

**Green Lake Crew  
Rowing Advisory Council  
2021-2025 Strategic Plan**

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## Background

Founded in 1948, Green Lake Crew (GLC) paved the way for Seattle-area youth rowing and has maintained a long tradition of success in youth development through teamwork and competition. Today, GLC offers high-quality public rowing programs for youth and adults, made possible through a strong partnership between the Seattle Parks & Recreation (Parks) and the Associated Recreation Council (ARC). The Green Lake Rowing Advisory Council (RAC) provides strategic direction for GLC. Backed by decades of success in youth development and public support for a new boating facility, the RAC is uniquely positioned to open up the sport of rowing to a broad population.

In this strategic plan, the RAC builds upon the Parks and ARC visions, missions, and values to guide the next five years of public rowing on Green Lake. A brief history of Green Lake Crew, an overview of our governance structure, and a description of our strategic planning process precede the plan, itself.

## History

The Green Lake Small Craft Center (GLSCC) in north Seattle has been a hub for Pacific Northwest rowing since the late 1940s. In June 1948, Alex Shultz, a former *Seattle Times* reporter, legendary University of Washington (UW) coach, Al Ulbrickson, along with several other local leaders, took steps to bring youth rowing to Seattle, ultimately starting GLC. Three summers later, the Parks authorized the building of a rowing shellhouse. The Massart Shellhouse, now part of GLSCC, would be built adjacent to the Green Lake Aqua Theater, a portion of which stands at the southwest corner of Green Lake today. In response to continued interest in youth rowing, in 1963, the program became one of the first in the country to make rowing available to high school age girls.

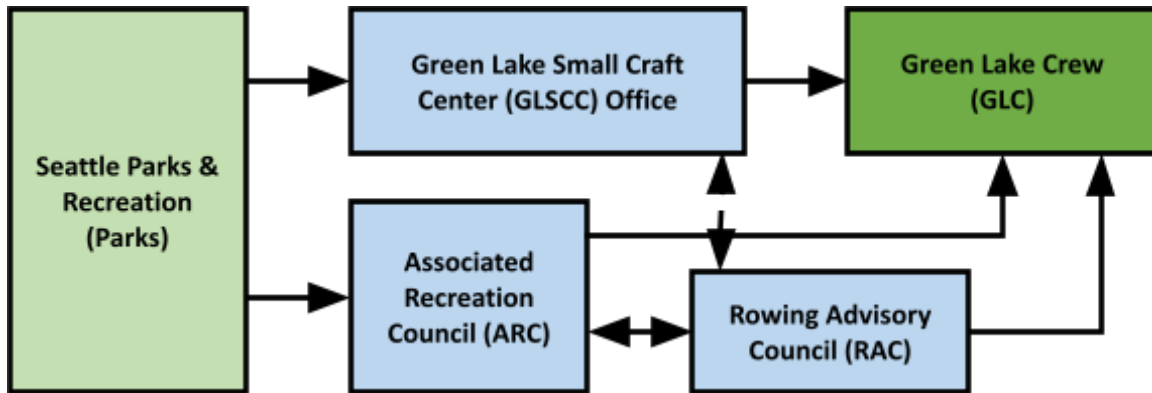
In 1968, Seattle and King County voters approved a ballot initiative to build new parks and develop existing ones – a key component of what was known as the Forward Thrust Campaign to improve urban infrastructure in the Seattle metropolitan area. In addition to providing the public funds that enabled GLSCC to house sailing and paddling programs in its current physical configuration, this \$118M bond issuance paved the way for the construction of Mount Baker Rowing & Sailing Center (MBRSC). MBRSC fulfilled a vision of youth “in the south and central part of the city enjoying the same proximity to rowing facilities that the north-enders presently enjoy with the Green Lake program.”

GLSCC and MBRSC have since provided recreational opportunities to thousands of Seattle area residents, with both facilities adding adult rowing programs by 1984. Between 2002 and 2012, the MBRSC community raised funds to renovate its small craft facility to serve more users, now a promising model for public-private facility redevelopment. Today, over 40 years since the last major GLSCC renovation, the RAC – in collaboration with several public and private partners – has successfully raised over \$6M to break ground on the new Green Lake Community Boathouse in 2021.

