

**Virginia-Highland Civic Association
2015-2016 Strategic Plan**

In accordance with Article I, Section 7 of the Bylaws of Virginia-Highland Civic Association (the “Association”), the following goals and objectives are presented by the Board of Directors. These goals and objectives will guide the Board of Directors in carrying out the business of the Association, which it does through the following committees and sub-committees:

- I. Budget Committee
- II. Communications Committee
- III. Fundraising Committee
 - a. Summerfest Sub-committee
 - b. Tour of Homes Sub-committee
- IV. Parks Committee
- V. Planning Committee
 - a. History & Preservation Sub-committee
- VI. Safety Committee
 - a. Sidewalks Sub-committee

I. Budget Committee

Responsibilities: Monitor budget procedures and bookkeeping practices in order to provide accurate up-to-date financial information.

Co-Chairs: Peggy Berg and Jack White

Committee Members: Lola Carlisle, Robin Ragland, Jess Windham

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Keep an accurate record of income and expenses of the Association.
2. Review goals and budgets to ensure goals are aligned with budgets.
3. Provide appropriate insurance for the Association’s directors, volunteers, and tangible assets. Insure the general legal financial obligations of the Association are met and that the assets of the Association are safeguarded.
4. Maintain standard practices of fiduciary responsibility within the Association.
5. Make detailed financial reports available to each committee chair on a quarterly basis with more frequent reports available on request, including a profit and loss statement for all events.
6. Have timely annual tax returns prepared for in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

II. Communications Committee

Responsibilities: Planning and oversight of the Association’s community outreach and build awareness of its activities, using both electronic and published materials. Maintain and keep current the VHCA website and sub-sites, including data for the various committees.

Chair: Lola Carlisle

Committee Members: Ida Centner, Stephen Cohen, Mary Johnson, Ernest Lessinger, Jess Windham

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Raise awareness of the Association’s and neighborhood’s activities, using electronic media - VHCA website, the VOICE, and social media.
2. Provide hard copies of such materials (US mail or hand delivery) to VaHi members who do not have electronic access.

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3. Ensure that all communications are vetted through the Communications Committee and other appropriate committees.
4. Look for opportunities to actively engage subscribers through use of digital media.
5. Promote advertising in the VOICE.
6. Grow the Association database of email addresses. Keep it easy for subscribers to opt in and out.
7. Develop and implement a strategy for using social media in communicating with subscribers. Maintain an appropriate presence on Facebook, including separate websites and Facebook pages for events like Summerfest and Tour of Homes.
8. Monitor the relevant social and print media and recommend appropriate responses, as needed - primarily directing the public to official VHCA communications platforms.
9. Work cooperatively with local publications (Creative Loafing, Atlanta Intown, et al.) to share content, leverage subscriber databases, etc.
10. Assist in promoting fundraising events.
11. Reach out to communication chairs from nearby neighborhoods and find ways to leverage mutual communication efforts and email databases to increase overall reach.
12. Assist committee and board members in telling the stories.
13. Improve effectiveness of email campaigns and quality of email layout with tools like MailChimp, Formstack, and Survey Monkey.
14. Identify areas where content can be improved (i.e., zoning/planning, education).

Specific Goals for 2015-16

1. Publish a well-written and well-edited Voice 20 times a year.
2. Add links to authors (usually a committee email) of articles so residents can easily reach out to authors/committees for more information or clarification on topics.
3. Work with the developer to thoroughly review site and make improvements as follows: responsive (mobile friendly) improvements, search enhancements, reporting of activity
4. Create a stand-alone Summerfest site
5. Bring in new volunteers to help with ad sales, copywriting, and photography.
6. Monitor ad types, sizes, and pricing; recommend adjustments as appropriate. Report ad status bi-annually.
7. Establish relationships with communication chairs in neighboring communities and establish processes for exchanging and posting information.
8. Maximize online content and resources by training Board members to use CMS and encouraging members to place as much relevant content and information online as possible themselves.

Contemplated 2016 Budget (not specifically costed or adopted)
\$1,000 (20 hours at \$50/hour) Content generation for website updates and publications

III.Fundraising Committee

Responsibilities: Creating and leading activities that promote the neighborhood and the Association and raise funds to support the Association's Goals and Objectives.

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a. Summerfest Sub-Committee

Responsibilities: Organize and run this annual event, which is the Association's largest fundraiser.

