

The Bay-Lake Buzz

Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Bay-Lake RPC



Welcome!

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (Commission) publishes quarterly newsletters in the Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall to provide updates on Commission activities, recently completed projects, upcoming meetings and events, grants and funding opportunities, and other information relevant to the Bay-Lake region.

The Commission is a public entity similar to a municipality and provides a range of planning services to member local governments. The Commission serves an eight-county region within northeast Wisconsin consisting of Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto, and Sheboygan counties.

Wondering how the Commission can help your community? Contact us today to find more about how the Commission can assist in the following services:

Community Planning

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New Leadership



The Commission is pleased to announce the appointment of Brandon Robinson as the organization's new Executive Director. Brandon brings over 25 years of experience in the planning profession, with most of his career as an employee of the Commission. He holds degrees in Urban and Regional Studies and Geography. Brandon was extensively involved with the evolution of the community assistance program and played an instrumental role in the oversight of the Commission's regional transportation and environmental programs. Over the past several years, he served as the Commission's Assistant Director helping with management duties and program administration. Brandon's leadership, experience, and desire is an effective combination for the continued support offered to the communities of the Bay-Lake region and the growth of the Commission.



Sydney Swan was appointed as the Commission's Assistant Director. Sydney has been with Bay-Lake RPC for over four years and holds degrees in Regional Land Use Planning as well as Urban Planning from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. Sydney's experience in Economic Development and contract administration has helped to bring millions of dollars to the region in federal and state grant funding. Sydney will continue to oversee the Commission's Economic Development program while supporting organizational efforts lead by the Executive Director.

For more information regarding all current Commission staff, please visit our [website](#).

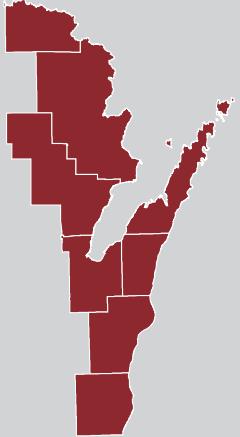
WE'RE HIRING!!

The Commission is looking for a planner to join our team! The Planner I/II position will handle a wide range of planning activities from short-range and long-range transportation plans to multi-modal transportation plans, comprehensive plans, and more. The Planner will work under the supervision of the Executive Director and lead Transportation Planner. This is a full-time position with a full benefits package that can be found within the [full job description](#).

Please visit the [Commission's website](#) to fill out an application. This position will remain open until filled with the initial review on August 14, 2023.

EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Workshop

The Commission received \$500,000 in Brownfield Assessment funding from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) which will be used to conduct brownfield site assessments throughout the region. The Commission, along with their environmental consultant Stantec, will hold a virtual brownfield workshop on **Wednesday, August 23rd from 10:00am - 11:00am** to provide more information. Recent brownfield redevelopment successes will be showcased from within the region along with more information which can be found in the flyer below. More information regarding brownfields can also be found on the Commission's [Brownfields program page](#).



Brownfield Assessment Grant Workshop

The Bay-Lake RPC was awarded a \$500,000 Brownfield Assessment grant from the US EPA to conduct environmental site assessments, redevelopment planning, and more within the region.

Bay-Lake RPC and Stantec will be hosting a **free virtual workshop on Wednesday, August 23rd at 10:00 AM** for those interested in learning more about brownfields and how to utilize these grant funds in your community. Topics that will be discussed include:

- What is a brownfield?
- How can US EPA brownfield grant funds be used?
- How can a site be added to the list for future assessments?

Wednesday, August 23
10:00Am-11:00am
Virtual Workshop

FREE!

To RSVP, email sswan@baylakerpc.org

FLORENCE MARINETTE OCONTO BROWN DOOR KEWAUNEE MANITOWOC SHEBOYGAN

BAY LAKE
Regional Planning Commission | Since 1972

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Stantec

Disaster Preparedness in the Bay-Lake Region



In the first of a regional event series, Commission staff held a community flood preparedness event in Oconto County in June. This collaborative project with Wisconsin Sea Grant (UW Sea Grant) and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) aims to engage disaster-prone cities on the Lake Michigan coastline in preparedness planning. The day included a coalition-building activity using the Extreme Event Game, a review of the latest data on flood exposure in Oconto, and a program to build up and organize volunteer and community organizations to respond to disaster events. Those in attendance of the event included representatives from the Commission, UW Sea Grant, WEM, county officials, emergency personnel, and members of community organizations.

