

2014 **Downtown** Verona Mobility & Development Plan



ADOPTED ON
March 10, 2014



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The following people are responsible for the creation, refinement, and adoption of this Plan

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Verona residents, property owners, and business owners attended meetings, reviewed draft materials, and submitted comments that have improved this Plan.

Executive Summary

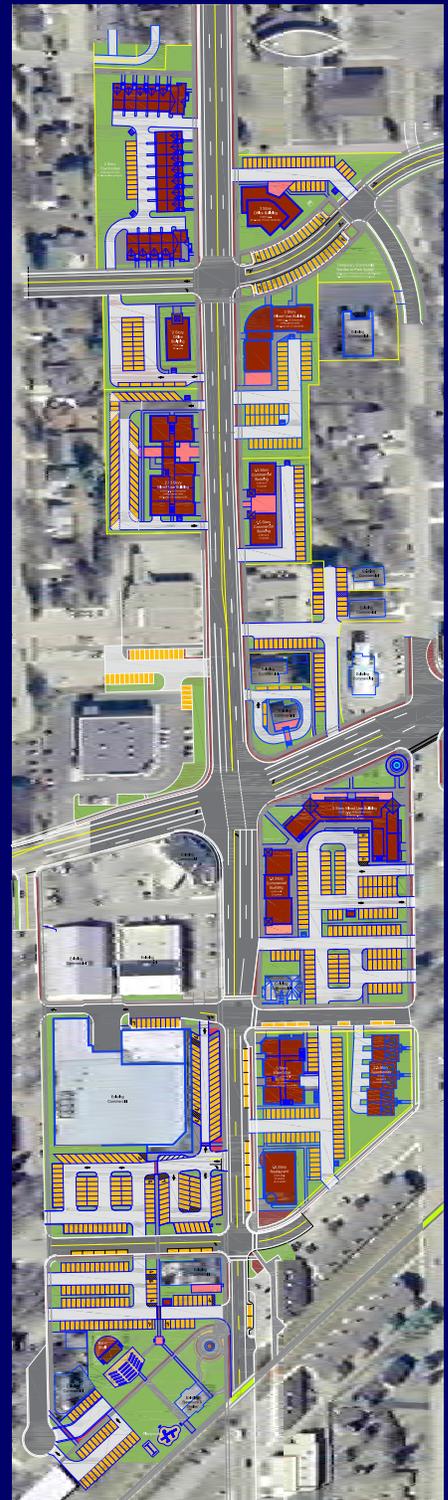
This Plan is a guide to help City officials shape the future of Downtown Verona. As with any vibrant downtown, there are varied interests competing for limited public investment and physical space in the Downtown area. The recommendations of this plan strike a careful balance between transportation and traffic needs, redevelopment opportunity, and enhancements to the appearance and character of the place.

Our vision:

Downtown Verona is the center of the community, a vibrant destination for residents and visitors. The downtown has grown with the City, adding more places to live, work, shop and eat, yet it has retained a small-town feel. Businesses are thriving. New parking lots and other improvements have eased congestion, and a series of sidewalk and streetscape improvements have made the entire area inviting, attractive, and recognizably “downtown”.

Our core objectives for Downtown Verona:

1. Manage traffic congestion and delays
2. Provide adequate parking for all downtown uses
3. Improve comfort and safety for pedestrians and bikers
4. Facilitate private investment and redevelopment
5. Establish a consistent and unique character through streetscape improvements and development standards



This Executive Summary focuses on the decisions and policies of this plan, and the process by which those decisions were reached. See Chapter 1 for summaries of the various public input and draft feedback. See Chapter 2 for transportation and mobility existing conditions and alternatives considered. See Chapter 3 for land use and development existing conditions and alternatives considered.

Planning Process

There are many people interested and invested in the future of Downtown Verona; an inclusive, transparent public process was vital to the success of this plan. The Project Milestones graphic (at right) illustrates the year-long planning process. In total, MSA and the City facilitated fourteen meetings, conducted a dozen stakeholder interviews and implemented a community survey.

The business interviews, conducted early in the process, helped to identify the future plans, needs and desires of many downtown businesses. The visioning survey and public meeting provided input on a range of topics, including preferences for the function, physical design, and redevelopment of the downtown area.



