# SRA STRATEGIC PLAN

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### INTRODUCTION

### 

Sammamish Rowing Association (SRA) is a not-for-profit community rowing organization founded in 1995, located in communities east of Seattle at the north end of Lake Sammamish. SRA operates in partnership with King County Parks and the City of Redmond.

From early in its history until recent years, SRA’s resources were largely consumed by the process of building a new boathouse to replace the aging boatshed in which the organization spent its formative years. The state-of-the-art Hod Fowler Boathouse was dedicated in 2016 and is now the home for SRA’s premier fleet of rowing shells, as well the place where the close community of over 800 adult and youth rowers and their families convene to enjoy their shared passion for rowing.

Since the completion of the new boathouse, SRA has continued to grow and flourish in the following key areas:

* **Staff quality and stability:** The development of SRA over the years has allowed it to attract high-caliber staff from across the country, and the restructuring of responsibilities has helped to foster greater staff retention.
* **Membership health:** The growing membership draws a broad range of people that has included both recreational athletes and world champions, many of whom accessed the magic of rowing through SRA scholarships.
* **Fiscal sustainability**: Rigorous financial planning and management of cash flow, combined with contributions from the generous SRA community, have provided both the growth and stability to ensure continued health of the organization.
* **Premier fleet**: The multi-year equipment plan established with Hudson Boat Works in 2017 is designed to maintain a current fleet of racing shells of all configurations, with a rotational agreement to ensure the SRA fleet has shells no older than seven-years.
* **Community adaptability**: Flexibility and adaptability of the entire SRA community have been proven with the response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, the SRA staff creatively shifted programming while ensuring safety of the community, coaches pivoted responsibilities, Hudson partnered to accommodate SRA’s fleet needs shifting to singles, and members continued to be flexible and supportive – together, the community helped SRA adapt and carry through these unprecedented challenging times.

The focus forward continues to be on developing and deepening the strength of the SRA community, while providing a safe environment where individuals can discover their limits and together inspire and share their lifelong passion for rowing.

### PROGRAMS

* **Juniors:** 
  + Competitive girls, experienced and novice teams
  + Competitive boys, experienced and novice teams
  + Recreational morning and afternoon teams
  + Summer camps for competitive and recreational teams
  + Local, regional, and national regattas for competitive teams
* **Masters:** 
  + 5 a.m., mid-morning, and evening teams
  + Beginner, novice, and experienced sculling and sweep teams
  + Learn to Row classes
  + Private lessons
  + Local, regional, and national regattas
* **Independent Rowers:**
  + Use of club-owned small boats
  + Private boat and oar storage
  + Private lessons
  + Local, regional, and national regattas
* **New to Rowing:**
  + Introductory “Row for a Day” classes

### SRA TODAY: WHO WE ARE

#### MISSION

SRA provides an inclusive community that ignites a passion for rowing by encouraging the development of our members, embracing individual discovery, and celebrating team success so every rower can experience the life-long benefits of rowing.

#### VALUES

* *“A priority is something that changes, due to outside influences and demands. A value is something outside influences can't change."*

SRA holds as its highest values:

* **Thoughtful Stewardship of SRA Resources:**SRA resides on public land in the heart of Marymoor Park and shares the resources with the local community and is committed to environmentally sustainable practices that protect the surrounding lands and waterways*.*
* **Personal Discovery:** SRA seeks and welcomes members of all backgrounds, beliefs, skills, and experience; and strives to help every member extend and achieve their potential in rowing and in life.
* **Team Success:** SRA fosters a culture of personal growth, integrity, and perseverance, as well as accountability of each individual to oneself, the team, and the club as a whole. Accountability to the club includes investments of finances, time and heart by individual members, Board of Directors, and staff.
* **Safety:** Safety is a habit. Staff, coaches, and rowers alike take responsibility for keeping one another safe at all times.
* **SRA’s Support Team:** Coaches and staff are the energizing glue and valued leaders in the SRA community, who support the ethos of the club and help advance SRA's mission.

### GOALS

The following cornerstone goals are guiding principles that will help SRA achieve its mission and live up to its values:

1. Maintain a financially sustainable organization, enabling SRA to serve both current and future generations
2. Serve the needs of every community member, from novices to competitive rowers, with programs that strive to meet and equally respect each individual’s level and objectives
3. Provide facilities and equipment that enhance the experience of all rowers
4. Attract and retain high-quality staff members by providing a supportive environment that offers opportunities for long-term growth and development
5. Foster a culture that values open communication, celebrates the individual, and provides a supportive community both on and off the water
6. Extend SRA’s reach and impact in the broader community through educational programs, scholarships, and community stewardship

### SRA TODAY: THE POSITIVES

SRA faces the future with a number of internal strengths that serve it effectively and distinguish it from other clubs. SRA can capitalize on the things it does successfully and is well-positioned to take advantage of the many external opportunities that are available.

