



**FOUNDATION MISSION:** Our mission is to create an **inclusive** and **resilient** urban riverfront trail that **connects** and **inspires** people and businesses in the region. The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation will provide the planning, fundraising, and marketing to generate public support for a healthy and dynamic **regional** trail.

**FOUNDATION VISION:** The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation will build a trail as diverse and vibrant as the land it sits on, the river it follows, and the community it serves.

**EQUITY STATEMENT:** Something FOR Everyone. The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation believes that access to trails and open spaces are a fundamental right for all. The ERT has the power to connect communities and provide public access to our working waterfront.

The ERTF seeks to provide access and amenities to people along the Trail to meet the specific needs of each community. Inequities exist in the built environment, and it is our responsibility to bring equity in every trail section, trailhead, and amenity.

The ERTF commits to cultivating an inclusive and welcoming culture among its staff, volunteers, board members, community partners and program participants. We approach this work with respect, openness, and a willingness to learn and adapt.

### FOUNDATION GOALS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

#### SUSTAINABILITY:

Ensure the Foundation has a line of succession for its leadership and a robust recruitment strategy for new committee members. Prioritize sustainable funding sources, a corporate partner and individual donor program, and the creation of a three-year operating and capital budget plan. Prioritize trail projects and infrastructure that implement sustainable environmental practices and resilient building practices to increase our trail tree canopy and utilize the ERT as a sponge, bridge and storyteller to coastal sea level rise.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:

Strategize relationship-building opportunities with the City, (and our regional localities), Community Partners and neighborhoods on the existing 10.5 miles and in the eastern extension, and continue building relationships with the faith community and other non-profit organizations. Launch a Foundation-based "Awareness Campaign" emphasizing the ERT has "Something FOR Everyone".

#### CAPACITY BUILDING:

Invest in internal organizational capacity needs, (systems, processes and resources), to make the Foundation a more vital, efficient, and sustainable institution. Invest in oversight such as a financial audit and economic impact study.

## **Elizabeth River Trail Foundation Committee Structure**

**Executive Committee:** Chris Neikirk, Kevin Murphy, John Garrett, Barry Bishop, Destini Harrell, Rachel McCall, Babs Benesh, Chris Uiterwyk, Mel Price, Giovanna Genard, Trista Pope. The Executive Committee is made up of officers of the Board and the Committee Chairs.

**Guiding Principle: To protect and advance the leadership of the Foundation.**

- Maintain a robust pipeline of board members and plan for leadership succession
- Maintain oversight of the fiscal health of the Foundation
- Manage the future of the Trail including plans for expansion and connections
- Manage and maintain a capable Executive Director and Team to lead the organization

## **DEI Committee - Chair: Destini Harrell, Co-Vice Chairs: Sharon Manana and Ariel Barrientos**

**Guiding Principle: We believe in a Trail for everyone, by everyone. The DEI committee seeks to offer and embrace the different lenses and perspectives of the beautiful diversity of individuals that walk along, play along, and live life along the Trail. They are our fabric and future, directing and inspiring the Foundation's way forward.**

- Community Outreach and Relationship Building
- Stakeholder Representation and Collaboration
- Trail Equity and Accessibility
- Better Understanding our Trail-Users (through Surveys and Data)

## **Events Committee - Chair: Rachel McCall, Vice Chair: TBD**

**Guiding Principle: Consistently and regularly activate the Elizabeth River Trail with organization-led and partner events that support the overall ERT mission and vision.**

- Signature Event
- Programming
- Community Engagement
- Trail Beautification
  - Volunteers/Trail Ambassadors
  - Education

## **Finance Committee - Chair: Barry Bishop**

**Guiding Principle: To maintain and monitor the financial health and future of the organization**

- Develop and monitor the annual budget
- Monitor monthly financial statements
- Oversee financial reporting, including the annual IRS Form 990 and all required tax filings
- Oversee annual audit
- Review and update as necessary internal financial processes and procedures
- Ensure the organization has the cash reserves and investments necessary for long-term success

### **Fundraising Committee – Chair: Babs Benesh, Vice Chair: TBD**

**Guiding Principle: Raise money for the trail and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Foundation while cultivating and maintaining relationships with a strong donor base to continue public/private partnerships.**

- Sponsorships
- Strategic Partnerships
- Grants
- Donations
- Donor Events/Fundraisers

### **Marketing Committee - Chair: Chris Uiterwyk, Vice Chair: TBD**

**Guiding Principle: Tell the story of the trail through branding, social media, written and visual mediums to foster community stewardship, grow reach and awareness, and promote and advance the mission of the trail.**

- Branding
- Website
- Social Media
- Public Relations
- Collateral
- Merchandise

### **Master Planning Committee – Chair: Mel Price, Vice Chair: TBD**

**Guiding Principle: The ERT Master Planning Committee commits to creating a safe, inclusive, and equitable trail that connects people, neighborhoods, and economic generators, promotes environmental stewardship, restoration, and coastal resilience, and stays close to the Elizabeth River with a protected, off-road, multi-use trail wherever possible.**

