



# City of La Crosse, WI

Climate Action Plan Proposal

June 18, 2021



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City of La Crosse, Planning and Development Department  
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Dear Lewis,

The City of La Crosse is no stranger to the seriousness of climate change impacts. Increased frequency of Mississippi River flooding amidst sustained drought conditions, particularly in the south part of the state, all while the month of June 2021 brings an exceptionally hot heat wave. Climate change is here...now, and these extreme weather events caused a myriad of consequences for the people who call La Crosse home.

But La Crosse has made substantial progress in addressing the urgency of climate change already. The community's goals to achieve community-wide carbon neutrality and use 100 percent renewable energy by 2050 are important and bold. The City has already taken several steps to begin its march towards the 2050 goal, yet there is a desire to focus on what can and should be done between now and 2030. That's a focus we understand and appreciate - the time to act is now.

La Crosse is ideally positioned to create a groundbreaking Climate Action Plan that will mobilize and inspire action this decade while serving as a guiding light for years to come. This plan will address La Crosse' most important climate vulnerabilities with actionable steps. It will chart a course for how to implement innovative ideas to achieve the its goals, and serve as a model for other cities that want to follow La Crosse' lead in doing the same. It will clearly show what will be necessary to achieve the goal carbon neutrality by 2050.

What's more, the plan will achieve these outcomes by successfully engaging La Crosse residents from every neighborhood, with particular attention to the voices of people from historically underserved communities. Understanding the interconnections between race, economic outcomes, public health, and environmental health will be critical to implementing strategies that will allow everyone to thrive.

Achieving this Climate Action Plan requires a unique combination of engagement, facilitation, and technical skills. Verdis Group has the track record to guide the La Crosse community through a multi-layered planning process that will yield a top-notch plan.

We have teamed with two firms that have experience in - and in one case are located in - the City of La Crosse: RDG Planning & Design and Vendi Advertising. RDG brings important experience working in the community and boasts in-depth natural river restoration and watershed planning expertise, among others.

Our partners at full-service advertising, marketing, brand, PR, and digital firm Vendi will add their experience and expertise in our stakeholder mapping and in the development of our Public Engagement Plan. They will also be responsible for creating messaging and graphical communication for a variety of media that is clear, engaging, and attractive, and they will also take the lead in designing the final Climate Action Plan in a way that communicates outcomes and builds excitement for implementation.



We have completed over a dozen sustainability and climate action planning projects over the past decade, which has allowed us to hone effective methods rooted in best practices, which are always tailored to our clients' unique needs. Our understanding of climate impacts, analytical expertise, engaging facilitation techniques, and excellent project management skills all allow us to offer an unparalleled level of service to help municipalities thrive in a climate-altered future.

This proposal articulates our plan to create a truly innovative and transformational Climate Action Plan for the City of La Crosse. We can't wait to get started!

**Contact Information:**

**Project Manager:**

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We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Kim Morrow  
Director of Climate Planning and Resilience  
Verdis Group

Craig Moody  
Managing Partner  
Verdis Group



## 2. Overview

### Project Understanding

With the Verdis team leading the way, the Climate Action Plan (CAP) for the City of La Crosse will be a visionary document that will serve as a guiding light for years to come as community leaders work to create a climate-smart city. It will clearly articulate the climate risks the city faces and communicate what residents from all neighborhoods need to thrive in the midst of those risks. It will include smart and equitable targets and 2030 milestones to reduce emissions and increase climate resilience. It will lay out a pathway to achieving those goals that is relevant, actionable, and exciting, with a focus on spurring action in this decade.

To achieve this desired outcome, we have designed a multi-faceted approach based on our years of climate action planning with municipalities and our ability to cater a unique experience for the La Crosse community. Verdis Advertising and RDG Planning & Design bring exceptional local experience and will add incredible value by sharing their local perspectives. Our approach centers equitable community engagement in a way that allows residents of La Crosse to shape each phase of the planning process, with an emphasis on outreach to and inclusion of frontline communities.

A series of interactive workshops with the CAP Task Force will provide rich input to and thoughtful review of project outcomes. Meetings with the Technical Advisory Group and other subject matter experts will provide the technical refinement necessary to ensure recommended strategies are actionable. Our greenhouse gas emissions forecasting and planning analysis will ensure that all stakeholders have the data they need to make impactful decisions.

Our approach to creating a CAP for La Crosse centers community engagement in a multi-faceted strategic planning framework. We have designed our community engagement approach with a priority on bringing voices that have been historically underserved to the table. We will conduct detailed analyses at several key junctures to provide analytic frameworks to guide decision-making. Key components of our approach are described below.

#### Key Planning Groups

**CAP Project Team (CPT)** - Verdis Group and key City staff guiding the project (3-4 individuals).

**CAP Steering Committee (CSC)** - Primary advising body to guide the project. CSC members will also be on the CTF, which is where they will review and analyze recommended strategies.

**CAP Task Force (CTF)** - Approximately 40 community stakeholders and city staff who will play a key role in the development of the plan through a series of interactive workshops.

**Technical Advisory Group (TAG)** - Approximately 10-15 subject matter experts who will advise on the technical aspects of the plan's development.

**TAG Refinement Teams** - Focus teams that will be created to refine strategy ideas. Members will include subject matter experts from TAG and others.

**Community Partners** - Well-connected individuals who are trusted in frontline communities.

**CAP Focus Groups** - Four groups of 8-10 stakeholders (particularly individuals from frontline communities) who will participate in interviews for gathering detailed input.



The project will unfold over five key phases:

**Phase 1: Discovery.** In the first phase, we will establish project norms, structures, and plans; conduct a comprehensive review of La Crosse’s prior work that will inform the CAP; and create the Public Engagement Plan. This Plan will detail the stakeholders that will be engaged during the project, establish brand standards, and outline the communication and outreach vehicles to be used in coming months.

The CAP Task Force and Community Partners will also be identified and assembled. The public-facing project website will be developed, and we will conduct our first (of five) site visit.

**Phase 2: Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment.** In Phase 2 we will conduct a detailed climate risk and vulnerability assessment for the City of La Crosse. Using stakeholder input and a research-based analysis framework, we will assess the multitude of ways that both climate and non-climate stressors may impact the community in coming years. We will also assess the City’s adaptive capacity to respond to those impacts. In this phase, we will begin our public engagement series, activating a number of outreach modalities around the question of how climate change is affecting La Crosse residents.

**Phase 3: CAP Development.**

With the first two phases laying the groundwork, in Phase 3 we will begin the stakeholder-driven planning process. Structured around four “Planning Pillars”, the process will engage the CAP Task Force and residents in a series of key questions that move from establishing a vision for a climate-smart 2050, identifying barriers to achieving that vision, developing emission-reduction targets, 2030 milestones and strategies that address the barriers and work toward the vision, and finally, creating an actionable implementation plan with a focus on short-term strategies in this decade. Along the way, La Crosse residents will be engaged through a variety of outreach modalities.

We will conduct a 2020 greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and will then conduct GHG forecasting to establish three “business as usual” scenarios for what La Crosse’s emissions may look like between now and 2050. Finally, we will model three planning scenarios in which a range of emissions reduction targets are met. This analysis will provide all planning groups and residents with the information they need to develop realistic strategies for the CAP.

The planning process will yield many ideas for inclusion in the CAP, and these ideas will go through a detailed process of categorization and strategy refinement. Strategy refinement teams and subject matter experts will be convened to evaluate the strategies and ensure they are relevant and actionable. Finally, the CTF and the public will be engaged to determine what implementation of the CAP will look like for the next year and beyond.

**CAP** - Climate Action Plan

**GHG** - Greenhouse Gas

**CRVA** - Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment



Phase 3 will also include the creation of a Strategy Scorecards for select, short-term, high-impact strategies. Scorecards will include a cost-benefit analysis as well as GHG impact rating, list of co-benefits, lead agency designation and priority.

**Phase 4: Plan Drafting & Design.** During Phase 4 we will carefully draft the text of the final CAP document. Once it is approved, we will send it to our design team, Vendi, who will transform it into an engaging, accessible and elegantly-designed document.

**Phase 5: Plan Approval.** In the final phase of the project, we will support the La Crosse City staff in bringing the CAP through the approval process. We will present the plan to Common Council and/or Plan Commission by describing the process, outcomes, and opportunities that lie ahead for the community. Afterward, we will wrap up the project by creating a presentation for City staff to use for further outreach, and we will create a Climate Action Toolkit that will allow residents, neighborhoods and community groups to get started implementing the plan on their own terms.

### **Community Engagement**

As visually demonstrated in our timeline in section 3, Community Engagement is not an independent phase. Rather, it begins in Phase 1 and continues throughout the course of the entire project with strategic ebbs and flows in order to obtain the right information at the right time from the right stakeholders. We explain our engagement approach in section 4, and section 3 identifies key engagement strategies during the four rounds of public engagement.

## **The Verdis, RDG & Vendi Team**

We have pulled together an exceptional team that is well suited to the City of La Crosse. We have extensive experience in sustainability and climate action planning. We have in-depth expertise in GHG planning, equitable public engagement, strategic planning, watershed management, conservation, cost benefit analyses, marketing, and graphic design. And our team has extensive experience in and knowledge of the La Crosse community. Below is a summary of each organization's roles and responsibilities.

### **Verdis Group Roles & Responsibilities**

We will lead and manage the project, serving as the primary point of contact throughout, and ensuring that the project is on time and on budget. Some of the more critical roles and responsibilities include:

1. Greenhouse gas inventory, forecast and planning
2. Completion of the Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment
3. Full design of and oversee the implementation of the public engagement plan. This includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Project website development and management
  - b. Creation and implementation of the Public Engagement Plan
  - c. Design and facilitate all five CAP Task Force workshops
  - d. Conducting focus group meetings



- e. Extensive engagement with and coordination of several stakeholder groups, including the CAP Project Team, CAP Steering Committee, CAP Task Force, CAP Technical Advisory Group, Common Council, Plan Commission and others
4. Development and refinement of strategies with input from several stakeholder groups and subject matter experts
5. Recommending 2030 GHG emission targets and milestones
6. Draft the final plan and coordinating with Vendi and the City on design
7. Shepherding the CAP through the approval process
8. Preparing the Implementation Toolkit

## **RDG Planning and Design Roles & Responsibilities**

RDG's years of experience working with and in the City of La Crosse is an important asset to the project, and RDG brings exceptional expertise in key areas that are critical for a Mississippi River community. Specifically, their team will add meaningful depth of expertise in the areas of riverfront restoration, watershed management, landscape architecture and city planning. Their primary responsibilities for the project include:

1. Provide input on Stakeholder Mapping & Public Engagement Plan
2. Assist with CAP Task Force workshops #1, 2 and 3.
3. Strategy development and refinement
  - a. Assist with preliminary ideation of strategies in select content areas based on RDG's expertise
  - b. Assist with the refinement of strategies in select content areas
4. Prepare for, lead, and report back on select engagement activities, which will be defined by the Public Engagement Plan.
  - a. These will include:
    - i. In-person public workshop #1
    - ii. Open house style public meeting for presenting the plan
  - b. These *may* include:
    - i. Select, small, in-person meetings that occur in aggregate (several meetings over two days).
    - ii. In order to minimize travel costs and emissions, Verdis Group will facilitate small community meetings when they're held virtually. When there are in-person meetings that can be grouped so as to maximize outcomes in one trip, RDG may be called upon to be present.
    - iii. For one-off, in-person meetings, we expect City of La Crosse staff to lead and attend; Verdis Group will provide training and resources.

## **Vendi Advertising Roles & Responsibilities**

Vendi's local experience and knowledge coupled with its stellar design work will be on full display. Their primary responsibilities for the project include:



1. Provide input on Stakeholder Mapping & Public Engagement Plan
2. Establish a graphic and written communications standard
3. Support the development of certain print and/or digital outreach materials. Tasks will be dictated by the Public Engagement Plan, but may include creating marketing materials such as posters or rack cards, creating infographics, creating a social media templates and/or assisting with social media posts.
4. Design of final Climate Action Plan document. Handling all matters related to the final CAP's graphical layout and design, including icons, graphs, illustrations, and photos.
5. Coordinate printing and production of marketing and outreach materials

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical aspects of our approach to climate action planning. We believe the world cannot truly thrive until everyone can thrive. We have designed our community engagement approach to include the voices of people who have been historically underserved. The experiences, needs, and desires of people who may experience climate impacts most acutely will be key inputs to each phase of the planning process.

## Strategic Planning Process

In Phase 3: CAP Development, we will engage stakeholders in a strategic four-part planning framework. This approach allows stakeholders to set a vision for what the community can achieve, to understand barriers that might impede the vision, to develop strategies and goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase community resilience, and finally, to plan implementation actions that will bring the final plan to life.

We will involve stakeholders in four planning nodes - our four pillar planning process - around which we will organize a series of workshops for the CAP Steering Committee and a set of outreach activities for the public.

1. **2050 Vision.** What would a climate-smart La Crosse of 2050 be like? We engage a wide range of stakeholders in capturing their best ideas for the city's future.
2. **Barriers.** What are the barriers that might hold the community back from achieving their vision? Listening to many voices will help to uncover potential snags, conflicts or delays and allow them to be intentionally addressed in the strategy development phase.
3. **Goal-Setting and Strategy Development.** What specific actions can we take to reduce emissions and become a more resilient community? We do a lot of listening to residents and subject matter experts, combined with consultation of a wide range of cutting-edge resources, to discern the best ideas for the La Crosse community. We analyze GHG emission reduction pathways to advise stakeholders in setting ambitious yet achievable climate goals if they've not already been set.
4. **Implementation Planning.** What will be the community's specific, measurable accomplishments be for the first year? For the next five years? We will work with planning teams to articulate key





accountability structures and timeframes to ensure La Crosse can hit the ground running with the implementation of its CAP.

