

Regional Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Meeting 1 Summary

Date: June 3, 2024

Time: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Place: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Loretta Baughan, Jason Grueneberg, Doug Machon, Betty Manson, David Meurett, Paul Millan, and Tim Reed

Staff Attendees:

Christian Boulanger, Dennis Lawrence, and Sam Wessel

Meeting Overview:

- NCWPRC staff provided a brief overview of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) planning process. The four past regional planning efforts were outlined, including the most recent plan named the “Regional Livability Plan.” This plan, adopted in 2015, addresses four specific areas: Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, and Land Use. NCWPRC has begun updating its Regional Comprehensive Plan, formally known as the “Regional Livability Plan.” This plan will provide data, trends, and goals that local comprehensive plans should reference and/or incorporate into their own comprehensive plan since many regional challenges also affect local and county governments.
- Staff provided a tentative timeline for the project. This project will likely involve 4-6 meetings with the Steering Committee to discuss/review a few chapters at each meeting. Before each meeting, a Doodle Poll will be sent out via email to pick a date and time that works for most committee members. Staff also explained the goal is to complete the rough draft around June 2025, with the full Commission adopting the plan in October 2025.
- Staff reviewed the Public Participation Plan and highlighted the actions that will be taken to meet Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning law (ss. 66.1001).
- Staff reviewed the Introduction and Chapter 1 sections of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Committee members supported the demographics/data findings in Chapter 1.
- The Committee held an open discussion on regional issues that should be integrated into the Regional Comprehensive Plan. As demand has decreased, several members voiced their concern about the future of the region’s forestry/paper products industry.

Additionally, the topic of resiliency came up; with economic and environmental factors impacting a community's ability to adapt to changing conditions. Further, the lack of effort to increase resilience in a community can impact bond ratings, one member said. Several members also brought up changing demographics in their area, brought on by a declining school-age population and an increased elderly population, impacting local schools and the workforce. Related to this issue is the lack of ability to attract new or returning people to the region. A couple of members are concerned about the lack of services for elderly people in rural areas. Other issues brought up included: aging infrastructure, groundwater quality, and the future of automation and work from home. Staff said they would incorporate/explore these issues in the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

- Staff concluded the meeting by mentioning that they will send a Doodle Poll to identify dates/times for the next meeting, likely in August.