- Routing
- Expansion
- Trail Standards
- Environmental Stewardship
- Wayfinding
- Planning for and Identifying Maintenance needs

- Amenities
  - Procurement
  - Inventory Management
- Benchmarking
- Data Collection

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1.1 Expand Executive Committee agendas to include Government Relations topics

GOALS :

- Recruit members for a Government Relations Subcommittee
- Advocate for State and Federal funding directed specifically to the South Hampton Roads region
- Advocacy for Bike and Pedestrian infrastructure

OBJECTIVE #1.2 Expand Executive Committee agendas to include Finance topics

GOALS:

- Establish 3-5 year operating budget
- Establish 3-5 year capital budget

OBJECTIVE #1.3 Improve coordination with City, (and regional connection to VA Beach)

GOALS:

- Certify 2023 MOU revision
- Establish a Public Safety Plan for ERT
- Identify a lead City Department for the ERT

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE# 2.1 Work regionally with VA Beach Active Transportation Committee and HRTPO to organize a Trails Summit

GOALS:

- Host Regional Trails Summit to collaborate on issues addressing South Hampton Roads Trails - start planning summer 2023 for fall 2024 summit
- Work collaboratively to connect our trails systems and increase funding to our region at the state and federal levels

OBJECTIVE # 2.2 Establish Public Safety Response Plan in coordination with the City

GOALS:

- Work with appropriate City Departments

OBJECTIVE # 2.3 Foundation Audit and Annual sustainability

GOALS:

- Establish a regular audit routine schedule
- Annually update Charity Navigator, Candid and GuideStar
- \$300k in Corporate Partnerships
- \$300k+ in grant awards

OBJECTIVE # 2.4 Move the ERT Foundation office to a permanent trailside home

GOALS:

- New office should provide long term growth and funding sustainability

OBJECTIVE # 2.5 Continue building Foundation organizational infrastructure

GOALS:

- Establish Code of Conduct for Trail Ambassadors - launch with summer 2023 ambassador training
- Complete Standard Operating Procedures
- Donor Platform Reports and Recurring Pledge Payments

OBJECTIVE # 2.6 Obtain National Recreational Trails Designation for the ERT

GOALS:

- Complete application by deadline November 1, 2024

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #3.1 Community Outreach and Relationship Building

GOALS:

- Assist with Communications Plan for awareness and engagement of “on-trail” and “off-trail” users in trail adjacent neighborhoods (with specific focus on proposed eastern extension)
- Map trust networks (people ERT supporters and leadership already have rapport and established relationships with) of individuals on our committee to help bridge opportunities for new partnerships and outreach points for the ERT
- Establish ERT as a more active, connected, visible and supportive presence in the community by taking part in different initiatives and events of organizations in our trust networks

OBJECTIVE #3.2 Strengthen Relationships with Schools & Academic Institutions along ERT

GOALS:

- Recruit representatives from academic institutions and schools along ERT to be part of the DEI committee (including NSU, TCC, ODU, EVMS, elementary, middle, and high schools)
- Build relationships for potential collaboration points between these academic institutions’ students and faculty and the Trail

- Appoint a NSU “HBCU Outside” Ambassador and actively promote NSU as a bike-friendly campus that is a part of the ERT

OBJECTIVE #3.3 Promote Trail Equity and Accessibility

GOALS:

- Work to bring the trail to the people, not just bring people to the trail, by identifying ways to promote physical, social and informational access for current and prospective trail users
- Explore and address how the Trail can play a role in promoting more equitable and safe spaces in the communities it touches
- Support and partner with other ERT committees to address accessibility across our activities and initiatives

OBJECTIVE #3.4 Surveys and Trail-User Data Collection

GOALS:

- Attend as many ERT events as possible to support collection of demographic survey data and better understand the makeup and needs of the diversity of people who use the Trail
- Increase newsletter subscribers, zip code reach, and submit annual report of demographic data
- Promote transparency by providing access for the public to view results of data from surveys

## EVENTS COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #4.1 Consistently and Regularly Activate the Trail

GOALS:

- Utilize the Events filter when committing to programming
- Build on monthly events and series activities
- Become a stakeholder in the review process for events permitted on the trail
- Create safe and navigable alternate routes for events impacting the trail using Master Planning and community recommendations
- Create partnerships with community organizations through outreach and collaboration
- Create engagement opportunities with ERT volunteers
- Seek to add one series sponsor per year
- Retain adequate liability insurance coverage annually for group rides and other events

OBJECTIVE #4.2 Work towards shifting events programming/planning responsibilities from the Foundation to our Community Partners

GOALS:

- Evaluate an annual plan in conjunction with the ERT events calendar to identify what community partners may be interested in in planning/leading and coordinating each event

- Add five new community partners per year that bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the ERT
- Evaluate events annually to showcase the work of the ERT Foundation
- Stay focused on trail development and construction projects as part of an annual calendar (ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings, etc.)

