



Waukesha County Business Alliance 2012 Policy Agenda

The mission of the Waukesha County Business Alliance is to drive economic growth in Waukesha County through a vibrant business community. We are a countywide chamber of commerce with more than 900 member companies and organizations, representing 60,000+ employees in southeastern Wisconsin.

The Alliance has been a voice of business since its founding in 1918 as the Waukesha Association of Commerce. Initially established to serve City of Waukesha businesses, over the years we evolved into the Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce to meet the needs of our diverse and growing membership. In September of 2010, we joined forces with the Waukesha County Action Network to become the Waukesha County Business Alliance.

The Alliance plays an active role in determining what policy issues matter most to our business community and has developed the following priorities as a framework for advocacy:

- Energize economic development in the region by promoting greater collaboration between public and private stakeholders in the county and surrounding area.
- Improve and modernize our public infrastructure, including roads and water supply, to encourage continuous growth and relocation of people and businesses in the region.
- Ensure employers have access to a skilled talent pool of workers.
- Create a competitive tax and regulatory climate that retains, attracts and creates businesses and jobs.

Attached is a 2012 Business Policy Agenda for Waukesha County. This document was developed by the Alliance's four Policy Committees and reviewed and approved by our Policy Board and Board of Directors. Additional information can be found on our website, www.waukesha.org.

The Alliance is proud to provide opportunities for our members to advocate on behalf of the business community, develop themselves and their employees, network and build strong business relationships, and promote their products and services.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Kelley, President of the Alliance at (262) 542-4240 or skelley@waukesha.org.

Consolidated Services Policy Statement

Encouraging Partnerships to Provide Exceptional Services within Waukesha County

In light of declining tax revenues and current economic conditions, municipalities within Waukesha County need to partner with one another and with Waukesha County to provide efficient and cost-effective services to their communities.

Key Policy Deliverables:

1. **Improve Current Processes within the County Combined Dispatch System**

While Waukesha County has made consistent progress in addressing many of the initial issues associated with the Combined Dispatch, there is still significant work to be completed. Waukesha County has installed new software to replace the existing dispatch system and is in the testing phase, with deployment planned later this year. We will stay current with the progress and key decisions related to the software implementation and support decisions in the best interest of the Waukesha County community.

2. **Support the Inclusion of Waukesha County Communities in Combined Dispatch Center**

A total of seven local communities have not joined the Waukesha County Combined Dispatch Center – Elm Grove, Menomonee Falls, Mukwonago, Muskego, New Berlin, Oconomowoc and Waukesha. We will continue to reach out to these communities to understand their needs and determine the most efficient and cost effective way to provide dispatch services to all communities in Waukesha County.

3. **Ensure Efficiency and Effectiveness of Waukesha County Services**

The Waukesha County Business Alliance will continue to look for opportunities for Waukesha County government and its local municipalities to develop even stronger connections in order to continue delivering high-quality public services at a reasonable cost. We will encourage the communities to share best practices in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services within Waukesha County and ensure that our level of taxation remains fair and competitive.

Economic Development Policy Statement

Facilitating the Economic Vitality of Waukesha County for its Businesses and Residents

Waukesha County and its 37 municipalities possess many of Wisconsin's most vibrant businesses. Waukesha County's most important resource, its people, contributes significant numbers to the state's economic output and tax base. Additionally, the quality of life of each community is attributed to the hard work of businesses large and small. We remain committed to removing obstacles to business growth, expansion and development, and marshaling resources to foster development.

Key Policy Deliverables:

1. **Foster Business Development Through Greater Collaboration**

Business leaders who want to expand or relocate within Waukesha County, often find it difficult to navigate the myriad of regulations and approvals necessary from government entities. In addition, they are unaware of the many resources that exist to assist them in their efforts, such as local chambers of commerce and economic development staff. We will pursue continued opportunities of collaboration among business groups and government. Key partnership areas include the Waukesha County Economic Development Corporation (WCEDC), Milwaukee 7 (M7), Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), and additional regional entities. We will also promote the many assets of the cities, villages and towns of Waukesha County to the greater business community.

