



Vine Ventures, Inc.

VINE VILLAGE—  
A VIBRANT COMMUNITY,  
FULL OF POSSIBILITIES



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

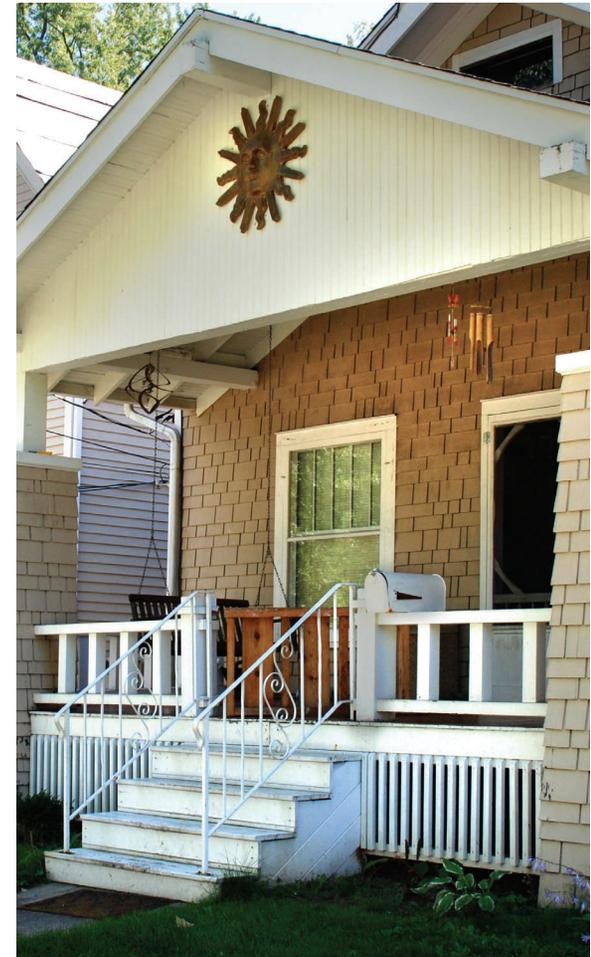
The Vine Revitalization Plan would not have been possible without the insight, vision, and steadfast commitment from the following:

Vine Ventures, Inc. Board of Directors

Vine Neighborhood Association Board of Directors

Vine Neighborhood Residents, Businesses & Visitors

A special thanks to Fran Dwight for providing all of the photographs featured within the Vine Revitalization Plan.



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# EXECUTIVE Summary

*The spirit of the Vine Neighborhood exists because of its strong sense of history combined with a dedication to neighborhood revitalization.*

The Vine Ventures, Inc. Board of Directors has approved a new strategic direction for the organization and announced an expanded commitment to the revitalization of the Vine Neighborhood. By doing so, Vine Ventures, Inc. (“VVI”) positioned itself as the convening organization that identified community stakeholders, partner organizations, residents, and other concerned citizens, and lead them through a process that would result in two objectives:

- Development of a comprehensive neighborhood Revitalization Plan; and
- Implementation of projects and programs that actively promote the *Vine Village – A Vibrant Community, Full of Possibilities* concept and have an immediate, positive impact on the Neighborhood.

Recognizing the complex nature of the neighborhood, VVI initiated a study process to learn more about the issues facing Vine Neighborhood that went far beyond physical changes. Restoring the health of a community is intrinsically linked to the resident’s well-being and pride of place. Understanding the human services network and quality of life issues were a part of the VVI’s study efforts. Vine Neighborhood residents participated in the recommendations contained herein through community workshops, surveys, neighborhood level meetings, and written comments. VVI collected information from interested residents, students, property owners, and others.

VVI learned that people who have a vested interest in Vine Neighborhood

would like to see more development, but also have a very strong and clear opinion about the kind of future they envision for their neighborhood. While residents favor development, they value and want to retain specific neighborhood characteristics, including its social and economic diversity and strong sense of community, its green parks and public spaces, as well as historical homes.

