

**Planning Commission
Planning Comm Meeting
Government Services Center & Zoom Id 267-094-2170 password 56587
6:00 PM on Monday, January 26, 2026**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Agenda Additions or Deletions**
- 3. Positions**
 - A. Chair
- 4. Set Time, Place and Date of Regular 2026 Meetings**
- 5. Minutes**
 - A. October 27, 2025
- 6. Status of Council Recommendations**
 - Conditional Use Permit
- 7. Construction Permits**
 - A. Active Construction Permits
 - B. Approved by Clerk-Treasurer Permit
 1. 235 E. Frazee Ave, inside remodel, doors and sign
 - C. Conditional Use Permit
 1. 303 Altona Ave
- 8. Old Business**
 - A. Nuisance Properties
 - B. City Ordinance Update
- 9. New Business**
 - Vergas Comprehensive Plan 2036 - 2025 Update
- 10. Adjournment**

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**Planning Commission
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3. Positions

A. Chair

**Planning Commission
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5. Minutes

A. October 27, 2025

Files Attached

- 10.27.25 Planning Commission Minutes.pdf

City of Vergas Planning Commission Public Hearing
Monday, October 27, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Government Services Building and Zoom

The City of Vergas Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on Monday, September 22, 2025, on Zoom and at the Vergas Government Services Building with the following members present: Alex Ohman, Bruce Albright, Shane Hasse, Rebecca Hasse, and Jim Courneya. Absent: None. Also present: Clerk-Treasurer Julie Lammers and Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane; and citizens Editor Bob Williams with Frazee-Vergas Forum, Deb Sonnenberg, Paul Sonnenberg, Marcia Huddleston, Mallory Huddleston, Melissa Moltzan, Ricky Moltzan, Ethan Bachmann, Julie Bruhn, Loren Menz and Garrett Boeowicz.

Call to Order

Chair Ohman called the public hearing to order at 6:00 PM.

Conditional Use Permit request for 511 W Glenn Street. Paul Sonnenberg explained that he was applying for a conditional use permit to move his auto dealership license to Vergas. He acknowledged that the area is residential but emphasized that the business would remain inside their building. He stated that their office would be inside their new "shouse" in Vergas with no cars displayed outside, as it's for wholesale use only. They would need to follow Minnesota state rules for their dealer's license, which they have held for over 60 years.

Deb Sonnenberg clarified they wanted to move their business office from their Perham location to Vergas as they are approaching retirement. She explained that while dealer's license requirements state they need a place to display vehicles, they would not be carrying any inventory at the shed in Vergas. She confirmed they would need to display a small magnetic sign (approximately 18" x 22") on their building showing "Marlo Motors" and their phone number as required by the state.

When questioned about traffic, the Sonnenbergs confirmed there would be zero increase in traffic as their business dealings occur at other locations. P. Sonnenberg explained that when buying vehicles for other dealerships, he goes to their locations to transfer paperwork, with no customers or vehicles coming to their Vergas property.

Mallory Huddleston asked what would happen if the business was sold someday, specifically if future owners could display vehicles on the property. P. Sonnenberg confirmed that the conditional use permit would only apply to the original applicant and their dealer's license would end at that point.

Loren Menz expressed concern that approving this request might set a precedent for other commercial uses in the development. Lammers clarified that while anyone in the residential area can apply for a conditional use permit, each application would go through the same process independently, though she acknowledged it does make it more difficult to deny similar requests in the future.

Ohman read a letter from Erik and Ellie Moltzan expressing opposition to the proposed conditional use permit, citing concerns about changing the character of the residential area, potential impacts on property values, and disruption to the residential atmosphere. See attached letter from the Moltzans.

Ohman called three times for public comments. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing at 6:30 PM.

City of Vergas Planning Commission Minutes
Monday, October 27, 2025 at 6:30 pm
Government Services Building and Zoom

The City of Vergas Planning Commission held a regular hybrid meeting on Monday, October 27, 2025, on Zoom and at the Vergas Government Services Building.

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alex Ohman, Chair	A	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P/P	P	P		
Bruce Albright, Liaison	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P/P	P	P		
Shane Hasse, Member	P	P	A	P	P	P	N/A	A/P	P	P		
Rebecca Hasse, Member	P	P	P	P	A	P	N/A	P/P	P	P		
Jim Courneya, Member	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	A/P	P	P		
Julie Lammers, Clerk-Treasurer	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	P/P	P	P		
Mike Dufrane, Utilities Superintendent	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	A/P	A	P		

P: Present. A: Absent N/A: No Meeting

Also present: Citizens; Editor Bob Williams with Frazee-Vergas Forum and Marcia Huddleston.

