

Vollintine Evergreen Community Association
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Vollintine Evergreen Community Association Strategic Plan Update for 2024-2027

Approved by the VECA Board, January 8, 2024

History of the Strategic Plan

VECA's Strategic Plan 2011 to 2015 involved input from neighbors via public meetings, input from other stakeholders via individual interviews, a review and analysis of the resident survey, and a review of organizational documents provided by VECA. It resulted in a detailed plan provided by a consultant and adopted by the neighborhood's governing bodies. See <http://veca.org/bylaws-and-governing-documents/>

In 2015 the VECA Board of Directors reviewed the earlier document and revised the Strategic Plan to reflect the experience of working with the plan and the needs and resources that would be available in 2016-2017. The plan was approved by the VECA membership at its annual meeting on January 23, 2016.

In 2019, the VECA Board of Directors once again reviewed and revised the Strategic Plan to set the board's goals and priorities during 2020-25. The plan was approved by the VECA membership at its annual meeting on January 25, 2020.

In 2023, the Board reviewed, revised, and approved the Strategic Plan considering changes that have occurred in how the organization conducts business.

The plan includes two categories:

Actions in Progress: These are the primary goals to be employed by VECA during the 2024-2027 period. They reflect goals that are sustainable with financial and volunteer resources and of high priority to both the VECA Board and neighborhood residents.

Actions Wish List: These goals are seen as important but lack resources (time, people, and/or money) and they remain for possible long-term development.

VECA's Mission

- To maintain a quality residential neighborhood through the volunteer efforts of the neighborhood's residents and community partners.
- VECA's vision is to make Vullintine Evergreen a joyful place to live, work, and play.
- VECA is driven by our six values:
 - We are culturally diverse
 - We are inclusive
 - We support our greenspaces
 - We care about our historic design and architecture
 - We are the voice for our community
 - We respect and care for our neighbors

VECA's Goals

- Vullintine Evergreen neighbors act as the primary change agents in their neighborhood.
- VECA engages in effective and efficient partnerships with surrounding neighborhoods, institutions, and government entities to accomplish mutual goals.
- VECA works directly, and in partnership with neighbors and the city and county, to improve and maintain properties in the neighborhood.
- VECA is an organization that maintains the flexibility necessary to be authentic to its grassroots nature, while at the same time operating under an organizational management structure

that helps the organization remain sustainable.

Actions in Progress

1. Overall Activity

- The VECA Board will determine the date, time, and location for board meetings and committee meetings as well as events. All regular board and committee meetings will be posted on the VECA online Calendar.
- The VECA Board will pursue foundation and corporate investment for project and core support funding.

2. Blight Busters

- Strive to develop effective relationships with government agencies, including Code Enforcement management.
- Assist neighbors and block clubs with strategies and information to help them solve code enforcement or nuisance issues on their own or using their block club structure.
- Conduct windshield surveys of blighted properties for code enforcement reporting, and corrective actions.
- Develop strategies to promote neighborhood cleanup committee recruitment and enhancements.
- Develop a user friendly system to track, verify accuracy, and follow-up of reported code enforcement infractions.

3. Communications

- Provide frequent communication and information for neighbors via the enews.
- Publish a printed newsletter once a year as a year-end report.
- Keep the VECA website up to date and begin a resource program for neighbors.

4. Community Outreach

- Offer a platform for neighbors to surface ideas they are passionate about and invite others to join them in making these projects come to fruition.

5. Historic

- Encourage and support residents' involvement in preserving the neighborhood's architectural character and value. Promote, preserve, and protect the neighborhood's architectural character and value. Boost support for historic preservation.
- Outreach to Property Owners: Provide neighbors with information regarding cases at MLC, LUCB, and BOA through VECA's website and social media platforms.
- Education and Engagement: Be a resource for neighbors regarding the COA process, the types of exterior work projects that need a COA, and the design guidelines.
- Collaboration with VECA Committees: Partner for example, with the Blight Busters Committee to identify and address properties with code violations (such as stop work orders and non-permitted exterior alteration activity).
- Lead an effort to revitalize the Jackson/Evergreen intersection: Visioning Jackson/Evergreen

6. Managing

- Develop partnerships with nonprofits to advance mutual interests.
- Continue the practice of developing annual committee goals, volunteer activities, and budgets.
- Continue the sidewalk repair program.
- Utilize the vacant lots at McLean and Edward Streets.

7. Membership

- Promote the benefits of membership including VECA partnerships with other nonprofits, the City of Memphis, and Shelby County
- Develop a proactive and standardized procedure for identifying and welcoming new neighbors; provide new neighbors with a VECA Welcome packet.
- Maintain an updated membership database.
- Support VECA committees in their grassroots initiatives.

8. Neighborhood Networks

- Organize quadrant input annually.
- Continue to develop and support block clubs.
- Hold neighbor events such as National Night Out, Annual Meeting, Block events, Meet and Greets, Vacant lot activation.

9. Rental Houses

- Sell all properties by the end of 2024.

10. Welcome Center

- Utilize Welcome Center as a meeting place for neighborhood/government meetings and government agencies doing work in the neighborhood.

