

Virginia-Highland Civic Association 2016 -2017 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
 - a. Survey Sub-committee
- III. Fundraising Committee
 - a. Summerfest Sub-committee
 - b. Tour of Homes Sub-committee
 - c. Other
- IV. Parks Committee
- V. Planning Committee
 - a. History & Preservation Sub-committee
- VI. Safety Committee

I. Budget Committee

Responsibilities: The committee is responsible for recommending financial policies, goals, and budgets that support the mission, values and strategic goals of the VHCA. The committee also reviews the organization’s financial performance against its goals and proposes major transactions and programs to the board.

Co-Chairs: Jenifer Keenan, George Zirkel

Committee Members: Robin Ragland, Kay Stephenson

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Recommending policies that maintain and improve the financial health and integrity of the VHCA.
2. Reviewing and recommending an annual operating budget that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the organization.
3. Keep an accurate record of income and expenses of the Association.
4. Provide appropriate insurance for the Association’s directors, volunteers, and tangible assets.
5. Ensure the general legal financial obligations of the Association are met and that the assets of the Association are safeguarded.
6. Maintain standard practices of fiduciary responsibility within the Association.
7. 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.
8. Provide a monthly update to the association members on the financial standing of VHCA.
9. Make financial information available to members of the association upon

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- request.
10. Have timely annual tax returns prepared for in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

II. Communications Committee Plan

Responsibilities: Plan, execute and/or approve all communication related to the Virginia-Highland Civic Association including website(s), social media, and other digital content.

Chair: Kay Stephenson

Committee members: Ida Centner, Stephen Cohen, Kay Stephenson, George Zirkel, Cindy Kaufman

Recurring:

1. Use VHCA website(s), the VOICE, Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, VHList, and other media outlets to raise awareness of association and neighborhood activities including fundraising events such as Summerfest and Tour of Homes.
2. Ensure that all communications are presented with a consistent look and feel and represent VHCA in a positive light.
3. Seek opportunities for two-way communication with association members.
4. Generate revenue through advertising to assist with operational costs.
5. Increase reach of association communications by offering a variety of ways to consume information including e-mail blasts, RSS feed, etc.
6. Monitor relevant social and print media and recommend appropriate responses, as needed.
7. Work cooperatively with local media outlets (Creative Loafing, Atlanta InTown, etc.) to share content, leverage subscriber databases, etc.
8. Reach out to communication chairs from nearby neighborhoods and find ways to leverage mutual communication efforts and email databases to increase overall reach.
9. Assist content providers in telling their stories.
10. Improve quality and effectiveness of communications by using best-in-class tools.
11. Identify areas where existing static content can be improved.

2016-2017 Specific:

1. Publish well-written and edited articles and blog posts on the VHCA website on a regular basis.
2. Push out all new content via e-mail blast (VOICE) twice per month.
3. Increase traffic to website by posting regularly to Facebook, Nextdoor and other appropriate channels.
4. Include contact information for authors of articles so readers can ask questions, request more information or volunteer.

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5. Work with the website manager to thoroughly review site and make improvements including search enhancements, reporting of activity, and ongoing maintenance.
6. Recruit additional volunteers to help with ad sales, and content including copy, photography, video, etc.
7. Increase advertising revenue by 25%.
8. Enable regular contributors to directly post information online.
9. Begin evaluating website enhancements for 2018.

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.

a. Summerfest Sub-Committee

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

Co-Chairs: John Becker, Pamela Papner

Committee Members: Jodan Garcia, George Zirkel

Recurring Annual Goals

1. Continue building and refining the event's business model
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 2016-2017

1. Examine acquiring new media partnerships.
2. Utilize marketing company to sell festival sponsorships of at least \$100K.
3. Sell 10-15 available neighborhood sponsorships.
4. Pay attention to cost of beverages and select those that will maximize contribution margin, subject to sponsorship constraints.
5. Create a plan to establish tighter beverage cash controls.
6. Monetize and improve Kidsfest
7. Maintain cost of artist market booths at last year's level.
8. Review the operation and expectations of the road race in light of existing competition.
9. Develop brochure with artist names/locations, as we did last year.

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10. Appoint specific person to be in charge of print/online PR.
11. Post street banners on light posts and within square.
12. 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: TBD

Committee Members: TBD

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. Maximize the profitability of the tour through close analysis of past successes and 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.
7. Include restaurants as food tasting sponsors to differentiate our tour from others, and enable a higher priced ticket.

