

Verdigre Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process (ECAP)

Community Conversation #1—Report

Z.C.B.J. Hall



Eighteen Verdigre community members participated in the Entrepreneurial Community Activation Process (ECAP) conversation held on June 26, 2025 at the Z.C.B.J Hall. This summary describes the process and highlights from the discussions. The summary is shared so others can see how the conversations evolved. Verdigre community members are invited to a follow-up meeting on July 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Verdigre Fire Hall to assist with the visioning and priority setting.

Welcome and Data Walk

Upon arrival attendees were invited to go on a data walk, reviewing key responses to the Verdigre discovery tool and community survey. Key data points were drawn from each of the eight Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process categories. Attendees were encouraged to take notes.

Following the data walk, Jordan Rasmussen, Extension Educator, opened the conversation welcoming and introducing fellow facilitator Becky Vogt, Survey Manager with UNL's Department of Ag Economics. Meeting attendees took a moment to introduce themselves and how long they have called Verdigre home. An overview of the ECAP process and aims was shared.



What is ECAP?

- ECAP is a holistic approach to community change
- Helps communities understand
 - Unique characteristics
 - Community assets
 - Potential opportunities for growth
- Engages community members
 - Discovery Tool
 - Conversations
- Actions for change



Data Debrief

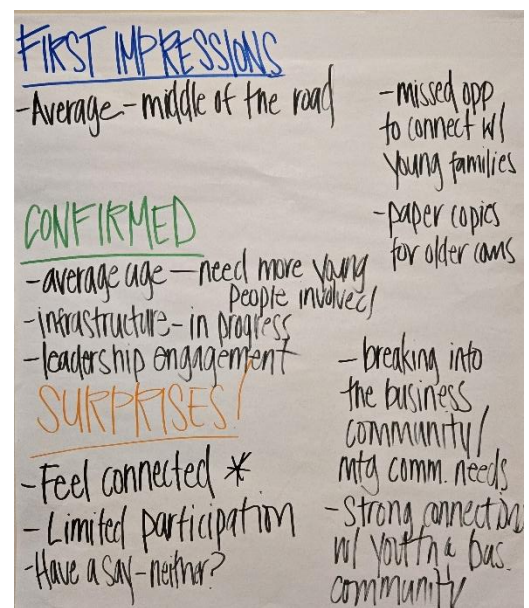
Drawing from the data walk, community members were asked to respond to the following:

- What are your first impressions of the data?
- What confirmed what you already knew?
- What surprises you, if anything?
- What patterns, themes, or trends do you notice?

Attendees were invited to converse in small groups and share out key discussion points with the larger group.

What are your first Impressions of the data?

- Responses were middle of the road—not leaning in one direction or another.
- Based on participation—missed opportunity to connect with and gather the input of young families and collect responses from elder community members.



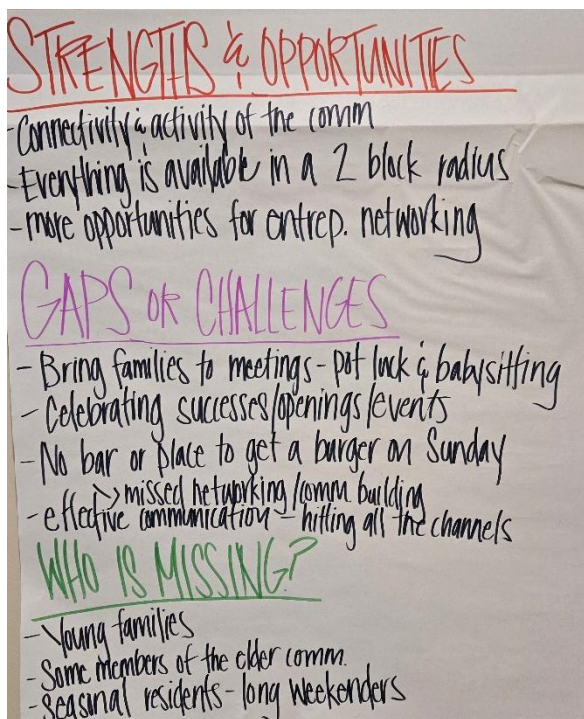
What confirmed what you already knew?

