



**Piers Park
Sailing Center**
EAST BOSTON

2020 - 2023

Strategic Plan



**Fostering a Culture
of Inclusion**



Welcome.

For 22 years, Piers Park Sailing Center has worked toward a more accessible and inclusive Boston Harbor. Some 20,700 youth and 4,900 disabled sailors have taken the helm of a Piers Park Sonar Keelboat.

In 2017, PPSC recovered from a dire financial crisis. Over the last three years and with the support of our community and stakeholders, we have built a strong continuum of year-round programs. We now look forward to the next three years.

This plan clarifies our vision, mission, and values as an organization. It sets the agenda for key actions we will take, and looks beyond 2023 to our hopes for the future.

We are proud to present you with this vision and hope that you will join us in partnership as we work to achieve it.

Thank you!

At Piers Park Sailing Center, we believe:

Boston Harbor is a public resource that belongs to everyone, and should be accessible to everyone to enjoy.

Disparities in access to the harbor make us less resilient to the climate crisis and represent a social and environmental injustice.

Sailing inherently builds self-reliance, the ability to cope with adversity, confidence, and esteem, especially for children and persons with disabilities.

We must be intentional in our efforts to make sailing, and Boston Harbor, more inclusive and accessible.

Piers Park Sailing Center's mission is to foster *inclusive empowerment through marine science and community sailing*.



Piers Park Sailing Center's Statement of Values

PPSC provides inclusive and accessible recreational, educational, and personal growth opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and identities. PPSC empowers participants to become stewards of a stronger community, advocates for a healthy Boston Harbor, and leaders of individual and family wellness.

Our vision is to be the premier organization utilizing the marine environment and maritime sector to deliver accessible, high-impact programs to people of all ages, abilities, and identities in an inclusive, enriching, and empowering environment. PPSC envisions a unique and diverse community that is engaged in the local environment and based in mentorship and deep ties to our neighborhood and landscape.

Through mentorship and education in marine science and community sailing, we empower future generations of leaders through these four impact areas:

- **Social:** Increased esteem and confidence with broadened perspectives as a result of our programming.
- **Civic:** Strengthened commitment to the local community.
- **Environmental:** New advocates for a healthier environment.
- **Leadership:** Students of all ages engage in cross-generational mentorship and become stewards of a connected community.



Piers Park Sailing Center's Statement of Values

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Justice

To realize our vision of a community engaged in the local environment we foster a workplace and programs that are intentionally equitable, diverse, inclusive, and just. At PPSC we know that what we model within allows us to achieve outward goals, and we recognize this as a continual process. PPSC recruits, employs, trains, compensates, and promotes based on these definitions and places value on merit rather than heredity or wealth. The strength and longevity of our programs stems from bringing together diverse people to create healthy communities for all.

At PPSC **equity** is a highly valued concept and is used to dismantle systems that privilege some groups and individuals and disadvantage others based on their identities.

Equity ensures equal opportunity for all to thrive and participate in the programs PPSC offers. We acknowledge that because of systems of oppression and privilege, individuals and groups have different access to resources. To achieve equity, we must balance that disparity, which may mean dividing and sharing resources unequally in order for each person or group to have access to opportunities of equal quality and impact.

At PPSC **diversity** reflects the psychological, physical, social, and cultural differences that occur in all individuals within the PPSC community, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, age, marital status, gender identity, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, self-expression, and mental and physical ability. These varieties of characteristics exist in the PPSC community at large and add value to our work.

At PPSC **inclusion** is the act of creating a community in which any individual or group is welcomed, respected, and valued, while being supported to fully participate without barriers based on identity. PPSC's work environment embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people, working to diminish the culture of elitism that is so prevalent in the sailing world.

At PPSC **justice** is a commitment to challenging social, emotional, cultural, environmental, and economic inequalities imposed on individuals from any distribution of power, access to resources, and privilege in the larger society.



Piers Park Sailing Center's Statement of Values

Social Justice: In order to achieve our goals of fostering a culture of anti-elitism, bridging the gaps in diversity and academic achievement in STEM, creating equal opportunities for youth to develop healthfully we must take into account our society's systematic inequalities, including those based on race, class, gender, ability. At PPSC, we know representation matters. We promote social justice for employees and students, which means we do not discriminate based on systematic inequalities. We foster a safe environment for social-emotional growth and development. Systemic racism and class bias have caused neighborhood fragmentation. As a result, people of color, people living with low-income, and immigrants are more likely to be inactive and suffer health disparities due to a lack of affordable and accessible recreational and educational options.