Call to Order

Chair Ohman called the planning Commission meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Agenda Additions or Deletions

Lammers requested the conditional use permit be added as item #6, with subsequent items renumbered accordingly.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya, to approve the agenda with the addition of the conditional use permit. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Motion by Ohman, seconded by R. Hasse, to approve the minutes of September 22, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Status or Council Recommendations

None.

Conditional Use Permit

Ohman opened discussion on the conditional use permit application from Paul and Deb Sonnenberg.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Ohman, to recommend to City Council to approve the conditional use permit. The motion passed unanimously.

Albright discussed the city ordinances that should guide their decision, noting the purpose of zoning regulations is to ensure public health, safety, and general welfare, as well as to protect and maintain property values. He determined the application would be considered a commercial use since it involves financial gain.

Ohman reviewed the specific standards for home occupations in Section 151.21(C) of the ordinance, confirming with the Sonnenbergs that:

- The occupation would be carried on in the main building.
- Not more than 25% of the floor space would be used.

- No articles for sale would be displayed visibly from the street.
- There would be no change in outside appearance except for one small sign.
- No increased traffic would be generated.
- No retail sales activity would occur.
- No outside employees would be involved.
- No outside storage would occur.
- Business hours would be within 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM.
- Only one commercial vehicle would be parked on site.

Ohman proposed amending the motion to include these specific standards.

Motion by Ohman, seconded by Courneya, to amend the motion to include compliance with the specific standards outlined in Section 151.21(C). The amendment passed unanimously.

Motion by Ohman, seconded by Courneya, to recommend approval of the conditional use permit to the City Council with compliance with Section 151.21(C) required. The motion passed unanimously.

Ohman advised the applicants that the City Council would consider their application at their November 18, 2025 meeting, and reminded them they would need approval for any signage.

Construction Permits

A. Active Construction Permits

None.

B. Approved by Clerk-Treasurer Permit

Lammers reported approving permits for:

1. 136 & 146 E Main St to replace roof.
2. 320 E Frazee Avenue to replace shingles.

C. Approved by Otter Tail County

None.

D. Permits Needing Approval

The commission reviewed a permit application for 123 W Mill St to remove hop buildings (21' x 36') and a wood building and shed, and to build a greenhouse (24' x 66').

Lammers explained that the corner of the proposed greenhouse would be 11 feet from the property line (exceeding the 10-foot minimum requirement) and 52 feet from the property line at the back of the building. She noted that Olson Oil owns the lot and has provided signed forms giving permission for the construction. The contractor was identified as Scott Orvik.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya, to approve the permit for 123 W Mill St. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

A. Nuisance Properties

The commission discussed three nuisance property issues:

1. **Demolition Vehicles:** The commission reviewed advice from the city attorney regarding demolition/derby cars. After discussion, they decided to follow the attorney's recommendation to enforce the ordinance as written without special exceptions for demolition vehicles.

Motion by Albright, seconded by S. Hasse to adopt the attorney's recommendation to read the ordinance as is. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **350 S Pelican Avenue:** Lammers reported that the property has been under a court order since 2019 requiring abatement of hazardous and unsanitary conditions. The attorney recommended that city staff compile a specific list of items needing correction and set a deadline, after which the city would abate the issues at the owner's expense if not addressed.

Motion by Albright, seconded by R. Hasse, to require abatement of the nuisance problem (removal of garbage and either removal or repair of garage to city codes) by May 1, 2026, or the city will take appropriate action. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Property behind the nursing home:** Lammers noted this property receives frequent complaints. The attorney recommended a similar approach as with 350 S Pelican Avenue, but the commission decided to address this in the spring.

Ohman requested that Lammers send him a nuisance letter regarding leaf bags at his property so he could experience the process from the citizen's perspective and potentially help improve communication.

Motion by Albright, seconded by Courneya, to send Ohman a nuisance letter regarding leaf bags at his property. Voting Yes: Albright, Courneya, R. Hasse, and S. Hasse. Voting No: None. Abstained: Ohman. The motion carried.

