

COLLEGE HILL



ASSOCIATION

COLLEGE HILL ASSOCIATION:

Strategic Plan

2022-2027

This document articulates CHA's current priorities. Although primarily an internal document, it may be freely shared with stakeholders, community partners, and other interested parties. Elements of the plan will be posted on the CHA website and included in CHA communications.

Values Rooted in Purpose and Place:

- **Authenticity** – Strengthening neighborhood identity and distinctiveness while preserving and enhancing places for future generations
- **Connection** – Nurturing strong bonds among association members and the community
- **Inclusion** – Fostering a social environment that welcomes and provides opportunities for all
- **Justice** – Promoting local self-determination through a long-term vision for the common good
- **Sustainability** – Preserving the built environment and enhancing the natural environment to realize a more livable neighborhood and community

Mission: The College Hill Association exists to improve the quality of public life in Pullman's College Hill Neighborhood.

Tagline: Improving, Preserving, Celebrating College Hill

College Hill Vision Statement:

CHA envisions a vibrant, diverse, and improving community that welcomes all and values the neighborhood's historic character. The following qualities represent our vision for public life on College Hill:

College Hill has a unique pride of place. Proximity to Washington State University's flagship campus and Pullman's downtown business district makes College Hill a highly desirable location to live in and visit. The built environment is characterized by clean, tree-lined streets and historic architecture in many forms—from single-family residences to churches, commercial and public buildings, and stately WSU Greek-community houses.

College Hill is walkable. The active pedestrian community is served by excellent infrastructure, including lighting, paths, and public transit. Small commercial areas scattered within and near the neighborhood allow College Hill residents to perform daily errands and enjoy a night out without use of a car.

Green and open spaces balance the density of College Hill's built environment. The economic, health, and environmental benefits of the neighborhood's green areas are acknowledged and prioritized; the urban forest and tree canopy are protected and well maintained.

Residents and visitors experience College Hill as a richly diverse neighborhood community that is safe and welcoming for all.

Brief Organizational History

As early as 1987,¹ College Hill residents began organizing to discuss neighborhood changes, eventually incorporating The College Hill Association as a nonprofit in 1992. The group's early motto was "Life on the Edge," and its members worked with WSU to address conditions endemic to university-adjacent neighborhoods.² Pullman's residential permit parking system, its noise and nuisance ordinances, and College Hill's network of public litter containers are all products of the group's early efforts. Historic preservation and participation in the comprehensive planning process were also early emphases³ and remain so. The 2006 listing of the College Hill Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places cemented a proud tradition of strong, citizen-based neighborhood advocacy.

A 2008 revision of the CHA bylaws grounded the Association's long-term neighborhood revitalization strategies in New Urbanism and Placemaking, emphasizing walkability, historic preservation, and context-appropriate design. In 2014, the CHA was formally recognized as a tax-exempt public charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The CHA changed its motto in 2015 to "Improving, Preserving, Celebrating College Hill."

