

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

BAY LAKE
Regional Planning Commission | Since 1972

**BAY-LAKE
REGIONAL
PLANNING
COMMISSION**

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



To: The Wisconsin Legislature, governing bodies of the local governmental units, and interested parties within the Bay-Lake Region.

Since 1972, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC) has served governmental units within eight counties in northeastern Wisconsin. This annual report summarizing programs and work completed in 2023 is submitted in accordance with the requirements set forth in s.66.0309(8)(b), Wis. Stats.

BLRPC had another successful year in securing grant funding for member governmental units and completing a variety of projects that brought value to the region in 2023. Highlights include the administration of the Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Assessment Grant Program and Community Development Block Grant program; assisting with Economic Development and state/federal grant applications, securing Wisconsin Coastal Management funding for Regional Technical Assistance, completion of numerous plans and studies such as comprehensive plans, outdoor recreation plans, transportation plans and studies, and hazard mitigation plans, providing zoning assistance and much more. Additionally, BLRPC's online presence continues to grow and gain public attention. Online maps and portals published in 2023 include the *Waterfront Planning Toolkit*, *City of Sheboygan Falls Online Cemetery Application*, and *Town of Gibraltar Comprehensive Plan Story Map*. BLRPC's *Funding and Grant Opportunities Portal*, *Bay-Lake Community Resource Portal and Community Profiles Dashboard*, and *Environmental Corridors Dashboard* continue to serve the region along with other online planning resources.

The Commission continues to serve as the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Economic Development District for the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Member-levied funds are used to leverage these programs, as well as the Regional Transportation Program and Wisconsin Coastal Management Program that provide cost-effective services for local initiatives ranging from grant writing to planning, to Geographic Information Systems.

Projects related to the Sheboygan MPO Program in 2023 included providing technical assistance, amending transportation plans, developing new plans and studies for the Sheboygan area, and more. BLRPC made various minor amendments and one major amendment to the *2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* and completed the *2024-2027 TIP* as well as the *2050 Sheboygan Area Transportation Plan (SATP)*. Work continued on the development of a *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)*.

This past year also served as a year of staff transition as we said goodbye to Executive Director Cindy Wojtczak and Transportation Planner Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo, who retired with over 60 years of combined service with BLRPC. Brandon Robinson was promoted as the new Executive Director and Sydney Swan was elevated to our Assistant Director. We also welcomed a Planning Assistant and a Transportation Planner to the team.

I would like to thank the BLRPC staff for their expertise and professionalism. This talented and knowledgeable staff, when combined with active and informed Commissioners, enables BLRPC to be a valuable resource for our region's local governmental units and partner organizations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Hotz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "H".

Michael Hotz
Bay-Lake RPC Chairperson

BAY-LAKE RPC REGION

COUNTIES

Brown	Kewaunee	Manitowoc	Oconto
Door	Florence	Marinette	Sheboygan

CITIES

Algoma	Kewaunee	Niagara	Plymouth	Two Rivers
De Pere	Kiel	Oconto	Sheboygan	
Gillett	Manitowoc	Oconto Falls	Sheboygan Falls	
Green Bay	Marinette	Peshtigo	Sturgeon Bay	

TOWNS

Abrams	Egg Harbor	Lake	Morrison	Scott (Brown)
Ahnapee	Fence	Lakewood	Mosel	Scott (Sheboygan)
Amberg	Fern	Lawrence	Mountain	Sevastopol
Athelstane	Florence	Ledgeview	Nasewaupee	Sheboygan
Aurora	Forestville	Lena	New Denmark	Sheboygan Falls
Bagley	Franklin (Kewaunee)	Liberty	Newton	Sherman
Baileys Harbor	Franklin (Manitowoc)	Liberty Grove	Niagara	Silver Cliff
Beaver	Gardner	Lima	Oconto	Spruce
Beecher	Gibraltar	Lincoln	Oconto Falls	Stephenson
Brazeau	Gibson	Little River	Pembine	Stiles
Breed	Gillett	Little Suamico	Pensaukee	Sturgeon Bay
Brussels	Glenmore	Long Lake	Peshtigo	Tipler
Carlton	Goodman	Luxemburg	Pierce	Townsend
Casco	Green Bay	Lyndon	Pittsfield	Two Creeks
Cato	Greenbush	Manitowoc	Plymouth	Two Rivers
Centerville	Grover	Manitowoc Rapids	Porterfield	Underhill
Chase	Herman	Maple Grove	Pound	Union
Clay Banks	Holland (Brown)	Maple Valley	Red River	Wagner
Commonwealth	Holland (Sheboygan)	Meeme	Rhine	Washington
Cooperstown	Homestead	Middle Inlet	Riverview	Wausaukee
Doty	How	Mishicot	Rockland (Brown)	West Kewaunee
Dunbar	Humboldt	Mitchell	Rockland (Manitowoc)	Wilson
Eaton (Brown)	Jacksonport	Montpelier	Russell	Wrightstown
Eaton (Manitowoc)	Kossuth	Morgan	Schleswig	

VILLAGES

Adell	Coleman	Glenbeulah	Maribel	St. Nazianz
Allouez	Crivitz	Hobart	Mishicot	Suamico
Ashwaubenon	Denmark	Howard	Oostburg	Suring
Bellevue	Egg Harbor	Howards Grove	Pound	Valders
Cascade	Elkhart Lake	Kellnersville	Pulaski	Waldo
Casco	Ephraim	Kohler	Random Lake	Wausaukee
Cedar Grove	Forestville	Lena	Reedsville	Whitelaw
Cleveland	Francis Creek	Luxemburg	Sister Bay	Wrightstown

ABOUT US

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (Commission) is a regional or quasi-governmental organization that serves northeast Wisconsin. The Commission was established in 1972 under Section 66.0309 of the Wisconsin Statutes to address planning and development at a regional level, collaborating with local governments and stakeholders to foster coordinated and sustainable growth. Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission is one of nine regional planning commissions within the State of Wisconsin.