The *Vine Village – A Vibrant Community, Full of Possibilities*, Revitalization Plan will outline VVI’s core values, vision, key integrated strategies, and plan elements to achieve the following:

- Expand the supply of new housing for a mix of incomes, and support improvement of existing housing stock;
- Enhance and expand retail and commercial activity;
- Promote health and well-being for all ages, and develop new programs around arts and culture; and
- Improve communication and coordination among organizations, residents, and institutions.



# BACKGROUND

## Information

*VVI's revitalization plan will be vital to maintaining the community's sense of place while encouraging distinctive and appropriate development and growth.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Just outside the heart of downtown Kalamazoo exists a historic neighborhood with its 6,000 residents forming a community possessing the spirit and know how to make the Vine Neighborhood a great place to live, work, and play. Connected by shared challenges and goals, residents began to work collectively in 2007 through Vine Ventures, Inc. (VVI), a volunteer-driven organization of active residents, businesses, and property owners, to create a plan that would address critical quality-of-life issues within the neighborhood.

Although the Vine Neighborhood remains a vital urban neighborhood for the city of Kalamazoo, it is struggling to retain and attract homeowners and is losing its once-captive market position for students. Despite its abundance of affordable single and two-family housing stock and excellent location relative to Western Michigan University and downtown Kalamazoo, the neighborhood continues to experience a decline in home ownership levels. Neighborhood blocks are full of homes that are for sale, and have been on the market for many months. Foreclosures are also beginning to be a problem within the neighborhood.

Public safety and crime are also central concerns within the Vine Neighborhood. Part I crime rates have decreased over the last few years, however the perception of dangerous crimes, as well as nuisance or quality of life crimes (noise, barking dogs, fireworks, etc.) have risen. Ineffective code enforcement has led to inappropriate and poorly constructed renovations, as well as numerous structures that are dilapidated and in need of repair. Extremely high densities coupled with insufficient public services have resulted in overflowing trash containers, unswept streets, sidewalks in need of repair, and limited park and recreational facilities.

The Vine Neighborhood is entering a period where change must occur to ensure health and economic stability. Reversing the trends of disinvestment, declining homeownership, and loss of security are possible.

Recognizing the complex nature of the problems in the Vine Neighborhood, the scope of the Vine Neighborhood revitalization plan development involved research into issues that go far beyond physical changes. Restoring the health of a community is intrinsically linked to the resident's well-being and pride of place. Understanding the human services network and quality of life issues are also a significant component of the effort. Vine Neighborhood residents were surveyed and participated in neighborhood level meetings, to determine a general public attitude about various factors of the neighborhood and in turn to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Results of the research effort concluded that people who live and/or work in Vine would like to see more development, but also have a very strong and clear opinion about the kind of future they envision for their neighborhood. While residents favor development, they value and want to retain specific neighborhood characteristics, including its social and economic diversity and strong sense of community, its green parks and public spaces, as well as historical homes.

Future development should address the neighborhoods existing shortcomings. Residents believed that continued improvements to the housing stock, coupled with new commercial/retail services, would attract new residents thereby making the Vine Neighborhood a "neighborhood of choice."

Lastly, residents felt that future development will help mitigate some of the existing problems, including neighborhood appearance, crime and safety concerns. Residents identified the types of businesses that are appropriate for the neighborhood, these include additional small/local restaurants, businesses related to arts and culture, and specialty shops.

The spirit of the Vine Neighborhood exists because of its strong sense of history combined with a dedication to neighborhood revitalization. VVI's plan places its highest emphasis on community. VVI makes certain that the plan is an important and effective tool to ensure the Vine Neighborhood's ability to meet the new growth challenges of today, preserving, preparing, and improving the community for tomorrow.



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## VINE NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

The resident survey of the Vine Neighborhood was conducted to determine a general public attitude about various factors of the neighborhood and in turn to identify strengths and weaknesses. The number of people surveyed was not statistically significant enough to be used as a representation of the entire neighborhood but does provide some insight into the general attitudes of some Vine residents. The total number of people surveyed was 100 with the total population of the neighborhood being near 6,000 (Census track 6 and a portion of track 11).

The surveys were conducted using two different methods. First, 5 local business establishments were visited and resident patrons were asked to participate in the survey; O’Duffy’s Pub, Martinis, Harding’s Market, 4<sup>th</sup> Coast Café, and Ye Old Laundry. 40 surveys were completed utilizing this method.