Project Milestones

City Staff “Kickoff” Meeting
December 11, 2012

Steering Committee “Kickoff” Meeting #1
February 7, 2013

Public Informational Meeting #1 -
Project Introduction / Public Input
March 7, 2013

City Staff Progress Report Meeting
April 4, 2013

Stakeholder Interviews
March 21-April 13, 2013

City Staff Progress Report Meeting
April 15, 2013

Steering Committee Meeting #2 –
Transportation Alternatives review
April 19, 2013

Public Informational Meeting (2) -
Transportation Alternatives
May 14, 2013

Steering Committee Meeting #3 –
Transportation Alternatives final review
May 23, 2013

Plan Commission Progress Report Meeting
June 3, 2013

Downtown Visioning Survey
July 10-24, 2013

Public Visioning Meeting
July 20, 2013

Steering Committee Meeting #4 –
Land Use & Transportation Recommendations
September 16, 2013

Public Informational Meeting (3) -
Final Draft: Land Use & Transportation
October 21, 2013

Steering Committee Meeting #5 –
Draft Plan review
December 2, 2013

Plan Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation
February 3, 2014 / March 3, 2014

Common Council Adoption
March 10, 2014

MOBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The final preferred solutions were selected and refined to meet four key goals identified during this planning process:

1. *Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities*
2. *Improve property access, especially during peak traffic periods*
3. *Reduce school-related traffic and congestion*
4. *Improvements should enhance downtown character and quality, not just reduce traffic congestion.*

MAIN & VERONA INTERSECTION

This intersection is the linchpin to the function of the local transportation network and was the focus of considerable study and discussion. Current traffic conditions include heavy congestion during peak periods, especially during the afternoon school release and evening commute periods. Future traffic projections indicate the eventual need (~2035) for four lanes of traffic north of this intersection and east of this intersection.

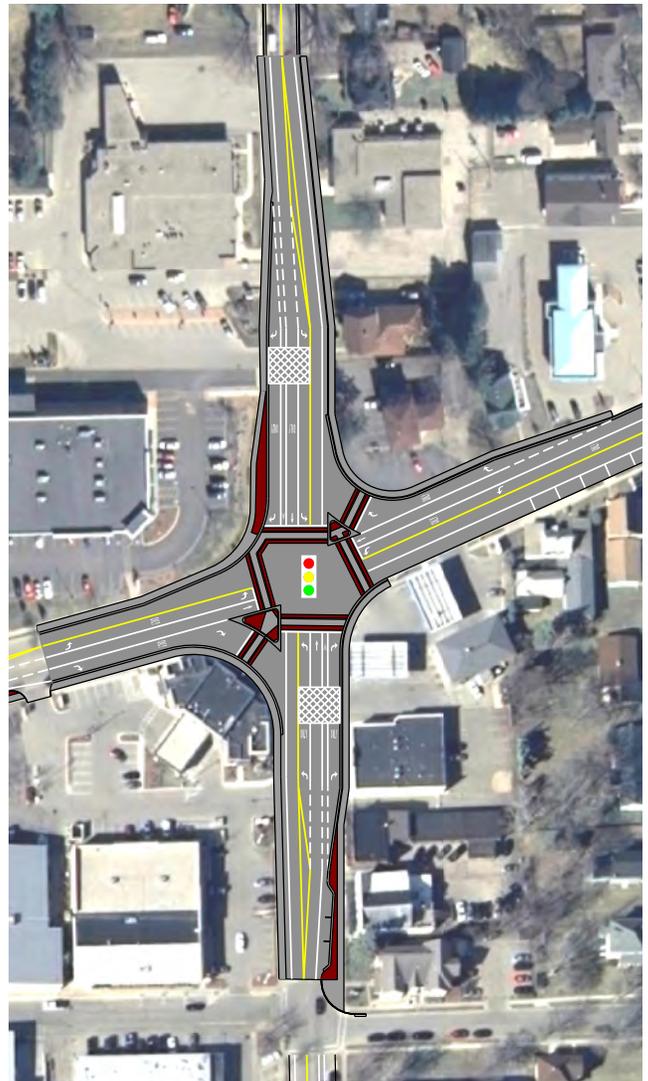
The community considered three alternatives to expand capacity and improve the function of this intersection, including a roundabout, a larger signalized intersection, or a one-way pair that moves northbound traffic to Franklin St. Community consensus focused on the signalized intersection as the preferred alternative.

It is proposed that this intersection be improved in two stages. The first stage will reduce congestion by adding turn lanes, but will not require the removal of any buildings. The second stage, considered the “long-term solution”, will expand the intersection to feature two through lanes in every direction. This stage will require the removal of several existing buildings.

Stage One

This redesign will include a left-, thru-, and right-lane on all approaches of the intersection. Storage lanes for left and right turn lanes will be extended to handle longer queue lengths. This alternative utilizes all of the available roadway width, including expanding the right-of-way to the building faces on S. Main Street. No building impacts are expected as part of this improvement project, however there may be impacts to the Mobil station operations that could limit circulation and or use of all existing fueling positions. Bike lanes will also be added to Main Street as part of this project.

