

Verona Press

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Get a last look at the comp plan

Document will map out city's future, near and far

By Jim Ferolie
Verona Press editor.

All the background information, opinions and suggestions the city has compiled over the past year have been refined into a set of 24 goals.

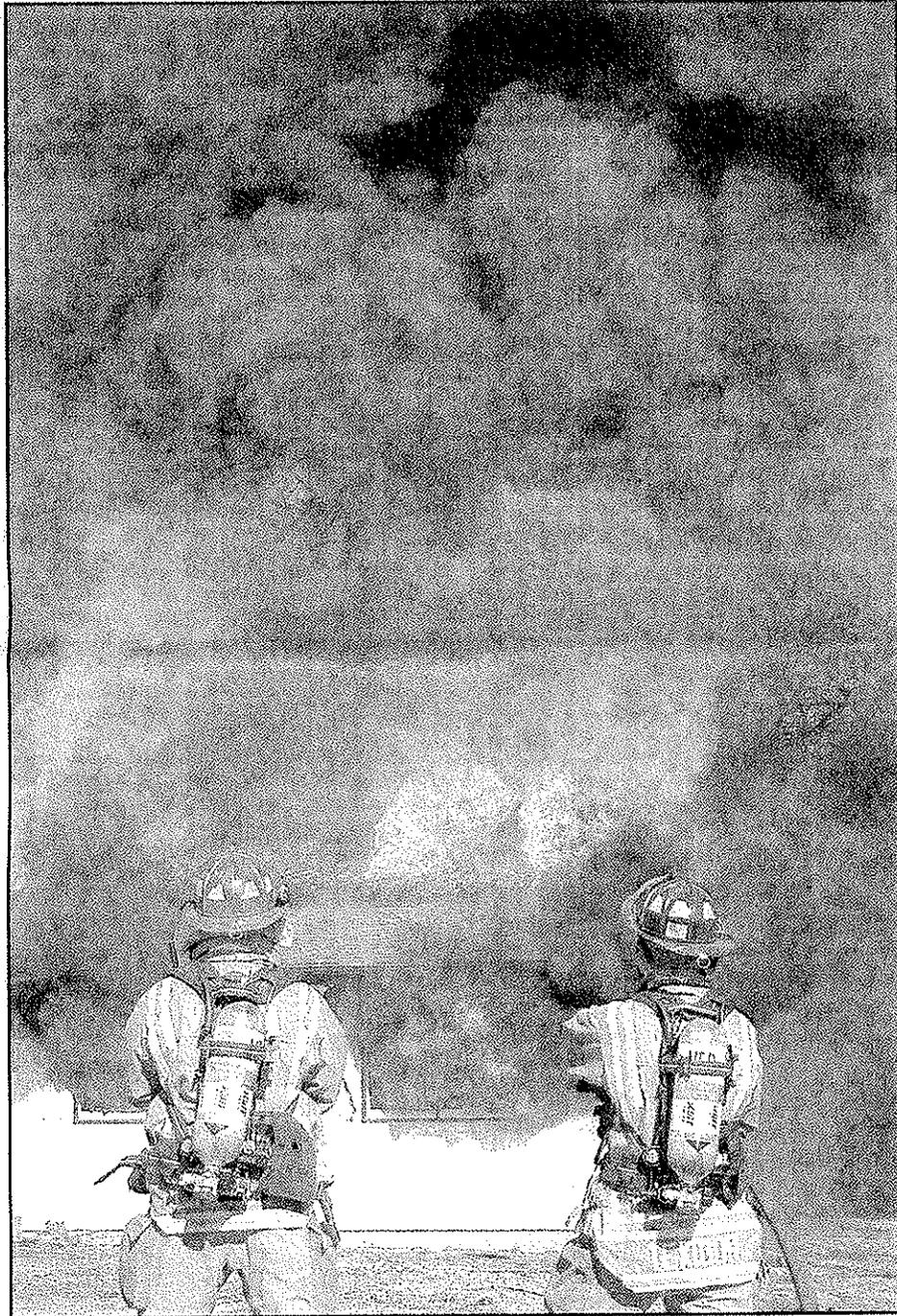
See the plan

Many are typical, but a few are uniquely Verona, and all will be presented March 30 at City Center in an open house designed for one final informal opportunity for public input.

To see the latest draft of the city's comprehensive plan, visit the city's Web site, ci.verona.wi.us and click on the comprehensive planning link on the right side of the page.

The comprehensive plan – essentially a state-mandated result of the “Smart Growth” law – is the roadmap to the future of Verona, and pieces of it have been distributed directly to all sorts of area governments, organizations and citizens in order to keep the city's goals as harmonious as possible with those of its neighbors and residents.