Similar events are currently scheduled in both Marinette and Manitowoc counties:

Marinette County

Wednesday, August 16, 10:00am
Marinette County Board Room
1926 Hall Ave, Marinette

Manitowoc County

Wednesday, September 6, 10:00am
Manitowoc County Emergency
Operations Center
1024 S 9th St, Manitowoc

These scheduled events will include similar programming to the Oconto event with an additional session overviewing the hazard mitigation planning process, as both these counties will soon be updating their hazard mitigation plans with the support of Commission staff. Any questions related to these events can be directed to [Izzy Fuller](#).

Wisconsin Broadband Survey

In an effort to understand Wisconsinites' experiences with the internet, their needs and barriers, and network performance, the Wisconsin Broadband Office is encouraging all households to take the [Wisconsin Internet Self-Report \(WISER\) survey](#). This information will help shape the state's and the Bay-Lake region's internet planning efforts.

WISER is an online survey with a speed test; it is designed to capture the complexity of residents' experience with internet service or lack thereof (e.g., service quality, cost burden, and more) so the Commission and the Wisconsin Broadband Office can accurately understand a variety of broadband needs. Through this collaborative effort with all WI residents, we will be able to further improve internet access, understand associated costs, and support internet adoption for Wisconsin residents by identifying areas where internet is not available, too expensive, underperforming, or intimidating to subscribe. The survey is confidential, and the number of responses will be visualized in an online mapping tool.

The WISER survey is available online [here](#) or via phone by calling 608-267-3595.



Transportation Planning Activities



Sheboygan County Transportation Planning/Feasibility Study and Outreach

Sheboygan County is putting in efforts to provide its citizens with public transport. There is a great increase in demand for public transportation in the rural areas of Sheboygan County, so, Sheboygan County approached the Commission to explore the feasibility of transit service in Sheboygan County. The study will center 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.

This study is being reviewed through a special steering committee called the "Sheboygan County Transportation Consortium Stakeholders' Group," which includes individuals representing public and private entities across Sheboygan County. Sheboygan county in collaboration with the Commission conducted a survey to better understand the needs of the residents. The survey received over 400 responses and staff are in the process of analyzing the survey results. The study began in March and is expected to be finalized Fall of 2024.



Application Materials for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) 2024-2028 - Now Available

In June, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) announced that the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) 2024 - 2028 applications are now available on their website. TAP is a legislative program that can provide funding for infrastructure and planning projects. These projects must be related to surface transportation and primarily serve to benefit or increase non-motorized methods of transportation.

All TAP projects are funded 80% federally, with a 20% local match. The minimum project costs is \$50,000 for non-infrastructure (planning projects) and \$300,000 for infrastructure projects. Eligible applicants are encouraged to apply and include:

- Local governments
- Regional transportation authorities
- Transit agencies
- Natural resource or public land agencies
- School districts or local education agencies
- Tribal governments

Some ideas for eligible projects include:

- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) planning
- Recreational trails program
- Bicycle and pedestrian planning
- Construction, planning, and designing of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers
- Construction, planning, and designing of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation

All applications for this TAP cycle are **due Friday, October 27, 2023**. To find out more about this program, please click on the [quick facts flyer](#) or visit [WisDOT's TAP webpage](#).

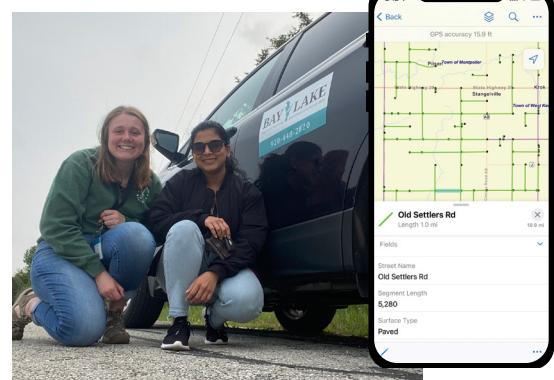


Transportation Planning Activities (Cont.)



PASER Surveys

It is that time of year when Commission staff are conducting PASER surveys (Pavement Survey Evaluation and Rating) for multiple member communities. In recent years, staff have begun utilizing the ArcGIS mobile field application on mobile devices to make this process more efficient. Prior to heading out onto the roads, GIS support staff prepare the data provided by WisDOT and display the data on an online map that is accessible to staff in the field. Staff then have the ability to locate themselves on the map, click on the road segment, and rate it appropriately. The data collected is then uploaded back onto the computer when staff get back to the office. This process not only saves time in the field but also improves the safety of those involved with conducting the ratings.



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 will be documented through an [online portal](#) that will provide study updates, online maps, and phase by phase analysis as the study progresses.

To get involved with the study, we are looking for examples of challenges that the population faces when accessing public health options within the region. If you have an example or know of a challenge, please provide your feedback [here](#).