Figure 2.28: Main/Verona - Stage One Improvements



Stage Two

Figure 2.29 illustrates the stage two improvements to this intersection. These improvements assume two through lanes in all directions at the intersection. This translates to six lanes in each approach to the intersection.

Figure 2.29: Main/Verona - Stage Two Improvements



Figure 2.30: Main / Verona Improvements - Stage Two



LINCOLN STREET CONNECTION

There were four alternatives considered to resolve the difficulty with left turns at Lincoln Street. The preferred alternative is to signalize the Lincoln Street intersection. At some point, as traffic volumes increase, the proximity of the Lincoln Street and Enterprise Drive signals may result in undesirable congestion. If and when this occurs, the City can choose to move the Enterprise Drive signal to Horizon Drive, which could also require the relocation of the park entrance drive to the south and reconfiguration of the intersection of Enterprise Dr. and Horizon Dr.

GRID REPAIR IMPROVEMENTS

A central shortcoming of the road network in Verona is the lack of viable north-south or east-west alternatives to traveling on Main Street or Verona Avenue when congestion is heavy. These project will improve the grid and moderate congestion.

Silent Street Completion and Realignment

Connecting Silent Street to the (realigned) High School driveway creates an opportunity to relieve some traffic pressure from the Main Street and Verona Avenue intersection. Traffic from the high school that is heading east currently must travel south to the Main/Verona intersection and then east on Verona Avenue.

Harriet Street Realignment

Harriet Street is busy during the school release peak hour. The City is encouraged to realign E. Harriet Street so that it connects directly with W. Harriet St., as a means of reducing pressure on other connecting roadways. On-street perpendicular parking could be incorporated in this design to help support adjacent redevelopment opportunities.

Railroad Street / Church Street Connection

East Railroad Street connects with neither West Railroad Street nor Church Street. This creates vehicle conflicts between the three separate intersections with Main Street. Crash reports confirm the anecdotal feedback about the poor visibility at this intersection. The removal of the Plumbing & Glass Services, Inc. (221 S Main Street) building will provide the necessary space to line up East Railroad Street with Church Street.

OTHER ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS***Don't Block the Box***

This is a simple pavement marking/signing solution that keeps critical access locations clear of vehicles when queued.

Basswood Avenue Connection to the Middle School

By providing an access driveway to the parking lots and an official drop-off site from this cul-de-sac, the City and School District could draw traffic away from Main Street.

Paoli Street

Congestion and difficulty making left turns onto Main Street have led some to call for improvements to this intersection. A traffic signal is the preferred improvement for this location, and this project can proceed as soon as signal warrants are met for any one turning movement.

CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS

There are many places in the Downtown Core where pedestrian crossings could be improved.

Standard Crosswalk Enhancements

Whenever a segment of either Main Street or Verona Avenue is repaved, pedestrian crossings should be improved to make them more visible and consistent with the general streetscaping theme. The recommended design is either colored concrete or brick bordered in concrete.

Westlawn Pedestrian Crossing

The preferred improvement for this location is the addition of medians and small curb bump-outs. The median provides a pedestrian refuge to allow children to focus on crossing one direction of traffic at a time.

Military Ridge State Trail Crossing

The preferred improvement at this location is green colored pavement and curb bump-outs to enhance the visibility of trail bikers. It is also encouraged to place new multi-use trail crossing (MUTCD sign number W11-15) assemblies on both approaches of S. Main Street.

STREETSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS

The streetscaping throughout the downtown area is proposed for improvement, following guidelines and a design menu provided in this plan. The design alternatives offer solutions to a variety of existing and future right-of-way conditions within a consistent design theme. The general design theme includes wider sidewalks, brick terraces, and black streetlights similar in form to the current blue light poles along Verona Ave.



DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This section presents a variety of development and parking projects throughout the planning area consistent with the various transportation recommendations.

PARKING

The current parking supply is generally adequate for the peak period parking demands. However, the long-term mobility improvements identified in this Plan will require removal of some on-street parking. To offset this loss of parking, the City is interested in providing off-street public parking lots within the downtown core.

P1 - Harriet Street On-Street Parking

This Plan recommends E. Harriet Street be realigned to connect to W. Harriet Street at Main Street. Harriet Street could provide up to 38 perpendicular parking spaces.

P2 - State Bank Shared Parking Lot

It is suggested that the existing State Bank and Walgreens private parking lots be reconfigured to enable a single access point to Main St.

