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NEWS

The old agrarian model won't work.

How does an Iowa community prepare for the future?

By **BILL SHEA**, Messenger staff writer

Making Fort Dodge a place where people want to not only visit, but move to, will be key to future growth, according to a draft version of a vision statement for the city.

Making the city into a destination place is a recurring theme of the preliminary Envision 2030 document presented to the City Council Monday.

Roger Slater, who heads the firm that's preparing the vision document, told council members that it seeks to answer two questions:

- ? How will Fort Dodge become a destination place?
- ? What will allow the city to transform itself?

To answer those questions, the report presents 194 policy statements and 163 strategies.

Perhaps the most eye-catching idea in the draft has been labeled the "Midwest's Only Boardwalk." The concept envisions a range of parks, trails and cultural attractions stretching from south of U.S. Highway 20 to north of the Harlan and Hazel Rogers Sports Complex. It includes artist galleries and sidewalk cafes along the Des Moines River.

Also included is a major equestrian arena in a warehouse in the Pleasant Valley neighborhood recently obtained by Iowa Central Community College for its horse and rodeo programs.

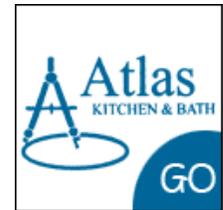
Frontier Days, the Badger Lake Dragon Boat Bash and the skydivers' Couch Freak Boogie would be promoted in connection with the Midwest's Only Boardwalk concept, according to the document.

The overall vision plan addresses education, entertainment, entrepreneurial atmosphere and energy.

Its varied recommendations include fostering more small business startups and using trailers to serve as portable police posts in areas where crime is considered a problem.

Slater, who heads The Slater Group of Woodstock, Ga., said the proposal is not in final form.

He said the ideas contained in it resulted from a series of focus group meetings



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held with the public early this year.

Contact Bill Shea at (515) 573-2141 or bshea@messengernews.net

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