2. **Advocate for Tax and Regulatory Measures that Promote Business Retention**

It is more cost-effective for public policy to foster the growth and retention of Wisconsin-based businesses, than to recruit businesses from outside of Wisconsin. We will advocate for policies that equally promote existing and potential businesses, instead of providing greater incentives to those entering or threatening to leave Wisconsin. We will also advocate for a tax and regulatory environment that promotes entrepreneurialism, innovation and retention of businesses in Wisconsin and Waukesha County.

3. **Advance Efforts to Streamline and Simplify Inconsistencies in Taxes and Regulations**

Wisconsin regulations and administrative rules should create a level playing field for local, national and international businesses. To that end, we will advance efforts to harmonize local, state and federal regulations, eliminating areas of overlap or conflicting requirements. We will also advocate for a more transparent, public regulatory process that welcomes business involvement and for more predictable and reasonable response time from regulators.

4. **Support State and National Efforts to Ensure Businesses are Treated Fairly**

We will continue to support the efforts of like-minded entities such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce at the national level, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) at the state level, and M7 and its supporting organizations at the regional level, to ensure the voices of large and small businesses are heard by legislators and regulators, and that businesses in Waukesha County and elsewhere are treated fairly in the legislative and regulatory process.

Education Policy Statement

Facilitating the Economic Vitality of Waukesha County for its Businesses and Residents

The economic vitality of Waukesha County depends on ensuring employers today, and in the future, have access to a skilled talent pool of workers. The next generation of workers must have access to multiple school-to-work options to meet the needs of businesses in Waukesha County. We believe it will take a collaborative effort between businesses, educational institutions, and parents to make sure that today's students understand the skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow.

Key Policy Deliverables:

1. Support efforts to increase articulation agreements between the Wisconsin Technical College and the University of Wisconsin systems

Although private colleges are more willing to establish articulation agreements with the Wisconsin Technical College System, the University of Wisconsin system, through its faculty control of the process, has turned articulation into an arduous and lengthy exercise. The Education Committee, working with a Leadership Waukesha team, will gather information to develop a white paper on articulation agreements. The goals of the Leadership Waukesha project include:

- a. Investigate the current articulation system and the process being used.
- b. Utilize social media to solicit examples of transferring credits between the Technical College and University of Wisconsin systems.
- c. Summarize the information and present the findings to the Waukesha County Business Alliance Education Committee.
- d. Make recommendations for possible changes to the articulation process.

2. Establish Stronger Partnerships between Schools and Businesses

- a. The Waukesha County Manufacturing Alliance has started collaborating with Waukesha County school districts to obtain the educational support needed for careers in manufacturing, which already provides 1 out of 5 jobs in the county. This has been done through internships, externships, co-op programs, equipment and labor donations, and plant tours for educators. We will expand the current partnerships and continue collaboration so educators, parents and students understand the careers available in manufacturing.
- b. The Waukesha County Business Alliance will continue to look for opportunities to strengthen the relationship between businesses, parents and the K-12 systems to ensure that high school graduates are prepared for transition to post secondary opportunities, both academically and in career preparedness. The education committee will accomplish this by organizing a Business Speakers Bureau that can speak about the employment needs of businesses to educators, parent groups and students. Focus will be on life skills, life-long learning and the skills sets that employers are looking for in their next generation of workers.

3. Strengthen Higher Education in Waukesha County

We support the efforts of County Executive Dan Vrakas and State Representative Paul Farrow to explore greater collaboration between the University of Wisconsin—Waukesha, Waukesha County Technical College, and other institutions of higher education in Waukesha County. These efforts include an examination of the best structure for UW-W and WCTC. The objective of these efforts should be to enhance educational and employment opportunities for Waukesha County students and to provide a qualified workforce for our local employers.

Infrastructure Policy Statement

Improving and Maintaining Essential Infrastructures for Residents and Businesses

Transportation

Waukesha County's economic vitality depends on an efficient transportation system to connect people to jobs and facilitate the flow of goods and services to markets. Long-term funding strategies, coupled with solid long term planning are critical to delivering a sound transportation system. There are two immediate needs impacting Waukesha County: the Zoo Interchange and the Waukesha West Bypass.

