



# Ontario Sailing Strategic Plan

## Propulsion, Balance, Alignment

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A strategic plan creates forward momentum – **propulsion**. To successfully move forward we **balance** daily operational demands and strategic priorities with available resources. To move forward in the desired direction, we seek **alignment** with stakeholders.

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## **Preamble**

An inclusive, broad-based strategic planning process is an opportunity for the board, staff and stakeholders to listen with curiosity to those Ontario Sailing seeks to serve. Over the course of nine months and with the assistance of a third-party consultant, Ontario Sailing received 634 pieces of direct input and feedback through either a survey response, interview, focus group or feedback loop opportunity.

In the final steps of our process, the draft plan was shared with several groups, including a group of Commodores who paid particular attention to the priorities related to the development and engagement of member organizations. There was general support for the plan and a commitment from the group to assist in gathering data in the months and years ahead to enable the organization to make well researched, evidence-based decisions.

While it was not our intention in this current planning process to review our mission, vision, and values, the feedback we have received suggests that there is some confusion about who we are, what we do and who we serve. The Board will consider, as part of our work in the months ahead, how to articulate our mission, vision, values, and overarching goals with greater clarity.

As a Board, we recognize that this plan involves elements of continued information gathering, learning and then action on that learning. We embrace our future as one that is adaptable and flexible and driven by data and evidence as well as relationships and community. We will continue to ask ourselves and the staff team, in relation to each strategic priority: What does success look like today?

We recognize the importance of all our partners in supporting Ontario Sailing's ability to deliver our mission. Our partnerships are mutually beneficial, and we value the support they each provide. We look forward to a renewed commitment with each of our key partners. We note the importance of our ongoing relationship with Sail Canada and are committed to an alignment of programs and services, as well as shared initiatives that serve the missions of both organizations.

## **Mission**

Ontario Sailing is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing lifelong sailors through leadership and programming.

## **Vision**

Ontario Sailing will champion the sport of sailing, enabling it to flourish and grow, becoming the leading, lifelong recreational and competitive sport in Ontario.

## **Themes**

Throughout the planning process several themes wove their way into the fabric of the various conversations and feedback opportunities. These themes provide the backdrop to the plan and our daily work at Ontario Sailing. They also form the basis for the strategic priorities that are highlighted in this plan. The themes of sustainability, membership, community, inclusion, and communications set the context for this plan.

Strategic priorities do not replace the core foundational work of Ontario Sailing. Strategic priorities provide the lenses through which day-to-day activities are aligned within the resources the organization has at their disposal. As stated at the outset, our goal is forward propulsion that balances our resources with day-to-day operational excellence and strategic initiatives in alignment with our stakeholders and partners.

## **Sustainability**

As an organization we view all aspects of our work through a lens of sustainability. This means that we consider the need to be sustainable in terms of the environment, finances, human resources, governance, and membership. Sustainability is a consideration intertwined throughout every discussion to ensure we act in a manner that is consistent with the long-term viability of our sport.

## **Community**

Throughout the planning process, we were buoyed by the positive, supportive, and thoughtful engagement of those who took the time to participate. We are a community of people who care deeply about this sport and want to ensure its long-term success. We heard frequently that there is concern that numbers in our sailing community are diminishing, the population aging, and interest in sailing and powerboating waning. This concern was balanced by others who shared that in their community, participation has increased. We need to gather data and investigate the concerns raised so we can have a shared understanding of the reality throughout the province. Once we know where the sport stands, we can address issues through the collective effort we hope this plan represents.

## **Membership**

We want Ontario Sailing member organizations, who lead sailing in their communities, to know they are supported through: training staff and volunteers to deliver programs; support for the governance and operations of each organization and through ongoing work to ensure the long-term health of the sport. We seek to establish greater clarity in all our communications and build greater understanding of who the members are and how we work together to achieve our shared goals.

## **Equity, Inclusion & Access**

The discussion around equity, inclusion and access was often couched in terms related to racial diversity, access for individuals of all genders, socio-economic backgrounds, abilities. However, it was not limited to this. We also heard about the importance of access to training, the cost of training and the limited ability for those trained to earn enough to cover the investment in their training.

## **Communications**

The importance of clear, concise, and consistent communication that is shared with all stakeholders arose often. Thankfully, some of the suggestions raised during collection of feedback included work the

organization is already advancing. We recognize a need to ensure we identify who our various audiences are for each mode of communication, and tailor messages to meet audience needs.