P3 - 104 E. Verona Avenue Public Parking Lot

This proposed public lot requires removal of one business (Sojo Blau Salon) and use of TDS's under-utilized parking lot.

P4 - Park Lane Shared Parking Lot

This lot would require removing two homes on S. Franklin Street (one recently purchased by the City) and reworking the existing parking areas of 119-125 S Main Street. If these parking spaces were shared, it would alleviate the existing parking issues within this block.

P5 - Church Street Parking Lot

This proposed lot requires removal of a home (305 S. Shuman Street) and quonset hut buildings (100 W. Railroad). It will support not only several downtown businesses, including Miller's, Tuvalu and Falbo Pizzeria, but it will also support Hometown Junction Park activities and possibly other new businesses.

Figure 3.10: Potential Public Parking Lots



REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

This plan features a series of redevelopment concepts consistent with the various recommended street improvements in the Mobility Plan. See Chapter 3 for the full list of redevelopment ideas. These concepts are examples of what could work on these sites - property owners and developers will bring forward their own ideas over time.

Hometown Junction Park

Based on public comment and survey responses, the community desires a larger community park that can be a social gathering place for Verona. The best opportunity for this type of space Downtown is to expand Hometown Junction Park to the north, closing West Railroad Street.

Design Guidelines

A key component of this plan is the parameters within which new development should occur, including clear identification of the public street rights-of-way to be protected and acquired. Public discussion about the desired downtown character led to consensus on building heights (2-3 stories), building setbacks (5-15 feet) and the location of off-street private parking (generally side yards and rear yards).

The City already has Design Standards for the downtown area, including the east and west gateway areas of Verona Avenue, and this plan recommends a few changes to those standards:

- Eliminate the requirement to align all Verona Ave. buildings along a “true” east/west line.
- Eliminate the 40% maximum building coverage standard

Identify a “Downtown Core” area with unique standards:

- Building Setback from Street : Min. 5’, Max. 15’
- Paved Surface Setbacks: Min. 5’ from any lot line, with landscape buffers required

Figure 3.15: Concept Plan - South Main Street



IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation Chapter summarizes the various public projects in the plan and offers recommendations on priority, timing, cost and funding, including grant opportunities.

Short Term and “Any Time” Projects	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Public Funding Sources
1) Development Standards Update	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Staff Time</i>	-
2) Downtown Zoning Amendments	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Staff Time</i>	-
3) Don't Block the Box	<i>Short Term</i>	\$5,000 - \$7,000	HSIP, TIF
4) Lincoln Street Signal and Intersection Improvement	<i>Short Term</i>	\$500,000 - \$700,000	TIF
5) Westlawn Pedestrian Crossing	<i>Short Term</i>	\$80,000 - \$100,000	SRTS, TIF
6) Military Ridge State Trail	<i>Short Term</i>	\$130,000 - \$150,000	RTP, TIF
7) Basswood Avenue Connection	<i>Short Term</i>	\$300,000 - \$500,000	SRTS, TAP, TIF
8) Park Lane Parking Lot	<i>Short Term</i>	\$275,000 - \$375,000	TIF
9) Paoli Street Signal	<i>As Soon as Warranted</i>	\$150,000 - \$200,000	TIF
10) Main Street & Verona Avenue Crosswalk Enhancements	<i>With Street Improvements</i>	<i>Included in street project costs</i>	SRTS, TIF
11) Streetscaping Improvements	<i>With Street Improvements</i>	<i>Included in street project costs</i>	TIF

Mid Term Projects	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Public Funding Sources
1) Main & Verona Intersection - Stage One	<i>Mid Term</i>	\$750,000 - \$1,000,000	STP Urban, LRIP, TIF
2) 104 E. Verona Avenue Public Parking Lot	<i>Mid Term</i>	\$300,000 - \$400,000	TIF
3) Hometown Junction Park Expansion	<i>Mid Term</i>	\$300,000 - \$500,000	TIF
4) Church Street Parking Lot	<i>Mid Term</i>	\$500,000 - \$750,000	TIF
5) Harriet Street Realignment and Parking	<i>Mid Term</i>	\$1,500,000 - \$1,750,000	TIF
6) E. Railroad Street Realignment	<i>Mid Term</i>	\$1,000,000 - \$1,200,000	TIF

Long Term Projects	Timeframe	Cost	Potential Public Funding Sources
"Main & Verona Intersection - Stage Two (includes corridor expansion to four lanes - N. Main to Silent Street and E. Verona to Lincoln St.)"	<i>Long Term</i>	\$10,000,000 - \$12,000,000	STP Urban, LRIP, TIF