11. Youth

- Seek partnerships with existing organizations that focus on youth.
- Revamp the youth committee with an increased focus on neighborhood schools: Snowden, Vollentine, and KIPP schools.
- Seek youth engagement with VECA.

12. V&E Greenline Strategic Plan

- Increase community awareness of the trail's benefits and amenities through targeted marketing and outreach efforts, including social media, local events, and partnerships with schools, businesses and organizations.
- Foster community engagement and ownership through volunteer programs and community events such as trail clean-ups, educational programming, and public art installations.
- Preserve and enhance the natural ecosystem surrounding the trail through responsible stewardship practices such as invasive species removal, litter control, and native plant restoration.
- Ensure financial sustainability through diversifying funding sources including grants, fundraisers, and individual donations, while also developing efficient operational systems such as volunteer management and asset tracking.
- See the complete plan on the following pages.

Actions Wish List

1. Youth

- Ensure that youth involvement is considered for every project through the creation of two board positions for Youth Action Team members.

2. Business

- Work with the businesses to facilitate major improvements to the business districts.
- Encourage and assist the neighborhood businesses to create a business association for the business districts.

3. Communications

- Develop branding components (logo, color themes, etc.) of identity to be used to create a unified look throughout various public materials used by the organization.

4. Board of Directors

- Develop a business plan.

V&E Greenline Committee Master Plan V
Submitted as part of the 2023 VECA Strategic Plan
May 8, 2023

About the V&E Greenline

The V&E Greenline is a natural trail located in Midtown Memphis, owned by the community and managed by volunteers. Contributions from trail users fund trail maintenance, taxes, insurance, and other costs. Fundraising events like the V&E Artwalk in the fall and Earth Day/Arbor Day in the spring have funded capital improvements.

According to estimates collected by the City of Memphis Bikeway and Pedestrian Program in 2022, 74,650 pedestrians and 7,899 cyclists travel on the V&E Greenline annually. The V&E Greenline Committee manages an average annual budget of \$25,000, and oversees approximately 150 volunteers who perform over 4000 hours of work.

Mission and Vision

The mission of the V&E Greenline is to provide a safe, accessible, and environmentally friendly pathway for individuals to engage in physical activity, while promoting the preservation of the natural ecosystem. Our vision is to create a vibrant and sustainable community asset that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Goals and Objectives

The following are the primary goals and objectives of the V&E Greenline:

- Increase the usage of the trail by promoting its benefits and amenities to the community.
- Preserve and enhance the natural ecosystem surrounding the trail through responsible stewardship practices.
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the trail by developing diverse funding streams and efficient operational systems.
- Continue efforts to control invasive vines and privet.
- Foster a sense of community engagement and ownership through volunteer programs and community events.
- Expand our volunteer base to manage and maintain the V&E Greenline through Second Saturday, and properly utilize social media and Volunteer Odyssey to promote volunteer work.
- Implement a plan for larger maintenance projects such as bridge painting and trail surface gravel.

- Sponsor the V&E Artwalk in the Fall and the Earth Day/Arbor Day event in the Spring.
- Develop partnerships with organizations at Rhodes College and the University of Memphis.
- Expand the Arboretum to Level 2 Certification.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- A unique and valuable community asset that provides recreational opportunities and promotes environmental conservation.
- A strong and committed volunteer base that has supported the trail's development and maintenance.
- A favorable location that connects multiple areas of the VECA neighborhood.
- A supportive local government and community that recognizes the value of the trail.

Weaknesses:

- Limited funding and resources to support larger maintenance problems like bridge maintenance, re-graveling the surface, and maintaining the culverts along the trail.
- Limited awareness and usage of the trail among certain segments of the community.
- Weak relationship with MLGW.

Opportunities:

- Partnerships with local businesses and organizations to support the trail's development and promotion.
- Collaborations with local schools and community groups to promote community engagement.
- Transition away from gasoline-powered tools toward more sustainable solutions for trail maintenance.

Threats:

- Continued work on MLGW wells near the Station House that limits our activity and degrades the natural environment of the trail.

Strategies and Tactics

To achieve our goals and objectives, we will pursue the following strategies and tactics:

- Increase community awareness of the trail's benefits and amenities through targeted marketing and outreach efforts, including social media, local events, and partnerships with schools, businesses and organizations.
- Foster community engagement and ownership through volunteer programs and community events such as trail clean-ups, educational programming, and public art installations.
- Preserve and enhance the natural ecosystem surrounding the trail through responsible stewardship practices such as invasive species removal, litter control, and native plant restoration.
- Ensure financial sustainability through diversifying funding sources including grants, fundraisers, and individual donations, while also developing efficient operational systems such as volunteer management and asset tracking.

Evaluation and Monitoring

To track our progress toward achieving our goals and objectives, we will establish key performance indicators such as trail usage, volunteer engagement, funding streams, and environmental impact. We will regularly monitor and evaluate our progress against these indicators, making adjustments and refinements to our strategies and tactics as needed.

By following this master plan, the V&E Greenline can continue to serve as a valuable community asset for years to come.