The Commission's region covers nearly 10 percent of the state's area consisting of eight counties, including Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto, and Sheboygan. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the population of the eight-county region was 604,157 persons, or 10.3 percent of the total population of the State of Wisconsin. The region has over 400 miles of shoreline along Lake Michigan and Green Bay, and contains 12 major watershed areas that drain into the waters of Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

MISSION

Providing cooperative planning and funding solutions to foster healthy and thriving communities within the region

SERVICES

The Commission serves 185 local units of government in northeast Wisconsin by offering a range of planning services to our member counties and communities through our core program areas. Program areas include Community Planning, Economic Development, Environmental Planning, Transportation Planning, and Mapping and Visualization.



COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

- Comprehensive Planning
- Green Infrastructure Code Audits
- Farmland Preservation Planning
- Implementation Plans
- Zoning Assistance
- Neighborhood & Corridor Master Planning
- Strategic Planning & Visioning Assistance



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- EDA Economic Development District
- Disaster Recovery Microloan Program
- Brownfield Assessment Program
- Economic Modeling Assistance
- Grant Writing & Administration
- Housing Reports & Studies
- Project Funding Identification



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- MPO Services for the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning
- Pavement Surveys
- Safe Routes to School Planning
- Transit Development Programs
- Specialized Transportation Planning



ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

- Coastal Planning & Studies
- Outdoor Recreation Planning
- Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Sewer Service Area Reviews
- Land & Water Conservation Planning
- Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Planning



MAPPING & VISUALIZATION

- Custom Map Design
- Field Collection & Management
- Interactive Maps & Applications
- Land Use Inventories
- Online Surveys & Maps

BAY-LAKE RPC COMMISSIONERS

(As of April 2024)

FLORENCE COUNTY

Tom Brandt
Larry Neuens*
Rich Wolosyn

KEWAUNEE COUNTY

Tom Romdenne
Stan Johnson*
Debra Noel

MANITOWOC COUNTY

James Falkowski
Daniel Koski - Vice Chairperson*
Greg Grotegut

MARINETTE COUNTY

Thomas Mandli
Ann Hartnell - Secretary/Treasurer*
Michael Kunesh

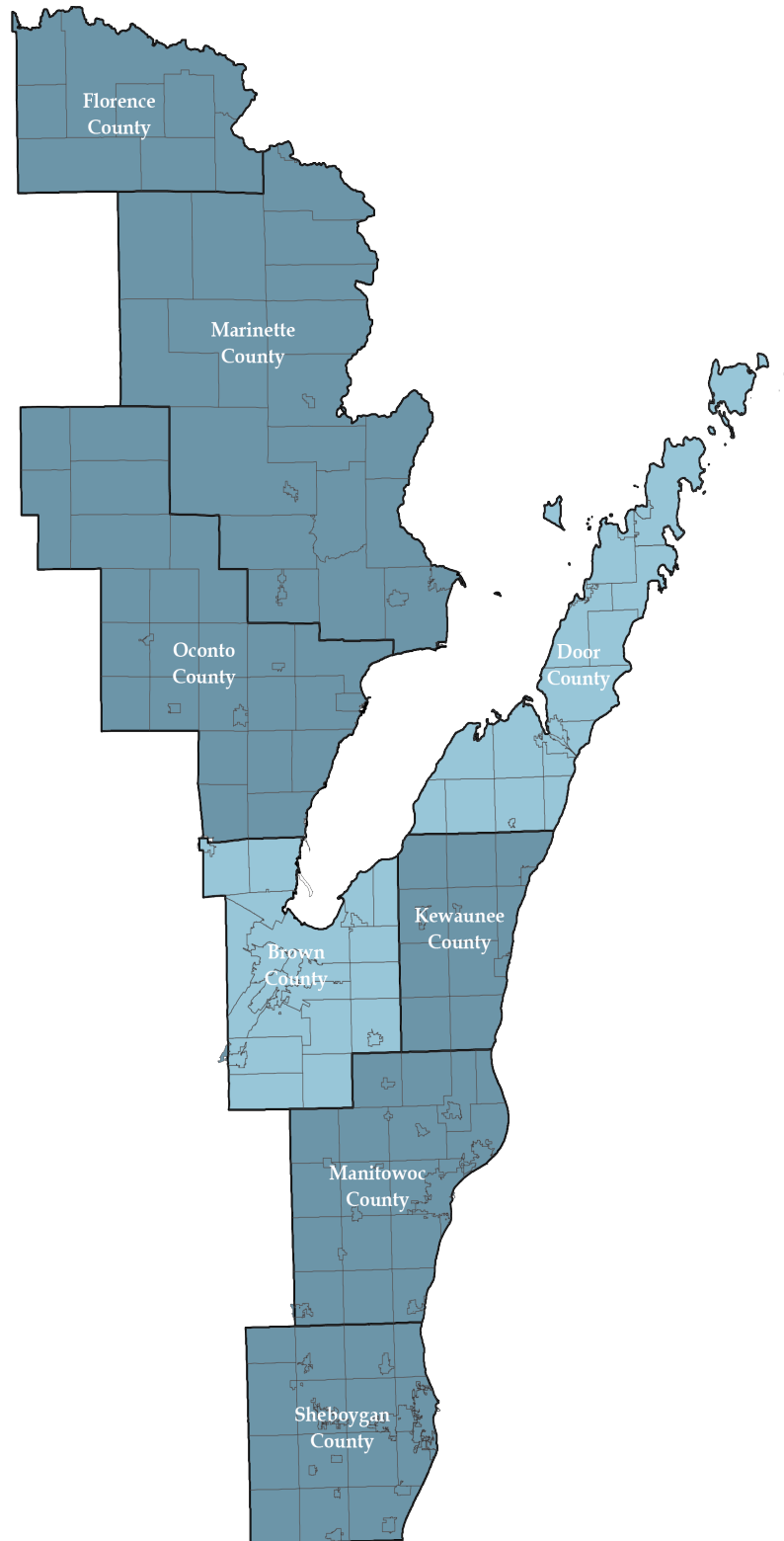
OCONTO COUNTY

Dennis Kroll
Karl Ballestad
Terry Brazeau*

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Ed Procek
Ryan Sorenson
Mike Hotz - Chairperson*