The second method conducted was to go door to door. The neighborhood was sectioned into 4 quadrants, and various streets were selected with an emphasis of known homeowner areas being targeted. Every house on that street was visited. Door to door surveying was difficult as several of the houses did not have people present, and of the ones that did, some people were unwilling to take the time to fill out the survey. Others in the neighborhood were very willing to talk and share their opinions about neighborhood issues. 60 surveys were completed using this method.

### Neighborhood Strengths

Survey respondents were asked to list two things they like the most about Vine. Being an open-ended question, responses were categorized in order to determine frequency. The category with the most responses (43.8%) was the people and community feel category. This history and historic character category accounted for 25.5% and 11.5% of responses fell into the physical location category.

Category	Category description	Percent of Total
people and community feel	community, people, and neighbors	43.8
history and historic community	architecture, age, and character of the community	25.5
physical location	convenience of location	11.5
natural and physical environment	trees, natural environment, and park-like settings	7.7
diverse housing types and costs	houses, housing types, and house value	4.6
local amenities	parks, businesses, and activities	2.6
safety	safety and cleanliness	1.9
cultural diversity	diverse cultural and ethnic community	1.4
stability	community stability	1.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>



## Neighborhood Significant Issues

Survey respondents were asked to list two most important issues in Vine. Being an open-ended question, responses were categorized in order to determine frequency. The three categories were neighborhood appearance (23.8%), economic development and businesses (23.5%), and safety (20.1%).

Category	Category description	Percent of Total
neighborhood appearance	absentee landlords, revitalization needs, and streetscape improvements	23.8
economic development and business	business growth, economic development, and lack of quality retail and services	23.5
safety	code enforcement, crime, and traffic issues	20.1
historic preservation	protect and preserve Vine's historic character	11.6
long-term image	"student Ghetto" image and proving it incorrect	4.9
education	improvements in the school	4.1
housing types and occupancy	promoting single-family, owner-occupied land uses	3.5
infrastructure	street, sidewalk, and drainage issues	2.9
property value	maintaining and improving value of homes and property taxes	2.9
culture and demographics	cultural growth, challenges, and opportunities	3.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>



Survey respondents were asked a follow up question to identify the two most frequent complaints in Vine. Being an open-ended question, responses were categorized in order to determine frequency. The category safety received the most responses (29.7%), businesses received 22.6%, and neighborhood appearance received 21.4% of the total responses.

## Changes in the Neighborhood

Those surveyed have witnessed many different changes in their years residing there. (*The average amount of time lived in the neighborhood of the respondents is nearly 6.5 years.*) Some of the common changes identified by the respondents of the survey include the



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change in the way the homes have been kept. Many respondents agree that many homes and properties have been improved and that the designation of a local historic district has contributed to this change. It was also noted that the number of students living in Vine has decreased, which has resulted in multiple properties being vacant, and an observed increase in the number of transient residents who are moving into the neighborhood.

### Synopsis of Results

The average age of those surveyed was 29 years. 32% of respondents own their own home in Vine. The average number of children of those surveyed is 1.35. Respondents have lived in Vine for an average of 6.5 years.

### Rating Criteria

The rating system was based upon a scale of one to five, one being poor and five being excellent. The issues were judged on quality, availability, and importance to the citizen being surveyed. An average was then calculated by factoring in the responses from all people surveyed. The overall average helps to show what issue is of most concern amongst the respondents.

### Transportation

The Vine residents averaged a 3.35 ranking in their response to the neighborhood’s transportation opportunities. This was the highest rated factor on the survey. The Metro Transit public buses are believed to provide adequate service to the neighborhood, and to other areas of the city. The only detractor to the neighborhood’s transportation is that of the pedestrian. The respondents complained of a lack of good sidewalks in the neighborhood.

### Education

The education issue received a rating of 3.09, slightly above average. At the time of the survey, many of the respondents were indifferent to the fact that Vine does not have a public elementary school, and that neighborhood children are bused out to other neighborhood schools throughout the city. When asked if they would like to see an elementary school return to Vine, respondents indicated that it would be an added value to the neighborhood, but it was not critical to the future development/direction of Vine.