DuFrane, Utilities Superintendent, expressed frustration that while he and Lammers enforce ordinances, they sometimes feel unsupported when issues come before the commission. The commission acknowledged these concerns and discussed ways to improve the narrative around enforcement and better support staff.

B. City Ordinance Update

Lammers mentioned that water source-related ordinances need review, but no specific updates were provided at this time.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

Motion by Albright, seconded by S. Hasse, to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorded by Rachel Nustad (assisted by ClerkMinutes)

Secretary,
Julie Lammers, CMC
Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer

Council Recommendations

To recommend approval of the conditional use permit for 511 W Glenn St to the City Council with compliance with Section 151.21(C) required.

Follow Up Actions

- Paul and Deb Sonnenberg: Obtain sign permit from Lammers when installing the magnetic sign on their building at the Vergas location.
- Lammers: Prepare written agreement for property owner at 360 South Pelican Avenue outlining abatement requirements with May 1st, 2026 deadline, including consent for city to place expenses on property taxes if not completed.
- DuFrane and Lammers: Meet with property owner at 360 South Pelican Avenue to discuss and obtain signature on abatement agreement.
- Lammers: Have Deputy Clerk send nuisance letter to Ohman regarding leaves next to his garage
- Planning Commission: Consider purchasing 500 custom business cards with nuisance complaint submission information to distribute to Utility Employees.
- Lammers: Prepare list of specific ordinance violations and required actions for property on Frazee Avenue for discussion at May meeting.
- Planning Commission: Review comprehensive plan items from 2025 at next month's meeting.
- City Council: Final decision on Sonnenberg conditional use permit at November 18th meeting.

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6. Status of Council Recommendations

Conditional Use Permit

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7. Construction Permits

- A. Active Construction Permits
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- C. Conditional Use Permit
 - 1. 303 Altona Ave

Files Attached

- 2025 Construction Permits END OF YEAR REPORT.pdf

2025 Construction Permits -
Vergas MN

Permit #	Issue Date	Parcel Number	Name	Address	Description	Closed Date	Value	Who closed
2024-009	4/22/2024/ 04/21/25	82000500037005	Donald Allmaras	816 Scharf Ave.,	Rebuild existing cabin in same footprint as existing cabin			
2024-017	6/24/2024/ 05/21/2025	82000990166001	Keith Kuehn	306 E. Frazee Ave,	Build 12'x24' addition on to existing garage, steps & railing on porch			
2024-026	7/24/2024 7/1/2025	82000990218000	Andrew & Jackie Bunkowske	1220 E. Scharf Ave.,	Moving a shouse onto the property EXTENDED			
2024-028	8/20/2024 8/18/2025	82000500035001	Mike Baumgart	540 S Pelican Ave	Shingling			
2025-001	1/21/2025	82000990054000	Vergas State Bank	106 E Main St	Remove walls, build walls, create break room area, new flooring & lighting	5/22/25		Julie
2025-002	1/27/2025	82000990137000	Pat Strand	271 Linden St	Replace 10 windows	5/22/25		Owne r
2025-003	3/24/2025	82000990228000	Michael Rosendahl	96 Parkview Dr	culvert	5/22/25		Julie
2025-004	3/24/2025	82000500012006	Amber Pausch	110 Railway Ave	replace and remove doors, install tongue and groove	5/22/25		Julie
2025-005	4/28/2025	82000990252000	Chris Lindburg	210 Eva St	New home		165K	
2025-006	4/28/2025	82000990167000	James Stenger	316 E Frazee Ave	replace doors, windows, skirting			
2025-007	4/28/2025	82000990089000	Merel Kvam	131 1st Ave	Enclose existing lower level of fire escae	8/25/25		B&J
2025-008	4/28/2025	82000990089001	Merel Kvam	125 1st Ave	Remove existing additions and add onto structure			
2025-009	4/28/2025	82000990250000	Colton Ditterich	230 Eva St	New home		190K	
2025-010	4/28/2025	82000990243000	Hunter Ditterich	411 Diane Ave	New home		190K	
2025-011	3/24/2025	82000990104000	Laura Osborn	110 w Elm	Replace door, repair deck and rain gutters			
2025-012	5/7/2025	82000990144000	Mary Hoffman	401 Pelican Ave	Replace existing bow window	7/23/25		
2025-013	5/19/2025	82000990302000	Paul & Deb Sonnenberg	511 Glenn Street	Shed 10x18	5/22/25		Owne r

