

Published June 29, 2008 02:20 am - GENEVA — If you could build a city rich in history, progressive in industry and ripe with residential opportunities, how would you do it?

Geneva committee outlines goals for the city's future

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GENEVA — If you could build a city rich in history, progressive in industry and ripe with residential opportunities, how would you do it?

The City of Geneva is growing in some places and lagging behind in others and nobody is more aware of the problems the city faces than the residents, Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown said.

The city's comprehensive plan steering committee put together plans outlining the city's highlights and downfalls, with clear, though flexible goals. The goals include enhancing the quality of life in the city and strengthening high value employment, making the city a "walkable community," becoming a "connection hub" to capitalize on the Route 534 corridor, and to develop green space, recreation and the downtown business district.

"We are absolutely asking the citizens to come forward with their ideas and visions for the future of Geneva. Every suggestion is valuable to us," Brown said.

The planning comes with the updating of the city's 17-year-old comprehensive plan.

"The comprehensive plan is a tool for the planning commission to use as guidance, a roadmap 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?"

Citizens of the Geneva area and beyond can access the city's plans so far on a virtual drawing board at the city's Web site www.genevaohio.com. There, people can review the city's plans and comment on issues and problems, strengths and weaknesses and offer ideas for Geneva's future, Brown said.

"Geneva has some really imaginative people who value the city's ample history, but know there are issues that need to be addressed," Brown said.

The city held a public "visioning session" last week to capture those ideas. Another public meeting will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Geneva City Hall. The committee will hold a presentation to council at the 7:30 p.m. Sept. 8 council meeting.

The comprehensive plan, directed in its infancy by a 12-person steering committee, comes at a cost of \$42,500, half of which is funded by a grant through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Coastal Management Assistance program. The plan includes the Geneva Area Recreation, Education, Athletic Trust (GaReat) indoor sports center to be constructed at the Interstate 90 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.