Environmental Justice: Surrounded by massive commercial usage from an international airport, a major shipping channel entering Chelsea creek, Global and Gulf oil facilities, and infrastructure from the Big Dig, East Boston and the neighborhoods we serve are without a doubt environmental justice communities. PPSC seeks to mitigate the burden of environmental injustice by not only acting as an access point to green space and open space on the water—the few spaces away from main sources of air, noise, and light pollution—but by creating a healthy atmosphere for the growth and development of our students.

Our Logic Model:

Inputs >	Activities >	Outputs >	Outcomes >	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff and volunteers -Marine equipment -Educational Supplies -Foundation support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year round educational opportunities - Provide inclusive and accessible personal growth for people of all ages, abilities, and identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teach 2,800 children & 400 adults about marine science and sailing - Provide employment for 40+ instructional staff each year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved self esteem -Improved empathy and sense of community -Stronger connection to others - Broadened understanding of environment and ecology - Sailing as a sport becomes more accessible, inclusive, and diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social: Empowered individuals with broadened perspectives as a result of our programming -Civic: Strengthened commitment to the local community -Environmental: New advocates for a healthier environment -Leadership: Students of all ages engage in cross-generational mentorship and become stewards of a connected community.

Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process was designed by PPSC Board Clerk, Chair of Governance Committee Melanie Zurek & PPSC Executive Director Alex DeFronzo. The process began in 2019 with a community feedback survey and Staff SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.

This feedback was used to develop a strategic framework. The framework was divided in three priority areas (1. Inclusion, 2. Smart, Sustainable Growth, 3. Program Culture) and the board reviewed each of these areas to provide input and feedback.

The board and leadership staff convened for a full day strategic planning session on March 1, 2020 and adopted the final plan, as presented here.



Priority One:

Inclusion

Strategic Vision:

To develop a community engaged in the local environment we will foster a workplace and programs that are intentionally equitable, diverse, inclusive, and just.

To achieve equity, we must balance disparities in access to resources, which will mean dividing and sharing resources unequally in order for each person or group to have access to opportunities of equal quality and impact. To ensure we sustain a diverse program, our board, staff, and participants must be reflective of our community, thereby not reflective of the sport of sailing generally where women, people of color, and people with disabilities are often excluded. To strive toward justice, we will work to undo systemic social and environmental injustices by directing resources to economically disadvantaged children and families, ensuring equitable access to the harbor and the islands.

Action Area 1: Equity in Programs and Staffing

- **Make online and in-person enrollment meaningfully accessible to Limited English Proficient families.**
 - By December 31, 2020 ensure that all paper enrollment forms are available in any language spoken by 5% or more of the East Boston population as identified by Boston Public Schools
 - By March 1, 2022 ensure that online youth program enrollment is available in any language spoken by 5% or more of the East Boston population as identified by Boston Public Schools
 - Ongoing, ensure program staff are available to translate and interpret for in-person program enrollment during registration periods
- **Increase access for first-time entry to PPSC programming for youth at all ages.**
 - By March 15, 2021 broaden enrollment for the high school sailing team by strengthening PPSC's partnership with East Boston High School
 - By May 1, 2021 develop a new teen-training program outside of the Future Leaders program
 - Ongoing, increase BPS field trip opportunities to broaden program exposure

Priority One: Inclusion



Action Area 1: Equity in Programs and Staffing *(continued)*

- **Expand opportunities for adaptive sailing.**
 - By September 1, 2021, successfully include an adaptive racing boat in Thursday Night Racing
 - By June 1, 2022, add an additional adaptive sailing partnership with a new human service providing organization
- **Maintain 100% accessibility for all levels of physical ability with continuous equipment improvements.**
 - By May 1, 2020 publish online the list of available chair configurations for adaptive sailors
 - By July 1, 2021 design and construct a more effective transfer bench
 - By May 1, 2023 acquire equipment for adaptive kayaking including outriggers, seat, transfer bench
 - Ongoing, maintain and update current equipment used for transfers and helming, sheeting
- **Ensure continued community representation among organization staff and board.**
 - Ongoing, recruit new board members from communities served by PPSC, representing at least 75% of board membership
 - Ongoing, recruit and train staff from communities served by PPSC, representing at least 75% of total staff

Priority One: Inclusion

Action Area 2: Economic & Environmental Justice in Programs

- **Ensure the elimination of financial barriers to entry for children**
 - By March 1, 2023, develop a partnership with the YMCA or BCYF to provide a no-cost pathway to swimming competency for youth with financial need
 - Ongoing, maintain private and state funding to ensure free access remains available to families with financial need
- **Increase educational lesson blocks related to environmental justice in school-year and summer programs**
 - By September 1, 2020, ensure a minimum of 50% of Climate NATURE lesson plans directly address local, regional, and global environmental issues
 - By January 1, 2021, add an environmental justice course to Ocean Science After School program
 - By July 1, 2021, integrate NOAA Climate Curriculum into Science of Sailing 3-Level skills assessments



Priority Two:

Smart, Sustainable Growth

Strategic Vision:

We will further establish our core continuum of East Boston programs while pursuing new inclusive program opportunities.