2025-014	5/14/2025	82000990088000	Lakes Area Word Fellowship	151 1st Ave N	Siding	8/25/25		B&J
2025-015	5/19/2025	82000500023000	Holly Sandberg	500 S Pelican Ave	replace driveway	6/11/25		Owner
2025-016	5/19/2025	82000500031000	Bruce Sonnenberg	461 S Pelican Ave	24x24 2 stall garage			
2025-017	5/22/2025	82000990055000	Tim Strom	110 Main St	Sign/Sulpture	7/23/25		
2025-018	5/22/2025	82000500012007	Summers Construction	100 S Railway Ave	Convert backroom into 2 offices, parking lot 3150 sq feet	7/23/25		
2025-019	5/27/2025	82000990068000	Altona Square (Ditterich)	105 E Main St	Turtle (Child) sign - on City Property	7/23/25		
2025-020	5/28/2025	82000990062000	Billy's Corner Bar	158 E Main St	Remove and Replace Flat Roof	7/23/25		
2025-021	5/29/2025	82000990106000	Paul Pinke	201 W Main St	replace steps in back porch	7/23/25		
2025-022	5/30/2025	82000990079000	Connie Lee	150 E Herman St	Windows, siding, drywall			
2025-023	6/6/2025	82000990125001	Verla Day	320 South Pelican Ave	Re doing the chimney blocks	8/25/25		B&J
2025-024	6/18/2025	82000990145000	Loren Menz	310 W Glenn St	Extend existing asphalt driveway to city street, rebuild driveway that was poorly built and difficult to use	6/23/25		Owner
2025-025	6/30/2025	82000990224000	Robert Hager	88 Park View Dr	Add a 7'X9' lean on to existing 10'X12' shed	8/25/25		B&J
2025-026	6/30/2025	82000990134000	Bruce Schlauderaff	301 S Unit Ave	8' X 10' plastic shed with metal frame being moved into yard	8/25/25		B&J
2025-027	7/1/2025	82000500012007	Refine Homes	100 S Railway Ave	Remove Summers Construction sign from font of building. Paint top board and bottom. Install new sign for Refine Homes. Additional two sided flag sign on left post. Sign on right of doors.	8/25/25		B&J
2025-028	7/2/2025	82000990086000	Franklin Fence Co. Inc	109 1st Ave S	Install 30' X 100' area of tar on the hill going up from the street to the crest of the hill	8/2/25		Owner
2025-029	7/7/2025	82000500014000	Jill Hoffman	161 S 3rd Ave	Install new door and screen	8/25/25	B&J	
2025-030	7/15/2025	82000990076000	Noah Olds	101 E Linden St	Build 23 X 22' Garage			
2025-031	7/17/2025	82000990161000	Michael Kratzke	402 E Frazee Ave	Change roof line for our addition that already exists - 4 feet total	8/25/25		B&J

2025-032	7/23/2025	82000990073000	Rachel Nustad	151 E Linden St	Move 5'X12' chicken coop onto property	9/2/25		Owne r
2025-033	7/28/2025	82000990170000	Benjamin Lankow	339 E Frazee Ave	Roof and window trim			
2025-034	7/28/2025	82000990180000	Tom & Judy Wollin	102 Park View Dr	Replace 13 windows			
2025-035	7/28/2025	82000500012002	Kyle Theisen/Vanessa Perry	235 E Frazee Ave	Attach vinyl signs to the exterior of the building	8/2/25		Owne r
2025-036	8/25/2025	82000990149002	Josh Hanson	409 Diane Ave	New House		322K	
2025-037	9/2/2025	82000990151000	James Hoffmann	440 S Pelican Ave	Install/Replace 6 windows			
2025-038	9/25/2025	82000990082000	Crossroads	123 W Mill St	Remove sheds/buildings and construct a new 24'X66' greenhouse			
2025-039	10/1/2025	82000990060000	Kim Doyle & Kelly Ament	146 E Main St	Re do the roof vaulting and rafters	10/1/25		
2025-040	10/2/2025	82000990168000	Kent Schrupp	320 E Frazee Ave	Replace shingles with steel roofing	10/2/25		
2025-041	12/4/2025	82000500012002	Keystone Storage & Rentals	235 E Frazee Ave	New Sign, 2 new doors, and service 2 windows			

