

Published June 24, 2008 07:51 pm - Where will you be in 20 years?

Geneva to hold public meeting on 20-year comprehensive plan

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GENEVA — Where will you be in 20 years?

Geneva is making a plan and sticking to it with the creation of the city's new comprehensive plan. The city will host a public meeting Thursday to obtain citizen input, Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown said.

"It is nice to hear from the perspectives of a lot of people," Brown said. "The comprehensive-plan process is so unique and interesting. It forces you to think about what people like and dislike about your town and to compare your town to other cities."

The meeting, called A Vision for Geneva's Future, will be held 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Geneva City Hall, located at 44 N. Forest St.

Brown said the public "visioning session" is the next step toward updating the city's 17-year-old comprehensive plan. The meeting will include visual representations of the city's assets, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, she said.

"There are many steps that have to be taken in this process," Brown said. "The steering committee has taken an inventory of the city's buildings, assets and trouble spots, has made a list of comparable towns and what they offer, and is now starting to put together goals for the city."

"Right now, we are asking ourselves, 'Where do we want Geneva to be in 15 or 20 years?'" she said.

One of the city's biggest and most troubling challenges is to bring jobs to the area, Brown said.

"It is those quality jobs that will bring people to our area; it is those quality jobs that will keep our graduates here," she said.

Brown said a comprehensive plan is a tool to help the city grow in a planned progressive way.

"The comprehensive plan is a tool for the planning commission to use as guidance, a road map or playbook of sorts to tell us where to grow. It will give us goals and focus," Brown said. "Decisions must be made: Do we focus on a certain industry? Do we focus on residential aspects of the city? What will define us?"

The comprehensive plan, directed in its infancy by a 12-person steering committee, comes at a cost of \$42,500, half of which was funded by a grant through the Ohio Department of

Natural Resources' Coastal Management Assistance Program. The plan includes the Geneva-area Recreation, Education and Athletic Trust indoor sports center, which will be constructed at the Interstate 90-Route 534 interchange in Harpersfield Township, and the city's revitalization plan, which includes new street lighting and the construction of the nation's shortest covered bridge on Liberty Street.