* *Executive Committee Members*



BROWN & DOOR COUNTIES

Door County withdrew from RPC participation in 2009 and Brown County withdrew in 2011. One non-voting commissioner appointment remains vacant for each county.

BAY-LAKE RPC STAFF

(As of April 2024)



Brandon Robinson | Executive Director

Brandon has been with the Commission since 1998. In addition to his management duties as the Commission's Executive Director, Brandon is extensively involved with the community assistance program, assisting with long-range planning, plan implementation, ordinance development, and more.



Sydney Swan | Assistant Director

Sydney has been with Bay-Lake RPC since 2019. In addition to acting as the Commission's Assistant Director, Sydney oversees the Economic Development department and the EDA Economic Development District. She also develops planning documents, writes and administers grants, and provides technical assistance throughout the region.



Heena Bhatt | Transportation Planner

Heena joined the Commission in 2022 as a Transportation Planner. She oversees the Transportation department, managing both the federally and state-funded Sheboygan MPO and Regional Transportation programs. She also develops local and regional transportation plans.



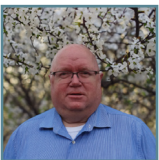
Raquel Orta | Managerial Assistant

Raquel joined the Commission in 2022 as a Managerial Assistant. Her primary duties include bookkeeping and financial management, human resources, and assisting in the overall day-to-day management of the Commission. Raquel also provides project support as needed.



Natalie Blackert | GIS Specialist

Natalie Blackert joined the Bay-Lake RPC in January 2024 as a GIS Specialist. Her core responsibilities include leading the development, implementation, and management of the Geographic Information Systems department for the Commission and the Bay-Lake Region.



Brian Dickson | Transportation Planner

Brian joined the Bay-Lake team in December of 2023 as a Transportation Planner. His primary duties involve assisting with activities under the Sheboygan MPO and regional transportation programs, developing planning documents, and providing transportation support within the region.



Bryce Thompson | Planning Assistant

Bryce joined the Bay-Lake team in January of 2024. As a Planning Assistant, his primary duties include assisting in long-range plan development, transportation planning, facilitation of community outreach, data collection and analysis, GIS mapping, and more.



Lydia Semo | Environmental Planner

Lydia joined the Bay-Lake team in March of 2024. As an Environmental Planner, her duties involve sewer service area and environmental reviews, climate change adaptation and hazard mitigation planning, and integrating sustainability for the many diverse projects and plans within the region.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

The Community Assistance Program offered by the Commission delivers a range of professional technical assistance and planning services. The Commission assists communities with developing and updating short and long-range plans including comprehensive plans, housing studies, farmland preservation plans, as well as other community development documents. The Commission also provides zoning and other ordinance assistance through this program. The Community Assistance Program is funded through various local, state, and federal contracts.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

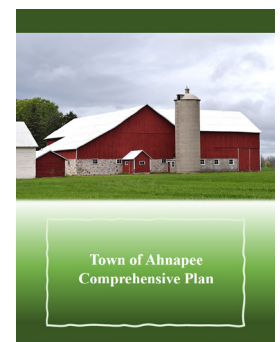
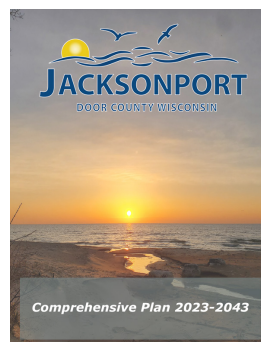
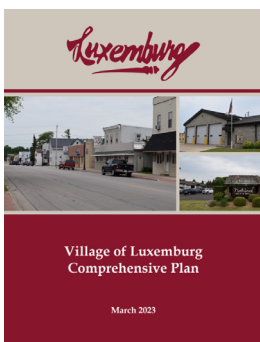
- Comprehensive Planning
- Green Infrastructure Code Audits
- Farmland Preservation Planning
- Implementation Plans
- Zoning Assistance
- Neighborhood & Corridor Master Planning
- Strategic Planning & Visioning Assistance

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

To guide a community's physical, social, and economic development, comprehensive plans serve as a rational basis for local land use decisions with a 20-year vision. Comprehensive plans must be updated at least once every 10 years. The Commission's comprehensive plans continue to evolve with varying document formats and interactive online versions of the plans. All variations of the documents maintain compliance with statutory requirements. In 2023, the Commission completed the following comprehensive plan updates:

- ▶ *Village of Luxemburg Comprehensive Plan*
- ▶ *Village of Mishicot Comprehensive Plan*
- ▶ *Town of Jacksonport Comprehensive Plan 2023 - 2043*
- ▶ *Town of Gibraltar Comprehensive Plan*
- ▶ *Town of Ahnapee Comprehensive Plan*

Additional comprehensive plan updates that were under development in 2023 and are anticipated to be completed in 2024 include the Village of Sister Bay, Town of Egg Harbor, and the Town of Washington.

