

**Vergas Comprehensive Plan
2023 Progress Review**

Committee/Board/Council: _____

Land Use & Built Form	
Goal: Capitalize on in-fill opportunities and direct growth to new areas where infrastructure is planned to be cost-effective and sustainable	
Strategies:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When considering expansion options, prioritize expansion that follows a set of guidance developed through a growth and management plan. • Investigate annexing shorelines across bodies of water when landowners are favorable to the request 	
Action Item	Progress
Develop tiered system for expansion based on Vergas water & sewer capacity, EMS services and other public services & facilities.	
Identify possible annexation areas and contact owners.	
Pay close attention to and abide by shoreline regulations governed by the state.	
Participate in preserving the health of lakes and surrounding wildlife.	
Goal: Land use and build form decisions support and celebrate the existing character of the town	
Strategies:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage land uses that strengthen Vergas’ reputation as a family-friendly, safe place with a small-town charm. • Limit land uses that allow for big box stores, chains, large processing plants or other developments that have short-term gains and long-term losses of community character and environmental protection. • Ensure that any land use involving light industrial development has a plan for maintenance and accessibility. • Encourage or offer tax incentives for parking for new construction. 	
Action Item	Progress
EDA/HRA develop incentives to encourage uses identified above.	
Planning and Zoning develop policies regarding use identified above	
EDA identify areas appropriate for light industrial development.	
Explore above and underground parking.	

Housing

Goal: Identify affordable housing lots that can be developed with the next 5 years

Strategies:

- Develop partnerships with Otter Tail Co. to share county-level resources with local developers and future residents via existing incentives and initiatives.
Conduct an inventory and promote lots available.

Action Item	Progress
EDA develop a fact sheet regarding available assistance programs	
Utilize city website by adding housing resources comparable to neighboring cities	

Transportation

Goal: Make Vergas accessible for all modes of transportation and for people of all abilities

Strategies:

- Identify key places across the city that can improve handicap accessibility.
- Communicate and market existing transportation services.
- Identify additional locations for downtown parking.
- Construct handicapped parking spots and sidewalks along Co Rd 4.
- Explore advantages and disadvantages of rerouting Co Rd 4 through downtown to reduce thorough traffic on Main Street.
- Explore options for reducing stopped trains and subsequent stopped traffic.
- Promote programs for ridesharing networks and services

Action Item	Progress
Conduct an ADA audit or other type of evaluation to identify key areas for improvement across the city.	
Create short reference guide for residents and visitors describing local and regional transportation options.	
Work with Planning Commission to determine if vacant or undeveloped property could serve as space for new parking lots, and potential diagonal parking.	
Contact Canada Pacific to explore moving the exchange.	
Streets, sidewalks and yard waste committee review possibilities of collaboration with OTC Highway Department.	

Goal: Increase connectivity between Vergas and regional trails

Strategies:

- Consult entities, like MN DOT, DNR, WCI and Partnership 4 Health, about pursuing grants for planning and infrastructure for a trail connection.
- Work with OTC to pursue grant funding to connect the Heartland Trail along Co.Rd 4.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add multi-use path to the update of the 2019 Capital Improvement Plan to ensure that it is included in future city budget. 	
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Business & Economic Development
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Goal: Maintain the small business atmosphere

Strategies:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise local businesses regionally • Review and update city laws and ordinances that support small business owners |
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Action Item	Progress
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Work with neighboring Chambers of Commerce to advertise and access resources	
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Collaborate with the Community Club to identify opportunities and resources to market regionally.	
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Submit stories, ads, and updates to surrounding local papers.	
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Invest in enhancing the City website	
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Preserve existing protections within city laws and ordinances	
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Explore state and federal incentives for small businesses, especially those making positive impact in nearby communities.	
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Goal: Invest in Human Capital

Strategies:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in local childcare options • Create opportunities for socializing, connecting, creative placemaking year-round. • Provide opportunities for retirees to utilize their knowledge and experience and increase social connection. |
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Action Item	Progress
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Connect with OTC Early Childhood Coordinator to identify needs and resources.	
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Improve marketing of existing community activities, from small socializing to large events.	
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Identify gaps in existing community programming and recruit volunteers to host one and/or recurring events.	
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Explore development of spaces for families to recreate and your specific activities.	
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Identify and invite volunteers to join planning and implementation projects.	
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Goal: Prioritize business development that provides daytime and evening activities for residents