Specific Goals for 2017

- Gather the 2016 committee in January to:
 - Discuss and document tour feedback, and identify improvement to implement for 2017.
 - Identify committee members who wish to continue for the 2017.
 - Invite potential new members to learn about the committee
- Recruit new co-chairs for the 2017 tour
- Offer a number of higher valued sponsorship spots to maximize the opportunity for sponsorship revenue
- Increase the capacity of the shuttle service
- Select a variety of types of homes, yet avoid inclusion of 'McMansions' on the tour. Avoid multiple homes with renovations with the same builder/architect combination.
- Select at least 6 homes to be on the tour by the end of May.
- Ensure the planning committee visits home candidates prior to finalizing each invitation to the homeowners to insure no unpermitted situations will be included on the tour
- Maintain expanded hours for the tour to ease crowding.
- Address insurance needs when overall liability policy is being renewed - early May.
- Provide a complimentary full page ad for the VHBA
- Offer Facebook giveaway sponsorship opportunities for local businesses, including restaurants that are not participating as food sponsors.

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- Require gift certificates from participating restaurant sponsors to be used as Facebook giveaways
- Develop a plan to insure that food supplies are available throughout the specified hours. Review and plan with restaurants.
- Sign-up a ticket sponsor, and charge ticket fees to attendees to offset credit card and online ticket system fees.
- Sign-up a transportation sponsor to cover the expenses of offering a shuttle
- Re-use all signage if possible, and collect signage after event to make possible re-use again in for the 2018 tour
- Engage an external PR firm to create further reach, and drive higher ticket sales
- Enhance the restaurant sponsorship brochure to illustrate breadth of value to participating food sponsors
- Target specific PR activities for the food sponsors
- Sign up local schools to provide music and caroling throughout the tour weekend

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. Public parks in the neighborhood include: John Howell Park, Orme Park, and the Triangle at Virginia & North Highland; VHCA-owned include North Highland Park.

Chair: David Brandenberger.

Committee members: Eleanor Barrineau, John Clark III, Micah Stringer 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-friendliness.
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 public 'Open Houses' to engage with citizens about their parks on an 'as-needed' or requested basis.
8. Continue with the established program to routinely prune desired plants and trees and remove invasive plants in addition to performing general maintenance.
9. Follow General Design Principles adopted for VaHi Parks in 2015-2016 (below):

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- a. Keep park spaces safe, inviting, and pleasant to be in.
- b. 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.
- c. 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 from the neighborhood and beyond.
- d. 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.
- e. Urban stormwater is not inevitable; it is a design failure. We should mitigate this problem wherever possible and feasible, 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 to protect our city's infrastructure. On site, we try to break up and re-distribute stormwater before it accumulates and accelerates.
- f. We deliberately plant native flora. Many non-invasive non-natives exist in VaHi parks and are tolerated because they address specific challenges. However, we strive to remove all invasives where possible from a design and practical perspective. Our parks should showcase the right plants in the right places.
- g. 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.
- h. Because open areas and recreational opportunities are at a premium in Atlanta, we support sharing all public spaces with the neighborhood's public schools.
- i. 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 2016-17 by Park

John Howell Memorial Park

1. Help fund (via matching funds) and monitor the execution of work planned for this year, including, but not limited to: (1) preventing the migration of sand around the volleyball courts and of general soil erosion above 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 missing brick walk sections on the upper level of the park, along with installation of a fence separating the two main sections of the park.
2. Continue with the established program to routinely prune desired plants and trees and remove invasive plants in addition to performing general maintenance.
3. Stage quarterly or as needed volunteer days to work on plantings and cleanups, etc.

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North Highland Park

1. Continue to utilize funds to pay down debt in a fiscally responsible manner.
2. Continue the established program to maintain plantings and flora.
3. Encourage different public and/or private uses and activities appropriate for the active areas (special events, exercise gatherings, receptions).

Orme Park

1. Monitor and maintain the renovation completed several years ago.
2. Study, analyze and consider plans to move forward with the contemplated riparian restoration - the reduction of invasive plants in the riparian corridor and the installation of appropriate new native ones.
3. Stage quarterly or as needed volunteer days to work on plantings and cleanups, etc.
4. Help to organize and participate in meetings of the Friends of Orme Park committee.

The Triangle at Virginia & North Highland

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

V. Planning Committee

Responsibilities: Oversight and review of all variance requests, special exceptions, rezoning applications and land-use proposals. Review of impact to the neighborhood from the City's Comprehensive Development Plan and related documents. Promote and implement the Master Plan.

Committee Members: Chip Bullock, Lola Carlisle, Barry Loudis, Jenifer Keenan, Debbie Skopczynski, George Van Horne, Jack White, Jess Windham

Chairs:

Variances: Barry Loudis and Jack White

Land Use and Zoning: Jenifer Keenan and Jack White

Transportation/Master Plan: Jenifer Keenan

Liquor Licenses: Jenifer Keenan

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Recurring 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. The redevelopment of the Atkins Park node - specifically the expansion of sidewalks and pedestrian capacity - is an area of special emphasis.
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 onsite stormwater management and the difficulties that even legal practices can pose for us and our neighbors. Be unafraid to advocate for the Golden Rule.