## Strategic Priorities

### 1. MEMBER ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT

**1.1 Ontario Sailing will further promote, communicate, and grow programs that support club development with a focus on areas such as governance, legal requirements, funding opportunities, and operational best practices.**

#### Objectives:

- 1.1.1 Survey member organizations to determine awareness and satisfaction of Ontario Sailing's organization support tools and data to prioritize areas of concern within governance for organizations.
- 1.1.2 In partnership with the broader organization's communication objectives and strategies, develop the information and resource sharing plan to address gaps.
- 1.1.3 Identify what information is needed and how to best attain that information to create a benchmark for sailing within Ontario.
- 1.1.4 Gather and analyze the data, both current, and past where available, to establish baselines and assess past performance.
- 1.1.5 Based on outcome of research develop a communications and education plan to share findings as necessary and develop next steps.
- 1.1.6 Based on data gathered with membership information forms, surveys, and quantitative information on sailing, create tools to support local organizations in setting priorities for Board activities.

### 2. DEVELOPMENT OF SAILORS

**2.1 Ontario Sailing will clarify and improve programs and services to align and promote the long-term sailor development pathway. This includes all stages of the pathway from learning fundamental skills to lifelong participation as a competitive sailor and cruisers inclusive of a variety of boats.**

#### Objectives:

- 2.1.1 Support member schools using Sail Canada curriculum to recruit and retain participants in their programs through province wide initiatives.

- 2.1.2 Promote the value of Race Official Training (Race Officer, Judge, Mark Layer) regarding how it provides a better competition experience at all levels.
- 2.1.3 Create a data-driven approach to evaluate the recruitment and retention of race officials.
- 2.1.4 Survey stakeholders and establish a working group to identify key areas where Ontario Sailing can best engage sailors outside of competition.
- 2.1.5 Pilot 1-2 initiatives developed in consultation with stakeholders and working group.
- 2.1.6 Create and lead a working group of member schools to collaborate on shared initiatives to improve the efficacy and longevity of their programs.

**2.2 In alignment with Sail Canada, Ontario Sailing will update and implement a High-Performance Plan.**

**Objectives:**

- 2.2.1 Update and publish a High-Performance Plan that is reviewed and updated annually in collaboration with Sail Canada, stakeholders, and funding partners.
- 2.2.2 Promote the performance of athletes to showcase the sport of sailing and combat negative perceptions about our sport.
- 2.2.3 Improve standing within the Ontario High Performance Sport Initiative (OHPSI) program through the Canadian Sport Institute of Ontario (CSIO).
- 2.2.4 Establish a data driven approach in partnership with Sail Canada and CSIO, to evaluate and support the development of athletes.
- 2.2.5 Engage with class associations to support the development of sailors outside of the Olympic pathway.
- 2.2.6 In alignment with Sail Canada, foster the development of club level programming in emerging high-performance classes.

**3. DEVELOPMENT OF INSTRUCTORS AND COACHES**

**3.1 Ontario Sailing will prioritize the accessibility of innovative training and certification programs for instructors and coaches to improve program quality and increase the availability of professional development and mentorship opportunities.**

**Objectives:**

- 3.1.1 Create a system to evaluate efficacy of programs through data analysis, participant, and course conductor feedback.

- 3.1.2 Leverage online tools created during the pandemic to improve accessibility of courses by reducing in person time commitments.
- 3.1.3 Survey member schools/coaches/instructors to assess the number of instructors/coaches working in Ontario, and their average retention rate.
- 3.1.4 Pilot a new mentorship program using online tools to promote accessibility across the province.
- 3.1.5 Based on system evaluation, work with Sail Canada to update courses and create professional development opportunities to address gaps in knowledge/skills.
- 3.1.6 Update mentorship program and professional development programming to achieve peak potential for instructors/coaches before the average length of service is reached.
- 3.1.7 Create a system to identify skilled instructors/coaches to be targeted for development to become Instructor Evaluators, Learning Facilitators, and Competition Development Coaches.
- 3.1.8 Survey instructors/coaches/schools to identify solutions to improve the recruitment and retention of instructors/coaches.
- 3.1.9 Implement initiatives to improve the recruitment and retention of instructors/coaches.

