Geologic Resources | 8. Recreation Features |
| 2. Non-Metallic Mineral Resources | 9. Cultural Resources |
| 3. Ecological Resources (2 maps) | 10. Economic Features |
| 4. Surface Water Resources (3 maps) | 11. Transportation Features (2 maps) |
| 5. Groundwater Resources | 12. Stormwater Features |
| 6. Open Space Resources (2 maps) | 13. Community Facilities (3 maps) |
| 7. Agricultural Resources | |

The mapping of regionally significant natural features, infrastructure, facilities and other resources within the region was a step toward the development of the 'framework' land use plan map which is located in Chapter 11. The answers to the questions "Is this resource a finite one?" and "Does it serve more than one jurisdiction at the county level?" served as a guiding principles for determining the maps' content.

The Commission anticipates that the maps' contents will change over time as a result of the improved data, or as new features or information related to the plan element comes to light. As with all planning efforts, the maps need to be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect regional priorities and/or changing needs and issues.