CLAIMS:

1. A method of restoring lysosomal function of retinal pigment epithelial (RPE) cells comprising administering (i) a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide comprising a constitutively active form of transcription factor EB (TFEB) or (ii) the polypeptide to a subject in need thereof.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject has age-related macular degeneration (AMD) or is at risk for developing AMD.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the AMD is atrophic AMD, optionally wherein the atrophic AMD includes geographic atrophy.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the AMD is wet AMD.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject has Stargardt's macular retinal degeneration or is at risk for developing Stargardt's macular retinal degeneration.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject has a neurodegenerative disease or is at risk for developing a neurodegenerative disease.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the neurodegenerative disease is Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject has diabetic retinopathy (DR) or is at risk for developing DR.

9. A method of preventing and/or treating age-related macular degeneration (AMD), Stargardt's macular retinal degeneration, neurodegenerative disease, or diabetic retinopathy in a subject comprising administering (i) a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide comprising a constitutively active form of transcription factor EB (TFEB) or (ii) the polypeptide to the subject.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the AMD is atrophic AMD, optionally wherein the atrophic AMD includes geographic atrophy.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the AMD is wet AMD.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the neurodegenerative disease is Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid further comprises a hVMD2 promoter.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is comprised in a vector.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the vector is an adeno-associated viral (AAV) vector.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the AAV vector is AAV2.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 except that the serine at one or more of positions 138, 142, 211, 455, 462, 463, 466, 467, and 469 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is, independently, substituted with another amino acid.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 138 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 142 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 211 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 455 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine.

22. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 462 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an aspartic acid.

23. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 463 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an aspartic acid.

24. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 466 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an aspartic acid.

25. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 467 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine.

26. The method of claim 17, wherein the serine at position 469 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an aspartic acid.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject is a human.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid, the polypeptide, or a vector comprising the nucleic acid is administered by subretinal injection, intravitreal injection, or topical administration.

29. A polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, except that the serine at each one of positions 138, 142, and 211 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is respectively substituted with an alanine.

30. A polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, except that the serine at position 455 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine and, optionally, the serine at position 211 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine.

31. A polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, except that the serine at each one of positions 462, 463, 466, and 469 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is respectively substituted with an aspartic acid and the serine at position 467 of SEQ ID NO: 1 is substituted with an alanine.

32. A nucleic acid encoding the polypeptide of claim 29.

33. A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 32.

34. A pharmaceutical composition comprising (a) a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and (b) the polypeptide of claim 29, a nucleic acid encoding the polypeptide, or a vector comprising the nucleic acid.