For any questions on any of the ongoing transportation planning activities, please contact Heena Bhatt at hbhatt@baylakerpc.org.

Hot off the Press - Completed Documents

2022 Annual Report



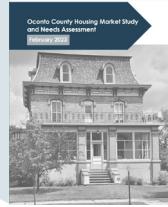
The Commission is pleased to announce the official release of Bay-Lake RPC's 2022 Annual Report. The annual report highlights work that has completed or was ongoing throughout the 2022 fiscal year. The report also provides an overview of the Commission's continuing programs areas. Click [here](#) to view the 2022 Annual Report.

Year 2050 Sheboygan Area Transportation Plan (SATP)



Year 2050 Sheboygan Area Transportation Plan was given its final review by the Sheboygan MPO Technical and Policy Advisory committees and then adopted by the Commission on April 21, 2023. The plan identifies the 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. Click [here](#) to view the final *Year 2050 Sheboygan Area Transportation Plan*.

Oconto County Housing Market Study and Needs Assessment



In February 2023, the Commission completed the *Oconto County Housing Market Study and Needs Assessment* for the Oconto County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC). The study analyzed the county's current housing stock, trends, and conditions to identify housing gaps and potential recommendations to mitigate current and future housing challenges. Click [here](#) to view the final study.

Featured Funding Opportunities

The Commission maintains a [Funding and Grant Opportunities Portal](#) that provides information about new and upcoming funding opportunities. Funding opportunities that are due over the next three months are highlighted below.

■ **AARP Small Dollar, Big Impact Grant** (Deadlines: July 18, August 15, September 19)

Small Dollar, Big Impact grants are exactly what the name describes - simple, short-term, low-cost solutions that could have remarkable impacts on the shaping of neighborhoods and cities. We know how impactful \$1,000 can be. This is our way of extending some seed money to get these projects off the ground. [More info...](#)

■ **Schreiber Foods Foundation Grants Program** (Deadline: July 31)

Let's make a difference together! Schreiber is committed to the communities where Schreiber partners work, live and play. To non-profit organizations in eight counties of Northeast Wisconsin, and in areas throughout the county hosting Schreiber facilities, we provide an opportunity to request support in a number of different ways, including funding in the form of Community Grants and Sponsorship opportunities. [More info...](#)

■ **AF Climbing Conservation Grant Program** (Deadline: August 1)

The Access Fund's Climbing Conservation Grant Program funds projects that preserve or enhance climbing access and opportunities and conserve the climbing environment throughout the U.S. Since our inception in 1991, Access Fund has funded \$1.3 million to local organizations, climbers, and public agencies. [More info...](#)

■ **WDNR Snowmobile Trail Aids – Previous Season** (Deadline: August 1)

Snowmobile trail aids are entirely funded by snowmobilers. The money awarded in grants to Wisconsin counties comes from snowmobile registrations, trail pass revenue and gas tax from some of the gas used in snowmobiles. These grants are used to reimburse the over 600 snowmobile clubs in Wisconsin for some of their expenses. Without these clubs, the trail system we enjoy would not be possible. [More info...](#)

■ **WDT Meetings Mean Business (MMB) Grant Program** (Deadline: August 1)

The purpose of the fund is to assist destinations as they bid for national or Midwest regional meetings and conventions that generate hotel overnights and a significant economic impact for the area where they'll be held. The grant program focuses on bringing meetings or conventions into the state, but not to fund existing in-state events that are regularly scheduled or which routinely rotate to destinations within the state. [More info...](#)

■ **WisDOT Harbor Assistance Program** (Deadline: August 1)

The Harbor Assistance Program provides financial assistance to harbor facilities on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River for projects that improve or maintain waterborne commerce. The objective of this program is to provide necessary water access and to maintain or improve the economically effective commodity movement capabilities of Wisconsin's commercial harbors on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River system. [More info...](#)

■ **NEA Our Town Grant Program** (Deadline: August 3)

Our Town is the National Endowment for the Arts' creative placemaking grants program. These grants support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Successful Our Town projects ultimately lay the groundwork for systems changes that sustain the integration of arts, culture, and design into local strategies for strengthening communities. [More info...](#)

■ **EDA Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program** (Deadline: August 15)

Through the Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (Tech Hubs Program), EDA seeks to strengthen U.S. economic and national security through place-based investments in regions with assets, resources, capacity, and potential to become globally competitive, within approximately ten years, in the technologies and industries of the future - and for those industries, companies, and the good jobs they create to start, grow, and remain in the United States. The Tech Hubs Program will support the modernization of United States manufacturing and improve commercialization and domestic production of innovative research. [More info...](#)

■ **WisDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)** (Deadline: August 15)

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds highway safety projects at sites that have experienced a high crash history. Emphasis is on low-cost options that can be implemented quickly. [More info...](#)

Featured Funding Opportunities (Cont.)

