

Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
September 2026 Vergas Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
Vergas Event Center Smart Room
5:30 PM on Wednesday, September 9, 2026

1. Additions and Deletions

2. Minutes

A. Review and approval of June 18, 2026 Minutes (no schedule meeting July. No quorum August)

3. New member needed

4. Status of Event Center Solar

5. GreenStep Cities: Vergas 2026 Assessment

6. Status of Vergas Energy & Resiliency Plan

A. United Prairie Foundation

B. Charging Smart Regional Engagement Cohort

7. United Prairie Foundation

8. VEC solar open house and informational fair October 10

9. Next Meeting Date/Time

To be determined

10. Adjournment

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**Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
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2. Minutes

A. Review and approval of June 18, 2026 Minutes (no schedule meeting July. No quorum August)

Files Attached

- Minutes June 2026 meeting.pdf

**Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
City of Vergas**

The Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board met on Thursday, June 18, 2026, 5:30pm, at the Vergas Event Center Meeting Room.

Attendance:

2026	Jan 15	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 16	May 21	Jun 18	Jul18	Aug 20	Sept 17	Oct 15
Julie Bruhn	P	P	P		P	P				
Alex Ohman	A	P	A		A	A				
Bruce Albright	A	P	P		P	P				
Cal Miller	P	P	A							
Jim Courneya					P	P				

- **P: Present. A: Absent**

1. Agenda approved as distributed.
2. Minutes from the May 21, 2026 meeting were approved as distributed.
3. Continue to look for a replacement member. Have had in the city newsletter with no interest expressed. Members asked to directly ask someone who they feel may have an interest. Will also confirm with Alex Ohman continued interest to serve on the board.
4. Event Center solar panels and battery system installed. Awaiting some final electrical work and inspector approval. Anticipate the solar panels will be functional by July.
5. The University of Minnesota is doing the final digital formatting of the Vergas Energy & Resilience Plan and Action Plan. Haven't yet received. The following areas were deemed areas that could be addressed the first year:
 - Energy Fair- meets community education
 - Solar on fire hall- meets expansion of clean energy
 - Ordinances- Planning Commission address
 - Look at tree's available to the community in spring
 - Look at how to certify as a Tree City
6. Discussed the Event Center solar open house and informational energy and resiliency fair. Available weekend dates in September had conflicts and will move toward looking at October available dates. Noted Saturday may be better to avoid conflicts with Sunday Church. Proposed was having the event 9am-12pm and include refreshments and handout information.
Discussed the following topics and organizations to contact.
 - Showcase and tour the solar and battery system. Have city solar report to show use and energy savings.
 - Energy efficiency, solar information and incentives- Lake Region, OTPC, CERTS, WCI, Holsen Solar, Solar United Neighbors Co-op (Prairies and Lakes)
 - Lakes and environment resiliency and sustainability practices-OTC Soil & Water, MN Extension Service
 - Share Vergas Energy and Resilience Plan and Action Plan

Bruce provided the OTC Lake Stewardship Guidebook and Long Lake potential acres to protect. The Board recommended this also be at the informational fair.
7. Julie Bruhn noted she would be part of a presentation at the annual LMC conference to share the Vergas story regarding work toward energy efficiency and clean energy. Others who are part of the presentation include CERTS and MPCA.
8. Next meeting will be August 20, 2026. Will not have meeting in July.

Advisory Board Recommendations:

- Search for a new member to serve on the Advisory Board
- Check Saturday dates in October when the Event Center would be open for the solar open house/information fair (Julie Bruhn)

City Council Recommendations: None

Recorder
e/s Julie Bruhn

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5. GreenStep Cities: Vergas 2026 Assessment

Files Attached

- Vergas Assessment 2026-3.pdf



Assessment 2026

City of Vergas: Category C City

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About the Program

The GreenSteps Cite program is a five-step program for cities and tribal nations to work towards sustainability. There are 29 best practices which each provide required and recommended actions. Recommended actions are placed into the following categories: buildings and lighting, land use, transportation, environmental management, and resilient economic and community development. Each action submitted by a city receives a ranking based on a three-star system.