Having begun our strategic planning process well before 2020 – a year where we experienced a global pandemic and national reckoning with racial injustice – the completion of our strategic plan comes at a time when we are reflecting upon and eagerly learning about the unique role we can play in creating a more just society. These developments have underscored the social determinants and privileges that enable current participation in the lifelong sport of rowing. And so, **we firmly believe – now more than ever – that anyone should be able to access and be accepted in a world-class rowing experience. Further, if we are to continue our history as pioneers in this sport, we must innovate and model the systemic change that can make the rowing community representative of our diverse global community.**

## Governance

Originally formed as the Seattle Junior Rowing Commission, the RAC is a volunteer board that oversees both rowing and sailing programs on Green Lake. The Seattle Canoe & Kayak Advisory Council (SCKAC) similarly oversees the Green Lake paddling programs. The RAC and SCKAC are two of 36 advisory councils that “advocate for the success of local and citywide recreation services for all people.” These councils are authorized by ARC, the nonprofit organization with which Parks contracts to support citywide recreation programs. The below diagram roughly illustrates the relationships between the key organizational entities that make GLC possible, and is followed by the vision, mission, and values for Parks and ARC.



### Seattle Parks & Recreation



**Vision:** Healthy people, healthy environment, strong communities

**Mission:** Provide welcoming and safe opportunities to play, learn, contemplate & build community, and promote responsible stewardship of the land

**Values:** Equity, Opportunity, Access, Sustainability

### Associated Recreation Council

**Vision:** Bringing together all people to build a healthy community

**Mission:** Inspire engagement and participation in equitable, dynamic, culturally relevant, and responsive recreation and lifelong learning programs

**Values:** Equitable access, Community, Community engagement and participation, Accountability, Mutual respect, Commitment to race and social justice





## Vision, mission, and values

### Vision

*What we strive to make Green Lake Crew*

Reaching farther to enrich our entire community

### Mission

*Our approach to achieving our vision*

To provide opportunity for all to grow as individuals, achieve as a team, and thrive as a community

### Values

*The principles guiding our decisions along the way*

Equity: We believe that all members of our community deserve the assistance necessary for them to access the benefits of the rowing program we offer at Green Lake. This includes lifelong health, life lessons, and the ability to open doors to greater opportunities.

Inclusivity: We believe there is a place for all skill levels and capabilities, and that Green Lake is a safe space that welcomes anyone who has an interest or passion in rowing or being part of our team.

Community: We believe that community makes us stronger and that Green Lake is a Commons for people to work together to achieve personal goals through rowing.

Commitment: We believe in teaching a commitment to a challenging goal, leading those who participate at Green Lake to learn, improve, excel, and achieve.

Development: We believe that the goal is to become greater than the sum of our parts through teamwork, and to extend capabilities beyond what the individual believes they can accomplish.

Excellence: We believe in achieving excellence in sport and inspiring participants to achieve something greater than they could do alone. We strive to be a model for our sport, a model for our community, and a model for our participants that all can be proud of.

We intend for these elements to be enduring; time will inevitably shape our goals and strategies, but our vision, mission, and values comprise the foundation of Green Lake Crew and all that we do.

## Goals for 2021-2025

Over the next five years, we will pursue the following four goals to advance our mission of providing – and increasing – opportunity for all:

1. Use our strengths to advance the future of public rowing
2. Break down barriers to accessing rowing
3. Build and strengthen our community
4. Increase rowing program sustainability

For each goal, we have developed broad strategies and specific tactics describing *how* we will achieve it.

## **Goal 1: Use our strengths to advance the future of public rowing**

Green Lake Crew has a legacy of excellence, a product of our leadership in the Pacific Northwest rowing community and high-quality programming that has served tens of thousands of Seattle area residents. Our greatest strengths include a proven model for competitive, safe, and inclusive junior and adult rowing, as well as long-standing partnerships that enable us to maintain a top-notch fleet of rowing shells. Green Lake, as a relatively small, protected body of water, is a particularly welcoming environment for those new to rowing and boating, in general. As we build the new Green Lake Community Boathouse, it will be critical for us to collaborate with our partners to assess and orient Green Lake Crew programming to serve the needs of the broader community; we want to reposition Green Lake as an accessible recreation destination for all.