Co-Chairs: John Becker, Paige Hewell

Committee Members: Lola Carlisle, Meghan McCloskey, Pamela Papner

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Continue building and refining the event's business model now that WZGC ('Dave FM') has changed to a news/talk format.
2. Identify and train new committee members; increase the Committee's capacity.
3. Attempt to earn revenues equivalent to or greater than last year.
4. Offer a fun, safe, quality event for all ages.
5. Generate sufficient and effective publicity and advertising.
6. Continue to solicit participation by local businesses.
7. Maintain the high quality of artwork; specifically report on that at the conclusion of the event.
8. Maintain a successful community parade & dinner.
9. Examine ways of keeping costs in check while making it a celebratory neighborhood event.

Specific Goals for 2015-16

1. Improve the quality of music over 2015.
2. Examine acquiring new media partnerships.
3. Utilize marketing company to sell festival sponsorships of at least \$100K.
4. Sell 10-15 available neighborhood sponsorships.
5. Pay attention to cost of beverages and select those that will maximize contribution margin, subject to sponsorship constraints.
6. Create a plan to establish tighter beverage cash controls.
7. Monetize Kidsfest again this year.
8. Maintain cost of artist market booths at last year's level.
9. Review the operation and expectations of the road race in light of existing competition.
10. Develop brochure with artist names/locations, as we did last year.
11. Appoint specific person to be in charge of print/online PR.
12. Post street banners on light posts and within square.
13. Encourage participation by and benefits to local businesses.

b. Tour of Homes Sub-Committee

Responsibilities: Organize and run the annual Tour of Homes, one of the association's largest fundraisers.

Co-Chairs: Robin Ragland, Angelika Taylor

Committee Members: Eleanor Barrineau, Karen Murphree, Stephen Cohen, Mandi Roberson, Pam Bullock, Bill Bell, Melinda Muffley, Hilary Harmon, Ashleigh Bryan, Chelsie Coker, Lori Zurkuhlen, Arturo Cruz, Jeanne Drehs, Alison Hutton, Jo Ann Zyla, Betsy Briehman, Billy Scott, Holle Gilbert

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Maintain the Tour as one of the premier events of its kind in the region.
2. Maintain its grassroots feel while showcasing a variety of interesting homes and structures paired with local restaurants.
3. Improve the profitability of the tour through close analysis of past successes and

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- failures. Ensure sponsorship money is successfully solicited and collected.
4. Develop a cohesive team to put on a neighborhood friendly event.
 5. Be cognizant of issues regarding infill housing during the home selection process and showcase the importance of the historic character of VaHi via the homes selected.
 6. Create more tie-ins with the local Virginia-Highland business community.

Proposed 2016 Budget

\$1500 PR
\$1800 Graphic Artist
\$2500 Booklet Printing
\$1500 Advertising (Creative Loafing and Comcast Commercial)
\$2000 Signage & Hardware
\$3000 Shuttles
\$ 500 Misc (Supplies, Flamingos, Etc)
\$ 250 Permit for JHP
\$ 640 Homeowner gifts
\$ 350 Portable potties
\$14,000 Total (rounded)

IV.Parks Committee

Responsibilities: The development, enhancement and maintenance of the park land located within Virginia-Highland, in cooperation with and as a local complement to the City of Atlanta's primary responsibility in this area. John Howell Park, North Highland Park, Orme Park, The Triangle at Virginia & Highland

Co Chairs: David Brandenberger, Lauren Wilkes Fralick, Linc Weiss, and Jack White

Recurring Annual Goals

1. In cooperation and with the support of CoA Parks, protect and improve the neighborhood's open spaces.
2. Develop and share a detailed narrative of each park's needs and contemplated responses that encourages not only beautiful space for residents and visitors alike, but that also benefit the general environment in an eco-friendly manner.
3. Organize, nurture and assist a network of citizens interested in parks. Stage volunteer days as needed to work on plantings and cleanups, etc.
4. Lobby for matching grants from non-profits such as Park Pride to maintain and support desirable park qualities such as sustainability, safety, and eco-friendly-ness.
5. Maintain a functional and inclusive relationship with the CoA Parks Department that makes effective use of the services they provide while bolstering their efforts as needed, especially as it relates to preserving the character and ecology of all neighborhood parks.
6. Select and hire appropriate professional horticultural services to meet these goals.
7. Hold 3 public 'Open Houses' to engage with citizens about their parks.
8. Continue with the established program to routinely prune desired plants and trees and remove invasive plants in addition to performing general maintenance.
9. Stage quarterly or as needed volunteer days to work on plantings and cleanups, etc.