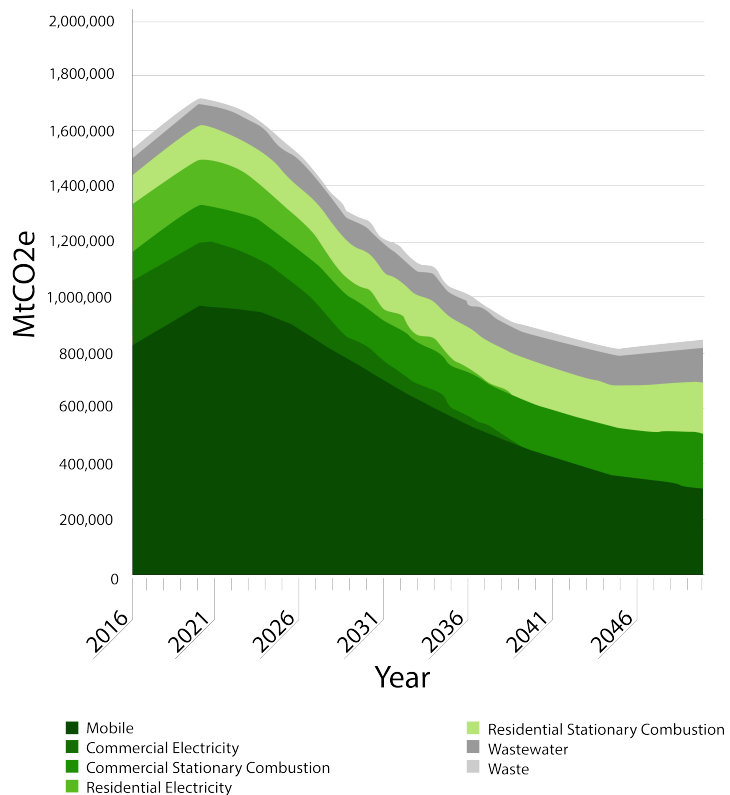
We incorporate all the data gleaned from this process into our vulnerability analysis tool. We then go through a careful process of rating and quantifying the risks—assessing likelihood of projected climate impacts, potential consequences, projected risks, and the City’s adaptive capacity to manage those risks. The result is an overall vulnerability level rating for each climate impact. We will write up a report detailing our findings, which will be included as an appendix in the final CAP. We’ll also have our design team create a one-page graphical summary of key findings that can be shared on the website, on social media, and in outreach activities.

## Greenhouse Gas Forecasting and Planning

We will first update La Crosse’s GHG inventory to 2020. From there, the really fun work begins! To measure the impact of greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies, La Crosse will first need a baseline from which to measure reductions. Unlike most baselines, which measure the past, GHG baseline forecasts make assumptions about what the future might look like between now and 2030, 2040 and 2050. Since there are a wide range of variables outside of La Crosse’ control that will impact what those GHG baseline emissions might look like—factors such as population growth or decline, emissions factors from electricity generation, increasing energy efficiency factors—we model three different baseline scenarios, which will form the backdrop of La Crosse’s GHG forecasts.

Once baseline forecasts are established, we move on to GHG planning. We will produce projections for three different scenarios, each one assuming ten target source reductions (strategies for reducing emissions) measured from the three baseline forecasts. These scenarios are intended to provide insight into where La Crosse could be in 2030 and through to 2050 if ten target source reductions were achieved. The ten target source reductions might include assumptions such as a reduction in vehicle miles traveled, an increase in electric vehicle adoption and bus ridership, maximizing onsite renewables, reducing natural gas usage, and/or sequestering carbon, among

**Sample GHG Planning Scenario, 2016 - 2050**



An example of our GHG planning analysis. We will model ten different target source reduction strategies across three scenarios to find out what it will take to meet La Crosse’s emissions reduction goals.



others.

Once complete, these GHG planning efforts will provide valuable models and inputs into La Crosse's target scenario and milestone planning for 2030. And it will also help the community understand how it might achieve its 2050 community-wide carbon neutrality goal. These models will directly inform the development of actionable strategies for the CAP.

## Strategy Scorecards

We will produce a series of Strategy Scorecards that include a rating system to assist with the prioritization of recommended actions in the Climate Action and Plan (CAP), and we will perform cost-benefit analysis (CBA) for select quantifiable, short-term, high-impact actions.

The rating system will be used broadly as a prioritization mechanism to assist with budgetary decisions and the efficient allocation of resources. A Strategy Scorecard for each policy objective will identify relative values of estimated costs and benefits (e.g. reduction of GHGs) and incorporate other important qualitative factors (e.g., improved air quality, improved community health, etc.) for comparison among recommended policy options. The goal of the rating system is to effectively prioritize actions within CAP strategies in order to promote co-benefits and pursue those with the greatest impact on GHG reductions and other community benefits.

Our CBA is an assessment method that quantifies the value of impacts (i.e. social costs and social benefits) of a policy or project. The purpose of CBA is to inform social decision-making to help increase social value and improve allocative efficiency. The CBA to be performed is *ex ante*, which investigates whether a proposed policy or project will produce positive social benefit. The analysis will attempt to identify direct costs, direct benefits, and externalities related to greenhouse gas emissions. The goal of CBA for the purpose of the CAP is to provide insight into the relationship between estimated costs and expected benefits from a particular action. CBA will be performed on select quantifiable strategy actions that would have significant budgetary considerations; the exact number of strategy actions to go through the CBA will need to be mutually agreed upon by the City of La Crosse and Verdis Group.

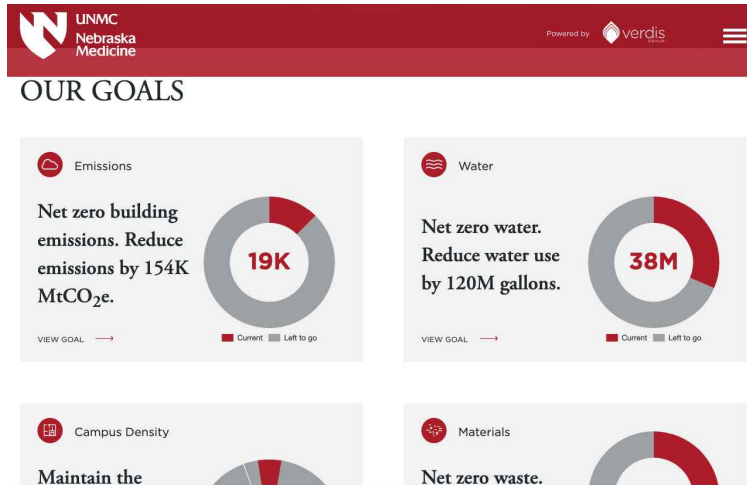
## Dashboard

As part of the final Plan Approval phase, we will deliver a graphics-rich online dashboard that will serve as the main tracking tool for La Crosse to show its progress towards its climate and resilience goals. Specific metrics to be tracked on the Dashboard will be determined in consultation with the Project Team, but may include greenhouse gas emissions, amount of renewable energy used, percentage of electric vehicles in the City fleet, public health metrics, social equity metrics, the number of community gardens, etc. The format is flexible and can accommodate whatever data is available.

We have included a setup and a one-year license for the Dashboard in our Cost Proposal (\$10,000 fee). Extending the license for future years is available at an additional fee of \$5,000 per year. This would include Verdis Group making quarterly updates to the Dashboard with data and narrative provided by La Crosse staff.

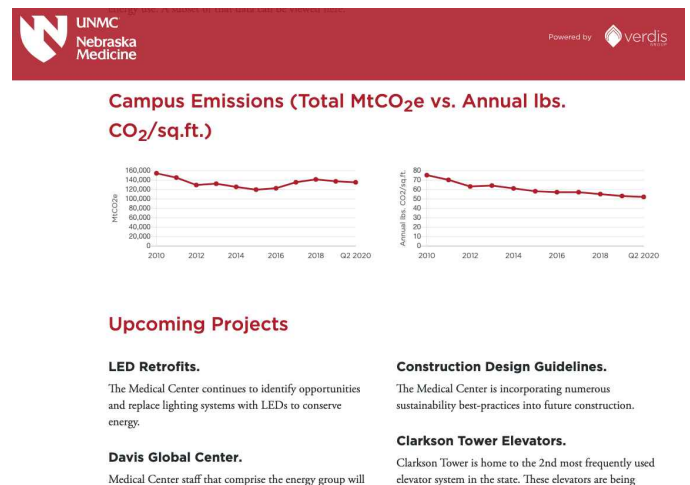
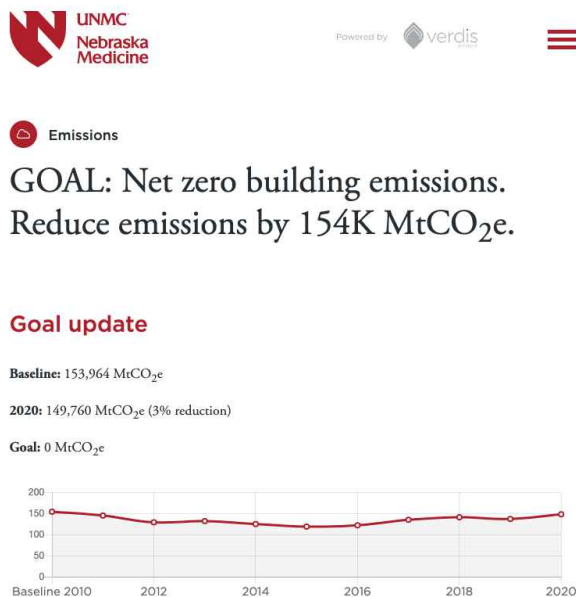


See our Dashboard in action at the [University of Nebraska Medical Center](#). Three screenshots are included below.



The main page of the Dashboard (at left) includes brief summaries of goals. Each is clickable and takes the user to more information pertaining to that goal area.

After clicking on a goal area, users will see more detail pertaining to that particular goal. As an example, GHG emissions over time (below) or the projects being pursued in order to drive down GHG emissions (sample at right).

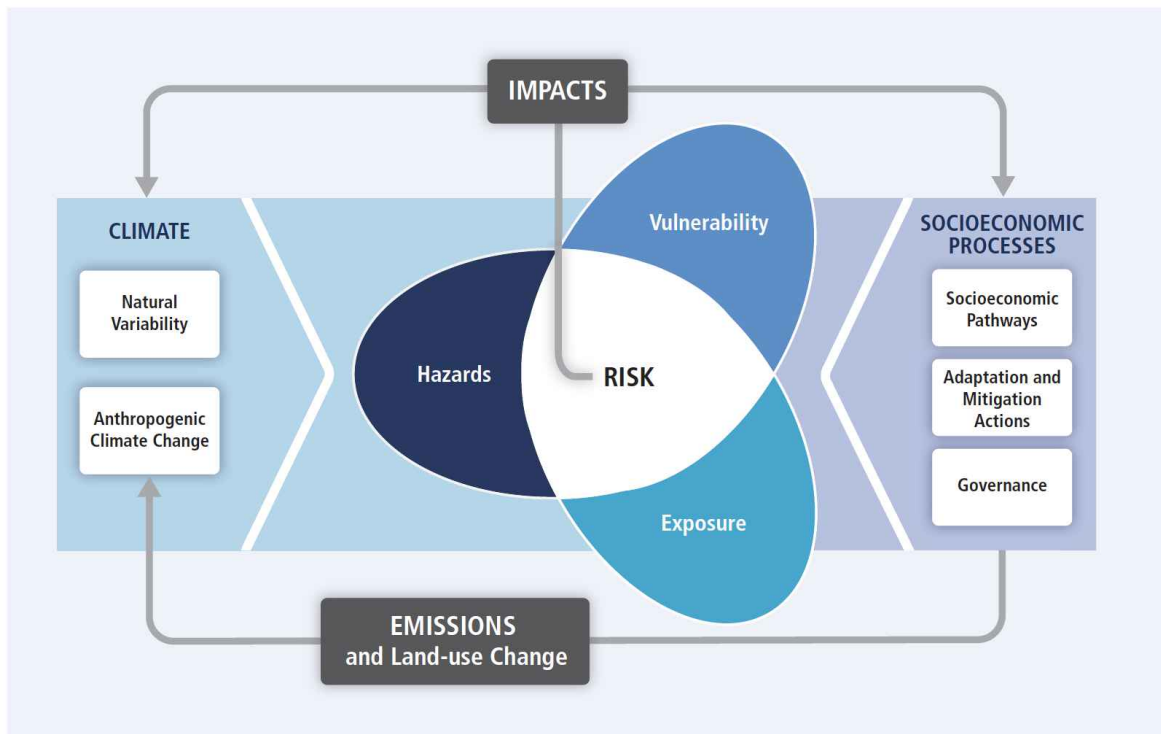


## Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

The IPCC describes climate vulnerability as “The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity.” (IPCC, 2001, p. 995)

We approach our vulnerability assessment work with this systemic perspective in mind. We do a careful analysis of the projected climate impacts for a municipality, and pair that with an assessment of the ways in which non-climate stressors like poverty, lack of affordable housing, or public health may intersect with

### How Climate Risk Is Created



Source: IPCC, 2014: Summary for policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Field, et. al. Mastrandrea, et. al., (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, pp. 1-32.

climate stressors in a way that will create risk exposure for the community. Our analysis incorporates equity factors so that stakeholders will be able to understand the unequal ways in which climate impacts are often experienced in a city. Using a research-based tool developed by the Climate Impacts Research Consortium, we are able to conduct climate vulnerability analyses that are detailed, analytic, and informative. The end result



quantifies each projected climate impact by likelihood, consequences, risks, adaptive capacity, and vulnerability level.

Our process begins by obtaining climate projection data from national and regional climate databases. This will provide us with valuable information on warming temperatures, extreme heat days, amount and type of precipitation, length of growing seasons, fire risk, and more.

Next, we talk with local subject matter experts to find out what this data actually means for La Crosse. We look to the past for valuable information, asking questions like: How was La Crosse affected by past extreme weather events? What gaps in community services were identified in those experiences? What has been done to ameliorate them? Who was vulnerable? What aspects of city operations are more vulnerable than others? It's very important to get on-the-ground information from residents about how they have been affected by climate change, so we'll start our public engagement process here, asking for the specific ways that they are experiencing climate change in their lives.

We'll also look at how the community might be affected in the future by climate impacts that haven't had a big presence yet, but might in the future, such as: public health risks from insect-borne diseases, water quality issues, extreme snow/ice events, increasing humidity, food supply chain disruptions, etc. We will also survey key City staff on their opinion of La Crosse' adaptive capacity in key areas.

## 3. Scope & Timelines

### Project Work Plan

The detailed outline below describes each step of the planning process. Please note that steps denoted with an asterisk are suggested add-ons to the main project budget. The City can add these activities to make a more robust engagement process, but they are optional. Please see Section 6: Cost Proposal for details.