Strategies:

- Create more opportunities to recruit local businesses, especially where gaps in existing services
- Increase awareness of state and regional resources for small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Action Item	Progress
Work in partnership with Vergas EDA to integrate public feedback into business development and expansion strategies	
Host a business and entrepreneurship fair in partnership with OTC with targeted outreach based on survey results and public input.	
Leverage partnerships with existing programs; i.e WCI, MN DEED, SCORE business mentors, Vergas Community Club, West Central Small Business Development Center, Women's Ventures, OTC Small Business Coaching.	

Goal: Develop and expand job opportunities

Strategies:

- Maintain and increase number of visitors
- Pursue opportunities for light manufacturing
- Support digital entrepreneurs and remote workers

Action item	Progress
Advertise business and recreational opportunities and events regionally.	
Pursue and invest in trail development.	
Cultivate more year-round attractions and events.	
Identify land available for development and purchase.	
Offer the Event Center as coworking space by appointment.	
Maintain and develop broadband capabilities.	
Connect with neighboring communities to participate in county-wide networking opportunities. (host pre-existing groups for a meeting).	

Public Services and Facilities

Goal: Maintain adequate public facilities and services to meet the health, safety, education, and leisure needs of all Vergas residents.

Strategies:

- Prioritize infrastructure investment based on existing facilities with deficiencies first, and retrofitting of facilities second, and future facility needs third.
- Engage in strategic partnerships to ensure that Vergas is identified as a community for investment in fiber optic cable to increase broadband access.
- Conduct a needs assessment to understand more about the barriers and opportunities to improve resident access to medical facilities. (transportation, awareness).

Action Item	Progress
Encourage various committees to complete prioritization exercise.	
Explore expanded services, particularly MN DEED Border-to-Border Broadband opportunity.	
Collaborate with EDA/HRA to oversee a needs assessment.	
Goal: Ensure highest quality standards and services for public safety given Vergas' existing resources and staff capacity.	
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safety of navigation throughout city streets and sidewalks. • Make Long Lake Park a desirable location for recreation year-round. 	
Action Item	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, update, and publicize the city's planning and zoning maps to accurately indicate which city sidewalks are to be maintained by the city vs residents. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a parking study. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility of a MNDOT Complete Streets project for Vergas. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate and upgrade public restroom facilities at Long Lake park. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to work with rental company for non-motorized watercraft. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider snowshoe rental companies. 	
Goal: Ensure that services and facilities allow residents and visitors of 55 years or older to age in place.	
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safety of navigation through city streets and sidewalks. • Work to develop a full spectrum of transitions in senior housing needs, from accessibility options to access of services and skilled nursing. 	
Action Item	Progress
Develop handicap parking spots	
Work with ED/HRS to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study for expanded senior housing options.	
Parks & Open Spaces	
Goal: Support Community Art and arts programming	
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of displays of interactive art around town, in parks, and open spaces. • Increase community education arts programming. 	
Action Items	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a directory of local artists. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offering summer youth art camp. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a listing of events on city website. 	
Goal: Update public facilities at Long Lake Park	
Strategies:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working with NDSU to develop concept designs for Long Lake park. • Communicate with county and regional stakeholders in parks and recreation the desire to pursue state and federal funding. 	
Action Item	Progress
Follow guidelines and budget in Capital Improvement plan for restroom facilities specifications and budget.	
Park Board present ideas to Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council for implementation.	
Goal: Leverage existing amenities to create a culture that celebrates physical activity and community-based sports that are complementary to school sports schedules.	
Strategies:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for sports and physical education. • Begin offering adult leagues for baseball, softball etc.. • Explore opportunities for additional recreational space development. 	
Action Item	Progress
Example; Offer lessons for pickleball, classes for local fitness trainers, dance classes.	
Coordinate community education for implementation.	
Conduct a feasibility study for soccer fields and/or frisbee golf.	
Planning and Zoning identify sustainable areas.	