### Housing

The average survey response regarding housing is 3.07, which is slightly above average. This survey response drew a wide range in answers. In general, residents feel that most of the homes are well kept, but that there are certain home owners that do not take care of their property well. Some respondents would like the city to tear down condemned houses in the neighborhood in order to remove unsafe structures and blight. Other residents said that every home on their block had been remodeled or refurbished in some form.

### Safety

Those surveyed found safety as an issue of concern, giving it an average rating of 2.76. The respondents felt relatively safe in their environment, but if they were to leave their own area of the neighborhood safety becomes a concern. Areas noted were the “Central Corners” business district and the area around the Oak Street Market.

### Leadership

The overall leadership within the Vine Neighborhood was rated 2.54. This means that of those surveyed, generally it ranked below average to average. Several respondents were unsure who neighborhood leaders are, what being a Vine leader would entail, or how they might get involved within their neighborhood or their neighborhood association. Of those who were aware of the Vine Neighborhood Associa-



tion, it was noted on occasion that Vine had been without staff for sometime, thereby hindering its ability to serve residents.

### Recreation

The issue of recreation within the Vine Neighborhood received a response that gave the issue a rating that is below average, 2.46 on a five-point scale. The neighborhood contains three larger parks, including Davis Street, a large park with playground equipment, Dutton Street and Westnedge Park. The elderly respondents of the community felt that there were no recreational opportunities to suit their needs. A few of the persons participating in the survey showed concern that the kids had "little or nothing for them to do." The neighborhood does not have a community center with programs for the residents. It appears that the recreational activities available are poorly publicized or no programs exist.

### Crime

Crime is defined by the people surveyed as one of the most significant issues within the neighborhood receiving a rating of 2.43. Overall, crime in general has decreased but is still a major problem facing the community. A few respondents feel that crime is contained within a few specific areas in the neighborhood, and that Western Michigan University students are frequently targeted as victims. Respondents perceive the "Central Corners" business district as a problem area for crime, as well as the area surrounding the Oak Street Market.

### Responsiveness of the City Government

Responsiveness of the city of Kalamazoo government ranked as the third to lowest factor (2.26) by the survey respondents. Many of those surveyed complained of the needs for new sidewalks and street repairs and better snow removal. Although these things need to be fixed some respondents feel the city doesn't care, and that there is little or no communication between the Vine Neighborhood and the city government.

### Arts & Entertainment

The issue of arts & entertainment ranked as the second to lowest factor (2.14) by respondents. It was stated that Vine does not have many opportunities for arts & entertainment; however the location to downtown theaters, as well as Western Michigan University, provides residents with adequate access. Many respondents did not consider the State Theater to be part of the neighborhood, or the Little Theater. Others noted that Chenery Auditorium was Vine's greatest asset.

### Shopping

With an average rating of 2.11, shopping was the lowest rated factor on the survey. This is due to the lack of nearby shopping facilities (such as retail). Most residents said that they did their shopping in other parts of the city. Most respondents feel as if there are not adequate shopping opportunities in the neighborhood, particularly specialty shops, art galleries, etc.



*Residents believed that continued improvements to the housing stock, coupled with new commercial/retail services, would attract new residents thereby making the Vine Neighborhood a "neighborhood of choice."*



# CORE VALUES & Our Vision



*"The Vine Neighborhood is a place to stay and grow - with quality housing, diverse neighbors, and businesses that are both family and student-friendly, and include arts and culture establishments, local restaurants, and specialty shops."*



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## **CORE VALUES**

The overall vision for the Vine Neighborhood embodies six Core Values that serve as the organizing element for all integrated strategies.

***Core Value: The Vine Neighborhood is a model for neighborhood redevelopment initiatives:***

- by optimizing investment in the community according to a mutually agreed upon Revitalization Plan;
- by enhancing human services through sponsorship and commitment; and
- by capitalizing on the synergies of academic, government and community goals.