- Average age of community members—and those that engage in community activities.
- There is a need for more young people to be involved in community life.
- Infrastructure projects are top of mind and in progress.
- Leadership engagement



What surprises you, in anything?

- People feel connected in the community.
- Limited participation in the survey
- People in Verdigre have a say about what goes on in the community—neither agree nor disagree was the lead response.
- Breaking into business and meeting community needs
- Strong connection with youth and business community



Diving a Bit Deeper:

were invited to dig deeper and begin to consider strengths and opportunities, gaps, or challenges and who might be missing from the data. Again, the attendees conversed in small groups and then shared with the larger group.

What strengths does this data suggest the community can build on? Opportunities?

- Connectivity and activity in the community
- Everything is available in a two-block radius.
- More opportunities for entrepreneurial networking

What gaps or challenges are emerging?

- Brining families to meetings—consider offering childcare and potluck suppers.
- Celebrating successes—like store openings, events
- No bar or place to get a burger on Sundays which creates missed opportunities for networking and

community building.

- Effective communication, hitting all the channels where people get their information about what is happening in Verdigre.

Are there particular groups or voices that might be missing from this data?

- Young families
- Some members of the elder community
- Seasonal residents or long weekenders.

Defining Verdigre's ECAP Successes

Tuning toward what Verdigre area residents seek to gain from the ECAP process, the following questions were asked and responses shared:

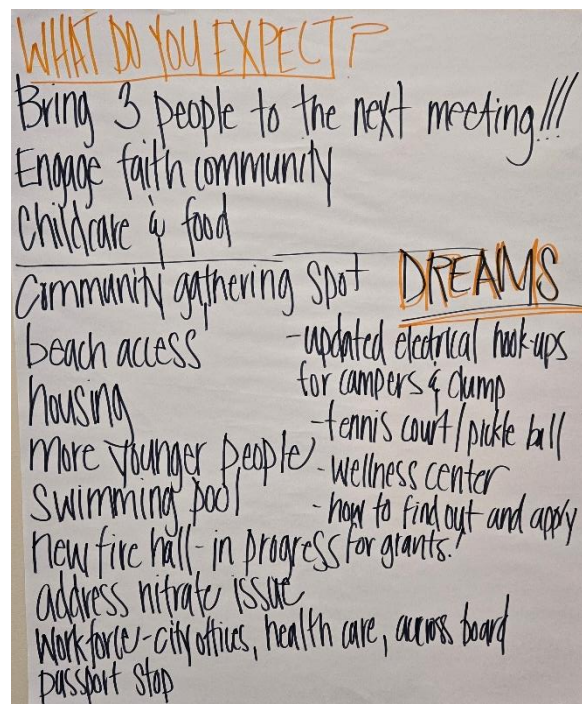
What do you EXPECT to see during Verdigre's ECAP process?

- Bring three people to the next meeting—to draw in and engage more members of the Verdigre community.
- Engage members of the faith community.
- Employ creative ways to make participation in the process available to more people—like offering childcare and food during meetings.

What would you LOVE to see happen over the next year as a result of this process? and—

What is your DREAM for Verdigre's future over the next five, ten, twenty years? (responses are blended together)

- A community gathering spot or community center.
- Beach access
- Housing
- More younger people
- Swimming pool
- New fire hall—in progress
- Address nitrate issue



- Workforce to fill vacancies in city offices, health care, other occupations.
- Become a Nebraska Passport stop.
- Updated electrical hook-ups for campers and dump station.
- Tennis court/pickle ball courts
- Wellness center
- Opportunities to learn more about grant funding.

Homework and Next Meetings

As the meeting drew to a close, participants were asked who they would share this information with and for the feedback on the data walk.

Attendees also received paper copies of the Verdigre Discovery Tool results, as well as results from the Verdigre Youth Survey. As homework, attendees were encouraged to review in more depth the responses to the survey and bring observations and questions to the following meeting. Paper or electronic copies of the results are available through the village office.

The next meeting will be on **July 10 at 7pm**—where the community's vision and priority setting will be the focus. On July 24, the community is invited to come together around action planning. All Verdigre community members are invited and encouraged to attend the meetings.