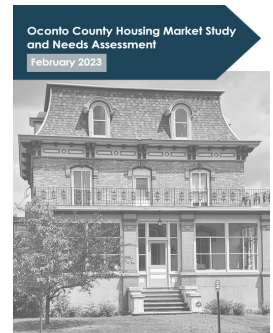


COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

HOUSING REPORTS

The Commission continues to stay up to date on housing-related issues within the region. Staff attend informational meetings and review funding opportunities to learn more about how housing shortages are being addressed elsewhere and relay this information to inquiring communities.

The Commission completed the Oconto County Housing Market Study and Needs Assessment Report in 2023. The study analyzed housing trends and conditions to better understand the county's current housing situation and potential housing opportunities that may exist. The study identified housing gaps and potential recommendations to mitigate current and future housing issues.



IMPLEMENTATION

In 2023, the Commission assisted the following communities with zoning ordinances and implementation projects:

- ▶ Continued to update the Town of Union Zoning Ordinance to include illustrations and modified language to improve functionality and simplicity.
- ▶ Continued to update the Sign Ordinance for the City of Sturgeon Bay.
- ▶ Worked with the City of Plymouth to strategize potential policies and programs that could foster the continued success of the community's thriving downtown area.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Annually, member units of government in the Bay-Lake region can apply for up to 40 hours of free technical assistance to aid them with a planning effort. Technical Assistance funding is supported through several of the Commission's existing work programs (i.e., Economic Development, Environmental, and Transportation).

In 2023, The Commission awarded the City of Marinette with 40 hours of technical assistance to develop a WisDOT Transportation Alternatives Program application for a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Program allows the Commission to perform technical assistance, planning services, grant writing and administration, funding identification, and partner collaboration within the region to help better promote economic development and strengthen the regional and local economies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- EDA Economic Development District
- Disaster Recovery Microloan Program
- Brownfield Assessment Program
- Economic Modeling Assistance
- Grant Writing & Administration
- Housing Reports & Studies
- Project Funding Identification

The Economic Development Program is funded in part by the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) as well as federal, state, and local contracts. The Commission maintains eligibility for EDA financial assistance by serving as the region's Economic Development District (EDD).

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

As the regional EDD, the Commission is required to develop, update, and implement a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for our eight-county area. The CEDS is a planning document designed to guide the economic growth and development of a designated region. This strategic planning document serves as a roadmap for coordinating and aligning various economic development initiatives, programs, and projects at the regional level. The CEDS planning process requires collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders in order to promote inclusive economic development throughout the region. It ultimately provides a framework for aligning resources and efforts toward common economic goals, fostering resilience, and enhancing the region's overall economic well-being. An approved CEDS allows the Commission, and its communities, to qualify for federal EDA assistance programs.

Work related to implementing the strategies, goals, and objectives identified in the CEDS falls under the Commission's EDA funding through technical assistance, grant writing and administration, funding identification, collaboration and networking, and more. The Commission updated the 2022-2027 CEDS document in 2022 and it was adopted by the Commission in 2023. The CEDS must be updated annually, with a fully revised CEDS document due in 2027.

COMMUNITY PROJECT LIST

Each year, the Commission distributes a project survey to each community and county in the region to better understand projects taking place in the region and to identify potential eligibility for EDA and other agency funding. Efforts to solicit the survey and conduct outreach is supported through the Commission's EDA program.

In 2023, 72 communities responded to the project survey supplying a list of over 250 unique projects that these municipalities wish to see implemented over the next 3-5 years. Of the projects submitted, 72 were identified as priority projects with the Commission providing assistance, where possible.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EPA BROWNFIELD ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Commission received a three-year Community-Wide Assessment Grant from the United States EPA in the amount of \$500,000 in late 2022. The program provides funding and support for the assessment of brownfield sites within the region and is to be used for identifying potential brownfield sites, conducting Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, community outreach and technical assistance, cleanup and redevelopment planning, and attending EPA Brownfield Training conferences.

Efforts to implement this grant began in 2023 and will continue through 2025. In 2023, the following grant-related activities were performed:

- ▶ The Commission contracted with an environmental consultant, Stantec, to assist with the implementation of the grant.
- ▶ A total of two Phase I and three Phase II Environmental Site Assessments were conducted in addition to other Asbestos Containing Material and Lead Based Paint Assessments and site investigations. These assessments were performed in Marinette, Manitowoc, and Florence counties.
- ▶ The Commission held a free informational webinar on the program being administered in the region. Presenters included Commission staff, EPA representatives, and Stantec representatives.
- ▶ Commission staff attended the 2023 EPA Brownfield Training conference in Detroit, MI.

DISASTER RECOVERY MICROLOAN PROGRAM

The Disaster Recovery Microloan (DRM) program provides short-term financial assistance (microloans) to businesses impacted by natural or man-made disaster events in the region. The program allocates zero percent interest loans up to \$20,000 to eligible, impacted businesses for repair work and operating expenses. There were no additional microloans made in 2023, however, the program remains available.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Each year the Commission provides communities and economic development organizations with economic modeling reports and economic snapshots. These reports are requested by email and obtained using an economic modeling software, known as LightCast, as well as through state and federal resources such as the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The Commission assists communities with identifying grants and funding opportunities throughout the year. Staff will analyze available opportunities and put together a funding summary for each project requested. The Commission also provides letters of support for grant applications in which RPC or EDD support is required or deemed essential.