In addition to the monthly public meetings (third Monday at 6:30 p.m.), this month's open house is the fourth community forum. The first two were sparsely attended, but the third drew a much more steady stream of visitors interested in (or riled up about) potential plans for improving downtown traffic. City planning director Bruce



Jim Ferolie photo

Burning down the house

A pair of Verona firefighters stands ready with a hose in case this training fire on Raymond Road gets out of control. But despite being surrounded by woods and having some tree branches just a few feet away, it never did – in fact, there was enough time to set up a group photo. Dozens of cars drove along the normally quiet lane across from the Meriter psychiatric hospital to gawk at the source of all the smoke, and a few people snapped pictures. It was the Verona Fire Department's first training fire since December 2007, when it cleared the way for construction on the West End along West Verona Avenue.

For more photos of the fire and training, visit ConnectVerona.com

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By Seth Jovaa
Unified Newspape

Local schoo
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At Verona School, Pam Ha officially hired night to become ment principal i She has served principal this year Meyers resigned

At New Cent former Stone Elementary prim Berge has agreed one-year term a time interim c 2009-10, sup Dean Gorrell sa: A letter to New C

Suppo advanc

By Seth Jovaa
Unified Newspape

A 13-month over a new contri than 200 Verona District employe mediation Tuesd

The Verona Support P Association, the represents schu taries, custodian aides, food serv and special educ tants, has worke contract since la group filed for r

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up about) potential plans for improving downtown traffic. City planning director Bruce Sylvester hopes to draw a good crowd this time, too, to get reactions and opinions to the city's goals over the next 20 years or so.

"If people want to weigh in, they still can, and if they don't, it's probably going to stay exactly the way it is," he said. "We can still add things, and we can still change things."

Some of the more notable goals – skipping the boiler-plate entries such as "Protect the natural environment" and "Work with other units of government" – include maintaining the city's "small-town" feel, limiting growth, using its sporting facilities as a promotional tool, attempting to add to the city's industrial and manufacturing base and focusing on the downtown area as a center for economic development.

And one of the few strongly worded objectives points to a policy that could raise some eyebrows – continuing to use extraterritorial powers to squash urban development outside the city's borders and preserve farmland.

"That is a clear goal in this plan," Sylvester said.

The plan as it stands also asks the city to require sidewalks in all new developments, find a way to improve traffic on County Highway M (including alternative

routes) and build "first-class" community facilities, such as the library and City Center. It also recommends that the city "carefully evaluate" retail developments not downtown or on the Verona Avenue corridor, that downtown housing is high-density, that North Main Street should be converted to commercial uses and that transportation systems accommodate bicycles and alternative vehicles, though the wording is far softer for those suggestions.

Most of the goals were written by city staff, promoted or rejected by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and refined by the Plan Commission and Common Council. But at least one has been a direct result of citizen involvement – reducing the number of options for improving the capacity of the Main Street-Verona Avenue intersection.

"We removed the paired one-way option from table," Sylvester said, noting that residents of Shuman Street and Franklin Street were vehemently against the idea of turning their front yards into throughways.

Instead, the plan asks the city to organize a planning committee to look into expanding lanes, removing on-street parking or even installing a roundabout at the intersection.

While the plan is broken into nine chapters, there is much overlap – for example

If you go

What: Comprehensive Plan open house

When: 6:30-8 p.m. March 30

Where: City Center council chambers

Why: Get a last look at the city's long-range plans and provide input before they begin being finalized.

What's in it: Everything from downtown expansion to farmland preservation, from transportation to economic development, from housing to parks, from utilities and city services to intergovernmental cooperation.

Info: Call Bruce Sylvester at 848-9941.

scriptive and force the hands of future leaders.

The March 30 open house will begin with a presentation by the committee chair, Ald. Steve Ritt, explaining the process and results and an overview of the chapters and goals. It will feature maps and background information at eight stations, with a committee member ready to answer questions at each station.

In addition to postings at the usual places and promotion on VCHAT-98, the local cable access channel, Sylvester has arranged for fliers for the open house to be distributed in Miller and Sons grocery bags next week and for e-mails to be sent to Verona Area Chamber of Commerce members.

Input from the open house will be discussed at the committee's April meeting and incorporated wherever possible, and changes will be included in a draft sent to a variety of state-mandated reviewing bodies, including neighboring governmental entities, the state, the county and certain organizations. The next step will be a formal public hearing over the summer, and adoption is expected in the fall.

The draft of the plan, including the goals, is available for previewing on the city's Web site, www.ci.verona.wi.us, and can be obtained at City Center.

housing, economic development and land use share many themes – and there are many possible ways to interpret some of the goals. "Encourage," for example, could mean anything from simply giving positive lip service to providing economic incentives. And even though, for example, the plan says the city should support the Route 55 bus, that doesn't mean it would continue to exist if Epic's funding suddenly dried up.

That's exactly why much of it is so openly worded, as committee members decided to keep the city's options open rather than be too pre-

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Senior Menu
Tuesday Taco/Burrito Buffet
Wednesday Burger &

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Dear Friends & Customers -
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to start As a