

Belmont Rowing Center - Overview

Established in 2013, Belmont Rowing Center offers affordable and inclusive rowing programs to youth and adults to encourage physical activity, support health and wellness, foster teamwork and promote the sport of rowing. Located on the Catawba River in Belmont, NC, BRC provides a unique recreational opportunity for individuals of all body types and abilities of teens through seniors. Though most BRC rowers live in Gaston or Mecklenburg County, BRC draws participants from the entire Charlotte metropolitan region, which has a population of 2.2 million and growing (as of 2023).

BRC program offerings have included:

Youth	Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Novice • Youth Competitive • Youth Summer Camps • Indoor rowing for youth • Summer camp for underserved youth (in partnership with Behailu) • 1 day clinic for Jack & Jill (an organization whose mission is to develop leadership skills in African American youth) • Rowing & Robotics camp • Adaptive rowing programs at Camp Dogwood for visually impaired youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Learn to Row • Adult Developmental (intermediate) • Adult Masters Competitive Rowing • Individually Tailored Private Lessons • Indoor rowing for adults • ROAR, (Rowing for Active Recovery), a program for cancer patients and survivors • Adaptive rowing program at Camp Dogwood for visually impaired adults

Despite relocating twice and operating on a short-term lease, BRC has managed to grow and thrive, even with much of its energy focused on the search for a permanent home. That search culminated successfully in December 2017, when several rowers teamed up to purchase 13.6 acres of land on the Catawba River in Belmont, NC. BRC then donated approximately 3.4 acres to the City of Belmont for a municipal park, with the remainder to serve as a permanent home for BRC. This arrangement provides a significant site upgrade while providing a new waterfront park for public enjoyment.

Updating the Strategic Plan

In late 2022 BRC leadership recognized some key opportunities and risks that would necessitate a review and revision to the existing Strategic Plan (circa Nov. 2020). These included the development of a new Center location and the associated fundraising; ensuring our 501c3 non-profit status to comply with our Statement of Purpose with the IRS and commitment to the City of Belmont; and the overall need for operational capabilities to support future growth and sustainability.

As a result, the Executive Committee created the role of Senior VP in early 2023 with the charter to update the Strategic Plan and then ensure execution thereafter. Under the direction of then BRC President, Julie Isaacson, BRC Senior VP, David Yagnesak and Masters rower, Sarah Macey convened to meet this objective.

A review was performed of existing organizational documents, the current Strategic Plan, and other historical documents. Additionally, interviews with current and past leadership were performed to better understand conditions and events contributing to the current state of BRC.

It was decided that before a revised Strategic Plan (SP) could be created, a few key documents should be prepared to improve and guide the creation of the resulting SP. These would include a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis (SWOT), BRC Values, BRC Mission Statement, and BRC Vision Statement. The following actions were therefore taken:

1. Develop input for creation of documents (David Yagnesak and Sarah Macey)
 - a. Form a Steering Committee
 - i. Leverage stated interest from a prior volunteer survey.
 - ii. Ensure representation (Masters/Youth) through additional outreach as needed.
 - b. Finalize Committee
 - i. Ellen Ladley, Tom Bryant, Cindy White, Jessica Jacks-Turkas, Jerome Butler, Kemery Gilbert, Jim Christopherson
 - c. Conduct Committee working sessions to obtain strategic input.
2. Create proposed documents (David Yagnesak and Sarah Macey)
3. Obtain consensus/alignment from Steering Committee (David Yagnesak and Sarah Macey)
4. Present to ExComm for approval and adoption (David Yagnesak and Sarah Macey)
5. Supplement Committee input by conducting interviews of current BRC leadership roles who represent key stakeholders.
 - a. VP Marketing/Secretary (Jenn Bower), VP New Site (Debbie Brown), Treasurer (Valarie Alcorn), Coaching Director (Anne Turner), Masters Liaison (Kristin Sherman), Equipment Manager (Morgan Stewart).

Mission Statement

Belmont Rowing Center promotes the growing sport of rowing through educational, competitive, and inclusive programs.