Information and GreenStep Status

Joined: July 2024

Status: Step 2

Total Best Practices (BPs) Complete: 7

Total BP Actions Complete: 12

Preliminary submission for city review: Yes

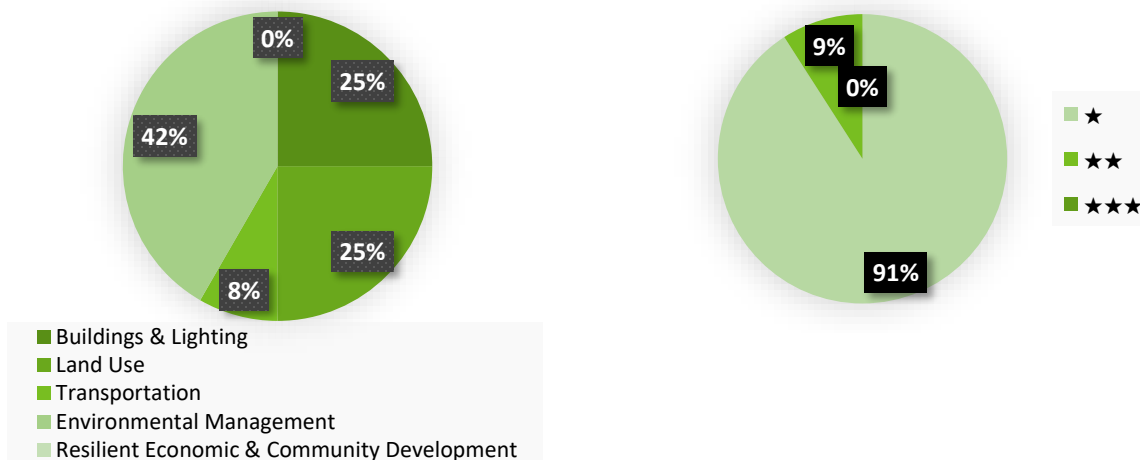
Final April 1st recommendation to League of MN Cities: No

All required BPs done for Step 3? No

Step 3 BP distribution requirement met? No

Recommend June 2026 recognition Step 3: No

Current Distribution of Best Practice Categories:



Notable Actions

- Through fundraising and state grant established a walking trail from downtown to the lake park and added a boardwalk, floating bridge, that added walking trail along the lake.
- Comprehensive Plan established in 2022 that includes land use, transportation, public facilities, and parks and open spaces.

See all city-reported actions at
[City Detail](#) | [GreenStep Cities](#)

Step Advancement Guidelines

Guidelines for Step 2:

As a Category C city, to be recognized as a Step 2 GreenStep City, **ANY 4 Best Practices** must be reported.

☒ **Any 4 Best Practices**

[Learn more about
Step 2](#)

Guidelines for Step 3:

As a Category C city, to be recognized as a Step 3 GreenStep City, the following must be reported, at minimum:

☒ **Any 8 Best Practices** (currently: 8)

[Learn more about
Step 3](#)

☒ **Buildings & Lighting:** ☒ any one Buildings & Lighting BP ([1-5](#))

☒ **Comprehensive, Climate & Energy Plans:** ☒ [6.1](#)

☐ **Transportation:** ☐ any one Transportation BP ([11-14](#))

☐ **Sustainable Purchasing:** ☐ [15.1](#)

☒ **Benchmarks & Community Engagement:** ☒ [24.1](#)

☐ **Climate Adaptation & Community Resilience:** ☐ [29.1](#)

Guidelines for Steps 4 and 5:

Steps 4 and 5 focus on metrics – what are the outcomes of all of the actions that the city has implemented over time?

- **Step 4:** Measure and report a minimum number of core and optional metrics for the previous calendar year or the most recent available data.
 - Category B communities: In addition to the CORE metrics, no additional metrics are necessary.
- **Step 5:** Demonstrate improvement three eligible metrics measured in Step 4, from one data year to the next.
 - Category A, B, and C communities: Improve upon 3 eligible metric elements.

[Learn more about
Steps 4 & 5](#)

Best Practice Actions: Detailed Descriptions

Buildings and Lighting

[BP 1: Efficient Existing Public Buildings](#)

[BP 2: Efficient Existing Private Buildings](#)

[BP 3: New Green Buildings](#)

[BP 4: Efficient Outdoor Lighting and Signals](#)

[BP 5: Building Redevelopment](#)

Best Practice 1: Efficient Existing Public Buildings

BP 1 Completed? **YES** Total actions completed: **1**

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
1.1	Choose an item.	Enter/update building information and monthly usage data into the MN B3 Benchmarking database.		
1.2	★★	Make no/low cost indoor lighting and operational changes in city-owned/school buildings.	All municipal buildings have LED lighting	12/26/24
1.3	Choose an item.	Invest in larger energy efficiency projects.	Received funding for energy efficiency and integration of clean energy that includes consumption use, energy audit, and building audit. Analysis is in process with a climate plan to be developed	12/26/24
1.4	★	Implement IT efforts and city employee engagement to reduce plug loads, building energy use and workflow efficiency.	Several automations implemented for efficiency and paper reduction. No paper packets for council, GIS used, electronic time cards, and SCADA alarm system for water plant and lift station	12/26/24
1.5	Choose an item.	Meet the SB 2030 energy standard or qualify under a green building or energy framework.		
1.6	Choose an item.	Improve operations and maintenance of city-owned/school buildings and leased buildings.		