Technical assistance is provided through the Commission's EDA program.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GRANT WRITING AND ADMINISTRATION

The Commission provides grant writing, application assistance, and grant administration services for entities within the eight county region. Throughout 2023, the Commission assisted dozens of communities with identifying funding opportunities for various projects, preparing grant applications, conducting grant administration, and providing project support.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a commonly used funding program that the Commission often works with. In 2023, the Commission closed out a City of Manitowoc project that involved ADA Accessible upgrades to the historic Rahr West Museum. The Commission also continued administering a CDBG-Coronavirus grant for the Town of Goodman, which is being used to restore the Goodman Township Park after being closed since 2019 due to severe flooding.

Davis-Bacon wage monitoring services for infrastructure projects in the City of Sheboygan were provided by the Commission in 2023. Furthermore, the Commission assisted the City of Sheboygan Community Development Department with administering their CDBG Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund by tracking job creation status for businesses that received a loan from the city.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

The Environmental Planning program continuously offers technical support and planning services to member municipalities with the aim of preserving, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and recreational opportunities in the region. The program is funded in part by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP).

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

- Coastal Planning & Studies
- Outdoor Recreation Planning
- Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Sewer Service Area Reviews
- Land & Water Conservation Planning
- Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Planning

Within the scope of the Environmental Planning program, the Commission engages in outdoor recreation, hazard mitigation, coastal management, and water quality planning. With a regional focus on ecological stewardship, the program actively promotes sustainable and resilient development in both the natural and built environment.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

In 2023, the Commission completed the Manitowoc County Parks and Open Space Plan. An online story map was also created with the plan update and serves as an interactive representation of the document. The plan will guide the county's efforts in meeting the recreation needs of the citizens while preserving natural resources in the area.

The Commission also assisted the Village of Sister Bay with their Outdoor Recreation Plan update in 2023. Staff held a public workshop to engage with residents and receive input on park amenities, park upgrades, and the public's priorities when it comes to parks and trails within the village. This plan is being developed alongside the village's Comprehensive Plan update and is expected to be complete in 2024.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

A hazard mitigation plan is a comprehensive and proactive strategy that county's put in place to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk and impact of natural hazards. The goal of hazard mitigation planning is to identify potential risks, vulnerabilities, and potential consequences, and to outline strategies and actions that can be taken to minimize or avoid those risks. In 2023, the Commission finalized the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan and continued updating the Marinette County and Manitowoc County hazard mitigation plans.

SEWER SERVICE AREA PLAN AND REVIEWS

In 2023, the Commission completed the Village of Luxemburg Sewer Service Area Plan and initiated the Sheboygan Sewer Service Area Plan. The Commission is expected to complete the Sheboygan Sewer Service Area Plan in 2024.

The Commission reviews sanitary sewer extension plans for new or existing development within the areas of the cities of Manitowoc, Two Rivers, and Marinette, the villages of Mishicot and Luxemburg, and the Sheboygan Urbanized Area. Commission staff reviewed three projects for consistency with the 2040 Manitowoc – Two Rivers – Mishicot Sewer Service Area Plan and one project for consistency with the 2030 Sheboygan Urbanized Area Sewer Service Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PROJECT

The Commission continued to work on a disaster preparedness project in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM). With increasing water level volatility and frequency of severe storm events across Wisconsin, communities will need to react to these events efficiently. This project aims to assess community vulnerabilities, facilitate natural disaster simulations in these communities, and provide outreach on disaster preparedness.

Commission staff assisted with a number of flood preparedness events in Marinette, Manitowoc, and Oconto counties. These events included a disaster preparedness role-playing game and presentations about flood vulnerability, community organizations active in disasters, and hazard mitigation planning.

WATERFRONT PLANNING TOOLKIT

The Commission completed and published the Waterfront Planning Toolkit in 2023. This interactive online toolkit strives to articulate the value of waterfront plans and help Bay-Lake Region waterfront communities to shape the long-term resilience and sustainability of their waterfronts. Tools and best practices were established to promote successful waterfront planning efforts. This project was funded by a grant from the WCMP.

The Waterfront Planning Toolkit was featured in the Wisconsin Counties Association Magazine, November 2023 edition. The article discussed waterfront planning efforts within the region and promoted accessibility to the toolkit materials.



STORMWATER EDUCATION

In 2023, Bay-Lake staff used a modified approach to fulfill the scope of work associated with the Sheboygan County's Stormwater Education & Outreach contract. Staff collaborated with Sheboygan County high schools to hold a storm water drain stencil competition among art students.

BLRPC received over 20 submissions and chose a winning design that staff stenciled on storm drains pre-approved by the municipalities' public works departments.



Commission staff stenciling winning design to Sheboygan County Stormwater Drains

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

In 2023, the Commission assisted with various initiatives including the Collaborative Action for Lake Michigan Coastal Resilience (CALM), Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, the East River Collaborative, and the Lakeshore Invasive Species Management Area (LISMA).

MAPPING & VISUALIZATION

The Commission's Mapping and Visualization program provides mapping and GIS technical assistance to the Bay-Lake region. The program supports Commission programs through mapping and graphical representation of the Bay-Lake region while providing analysis for informed planning decisions.

MAPPING & VISUALIZATION

- Custom Map Design
- Field Collection & Management
- Interactive Maps & Applications
- Land Use Inventories
- Online Surveys & Maps

MAPPING

Mapping and the use of GIS is a fundamental aspect of planning that plays a crucial role in visualizing and understanding spatial relationships, patterns, and trends. The integration of GIS in community planning offers several benefits, contributing to more informed and effective decision-making. The Commission continues to produce hundreds of static maps for planning documents, research, public outreach, and presentations.

Planners also use online tools to enhance the interactivity and engagement of final planning documents. Using ESRI Story Map, for example, allows planners to transform a printed plan into a visually compelling experience using combination of text, images, and interactive maps. In 2023, the following Story Maps were developed in conjunction with their planning documents.

