

Comprehensive plan gets final public vetting

Process began in
December 2007

By **Jim Ferolie**
Verona Press editor

Almost two years after the process started, the city is getting ready to approve a comprehensive plan.

The document — up to about 300 pages, plus an abundance of maps and photos and appendices — will be the handbook for the city in the future. It weaves visions of development, transportation, utilities, services and natural resources, among other things, into a single plan that will carry strong legal weight for most major decisions the city makes.

All municipalities — cities, towns and even counties — must have comprehensive plans on file by Jan. 1, 2010, or risk having their decisions contested as part of the Smart Growth law enacted in 2000. Verona will be bumping up against that deadline, but if there are no major changes, its plan could go to a vote of the Common Council as soon as this month and would be effective upon publication in the *Verona Press*.

The final remaining hurdle is its formal public hearing, which happens Tuesday night at the Plan Commission meeting (a day later than usual because of Labor Day).

“Now the city’s at the point of probably adopting this, and there’s one more formal opportunity for comment,” said city planner Bruce Sylvester. “We’ve left time so that if some unknown crops up we’ve got a month or two to study it.”

It has gotten public input throughout the process and was created with input from a nine-person committee composed of citizen representatives, one alder and the mayor. It finished its work this summer, and the draft they approved has been available on the city’s Web site (www.ci.verona.wi.us) for the past several months.

While the Comprehensive Plan committee mostly avoided controversial issues to leave maximum flexibility for future leaders, the plan does contain a few noteworthy items that could guide public policy for quite some time. Other parts of the plan simply spell out policies that have already existed or detail existing situations that people not familiar with the city might not realize.

Some highlights of the plan include:

- A downtown redevelopment section that suggests revisions to traffic and parking, the two most commonly cited problems there
- A commitment to the city’s policy of restricting development outside its borders (extraterritorial jurisdiction) in the name of farmland preservation and city planning
- A recommendation to continue supporting mass transit, even though currently the community’s only mass transit comes at no cost to the

city (the Epic bus)

- A clearly stated priority to add capacity to County Highway M, presumably by widening it

The plan also refers to hundreds of pages of what most people would consider minutiae — the wastewater, stormwater and municipal water master plans, for example.

Public input has included four forums, including one well-attended discussion on retail development and another that brought mostly town residents interested in the city’s plans for growth

into or near their properties. Various chapters were also sent directly to people, organizations and neighboring governmental bodies that might have an interest in what Verona does in the long term.

There have been a few tweaks along the way — the most notable being the removal of any reference to paired one-ways at Main Street and Verona Avenue — but for the most part it’s been a smooth process. Despite a contentious relationship between the city and town governments, for example,

the town provided comments for future roadways on areas currently outside of the city, and the city made about a dozen changes.

Though comment could be made to the Common Council, Tuesday’s public hearing before the Plan Commission is really the public’s final chance to weigh in on the plan.

“We’ve gone above and beyond the statute, but we complied with the spirit, I think,” Sylvester said. “We gave everyone ample opportunities to put their thoughts in.”



Chicken Word Find

Just in time for National Chicken Month, see how many related words you can find and circle in the puzzle.

BAKED	EGGS	MEAL
BIRD	FOWL	POULTRY
CHICKEN	FRIED	ROOSTER
CLUCK	GRILLED	WINGS

M	V	E	E	R	V	W	S	I	G	Y	
I	E	U	P	C	K	C	G	G	Y	R	O
E	N	A	P	B	E	G	G	R	Z	G	W
R	E	O	L	N	E	J	L	E	P	W	T
J	K	C	R	O	L	U	Q	F	G	N	O
I	X	U	O	O	R	H	M	S	D	C	
R	H	E	P	L	I	S	M	P	E	L	
J	C	C	O	E	C	A	B	E	X	H	
B	I	R	V	C	S	B	H	E	R	O	
F	M	R	J	I	E	O	F	M	V	L	

THIS DAY IN... HISTORY

- 1654: LOUIS XIV WAS CROWNED AS THE KING OF FRANCE.
- 1776: RICHARD HENRY LEE OF VIRGINIA PROPOSED A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.
- 1929: VATICAN CITY IN ROME, ITALY BECAME A SOVEREIGN STATE.

Learning difference

Dr. Nancy Vischovich will be the featured speaker at this month’s Learning Difference Network meeting.

Local quilters at expo

Carolyn Cain and Sharon Wagner of Verona have quilts in the juried and judged contest at the Quilt Expo.