Specific Goals for 2015-16

Formally adopt these General Design Principles for VaHi Parks.

1. Keep park spaces safe, inviting, and pleasant to be in.

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2. Park edges should be active and inviting, not barriers. Interior fences are appropriate only to address specifically identified needs. Except to shield private property, fences should be transparent and allow the inside of the park to be visually connected to the outside, both for safety and to induce greater usage.
3. Realizing that no park can be all things to all people, we strive for diverse and flexible designs that can attract a diverse set of users.
4. Spaces that are adaptable to multiple future uses are ideal; functional open areas are preferable to a field designed for a single sport, for example.
5. Urban stormwater is not inevitable; it is a design failure. We should mitigate this problem, not exacerbate it. We support the use of rain gardens and other formal methods of absorbing stormwater on site, both to supply a healthy water table and protect our city's infrastructure. On site, we try to break up and re-distribute stormwater before it accumulates and accelerates.
6. We deliberately plant native flora. Many non-invasive non-natives exist in VaHi parks and are tolerated because they address specific challenges. All invasives should be eliminated. Our parks should showcase the right plants in the right places.
7. Mature forests of the Georgia Piedmont are dominated by oaks and hickories, but pine trees are also found and should be included in our parks and public spaces.
8. Because open areas and recreational opportunities are at a premium in Atlanta, we support sharing all public spaces with the neighborhood's public schools.
9. By intention, by law, and in spirit, our parks are open to all citizens who follow the rules and treat their fellow humans with respect and courtesy.

Specific Goals for 2015-16: John Howell Memorial Park

1. Apply for a Park Pride Community Building Grant to support continued improvements at John Howell Park. Specific outcomes will include (among others):
 - 1) Building a new berm or other soft barrier to arrest the migration of sand northward from the volleyball courts and general soil erosion east of the De Leon entrance;
 - 2) The establishment of one or more rain gardens to prevent stormwater runoff from entering city streets and the sewer system;
 - 3) Completion of replanting and landscaping with native perennials where possible to enhance both the beauty and the low-maintenance qualities of the park as much as is practical; and
 - 4) The completion of the brick walk sections on the upper level of the park, and
 - 5) Installing a fence along the private property line on the southern border of the park near De Leon, plus a section that separates the two main sections of the park; and restoring the bank under the latter section of fence; (5) restoring the depleted and eroded top soils along the southern edge of the upper level, and (6) planting around the volleyball courts.

Specific Goals for 2015-16: North Highland Park

1. As the finances allow, examine the wisdom of reducing the principal of the loan amount..
2. Move existing bike rack at this location to Inman Middle, which has requested it.
3. Create a planted floral strip along St. Charles where the bike strip was
4. Determine the practicality and desirability of creating a photo exhibit areas along the N. Highland and/or St. Charles sidewalks and/or the northern boundary of the park.

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5. Encourage different public and/or private uses and activities appropriate for the active areas for special events.

Specific Goals for 2015-16: Orme Park

1. Monitor and maintain the renovation completed several years ago.
2. Consider how to move forward with the contemplated riparian restoration, especially along the severely denuded north side.
3. Stage volunteer days as needed to work on plantings and cleanups, etc.
4. Participate in meetings of the Friends of Orme Park.

Specific Goals for 2015-16: The Triangle at Virginia & Highland

1. Continue to install and maintain seasonal and perennial plantings.
2. Consider implementation of edging on the southwestern 'hypotenuse' side to discourage citizens from entering the planted areas.

V.Planning Committee

Responsibilities: Oversight and review of all variance requests, special exceptions, re-zoning applications and land-use proposals. Review of impact to the neighborhood from the City's Comprehensive Development Plan.