Vision Statement

Belmont Rowing Center is invaluable to rowers, coaches, and the community which enables sustainability and growth.

Longer Term Goal: *Belmont Rowing Center is the premiere rowing organization in the Carolinas.*

Values

Education, Responsibility, Communication, Community, and Growth Mindset

Mission Statement

Belmont Rowing Center promotes the growing sport of rowing through educational, competitive, and inclusive programs.

Belmont Rowing Center has successfully created and maintained the elements required to establish a viable rowing center. These include securing tax-exempt status, attaining financial viability, creating a leadership team, delivering programming for youth and adults, recruiting high quality coaches, and obtaining requisite equipment.

Our core activities:

- Provide educational rowing programs and training opportunities.
- Serve youth and adults.
- Ensure high quality coaches.
- Develop skills and enable competitive opportunities.
- Provide inclusivity - race, size, age, and economic background.

Our rowers tout physical, character building, and community benefits:

- Strength, endurance, improved health, and injury recovery.
- Perseverance, leadership, grit, and teamwork
- River stewardship, partnerships, youth camps, and college team training.

Vision Statement (1-3 years)

Belmont Rowing Center is invaluable to rowers, coaches, and the community which enables sustainability and growth.

BRC is at a critical point in time where we have both high risks and opportunities.

- Key risks include lack of facilities (boat storage area, launch/recovery capacity, parking), Board and coaching depth, and a current short-term lease.
- Key opportunities include property purchased for club relocation, our specific rowing location and conditions, a growth region, and passionate rowers.

Our Key Stakeholders:

- Rowers: Our primary client that we educate and who enable financial sustainability.
- Parents of Youth rowers: A constituent seeking skill and character development with the potential for scholarship opportunities.
- Coaches: Our educators seek a compelling and supportive work environment providing an opportunity to teach and help others grow.
- Community: New site development and participant growth is dependent on attracting external donors and partners. We also are environmental stewards.

How we will Become Invaluable to our Key Stakeholders:

- Measure ourselves, identify and implement improvement opportunities.
- Create measured excellence in programming & outcomes (youth/masters, camps/clinics, visiting coaches, colleges).
- Improve competitiveness of the Masters program.
- Create financial security (reserves, diversified revenues, sponsorships, and grants).
- Leverage our SWOT to guide our actions (build on strengths and opportunities, minimize or eliminate weaknesses and threats).
- Create the conditions to enable external fundraising: increase leadership, professionalize management, ensure 501c3 tax exempt status, dedicated fundraising activities.
- Achieve fundraising success and secure funds to develop the new site.
- Develop the new site (physical, amenities, support future programming) with an eye on the future opportunities for the organization.
- Raise awareness of rowing and our superb regional waters.
- Create economic development through clinics, spring training, scrimmages, etc.

Longer Term Goal (3+ years)

Belmont Rowing Center is the premiere rowing organization in the Carolinas.

How we will become a premiere rowing organization:

- Maintain measured internal excellence (programs, organization, facilities, scholarship athletes).
- Successfully host invitationals and regattas.
- Host local high school and/or college teams.
- Create sustained security (financial, influx of ideas, rowers, and 501c3).
- Enhance community awareness of rowing.
- Become a recognized steward of our river.
- Create deep community relations.
- Pursue partnerships that provide economic development and other mutual benefits.
- Create momentum for continual growth (increase programming, rowers).
- BRC is perceived as a priceless asset to our stakeholders: rowers, coaches, and our community. We attract stakeholders to BRC and become self-sustaining.

Values

Education

- We teach the sport of rowing to individuals having diverse skill and fitness levels - programs include Learn to Row, Development, Youth, and Masters.
- We develop skills leading to mastery and competitive opportunities.
- We enable personal and character development to achieve benefits such as teamwork, resilience, leadership, perseverance, and confidence.

Responsibility

- We are responsible for one another on the water and on land. We are committed to maintaining an effective safety program.
- We manage our finances to create sustainability and enable potential growth.

Communication

- We recognize communication is key to our success.
- Our standard: Promote and deliver professional transparent communication and invite feedback. Communication is inclusive of source, content, and form.