#### Strengths

Location

* The only rowing club east of Seattle in the Puget Sound region, enjoying a large catchment area
* On public land, part of the King County Park system
* Part of an engaged community that values outdoor activities

Staff

* Workforce stability as a priority
* Respect and regard for coaches at all levels
* Skilled full-time and part-time coaching
* Investment in robust communications and staff support tools

Community

* Strong sense of community, members are a part of the SRA family
* Culture of generosity, by giving time, donations and professional resources
* Members of the community are positive and professional
* SRA is a large organization with many resources

Programming

* Wide variety of programs that attract a diverse range of member types, to include first-time, recreational, competitive, elite, and independent rowers

Assets

* Expert care and maintenance of equipment; boats, launches, and oars to help ensure they outlive their projected lifespans
* Fleet-rotation program ensuring regularly scheduled replacement of and upgrades to aging equipment
* State-of-the-art boathouse, appealing to rowers and coaches alike

Stability

* Financial stability prioritization
* Financially supportive community, as related to fundraising
* Agile, able to adapt quickly

#### Opportunities

Staff

* Continue to build an organization that attracts coaches who recognize this is a place where they can succeed and grow
* Providing professional development opportunities in order to help ensure retention
* Staff succession plans to enable smooth transitions for both the coaches and members of the organization

Finance and Growth

* Increase financial giving by members (current and past) and by outside organizations
* Create additional opportunities for members to volunteer, to increase member community connectedness, and stewardship of SRA’s resources
* Create more opportunities for diversity and inclusion
* Expand alternative revenue sources
* Professionalize the development process
* Identify non-traditional fundraising tools such as endowments
* Expand alumni outreach

Programming

* Multiple levels of rowers for all masters teams create coaching challenges. Explore team and coaching structure, to include additional opportunities for masters who prefer not to compete
* Look beyond the boathouse – identify a potential satellite location
* Reach out to younger masters rowers in order to bridge the gap between the junior program and the typical masters rowers (e.g. an open masters rower program and a regatta-specific season)

### SRA TODAY: THE NEGATIVES

Mapping out a future for SRA requires an objective look at weaknesses within the organization that may impact its ability to grow and thrive. Likewise, it is necessary to understand external threats which may have a similar effect.

#### Weaknesses

Costs

* Rising costs have resulted in a steady increase of member fees
* Equipment plan requires a certain level of funding each year
* Failure to meet the higher fixed expenses of full-time staff could force SRA to operate at a deficit

Constraints

* Limited ability to expand team sizes and conduct team scrimmages due to small dock
* Low number of quality local and regional regattas limit volume of racing opportunities for competitive rowers
* Impact of small parking lot on practice time logistics

Finance

* Rowing/membership fees as primary revenue source
* Possible grant opportunities yet to be fully explored
* Historically, only one major fundraising event per year
* Not fully utilizing alumni relationship, especially parents and graduating juniors
* Reduced revenue opportunities in winter months

Community

* Constraint on ability to serve all current and possible community members, regardless of ability to pay,
* limited visibility and promotion of the scholarship program
* Aging masters’ population without a feeding system of younger rowers, especially experienced rowers
* Boathouse shell storage is at capacity
* Lacking dedicated diversity strategy

#### Threats

* Possibility of another rowing club on the Eastside, siphoning members or potential members from SRA
* Multiple programs with different needs, may compete for resources
* Changes in key staff or rowers may result in less well-maintained launches
* Staff departures resulting in shortage of coaches and limitations on SRA’s ability to put rowers on the water
* The impact the economy has on rowing; expendable income is required
* Outside threats that cause drift away from rowing, potentially reducing the desire to return to the sport
* Cyclical and seasonal variations in program size and outside influences affect revenue consistency
* Potential litigation, financial losses, damage to SRA’s reputation resulting from major injury of a member
* Inadequate parking constrains SRA’s ability to expand team sizes or make its facility available for rentals
* Potential departure of coaching staff, due to career pursuit utilizing their various skill sets

### GOALS IN ACTION

The following goals are a result of evaluation, while staying true to the mission statement and values, and reviewing the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats to SRA. Under each goal there are ongoing priorities and new initiatives. Ongoing priorities are continuous tasks that are currently conducted. New initiatives are short term, which should be addressed within a year, and long term, which should be addressed within one to two years. In order for these goals to be met, a continual feedback process is required. The board and the executive director share responsibilities to ensure these initiatives are accomplished.