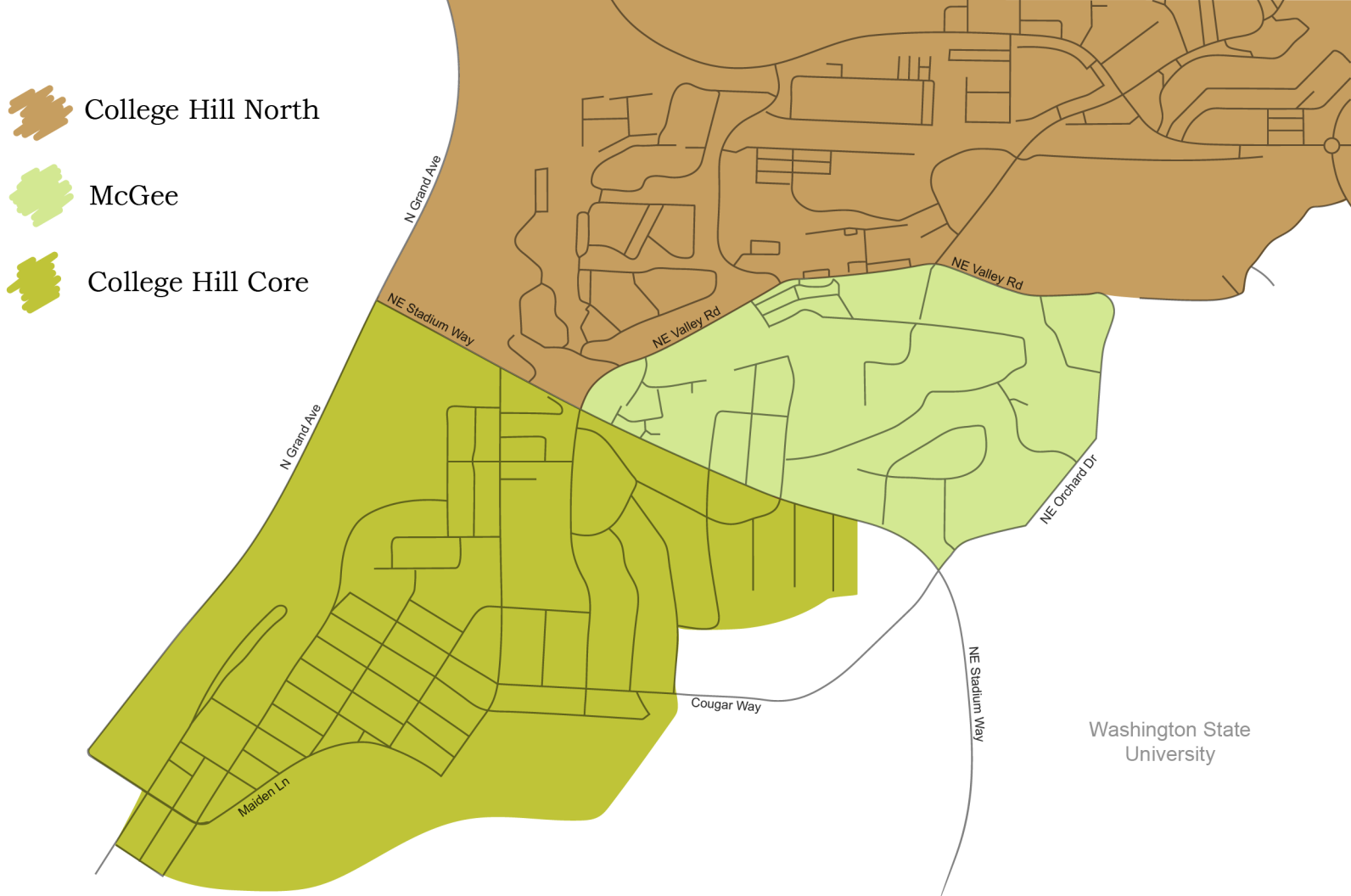
Now approaching the 30th anniversary of its incorporation, the CHA board provides regular, systematic feedback on planned neighborhood changes. CHA avoids "not in my backyard" positions; rather it strives to support positive design qualities such as walkability, character-rich architecture, and enhancements of the urban forest. Engaging in this participatory process ensures that neighborhood perspectives are considered, and that residents' voices are heard in dialogues that shape the neighborhood's long-term trajectory. Indeed, the CHA board believes failing to engage signifies tacit acceptance of whatever changes might be adopted. Overall, CHA positions advocate thoughtful planning and maximum transparency whenever decisions may affect College Hill's future.

In August 2021, the CHA board decided to explore a new long-term goal of creating a land trust or similar mechanism of property ownership to preserve open green space on College Hill. The board has long recognized that property ownership would also be an appropriate and feasible means of stabilizing the existing built environment, with its comparatively affordable supply of housing. The board's current strategic planning initiative will help determine the steps for achieving those ends and to re-evaluate other parts of its mission.

¹ Fisher, David and Steve Massey. 1987. "Too Noisy! WSU Frats Irritate Neighbors." *Daily News*, August 13.

² WSU began working with the CHA in 2000, collaborating on a series of public workshops to identify strategies for changing the culture of student behavior and improving housing conditions.

³ McClure, Steve. 1999. "Saving Pullman's History: Residents Work to Identify Areas of Local Historical Significance." *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*, January 2.



Present Reality:

As CHA approaches the 30th anniversary of its incorporation, the Association has stable leadership, a predictable calendar of events, and established patterns of civic engagement. It operates proactively and intentionally to promote continuous improvement in all endeavors, and has a demonstrated capacity for addressing long-term, complex goals while also retaining the idiosyncrasy and spontaneity of a small, grassroots organization.