***Core Value: The Vine Neighborhood is a place of pride by maintaining buildings, and conserving and enhancing architectural quality and character:***

- by providing an abundance of open space, recreation, and parks;
- by providing accessibility to all uses and services for the entire neighborhood; and
- by ensuring adequate levels of public maintenance and service.

***Core Value: The Vine Neighborhood is culturally and socio-economically diverse:***

- by providing diverse housing opportunities;
- by actively promoting home ownership; and
- by providing opportunities to live and work in the same neighborhood.

***Core Value: The Vine Neighborhood is a neighborhood of choice:***

- by being friendly to traditional and non-traditional families;
- by including diverse student populations;
- by being safe and secure 24 hours per day; and
- by ensuring balanced transportation systems to support business and employment while promoting pedestrian/bicycle/transit options.

***Core Value: The Vine Neighborhood demonstrates new leadership and investment partnerships to reverse the decline in retail and housing:***

- by coordinating positive investment partnerships between state, city, Western Michigan University, community, and individual investors;
- by expanding the economic base;
- by upgrading market values; and
- by working positively with economic cycles.

***Core Value: The Vine Neighborhood accomplishes its larger civic goals through the active participation of community individuals and agencies:***

- by maintaining open communication among all participants;
- by removing barriers and disincentives to participants; and
- by forging a new leadership collaborative of Western Michigan University, Bronson Hospital, city, and community.



## ***THE POSSIBILITIES***

### **Vine Village—A Vibrant Community, Full of Possibilities**

Currently, the Vine Neighborhood is a diverse, eclectic, and socially active community that, while principally existing as a residential area, also serves as a destination place within the city of Kalamazoo. Through thoughtful planning, Vine strives to integrate diverse housing with its commercial district, and open space to create a livable and thriving neighborhood.

Within the next 5 years, Vine Neighborhood will be one of the most attractive and desirable communities in Kalamazoo. An expanded range of housing choices will serve current residents and well as newcomers. The population will be growing because of excellent arts and cultural opportunities, a thriving business district, safe streets, strong employment possibilities and an enviable location, close to downtown Kalamazoo and Western Michigan University. Building on its long tradition of diverse neighborhoods living together, Vine will be a place where everyone can get involved in neighborhood life through organizations, artist communities, youth programs, and small businesses. A wide range of neighborhood retail businesses will serve the needs of the community.

The vibrant activity in Vine makes the neighborhood a safe place to be, day or night, and the neighborhood will become an attractive, vibrant family-friendly community whose residents are empowered and fully engaged in its sustainability. Vine Neighborhood will be characterized by attractive historic homes with well-tended greenways and gardens; cultural assets; safe streets; a thriving and pedestrian-friendly business and retail district; healthy and creative recreation for teens; dependable city services, and convenient, accessible public transportation.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

"The Vine Neighborhood is a place to stay and grow - with quality housing, diverse neighbors, and businesses that are both family and student-friendly, and include arts and culture establishments, local restaurants, and specialty shops."



# KEY INTEGRATED STRATEGIES

## ***STRATEGIES***

No single activity will achieve the vision of the community. Recommendations from several of the plan elements, when combined, result in a strategy of multiple actions or activities that will achieve that vision. Each key strategy consists of activities for a single complex project or theme that the neighborhood considers critical in achieving its vision. Some of the recommendations require action from the city of Kalamazoo. Others are recommended community activities. While Key Integrated Strategies are high priorities for the neighborhood, they represent a long-term vision, so specific activities within a key strategy may be implemented over a period of years.

**Strategy:** Affordable Housing & Redevelopment

**Goal:** Substantially increase housing occupancy and ownership through economic incentives and education. Decrease vacant and problem properties through neighborhood empowerment and community-based development resources. Produce and maintain quality housing options for people across spectrum (i.e. age, income, homeowners, rents, and disability)

**Indicators of Success and Baseline:** Increase home ownership and quality renter rate; and decrease the number of foreclosures.

**Strategy:** Commercial & Economic Development

**Goal:** Healthy commercial corridors featuring continuous, fully-merchandised storefronts, and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks with complimentary streetscape. Newly constructed in-fill buildings and reconfigured assets that compliment the existing urban design and replace empty lots. Green spaces softening the urban setting and linking the commercial areas with residential neighborhoods.