#### **4. ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**4.1 Ontario Sailing will continue to develop and facilitate our organization wide government relations program to identify the short- and long-term issues that require government consideration and provide local clubs with the tools they need to build relationships with their local governing bodies.**

##### **Objectives:**

- 4.1.1 Complete an environmental scan to identify current and potential issues in sport in Ontario.
- 4.1.2 Survey stakeholders to assess current relationships with local governing bodies and areas of concern.
- 4.1.3 Identify potential partners with similar concerns regarding identified issues. (e.g., Boating Ontario and their Clean Marine Program)
- 4.1.4 Based on survey results, provide stakeholders with resources and development opportunities related to improving local relationships.
- 4.1.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of the current resources and develop other resources through utilizing the stakeholder survey.

- 4.1.6 Create key message briefing documents on issues for government consideration.
- 4.1.7 Intentionally search for opportunities to share key messaging briefs with appropriate government officials and community leaders.

**4.2 Ontario Sailing will develop an equity, inclusion, diversity, and access plan that will assess all aspects of the organization from policies through to program execution to determine how best to build a culture of inclusion.**

**Objectives:**

- 4.2.1 Increase the organization's understanding of equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and unconscious bias, through on-going training/education for the Staff, Board and identified key volunteers.
- 4.2.2 Identify leaders in gender equity in sport, both individuals and programs in sailing as well as successful initiatives outside of sailing. Allocate staff resource to investigate current activities and create inventory to build upon.
- 4.2.3 Increase the organizations' understanding of the Truth Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action and support member clubs in their implementation.
- 4.2.4 In collaboration with national initiatives, collect data to improve our understanding of where sailing in Ontario can improve with respect to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- 4.2.5 Evaluate and support where appropriate current grassroots work on gender equity initiatives with staff resources and communication tools.
- 4.2.6 Establish a working group who will lead a process to develop a plan to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion in Ontario sailing.
- 4.2.7 Build upon gender equity initiatives evaluated in previous years and ensure they are supported and promoted.
- 4.2.8 Work with member organizations to implement equity, diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias training at the local level, and include resources in the COAST library.
- 4.2.9 Develop and implement equity, diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias, training as a professional development course for Ontario coaches.

**4.3 Ontario Sailing will develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and communications plan to include data collection, key message creation, website, newsletter, social media, events, club support tools and other mechanisms to promote sailing, sailing clubs, funding opportunities, and the work of the organization.**

## **Objectives:**

- 4.3.1 Develop a thorough understanding of who our stakeholder groups are and align key areas of interest for messages with each group. Clarify what terminology and language is appropriate to internal and external audiences for each stakeholder group.
- 4.3.2 Through training and ongoing communication, ensure that OSA staff, Board and key volunteers understand and can articulate the stakeholder groups.
- 4.3.3 Develop communication tools that articulate Ontario Sailing's role and value.
- 4.3.4 Create an annual content calendar for each stakeholder group with each communication platform to ensure regular, and targeted messaging is delivered.
- 4.3.5 Adhere to delivering the items laid out in the communications calendar with complete notes on engagement, feedback, and additional messaging.
- 4.3.6 Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication calendar and identify gaps for each stakeholder group in communications. Implement an updated plan that reflect these learnings.
- 4.3.7 Integrate a storytelling culture into our communications to further enhance engagement, through more meaningful communications.

## **4.4 Ontario Sailing will create a comprehensive human resource plan inclusive of program expansion, succession planning and a compensation plan.**

### **Objectives:**

- 4.4.1 Gather data and information on current and past human resources, including staff and volunteers.
- 4.4.2 Gather data on human resource models in place for other provincial sport organizations for reference.
- 4.4.3 Review HR policies and procedures, including staff satisfaction, to evaluate Ontario Sailing as "employer of choice" in evolving times.
- 4.4.4 Identify key areas and positions in the organization and the required capabilities and competencies for each, ensuring job descriptions are reviewed and up to date.
- 4.4.5 Assess current staff and volunteers' competency and capabilities and incorporate strategies to train and develop individuals as required.
- 4.4.6 Create knowledge transfer systems in addition to ongoing training and development of all organization leaders.

- 4.4.7 Create new volunteer recruitment tools (job descriptions, marketing, suggestion box concept) to utilize in recruitment of Ontario Sailing volunteers.
- 4.4.8 Return to the sanctioning of provincial championships, class specific provincial championships, and the grand prix development series to track and promote the performance of sailors across all participating classes.
- 4.4.9 Create a race officials mentorship program at sanctioned events to support their long-term development and retention within the sport.
- 4.4.10 Review efficacy of initiatives targeted at recreational sailors with working group and implement updates/new initiatives as appropriate.

*\*Objectives provided will be further developed in operational plans spanning the four-year period of the Strategic Plan and will evolve as more information is gathered and progress is made within each priority area.*