1.7	Choose an item.	Install one or more of the following: -A ground-source, closed loop geothermal system. -A district energy/microgrid system. -A rainwater harvesting system		
Best Practice 2: Efficient Existing Private Buildings BP 2 Completed? YES Total actions completed: 1				
Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
2.1	★	Create or participate in a program to promote energy and water efficiency.	Promoted solar group purchasing program with area partners	12/26/24
2.2	Choose an item.	Integrate green building and EV charging best practices information and assistance into the building permit process.		
2.3	Choose an item.	Implement an energy rating/disclosure policy for residential/commercial buildings.		
2.4	Choose an item.	Describe energy/water efficiency outcomes and other green building practices at local businesses and not-for-profit organizations.		
2.5	Choose an item.	Create one of the following: -Water-wise landscaping ordinance/guidance -WaterSense purchasing program -Guidance on rainwater harvesting and home water softener use		
2.6	Choose an item.	Provide a financial or other incentive to private parties who add energy/sustainability improvements, meet the SB 2030 energy standard, or renovate using a green building or energy framework.		
2.7	Choose an item.	Customize a model sustainable building renovation policy that includes the SB 2030 energy standard		

		and adopt the language to govern private renovation projects.		
Best Practice 3: New Green Buildings BP 3 Completed? NO Total actions completed: 0 Actions to Complete BP 3: Any one action				
Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
3.1	Choose an item.	Require by city policy that new city-owned buildings be built using the SB 2030 energy standard and/or a green building framework.		
3.2	Choose an item.	Work with the local school district to ensure that future new schools are built using the SB 2030 energy standard and/or a green building framework.		
3.3	Choose an item.	Adopt a sustainable building policy for private buildings; include the SB 2030 energy standard; adopt language governing new development projects.		
3.4	Choose an item.	Provide a financial or other incentive to private parties who build new buildings that utilize the SB 2030 energy standard and/or a green building framework.		
3.5	Choose an item.	Adopt environmentally preferable covenant guidelines for new common interest communities addressing sustainability.		
Best Practice 4: Efficient Outdoor Lighting and Signals BP 4 Completed? YES Total actions completed: 2				
Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:

4.1	★	Require energy efficient, Dark-Sky compliant new or replacement outdoor lighting fixtures on city-owned/private buildings/facilities.	All street lights LED	12/26/24
4.2	★	Purchase LEDs for all future street lighting and traffic signals.	Policy that future street lights will be LED	12/26/24
4.3	Choose an item.	Replace city street lighting with Dark Sky-compliant LEDs, modifying any city franchise/utility agreement and adding smart grid attributes.		
4.4	Choose an item.	Coordinate traffic signals; optimize signal timing to minimize car idling at intersections yet maintain safe and publicly acceptable vehicle speeds.		
4.5	Choose an item.	Use LED/solar-powered lighting for a flashing sign or in a street/parking lot/park project.		
4.6	Choose an item.	Relamp/improve exterior building lighting for city-owned buildings/facilities with energy efficient, Dark-Sky compliant lighting.		
4.7	Choose an item.	Replace city-owned parking lot/ramp lighting with Dark-Sky compliant, energy efficient, automatic dimming lighting technologies.		
4.8	Choose an item.	Replace city's existing traffic signal indications with LEDs.		

Best Practice 5: Building Redevelopment

BP 5 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 5: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
5.1	Choose an item.	Adopt an historic preservation ordinance/ regulations and encourage adaptive reuse.		

5.2	Choose an item.	Implement the Minnesota Main Street model for commercial revitalization.		
5.3	Choose an item.	Plan for reuse of large-format retail buildings, or work with a local school, church or commercial building to either add-on space or repurpose space into new uses.		
5.4	Choose an item.	Create/modify a green residential remodeling assistance/financing program to assist homeowners in adding space or sustainable features.		
5.5	Choose an item.	Adopt development/design standards and programs that facilitate infill, redevelopment, and adaptable buildings.		

Land Use

[BP 6: Comprehensive, Climate and Energy Plans](#)

[BP 7: Resilient City Growth](#)

[BP 8: Mixed Uses](#)

[BP 9: Efficient Highway and Auto-Oriented Development](#)

[BP 10: Design for Natural Resource Conservation](#)

Best Practice 6: Comprehensive, Climate and Energy Plans

BP 6 Completed? **YES** Total actions completed: **1**

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
6.1	★	Adopt a comprehensive plan or a future land use plan adopted by the county or a regional entity.	Comprehensive Plan established in 2022 that includes land use, transportation, public facilities, and parks and open spaces	12/26/24
6.2	Choose an item.	Demonstrate that regulatory ordinances comply with the comprehensive plan.		

6.3	Choose an item.	Include requirements in comprehensive and/or other plans for intergovernmental coordination.		
6.4	Choose an item.	Include ecological provisions in the comprehensive plan that explicitly aim to minimize open space fragmentation and/or establish a growth area with expansion criteria.		
6.5	Choose an item.	Adopt climate mitigation and/or energy independence goals/objectives in the comprehensive plan or in a separate policy document; include transportation recommendations.		

