

Sept 11, 2008

Verona examines plan for downtown

By Jim Ferolie
Verona Press editor

See the plan

There's no shortage of opinions in Verona about the future of the city's downtown district.

Finding a way to bring more restaurants, more shops, a stronger identity and ease traffic problems is a frequent topic of discussion.

The city's Comprehensive Planning Committee will share its own opinions on the subject next week, then seek out everyone else's later this month at an open house. The committee will use whatever comments it receives to help build the city's comprehensive plan, which will play a key role in shaping policies and spending over the next few decades.

Re-creating the downtown is a major focus of the comprehensive plan's Land Use chapter, which the committee will discuss over the next two months. The draft plan, which is available on the city's Web site, includes long-term suggestions for alleviating problems with parking, stormwater management and traffic congestion, including the construction of municipal parking lots and stormwater facilities and using some current parking spaces as traffic lanes during rush hour.

The discussion will spread out to undeveloped areas both within and outside the city in October, including targeted areas for either

How to get a look at the city's draft plan for downtown:

Web

Go online to www.ci.verona.wi.us, then click on "Comprehensive planning information."

Paper

Get a copy at City Hall or the Verona Public Library.

Meeting

Hear a discussion at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 15 at City Hall or come to the open house at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29 at the Verona Senior Center.

Call

Call city planning director Bruce Sylvester at 848-9941.

growth or preservation.

Anything the committee has discussed, including transportation, economic development, housing and natural resources, is fair game at the Sept. 29 open house, as is discussion on any other relevant planning-related topics. But the committee will be actively promoting discussion of land use topics with maps of downtown, of the long-term Main-at-Verona intersection options, of alternate north-south roads and of the city's potential future land uses.

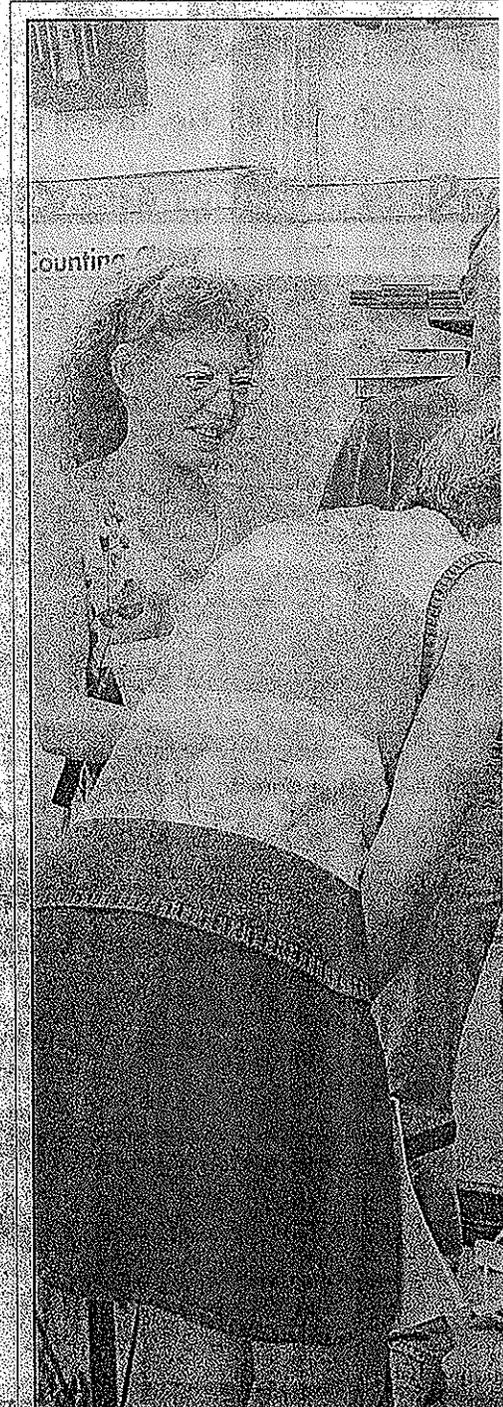
Volunteers from the committee will be on hand to answer questions, explain the plan and its purpose and take comments. It will be a casual, drop-in setting from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Verona Senior Center.

The comprehensive plan

a major undertaking that began in December and needs to be complete by the end of next year — is the result of the state's Smart Growth law passed earlier this decade. It mandates that cities, villages, towns and counties use a much more open public process than in the past for determining where and how growth will occur, as well as an emphasis on working with other governmental bodies, such as towns, other cities, school districts and the county.

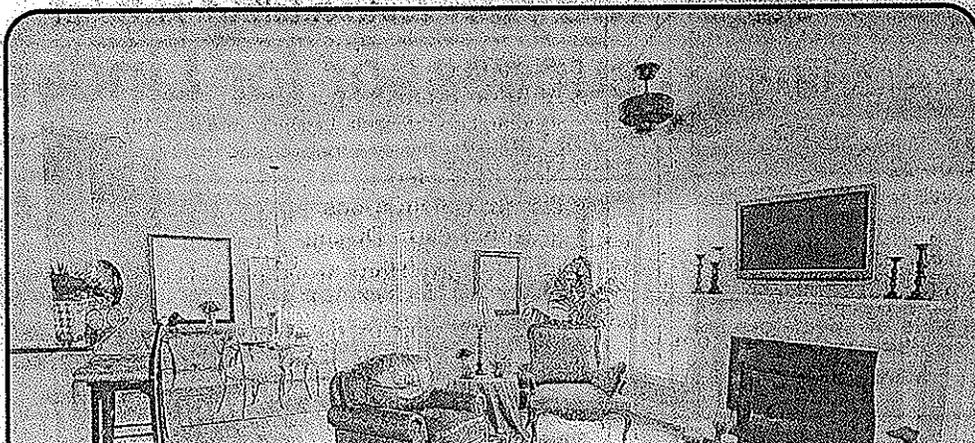
Any decisions the city makes after Jan. 1, 2010, must comply with the comprehensive plan, or face a threat of being challenged legally.

For information on the plan or the process, call city planning director Bruce Sylvester at 848-9941.



Back to school

Dylan Banks meets his new first-grade special time set-aside at Sugar Creek El their school supplies. His parents, Tracey acquainted.



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