**Indicators of Success & Baseline:** Increase the business mix by county local businesses quarterly; and increase the number of jobs available in neighborhood.

**Strategy:** Leadership & Neighborhood Connections

**Goal:** Weaving together skills and talents of Vine Neighborhood residents with local assets and needs through the development and implementation of open channels of communication, training, and learning opportunities.



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**Indicators of Success & Baseline:** Survey neighbors to determine participation in block clubs, neighborhood meetings, festivities, etc.

**Strategy:** Livability, Beautification, & Clean-Up

**Goal:** Create a clean, green community where people feel connected, person-to-person, street-to-street, presented-to-past.

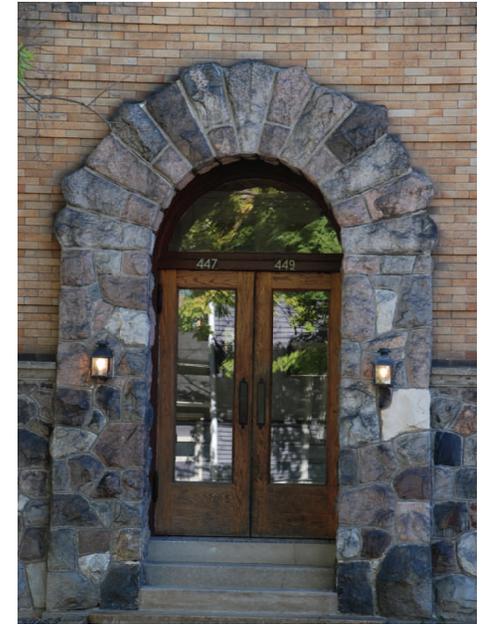
**Indicators of Success & Baseline:** Survey neighbors to determine satisfaction levels with parks/green space, biking, litter control, etc.

**Strategy:** Public Safety

**Goal:** Engage residents, organizations, businesses and Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety to develop partnerships with open communication that reduces crime and promotes safety.

**Indicators of Success & Baseline:** Decrease in number of Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety incidents/calls (this number can initially rise); increase the number of block clubs; and survey neighbors to determine how safe they felt at home, walking in the neighborhood, etc.

*Within the next 5 years, Vine Neighborhood will be one of the most attractive and desirable communities in Kalamazoo. The population will be growing because of excellent arts and cultural opportunities, a thriving business district, safe streets, strong employment possibilities and an enviable location, close to downtown Kalamazoo and Western Michigan University.*



# PLAN ELEMENTS

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT

### Goal

Substantially increase housing occupancy and ownership through economic incentives and education. Decrease vacant and problem properties through neighborhood empowerment and community-based development resources. Produce and maintain quality housing options for people across spectrum (i.e. age, income, homeowners, rents, and disability).

### Indicators of Success and Baseline

- Increase home ownership and quality renter rate; and decrease the number of foreclosures.

**Action Step:** Encourage grass-roots model of community development to best utilize resources.

- ◇ Build capacity of Vine Ventures, Inc. (VVI) to successfully lead redevelopment projects and to serve as the convening organization for the Vine Neighborhood.
- ◇ Create a development fund for acquisition to assist neighborhood based organizations to turn vacant houses and lots into quality housing opportunities.
- ◇ Explore grass roots financing models for Vine neighbors to safely pool resources to promote property redevelopment.
- ◇ Develop training opportunities on house how-to instructions: gardening, maintenance, basic repair programs, etc.
- ◇ Develop an online and printed skills bank of local craftsmen/trades.

**Action Step:** Upgrade the competitive position of the neighborhood as a rental housing location for graduate students

- ◇ Engage in the active upgrading of existing student rental properties while maintaining affordability, either working with existing landlord to improve the quality of their properties, or directly development improved products through Western Michigan University's housing office.



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

**Action Step:** Increase home ownership by aiding existing property owners and promoting and creating opportunities for new homeowners.