#### Phase 1: Discovery

September - October 2021

1. Project Kickoff
  - a. Kickoff Meeting with Project Team. Confirm scope, process, roles, responsibilities, and timeline.
  - b. Create meeting schedule, workflow management system, and project planning documents.
  - c. City completes Verdis information request.
  - d. Develop and begin use of methodology for tracking of community resources used throughout the project.
  - e. Stakeholder mapping: City and Verdis (with input from RDG) work collaboratively to outline all the stakeholders who can influence or will be impacted by the CAP project in order to help guide engagement.
  - f. Identification of potential CAP Task Force (CTF) members. Our experience shows that a group of around 40 members representing a wide cross-section of the La Crosse community will work best to accomplish the project goals. This group will have an important participatory role in shaping the CAP through a series of interactive planning workshops.
  - g. Identification of Community Partners to help open doors for greater engagement, especially to frontline communities.
  - h. Identification of Technical Advisory Group members.
  - i. Open application process for CTF.
  - f. Site Visit #1: Second meeting with Project Team and CAP Steering Committee: La Crosse Context. Tour, community questions, environmental assessment, demographic data, accomplishments, trends, review draft CTF membership. This will be the first of our five site visits.
  - g. Finalization of CTF. City to extend invites to participate.
  - h. Meeting #3 with Project Team: CAP Task Force (CTF) workshop planning.
    - i. Review overall process, number of workshops and intended outcomes of each workshop, writing process, and engagement philosophy.
  - h. Virtual meeting with Community Partners to discuss public engagement approach.
2. Create Public Engagement Plan.
  - a. This plan will guide the engagement work throughout the process. The objectives will be centered around International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum. A uniform graphic and written communication standard/brand will be created. Stakeholder mapping will have been

Site  
Visit #1

The **Public Engagement Plan** defines and describes the engagement that will occur throughout the process. While several activities are included throughout this proposal, they should generally be considered a draft until the Public Engagement Plan is developed.



completed and will inform the public engagement plan, and engagement approaches to be used throughout the project will be articulated.

3. Biweekly Project Team meetings begin.
4. Set up project website.
  - a. We use EngagementHQ as an accessible, easy-to-use central communication and engagement hub for the project.

#### *PHASE 1 DELIVERABLES:*

1. *Meeting schedule with key planning groups*
2. *Agreed-upon protocols for workflow management system*
3. *CAP Task Force membership and meeting plans*
4. *Public Engagement Plan*
5. *Project website*

## Phase 2: Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA)

September 2021 - January 2022

1. Review prior regional risk assessment reports, including from the Floodplain Advisory Committee, the Strategic Plan for Sustainability, other relevant reports, and GIS maps.
2. Obtain climate projection data.
  - a. Sources to be consulted include the Fourth National Climate Assessment, the Climate Toolbox, NOAA, and EPA resources.
3. Obtain demographic and community equity data to gain a better understanding of community vulnerabilities.
4. Consult with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and subject matter experts with the City and County to obtain information about the impacts and findings of previous extreme weather events.
5. Refine Climate Risk & Vulnerability (CRVA) framework.
  - a. The vulnerability assessment table developed by the Climate Impacts Research Consortium will serve as the analysis framework for this step of the project (see Section 2: Overview).
6. Conduct CRVA.
  - a. Incorporate public input from Round 1 of public engagement (described below) into the CRVA analysis.
  - b. Detailed analysis of climate impacts, ways in which climate impacts may be felt in the community, likelihood, consequences, risks, adaptive capacity, and vulnerability level.
7. Review findings with TAG and subject matter experts.
8. Prepare CRVA report.
9. Create a graphical summary version of CRVA findings to share with the public.

#### *PHASE 2 DELIVERABLES:*

1. *Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment*
2. *Results from Round 1 public engagement*
3. *Graphical summary of CRVA findings*



## Round 1 of public engagement: How does climate change affect you?

The first round of engagement will serve two important purposes: 1) to educate and spread awareness about the importance of the project, and 2) to gather insight from the community about their experiences with climate change, which will inform the climate risk & vulnerability assessment.



**\*Work with influential community members to create brief videos** about why the CAP is important to them and their communities (with a hashtag), to be shared on their own social media, the City's social media, and the project website. The goal is to generate buzz and invite others to join in posting about the CAP, and the commitment is limited to a quick recording on social media of choice.



### **Public launch of project via various communication channels.**

- Social media content about CAP and vulnerabilities
- Hard copy advertisements like flyers or posters for local organizations (i.e., faith-based orgs, libraries, coffee shops)
- Content for organizations to use in newsletters or bulletins
- Content for City's news channels, newspaper/local news (radio, TV, print)



### **Public Workshop**

The first (of two) public workshops will be held with the intent to educate the public on the project and climate change, and to give the public an opportunity to inform the community's vision. The latter will inform the CAP Task Force's work at its first workshop.



### **Kickoff survey on engagement website.**

- Short survey with targeted questions about climate change
- Encourage participants to sign up for updates to be notified when additional surveys/activities are open

## Phase 3: CAP Development

**October 2021 - June 2022**

1. Comprehensive review of existing local and regional plans, reports and documents related to CAP.
  - a. Documents to be reviewed include the City's Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan for Sustainability, Sustainability Indicators Report for 2019, Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2019, Bicycle & Pedestrian



- Master Plan, Green Complete Streets Ordinance, Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan, and others as needed.
2. Conduct 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory.
    - a. Verdis Group will conduct municipal and community 2020 and 2015 GHG inventories from which to baseline emissions. These inventories will be entered into Clearpath to align with previous GHG inventory work already conducted and to provide city staff with a consistent data location.
  3. Recruit members for three rounds of one-hour CAP Focus Group interviews.
    - a. Focus Group members will be a mix of individuals from different sectors, focusing on individuals from frontline communities and those who are influential in the community. Some CAP Focus Group members will be offered financial stipends for their time.
  4. Public Workshop #1: 2050 Vision (in person).
    - a. The first (of two) public workshop will be held with the intent to educate the public on the project and climate change, and to give the public an opportunity to inform the community's vision. The latter will inform the CAP Task Force's work at its first workshop.
  5. CTF Workshop #1: 2050 Vision (in person).
    - a. In the first CAP Task Force workshop, members will be oriented to the project and review findings from the 2020 GHG inventory. We will present a summary of La Crosse's projected climate risks, and work with the Task Force to collaboratively ideate a preliminary vision for a climate-smart La Crosse.

Site  
Visit #2

## Round 2 of public engagement: What do you want to see for the future of your community as a result of the CAP process?



**CAP Focus Groups.** Convene focus groups to 1) report out results of the first round of engagement and 2) conduct a visioning exercise that will help inform strategy development. These focus groups will be primarily made up of frontline community members, alongside other key stakeholders. The groups will remain the same and will be convened to participate in three interviews throughout the project.



**\*Work with a professional production company to create a short educational video** about climate change, the CAP process, and vision areas identified by focus groups and CTF. Videos make content more accessible and engaging. This is an optional activity included in the Add-On Budget.



**Attend community events or host pop-up events** in gathering places.

This may include sharing stories from the first round of engagement and creating a voting activity that will ask community members to place stickers or use tokens to vote on what they want to see in the community in a climate-smart future. Primarily attended by City staff.



**Attend community group meetings** (e.g. neighborhood associations, faith-based gatherings, non-profit board meetings) and/or co-host meetings with Community Partners to present information about the project and ask visioning question. Primarily attended by City staff.



**Visioning activity on engagement website.** Participants add idea cards to a page about their vision for the future of La Crosse, comment and like others' ideas.

6. CTF Workshop #2: Barriers (virtual).

- a. In this interactive workshop, CTF members will be asked to reflect on what issues might be keeping La Crosse from achieving the vision articulated in the previous workshop.

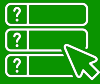
## Round 3 of public engagement: What's keeping us from achieving this vision and how can we overcome those barriers?



**CAP Focus Groups:** Convene the same focus groups to participate in a discussion about barriers to achieving the vision.



**Social media campaign with poll:** Create sponsored social media posts asking asking community members to identify what they see as the most significant barriers to achieving various aspects of the vision. Then, ask community members to identify their priorities for overcoming those barriers. Use content from CTF workshop and focus group interview.



**Barriers activity or survey on engagement website.**



**Explore options to broaden reach** through community partnerships such as tagging onto a speaker series or a resiliency-themed networking events or forums. Explore asking existing annual events/program to have a 2022 theme on climate change.

## 7. GHG Forecasting.

- a. Creation of three “business as usual” baseline forecasts of possible future emissions from which to then measure potential emissions reductions of different scenarios. Includes different levels of assumptions on metrics like population growth, electricity utility provider fuel mix trends, and vehicle emissions trends. The intent of these forecasts is to demonstrate the breadth of possible futures to use as a starting point for the GHG reduction analysis.

## 8. CTF Workshop #3: Strategic Directions.

- a. In this workshop, the results of the GHG Forecasting scenarios will be presented, and CTF members will engage in an interactive workshop to develop ideas for the strategic directions of the CAP. Strategic directions:
  - Look into the future and help us answer the question, “Where to?”
  - Are creative, dynamic, and guide us on our path of realizing the vision
  - Inform the concrete planning efforts that are developed in the implementation planning workshop
  - Answer the question, “What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the underlying contradictions and move us toward our vision?”

Site  
Visit #3

## 9. TAG Refinement Teams.

- a. TAG strategy refinement teams will be created. These teams will be organized based on the climate action subject areas that emerge during the process. TAG Refinement Team members will include subject matter experts from the TAG and others, some of whom may be members of the CTF. Each Focus Team will work to generate, review and refine strategies for their assigned climate action area. The Focus Teams, and in some cases individual subject matter experts from these Teams, will be engaged on and off throughout the remainder of the strategy development process.
- b. The climate action areas will be borne out of the results of public engagement and through discussions with the planning groups (CTF and CSC in particular).

## 10. Strategy refinement.

- a. Using input that will have been generated from public engagement and CTF work thus far, we will consult with RDG, the TAG and subject matter experts to suggest, refine and clarify the specific climate action strategies that will be included in the CAP. Strategy refinement will likely be happening in an ongoing fashion for the remainder of Phase 3.

## 11. GHG Planning.

- a. In order to understand the estimated GHG reduction impact of various climate actions La Crosse could take, ten (10) emission-reduction scenarios will be selected for analysis of their GHG reduction potential between now and 2050. The assumed strategies selected will likely relate to energy generation, vehicle miles traveled, transportation mode splits, energy efficiency, composting, and land use, among others. A priority will be placed on the short-term (now through 2030).

## An Overview of Strategy Development and Refinement

The process of vetting and refining strategies is one that requires a great deal of experience, some flexibility and persistence, and having the right people at the table. There are seven important key elements to the strategy development process:

1. Ideas for potential strategies to reduce emissions and increase climate resilience will come from every corner of the community. Through our engagement process, we aim to ensure that the community is fully informing and driving the strategy ideation process.
2. Strategies should build on the community's previous successes to ensure future strategies are relevant, actionable, equitable and not duplicative.
3. Strategies should also address current and potential future barriers that are or will prevent the community from realizing its vision.
4. We will leverage our experience and expertise to supplement the community's wisdom. We will bring ideas from other communities. We will share best practices and research-based climate solutions from across the country. Community members, the Task Force, TAG, and TAG Refinement Teams will have the opportunity to react to ideas from other communities and share their own thoughts on how best practices could be adapted to best fit the local context and needs of La Crosse.
5. We will model how the implementation of certain strategies will affect GHG emissions. We will share these results with stakeholders so they can have a greater understanding of what actions need to be taken for La Crosse to reduce emissions and achieve goals.
6. We will lean on the knowledge and experience of the community's subject matter experts, including members of the Task Force, TAG and TAG Refinement Teams, our partners at RDG, City staff, and other community experts. They will help us understand previous efforts, current opportunities, and potential barriers to implementation.
7. Short-term strategies will be prioritized. Our goal is to give the City clear direction on its path in the near term so immediate action toward the City's 2030 goal can be achieved.

### 12. Strategy Scorecard Development.

- a. We will produce a series of Strategy Scorecards that include a rating system to assist stakeholders with the prioritization of recommended actions in the CAP and we will perform cost-benefit analysis for select, quantifiable, short-term, high-impact actions. The Scorecards will consider measurable GHG emissions, potential costs, lead agency, feasibility, timing and co-benefits such as public health, equity, quality of life, air quality, and economic factors.

### 13. Develop emission reduction targets.

- a. We will use a wealth of information and experience to recommend emission reduction targets leading up to a key 2030 emission-reduction milestone. We will use the information gathered from the community through our public engagement process, information from the strategy refinement process, and outputs from the GHG forecasting and planning process. The latter will be of particular importance because it is a model grounded in data and stakeholders' inputs as to which strategies can be pursued and when.

14. CTF Workshop #4: Strategy Refinement (virtual).

- a. In this workshop, the GHG Planning results will be shared so that CTF members can see the estimated impacts of various climate actions. The Task Force will be engaged in discussing and ideally recommending the 2030 emission-reduction milestone (and related targets), which we expect will need to be socialized to several other audiences, including the CAP Steering Committee and Common Council. Climate action strategies will be further vetted and refined as necessary.

15. Strategy Refinement.

- a. Ongoing strategy refinement will continue with a variety of stakeholders.

## Round 4 of public engagement: How can we bring the CAP to life?



**\*Work with a professional production company to create a video overview of the plan.** Videos make content more accessible and engaging. This is an optional activity included in the Add-On Budget.



**CAP Focus Groups:** Convene the same focus groups to gather input on the creation of a Climate Action Toolkit.



**Open house/town hall style public meeting(s)** with tables and representatives for each topic area of the plan. Attendees will be able to read information about the strategies within the topic area, ask questions, and take some materials with them if desired (which would point to engagement website).



**Short survey on engagement website** for feedback on plan (for participants who either watched the video or attended the open house).



**Social media campaign** asking people to post about what they'll do to help make the plan successful.



**\*Signature Art Installation:** Create a signature art installation to be used in the summer months as a communication device to relay results of the planning efforts and key steps to implementing change. Also in the Add-On Budget.

16. CTF Workshop #5: Implementation Planning (in person).

- a. In this workshop, CTF members will be led through an interactive process to identify the specific, measurable accomplishments for the first few years of implementation of the CAP. Lead agencies or individuals will be identified and/or affirmed, and a preliminary action plan will be created.

Site  
Visit #4



#### PHASE 3 DELIVERABLES:

1. *2050 Vision document*
2. *Document summarizing barriers to achieving the 2050 Vision*
3. *Greenhouse gas 2020 inventory, forecasts and scenario plans for achieving La Crosse' emission reduction milestones*
4. *Strategic directions, targets and milestones/goals for CAP*
5. *Refined list of action strategies for CAP*
6. *Preliminary implementation action plan*
7. *Results from Rounds 2, 3, and 4 of public engagement*

### Phase 4: Plan Drafting & Design

June - September 2022

1. CAP Drafting.
  - a. With guidance from the Project Team on structure, the Verdis team will draft the text of the CAP. The Plan will include:
    - Introductory letter from Mayor, if desired
    - Introductory material describing purpose, goals, and objectives of the CAP
    - 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory
    - Baseline information, including past sustainability and climate work, community demographics, community goals
    - Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
    - Presentation of GHG emissions reduction pathways and GHG reduction targets and milestones
    - Organization of strategies into 6-8 action areas
    - Narrative text describing the targets/milestones, intentions and strategies of each action area
    - Comprehensive list of strategies to reduce emissions, sequester carbon, increase climate resilience, and build community equity
    - Appendices of planning outcomes as desired, including community engagement feedback, GHG analysis assumptions, meeting notes, etc.
2. CAP Design.
  - a. Once the text of the CAP is approved, the document will be sent to the design team for graphical layout and design. Icons, graphs, illustrations, and photos will be incorporated, and a final, designed CAP will be delivered.