Best Practice 7: Resilient City Growth

BP 7 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 7: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
7.1	Choose an item.	Eliminate barriers and actively encourage higher density housing in city zoning ordinance and map.		
7.2	Choose an item.	Achieve higher density housing with one of the following: a. Flexible lot size/frontage requirement for infill development. b. Density and floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses in selected residential zoning districts. c. Clustered residential development. d. Allowing accessory dwelling units, single-room occupancy housing, senior housing, co-housing or tiny houses / apartments by right in selected zoning districts. e. Implement a vacation rental property registration policy and/or special tax.		
7.3	Choose an item.	Achieve higher intensity commercial/industrial land uses through at least one of the following		

		strategies: a. Include a commercial district with zero-lot-line setbacks and a FAR minimum of 1. b. Set targets for the minimum number of employees/acre in different commercial zones.		
7.4	Choose an item.	Provide incentives for affordable housing, workforce housing, infill projects, or for life-cycle housing at or near job or retail centers, or for achieving an average net residential density of seven units per acre.		
7.5	Choose an item.	Use design to create social trust and interaction among neighbors and allow developments that meet the prerequisites for LEED for Neighborhood Development certification.		

Best Practice 8: Mixed Uses

BP 8 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 8: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
8.1	Choose an item.	Organize or participate in a community planning process for the city/a mixed-use district, including specific community engagement practices that engage cultural and income diverse community members.		
8.2	Choose an item.	Locate or lease a property for use as a school, city building or other government facility that has at least two of these attributes: a. Adjacent to an existing employment or residential center. b. Designed to facilitate and encourage access by walking, biking, or other non-vehicle travel modes. c. Accessible by regular transit service.		

8.3	Choose an item.	Modify a planned unit development (PUD) ordinance to emphasize or require mixed-use development or affordable housing, to limit residential PUDs to areas adjacent to commercial development, and/or to add sustainability features.		
8.4	Choose an item.	Report that a (re)development meets a city/community-determined minimum point threshold under the Equitable Development Scorecard or LEED-Neighborhood Development.		
8.5	Choose an item.	Have a downtown zoning district that emphasizes small and destination business, entrepreneurial spaces, and allows or requires residential and residential-compatible commercial development.		
8.6	Choose an item.	Incorporate form-based zoning approaches into the zoning code, in those areas where a diverse mix of uses is desired.		
8.7	Choose an item.	Create incentives for vertical mixed-use development in appropriate locations.		

Best Practice 9: Efficient Highway and Auto-Oriented Development

BP 9 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 9: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
9.1	Choose an item.	Establish design goals for at least one highway/auto-oriented corridor/cluster.		
9.2	Choose an item.	Participate in regional economic development planning with representatives from surrounding townships, cities, the county and business interests to:		

		a. Estimate commercial/industrial needs among all jurisdictions. b. Jointly implement recommendations to stage highway/auto-oriented commercial development in order to avoid overbuilding and expensive low-density development.		
9.3	Choose an item.	Adopt infrastructure design standards that protect the economic and ecologic functions of the highway corridor through clustering of development, native plantings and incorporating access management standards.		
9.4	Choose an item.	Adopt development policies for large-format developments, zoning for auto-oriented commercial districts at the sub-urban edge and/or in tightly defined and smaller urban development corridors/nodes that have some bike/walk/transit access.		

Best Practice 10: Design for Natural Resource Conservation

BP 10 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 10: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
10.1	Choose an item.	Conduct a Natural Resource Inventory or Assessment; incorporate protection of priority natural systems or resources such as groundwater through the subdivision or development process.		
	Choose an item.	For cities outside or on the fringe of metropolitan areas, conduct a build-out analysis, fiscal impact study, or adopt an urban growth boundary and a capital improvement plan that provides long-term protection of		

		natural resources/systems, and agriculture outside the boundary.		
	Choose an item.	For cities within metropolitan areas, incorporate woodland best management practices addressing protection of wooded areas into zoning or development review.		
10.4	Choose an item.	Adopt a conservation design policy; use a conservation design tool for pre-design meetings with developers and for negotiating development agreements in cities with undeveloped natural resource areas.		
10.5	Choose an item.	Preserve environmentally sensitive, community-valued land by placing a conservation easement on city lands, and by encouraging/funding private landowners to place land in conservation easements.		
10.6	Choose an item.	Conserve natural, cultural, historic resources by adopting or amending city codes and ordinances to support sustainable sites, including roadsides, and environmentally protective land use development.		
10.7	Choose an item.	Support and protect wildlife through habitat rehabilitation, preservation and recognition programs.		