- ◇ Create a “Vine Neighborhood Welcome Center” to serve as a central housing information center that would provide information and assistance for homeowner financing, repair and resources.
- ◇ Focus homeowner repair grants and loans in areas of focused development and where neighbors are taking the lead (reward active blocks, incentives for civic involvement).
- ◇ Offer down payment assistance and choice loan products for new homeowners.
- ◇ Provide opportunities for Vine renters to become homeowners through increased Home Buyer education and resources.
- ◇ Provide opportunities for Vine renters to become homeowners through development of a Home Ownership Incubator.
- ◇ Attract local employers and institutions to develop similar programs such as the Home Ownership Program (HOP) or Bronson’s B-HOP program for employees seeking to live in the neighborhood.

**Action Step:** Effectively Deal with Problem Properties

- ◇ Determine protocol and “toolkit” for neighbors concerned with specific problem properties.
- ◇ Educate property owners/landlords how to create an addendum to a lease that contains basic information regarding the consequences of trash, noise, and other nuisance related issues.
- ◇ Facilitate legal action against “worst of the worst” bad landlords.
- ◇ Enforce codes already in place to eliminate blight, boarding houses, and high weeds.
- ◇ Establish a Problem Property Fund, and facilitate with partners to acquire and remove problem properties.
- ◇ Educate tenants and property owners how to maintain a property by “being a good neighbor”.



# COMMERCIAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Goal

Healthy , commercial corridors featuring continuous, fully-merchandised storefronts, and pedestrian friendly sidewalks with complimentary streetscape. Newly constructed infill-buildings that compliment the existing urban design and replace empty lots.. Green space softening the urban setting and linking the commercial areas with residential blocks.

## Indicators of Success and Baseline

- Increase the business mix by county local businesses quarterly.
- Increase the number of jobs available in neighborhood

**Action Step:** Enhance and expand retail and commercial activity on Westnedge Avenue



- ◇ Support existing businesses and assist development of new locally owned businesses, while also attracting new retailers to create a vital mix of unique retail offerings and cost competitive retailers.
- ◇ Create a Business Improvement District for the Westnedge Avenue Corridor to provide daily maintenance, improved safety, District-wide marketing, and business support.
- ◇ Develop Design Guidelines for Retail and Commercial Uses within the Vine Neighborhood and Westnedge Avenue in particular.
- ◇ Upgrade the physical appearance of the Westnedge Avenue Corridor from Lovell to Howard with coordinated signage, lighting, street furnishings, and pavement systems.
- ◇ Facilitate the acquisition and exchange of public/private lands to redevelop existing properties into a new neighborhood commercial area.

**Action Step:** Support and strengthen existing neighborhood-serving business community

- ◇ Provide a low interest business/micro-enterprise loan fund.
- ◇ Develop a business incubator to provide centralized support services at a reduced cost.
- ◇ Organize a Vine Neighborhood “buy local” initiative - educational campaign and implementation.



## COMMERCIAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CONT.)

**Action Step:** Market the Vine Neighborhood with attractive streetscape and signage

- ◇ Secure resources for funding for gateway signs and trees along corridors that welcome visitors.
- ◇ Seek community partners that can assist with designs for landscaping, signage, volunteers for planting and maintenance and chose public art that honors the history and diversity of the neighborhood.
- ◇ Identify standards for public art that honors the diversity of the neighborhood. Establish a procedure for adding new public art in the area.
- ◇ Set standards for corridor streetscape signage and lighting, bus shelters and other infrastructure improvements welcoming visitors to the business district. Keep corridors clean.
- ◇ Create comfortable “resting” places along business district for visitors to rest and shop.

## LEADERSHIP & NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

### **Goal**

Weaving together skills and talents of Vine Neighborhood residents with local assets and needs through the development and implementation of open channels of communication, training, and learning opportunities.

### **Indicators of Success and Baseline**

- Survey neighbors to determine participation in block clubs, neighborhood meetings, festivities, etc.

**Action Step:** Develop tools for marketing and communication to connect residents and potential residents to service providers, organizations, and the community

- ◇ Develop an interactive, community focused website that highlights the Vine Neighborhood and strikes balances between marketing the housing market and local businesses in Vine, and providing a conduit to services and information, such as: an events calendar, housing assistance, schools, churches, and social services.