#### PHASE 5 DELIVERABLES:

1. *Final CAP document*

### Phase 5: Plan Approval

October - December 2022

1. Final presentation to Common Council and/or Plan



Commission.

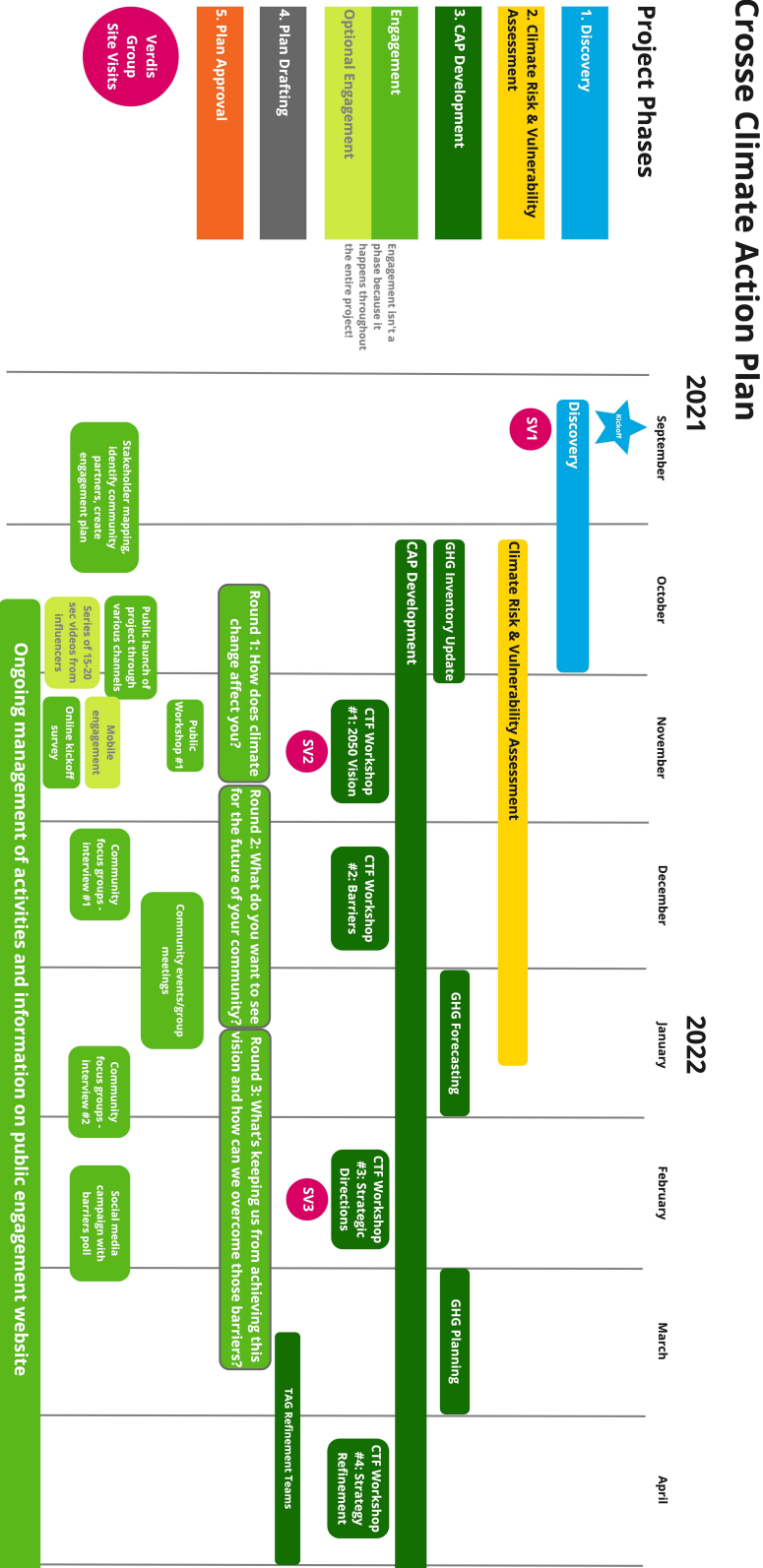
2. Develop presentation for City staff to give to the public.
  - a. A slide deck will be created that describes the process and outcomes of the CAP planning project, as directed by the Project Team. The slide deck will include project branding and graphics from the final CAP document in an easily accessible format.
3. Create Climate Action Toolkit.
  - a. With guidance from focus groups and the CTF, a Toolkit will be developed for organizations in La Crosse to use to implement climate action strategies within their own communities. This toolkit will be shaped around 3-5 key strategies and will provide organizations the resources they need to make collective changes toward the City's goals.
4. Activate online Dashboard.
  - a. An online Dashboard that will track CAP implementation metrics will be activated for the City's use. This Dashboard can serve as the annual reporting framework for the City to communicate its progress to the public.

*PHASE 5 DELIVERABLES:*

1. *Presentation to Common Council and/or Plan Commission*
2. *Presentation for City staff to give to the public*
3. *Climate Action Toolkit*
4. *Online Dashboard*



# Proposed Project Schedule







## 4. Community Engagement

### Public Engagement

Engaging the public early and often, in a transparent and genuine way, is critical to creating a successful CAP that is rooted in and owned by the community. It is essential for engagement to be accessible, inclusive, and equitable, with meaningful input from all members of the community. Ultimately, engagement should garner support from important stakeholders, generate excitement among La Crosse residents, and inspire action toward a future that **everyone** has helped to create. We are aware that significant public input has been done in La Crosse through other planning efforts, and we intend to build on that work.

Our engagement approach is centered on objectives framed around the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum, which includes:

**Inform** We will **inform** the community by educating about climate change and the need for a CAP, connecting this complex issue to their daily lives and values.

**Involve** We will **involve** community members by asking them to share their experiences with climate change, their greatest concerns, and their vision for the future of La Crosse.

**Consult** We will **consult** with the community by asking for their feedback on the barriers to achieving this vision and ways to overcome those barriers.

**Empower** We will **empower** the community through the creation of the Climate Action Toolkit to begin implementing the strategies and plans outlined in the CAP.

To achieve these objectives, our engagement efforts are focused on four key questions, which reflect the phases of the strategic planning process:

- 1 How does climate change affect you?
- 2 What do you want to see for the future of your community as a result of the CAP process?
- 3 What's keeping us from achieving our vision and how can we overcome those barriers?
- 4 How can we bring the CAP to life?



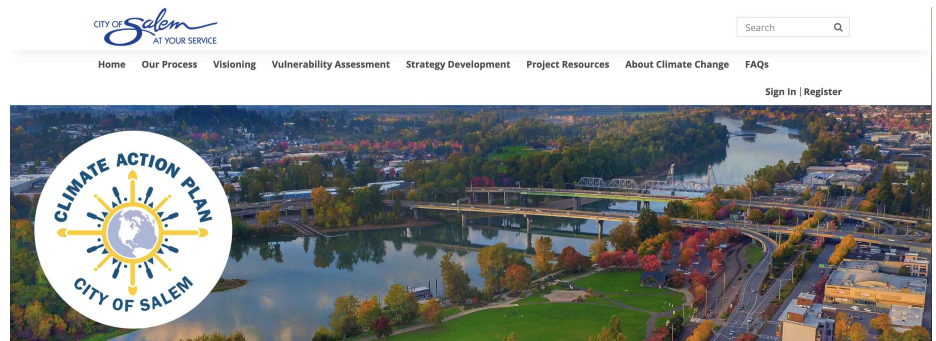
Throughout the project, we will use a range of techniques to reach a diverse range of stakeholders and accomplish our objectives:

- Focus groups
- Digital outreach/social media campaigns
- Attending community events/group meetings
- Pop-up events
- Public art
- Surveys/polls
- In-person advertisement (like posters or CitySource)
- Videos
- Open house/town hall style meeting(s)

The project scope and timeline in Section 3 provides detailed descriptions of each engagement activity we anticipate conducting. These activities will be edited and refined as we move through the Discovery phase and create the Public Engagement Plan. While we have outlined specific engagement activities in this proposal, we know that engagement is most successful when it is tailored to the community. We will first look at outreach efforts that have already been conducted by the City to understand what information we already have from the La Crosse community, and we will then build upon this to create and execute an engagement plan specific to the context.

## EngagementHQ Website

We will set up a website for the CAP through the online platform EngagementHQ, which will serve as a hub for information and activities related to the CAP. Community members will have the option to sign up for emails, take surveys, view updates, and ask questions, all in one central place. If the City prefers that we use [PublicInput.com](https://www.publicinput.com) as the central hub for online engagement, we are more than happy to do so.



## Engaging Frontline Communities

A key aspect of our approach is to ensure that the voices of those who have historically been excluded from civic processes and decisions are not only included, but elevated. As the Georgetown Climate Center says, “frontline communities include people who are both highly exposed to climate risks (because of the places they live and the projected changes expected to occur in those places) and have fewer resources, capacity, safety nets, or political power to respond to those risks.” These communities have largely been underrepresented and underserved, but are impacted earliest and most severely by climate change. We have designed our approach around the importance of understanding the perspective of frontline communities and incorporating their expertise as we craft the CAP. Through each outreach activity, our goal will be equitable and inclusive participation. Key to success will be a thorough stakeholder mapping, which will pull in the local knowledge of Vendi, RDG, the City, the CAP Steering Committee, Community Partners, and others.

Our team will reach frontline communities in two main ways: by visiting local meetings and community hubs, and by holding a series of CAP Focus Groups. To facilitate invitations to local meetings and community hubs, we will recruit Community Partners who are trusted and recognized within key stakeholder groups to help communicate and facilitate engagement activities.

**Community Partners are individuals who:**

- Are well-connected and trusted in frontline communities
- Have a significant social media presence
- Are influential stakeholders in different sectors

**...such as:**

- Leaders from key organizations connected to and working with frontline communities.
- Faith leaders
- Business leaders from key sectors like healthcare, education and key employers such as Gunderson, Mayo, Trane, UW- La Crosse, and others

**...and they will be asked to:**

- Provide input on the Public Engagement Plan
- Share posts and information on their social media accounts or with their communities in other formats
- Help organize and facilitate community meetings, community/pop-up events, focus groups, and/or other engagement activities

We will also create four **CAP focus groups** with 8-10 members each, which will be made up of individuals from frontline communities as well as other key stakeholders as identified through stakeholder mapping. A number of the Community Partners and focus group members will be offered stipends for their contributions, not only to compensate them appropriately for their time and contribution (as is best practice), but to ensure that we are investing in organizations that will be able to carry this work into the future. We will also provide transportation and childcare support for members of focus groups in order to eliminate barriers to participation. Translation and interpretation services provided by the City will address additional accessibility barriers. We are committed to a process that does not simply “check the box,” but truly opens the doors for engagement with a more representative and diverse set of stakeholders.

## Art as a Prompt for Interaction

Humans are a visual species and learn information more easily via visuals than text. Climate change can be so overwhelming and politicized that people disengage. New tools are needed to make connections between the effects of things



In Minneapolis, a paleta-inspired cart with an interactive mobile screen print invites residents to spread a message one silkscreen poster and paleta (poster) at a time. Artist: Jessica Lopez Lyman. [Source](#).



like rising sea levels or loss of biodiversity to people's day-to-day lives. Art offers a place to communicate climate change data in a vivid and accessible way and to inspire action. Our team is interested in exploring an opportunity to partner with a La Crosse community partner to design temporary art installations as part of our community engagement. During round one of our community engagement process, we would work with an artist to create "ready-go" mobile engagements to pique curiosity and prompt interaction. Later in the process (during the summer of 2022) while the plan is being drafted and designed, a signature art piece could be created that could be taken to local summer events as a tool to spark conversation around the CAP and garner momentum toward collective action. The incorporation of art in these ways is part of an optional add-on budget (see Section 6).

## **Marketing and Communications**

Effective implementation of the approach and strategies above will require that we present technical information in a graphically appealing and easy-to-understand way. We are excited about our partnership with Vendi Advertising, a marketing firm based in La Crosse and that has experience with conservation programs. Their design skills and communications expertise will amplify our ability to connect with people through visually engaging content, online and in-person. They will also design the final plan in a way that is graphics-rich, engaging, and easily understandable.



## 5. Qualifications

### About Verdis Group

Our experience in the sustainability and climate action planning world is profound, with dozens of sustainability and climate planning projects under our belt. Three are most relevant to La Crosse: a Climate Action Plan for the City of Lincoln, NE; another currently underway for the City of Salem, OR; and a Climate Resiliency Plan for Black Hills State University + the City of Spearfish, SD.

We are a small but powerful Midwestern sustainability firm that has been creating innovative sustainability solutions for 12 years. With our local, regional, and national experience, we bring significant insight into the climate planning field to our work. However, we don't provide generic, prepackaged content; we tailor it to you, and we have fun doing it. Our solutions are created in partnership with our clients as we build close relationships with individuals involved in the effort, and we have the ability to adapt quickly to adjust to our clients' needs.

We are headquartered in Omaha with talent also residing in Lincoln, NE; Los Angeles, CA; Seattle, WA; Des Moines, IA; and Fort Myers, FL. Omaha has been and will always be our home. That's where most of us reside, and we're bringing talent to the Midwest. We love working with our neighbors in the region, but our work has also become increasingly national in the last few years with projects in Minneapolis, Seattle, Dallas, and Salem.

Our purpose is to create a thriving and resilient world, and we intend to fulfill that mission through our work with the City of La Crosse. We are extremely passionate about this work, and that exuberance shows in all that we do. We are committed to providing the City of La Crosse with a process and an outcome it will be proud of. In realizing this commitment, we will be communicative and adaptable, and we will endeavor to exceed expectations.

For more information about our firm, our people, our commitment to sustainability in action, and how our customers feel about our work, please see Attachment A.