Key Policy Deliverables:

1. **Zoo Interchange**

Reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange is the most critical long-term infrastructure issue facing not only Waukesha County, but also the entire state. This interchange handles the bulk of the state's commerce and has 350,000 vehicles pass through on an average weekday. Opened in 1963, the Zoo Interchange has reached the end of its useful life as evidenced by the emergency replacement of key bridges throughout the interchange in the spring of 2010. Besides its impending obsolescence, the interchange is one of the state's most dangerous stretches of highway with an average crash rate of 2.5 accidents per day from 2001-2005. The Final Environmental Impact Study should be completed so engineering studies can commence and reconstruction can stay on target for a 2016 start date. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) expects engineering costs to run approximately \$195 million. Along with reconstruction, we believe the Zoo Interchange's capacity needs to be increased to eight lanes. This improvement is projected to cost \$2.25 billion, only 8% more than modernization of the current six-lane system. The continued growth of Waukesha County and other communities, including the expansion of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, Milwaukee Research Park and proposed UWM Engineering campus, will increase stress on the system's capacity. For these reasons, we believe full attention needs to be given to completing reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange with an eight-lane capacity.

2012 Update: *The 2011-2012 biennial budget provided the funding for the Reduced Impact Alternative to move forward for the reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange. The \$1.7 Billion dollar project is in final DOT design stage and Federal Record of Decision phase. With the final design and record of decision completed in 2012 work on arterial streets will commence in 2013 with actual freeway work beginning in 2014. The reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange was the top policy priority of the Alliance's Infrastructure Committee and the fast tracking of the project is a great achievement for the Waukesha County business community that relies on the interchange to facilitate commerce.*

2. **Waukesha West Bypass**

After decades of discussions, the Environmental Impact Study period for the proposed Waukesha West Bypass began in February of 2010. The final study, as well as recommendations from the Federal Highway Administration on whether or not to proceed with construction, is expected in summer of 2011. We believe this project needs to move forward to completion and support the four-lane expansion of Highway TT (Meadowbrook Road/Merrill Hills Road) from I-94 to Highway 59. The Town, City, and County of Waukesha and the state DOT have reached an agreement on funding for the estimated \$51 million project. Under this agreement, the state would cover \$37.5 million of the cost (plus an additional \$2.6 million set aside for purchasing real estate), Waukesha County \$8.6 million, and the City of Waukesha \$2 million. People traveling from I-94 to the south end of Waukesha via the current road system can face long delays, in addition to safety concerns due to capacity issues and current roadway design. By 2035, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning

Commission (SEWRPC) estimates traffic counts on this stretch will range from 13,000 Vehicles Per Day (VPD) near Sunset Drive and 20,000 VPD closer to I-94. The current two-lane structure has reached its capacity, as the state DOT generally considers going to four lanes when traffic counts exceed 13,000-14,000 VPD. The completion of the West Bypass presents a great opportunity to increase the efficiency and capacity of traffic flow for businesses, property owners and tenants on the west end of Waukesha and will provide an alternative route for business travelers who normally would take routes such as Highway T, St. Paul Avenue, or Highway 164 to access southern Waukesha.

2012 Update: *The Waukesha West Bypass is slowly progressing. As of January 2012, the EPA has asked for the design work to reconsider the Merrill Hills East route to avoid impact to wetlands via the Pebble Creek or Sunset Drive route. The EPA is also requiring further farmland wetland delineation studies for areas located north of Sunset Drive. SEWRPC was engaged in November of 2011 to update the wetland delineation. The final proposed design is on hold until the wetland delineations are completed and the Merrill Hills East route is more thoroughly vetted. Upon the completion of the delineation process, a preferred Western Bypass route can be proposed to the EPA for a concurrence to initiate the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The likely public hearing for the Waukesha West Bypass will be sometime in summer of 2012 with the best case scenario of construction beginning in 2013. The Alliance's Infrastructure Committee still supports a true bypass through the Pebble Creek area to link up at the intersection of Highway 59 and St. Paul Avenue.*

Water

A vibrant business climate in Waukesha County hinges on the ability of its communities to secure a sustainable, long-term and safe supply of drinking water that is affordable for all residential and business users.

