Champaign County Design and Conservation Foundation
Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Mission: Advocating for a healthy, equitable, and balanced relationship between the built and natural environments.

Vision: We envision a beautiful and environmentally sustainable county.

Summary: Established as a 501c3 non-profit in June of 1968, Champaign County Design and Conservation Foundation (CCDC) is the oldest environmental conservation organization in the county. Its first major project can be traced to the late 60s/early 70s when Dutch elm disease decimated the local American elm tree population in Champaign County and across eastern North America. CCDC raised funds and worked with local governments to plant trees and restore the devastated urban forest canopy. Two more recent notable projects carried out by CCDC include the rail-banking and lease of the CSX rail corridor, now developed as the Kickapoo Rail Trail, and the financial backing that led to the development of the Red Oak Rain Garden, located near McKinley Health Center and Allen Hall on the University of Illinois campus.

In 2022, the CCDC board of directors embarked on a year-long facilitated effort to update its strategic plan. The following document is the result of that effort and will serve as a road map to guide its goals and commitment to action over the next several years. As it has over its long and highly successful history, CCDC will continue to partner with the Champaign County community to advance environmental justice, promote clean air and water, and foster healthy communities. To put it more succinctly, CCDC will support trees, trails, and a robust network of environmental stewards.

Strategic Direction 1: Catalyze Community Sustainability		
Goal 1.1: Promote and fund promising sustainability projects in Champaign County.		
Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Create a pool of funding for annual grant projects.		
Develop grant project guidelines.		
Solicit donors or micro-lenders.		
Revise and resume awards program.		
Goal 1.2: Partner with the community to leverage resources for sustainability.		
Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Talk with Habitat for Humanity about sustainability features in Habitat homes.		
Develop partnerships with other green organizations.		
Consider board composition; invite new board members with vital community connections.		
Goal 1.3: Initiate sustainability projects that respond to community needs.		
Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Continue tree planting efforts.		
Environmental justice projects: research and identify where sustainability "gaps" exist;		

partner with affected groups or neighborhoods.		
Support projects that reduce dependence on non-renewable energy – solar, wind, EVs, bike/pedestrian infrastructure, etc.		

Strategic Direction 2: Connect the Sustainability Community		
Goal 2.1: Be the conduit and information hub for the sustainability community.		

Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Create a comprehensive online clearinghouse of sustainability organizations. (Green Alliance)		
Identify a tool for organizations to annually update contact information.		
Organization and contact list should be sortable by area of expertise.		
Create a network map.		
Disseminate other organization information/ programs/volunteer opportunities to CCDC network via regular email communications.		

Goal 2.2: Create connections among people working in the sustainability sector.		

Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Meet periodically (quarterly?) to network.		
Host networking events.		
Track projects to reduce redundancies and develop a comprehensive approach to community sustainability.		

Strategic Direction 3: Advocate for Sustainability		
Goal 3.1: Raise awareness of local policy initiatives.		

Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Create a system for tracking and communicating relevant policies and practices to CCDC members and the public.		

Goal 3.2: Inspire community members to take action related to sustainability policies/practices.		

Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Create a stakeholder list and establish relationship managers.		
Hold meetings with community stakeholders.		

Goal 3.3: Facilitate, participate in, and/or promote community-wide sustainability-related events.		

Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Potentially hold an Arbor Day event and promote other Arbor Day events.		
Promote Boneyard clean-up events.		

Strategic Direction 4: Build Organizational Capacity		
Goal 4.1: Develop the organizational structure to increase operational and strategic capacity.		
Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Hire a part-time or contractual coordinator to carry out strategic plan activities under board oversight.		
Develop committee structure and identify committee membership.		
Develop a fundraising plan.		
Seek grants to fund initiatives.		
Update by-laws.		
Create a board member pipeline; identify gaps in board membership talents and seek to fill.		
Goal 4.2: Expand individual and institutional membership base to support strategic plan implementation.		
Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline
Hold a membership drive.		
Develop a sponsorship program.		
Recruit volunteers to increase membership.		
Partner with student groups.		