Transportation

[BP 11: Living & Complete Streets](#)

[BP 12: Mobility Options](#)

[BP 13: Efficient City Fleets](#)

[BP 14: Demand-Side Travel Planning](#)

Best Practice 11: Living & Complete Streets

BP 11 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 11: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
11.1	Choose an item.	Adopt a complete streets policy, or a living streets policy, which addresses landscaping and stormwater.		
11.2	Choose an item.	Adopt zoning language or approve a skinny street/development project that follows green street and/or walkable streets principles.		
11.3	Choose an item.	Modify a street in compliance with the city's complete streets policy.		
11.4	Choose an item.	Identify, prioritize and remedy complete streets gaps and lack of connectivity/safety within your road network.		
11.5	Choose an item.	Identify and remedy street-trail gaps between city streets and off-road trails/bike trails.		
11.6	Choose an item.	Implement traffic calming policy/measures in at least one street redevelopment project.		

Best Practice 12: Mobility Options

BP 12 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 12: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
12.1	Choose an item.	Increase walking, biking and transit.		
12.2	Choose an item.	Conduct an Active Living campaign such as a Safe Routes to School program.		
12.3	Choose an item.	Prominently identify mobility options: transit; paratransit/Dial-A-Ride; ridesharing/cab services; rental cars; bikes; airports.		
12.4	Choose an item.	Promote carpooling or ridesharing among community members, city employees, businesses, high schools and institutions of higher education.		
12.5	Choose an item.	Implement workplace multi-modal transportation best management practices - including telework/ flexwork - in city government, businesses or at a local health care provider.		
12.6	Choose an item.	Add/expand transit service, or promote car/bike sharing.		

Best Practice 13: Efficient City Fleets

BP 13 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 13: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
13.1	Choose an item.	Efficiently use your existing fleet of city vehicles by encouraging trip bundling, video conferencing,		

		carpooling, vehicle sharing and incentives/technology.		
13.2	Choose an item.	Right-size/down-size city fleet with the most fuel-efficient vehicles that are of an optimal size and capacity for their intended functions.		
13.3	Choose an item.	Phase-in operational changes, equipment changes including electric vehicles, and no-idling practices for city or local transit fleets.		
13.4	Choose an item.	Phase in bike, e-bike, foot or horseback modes for police, inspectors and other city staff.		
13.5	Choose an item.	Document that local school bus fleet has optimized routes, start times, boundaries, vehicle efficiency and fuels, driver actions to cut costs including idling reduction, and shifting students from the bus to walking, biking and city transit.		
13.6	Choose an item.	Retrofit city diesel engines or install auxiliary power units and/or electrified parking spaces.		

Best Practice 14: Demand-Side Travel Planning

BP 14 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 14: Any one actions

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
14.1	Choose an item.	Reduce/eliminate parking minimums; add parking maximums; develop district parking; install meters and charge for parking at curb and city-owned lots/ramps.		
14.2	Choose an item.	For cities with regular transit service, require/provide incentives for the siting of retail services at transit/density nodes.		

14.3	Choose an item.	For cities with regular transit service, require/provide incentives for the siting of higher density housing at transit/density nodes.		
14.4	Choose an item.	Require new (re)developments to prepare a travel demand management plan or transit-oriented development standards or LEED for Neighborhood Development certification.		

Environmental Management

[BP 15: Sustainable Purchasing](#)

[BP 16: Community Forests and Soil](#)

[BP 17: Stormwater Management](#)

[BP 18: Parks and Trails](#)

[BP 19: Surface Water](#)

[BP 20: Efficient Water and Wastewater Systems](#)

[BP 21: Septic Systems](#)

[BP 22: Sustainable Consumption and Waste](#)

[BP 23: Local Air Quality](#)

Best Practice 15: Sustainable Purchasing

BP 15 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 15: 15.1

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
15.1	Choose an item.	Adopt a sustainable purchasing policy or administrative guidelines/practices directing the city purchase at least: a. EnergyStar and EPEAT certified equipment and appliances. b. Paper containing post-consumer recycled content.		
15.2	Choose an item.	Purchase energy used by city government with a higher renewable percentage than required by MN law.		
15.3	Choose an item.	Establish purchasing preferences that support local, Minority, Disability, and Women-Owned businesses and, working with a local business		

		association, develop a list of locally-produced products and suppliers for common purchases.		
15.4	Choose an item.	Require purchase of U.S. EPA WaterSense-certified products.		
15.5	Choose an item.	Set minimum sustainability standards to reduce the impact of your concrete use, asphalt, roadbed aggregate, or other construction materials.		
15.6	Choose an item.	Require printing services to be purchased from companies using sustainable practices.		
15.7	Choose an item.	Lower the environmental footprint of meetings and events in the city.		
15.8	Choose an item.	Use national green standards/guidelines for purchasing/investments such as cleaning products, furniture, flooring/coatings.		