■ **Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S Grant Program** (Deadline: September 1)

The first of its kind in the off-highway vehicle industry, the Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. Grant Program was launched in January 2006 for OHV clubs, associations and grassroot groups. OHV riders and the trails they use are the lifeblood of the sport and Polaris Industries aimed to create a program to help. [More info...](#)

■ **WDT Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) Grant Program** (Deadline: September 1)

The purpose of the fund is to assist destinations as they bid for national or Midwest regional competitive sporting events that generate hotel overnights and a significant economic impact for the area where they'll be held. [More info...](#)

■ **WisNRF C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants** (Deadline: September 1)

The C.D. Besadny Conservation Fund was established to invest in grassroots conservation and education projects that benefit Wisconsin's lands, waters, and wildlife, and that connect people to Wisconsin's natural resources. Grants range from \$500 to \$2,000. [More info...](#)

■ **WDNR Surface Water Grant Program** (Deadline: September 2)

The Surface Water Grant Program supports surface water management from start to finish. Whether your organization is looking for help with outreach, assessments and surveys, planning, project design, or management, there is probably a grant program that can help you. [More info...](#)

■ **WDNR Shooting Range Grant Program** (Deadline: September 15)

This grant program is administered as a reimbursement program. This means that you must incur and pay all costs associated with the project before seeking reimbursement from DNR. No grant advances are possible. It is possible for grantees to request partial (quarterly) reimbursements of the DNR during the life of the project. [More info...](#)

■ **T-Mobile Hometown Grants Program** (Deadline: September 30)

T-Mobile is committing up to \$25 million over the next 5 years to support small towns across America by funding community projects. [More info...](#)

■ **WDNR Clean Water Fund Program** (Deadline: September 30)

Since 1991, the Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) provides affordable financial assistance to municipalities for publicly-owned wastewater and storm water infrastructure projects that are needed to achieve or maintain compliance with federal and state regulation, such as Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permits. [More info...](#)

■ **WisNRF Go Outside Fund** (Deadline: September 30)

We know that nature provides tremendous physical and mental health benefits - yet today's children spend less than 1% of their time outside. The Go Outside Fund provides funding that helps connect youth to outdoor, nature-based learning experiences. [More info...](#)

■ **Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative Grant Program** (Deadline: September 30)

The Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative is dedicated to those who work and play outdoors including, but not limited to, those who rely on off-highway vehicles (OHVs) to ride, camp, hunt or fish. Supporting the outdoor enthusiast, the Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative's mission is to provide practical support for efforts that promote safe, responsible use of OHVs, educate the public on proper recreational land use and wildlife conservation practices, and protect appropriate and sustainable access to public lands. [More info...](#)

■ **WDNR Regular Urban Forestry Grants** (Deadline: October 1)

Regular urban forestry grants support projects that improve a community's capacity to manage its trees. Cities, villages, towns, counties, tribes and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in or conducting their project in Wisconsin may apply for a regular urban forestry grant. [More info...](#)

■ **WDOA Rental Housing Development** (Deadline: October 15)

The Rental Housing Development (RHD) Program assists eligible housing organizations, including Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), with funds to develop affordable rental housing. For-profit corporations may partner with the above-mentioned groups to apply directly for RHD funds. [More info...](#)



Upcoming Events/Meetings

July

Manitowoc County Parks and Open Space Plan Open House
Monday, July 24, 1:00pm | Location: Manitowoc County Office Complex, Room 300

Bay-Lake RPC Executive Committee Meeting
Friday, July 28, 10:00am | Bay-Lake RPC Office

August

Community Flood Preparedness - Marinette County
Wednesday, August 16, 10:00am | Location: 1926 Hall Ave, Marinette, WI (*Marinette County Board Room*)

EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Workshop
Wednesday, August 23, 10:00am - 11:00am | Location: Virtual workshop, RSVP to [Sydney Swan](#)

September

Community Flood Preparedness - Manitowoc County
Wednesday, September 6, 10:00am | Location: 1024 S 9th St., Manitowoc, WI (*Manitowoc County Emergency Operations Center*)

Sheboygan MPO Technical and Policy Advisory Committees Joint Meeting
Thursday, September 7, 1:00pm | Location: Sheboygan City Hall

Bay-Lake RPC Full Commission Meeting
Friday, September 8, 10:00am | Bay-Lake RPC Office