Community

- We are passionate about our region, our waters, and our local community.
- We desire to raise awareness of rowing throughout our region.
- We invite people from all backgrounds, economic status, and geographic areas to participate in the sport.
- We are deliberate in creating a welcoming and fun atmosphere.
- We are intentional in fostering meaningful connections among rowers.
- We serve our community through volunteering and partnerships.

Growth Mindset

- We must ask ourselves if our decisions will drive growth in value to stakeholders.
 - Measurable “hard” benefits resulting from programming and events.
 - Derived “soft” benefits such as perseverance, leadership skills, camaraderie, achievement of fitness goals, community relations and partnerships.
- We maintain an improvement attitude.

SWOT Analysis

PURPOSE	
Identify and Rank BRC's Internal and External Influences	
S	INTERNAL STRENGTHS
1	Premium Locale: River qualities, a growing metropolitan region, moderate weather, easy access, low competition
2	Youth Program: Full service: Programming, coaching, sports psychology, competition, personal development
3	Personality: Fun, welcoming, social
4	Mentorship: Many strong/enthusiastic rowers willing to mentor peers/Learn to Row (LTR)/Devo
5	Coaching: High quality, enthusiastic, professional
6	Rowing Programs to Serve All Abilities: Private lessons, LTR, Devo, Youth, Masters, Competition
O	EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES
1	Grow Youth and Create School Programs: K-12 and private schools, universities, homeschoolers, explain aid/support availability
2	Boost Awareness of Rowing and BRC: Leverage social media, define target rowers, align with health and social trends
3	Diversify Revenue: New Partnerships and Events: E.g., Whitewater Center, on-river(front) neighbors, community events, Row-a-thon
4	Diversify Revenue: New Programs: E.g., Indoor rowing, learn to cox, strength training, fitness evaluations, stretching, etc.
5	Align Offerings with Costs/Benefits: Alignment of BRC programs/offerings/pricing with benefits, responsibilities, etc.
6	Increase Retention: Rowers and coaches
7	New Site: Undefined
W	INTERNAL WEAKNESSES
1	Modest Finances: Low profit/reserves, donor fatigue, no external fundraising, very reliant on volunteers
2	"Black Box": Lack of transparency, no voice in decisions, impression of disorganization, unknown goals
3	"Two Clubs": No interaction/cohesion between youth/masters, infrequent/unequal communication
4	Club Size: Too small to consistently fill out bigger boats and support programs
5	Coaching Depth: Impacts communicated/paid coached sessions
6	Facilities/equipment: Sheds (space, lighting/shoes/oars/electric) Mill (condition/ventilation/cleanliness/lighting)
T	EXTERNAL THREATS
1	Operational "Health": Leadership depth and support (candidate bench, open roles, lack of committees), formal policies, opaqueness
2	Lack of Awareness of Rowing and BRC: Inability to attract enough interested rowers
3	Minimum Participant (or Session) Count: Too few participants to meet financial requirements and provide satisfactory rowing experiences
4	Participant Loss to Other Clubs or Fitness/Recreation Choices: Are we competitive in this market?
5	Financial Health: Reserves and profitability adequate to maintain current offerings and support growth initiatives
6	New Site: \$\$, resources, unknowns/surprises (regulatory, legal, municipal)
7	

Strategic Priorities

The list below identifies the seven strategic priorities identified for BRC to focus on over the next three years. These priorities have been carefully selected to drive progress and move our organization forward. Each priority will be assigned a dedicated board member who will champion its advancement, ensuring a focused and concerted effort towards achieving our strategic objectives. To facilitate effective execution, annual work plans will be crafted, delineating the necessary actions and resources required to move these initiatives forward. These work plans will remain dynamic, evolving documents, continuously adapted to reflect changing circumstances and ensure alignment with our overarching strategic goals.

- ***Ensure Success of Programs***
- ***Professionalize Management***
- ***Maintain Non-Profit (501c3) Compliance***
- ***Ensure Financial Sustainability***
- ***Ensure Physical Assets***
- ***Ensure Safety***
- ***Develop New Site***