Chair: Position rotates among members

Committee Members: Chip Bullock, Lola Carlisle, Karen Feigh, Jenifer Keenan, George Van Horne, Jack White, Jess Windham

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Review all new applications for variances, special exceptions, and liquor licenses and make recommendations to the Board.
2. Represent the Association at NPU-F meetings, with special attention to NPU activities that impact Virginia-Highland. Provide updates and feedback to the VHCA Board.
3. Attend relevant BZA meetings to advocate for VHCA and/or NPU decisions. Monitor trends and developments within the BZA.
4. Monitor the development of public policies in the city that might impact the neighborhood and the Association, with a particular emphasis on land use, zoning, transportation and the environment.
5. Monitor the ongoing development of the commercial nodes to ensure that development does not adversely affect residents and traffic patterns in the surrounding streets.
6. Compile and maintain a record of all existing businesses in each NC node. Share with the City and business owners a list of each node's eating and drinking establishments.
7. Expand our database of existing and historic traffic volume, flows, and impacts.
8. Review public education policies and help educate residents so they can respond to their Planning impacts.
9. Respond to citizen complaints and concerns about potential building code violations.
10. Monitor Beltline-related developments, CDP updates and other citywide transportation and development initiatives.
11. Continue to make clear that in building and zoning (as in all areas), we acknowledge the rule of law and follow it, even as we sometimes advocate for changes in it.
12. Educate the citizenry about the challenges that result from decades of inadequate on-site stormwater management and the difficulties that even legal practices can pose for us and our neighbors. Be unafraid to advocate for the Golden Rule.

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Specific Goals for 2015-16

1. Work with Councilmember Wan and the City of Atlanta Departments of Planning and Public Works on opportunities to implement projects from the VaHi Master Plan, including - but not limited to - reduced traffic speeds and safer pedestrian and cycling capacity on Monroe Drive and other neighborhood streets, creating a more functional intersection at 10th and Monroe, improved design of Barnett Street, bike lanes on St. Charles, and BeltLine-related development.
2. Closely monitor the anticipated re-development of 10th and Monroe, with a particular emphasis on any proposed rezoning or land use changes to NPU-F's CDP and/or the VHCA Master Plan.
3. With the Preservation Sub-committee, monitor the redevelopment of FS19. Increased staff capacity, safety, and firefighting functionality are certain goals; specific attention to maintaining the building's historic elements and addressing stormwater challenges are also critical.
4. Monitor and support the City of Atlanta's anticipated rewriting of the zoning codes, with a specific eye on informing and resolving challenges resulting from inconsistent and overlapping responsibilities, processes, and approaches within the Departments of Planning, Watershed Management, and Public Works.
5. Install 'Only Rain in the Drain' markers on stormwater outlets in the neighborhood.
6. Provide input to the city in the discussion on the renewal of the Park Atlanta contract-letting them know the negative effects of the contract on VaHi businesses.
7. Monitor ongoing development to promote cycling and pedestrian strategies within, PEDs, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, and the City of Atlanta.
8. Work with Center4ward to advocate for locations of the City of Atlanta Bike share plan.
9. Continue to strive for short and long-term solutions to the traffic congestion at Inman Middle School.
10. Identify architectural features and appropriate building scales within the neighborhood that, if codified, would prevent or reduce development out of scale with the surrounding R-4 lots.
11. Report the Planning Committee's formal decisions to the VaHi Communications committee by the Friday following the Planning meeting for posting on our web site.
12. Create and maintain an online database of variance applications, accessible by address.
13. Continue to monitor the impacts of stormwater at Callanwolde and Laurel Heights and their outcomes for downstream residents on Rosedale Road.
14. Provide formal opportunities for the committee, board, and public to increase their understanding of the Neighborhood Commercial code and the Beltline Overlay District and their meaning & application within VaHi.
15. Formalize the committee's approach and response to variance applications.
16. Map parking spaces using Open Maps and their assignors at each NC node.
17. In conjunction with the Planning Department and our council member, examine the wisdom of a change to the code for the VaHi NC districts that allows a very limited number of easily-measurable seats in a new (or revised) category of licensing (possibly labeled "Retail Eating.")

a. Preservation & History Sub-Committee

Responsibilities: Identify and educate the community on the historic features and defining qualities of Virginia-Highland. Be a resource for those supporting historic preservation in VaHi.

Chair: Catherine Lewis

Committee Members: Lola Carlisle, Karri Hobson-Pape, Judy Potter, Jack White, Jess Windham

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Recurring Annual Goals

1. Gather and archive historic documents, images, and stories.
2. Examine other organizations' activities in this field for useful practices.