PPSC's pathway for youth to spend two full summers in paid employment training positions us to make a meaningful impact in East Boston and around Boston Harbor. Our non-traditional pathway into maritime work should be leveraged to better program both the harbor and local classrooms.

Action Area 1: Financial Resilience

- **Achieve long-term financial stability to ensure equitable access to Boston Harbor for youth from East Boston, youth from surrounding communities, and persons with disabilities.**
 - Ongoing, continue to diversify revenue and develop new program partnerships
 - Between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2023 remain in the optimal operations reserve window as outlined in the PPSC board manual
- **Pursue new inclusive program opportunities on Boston Harbor**
 - Ongoing, seek partnership opportunities to work with City of Boston, Department of Conservation and Recreation and nonprofit partners to bring on-the-water programs other sites on Boston Harbor.
 - Ongoing, work with Boston Harbor Now, Trustees of Reservations, other nonprofit organizations, and new development interests to expand low and no-cost community kayaking programs on Boston Harbor.
- **Add new program enrichment to sailing-pass holders to improve adult program retention and recruitment, with a focus on recruitment of adults new to sailing**
 - By August 1, 2021 add a summer adult enrichment instructor to provide educational courses, weekend program events, and new racing opportunities
 - Ongoing, engage adult pass-holders as volunteers and donors in PPSC's youth, adaptive, and community programs to build a unified organizational culture

Priority Three:

A Philosophy of Safety, Fun, and Education

Strategic Vision:

Strengthen PPSC's long-standing core values of safety, fun, and education by addressing opportunities in each area.

A safe, fun, and educational atmosphere is essential in bringing diverse users into our programming and sustaining a lifetime of learning and mentorship. To keep PPSC students engaged in our community, we know that creating unique memories is essential. It is the reason that youth involved 20 years ago are still supporting the program today, and must be a key element to all the work we do.

Action Area 1: Safety in Programs and Physical Plant

- **Standardize safety procedures and equipment across all programs**
 - By June 1, 2020 have three fully-outfitted Maritime Skiffs capable of towing Sonar Keelboats in service, as well as one small Maritime Skiff to coach teen and racing programs
 - By July 1, 2020, require all lead dockstaff to pass US Powerboating certification in Safe Powerboat Handling
 - By July 1, 2021 require all staff to participate in 32 standardized core trainings
- **Address coming changes in need for fleet mobility, replacement of Sonars, and park construction**
 - By October 31, 2021 prepare the entire fleet to be mobile in off-season months
 - Ongoing, work with Massport, Kleinfelder, and Marion Pressley Associates to advocate for PPSC's physical plant needs
 - Ongoing, ensure capital reserve is adequate to replace a minimum of 2 Sonars per year

Priority Three:

A Philosophy of Safety, Fun, and Education



Action Area 2: Individual and Community Fulfillment

- **Provide professional development opportunities for staff at all levels of the organization**
 - By November 1, 2022 budget an annual allotment available to all PPSC staff to apply for and pursue professional development opportunities related to PPSC's work
 - Ongoing, offer pathways into education, maritime, disability services, and educational and career opportunities
- **Generate community happiness and fulfillment by sustaining our welcoming and spirited culture**
 - Ongoing, celebrate the joy of learning and recreating on the water – fun should be a central tenet of all programs
 - Ongoing, reward the ethos of mentorship between youth, adults, staff, and students with special program events including voyages to Boston Harbor Islands and small-boat sailing in the PPSC cove

A Vision for the Future

Beyond 2023, Piers Park Sailing Center will continue our work of inclusive empowerment. We are hopeful that expanded facilities and new partnerships will allow us to activate the harbor more than ever before.

We envision an East Boston where every young person has the opportunity to learn to sail, and our City of Boston as a whole as one that is open and welcoming to all residents on the harbor.

We believe our program is a catalyst for the youth we serve, providing personal and educational support as students enter young-adulthood. We also believe we provide individual growth for our abled and disabled adult sailors, and build a sense of community in a unique way between all people in our neighborhoods.

We are grateful for all of your support over the last two decades, and encouraged that we can continue to work together in partnership to advance the vision described in this plan.