- ▶ *Town of Gibraltar Comprehensive Plan*
- ▶ *Manitowoc County Parks and Open Space Plan*
- ▶ *Jacksonport Comprehensive Plan*
- ▶ *2050 SATP*

BROADBAND MAPPING

The Commission entered into an agreement with New North Inc. and East Central Wisconsin RPC for a regional broadband mapping project in 2023. The efforts resulted in the New North Broadband Overview Map which ultimately provides the public, government officials, and communities with a combined dataset of broadband-related data as well as economic data for 15 counties within Bay-Lake and East Central RPC regions.

CITY OF SHEBOYGAN FALLS CEMETERY APPLICATION

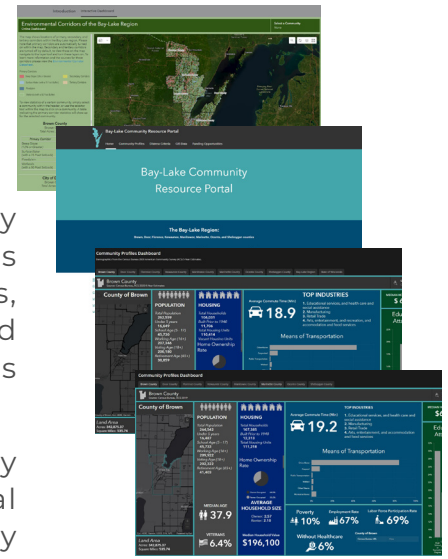
The Commission produced and published the City of Sheboygan Falls' Online Cemetery Application in 2023. This interactive online application allows public users to view cemetery records, burial locations, and available burial plots within the City's cemetery. Users can search for burials by first and/or last name, by death year, or by the grave site owner's first and/or last name.

MAPPING & VISUALIZATION

ONLINE TOOLS

In addition to Story Mapping, the Commission uses other online tools such as ESRI Hub Sites, Portals, and Dashboards, to create visually pleasing, interactive, and engaging content. These tools are often developed by the Commission and maintained continuously or throughout the life of a certain project. Applications that the Commission routinely updates include:

- ▶ Environmental Corridors of the Bay-Lake Region features descriptions of the Commission’s regional environmental corridor GIS dataset and an online interactive dashboard to view the dataset within each community within the Bay-Lake region. This dataset was updated in 2023.
- ▶ Bay-Lake Community Resource Portal and Community Profiles Dashboard is a one-stop area where communities within the Bay-Lake region can go to find demographics, funding eligibility and opportunities, and both local and regional GIS data. The Community Profile Dashboard was updated last with 2022 5-Year ACS data.
- ▶ Grants and Funding Opportunities Portal is an inventory of available grants and funding opportunities for local units of government. This portal is updated frequently with new opportunities, deadlines, and more.
- ▶ Waterfront Toolkit addresses gaps in waterfront planning efforts by synthesizing findings from existing waterfront plans and projects, creating tools for effective waterfront planning, and providing access to resources such as funding, data, and guides.



The Commission will also create interactive webpages for projects and plans that are under development as a one-stop shop to learn more about the project. These webpages will often host information about the project timeline, public participation opportunities, draft and final documents, resources, and more. Project webpages were created for the following projects:

- ▶ *Bay-Lake RPC Brownfield Webpage*
- ▶ *Sister Bay Comprehensive Plan Webpage*
- ▶ *TAPHO Study Webpage*
- ▶ *2023-2026 TIP Dashboard*

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Commission continues to provide GIS technical assistance to member communities within the Bay-Lake region. In 2023, staff assisted Kewaunee County with mapping updates to their county-wide parcel database.

TRANSPORTATION

The Commission provides transportation planning services in northeastern Wisconsin through its Regional Transportation Program and revenues from local and regional contracts. The Commission's transportation planning program focuses on state, regional, and local issues. Services include bicycle and pedestrian planning; transit planning; corridor studies; pavement management; safe routes to school; railroad; airport; and port and harbor planning. Specialized transportation planning services are also offered, including the coordination, planning, and implementation of elderly and disabled special transportation services and programs.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- MPO Services for the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning
- Pavement Surveys
- Safe Routes to School Planning
- Transit Development Programs
- Specialized Transportation Planning

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION WORK PROGRAM

Since 1972, the Commission has provided rural multi-modal transportation planning services to address both area wide and local transportation issues. The Regional Transportation Work Program is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), and matching funds from the Commission.



Federal Highway
Administration

SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The Commission assisted the Northeast Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee (NEWRATC), a group that brings together stakeholders from across the region to collaborate on issues related to transportation access, particularly for those segments of the region's population that are elderly or disabled.

The Commission assisted the City of Marinette with administration of the city's Shared-Ride Taxi Program, which included preparation and submittal of the WisDOT 85.20 formula grant also known as 2024 Public Transit Assistance Program (PTAP) application for federal and state assistance to operate the transit system.

COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The human services transportation provisions of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) aim to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple federal programs. Coordination will enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation possible with available resources. These plans need to be updated every four to five years. In 2023 staff worked with Florence, Marinette and Oconto Counties to update their coordinated plans.

TRANSPORTATION

PAVEMENT SURVEYS

Every odd numbered year, municipalities are required to report local roadway conditions to WisDOT using the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads. Roadway conditions are evaluated and rated using the PASER system (Pavement Survey Evaluation and Rating). This is a 10-point rating system, developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Transportation Information Center, requires visual inspection of roadways to evaluate pavement surface conditions.

The Commission conducts PASER surveys for communities through its Regional Transportation Work program for these efforts. In 2023, the Commission completed eight PASER surveys for the towns of Egg Harbor, Brussels, Gardner, Jacksonport, Sevastapol, and Washington in Door County; and the towns of Franklin and Montpelier in Kewaunee County.