### Verdis Group's Climate Action Planning Experience

We have focused on sustainability and climate for the full 12 years of our existence. It's what we know. It's what we do. Our clients are municipalities, universities, hospitals, zoos and aquariums, non-profits, and businesses. We excel at strategic sustainability and climate resilience planning for large organizations and have completed over a dozen of these in-depth projects over the last decade. Many of our clients retain us — some for over a decade — to implement the sustainability strategies that emerged from the planning processes, allowing us to have built wide-ranging expertise on issues such as waste management and recycling, emissions reduction, active transportation, climate resilience, community engagement, behavior change, and much more. Furthermore, our implementation experience helps to ensure we build plans that are actionable and grounded in the reality of implementation complexities.

Our experience in the sustainability and climate action planning world is very deep. Three projects are particularly relevant to the La Crosse scope of work, and are summarized below.





## Recent Similar Projects



### City of Lincoln, Nebraska - Climate Action Plan, 2019-2021

[Link to Lincoln's Vision for a Climate-Smart Future](#)

[Link to Lincoln's Climate Action Plan](#)

#### Miki Esposito

Senior Policy Aide

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Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird brought on our team in 2019 to create the City's first-ever Climate Action Plan. Over the course of a year and a half, we spearheaded the development of a comprehensive and far-reaching plan that has received praise from all corners of the community and is now being implemented in exciting and cross-sectoral ways. Our work resulted in two documents: a comprehensive assessment and recommendations document, called *Lincoln's Vision for a Climate-Smart Future*, and a slimmer, shorter-term *Climate Action Plan* that was officially adopted by the City Council.

#### Common Elements with Proposed La Crosse CAP:

- **Strategic Planning Process with Key Community Stakeholders.** We worked with the Mayor's office to establish a 40-member Climate Action Task Force (similar to the CAP Task Force for the La Crosse project) that included representatives from community sectors such as business, government, non-profit, faith, educational, public health, emergency management, immigrant and refugee, those with disabilities, and low-income residents. We led this group through a series of four interactive workshops that led participants through our four-part strategic planning process. Through this work, they identified:
  - A 2050 Vision
  - Local climate vulnerabilities
  - Strategies to address the vulnerabilities and achieve the vision
  - An implementation framework

In addition to the Task Force, we assembled a group of technical advisors (like the Technical Advisory Group for La Crosse) called the Sustainability Working Group. This group met several times throughout the strategy development phase, providing invaluable technical input to ensure that all recommended strategies were relevant and actionable. The Mayor's Environmental Task Force, a group of about 150 residents who meet month with the Mayor's office, was the third group to provide key

input and review during the planning process.

- **Consensus-Based Decision-Making.**

For the Lincoln project, as with all of our facilitation work, we used consensus-based decision-making models informed by Technology of Participation methodology to guide our facilitation of meetings and workshops. These methods allow us to facilitate in ways that are equitable, inclusive, efficient, and which drive stakeholder ownership of the final product. We integrated the input that

comes from key stakeholders with our own expertise in greenhouse gas mitigation and climate adaptation strategies to create a Plan that is broad-based, inclusive, equitable, detailed, and customized to local solutions.

- **Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment.** Using climate projection data, regional and national reports, and the input of community subject matter experts, we identified the main climate risks for the Lincoln community. Then, in an interactive workshop with the Task Force, we identified the ways in which climate stressors may interact with non-climate stressors to create hazards. We followed this step with extensive research and consultation with subject matter experts on the likelihood and consequences of the identified climate impacts. The write-up of these findings forms a key component of the final Climate Action Plan.

- **Goal-Setting and Strategy Development.** Lincoln's plan includes three overarching Strategic Directions:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. The 80×50 commitment is a goal that has been adopted by many cities across the U.S. and the world, as communities strive to reduce emissions and slow the pace of global warming. This is an all-encompassing, visionary goal that invites everyone in Lincoln to play a part in transitioning to a low-carbon future.
- Building resilience to future climate hazards. This strategic vision emphasizes the main goal of the Plan, which is to build resilience to climate hazards.
- Strategic climate directions and resilience will be integrated throughout City actions and ordinances. The vision for this plan is ultimately that it will not exist as a separate document, but that its recommendations will be woven into the planning and policy work the City does regularly.

The Plan includes hundreds of strategy ideas organized into the following eight Action Areas of climate solutions:







1. Transition to low-carbon energy
2. Build a decarbonized and efficient transportation system
3. Align economic development goals with climate realities to ensure a thriving economy
4. Improve protections for and with Lincoln residents
5. Build a resilient local food system
6. Maximize natural climate solutions
7. Reduce waste
8. Engage residents in co-creating a climate smart future



- **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Forecasting and Planning.** Since the original project budget was slim, the City has retained us for another year to conduct a GHG analysis so they can understand more about what it will take for them to meet their emissions reduction goals between now and 2050. As we have done for the City of Salem (see below), we will model three business-as-usual forecasts and three target scenario projections. The City of Lincoln has also asked us to create a Carbon Sequestration Plan, which we will complete this summer.



**City of Salem, Oregon - Climate Action Plan, 2020 - present (completion date December 2021).**

[Link to Salem's Public Engagement Plan](#)

[Link to Salem's CAP Community Engagement Website](#)

**Patricia Farrell**

Parks and Natural Resources Planning Manager

City of Salem

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In 2020, we began working with the City of Salem, Oregon, to create a Climate Action Plan (CAP). This project has allowed us to hone and expand our skills and offerings while maintaining our interactive strategic planning process. Since this project has unfolded entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic, we successfully facilitated a multi-faceted planning process in a completely virtual environment.

**Common Elements with Proposed La Crosse CAP:**

- **Strategic Planning Process with Key Stakeholders.** As in Lincoln, we worked with the City of Salem to appoint a 40-member Climate Action Task Force (similar to the CAP Task Force for the La Crosse project) to guide the development of the plan. The group included representatives from community sectors such as regional transportation, utilities, non-profit, environmental advocacy, faith, Latinx youth, public health, Indigenous peoples, seniors, and those with disabilities, among others. We led this group through a series of interactive, virtual workshops that took participants through our four-part strategic planning process. Through this work, they identified:

- A 2050 vision
- Local climate vulnerabilities
- Strategies to address the vulnerabilities and achieve the vision
- An implementation framework (forthcoming)

Concurrent to these planning phases, we have used the project website, which is built on the same EngagementHQ platform we intend to use with La Crosse, to engage residents in interactive online activities. In this way, residents helped to identify a vision for the community's future and develop strategies to meet Salem's emissions reduction goals.

- **Public Engagement Plan.** We started by mapping and analyzing stakeholders, and we designed a Public Engagement Plan to outline key audiences and engagement approaches. We



**Public Engagement Plan**

City of Salem, Oregon Climate Action Plan  
October 2020



Prepared by  verdis GROUP



also set up an online tool for public engagement using the EngagementHQ platform, where members of the Salem community are being invited to share their input at each stage of the planning process. As summer arrives, key staff from the City of Salem now have detailed plans to gather input from residents by attending local meetings and events, visiting farmer's markets, issuing radio advertisements, and using social media advertising, which is similar to our anticipated approach for La Crosse.

- **Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment.** We used a Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment tool developed by the Climate Impacts Research Consortium. In consultation with a climatologist from Oregon State University, we acquired climate projection data, interviewed subject matter experts about past extreme weather events, and built out the vulnerability assessment tool framework to identify the most important hazards that Salem will face due to climate change.
- **Strategy Development.** Our strategy development process has been an interactive and comprehensive one that has involved hundreds of ideas from the public, the Task Force, and from subject matter experts. Through an iterative and detailed process, we prioritized and refined strategy recommendations, culminating in a list of around 200 ideas organized around seven action areas:
  1. Build a Connected, Multi-Modal Transportation Network
  2. Transition to Zero-Carbon Energy
  3. Engage the Community in an Equitable Transition
  4. Protect Natural Resources
  5. Foster Local Economic Development
  6. Enhance the Local Food System
  7. Reduce Emissions from Waste
- **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Forecasting and Planning.** We produced a detailed GHG analysis that has provided valuable information for the Salem Climate Action Plan stakeholders as they make decisions about how to achieve their emissions reduction goals (reduce emissions 50% from 2016 levels by 2035 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050). Since there are a wide range of variables outside of any city's control that will impact what baseline emissions may look like, and therefore what impact the City's emissions-reducing actions will make on reducing overall emissions, we modeled three different business-as-usual scenarios to create a baseline. Next, we modeled the assumptions of 10 emissions-reduction or carbon-sequestration activities to see what impact they would have on reducing overall emissions.



## **Black Hills State University + City of Spearfish, South Dakota - Climate Resiliency Plan, 2018 - 2020**

[Link to Climate Resiliency Plan here](#)

### **Kathy Johnson**

Vice President for Finance and Administration

Black Hills State University

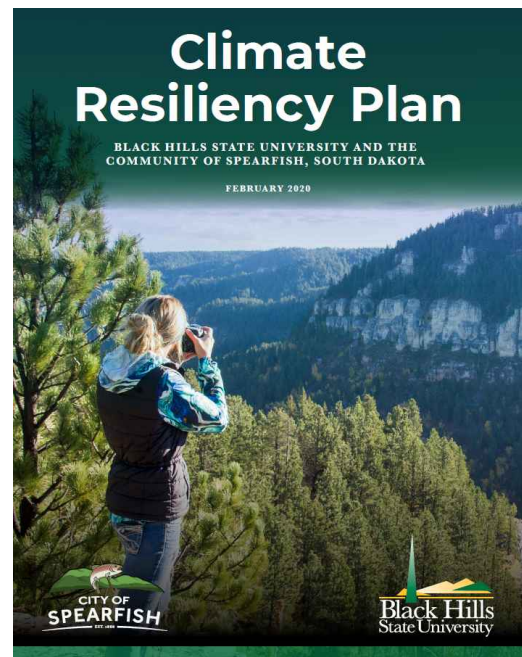
kathy.johnson@bhsu.edu

605.642.6512

As part of the 2017 Sustainability Master Plan we helped develop, Black Hills State University (BHSU) asked us to begin to examine climate resilience. The final Sustainability Master Plan included a chapter outlining how the university might engage in a process to assess its climate vulnerabilities and increase resilience. The following year, BHSU hired us to create a standalone Climate Resiliency Plan. As a signatory of Second Nature's Climate Leadership Network, BHSU wanted their plan to follow the best practices laid out by Second Nature. Because the resiliency of a university is inextricably intertwined with that of its home town, we immediately brought the City of Spearfish, SD, to the table for involvement in the Plan. The final product was a Climate Resiliency Plan with a 2040 vision, goals and short-, medium-, and long-term strategies nested beneath broad solutions for achieving the vision. Perhaps more importantly, the process resulted in a group of campus and community stakeholders who understood their climate vulnerabilities and were excited about building multi-faceted resilience strategies.

### **Common Elements with Proposed La Crosse CAP:**

- **Strategic Planning Process with Key Stakeholders.** We worked with BHSU to identify a Task Force, intentionally made up of representatives from many sectors of the community, to ensure the appropriate knowledge and voices were brought to the table.
- **Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment.** We gathered climate projection data from national sources and, through interactive workshops with the Task Force, had them identify the ways in which those climate stressors might impact with non-climate stressors like poverty, public health, economic vitality, and workforce shortages. With this information we were able to develop a clear sense of the primary hazards the Spearfish community needs to address.
- **Goal-Setting and Strategy Development.** The Task Force engaged with regional partners to assess strengths and vulnerabilities in terms of projected climate change impacts, and to jointly develop strategies to build resilience to those impacts.







## Verdis Group Disciplines & Expertise

We bring a breadth and depth of expertise to every project. Below are a few of the most important disciplines that are critical to this project's success.

### **Strategic Planning**

Since our firm's founding in 2009, we have helped a wide range of clients in strategic planning for sustainable outcomes. Over the years, we have honed our own unique approach to strategic planning, which incorporates consensus-based decision making, deep subject matter expertise, and a relationship-based approach to helping our clients take hold of ambitious and achievable goals in a way that allows everyone to feel a sense of ownership and excitement about implementation.

### **Climate and Sustainability**

We are deeply informed experts with the background to guide our clients toward tangible impacts while tailoring our process to the culture of each organization we work with. Many of our clients retain us to implement the strategies that emerged from the planning processes, allowing us to have built wide-ranging expertise on issues such as waste management and recycling, energy use, emissions reduction, active transportation, climate resilience, community engagement, behavior change, carbon offsets, and much more. We also understand the intersection between social inequity and climate vulnerabilities, and we are passionate about ensuring that our work is inclusive and equitable, both in process and outcomes.

### **Public Engagement**

Successful public engagement is key to the success of any climate action plan. To that end, we have devoted many resources in recent years to ensure that we have the skills to create and implement public engagement activities that are inclusive, equitable, and relevant. We follow the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) model for public engagement, and we make sure that our messaging and communication is easily understandable and attractive. Climate change can be abstract, so we work hard to bring it down to earth and make it relatable. We use software such as EngagementHQ to create online hubs where engagement activities can be deployed to a large audience.

### **Greenhouse Gas Inventories and Analysis**

The first step toward making realistic, measurable progress toward climate goals is to assess the level of current greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and understand where they are coming from. Our team has years of experience producing GHG inventories for a wide variety of settings, ranging from multi-county municipalities covering over 4 million residents to small nonprofits. We are well-versed in both the ICLEI United States Community Protocol and the Greenhouse Gas Protocol for Cities. We have experience in producing both sector-based and consumption-based inventories, as well as product life-cycle analyses. We have expertise using both the NON-ROAD and WARM EPA models, which means we can quickly and effectively produce accurate emissions for activities often overlooked by our competitors. We're ready to tackle anything thrown at us, because chances are we've seen it before.

In addition to performing inventories to establish baselines or to measure progress, we also provide analysis of projected GHG reduction targets and the reduction pathways that would be required to achieve them. We provide both numerical and graphical representations of our analyses. It's always important to us to create



final deliverables that are easy to understand and visually pleasing to a lay audience, so we put special effort into clear visual communication.

### **Survey Design & Analysis**

There is a science to proper survey design, and several members of our team have the education and training necessary to craft and analyze a proper survey. We run hundreds of surveys a year, knowing that they provide invaluable data that will help steer a project's outcome. We ensure that our reports are colorful and impactful, following best practices for the graphical presentation of data.

### **Project Management**

Our clients are often very large organizations, and our projects may span several months if not years. In order to achieve high-quality results and earn the customer service survey results that we do (see Attachment A), we absolutely must tightly manage our projects. To that end, we are well-versed in project management best practices and use the proper tools to help us — and our clients — stay on track and on budget.