**Goal 1: Maintain a financially sustainable organization, enabling SRA to serve current and future generations**

#### Ongoing Priorities

* Establish and adhere to an annual budget
* Maintain adequate cash reserves and control expenses
* Explore additional revenue streams
* Continue fundraising and expand fundraising efforts
* Maintain membership base necessary to achieve budget revenue projections and goals while still maintaining fair market value for membership dues
* Monitor membership numbers and trends in relation to budgeted numbers
* Develop and grow volunteer opportunities to support the needs of the club
* Evaluate possible program/club changes to better manage costs and avoid cost increases
* Continue to ensure obligations are met
* Continue to perform financial analysis of each program to assist in decisions around future investments and membership fees

#### New Initiatives

* Short Term
  + Establish a process for ongoing grant identification and application
  + Perform more detailed annual review of expenses
  + Create an annual internal audit process
* Long Term
  + Evaluate potential corporate and community events
  + Structure fundraising efforts to increase the availability of scholarships
  + Develop alternative financial development opportunities

### **Goal 2: Serve the needs of every community member, from new to competitive rowers, with programs that strive to meet and equally respect each individual’s level and objectives**

#### Ongoing Priorities

* Provide youth rowers the opportunity, support and resources to achieve their individual maximum potential while at SRA, that also supports their long-term athletic development and nurtures personal growth
* Provide an environment to introduce members to the joy of rowing and team sports
* Provide masters rowers with the opportunity, support and resources to row (and race) at a variety of schedules, skills, and speeds, by offering introductory, recreational and competitive programs
* Ensure independent rowers are part of the SRA community by providing regular communication from staff and continual access to equipment, events and race opportunities
* Develop/standardize marketing strategies around forecasted program sizes

#### New Initiatives

* Short Term
  + Research additional launch sites in order to support a larger team
  + Review current programming and develop alternative offerings to fill any gaps
* Long Term
  + Establish and host an annual local or regional regatta
  + Evaluate other national/international racing opportunities

### **Goal 3:** **Provide facilities and equipment that enhance the experience of all rowers**

#### Ongoing Priorities

* Maintain and purchase the appropriate land and water fleet as per the equipment plan
* Continue the launch cycling plan and engine cycling plan
* Manage ongoing facility maintenance and upkeep
* Continue to follow SRA safety protocol
* Continue to review existing safety policies, rules, procedures, and responsibilities and revise any gaps
* Continue to ensure regular staff and rower safety education

#### New Initiatives

* Short Term
  + Create and/or update launch maintenance plans including emergency repairs
  + Create a long-term maintenance and replacement plan for major boathouse and property items

### **Goal 4: Attract and retain high-quality staff members by providing a supportive environment that offers opportunities for long-term growth and development**

#### Ongoing Priorities

* Continue to pay competitive wages and provide other financial benefits such as 401k matching and insurance stipend
* Provide coaching education opportunities, from new hire through continuing education, as well as targeted development opportunities
* Ensure regular CPR training is available and complimentary for staff and members
* Provide work-life balance and flexibility in scheduling employees
* Ensure job descriptions and performance reviews continue to evolve with club needs and strategic direction
* Perform a staff satisfaction survey annually, at a minimum, and provide results and analysis to the Board President, Staff Liaison, and staff
* Ensure/maintain staff morale

#### New Initiatives

* Short Term
  + Network within the coaching community to develop relations and ensure an easier, and faster pipeline when necessary
  + Adapt the size of administrative staff as needed
  + Create a database or list of alumni to use as a tracking mechanism to build coach pipeline and maintain the SRA community
* Long Term
  + Maintain connections with alumni to build a coach pipeline and maintain the SRA community
  + Develop pipeline of experienced coaches
  + Implement coach/staff career development planning
  + Develop job descriptions and full-time job opportunities
  + Evaluate coach/staff compensation and benefits

### **Goal 5: Foster a culture that values open communication, celebrates the individual, and provides a supportive community both on and off the water**

#### Ongoing Priorities

* Continue information updates to the club regularly through the website, newsletter, and social media
* Maintain and grow presence in social and web channels
* Continue to assess member satisfaction regularly, at least once a year, and provide results and analysis to board, staff, and membership
* Continue writing and sharing the stories of alumni, members, staff, and supporters to create a history of SRA to be stored and documented online
* Maintain online database of photos for club use and preservation

#### New Initiatives

* Short Term
  + Create and distribute an annual communication/marketing report
  + Launch the SRA sponsorship program
  + Create an official SRA promotional video
  + Update and review the current SRA website to reflect the current programs and memberships we have to offer
  + Foster opportunities to build cross-team camaraderie
* Long Term
  + Take SRA to the next level by increasing recognition of staff, rowers, coaches, and volunteers for their accomplishments

### **Goal 6:** **Extend SRA’s reach and impact in the broader community through educational programs, scholarships, and community stewardship**

#### Ongoing Priorities

* Continue to fund the scholarship program, and expand if needed
* Continue to assist King County in wetlands maintenance
* Continue club-wide community volunteer opportunities such as boathouse cleanup, Row for a Days, etc.
* Continue environmentally-sustainable practices that protect the surrounding lands and waterways

#### New Initiatives

* Short Term
  + Create a committee of board members, staff, and rowers to develop a comprehensive plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), including soliciting trained expertise on DEI
  + Drive more grassroots volunteer opportunities for the club through opportunities that move SRA to the next level
* Long Term
  + Find ways to embrace the community, and have them embrace us back - get known to the community