**Action Step:** Build neighbor-to-neighbor commonalities and address potential tensions and disconnect between new and long-term residents

- ◇ Develop and distribute materials on commonalities - what draws us together (street, codes, laws and covenants).
- ◇ Develop landlord-tenant council.



# LIVABILITY, BEAUTIFICATION, & CLEAN UP

## Goal

Create a clean, green community where people feel connected, person-to-person, street-to-street, present-to-past.

## Indicators of Success & Baseline

Survey neighbors to determine satisfaction levels with parks/green space, biking, litter control, etc.

**Action Step:** Develop and maintain community greenspaces



- ◇ Work with city of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that public and community greenspace are properly maintained. Clean, trim, and maintain neighborhood parks. Encourage youth participation through community service projects.
- ◇ Develop pocket parks, community gardens, and playgrounds to provide access to a community greenspace within convenient walking distance of every Vine home.
- ◇ Identify and develop resources to improve park landscaping, and provide playground equipment.
- ◇ Encourage residential greenscaping through wildlife habitat designations, plant exchanges, and encouraging homeowner pride in lawn care.
- ◇ Regarding public and commercial buildings, enforce ordinances that impact the environment, and encourage green practices such as permeable parking surfaces, solar outdoor lighting, and green roofs.
- ◇ Encourage creative way to manage parking such as the “right type concept” i.e. reserve spots for hybrid parking only.

**Action Step:** Improve neighborhood connectivity

- ◇ Facilitate bicycling through cyclist/motorist education, installation of bike racks, and addition of bike lanes.
- ◇ Install area and neighborhood gateway signs.



## LIVABILITY, BEAUTIFICATION, & CLEAN UP (CONT.)

**Action Step:** Develop a comprehensive plan for neighborhood cleanliness

- ◇ Place and maintain trash cans at all bus stops, and place additional public trash cans along major commercial corridors.
- ◇ Implement a high-saturation, anti-littering educational/marketing campaign, including public service announcements, billboards, posters, yard signs, and school programs.
- ◇ Increase enforcement of litter ordinances, code violations for illegal dumping, and code compliance on vacant properties to reduce the number of eye-sore properties.
- ◇ Identify and immediately remove graffiti with help from the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety.
- ◇ Ensure adequate street sweeping and maintenance of sewer inlets by the city.

**Action Step:** Expand arts and cultural programming

- ◇ Add at least one piece of public art to each quadrant of the neighborhood, encouraging the use of works by Vine area artists.
- ◇ Hold an annual juried art and music contest for Vine neighborhood students to select works for public display/performance in the neighborhood.
- ◇ Hold annual “Art in the Park” event featuring locals artists, antique dealers, music, and vendors



# PUBLIC SAFETY

## Goal

Engage residents, businesses, and Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety to develop partnerships with open communication that reduces crime and promotes safety.

## Indicators of Success and Baseline

- Decrease in the number of Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety incidents/calls
- Increase the number block clubs
- Survey the neighbors to determine how safe they feel at home, walking in the neighborhood, etc.

**Action Step:** Engage residents in networking and communication to improve public safety

- ◇ Conduct resident survey to improve and engage more residents in public-safety strategies in Vine.
- ◇ Create, update and disseminate a short, “keep-with-you” list of emergency contacts and phone numbers.
- ◇ Educate and encourage residents to monitor crime in their area by using Silent Observer, the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety “Hot Spot” sheets, and reporting suspicious activities with email and cell phones; even turning on porch lights at night.
- ◇ Conduct fire safety activities and educate residents about protecting their homes and families from fire.
- ◇ Create “Tips for Public Safety” bags and annually disseminate to all residents.

**Action Step:** Make public safety a part of the fabric of our community

- ◇ Realign Block Clubs as the lifeblood of neighborhood life in Vine.
- ◇ Work with developers to implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) into home renovations and new home builds.
- ◇ Work to promote walkable neighborhood corridors.
- ◇ Work to monitor policy issues that relate to public safety in Vine and proactively work with representatives to develop grassroots solutions to these issues.
- ◇ Target demonstration area where the “Broken Window” theory is implemented.