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8. Old Business

A. Nuisance Properties
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9. New Business

Vergas Comprehensive Plan 2036 - 2025 Update

Files Attached

- 2025 Comp Plan Progress Review.pdf

Vergas Comprehensive Plan 2025 Progress Review

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:

- 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	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Develop tiered system for expansion based on Vergas water & sewer capacity, EMS services and other public services & facilities.	Water/Sewer Committee is developing a tiered system for expansion based on capacity.	
Identify possible annexation areas and contact owners.	Planning Commission looking at W. Lake Street Zoning map identified potential expansion.	Potential expansion/annexation areas identified
Pay close attention to and abide by shoreline regulations governed by the state.	Planning Commission changed permit process and updating shoreline management ordinance. Updated Shoreline Management ordinance. Discussing Shoreline Management inspection services with Otter Tail County.	Agreement in place for Otter Tail County Land and Resource Management to oversee all construction within 1,000 feet of lakeshore.
Participate in preserving the health of lakes and surrounding wildlife.	Storm water runoff being discussed Widseth Engineering evaluated water drainage issues in downtown main street alley ways. Vergas was the recipient of the Dave Neiman Source Water Protection Award. Updated Local Government Unit Wetland Conservation Act information. Working with East Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation and State of MN (BWSR).	Working with East Otter Tail County Soil and Water Management for planting of flowers and trees in parks. The Vergas Long Lake Association conducts water testing looking at phosphorus, chlorophyll, & clarity. Energy & Resilience Advisory Board has prioritized reiew and action directed at building infrastructure, environment & green infrastructure and lake/water systems

Goal: Land use and build form decisions support and celebrate the existing character of the town

Strategies:

- 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	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
EDA/HRA develop incentives to encourage uses identified above.	Ordinance already in place that restricts big box stores	HRA signed purchase agreement for property to be developed into daycare. City Energy & Resilience Advisory Board looking at environment/green space.

Planning and Zoning develop policies regarding use identified above	Planning Commission updating zoning map with review and modification of city ordinances. Zoning map updated and approved. In the process of conducting codification of all ordinances.	Continuing codification of all ordinances.
EDA identify areas appropriate for light industrial development.		
Explore above and underground parking.	Parking lot identified and planned for OTC building site. Plan to pave parking lot and alley ways. Informational meeting was held with those affected. Call for bids to go out in spring.	Completed parking lot project adding 140 E Linden for parking. Added Handicapped space behind liquor store.

Housing

Goal: Identify affordable housing lots that can be developed with the next 5 years		
Strategies:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with Otter Tail Co. to share county-level resources with local developers and future residents via existing incentives and initiatives. Conduct and inventory and promote lots available.		
Action Item	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
EDA develop a fact sheet regarding available assistance programs	Pamphlet for Sunny Oaks Properties with County/City incentives.	Pamphlet for Eva/Dianne Properties with County/City incentives.
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:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Conduct an ADA audit or other type of evaluation to identify key areas for improvement across the city.	Cross walks placed at intersections on Main Street.	2 handicap parking spots added to downtown. Itched crosswalks added to downtown intersections.
Create short reference guide for residents and visitors describing local and regional transportation options.		As part of City of Vergas Trail Feasibility Study; Vergas was connected to the Heart of Lakes regional trail.