### **Strategy 1.1: Formalize current partnerships within the rowing and boating communities**

- 1.1.1: Partner with Mount Baker Rowing & Sailing Center and George Pocock Rowing Foundation on local initiatives to advance public rowing
- 1.1.2: Strengthen relationships with local boating organizations, notably Seattle Canoe and Kayak Club
- 1.1.3: Participate in Northwest Rowing Council meetings and seek board membership
- 1.1.4: Learn from national leaders in public rowing and contribute to development of best practices

### **Strategy 1.2: Reconfigure programming to optimize use of the new rowing facility**

- 1.2.1: Seek broad community input on use of new facility, including new and existing programming
- 1.2.2: Plan for existing programs to “grow into” the new facility
- 1.2.3: Use technology to coordinate use of facility and equipment across programs
- 1.2.4: Adapt home regatta planning and event logistics to new physical space

## **Goal 2: Break down barriers to accessing rowing**

Participation in rowing has historically been predominantly enjoyed by white, college-bound or college-educated individuals. Green Lake Crew proudly enables program participation regardless of means and supports junior rowers' pursuits of college scholarships, but we must do more to help our sport realize the systemic change it needs. We recognize that institutional barriers, both conscious and unconscious, create disparities of access to publicly funded programs such as Green Lake Crew. We will work to break down the barriers that exist within our own organization, and to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the program.

### **Strategy 2.1: Reshape Green Lake Crew culture to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion**

- 2.1.1: Recruit members of under-served and under-represented communities to the RAC
- 2.1.2: Provide ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion training to RAC, staff, and participants
- 2.1.3: Partner with George Pocock Rowing Foundation to promote rowing to under-served and under-represented groups and eliminate barriers that might keep individuals from participating
- 2.1.4: Meet with leaders in community organizations and local high schools to provide information about rowing and our commitment to equity
- 2.1.5 Shift from a passive financial aid program to one that promotes financial aid to help recruit disadvantage youth

### **Strategy 2.2: Expand lifelong rowing opportunities**

- 2.2.1: Add junior and adult programming to accommodate diverse rowing goals
- 2.2.2: Formalize partnership with Seize The Oar Foundation to offer rowing programming for individuals with physical and/or cognitive differences
- 2.2.3: Promote program entry points and community building at local regattas and events

### **Strategy 2.3: Minimize participant costs**

- 2.3.1: Evaluate and ensure participant fees are commensurate with program costs and can accommodate different abilities to pay
- 2.3.2: Facilitate scholarship and intraorganizational sponsorship opportunities



### **Goal 3: Build and strengthen our community**

Rowing may be what brings participants to Green Lake Crew and keeps them coming back, but rowing is – more importantly – a means for teaching and learning about the importance of teamwork and community. A dual focus on individual development and collective development can help Green Lake Crew become greater than the sum of our parts. In turn, we can be a model of community cohesion and use this newfound strength to positively impact the community at large.

#### **Strategy 3.1: Foster a culture of reciprocity**

- 3.1.1: Empower and energize participants to contribute to events
- 3.1.2: Develop cross-program pods to facilitate collaboration and learning
- 3.1.3: Promote philanthropy and service to the broader community

#### **Strategy 3.2: Attract, develop, and retain staff and coaches who share our values**

- 3.2.1: Invest in professional development opportunities for staff and coaches
- 3.2.2: Build case for supplemental staff and coaching capacity
- 3.2.3: Develop succession plans for key leadership positions

#### **Strategy 3.3: Improve alumni engagement**

- 3.3.1: Build upon capital campaign efforts to develop and maintain an alumni database
- 3.3.2: Invest in alumni outreach and communications
- 3.3.2: Plan and co-host an annual Alumni Day event with Friends of Green Lake Crew

#### **Strategy 3.4: Foster parent involvement and engagement**

- 3.4.1: Support office staff with communications function
- 3.4.2: Establish a Green Lake Crew parent volunteer committee
- 3.4.3: Create opportunities for parents to try rowing

## **Goal 4: Increase rowing program sustainability**

Attaining and sustaining the first three goals will require ample resources – financial, human, and otherwise. As program operations evolve and expand, so must fund development and evaluation strategies. To ensure we are positioned to achieve our vision, we will embark on more sophisticated assessment and fundraising activities to measure progress and capitalize on program results and impact.

### **Strategy 4.1: Create a development plan**

- 4.1.1: Conduct comparative analysis of RAC financial model to those of other public and non-profit rowing programs
- 4.1.2: Establish an annual fund and quarterly fundraising goals
- 4.1.3: Align fundraising efforts with specific program goals, establishing fund restrictions as needed (e.g., coaching fund)
- 4.1.4 Work with FOGLC to grow our endowments while maximizing their use to keep program costs low, reach a larger segment of disadvantaged youth and to attract and retain quality coaches and staff.

### **Strategy 4.2: Engage in ongoing program evaluation**

- 4.2.1: Establish key performance indicators informing progress toward Strategic Plan goals
- 4.2.2: Identify program data sources and develop evaluation involvement, procedures, and frequency
- 4.2.3: Use evaluation results to recommend areas for improvement and engage stakeholders in an iterative strategic planning process