

Overview of Town of Verona

The Town of Verona, located southwest of the City of Madison, is a small community of about 1,900 residents and occupies about 15,000 acres. The Town's topography has been shaped by glaciation and a predominant terminal moraine, the Johnstown Moraine, runs diagonally across the Town from the northwestern section to the southeastern section. To the southwest of this moraine is an outwash plain through which flows the Sugar River. The Driftless Region, which covers the southwestern corner of the State, starts at this terminal moraine. The Town has a variety of landscapes, which are cherished by the residents, including wooded areas, two rivers, scenic valleys and ridges. Much of the land is farmed and this contributes to the rural character of the Town. The Town also has an urban area in the northeastern corner.



Most of the Town residents earn their living by driving to some location outside of the Town. Additionally, the Town roads are mostly used by non-residents as they travel to work. This places a high demand of road maintenance as an important responsibility of the Town.

Because of the proximity to the Madison metropolitan area there are considerable opportunities for development. Thus, this comprehensive plan provides for some development but still maintains the rural character of the Town by preserving farmland, protecting woodlands and the Sugar River vision corridor.

Comprehensive Plan Purpose

This twenty year comprehensive plan is intended to update the 2006 plan, which is no longer adequate to service the future needs of the Town. This plan will allow the Town to guide future residential development to specific areas so that the rural character of the Town is maintained and still preserve the most productive farmland.

The Plan covers the nine elements required by the Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, including housing, transportation, utilities and community facilities, agriculture, natural and cultural resources, economic development, land use, intergovernmental cooperation, and plan implementation.

Residents and property owners were consulted in the drafting of this plan document through public meetings near the beginning and end of the planning process and a formal public hearing held prior to adoption. All Plan Commission working sessions were also open to public attendance and comment. A survey was completed by about 30% of the Town residents and was used in making decisions about the future land use plan.

The remainder of this summary provides an overview of key recommendations of this 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

Rural Character Preservation

The main challenge facing the Plan Commission in preparation of this Comprehensive Plan was how to provide for future residential growth and still maintain the rural character of the Town. Besides this challenge the Town is also greatly impacted by the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of the Cities of Madison, Fitchburg and Verona. A ten-year boundary agreement was reached in 2016 with the City of Verona, and this agreement allowed the Town to make decisions about lot splits and use for an area of about 3,000 developable acres in the western and southwestern part of the Town. The Plan restricts future development to areas of the Town that would have the least visual impact when viewed from roads and neighboring properties. The Sugar River vision corridor and considerable wooded areas will be unchanged as well as the most valuable farmland.

Future Development Guidance

Balancing the preservation of agricultural lands and of the rural and scenic vistas is a focus of this plan while still providing for growth opportunities to meet market demand and increase the Town tax base. Four major development areas were identified that would allow for denser rural residential development. To forecast growth the Plan Commission assumed a 1.5% annual increase in the number of home sits and allowed for potentially twice that many homes. To ensure the rural character of the Town, policies encouraging clustering of residences in conservation subdivisions will be encouraged. The land condominium tool may be used in areas where Extraterritorial Jurisdiction would hinder the ability of the Town to develop a subdivision.

Selected Policies

- The maximum rural residential density is one home per two acres except in special cases for land condominium and conservation subdivision developments. Densities of one home per four acres and one home per eight acres are also designed on the future land use map.
- Limited opportunities exist for fill-in, but where this can occur in existing neighborhoods, lot sizes will depend on the available for public or private septic systems.
- The Town will provide a welcoming environment for residents who are moving into the new subdivisions.
- The Sugar River corridor, which is prime farm land, will be preserved by restricting development in this area.
- Strategies will be implemented to continue the completion of the Ice Age Trail.
- The Town will explore the development of Boundary agreements with the Cities of Madison and Fitchburg to allow for joint planning in areas of mutual interest.
- The Town will work with the City of Verona to develop a plan for those areas in the Boundary Agreement where there is joint decision making.
- Farmland Preservation land designations are in place for those farmers where it has been requested.
- Road maintenance will remain a high priority and a five-year maintenance plan will be developed to guide future road repairs.
- A five-year budget is being developed, which considers needs for increased staffing, road maintenance, and Town Hall maintenance.

Implementation

The Town of Verona Comprehensive Plan is not self-implementing. Instead, it will depend on the future dedication of the Plan Commission and Town Board of Supervisors to use this plan to guide future decisions on requests for new development. Additionally, the future of the Town will greatly be enhanced by the successful collaboration with the Cities of Fitchburg, Madison and Verona. It is especially important that the Town and City of Verona have a positive working relationship involving joint planning. Continued collaboration with Dane County is necessary as Town and Dane County currently share responsibility for planning, zoning, and land division review authority. The continued strong involvement by Town residents in Town government is essential for the future wellbeing of the Town.