OBJECTIVE #4.3 Evaluate a signature event for the Foundation

GOALS:

- Execute a profitable ERR10k in 2023 that is both fundraiser and friendraiser
- Evaluate the Elizabeth River Run as a signature event and determine by 10/30/2023 if we are committing to June 2024 ERR
- Secure a naming and presenting sponsor for a signature event
- Research alternative Signature Events/Fundraisers

OBJECTIVE #4.4 Create an Activation Plan for the Blue Trail

GOALS:

- Source public and private partnerships that activate ERT kayak launches
- Advocate for and support the construction of new kayak launches and water amenities on the Elizabeth River

## FUNDRAISING/SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #5.1 Build annual commitments through a combination of Corporate and Individual donors to meet \$300,000 or our annual operating needs.

GOALS

- Build in loyal Corporate Partner support by incentivizing sharing their commitments on our website, social media, donor spotlight, etc.
- Implement “tip jar” fundraising at strategic trailside businesses and all trailside festivals/events
- Explore local, state and national sponsorship opportunities for sustaining funding, (i.e. a portion of xxx sales go to the ERT Foundation)
- Explore endowment options

OBJECTIVE #5.2 Implement [Master Donor Tracking](#) Spreadsheet

GOALS:

- Consolidate all funding streams into one easily navigable resource
- Determine strategic asks for Capital, Annual and Signature Event sponsorship
- Implement Series Sponsor Program, (i.e. Norfolk Tour Company Series Sponsor, Botanical Tour Series Sponsors, Kayak Tours Series Sponsor, Sponsor an Intern)

OBJECTIVE #5.3 Establish a funded grant writer and keep [Prospective Grants Spreadsheet updated](#)

GOALS:

- Be prepared to submit package to appropriate City department for 2025 RAISE grant for eastern extension funding
- Advocate for TAP funding

OBJECTIVE #5.4 Plan for next Capital Campaign launching summer 2024?

GOALS:

- 2024 - 30th anniversary of “Friends of the ERT” initial catalyst; execute fundraiser event
- Gear up for Eastern Extension
- Plan Grassroots Crowdfunding Campaign
- Coordinate with Events Committee for donor appreciation and engagement events

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## MARKETING COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #6.1 Launch ERT awareness campaign

GOALS:

- Increase Trail usage and awareness
- Brand recognition in trail adjacent communities

OBJECTIVE #6.2 Develop a Trail User Campaign Strategy

GOALS:

- Revise Trail yard signs for Text to Give and Scan QR code launch summer 2023

OBJECTIVE #6.3 Develop Annual Report

GOALS:

- Determine FY or Calendar Year report to be rolled out in 2024
- Will be preceded by an ERT Foundation Impact Report debuting summer 2023

OBJECTIVE #6.4 Expand Merchandise to encapsulate the ERT experience

GOALS:

- Move beyond just ERT logo
- Capture passive recreation on trail as well as active

OBJECTIVE #6.5 Increase Video Marketing of the Trail

GOALS:



- Utilize brand ambassadors, social media interns and Community Partners for social “take overs” to amplify our digital presence through videos
- Use our YouTube channel to host videos of the trail to be featured on our website and updated seasonally

## MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #7.1 Complete Remaining Trailhead Capital Projects for existing 10.5-mile Trail.

GOALS:

- Install remaining trailhead shelters and amenities
- Construct Larchmont Library Trailhead
- Construct NSU Trailhead
- Work to incorporate public space at former Lambert’s Point Golf Course
- Work to fund and construct a protected bike lane on the Hampton Blvd Bridge
- Present a pedestrian flyover rail crossing rendering to Norfolk Southern for construction at Jeff Robertson Park into Lambert’s Point
- Rehabilitate the path at “The Pines” (consider an elevated multiuse path that becomes the standard for coastal resilience efforts)

OBJECTIVE #7.2. Begin Eastern Extension and Connections to St. Pauls Blue/Greenway

GOALS:

- Design potential connections and organize infrastructure walk in conjunction with DEI and City officials summer 2023
- Work with the City to fund these connections as part of the ongoing St. Paul’s redevelopment work

OBJECTIVE #7.3 Develop ERT Trail Ordinance Guidelines

GOALS:

- Incorporate into Public Safety Plan
- Emphasize green infrastructure as a way to mitigate coastal flooding

OBJECTIVE #7.4 Establish a 5-year Strategic Master Plan

GOALS:

- Include a Public Art Master Plan
- Include a coastal resilience/green infrastructure plan

OBJECTIVE #7.5 Establish a Long Term Projects Subcommittee

GOALS:

- Continued work on wayfinding phase 2 and beyond

- Continued work on funding sources with partners such as the Navy and other DOD/DHS/VDOT opportunities

OBJECTIVE #7.6 Map/Identify areas of the trail for 100% ADA

GOALS:

- Aid in surveying sections of trail for accessibility
- Establish a section of the trail that is designated as a sensory trail