### **Facilitation of Collaborative Decision-Making**

We are personable and skilled meeting facilitators who have conducted hundreds of engaging, fun, and results-oriented workshops. We use consensus-based decision-making models informed by Technology of Participation methodology for our facilitation of meetings and workshops. The pandemic has allowed us to expand our virtual facilitation offerings, using tools such as Miro and Zoom to create highly engaging online workshops.

This is not to say that the process is entirely led by consensus. Using the input scale of the IAP2 model, we clarify with stakeholder groups how their input will be used and who will have final decision-making authority over top-level goals and strategies. This approach allows leadership to choose or refine ideas that were generated by stakeholders, giving them the confidence that their final choices reflect the will of their constituents. The final outcome is a plan that reflects a wide variety of perspectives, includes many points of insight, and a network of relationships of people who will be prepared to implement the plan they helped create.

### **Working with Climate Vulnerable Communities**

Climate vulnerable communities are critical to the climate action planning process. We strive to create an open, inclusive, and transparent environment through our work, and we hold equity as a top priority. Frontline communities have the most at stake because of the disproportionate impacts of climate change, but have historically been excluded from government processes. These communities hold knowledge and expertise that help inform climate planning efforts, and their participation in the process results in a plan that is rooted in and owned by the community. Our community engagement process involves building a stakeholder list that is mindful of this context, identifying the power dynamics across all stakeholder groups, prioritizing groups and individuals from frontline communities, and working with Community Partners to engage them. Inviting and elevating the voices of frontline communities and being clear about the ways in which their input will be incorporated into the plan is not only the right thing to do, it ultimately results in a more successful outcome.



### **Electric Utility Expertise**

Managing Partner & co-owner Craig Moody has served on the Omaha Public Power District board of directors since January 2017. In that capacity, he and his board colleagues set the direction of the utility. Through this role, Craig has developed important expertise in the electric utility sector that has proven immensely beneficial to our clients developing climate action plans. Craig's experience with OPPD will be of particular benefit as La Crosse explores how it might achieve its 2050 carbon neutrality and 100% renewable goals.

### **Land Use and Transportation Planning**

Several members of our team have expertise and experience in land use and transportation planning. In particular, Chief Century Thinker & co-owner Daniel Lawse has served on the Omaha Metro Transit board of directors for five years, which gives him a thorough understanding for how transit authorities plan and execute. Several Verdis Group team members have experience examining, recommending and designing active transportation plans. Finally, through previous and current work, our team has expertise in land use policies that move a city toward greater sustainability and climate resiliency. We will bring a team of experienced and talented climate change professionals to the La Crosse Climate Action Plan, each adding unique value and expertise. We are a highly integrated team with years of successful collaboration on multi-faceted projects.



## RDG Planning & Design's Experience & Qualifications



### Firm Overview

From their newest team members to the founding principals who began their practices in the 1960s, RDG Planning & Design is a multifaceted network of design and planning professionals. Diverse in knowledge and experience, they are united in the pursuit of meaning for their clients and themselves. Officially formed in 1989 as the Renaissance Design Group Corporation, and crafted to bring two well-established firms into practice together, their two business centers of RDG IA, Inc. and RDG Schutte Wilscam Birge, Inc. create one distinct organization with the shared purpose of creating meaning together.

Creation is a result of every interaction with their clients and those they serve. Ultimately, they help create lasting relationships between people and the places they live and love.

They find meaning in relationships, and in people and the deep connections they have to their environments. With meaning, they achieve a deeper understanding of how to create the very best spaces to work, live, and play. They consider human, ecological, and economic impacts fundamental to shaping your vision and developing your project. They want to help tell your story of environmental stewardship.

The most important member of their team is you. You know your needs better than anyone else, and you're the advocate for the effort because you'll love and care for your space long after we celebrate its completion.

Over 50 years of dedication to success have taken them around the world. Today, their commitment to communication and technology allows them to engage their clients anywhere they may be from their offices in Omaha, Nebraska; Des Moines, Dubuque and Iowa City, Iowa; St. Louis and Kansas City Missouri, and Ft. Myers, Florida. They're free from boundaries and able to work on a regional, national, or global scale. Their interdisciplinary approach allows them to integrate their broad areas of expertise and apply the right team members to any given endeavor.

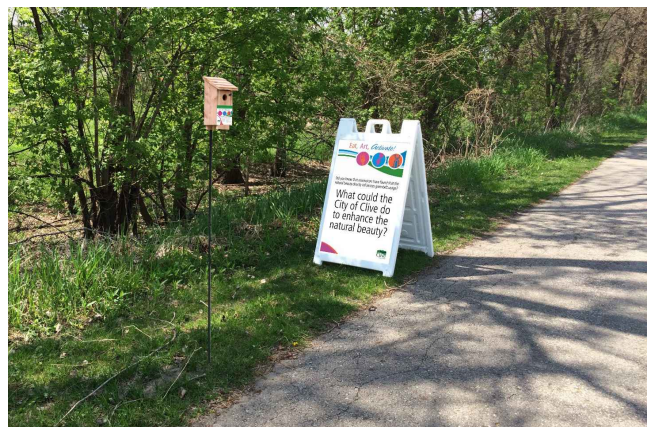
### Relevant Experience & References



#### Clive Greenbelt Master Plan Polk County, Iowa

Owner Reference:  
Matt McQuillen, Assistant City Manager  
515-223-6220  
mmcquillen@cityofclive.com

The Clive Greenbelt hosts one of Iowa's first trails — a trail that remains a key connector for the Central Iowa Trails Network. Adjacent to Walnut Creek and a vibrant, riparian corridor, residents and visitors agree the trail and Greenbelt serve as this growing

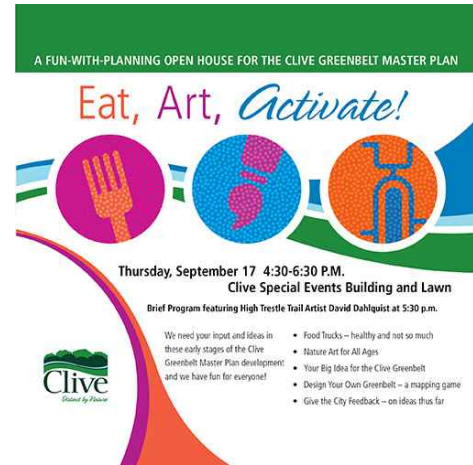






community’s “Main Street” and perhaps its most important amenity, creating the community’s brand: Distinct by Nature. The City of Clive wants to ensure the Greenbelt continues to serve as the community’s vibrant social, economic, and ecological resource. Meanwhile, the Greenbelt faces challenges from upstream flows and changing weather patterns, construction to outdated design standards, and habitats/woodlands facing invasive species and development pressures.

The RDG Team (including the Healthiest State Initiative (HSI), ConsultEcon and Applied Ecological Services), has employed a robust system of stakeholder engagement, connecting to social, human, cultural, economic, built, policy and natural resources partners. The results (so far) include detailed understanding of the ecological, economic and cultural resources – leading to a meaningful strategic framework for the plan ahead.



## Western Technical College - Complete Street Improvements La Crosse, Wisconsin

Owner Reference:

Mike Pieper, Former Vice President of Finance

701-777-6844

michael.pieper@und.edu

For more than 10 years, RDG Planning & Design worked with Western Technical College and the City of La Crosse creating a campus “living laboratory” that serves as a model for innovative design and infrastructure. Early in the planning phase we developed a comprehensive streetscape and stormwater plan, which included an assessment of the street’s preferred function and its capacity to manage stormwater. Traffic calming measures included paver crosswalks, lane shifts, raised intersections, and medians to guide vehicles and





manage where pedestrians cross the street. Bicycle lanes and transit stops were evaluated, including the assessment of on-street parking — and the prioritization of these amenities.

After several success stories and some lessons learned, we were able to develop a model street that accommodates the numerous influences of the urban context, resulting in the following annual benefits: 1.7 million gallons of stormwater infiltrated, a 28% reduction in total runoff for the 10-year storm, and 2,360 pounds of sediment removed from local waterways.

## **RDG Disciplines & Expertise**

We bring a breadth and depth of expertise to every project. Below are a few of the more important disciplines that are critical to this project's success.

### **Natural River Restoration**

Natural River Restoration restores ecological function and services to rivers, wetlands, and the watersheds they inhabit. Through Level 1 and Level 2 training in the River Restoration Toolbox, this team is well-versed in best management practices developed to assist in restoration projects. Understanding driving factors that cause an unstable stream segment or damage infrastructure prior to jumping to solutions leads to stable, cost-effective solutions.

### **Watershed Planning**

Watershed Planning is crucial in an ever-changing climate. At the juxtaposition of urban and rural, old and new, flooding and draught; the agricultural Midwest is poised to be a leader in long-term resource management and planning. Utilizing numerical analysis of local climate data, a quality plan can address the EPA's nine elements for watershed planning and focus on smart growth planning.

### **Landscape Architecture**

It often goes without saying but landscape architecture starts with a deep understanding of the landscape. LA's apply art and science to the design of public spaces and strive to create those space for people, plants, and possibility. Sensitive integration of the built environment with the relevant ecological process can connect people with their past and future through inclusive design.

### **Master Planning**

Imagine 2040, includes a section titled, "A Confluence of Nature". Recommendations, which can be viewed at [www.imaginedowntownlacrosse.com](http://www.imaginedowntownlacrosse.com), include creating a Model Sustainable District around the facilities for the City, County, and Western Technical College. The intent of the district is to become an exhibit of best practices that can be adopted in other areas of the city, region, and State of Wisconsin. Many of the recommendations focus on reducing the urban heat island effect, managing stormwater, and using alternative energy sources. While the district is a targeted area, the intent is for the district to expand over the decades to become common practice. Other segments of the plan, identify opportunities for active transportation, maintenance, replacing surface parking, and sustainable development design.



## Vendi Advertising's Experience & Qualifications

### Vendi Firm Overview

Vendi is a full-service advertising, marketing, brand, PR, and digital firm. Their team of 22 in-house professionals is highly experienced, innovative, collaborative, creative and takes a personal, serious interest in their clients' work.

Vendi is led by advertising, web, and creative professionals who met while working for a national agency serving brands including State Farm Insurance, Anheuser-Busch, Sargento Cheese, 3M/Aero, and others. Their desire to live and work in La Crosse, while producing national-class branding, advertising and marketing work led to the founding of Vendi in 2004. They have grown each year.

Their current client roster includes the Redevelopment Authority of La Crosse, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Viterbo University, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Kaplan, Gensler, Toro, Encompass Health, National Blood Clot Alliance, Mayo Clinic Labs, Mayo Clinic Health System, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and WEA Trust.

### Relevant Experience & References



#### River Point District La Crosse, Wisconsin

Owner Reference:  
Andrea Trane, Director of Planning, Development & Assessment  
608-789-8321  
[tranea@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:tranea@cityoflacrosse.org)

They're turning damaged land on the Mississippi River into a visionary eco-friendly development. Vendi created the brand, then spread the word. Now developers and investors across the nation know The Point.

City leaders hoped for years to buy and revitalize 65 acres of damaged industrial land perched at the confluence of the Mississippi, Black, and La Crosse Rivers. With a plan for a vibrant, mixed-use, sustainable waterfront neighborhood and a master developer in place, the Redevelopment Authority of La Crosse turned to Vendi.

The Vendi team designed the overall branding, including the development of positioning strategy, name, logo, website, collateral, video, and developed a multi-year communications strategy.



# RIVER-POINT DISTRICT



## 6. Cost Proposal

Our total fees for completing the scope of work is \$186,900. This budget includes all steps except for those denoted as optional add-ons throughout the proposal; those tasks are included below in the Optional Add-On Budget. We have provided multiple breakdowns of the budget below.

### Budget Breakdown By Organization

Organization	
Verdis Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Billable hour fees: \$114,025 (see breakdown below)</li><li>• Dashboard + year one license: \$10,000</li></ul>	\$124,025
Vendi Advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Billable hour fees: \$30,000 (approximately 200 hours total)</li></ul>	\$30,000
RDG Planning & Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Billable hour fees: \$17,475 (approximately 124 hours total)</li></ul>	\$17,475
Stipends for community partners and focus group members	\$3,500
Reimbursables	\$11,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$186,900</b>



## Budget Breakdown By Phase & Task

Below is a breakdown based on the the major portions of the project. Figures include fees for all three firms. Please note: while there is a meaningful allocation of fees in project administration, it should be noted that the biweekly Project Team meetings are essential to the project's success, and a great deal of work occurs leading up to, during, and immediately after those meetings.

Discovery & Project Administration	
Kickoff Meeting	\$605
Site Visit #1	\$4,400
Confirm project process, timeline; create meeting schedule; create workflow management system	\$700
Develop vision statement and goals for project	\$400
Project management	\$4,275
Stakeholder mapping	\$1,530
Identify & establish CAP Task Force	\$2,050
Identify Community Partners	\$270
Preliminarily identify TAG members	\$580
Create a uniform graphic and written communication standard/brand	\$4,180
Meet with Community Partners to discuss Public Engagement Plan	\$270
Develop the Public Engagement Plan	\$3,620
Set up engagement website	\$690
CAP Project Team Mtgs (Biweekly, 18 mos.)	\$13,895
	<b>\$37,465</b>
Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	
Review prior regional risk assessment reports	\$540
Obtain climate projection data	\$180
Obtain demographic and community equity data	\$180
Consult subject matter experts	\$1,075

TAG Meeting #1 - CRVA advising	\$305
Refine CRVA analysis framework	\$90
Conduct CRVA	\$1,815
TAG Meeting #2 - CRVA review	\$305
Prepare final CRVA report	\$1,335
	<b>\$5,825</b>
<b>Climate Action Plan Development</b>	
Comprehensive review of existing local and regional plans, reports and documents related to CAP	\$1,160
2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory	\$2,700
CTF Workshop #1 - 2050 Vision (site visit #2)	\$4,785
Public Workshop (site visit #2)	\$3,715
CTF Workshop #2 - Barriers (virtual)	\$2,845
CTF Workshop #3 - Strategic Directions (site visit #3)	\$5,235
TAG Meeting #3 - Strategy advising	\$730
Create, analyze and report strategy survey for CTF	\$920
CTF Workshop #4 - Strategy Development	\$2,320
Consultation with subject matter experts on strategies	\$4,015
Research, consultation and refinement of strategies	\$6,645
TAG Focus Team Mtgs - Strategy development	\$3,410
GHG Forecasting & Planning	\$3,025
Develop Strategy Scorecards	\$4,870
Develop recommended 2030 targets	\$720
TAG Meeting #4 - GHG analysis review	\$580
CTF Workshop #5 - Implementation Planning (site visit #4)	\$3,165
	<b>\$50,840</b>