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FEASIBILITY STUDY

Sheboygan County approached the Commission to explore the feasibility of transit service in Sheboygan County. The study centers towards fulfilling the needs of the county's elderly, disabled, and veteran's population and will provide transportation options to other residents for commuting.

The study aims to develop specific recommendations for a suitable transportation service, as well as the fare structures, hours, and frequency of the service. Sheboygan County in collaboration with the Commission conducted a survey to better understand the needs of the residents. The survey received over 500 responses with analyzed results being incorporated in the potential service options. The Commission is in the process of developing potential feasible transportation options based on the survey and demand in the county. The study began in March 2023 and is expected to be finalized in the Summer of 2024.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTH OPTIONS STUDY

The Bay-Lake region contains communities that are both urban and rural spanning from the Lake Michigan shoreline to the Nicolet National Forest. Different issues face this broad-ranging region but one in particular that warrants attention is transportation access. Many segments of the population in the region have little to no options for transportation other than private car ownership to access services that would benefit their health. Recreational opportunities, health care facilities, and healthy food options are out of reach for many in the region without a private car, placing an unintentionally expensive barrier to improving public health.

The Commission was awarded grant funding through WisDOT's TAP 2022 - 2026 to conduct a region-wide study looking at the existing gaps to public health options through public transit, walking, biking, and other alternative modes of transportation. The study will analyze these gaps and provide recommendations on overcoming these obstacles. The study is being documented through an online portal that provides study updates, online maps, and phase by phase analysis as the study progresses.

TRANSPORTATION

GRANT WRITING

The Commission assists communities in finding and applying for transportation related grant opportunities. In 2023, the Commission assisted the City of Sheboygan with a “Safe Roads and Streets for All” grant application and the city got awarded with \$200,000 to develop a safety action plan for the city and work on the implementation of the plan.

In 2023, the Commission assisted the City of Marinette to apply for Transportation Alternatives Program grant application for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The awards are expected to be announced in spring of 2024.

WisDOT announced the Safe Transportation Alternatives for Rural Schools (STARS) program under their annual TAP grant. The STARS program was created for rural schools located in towns under 5,000 in population to apply for funding for planning efforts or construction costs. In the Bay-Lake region, the Random Lake School District in Sheboygan County and Algoma School District in Kewaunee County both applied for and received grants to fund Safe Routes to School (SRTS) planning efforts. BLRPC assisted the school districts with writing the applications and will also be leading the SRTS plans. Both projects are set to start in 2024.

The Commission assisted the Town of Gibraltar with securing STARS funding for a trail feasibility study. This project will explore connecting the communities of the Village of Egg Harbor, the Town of Gibraltar, the Village of Ephraim, and the Village of Sister Bay. The feasibility study will also incorporate trail connections to the Peninsula State Park and conduct safe routes to school planning efforts within the Gibraltar School District. The trail feasibility project was initiated in 2023 and is expected to be completed in 2025.

SHEBOYGAN MPO

Since 1982, the Commission has provided urban transportation planning activities as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area, with the assistance of local technical and policy advisory committees. The Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area includes the cities of Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls, the villages of Howards Grove and Kohler, the town of Sheboygan, and portions of the towns of Herman, Lima, Mosel, Sheboygan Falls, and Wilson. Transportation planning is required of metropolitan planning areas as a prerequisite to receiving federal funding for transportation projects.



The MPO program is funded by the FHWA, WisDOT, Sheboygan County (local match for non-transit planning activities), and Shoreline Metro (local match for transit planning activities).

PROGRAM SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

The 2024 Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Planning Work Program was approved. The Sheboygan MPO Technical and Policy Advisory Committees met jointly eight times in 2023, and Commission staff presented or reviewed MPO items at seven full Commission and Executive Committee meetings. Commission staff participated in quarterly MPO/RPC Director meetings facilitated by WisDOT, and two work program review meetings with WisDOT and FHWA staff. Commission staff also attended the annual Wisconsin MPO/RPC/WisDOT/USDOT transportation planning conference in fall. The Commission continued its membership in the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) in 2023 and participated in various AMPO webinars and 2023 AMPO annual conference in Cleveland. Commission staff also participated in quarterly meetings of the WDNR Transportation Conformity Work Group.

SHORT-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Short-range transportation planning activities that took place in 2023 included: establishment of performance targets in the areas of public transportation agency safety, transit asset management, and highway safety; completion of the 2022 transportation system performance indicators report; and technical assistance to Shoreline Metro, WisDOT, Sheboygan County, and local units of government. Commission staff participated in quarterly meetings of the Northeast Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee (NEWRATC), and also engaged in Sheboygan County's Transportation Coordinating Committee meetings.

SHEBOYGAN MPO

LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

In April 2023, the Commission adopted the 2050 Sheboygan Area Transportation Plan (SATP) after an open house and approval by the Technical and Policy Advisory Committees of Sheboygan MPO. The plan identifies long-range transportation needs by analyzing the existing system and preparing plans and studies in a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing manner. It also considers possible infrastructure improvements and establishes priorities to implement projects based on anticipated funding.

The Commission created a webpage for the 2050 SATP to summarize the plan and enhance engagement. The webpage included a summary of each chapter with graphics and interactive maps. Recommended street, highway, and bicycle and pedestrian projects are also included with its impact on the environment and the financial plan of all the projects.

Meetings were held with WisDOT in 2023 to update the Sheboygan Urban Area Boundary. Based on the results of the Decennial Census Data, the US Census Bureau published Federal register notice with the criteria defining urban areas. These Urban Area Boundaries are required to be adjusted by the state DOT in coordination with the RPCs and MPOs.