Work with Planning Commission to determine if vacant or undeveloped property could serve as space for new parking lots, and potential diagonal parking.	Parking lot planned for OTC building property that was acquired by the city. Parking lot area available with plan to asphalt in spring.	Parking lot was paved and parking lot lines provided.
Contact Canada Pacific to explore moving the exchange.	Working with County, State and CP Railroad on notification process to identify and track delays and issues. Communications with CP broadly advertised. Ultimate goal is to move track switch.	Met with CP and their engineers are reviewing design process of moving the track switch.
Streets, sidewalks and yard waste committee review possibilities of collaboration with OTC Highway Department.	Working with OTC Highway Dept. on identifying handicap parking locations and signage for downtown. Working with OTC Highway Department on main street sidewalks with future Hwy 4 road work.	2 handicap parking spots added to downtown.
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.		
Action Item	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Work with OTC to pursue grant funding to connect the Heartland Trail along Co.Rd 4.	Feasibility study conducted for Heartland and Heart of Lake trails. Approved by Council and plan for Heart of Lakes trail connected with Co. Hwy 35 project Plan to connect with future Hwy 35 road work.	Trail completed on Hwy 35 connecting to the Pelican/Perham the Heart of the Lakes rail. Working with Hobart Township and Otter Tail County to connect to Heartland regional trail to Frazee in 2031.
Add multi-use path to the update of the 2019 Capital Improvement Plan to ensure that it is included in future city budget.		
Business & Economic Development		
Goal: Maintain the small business atmosphere		
Strategies: • Advertise local businesses regionally Review and update city laws and ordinances that support small business owners		
Action Item	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Work with neighboring Chambers of Commerce to advertise and access resources	OTC Lakes Country Magazine	
Collaborate with the Community Club to identify opportunities and resources to market regionally.	Facebook on ongoing bases features a Vergas business, and hosts events to promote businesses, i.e new event Shops n' Hops. Vergas advertising and featured highlights in OTC Lakes Country Magazine. Established a full Vergas/lakes billboard that features map of area and Vergas hosted Events. Also have a brochure with Vergas events that was distributed and in stores for ongoing access and have full size posters in the businesses that shows 2023 events.	VCC continues strong facebook and promotions presence and has Vergas in the Ottertail Lakes country publication. This is ongoing. Would close.

	Weekly TV3 Vergas show that highlights Vergas Ongoing. Vergas Community Club is active in regional marketing. Has Facebook site with high volume access.	
Submit stories, ads, and updates to surrounding local papers.	Frazee Forum has featured a number of Vergas stories, i.e. Maple Syrup Fest, Art Camp, Vergas Art Program. Ads in Frazee forum on an ongoing basis. Ongoing. Vergas events routinely featured in Frazee Forum and DL paper.	Events and stories regarding Vergas are consistently featured in Frazee and DL papers and Vergas TV3 . This is ongoing.
Invest in enhancing the City website		VCC and City of Vergas looking at website improvements
Preserve existing protections within city laws and ordinances		City Planning Commission is reviewing all ordinances in terms of relevancy and currency to ensure accurate and up to date
Explore state and federal incentives for small businesses, especially those making positive impact in nearby communities.	EDA Grant program with OTC Community Fund and CEDA money. Business Facade Improvement Program being offered.	Business Facade Improvement program remains in place. Continue to have a CEDA representative with EDA/HRA providing ongoing information to potential incentives.
Goal: Invest in Human Capital		
Strategies: <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.		
Action Item	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Connect with OTC Early Childhood Coordinator to identify needs and resources.	Meetings and discussions are being held with OTC and WCIF regarding childcare needs in Vergas.	HRA received grant from RCCIP and developed a daycare committee.
Improve marketing of existing community activities, from small socializing to large events.	As above, Facebook, OTC Lakes Country magazine, event brochure and billboard Ongoing.	Continue promotion of events regardless of the size on Facebook, OTC Lakes Country magazine, event brochure /flyer and city billboards
Identify gaps in existing community programming and recruit volunteers to host one and/or recurring events.		VCC and Art Club have implemented new events to draw in different crowds; as Puzzles/Pizza/Pounders and Kids/family Bring in Spring event. Volunteers routinely recruited. VCC is reinstating a community welcoming outreach to new residents and businesses to inform and engage in volunteering.
Explore development of spaces for families to recreate and your specific activities.	Detroit Lakes water ski club practicing Long Lake city park and offering ski shows Improvements made to Vergas Event Center and future improvement plan for Long Lake Park. Community events are family oriented and hosted at various sites throughout the community as event center, long lake park, ballpark and main street	Ongoing from prior years where events and activities are held at a variety of venues conducive to family participation.

Identify and invite volunteers to join planning and implementation projects.	Ongoing. Is part of event planning to reach out for volunteers. Ongoing process with city events.	City has engaged residents to participate in surveys and participate in city committee's. Surveys in 2025 included Energy & Resilience and City Siren. VCC routinely solicits volunteers to assist with the planning and implementation of events. VCC has established a volunteer recognition program.
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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	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Work in partnership with Vergas EDA to integrate public feedback into business development and expansion strategies	EDA is working with CEDA for a business retention and expansion plan. First impressions report and survey with businesses regarding their needs. Local Business Facade Improvement Grant established.	Continue with CEDA contract to support city and business development and expansion. In 2025 priority given to a daycare in the community.
Host a business and entrepreneurship fair in partnership with OTC with targeted outreach based on survey results and public input.	Digital Marketing workshop held for businesses.	Continue to host an annual EDA/HRA meeting with encouraged attendance by the community where education and opportunities are highlighted.
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.	Established partnerships related to receiving energy grant. Partnerships with CERTS, ESMC, RSDP, University of Minnesota Architecture program, Green Cities, and WCIF in pursuing Municipal Building energy efficiencies and integration of clean energy. Working with OTC Lake Shore Management on lake shore inspection services. Work with CEDA Rural Capacity Program.	Continue to strengthen and establish partnerships as noted in 2024. In 2025 establishing partnerships in assessing and implementing a daycare.