Outreach and Engagement	
Ongoing management of engagement website	\$2,700
Create simplified/graphical version of CRVA report to share with public	\$2,180
Stipends for Community Partners and focus group members	\$3,500
<b>Round 1 of public engagement: How does climate change affect you?</b>	
Create content for social media, hard copy advertisements, and assets for public engagement throughout the project (includes Vendi's time to design the materials)	\$10,300
Create kickoff survey	\$860
Analyze results of round 1 of public engagement (online survey, temporary art installation engagement, social media engagement)	\$2,170
Incorporate public input into CRVA report and finalize	\$780
<b>Round 2 of public engagement: What do you want to see for the future of your community as a result of the CAP process?</b>	
Recruit members for three rounds of CAP Focus Group interviews (4 groups with 10 members each)	\$950
CAP Focus Groups - interview #1	\$1,765
Support City staff in attending community events or hosting pop-up events in gathering places	\$2,155
Attend community group meetings or co-host community meetings with Community Partners to ask for feedback on vision (in person)	\$2,160
Attend virtual community meetings or co-host community meetings with Community Partners	\$2,330
Analyze results of round 2 of public engagement (focus groups, voting activity)	\$935
<b>Round 3 of public engagement: What's keeping us from achieving this vision?</b>	
CAP Focus Groups - interview #2	\$1,765
Social media campaign with poll	\$950
Work with community organizations to focus programming on climate change	\$1,575
Analyze results of round 3 of public engagement	\$530
<b>Round 4 of public engagement: How can we bring the CAP to life?</b>	



Open house style public meeting(s) (RDG in person)	\$3,115
Social media campaign and hashtag	\$770
Analyze results of round 4 of public engagement	\$530
	<b>\$42,020</b>
<b>Plan Drafting &amp; Design</b>	
CAP Drafting	\$8,020
CAP Design	\$14,905
Dashboard setup and year one license	\$10,000
	<b>\$32,925</b>
<b>Plan Approval &amp; Finalization</b>	
Create Climate Action Toolkit	\$2,580
Prepare final presentation to Common Council and/or Plan Commission (site visit #5)	\$2,370
Develop presentation for City staff to give to the public	\$975
	<b>\$5,925</b>
<b>Reimbursables</b>	
Travel	\$7,400
Project website license (EngagementHQ)	\$3,500
Printing & supplies	\$1,000
	<b>\$11,900</b>
<b>Total Not-to-Exceed Cost</b>	<b>\$186,900</b>



## Budget Breakdown By Verdis Group Staff

Below is a breakdown of fees per staff member. Verdis Group's total billable fees are \$114,025 plus \$10,000 for Dashboard setup and year one license.

Staff Name	Moody	Morrow	Thomas	Bentlage	Hamel	Harmon	Evans
Position	Partner	Director	Senior Associate	Associate	Associate	Associate	Intern
Billable Rate	\$200	\$150	\$125	\$90	\$90	\$90	\$45
Total Hrs	5	144.5	297	170	223.5	153.5	111
\$114,025	\$1,000	\$21,675	\$37,125	\$15,300	\$20,115	\$13,815	\$4,995

## Additional Budget Information

### Breakdown by RFP Task

Our time-tested process doesn't match the seven tasks outlined in the RFP particularly well. Nevertheless, if the City needs us to provide such a breakdown, we will do our best to disaggregate and then recompile the data in order.

### Opportunities to Reduce Fees & Services

There are several ways in which fees could be reduced. Below is a preliminary list:

- Eliminate public meetings in lieu of online engagement via the EngagementHQ platform and the five Task Force workshops. We included two public meetings - per the RFP requirement - but one or both could be eliminated; thereby, the time required to prepare, travel, facilitate and summarize.
- Reduce the number of site visits and/or the number of staff attending site visits. In doing so, we would expect that City staff step into facilitating roles.
- Reduce the frequency of CAP Project Team meetings. Doing so presents a risk to the project because these meetings are essential to keeping the project on track, making decisions, gaining direction, and working through challenges.
- Pare back the size of the final CAP deliverable. A smaller, more streamlined deliverable will mean less design time. Non-public documents that include the detailed information can supplement a smaller, professionally-designed deliverable.
- Pare back community engagement activities. This could include less attendance at community meetings.
- Cut the Dashboard from the scope of work.



## Budget Assumptions

Below are key budget assumptions:

6. Verdis Group will make five site visits. All will include two staff members for two days and one night. Direct reimbursables for these site visits is approximately \$1,200 per trip.
7. RDG will make four site visits. All will include one staff member for two days and one night. Direct reimbursables for these site visits is approximately \$600 per trip.
8. Field investigation work (e.g., examining location details in a watershed) by all parties is excluded from the budget.
9. A successful cost benefit analysis of a climate action strategy relies on the insight and expertise of local City staff. As such, for those short-term, high-impact strategies which garner cost benefit consideration, we will need City staff to provide certain information. Furthermore, the cost benefit analysis will be limited to a reasonable number of short-term, high-impact strategies; which is to say it will not include all strategies identified.
10. CAP Project Team meetings will occur, at most, every other week.

## Optional Add-On Budget

Though we have designed a robust community engagement plan, we believe that the use of professional videos and art installations could galvanize public involvement in the CAP and drive support for implementation. We propose the following optional add-on budget that would elevate community engagement. The budget includes two educational videos, one of which would be used to inform residents about the CAP planning process near the beginning of the project; and one which would be used near the end of the project to inform residents about the strategic directions of the final plan. It also includes two art installations. The latter will be designed to be an engaging work designed by an artist that could be used as a prompt for interaction: to draw attention to climate change, gather feedback from residents, display information gathered from residents, or invite residents into an immersive experience that would reflect the strategic directions of the plan. Other local funding sources could be considered to augment this budget and create an even more impactful community experience with the arts.



Optional Add-On Budget for Community Engagement	
Facilitate the completion of informal 15-20 second videos from influential community members	\$980
Professionally done educational video about climate change, CAP process, vision areas identified by planning groups	\$4,000
Professionally done video overview of completed CAP	\$4,000
Facilitate temporary art installation(s) #1	\$1,540
Create temporary art installation(s) #1 (artists stipend)	\$5,000
Attend community events with temporary art installation(s) #1	\$2,750
Facilitate signature art installation #2	\$1,540
Creation of signature art installation #2 (artist stipend)	\$15,000
Outreach with signature art installation #2	\$2,375
<b>Total Optional Add-On Budget</b>	<b>\$37,185</b>



## Attachment A: Additional Firm Information & Bios

### Verdis Group Customer Satisfaction & Testimonials

Our customer service scores are off-the-charts positive. In our November 2019 customer service survey, we learned that 96% of responding customers agree or strongly agree that we exceed expectations, and 100% either agree or strongly agree that:

- We deliver the results we promise
- We are knowledgeable in the services we provide
- We understand and align our work with the needs of the client
- We provide high-value services
- They enjoy working with us
- If a problem occurs, we will handle it fairly and arrive at a satisfactory result
- They are satisfied with our work overall

We have several testimonials from our clients — some of which are included below — and we are more than happy to provide you with additional testimonials or overviews of project work if needed.

“The Verdis team has been a pleasure to work with. They were able to take a large and complex issue and turn it into a measurable, actionable plan which all parties on campus supported. The final result is a plan that our campus is truly excited about and which will allow us to make demonstrable progress in our sustainability efforts. We couldn't have done it without them.”

**Kathy Johnson**

Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Black Hills State University  
kathy.johnson@bhsu.edu  
605.642.6512

“Verdis Group helped us better align our sustainability efforts with our corporate strategy and set stretch goals at an enterprise level. With Verdis Group’s help, we’ve made tremendous progress in a short period of time.”

**Brian Ryks**

CEO  
Minneapolis/St. Paul Airports Commission





“The Verdis team offered invaluable support and guidance as we moved forward with our green efforts. Their methods are backed by research, and they have strong knowledge of how to enact behavior change on a large scale. Thanks to Verdis, we now have an initiative that benefits the environment, saves money, and increases employee satisfaction.”

**Melanie Stewart**

Sustainability Manager  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
mlstewart@unmc.edu  
402.559.8154

“The team at Verdis Group was an excellent fit for us. Their structured yet flexible and catered approach has really breathed new life into our sustainability initiative and set us on a clear and bold path forward.”

**Jeff Prochazka**

Vice President of Strategic Planning and Business Development  
Nebraska Methodist Health System

“We wanted to take an organized, well-thought-out approach to improving sustainability, and Verdis fit the bill perfectly. They brought multiple disciplines together to create our plan, implement action steps, and change the way our entire organization thinks on an individual level about the wise use of precious resources.”

**Dennis Pate**

Executive Director and CEO  
Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium  
dpate@omahazoo.com  
402.733.8401

## Sustainable in Our Actions & Our Work

One of our core values is ‘Integrity’. We’re not going to greenwash, and we won’t let our clients either. Everything we do — from the services we provide to our internal operations — aligns with and is intended to achieve our purpose to create a thriving and resilient world. Sustainability a way of life for us, and we are committed to practicing the values that we espouse to our clients. For us, that means initiatives that have positive environmental, social, and economic impacts, and it also means providing tools that allow our clients to hold themselves accountable to their goals too. Using the triple-bottom-line approach, we endeavor to be sustainable environmentally, socially, and economically.

### Environmental

- We are carbon neutral. This includes purchasing carbon offsets from the Arbor Day Foundation to offset all business travel.



- We are zero waste. We've reduced at the source, reuse as much as possible, donate to nonprofits, recycle or compost, and pretty much anything that's left fits in the palm of our hand each month.
- Our building is sustainable. We specifically chose to lease space in one of Omaha's most sustainable buildings, which is nearly 100 years old and was recently renovated and brought back to life. It is in a walkable, dense part of downtown Omaha, boasts a rooftop solar array, electric vehicle charging stations, all the best bicycle infrastructure, a sophisticated waste management system, and our common areas are often used for community events.
- We actively commute. Pre-pandemic our active mode split was 67%, and a few of those that are driving a vehicle are driving either a gas-hybrid or a plug-in electric-hybrid.

## Social

- Our employees are not just provided an opportunity to volunteer in the community, they are expected to do so, and we pay them when they volunteer. Our team members have individually become leaders in the community. Many of us serve on the boards of organizations such as Metro Transit (appointed by the Mayor of Omaha), Omaha Public Power District (an elected position), Lauritzen Gardens, The Nature Conservancy, and the Green Omaha Coalition. We participate in community groups like Missing Middle Housing, neighborhood associations, and the Mayor's Millennial Council. We tend to think our culture of authenticity, flexibility, and professional development support has encouraged our team to get involved in these diverse ways.
- 'Inclusivity' is one of our six core values, and we are working hard to live it out. We have increased our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in a variety of ways, including participation in a year-long program called ProjectREADI (Respect, Equity, Access, Diversity & Inclusion). The program is designed to help employees understand their role and responsibility in creating an organizational culture where everyone can learn, communicate, and work in collaboration and mutual respect.
- Strive for Zero. In 2019, we launched our Strive for Zero program, which affords local nonprofits the opportunity to obtain a free analysis of their materials management systems and subsequent recommendations for achieving Zero Waste — all complete by our team in a 24-hour period. The program is on hold due to COVID now, but it will be back once the pandemic subsides.

## Economic

- We give back to the community. Our LOVErdis program was established in 2010 as a way to give back to the communities in which we work. We give our time, talent and treasure. This includes serving on elected or mayor-appointed boards, serving on nonprofit boards, financially supporting many causes, and donating our expertise to nonprofits and schools.
- When COVID-19 set in, we didn't hunker down. Rather, we examined how we could help. In doing so, we've been financially contributing to several nonprofits providing critical services to those in need, including food banks and COVID relief funds.
- In the spring of 2020, we provided our employees with bonuses with the express purpose of asking them to spend the money at locally-owned businesses or donating to nonprofits.





- We have given substantial, unsolicited discounts to several of our clients that have been hit the hardest by COVID-19, such as zoos, universities, and K12 schools.
- We have a 1:1 match to all employee charitable contributions, up to \$250 per year per employee.

We don't do this work for the accolades, but we were really proud to earn the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce's excellence awards in two categories: philanthropy and leadership.

We are honored to be recognized by the  
**Greater Omaha Chamber** as a  
**2020 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE  
AWARD WINNER**  
in two categories  
**PHILANTHROPY & LEADERSHIP**



## Verdis Group Team Bios



### **Kim Morrow**

#### **Director of Climate Planning & Resilience, MDiv**

#### **Project Lead**

An experienced project manager, Kim will serve as the main point of contact for the City of La Crosse. She will lead workshops and meetings with stakeholder groups, coordinate research and analysis, and will be responsible for ensuring excellence in the final deliverable. Kim has successfully led three other climate planning projects in recent years and is currently leading our work on the City of Salem, OR, Climate Action Plan.

In 2015, Kim was honored at the White House as a “Champion of Change” for her efforts on climate change with the faith community.

From 2016-2019, she was named as one of Lincoln, NE’s 30 Most

Influential Women by the Lincoln Journal Star. She serves on the board of the Nature Conservancy Nebraska.

Kim is pursuing certification as a Climate Change Professional by the Association of Climate Change Officers. She holds a Master of Divinity from Pacific School of Religion and a B.A. from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Kim’s Gallup Strengths are Intellection, Learner, Strategic, Maximizer, and Relator.

#### **Relevant Experience**

- Verdis Group, Director of Climate Planning & Resilience, 2016 - present
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Lincoln, NE
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Salem, OR
  - Strategic Plan for Climate Center, California State University East Bay
  - Climate Resiliency Plan and Sustainability Master Plan, Black Hills State University & Spearfish, SD
  - Recycle Right, City of Lincoln, NE
- Univ. of Nebraska - Lincoln, Climate Change Resource Specialist, 2015 - 2016
- Nebraska Interfaith Power & Light, Executive Director, 2013 - 2016
- First-Plymouth United Church of Christ, Minister of Sustainability, 2010 - 2015
- Nebraska Wildlife Federation, Clean Energy Advocate, 2013 - 2015
- City of Lincoln ReEnergize Program, Sustainability Advisor, 2012 - 2013



**Grace Thomas**  
**Senior Associate, BA**

**Research and Facilitation**

Grace will work closely with Kim on project management, meeting facilitation, and research to bring the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan to fruition. Grace joined Verdis Group in 2017. Since joining the team, she has demonstrated the ability to manage some of the firm's largest projects while also handling in-depth data analysis and research projects and facilitating strategic planning sessions and workshops.

Grace helped lead the sustainability and climate resiliency planning processes for Black Hills State University and was a key member of the team for the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. She has also taken on project management responsibilities for the University of Nebraska Medical

Center, working with a wide range of stakeholders to manage sustainability activities across the entire organization.