SHEBOYGAN MPA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

The Commission started working on developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The existing bicycle and pedestrian network in the Sheboygan MPA contains gaps that often force bicyclists and pedestrians to use high-traffic and high-speed roads, use unsafe intersections, break traffic laws, or choose a different mode of transportation. This plan aims to connect the people within the MPA by a safe, convenient, and enjoyable bicycle and pedestrian network accessible and comfortable for individuals of all ages and abilities. The Commission collaborated with a consultant (Toole Design) to develop a Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) Analysis for the MPA. The LTS analysis will be completed by April 2024. When completed, the plan will provide strategies to enhance the existing infrastructure and provide recommendations to close the existing gaps in each municipality within the Sheboygan MPA. The plan is estimated to be completed in 2025.

Inviting public opinions and getting input is a big part of the plan. Commission staff hosted a booth at the Saturday farmers market in August to receive public input and educate people about the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and its importance. The Commission also coordinated with the City of Sheboygan Department of Public Works to promote the city's Complete Streets Policy initiative.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Activities related to the TIP in 2023 included development and approval of the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area TIP: Calendar Years 2024 – 2027; two sets of minor amendments and one Major amendment to the 2023 – 2026 TIP; and preparation and posting of the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects for Calendar Year 2022. Other TIP-related activities in 2023 included prioritization of STBG Urban candidate projects in the Sheboygan Urbanized Area for the latest funding cycle.

2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

Below is a summarized statement of revenues, expenses and change in net position as presented in the audited financial statements for the year 2023.

OPERATING REVENUES

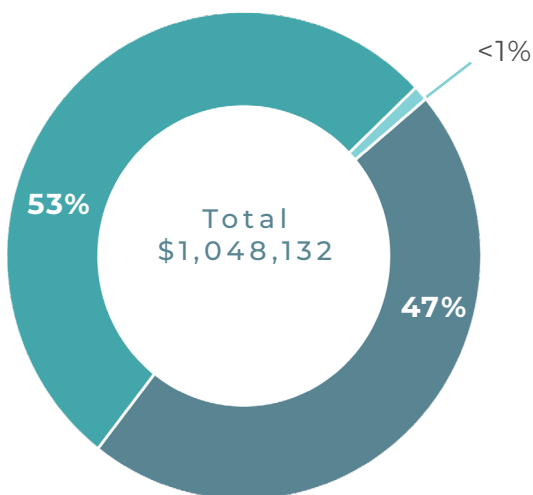
■ Intergovernmental grants	492,716
■ Intergovernmental charges for services	553,257
■ Public charges for services	2,159
■ Other operating revenues	-
Total Operating Revenues	1,048,132

OPERATING EXPENSES

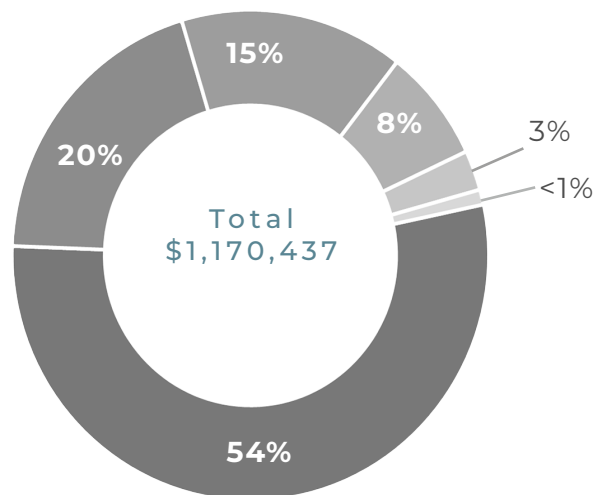
■ Salaries and wages	634,946
■ Employee fringes and benefits	232,258
■ Subcontracted project consultants	88,197
■ Beneficiary Payments	5,000
■ Depreciation	31,091
■ All other	178,945
Total Operating Expenses	1,170,437

Operating Income	(122,305)
Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses)	(15,711)
Change in Net Position	(138,016)
Net position - January 1	488,048
Net Position - December 31	350,032

Operating Revenues



Operating Expenses



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As we reflect on the completion of yet another year, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals and organizations whose unwavering support and dedication have made our achievements possible.

COMMISSION STAFF

Our staff's hard work, dedication, and passion are the driving force behind every success we achieve. Their tireless efforts and commitment to excellence are truly commendable, and we are grateful for their invaluable contributions to our organization. It is with great appreciation that we acknowledge the following former staff that contributed to our success in 2023: Jessica Missall, Nicole Barbiaux, Izzy Fuller, Makayla Lesperance, and Fabiola Ramirez.

RETIREMENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Commission would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to two remarkable and long-tenured staff. Cindy Wojtczak and Jeff Agee-Aguayo, who retired from the Commission in 2023, had a combined tenure of 60+ years and left an indelible mark on the organization.

COMMISSIONERS

We extend our sincere thanks to our Governing Board of Commissioners for their guidance, wisdom, and unwavering support. Your leadership and strategic insight have been instrumental in shaping our organization's direction and ensuring our continued growth and success.

LOCAL, STATE, and FEDERAL PARTNERS

We extend our sincere gratitude to our local partners whose collaboration and support have been instrumental in our organization's success. Collectively, your partnership and support have empowered us to make a significant difference in our region and beyond. We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to create positive change and build a brighter future for all.

Additionally, we would like to thank our state and federal funding agencies for their financial support, technical assistance, and advocacy efforts. Your investment in our programs and initiatives has been crucial in enhancing our capacity to address critical issues and deliver vital services to our region. We are honored to partner with you in our shared commitment to creating positive change across our region.

Thank You



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