Specific Goals for 2016 - 2017

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.

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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 ongoing redevelopment of FS19, paying specific attention to the budget, fundraising, and construction schedule, maintaining the building's historic elements and addressing stormwater challenges. Monitor and support the City of Atlanta's ongoing revisions 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.
4. Continue to install 'Only Rain in the Drain' markers on storm water outlets in the neighborhood.
5. Monitor ongoing development to promote cycling and pedestrian strategies within, PEDS, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, and the City of Atlanta.
6. Work with Center4ward to advocate for locations of the City of Atlanta Bike share plan.
7. Identify architectural features and appropriate building scales within the neighborhood that, if codified, would prevent or reduce development that is out of scale with the surrounding R-4 lots.
8. Report the Planning Committee's formal decisions to the VaHi Communications committee by the Friday following the Planning meeting for inclusion in the agenda.
9. Continue to monitor the impacts of stormwater at Callanwolde and Laurel Heights and their outcomes for downstream residents on Rosedale Road.
10. 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 and application within VaHi.
11. Continue to streamline the committee's approach and response to variance applications.
12. Map parking spaces using Open Maps and their assignors at each NC node.
13. 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.")
14. Educate citizens about the city's evolving approach to limits on residential development and redevelopment around sanitary sewer and stormwater lines.

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Preservation & History Sub-Committee

Chair: Catherine Lewis

Committee Members: Lola Carlisle, Raymond Keen, Karri Hobson-Pape, Judy Potter, Robin Ragland, Jack White.

Recurring Annual Goals

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

Specific 2016-17 Goals

1. Oversee and coordinate between various entities involved in the Fire Station 19 restoration project, and develop an exhibition
2. 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.)
3. Expand the site's collection of historic maps.
4. Support the authors of the Images of Modern America: Virginia-Highland.
5. Inform the citizenry about the preservation and conservation of historic features and their defining qualities.
6. Encourage the selection of historic homes on Tour of Homes and provide histories of those homes for informational and educational purposes.
7. Follow the exploration of Quick Fixes for neighborhood overdevelopment issues currently in progress with the City of Atlanta and provide input as merited regarding the history of Virginia-Highland, its architecture and existing conditions.
8. Monitor and comment on the Virginia-Highland and other relevant Wikipediapages.
9. Encourage school based documentaries and projects that support History Committee responsibilities.
10. Display historic materials at public events and places--for example, a North Highland Park historical installation similar to last year's photo exhibit.
11. 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
12. Leverage the content from the two history tours conducted for the Tour of Homes as a means to share the history of Va-Hi, and create a vehicle draw visitors to our unique neighborhood:

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- Create a PDF to be available on vahi.org and used for a self guided history tour of the neighborhood
 - Include a copy of the self guided history tour in the new resident packet
 - Work with the Atlanta Preservation Center to have our Va-Hi history tour incorporated into their framework of neighborhood tours (with a goal of being included in the Phoenix Flies tour the following year)
 - Make our history tour available to various groups offering tours in Atlanta
13. Utilize interns to support activities

VI. Safety Committee

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

Chair: Eleanor Barrineau

Committee Members: Jimmy Craig, Sterling Eaves, Jenifer Keenan, Holly Lybeer, Shannon Mehl, Steve Messner, Deborah Schwartz, Kay Stephenson, John Wolfinger

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. Prepare and distribute Safety Reports based on information from APD.
3. Coordinate the Street Captain program.
4. Encourage residents to participate in CourtWatch.
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 to educate and inform the neighborhood.
8. Maintain a positive working relationship with the Virginia-Highland security patrol (FBAC) and coordinate as needed to improve neighborhood safety.

Specific Goals for 2016 - 2017

1. Hold an annual Safety public meeting.
2. Hold Safety Committee meetings at least twice yearly.
3. Complete our "Street Captain refresh" project to identify Captains for streets without one, and to connect more residents to their Street Captains.
4. Report needed sign, pothole, street light and other safety issues to 311 and specific city departments and track results to assure satisfactory completion.
5. Work to continue and expand graffiti control.

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6. Develop a protocol for reporting and resolving traffic and parking issues for large events and improving advance notice to residents.
7. As needed, refer requests for stop signs, traffic, sidewalk, and crosswalk improvements to planning committee.
8. Identify areas of insufficient lighting in the neighborhood and work with the city, Georgia Power, and business and residential owners to improve lighting in those areas.
9. Plan and execute a fund-raising campaign to acquire and install additional APD video cameras in 2017 and 2018.
10. Organize “thank you” programs for Zone 6 and the Fire Station #19 (meal/snack delivery, thank-you notes from residents, etc).