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	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Advertise business and recreational opportunities and events regionally.	As noted previously; Facebook, OTC Lakes Country magazine, TV3 Vergas show. Ongoing. Continue to utilize a number of resources in advertising.	Ongoing as previously noted.
Pursue and invest in trail development.	Feasibility study conducted to examine Vergas connection to Heartland and Heart of Lake Trails City Council approved feasibility study. Heart of Lakes Trail to align with OTC Hwy 35 project.	In 2025 Vergas connected to the Heart of Lakes Regional Trail with the Hwy 35 project.

Cultivate more year-round attractions and events.	Year round event calendar, 9 of 12 months community event. This does not include events by other businesses and groups. Vergas Community Club has an established calendar of events throughout the year. Other organizations also host events. I.e. Lions club and churches and local businesses.	Between VCC , Businesses, Lions, Churches and clubst here are events throughout the year. In addition to events have outdoor activities as swimming/boating in summer and fishing/snowmobiing in winter. Newly adding a Vergas Story Book Trail where story will be posted along the long lake trail to add interest when walking.
Identify land available for development and purchase.	City purchase of 8 lots from OTC foreclosed land (Eva/Diane street)-Sunny Oaks. OTC to build 4 Senior living housing units in the development. Three new housing developments and EDA are active in the sale of Sunny Oaks lots.	27 Sunny Oak available lots were available for purchase. 1 lot remaining unsold.
Offer the Event Center as coworking space by appointment.	Event Center improvements and updates being made to make the space more visibly appealing and marketable. Hired part time Event Center Coordinator to promote event center space. Updating kitchen at VEC. Lions 170 hours of volunteer hours at the Event Center. Vergas Community Club provided over \$20,000 in donations.	VEC kitchen update completed. New LCD projector installed to support large group meeting projection needs
Maintain and develop broadband capabilities.	Maintain internet access inside and outside VEC for community use.	Internet access established. Close
Connect with neighboring communities to participate in county-wide networking opportunities. (host pre-existing groups for a meeting).	Regional Mayor meetings , Regional City Clerk meetings Continue active participation with the Region 4 Mayors Network, Regional City Clerk meetings and Otter Tail Lakes Country Association. League of Minnesota Cities hosted a regional meeting in Vergas and OTC Commissioners hosted an open house in Vergas.	Vergas Council met with Frazee Council to discuss ideas and plan for annual meetings. Continue to be involved with regional and state meetings.

Public Services and Facilities

Goal: Maintain adequate pubic 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	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Encourage various committees to complete prioritization exercise.	Water Sewer Committee is working on prioritizing needs by making a project list. Revised community zoning map approved.	As part of the annual budget process, the city committees and programming entities prioritize current and future needs