Best Practice 16: Community Forests and Soil

BP 16 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 16: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
16.1	Choose an item.	Certify as a Tree City USA.		
16.2	Choose an item.	Adopt best practices for urban tree planting/quality; require them in private developments and/or use them in at least one development project.		
16.3	Choose an item.	Budget for and achieve resilient urban canopy/tree planting goals.		
16.4	Choose an item.	Maximize tree planting along your main downtown street or throughout the city.		

16.5	Choose an item.	Adopt a tree preservation or native landscaping ordinance.		
16.6	Choose an item.	Build community capacity to protect existing trees by one or more of: a. Having trained tree specialists. b. Supporting volunteer forestry efforts. c. Adopting an EAB/forest management plan or climate adaptation plan for the urban forest.		
16.7	Choose an item.	Conduct a tree inventory or canopy study for public and private trees.		

Best Practice 17: Stormwater Management

BP 17 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 17: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
17.1	Choose an item.	Adopt and use Minnesota's Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS).		
17.2	Choose an item.	Complete the GreenStep Municipal Stormwater Management Assessment.		
17.3	Choose an item.	Adopt by ordinance one or more stormwater infiltration/management strategies to reduce impervious surface.		
17.4	Choose an item.	Create a stormwater utility that uses variable fees to incentivize and educate property owners.		
17.5	Choose an item.	Adopt and implement guidelines or design standards/incentives for stormwater infiltration/reuse practices.		
17.6	Choose an item.	Reduce de-icing and dust suppressant salt use to prevent permanent surface water and groundwater pollution.		

Best Practice 18: Parks and Trails

BP 18 Completed? **YES** Total actions completed: **2**

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
18.1	★	Make improvements within your city's system of parks, offroad trails and open spaces.	Through fundraising and state grant, established a walking trail from downtown to the lake park and added a boardwalk, floating bridge Completed a Trail Feasibility Study in July 2023. In July 2025, connected to regional trail, Heart of Lakes Trail	12/26/24
18.2	★	Plan and budget for a network of parks, green spaces, water features and trails for areas where new development is planned.	City ordinance that requires that any proposed subdivision dedicates a portion for conservation purposes or public uses like parks, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, etc.	1/7/25
18.3	Choose an item.	Achieve minimum levels of city green space and maximize the percent within a ten-minute walk of community members.		
18.4	Choose an item.	Adopt low-impact design standards in parks and trails that infiltrate or retain all 2 inch, 24-hour stormwater events on site.		
18.5	Choose an item.	Create park/city land management standards/practices that maximize at least one of the following: a. Low maintenance turf management; native landscaping; organic or integrated pest management; pollinator/monarch-safe policies. b. Recycling/compostables collection; use of compost as a soil amendment. c. Sources of nonpotable water, or surface/rain water, for irrigation.		

18.6	Choose an item.	Certify at least one golf course in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.		
18.7	Choose an item.	Document that the operation and maintenance, or construction / remodeling, of at least one park building used an asset management tool, the SB 2030 energy standard, or a green building framework.		
18.8	Choose an item.	Develop a program to involve community members in hands-on land restoration, invasive species management and stewardship projects.		

Best Practice 19: Surface Water

BP 19 Completed? **YES** Total actions completed: **2**

Actions to Complete BP 19: If the city has a State public water, 19.4 and any one additional action.
If the city does not have a State public water, any one action.

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
19.1	Choose an item.	Consistently monitor surface water quality/clarity and report findings to community members.		
19.2	Choose an item.	Conduct/support multi-party community conversations, assessments, plans, and actions to improve local water quality/quantity.		
19.3	★★	Adopt and publicly report on measurable surface water improvement targets for lake, river, wetland and ditches.	Vergas Long Lake Association conducts testing of long lake that is within city limits. They measure phosphorus, chlorophyll and water clarity. Report published	1/15/26
19.4	★	Adopt a shoreland ordinance for all river and lake shoreland areas.	Implemented shoreland inspection and permitting agreement with Otter Tail County	12/26/24
19.5	Choose an item.	Adopt goals to revegetate shoreland and create a local program or		

		outreach effort to help property owners with revegetation.		
19.6	Choose an item.	Implement an existing TMDL implementation plan.		
19.7	Choose an item.	Create/assist a Lake Improvement District.		
19.8	Choose an item.	Reduce flooding damage and costs through the National Flood Insurance Programs and the NFIP's Community Rating System.		

Best Practice 20: Efficient Water and Wastewater Systems

BP 20 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 20: If the city provides drinking water services and chooses to implement this BP, complete at least 20.1 and 20.2, OR 20.4.

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
20.1	Choose an item.	Compare the energy use and financial performance of your facilities with other peer facilities.		
20.2	Choose an item.	Plan and budget for motor maintenance and upgrades.		
20.3	Choose an item.	Establish an on-going budget and program for decreasing inflow and infiltration into sewer lines and losses in drinking water systems.		
20.4	Choose an item.	Optimize energy and chemical use at drinking water/wastewater facilities and decrease chloride in wastewater discharges.		
20.6	Choose an item.	Implement a wastewater plant efficiency project or a program for local private business operations.		
20.7	Choose an item.	Create a demand-side pricing program.		