CHA is currently the only organization of its kind in Pullman,⁴ and the issues it addresses, though originating in one neighborhood, have relevance throughout town. There may come a time when every neighborhood of Pullman has an association, perhaps with city support. Until then, CHA is the city’s first and only organization offering a program of systematic neighborhood improvement. This work appeals to people who share enthusiasm for community improvement – wherever they may live – especially for those with a vested interest in the College Hill neighborhood, such as residents (including WSU students and alumni), property owners, businesses, and faith communities.

⁴ An analogous group, the Downtown Pullman Association (DPA) <https://downtownpullman.info/>, was founded in 2018 and is utilizing the Main Street Approach® to advance a similar mission “to lead and advocate for the vitality of Downtown Pullman.” Unlike our neighborhood organization, the DPA was formed by and is supported through the City of Pullman, Washington State University, the Pullman Chamber of Commerce, and downtown merchants.

The board is cognizant of challenges posed by ongoing neighborhood demographic change and its reliance on a small handful of passionate volunteers. As more College Hill homes become renter-occupied, identifying and recruiting new CHA members becomes more difficult. The Association's continued viability requires support from outside the neighborhood's geographic boundaries, a situation that could threaten the organization's long-term viability.

As an organization, the CHA has always attempted to address current neighborhood conditions with a view toward long-term improvement. Relatedly, this plan introduces several new strategic initiatives related to CHA's core mission that can only be accomplished if the board's operations become more efficient and effective. This document is intended to clarify and solidify priorities, emphasizing what needs to be done and why. Articulating specific implementation actions for these goals (or goal areas), though, is work left for future committees.

Operational Areas: Increase Organizational Capacity

CHA will continue to refine and enhance operations, promote awareness of the organization, and intentionally collaborate with a range of partners in pursuit of its new strategic goals and its general neighborhood improvement mission.

- Create and support a Registered Student Organization (RSO) at WSU to promote involvement/engagement of short-term residents in neighborhood affairs
 - An all-student organization would support the efforts of short-term residents to promote their present-day welfare as well as long-term neighborhood revitalization
- Develop and implement board-approved plans to improve operations in high-priority areas:
 - *Fundraising* – improving stability and diversity of funding sources
 - *Marketing/communications* – promoting awareness and engagement through efficiently produced, professional-quality communications
 - *Document management/archives* – assuring that documents are retained or disposed of in accordance with legal requirements and board expectations
- Update governance documents to align with Washington State's new nonprofit law and CHA strategic goals
- Continuously improve operations through gradual implementation of nonprofit best practices
 - standing committees for most repeated events, reserving board meetings for oversight, long-term initiatives, and big-picture items
 - transparent recruitment and ongoing professional development for board members
 - program evaluation/indicators of progress

Strategic Areas: Pursue the Vision

CHA will continue to pursue its core mission areas, with special emphasis on these strategic goals:

- Land Trust goal area: Utilizing professional expertise, create one or more entities to own, manage, and conserve properties for purposes consistent with the bylaws, including preservation of open/green space and historic built environment on College Hill
 - CHA has been named in a resident's will as the inheritor of a small, undeveloped property suitable for a pocket park. CHA needs to develop the legal means to own property and enforce this donor's intent
 - The CHA board believes that owning property is the surest way to exert control over the neighborhood's trajectory and long-term future
- Urban Forestry goal area: Collaborate with other groups and entities to promote urban forest and tree canopy through various mechanisms including ordinance, commission, inventory, pooled funds
- Civic Representation goal area: Ensure that, as far as possible, a CHA board member is present at any meeting where decisions about College Hill are made
- Inclusion goal area: Foster an inclusive cultural and social life for College Hill residents and visitors by collaborating with stakeholders to address issues of discrimination and inclusion

Conclusion:

This document is intended to guide CHA board decisions about allocating resources, including both fiscal expenditures and uses of the board's time and energy. While established efforts, such as historic-property nominations and the Adopt-a-Block program, are envisioned as continuing, careful consideration must be given to significant new efforts to ensure that they align with the organization's mission, vision, and values. Based on research and discussion, the efforts outlined above are those most likely to promote CHA's continued viability and success.

Acknowledgments:

The College Hill Association strategic planning committee responsible for producing this plan includes Bob Cady, Dave Jones, Allison Munch-Rotolo, Jamie Peters, and Marilyn Von Seggern.

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- Elizabeth Perez, Director of Recruitment and Retention for WSU College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, and current neighborhood resident
- Bobbie Ryder, President for Pullman Civic Trust and the League of Women Voters of Pullman, WSU Senior Campus Planner (retired), and former CHA board member

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