Imagine Vine 2025: Executive Summary

The practicum team, composed of five students in the capstone course of Michigan State University's Urban and Regional Planning Program, worked closely with the City of Kalamazoo and the Vine Neighborhood Association to produce a strategic vision for the future of the historic Vine Neighborhood. This report will become the neighborhood plan for Vine, consistent with the *Imagine Kalamazoo Master Plan (IK 2025)*. The report includes an extensive socioeconomic profile, a summary of current and future land use, a *complete neighborhood assessment*, and an analysis of past resident engagement. Each of these pieces helped to inform a set of goals and recommendations aimed at strengthening Vine's position as a complete, vibrant, healthy, and inclusive neighborhood by the year 2025.

Vine Neighborhood is the oldest of the twenty-two neighborhoods comprising the City of Kalamazoo. For the purpose of this project, its borders are defined as West Lovell to the north, Oakland to the west, Howard and Crosstown to the south, and South Burdick to the east. This is the first neighborhood to undergo the neighborhood planning process outlined in *IK 2025*. The success of this document will undoubtedly impact the process for conducting these neighborhood plans in the future.

Data for this report was gathered in numerous ways. The *complete neighborhood assessment* was performed using criteria that had been determined by *IK 2025*. Maps, an intersection evaluation, and a real estate analysis using Zillow, supplemented census data to aid in the determination of Vine's *completeness* for a given category. From this research and analysis, we found that Vine was incomplete in four of the seven completeness categories. The ✗ symbol denotes categories that need significant improvement to reach completeness, while the ■ symbol indicates that a category is near-complete.

- ✔ Ability to meet daily needs
- ■ Access to parks and open space
- ■ Walkability
- ✔ Access to transit and bike networks
- ✗ Access to food
- ✗ Access to multiple housing opportunities
- ✔ Neighborhood schools

In addition to the quantitative data collected, qualitative data was received in the form of resident input. Vine Neighborhood residents were engaged in every step of this process, beginning with the city-wide plan that was adopted in October of 2017. The practicum team was involved in a survey, neighborhood meeting, and focus groups, all occurring during the winter and spring of 2018. Engagement at each stage, in accompaniment to the socioeconomic profile and *complete neighborhood assessment,* was synthesized into goals and recommendations for Vine Neighborhood 2025. Fourteen goals were included, each with a subset of actions/recommendations to help the neighborhood achieve those goals. These were organized into tables using

the S.M.A.R.T. model, ensuring that actions were *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based*. The fourteen goals are listed below, and the recommended actions under each can be found in the S.M.A.R.T. Tables section of this document.

1. Ensure safe, affordable, high-quality housing for all residents.
2. Stimulate local business growth and economic vitality in Vine.
3. Improve neighborhood safety through improved street lighting.
4. Initiate traffic calming along major corridors in Vine, including: Oakland, Howard, Lovell, Crosstown, Burdick, Westnedge, and Park.
5. Improve sidewalk conditions to help promote greater walkability.
6. Increase connectivity to downtown and campus.
7. Increase outdoor recreation opportunities in Vine Neighborhood.
8. Improve biodiversity and sustainability in parks and open spaces.
9. Improve network of edible landscaping.
10. Increase access to healthy food options.
11. Support youth development and engage youth in the planning process.
12. Improve communications between residents and the Vine Neighborhood Association.
13. Promote local arts and music.
14. Initiate a branding campaign for Vine Neighborhood.

To ensure compatibility with the city-wide master plan, these goals were aligned with the strategic vision outlined in *IK 2025*. Each goal falls within one or more of the ten vision areas:

Shared Prosperity

Connected City

Inviting Public Spaces

Environmental Prosperity

Safe Community

Youth Development

Complete Neighborhoods

Strength through Diversity

Economic Vitality

Good Governance

The team hopes that the work done here will inspire future neighborhood plans and ensure the strength of the Vine Neighborhood for years to come. The analyses conducted can be replicated by planners working on similar issues of neighborhood stability and completeness. Furthermore, in combination with *IK 2025*, this report serves as an example of what a successful balance between diligent research and extensive community engagement might look like. The goals and recommendations found within this report are a direct product of the valuable input received from residents who live the story of Vine Neighborhood every day. First and foremost, this document is FOR them, BECAUSE of them, and can only be successful when implemented WITH them. The team looks forward to sharing the final product with the community at a meeting on May 2nd, 2018.

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