Best Practice 21: Septic Systems

BP 21 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 21: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
21.1	Choose an item.	Report to landowners suspected noncompliant or failing septic systems as part of an educational, informational and financial assistance and outreach program.		
21.2	Choose an item.	Use a community process to address failing septic systems.		
21.3	Choose an item.	Clarify/establish one or more responsible management entities for the proper design, siting, installation, operation, monitoring and maintenance of septic systems.		
21.4	Choose an item.	Adopt a subsurface sewage treatment system ordinance.		
21.5	Choose an item.	Create a program to finance septic system upgrades.		
21.6	Choose an item.	Work with homeowners/ businesses in environmentally sensitive areas to promote innovative waste water systems.		
21.7	Choose an item.	Arrange for assistance to commercial, retail and industrial businesses with water use reduction, pollution prevention and pretreatment prior to discharge to septic.		

Best Practice 22: Sustainable Consumption and Waste

BP 22 Completed? **YES** Total actions completed: **2**

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
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22.1	★★	Improve city operations/ procurement to prevent/reuse/recycle/compost waste from all public facilities, and minimize use of toxics and generation of hazardous waste.	Community compost site available to residents since 2010 Recycling of plastic bags. Have a collection bin at City Municipal Building. Lions club provides oversight and works with Trex Recycling. For every 1000 pounds of recycled plastic a bench is donated to the community. To date 7 benches have been in placed. This initiative was started in 2022	1/15/26
22.2	★	Address concerns over consumer products and packaging through education, reuse options, recycling/composting options, credits, fees, mandates or bans.	City has site for recycling and compost	12/26/24
22.3	Choose an item.	Improve profitability, legal compliance and conserve resources through adoption of ordinance language, licensing and resource management contracts.		
22.4	Choose an item.	Publicize, promote and use the varied businesses/services collecting and marketing used, repaired and rental consumer goods, especially electronics, in the city/county.		
22.5	Choose an item.	Arrange for a residential and/or business/institutional source-separated organics collection/ management program.		
22.6	Choose an item.	Improve recycling services/expand to multi-unit housing and commercial businesses.		
22.7	Choose an item.	Improve/organize residential trash/ recycling/organics collection by private/public operations and offer significant volume-based pricing on residential garbage and/or incentives for recycling.		
22.8	Choose an item.	Adopt a construction and demolition ordinance governing demolition		

		permits that requires a level of recycling and reuse for building materials and soil/land-clearing debris.		
Best Practice 23: Local Air Quality BP 23 Completed? NO Total actions completed: 0 Actions to Complete BP 23: Any one action				
Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
<u>23.1</u>	Choose an item.	Replace small internal combustion engine lawn/garden equipment with lower polluting equipment.		
<u>23.2</u>	Choose an item.	Reduce residential burning of wood and yard waste and eliminate 'backyard' trash burning.		
<u>23.3</u>	Choose an item.	Decrease air emissions from vehicle idling, business trucking, and pollutants/noise from stationary engines/back-up generators.		
<u>23.5</u>	Choose an item.	Install, assist with and promote publicly available EV charging stations or public fueling stations for alternative fuel vehicles.		

Economic and Community Development

[BP 24: Benchmarks and Community Engagement](#)

[BP 25: Green Business Development](#)

[BP 26: Renewable Energy](#)

[BP 27: Local Food](#)

[BP 28: Business Synergies and Ecodistricts](#)

[BP 29: Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience](#)

Best Practice 24: Benchmarks and Community Engagement

BP 24 Completed? **YES** Total actions completed: **2**

Actions to Complete BP 24: ~~24.1~~

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
24.1	★★★	Use a city commission/committee to lead, coordinate, report and engage community members on sustainability best practices.	Conducted a community energy & resilience survey April-May 2025 to gain community insight and input regarding climate impacts, energy use, and support for city energy and resiliency related actions.	9/19/25
24.2	Choose an item.	Organize goals/outcome measures from all city plans and report to community members data that show progress toward meeting these goals.		
24.3	★★★	Engage community members/ partners in identifying, measuring, and reporting progress on key sustainability and social indicators.	Established Energy & Resilience Advisory Board to guide the city in achieving energy & resilience plan, focus priorities, track data and green step best practices.	1/15/26
24.4	Choose an item.	Conduct/support a broad sustainability education/action campaign.		
24.5	Choose an item.	Conduct a community visioning/ planning initiative that engages a diverse set of community members & stakeholders and uses a sustainability, resilience, or environmental justice framework.		

24.6	Choose an item.	Engage wide representation of community youth/students by creating opportunities to participate in city government.		
24.7	Choose an item.	Engage Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), renters, low-income, new Americans, differently abled and other traditionally under-represented community members.		