Key Policy Deliverables:

- 1. Support Application for Great Lakes Water Source for City of Waukesha**
Based on the research conducted to this point, Great Lakes Water appears to be the best and only known long-term sustainable solution to Waukesha's water needs. Should the application for Great Lakes Water be declined or new less costly technologies emerge in the near future, the Waukesha County Business Alliance is prepared to support the best alternative solution.
- 2. Advocate for Cost-Effective, Sustainable and Long-Term Water Solutions for All Waukesha County Communities**
Experts believe water issues will continue to exist for other Waukesha County communities that rely on the deep aquifer even after the City of Waukesha solves its issues. The Waukesha County Business Alliance also intends to advocate for the most cost-effective, sustainable and long-term solution for each community on a case-by-case basis.

Background/Supporting Materials:

The City of Waukesha is at the forefront in attempting to secure a long-term and safe water supply source. The city has been ordered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to pump radium compliant water by 2018. If the city is not radium compliant by 2018, it faces fines of up to \$80,000 per day until it achieves compliance. This deadline is rapidly approaching when one considers the time necessary to construct the appropriate infrastructure and the deadline has been extended previously and is unlikely to be extended further.

While Southeastern Wisconsin is blessed with many water sources, the primary source for drinking water for many county communities is the deep sandstone aquifer. Unfortunately in many places, like the City of Waukesha, this aquifer has restraints on its ability to recharge itself due to a unique geologic lining of shale that prevents recharge from a large area of Southeastern Wisconsin. The aquifer has therefore been "drawn down" and the resulting drinking

water for several communities has quality concerns. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has accordingly designated Southeastern Wisconsin as a groundwater management area.

Waukesha's water challenges have been examined by no shortage of experts, both contracted by the city and through SEWRPC's Regional Water Supply Plan. There is a strong consensus among the experts charged with reviewing the options that Lake Michigan water is the best long-term, sustainable and environmentally friendly water supply source for the City of Waukesha. Not only will Lake Michigan water provide a sustainable water supply for the City of Waukesha but will have the added benefit of allowing the deep aquifer the opportunity to "recharge" itself as the demand for its resources is reduced. Recent studies have also found Lake Michigan water as the most affordable solution and a solution that yields water of a very high caliber.

Waukesha County's business community cannot simply hope that future water supply for the city will be met by using supply sources that have been dismissed by experts as unsustainable, costly, legally-challenged or adversely impacting the greater environment. As it currently stands, the Lake Michigan water option is the best and may be the only long-term option for the city's residences and businesses for the following reasons:

- The City of Waukesha has been recognized for its water conservation efforts. Unfortunately, conservation alone will not address the water supply and quality issues facing the City. Despite this reality, the City of Waukesha should continue with its aggressive water conservation efforts to minimize its water needs.*
- Experts have evaluated a number of other water supply and treatment alternatives such as the use of quarry water, river water and shallow wells. All have been dismissed primarily due to health, environmental, legal and/or cost issues. A recent Wisconsin Court of Appeals decision has cast even further doubt on the city's ability to secure a groundwater supply source outside of the city limits which is the other main alternative to Great Lakes Water.*
- Lake Michigan water provides a consistent and safe source that is fully sustainable with the return flow being equal to the draw.*
- Costs are an unfortunate necessity of any plan to provide a sustainable water solution for the city, but we believe the Lake Michigan option minimizes the long-term cost impact. As further details emerge to the actual and not the projected costs for the city's water users, the City must share the actual costs for further public input after final negotiations with a potential supplier have concluded.*
- Studies have indicated that the Lake Michigan option will also bring environmental benefits to the regions wetlands, streams and lakes.*
- Last, but not least, Waukesha's ability to attract and retain businesses requires a reliable water source. Lake Michigan is the only viable, reliable long-term option.*

Wetland Regulatory Reform 2012

The business community relies on a government regulatory structure that is customer-focused, reliable, and provides timely decisions. The Wisconsin Legislature and Department of Natural Resources have been working cooperatively to improve the regulatory structure of wetland permitting.

Key Policy Deliverables:

- Creates General Permits (GPs) for minor projects impacting wetlands and additional GPs that are similar to permits currently issued by US Army Corps of Engineers.
- Establishes deadlines for the GP application process and determinations by the DNR for such permits, and sets consequences for not meeting deadlines.
- Revises compensatory wetland mitigation program to allow for more banking and the purchase of credits for the purpose of restoring.
- Establishes a wetland restoration fund and allows the DNR to enter into agreements with third-party organizations to perform wetland restoration/creation work.