Grace is an expert in transportation demand management (TDM), through her experience as project lead for our work with Metropolitan Area Planning Agency and the Midtown-Downtown Corridor Study. She has worked with many local clients on the ideation, design, and implementation of active transportation programs. Her work on TDM and as a volunteer with Missing Middle Housing has helped her develop expertise in land use planning as well.

Grace serves on the City of Omaha Mayor's Millennial Advisory Committee and is also the President of the Hanscom Park Neighborhood Association. Her Gallup Strengths are Arranger, Harmony, Empathy, Learner, and Input.

**Relevant Experience**

- Verdis Group, Senior Associate, 2017 - present
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Lincoln, NE
  - Strategic Plan for Climate Center, California State University East Bay
  - Climate Resiliency Plan and Sustainability Master Plan, Black Hills State University & Spearfish, SD
  - Sustainability Master Plan, Dallas Zoo (Dallas, TX)
  - Sustainability Implementation - Project Lead, University of Nebraska Medical Center
  - Active Transportation Planning, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Master Plan + Implementation, Metropolitan Utilities District (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Master Plan + Implementation, Nebraska Methodist Health System (Omaha, NE)
  - Active Transportation Planning, First National Bank of Omaha
  - Active Transportation Planning, Mutual of Omaha



**Belyna Bentlage**  
**Associate, MS**

**Vulnerability Analysis**

With a background in rigorous social science training, Belyna is adept at understanding and analyzing the social physics of an organization and its capacity for change. Her areas of expertise include behavior change, community-based social marketing, data management, systems thinking, human-centered design, and climate vulnerability analysis.

Belyna played a key role in the development of the City of Lincoln's Climate Action Plan. She developed and analyzed surveys sent to the City's Climate Resilience Task Force and members of the public, and co-facilitated workshops and meetings with various groups. Belyna has also been deeply involved in the research, vulnerability assessment, and strategy development for our current project with the City of Salem, OR. She researched the city's climate data and projected climate impacts, interviewed subject matter experts, determined Salem's risk levels, and facilitated conversations with an advisory group about the city's adaptive capacity, in order to ultimately arrive at a robust assessment of Salem's vulnerabilities.

Belyna's Gallup Strengths are Learner, Intellection, Input, Empathy, Connectedness.

**Relevant Experience**

- Verdis Group, Associate, 2019 - present
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Salem, OR
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Lincoln, NE
  - Sustainable Design Guidelines & Waste Management Plan, Millwork District (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Goal Setting & Implementation, University of Nebraska - Omaha
  - Sustainability Implementation, Metropolitan Airport Commission (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN)
  - Sustainability Implementation, University of Nebraska Medical Center
  - Sustainability Implementation, Nebraska Methodist Health System (Omaha, NE)
  - Campus Waste Management System Redesign, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- Creighton University, Sustainability Coordinator, 2017-2019
- Purdue University, Research Associate & Outreach Coordinator, 2015-2017





**Kate Hamel**  
**Associate, MA**

**Engagement and Equity Specialist**

Kate will have primary responsibility for developing the Public Engagement Plan and leading engagement activities. With a background in user experience, design, and social science, she is ideally suited to ensure our engagement efforts are inclusive and effective.

Kate joined Verdis Group in March 2019. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Truman State University as well as a Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Kate leads community engagement efforts for many of our clients, applying her people-focused skills and background to communicate technical information in relatable, accessible, and visually appealing ways.

Earlier this year, she completed the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)'s Foundations in Planning course. For the City of Salem, OR, Climate Action Plan, she created and has helped execute the Public Engagement Plan, and she has developed and analyzed surveys for many of our clients.

Kate serves as the Vice President for the Green Omaha Coalition. Her Gallup Strengths are Individualization, Input, Learner, Restorative, and Empathy.

**Relevant Experience**

- Verdis Group, Associate, 2019 - present
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Salem, OR
  - Sustainability Implementation & Planning, Omaha Public Schools
  - Sustainability Implementation & Planning, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium
  - Sustainability Implementation, University of Nebraska Medical Center
  - Sustainability Implementation, Nebraska Methodist Health System (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Engagement Planning, Millwork District (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Engagement & Data Analysis, Kearney Public Schools
  - Strategic Sustainability Plan, Metropolitan Airport Commission (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN)
- Bold Insight, UX Researcher + Consultant, 2018 - 2019
- Washington County, OR, Waste Reduction Outreach Specialist, 2014 - 2015
- City of Evanston, IL, Sustainability Intern, 2013



**Brian Harmon**  
**Associate, MS**

**Greenhouse Gas Specialist**

As our resident greenhouse gas inventory and modeling expert, Brian will lend his expertise to forecasting greenhouse gas reduction scenarios and recommending realistic goals.

Brian joined Verdis Group in 2018. He holds a M.S. in Natural Resource Sciences from the University of Nebraska, a B.S. in Fisheries Science, and a minor in Quantitative Sciences from the University of Washington. His Master's thesis focused on the spatial distribution of resource use by recreational fishermen. Brian enjoys and excels at data analysis, statistical modeling, and programming.

Brian is our in-house expertise on greenhouse gas emissions and has experience completing several types and sizes of inventories. He has conducted a geographic inventory for a four-county region of four million people and has evaluated the cradle-to-customer emissions per pound for a meat subscription service. Most recently, he completed a consumption-based inventory and created a model for greenhouse gas projections for the City of Salem, OR. Brian holds a certification with the GHG Protocol for the Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Standard and has developed robust, market-leading in-house tools and analyses that can be drawn upon.

Brian's Gallup Strengths are Ideation, Analytical, Intellection, Learner, and Responsibility.

**Relevant Experience**

- Verdis Group, Associate, 2018 - present
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Salem, OR
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Lincoln, NE
  - GHG Inventory/Corporate Social Responsibility Recommendations, First National Bank of Omaha
  - GHG inventories for eight additional clients
  - Sustainability Master Plan, Seattle Aquarium (Seattle, WA)
  - Sustainability Master Plan, Dallas Zoo (Dallas, TX)
  - Sustainability Materiality Assessment & GHG Inventory, Airline Plastics Company (Omaha, NE)
  - Greenhouse Gas Goal Modeling, Millwork District (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Master Plan and GHG Goal Modeling, First National Bank of Omaha
  - Sustainability Implementation, University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Planner, 2017 - 2018
- Cascadia Consulting, Seattle, WA, Project Analyst, 2017
  - King County, WA, GHG Inventory
  - Puget Sound Clean Air Agency GHG Inventory
  - City of Bellevue, WA, GHG Inventory



**Craig Moody**  
**Managing Partner, MBA**

**Advisor**

Craig will advise on myriad parts of the project throughout, including final strategy recommendations, and final deliverable review.

Craig manages all of Verdis Group's day-to-day activities, which includes ultimate responsibility for project planning and service delivery. He stays closely involved in the firm's projects, ensuring they are on-time, on-budget, and high quality. His experience in bringing sustainable solutions to organizations and managing large-scale, complex projects is a critical component to the success of many initiatives.

Given the City of La Crosse' 2050 goal, Craig's experience in the electric utility industry will prove to be an invaluable addition to the project. Craig was elected to the Omaha Public Power District board of directors in 2016 and has since gained a robust understanding of utilities and the electricity market.

Craig also serves on the board of Omaha's Lauritzen Gardens. His Gallup Strengths are Harmony, Achiever, Relator, Competitive, and Arranger.

**Relevant Experience**

- Verdis Group, Managing Principal, 2009 - present
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Salem, OR (pro bono)
  - Climate Action Plan, City of Lincoln, NE (pro bono)
  - Sustainability Master Plan + Implementation, University of Nebraska Medical Center
  - Sustainability Master Plan + Implementation, Omaha Public Schools
  - Sustainability Master Plan, University of Nebraska - Kearney
  - Sustainability Master Plan + Implementation, Nebraska Methodist Health System (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Master Plan, University of Nebraska - Omaha
  - Sustainability Master Plan, Kearney Public Schools
  - GHG Inventory/Corporate Social Responsibility Recommendations, First National Bank of Omaha
  - Sustainability Master Plan and GHG Goal Modeling, First National Bank of Omaha
  - Sustainability Implementation, University of Nebraska Medical Center
  - Active Transportation Planning - Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (Omaha, NE)
  - Sustainability Master Plan, Metropolitan Utilities District (Omaha, NE)



**Desmond Evans**  
**Data Analyst, BA**

**Analytics Assistant**

Desmond will act as an additional analyst and researcher, and he will play a role in executing engagement activities by helping prepare content, managing content on the engagement website, and assisting with analysis of results from surveys and other activities.

Desmond recently graduated from Colorado State University with a major in Ecosystem Science and Sustainability and a minor in Watershed Science. Desmond also has a deep background in statistical analyses using tools and has GIS mapping experience.

## RDG Planning & Design



**Cory Scott, BS**  
**Urban Planner**

### **Project Advisor**

Since joining RDG in 2000, Cory has been involved in all phases of project development, including conducting research and focus groups to producing graphics and publications. Cory has been published in numerous articles, cited in academic studies, and spoken at State and National APA conferences about market-based planning.

His plans and passion for communities have resulted in millions of dollars of new investment — both public and private funds, and honored by numerous awards. Cory earned his Bachelor of Science in Community and Regional Planning.

### **Relevant Experience**

- Downtown Planning
  - Wisconsin
  - Iowa
  - Illinois
  - Kansas
  - Minnesota
  - Missouri
  - Nebraska
  - North Dakota
  - South Dakota
  - Wyoming
- Land Use and Comprehensive Planning
  - Iowa
  - Nebraska
  - Minnesota
  - North Dakota
  - Wyoming
- Neighborhood and Corridor Planning
  - Green Streets - Omaha Plan, NE
  - Northwest Land Use and Transportation Plan - Fargo, ND
  - Transportation Connectivity Plan - Olathe, KS
  - Ingersoll Avenue Improvement Study - Des Moines, IA



**Molly Hanson, BS**  
**Conservation and Community Outreach Specialist**

**Community Outreach & Engagement**

Molly has 10 years experience working with boards, fundraising, facilitating and building coalitions around plans and projects. Molly is a sixth-generation Iowan, a life-long learner and an advocate for the region's land and waters. Through her stewardship as Executive Director of Iowa Rivers Revival and as a naturalist with the Madison County Conservation Board, Molly has built coalitions and rallied the public around protecting and improving our natural resources. Molly distills complex information to educate audiences on issues and promote

sustainable and practical solutions. Molly earned her Bachelor in Earth Science with a Minor in Geology.

Molly's watershed expertise and experience will be of particular importance to the La Crosse project, and she will be involved in designing and facilitating public workshops.

**Relevant Experience**

- RDG Planning & Design, 2019 - Present
  - Sugar Creek Watershed Study - Waukee, Iowa
  - North Raccoon River Watershed Planning Meetings - North Raccoon River Watershed Coalition
  - Beaver Creek Watershed Planning, Polk County, IA
  - City of Marshalltown, Iowa River Trail Placemaking Plan, Marshalltown, IA
  - City Park Master Plan - Bondurant, Iowa
  - Dubuque County Parks Master Plan - Dubuque, IA
  - Scott Community College Outdoor Campus Master Plan - Bettendorf, IA
- Iowa Rivers Revival - Executive Director, 2016 - 2019
- Madison County Conservation Board - Naturalist, 2012 - 2016



**Ryan Peterson, BS**  
**Landscape Architect**

**Project Advisor**

Ryan's passion is to elevate the vision and expectation of the places we create, impact, or develop through innovation and design. His work recreates the landscapes that make up our watersheds, cities, parks and campuses. He regularly engages the public to build consensus while navigating the complex political pressures and regulatory requirements to create meaningful projects. Ryan earned is Bachelor in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Studies.

**Relevant Experience**

- La Crosse Downtown Plan - La Crosse, Wisconsin



- Traffic Calming and Green Streets - Green Streets Design for Public Spaces, Sustainable Stormwater Management - La Crosse, Wisconsin
- Western Technical College - Campus Master Plan & Design Guidelines (Sustainable Stormwater Management) - La Crosse, Wisconsin
- Dubuque County Conservation Comprehensive Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces MP - Dubuque, Iowa
- Growing Green Communities: Adopt a Stream - Des Moines, Iowa
- Clive Greenbelt: Master Plan - Clive, Iowa
- Valley View Park: Sustainable Low-Impact Development - West Des Moines, Iowa
- Lower Cedar Valley Master Plan: The Nature Conservancy - Eastern Iowa
- Iowa River Landing: Low-Impact Development Master Plan (Green infrastructure planning, urban conservation) - Coralville, Iowa



## **Greg Pierce, BS**

### **Water Resource Engineer**

#### **Project Advisor**

Greg joined RDG in 2014 as a Water Resource Engineer and has over 19 years of experience in Civil Engineering — planning, designing and providing bid assistance/construction administration for both public and private projects. Planning efforts include comprehensive plans, large-scale master plans, watershed/city-scale stormwater management and neighborhood-scale design. Construction projects include water distribution, wastewater collection, stormwater quality and quantity best management practices, transportation facilities, urban streetscapes, ADA

sidewalk accessibility, civil site design, and stream corridor preservation and restoration. Greg has served on the Iowa DNR's Iowa Stormwater Management Manual Technical Committee since 2012. Greg earned his Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Civil Engineering.

#### **Relevant Experience**

- Stormwater Management Study and Master Plan - Ankeny, Iowa
- Big Bull Creek Park - Phase I - Johnson County, Kansas
- Jester Park Nature Center - Polk County, Iowa
- Central Park - Grinnell, Iowa
- Iowa Stormwater Management Manual Updates - State of Iowa
- Forest Grove Park - Phase 1 - Bettendorf, Iowa

## Vendi Advertising

# Vendi



**Julie Haas, MBA**  
**Client Services & Strategy Principal**

### Marketing & Graphic Design Coordinator

A passion for empirical data and an uncanny understanding of consumer behavior propelled Julie from market research analyst to senior marketing management to Vendi. Clients benefit from her vast experience and leadership implementing innovative, integrated multi-channel marketing. Julie runs a tight focus group and is known for developing audience personas that hit the mark, effectively targeting marketing, media, and creative. She earned her MBA from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and has more than 20 years of consumer and

B2B brand experience for national brands, media, utility, and telecom. Julie has an extraordinary commitment to building collaborative client relationships based on shared objectives. In warmer months, you'll find Julie either on the golf course or the river.

Julie will be the primary contact for Vendi Advertising — ensuring that the work is on track and the right personnel are brought in at the right times. Additional Vendi staff will be determined later and brought into the project as needed.