Specific 2015-16 Goals

1. Maintain and expand historic archives begun during research for historic designation and for the book "Images of America: Virginia-Highland". Continue to digitize historic images and documents and post the results on the VHCA site. (The majority of these archives belong to Lola Carlisle and Karri Hobson-Pape, who will have final approval of any uses of these images.)
2. Expand the site's collection of historic maps.
3. Support the authors of the Images of Modern America: Virginia-Highland.
4. Inform the citizenry about the preservation and conservation of historic features and their defining qualities.
5. Encourage the selection of historic homes on Tour of Homes and provide histories of those homes for informational and educational purposes.
6. Follow the exploration of Residential Overlay Zoning for Virginia-Highland and provide input as merited regarding the history of the neighborhood and its architecture.
7. Monitor and comment on the Virginia-Highland and other relevant Wikipedia pages.
8. As merited, create History Committee Awards that credit individuals, businesses, architects, and others who have given exemplary support to the history committee mission.
9. Encourage school-based documentaries and projects that support History Committee responsibilities.
10. Examine the advantages of installing signage noting the neighborhood's listing on the national historic registry.
11. Display historic images at public events and places.
12. Identify and recommend actions to protect historic sites and their defining qualities. Identify research incentives that encourage preservation, matching grants, and tax write-offs, etc.
13. Identify the advantages and challenges of creating a system of historic markers.
14. Conduct walking history tours and events, both for their educational merit and to raise funds.

Contemplated 2016 Budget (not adopted)

\$600 Physical and electronic file organization by an intern (40 hours at \$15/hr)
\$1,200 Office rent at VH Church for archives

VI. Safety Committee

Responsibilities: Promote and advocate for the safety of the residents of the Virginia-Highland

Co-Chairs: Peggy Berg, Jenifer Keenan

Committee Members: Eleanor Barrineau

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Use community resources (residents/businesses) and governmental resources to promote a safe, clean, and orderly neighborhood to provide a safe quality of life for citizens.
2. Continue to work with the Street Captain program and Court Watch.
3. Advocate with the City of Atlanta for safe and functional sidewalks, crosswalks and a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood.

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4. Advocate with the City of Atlanta for safe and functional bike routes.
5. Coordinate and share info with the Planning Committee (& others as needed) on common issues (parking, school safety, event licensing, etc.)
6. Use a variety of media - including Street Captain email lists, VH List, and social media - to share information with the neighborhood and promote participation in Safety initiatives.
7. Publish Safety Stats with Shannon Mehl and Holly Lybeer to educate and inform the neighborhood in an unbiased way.
8. Maintain a working relationship with FBAC and encourage that group to be highly visible, effective at outreach, integrated with the community on a daily basis, financially viable, responsive to quality of life issues, and viewed as a neighborhood asset.
9. Advocate for public policy changes in the city that both encourage the city to assume formal responsibility for and fund sidewalk repairs and greatly simplify the capacity of citizens to make their own repairs as desired.

Specific Goals for 2015/2016

1. Hold an annual Safety public meeting.
2. Expand Safety Committee and hold quarterly meetings
3. Report needed sign, pothole, street light and other safety issues to 311 and specific city departments and track results to assure satisfactory completion.
4. Promote VHCA- designed house number signs with number signs with lights.
5. Work with Angela Sturdivant to continue and expand graffiti control.
6. Develop a protocol for reporting and resolving traffic and parking issues for large events.
7. Facilitate city traffic studies and provide residents with protocols for requesting traffic calming on their street.
8. Provide “top priority” list for stop signs, traffic, sidewalk, and crosswalk improvements to Alex Wan
9. Promote and organize a “Light Up VaHi” event to encourage better lighting (porch lights, motion lights on houses, lit up house numbers).
10. Survey street lights to identify dark spots/locations for new lights and trees blocking lights that should be pruned.
11. Organize “thank you” programs for Zone 6 and the Fire Station #19 (muffin delivery, thank-you notes from residents, etc).
12. Purchase two portable solar-powered flashing speed signs.
13. Provide matching funds for security cameras through the Atlanta Police Foundation.

Contemplated 2016 Budget (not specifically costed or adopted)

\$8500 Portable solar powered flashing speed signs
\$1000 “Light Up VaHi” Campaign
\$1000 Thank You program for Zone 6 and Fire Station 19
\$5000 Matching funds for neighborhood video cameras

a. Sidewalks Subcommittee

Responsibilities: Advocate for public policy changes that simplify the capacity of neighborhoods and citizens to make their own repairs.

Chair: Peggy Berg

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Recurring Annual Goals

1. Simultaneously work to change the law to make the city responsible for sidewalk repairs.
2. Continue to participate on the city of Atlanta's ad hoc Sidewalk Committee and advocate for safer pedestrian and cycling measures.