Explore expanded services, particularly MN DEED Border-to-Border Broadband opportunity.		
Collaborate with EDA/HRA to oversee a needs assessment.	EDA business survey conducted regarding their needs.	Working with West Central SBDC to support businesses.
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. <p>Make Long Lake Park a desirable location for recreation year-round.</p>		
Action Item	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 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. 	<p>Planning Commission updating zoning maps Revised community zoning map approved. Clarification provided on sidewalks.</p>	Completed in 2024.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a parking study. 		Handicap parking review conducted by OTC DOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of a MNDOT Complete Streets project for Vergas. 		Submitting LRIP (Local Road improvement Program) to OTC for reconstruction of West Lake Street.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovate and upgrade public restroom facilities at Long Lake park. 	<p>Park improvement proposal developed, park board working with NDSU, which includes improved facilities. Painting and lighting improvements to restroom. Loon Art for the park fundraising event to support park improvements. Community feedback on plan at the Loon Art for the Park event. Long Lake Park improvement plan devised and reviewed with the community. Includes new bathhouse. Funding raising in process.</p>	Long Lake Improvement plan includes new restroom facility. Funding an issue in completing plan. Request submitted to MN state legislature to institute a 0.5% local retail sales tax specific to the Long Lake Improvement plan. If approved, will be on November 2026 elections ballot.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to work with rental company for non-motorized watercraft. 		Local business, Wild Fire Fur, has initiated rental of lily pads.
<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. <p>Work to develop a full spectrum of transitions in senior housing needs, from accessibility options to access of services and skilled nursing.</p>		
Action Item	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Develop handicap parking spots	Streets Committee is working with OTC to identify handicap parking locations and signage.	Added 2 handicapped spaces in the downtown.
Work with EDA/HRA to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study for expanded senior housing options.	Have 2021 Comprehensive plan, 2019 EDA/HRA Housing study and working with OTC Housing & Redevelopment	OTC has 2 lots in Sunny Oaks Development for senior housing complex.

Parks & Open Spaces

Goal: Support Community Art and arts programming

Strategies:

- Increase the number of displays of interactive art around town, in parks, and open spaces.
- Increase community education arts programming.

Action Items	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a directory of local artists. 	<p>Studio Crawl is planned for Sept 23, 2023 and this is step in the direction to create a directory.</p> <p>VCC has local artist creating loon pieces placed around Vergas.</p> <p>Active Vergas Arts Club and has the annual Studio Crawl which identifies local artists. Club has been applying for grants and received funding for Pert Near Sandstone band at Shops and Hops event.</p>	<p>A Vergas Arts Club established and working with local artists and has ongoing programming. Embedded in the community and would close from specifically tracking.</p> <p>The Artisan Inn Studio will be opening later summer and will offer Craft retreats, Artist teaching, local artist gallery. This includes event lodging for up to 20.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offering summer youth art camp. 	<p>Continues to grow. In 2023 had 126 youth art Youth pottery classes available</p> <p>Continue to have youth art camp each year in June. Have held since 2020. Youth play production and Viking Library production offering.</p>	<p>An annual established event. Will close from specifically tracking.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a listing of events on city website. 	<p>On City website, VCC Facebook, and posters Established a Vergas Arts Program, aligned with VCC. Hosted 3 performing arts (Chmielewski band, Tony DeBlois, and Siama Story Teller).</p> <p>A VCC website was established that city website has links to.</p> <p>City website continues to provide a listing of community events.</p>	<p>City Websit, VCC facebook and website on an ongoing basis has listing and dates of events. This is well established and will close from specifically tracking.</p>

Goal: Update public facilities at Long Lake Park

Strategies:

- 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	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Follow guidelines and budget in Capital Improvement plan for restroom facilities specifications and budget.	Park improvement plan priority is a new bathhouse at the beach.	Priority in the Long Lake Part improvement plan.
Park Board present ideas to Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council for implementation.	Park Board presented park improvement plan Long Lake Park improvement plan broken down master plan into phases. Fundraising in process.	Long Lake Park Improvement plan established. Looking at a local retail sales tax to fund.

Goal: Leverage existing amenities to create a culture that celebrates physical activity and community-based sports that are complementary to school sports schedules.

Strategies:

- Create opportunities for sports and physical education.
 - Begin offering adult leagues for baseball, softball etc..
- Explore opportunities for additional recreational space development.

Action Item	2023 and 2024 Progress	2025 Progress
Example; Offer lessons for pickleball, classes for local fitness trainers, dance classes.	Lakes Fit offers classes and pickleball has classes for beginners Pickle ball Association has offered lessons and has held events as women's night & during Looney Days.	Pickelball lessons in place and classes available for fitness, swimming, and yoga. North Star ski show has offered ski lessons
Coordinate community education for implementation.	Continue to collaborate with Frazee community education for Vergas swimming lessons Continue to collaborate with Frazee community education for Vergas swimming lessons and summer youth play.	Continue to collaborate with Frazee community education for Vergas swimming lessons, baseball, summer youth play.
Conduct a feasibility study for soccer fields and/or frisbee golf.		
Planning and Zoning identify sustainable areas.		As part of the Energy Grant and GreenStep City recognition program, the Energy & Resilinece Advisory Board looking at building infrastructure, environment & green space and lake/water systems.