Best Practice 25: Green Business Development

BP 25 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 25: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
25.1	Choose an item.	Grow new/emerging green businesses and green jobs through targeted assistance and new workforce development.		
25.2	Choose an item.	Create/participate in a marketing/ outreach program to connect businesses with assistance providers.		
25.3	Choose an item.	Promote sustainable tourism.		
25.4	Choose an item.	Strengthen value-added businesses utilizing local "waste" material.		
25.5	Choose an item.	Lower the environmental and health risk footprint of a brownfield remediation/redevelopment project; report brightfield projects.		
25.6	Choose an item.	Promote green businesses that are recognized under a local, regional or national program.		
25.7	Choose an item.	Conduct/ participate in a buy local campaign for community members and local businesses.		

Best Practice 26: Renewable Energy

BP 26 Completed? **YES** Total actions completed: **1**

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
26.1	Choose an item.	Adopt wind/biomass ordinances that allow, enable, or encourage appropriate renewable energy installations.		
26.2	Choose an item.	Promote resident/business purchases and/or generation of clean energy.		
26.3	Choose an item.	Promote financing and incentive programs for clean energy.		
26.4	Choose an item.	Support a community solar garden or help community members participate in a community solar project.		
26.5	★	Install a public sector/municipally-owned renewable energy technology.	Participating in the West Central Initiative Municipal Building Solar Cooperative	12/26/24
26.6	Choose an item.	Report installed private sector-owned renewable energy/energy efficient generation capacity.		
26.7	Choose an item.	Become a solar-ready community, including adopting ordinance/zoning language and an expedited permit process for residents and businesses to install solar energy systems.		

Best Practice 27: Local Food

BP 27 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 27: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
27.1	Choose an item.	Incorporate working landscapes - agriculture and forestry - into the city by adopting an ordinance.		

27.2	Choose an item.	Facilitate creation of home/ community gardens, chicken & bee keeping, and incorporation of food growing areas/access in multifamily and residential developments.		
27.3	Choose an item.	Create, assist with and promote local food production/distribution within the city.		
27.4	Choose an item.	Measurably increase institutional buying, and sales through groceries and restaurants.		

Best Practice 28: Business Synergies and Ecodistricts

BP 28 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **0**

Actions to Complete BP 28: Any one action

Best Practice Action:	Completed: <i>(Star Level out of three stars)</i>	Action Description: <i>(View on GreenStep Website for full description)</i>	Action Summary: <i>(Provided by GreenStep Staff)</i>	Date of Last Entry:
28.2	Choose an item.	Document that at least one business/ building uses waste heat or water discharge from another business or conducts materials exchange activities with another organization.		
28.3	Choose an item.	Require, build or facilitate at least four sustainability attributes in a business/industrial park project.		
28.4	Choose an item.	Use 21st century ecodistrict tools to structure, guide and link multiple green and sustainable projects together in a mixed-use neighborhood/development, or innovation district.		

Best Practice 29: Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience

BP 29 Completed? **NO** Total actions completed: **1**

Actions to Complete BP 29: 29.1

Best Practice Action:	Completed: (Star Level out of three stars)	Action Description: (View on GreenStep Website for full description)	Action Summary: (Provided by GreenStep Staff)	Date of Last Entry:
29.1	Choose an item.	Prepare to maintain public health and safety during extreme weather and climate-change-related events, while also taking a preventive approach to reduce risk for community members.		
29.2	Choose an item.	Integrate climate resilience into city or tribal planning, policy, operations, and budgeting processes.		
29.3	Choose an item.	Increase social connectedness through engagement, capacity building, public investment, and opportunities for economically vulnerable residents.		
29.4	Choose an item.	Encourage private sector action and incentivize investment in preventive approaches that reduce risk and minimize impacts.		
29.5	Choose an item.	Protect public buildings and natural/constructed infrastructure to reduce physical damage and sustain their function during extreme weather events.		
29.6	Choose an item.	Reduce the urban heat impacts of public buildings/sites/infrastructure.		
29.7	Choose an item.	Protect water supply and wastewater treatment facilities to reduce physical damage and sustain their function during extreme weather events.		
29.8	Choose an item.	Improve local energy resilience.		

**Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
September 2026 Vergas Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
Vergas Event Center Smart Room
5:30 PM on Wednesday, September 9, 2026**

6. Status of Vergas Energy & Resiliency Plan

- A. United Prairie Foundation
- B. Charging Smart Regional Engagement Cohort

**Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
September 2026 Vergas Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
Vergas Event Center Smart Room
5:30 PM on Wednesday, September 9, 2026**

7. United Prairie Foundation

Files Attached

- Prairie Vision.pdf



Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
September 2026 Vergas Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
Vergas Event Center Smart Room
5:30 PM on Wednesday, September 9, 2026

9. Next Meeting Date/Time

To be determined